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1. Gustavo Petro sworn in as Colombia's first leftist President (Aug. 8, 2022)

Gustavo Petro was sworn in as the first leftist president of Colombia on 7 August.

Important facts

- He has promised to fight inequality in the country and bring about a significant change in the history of a country ravaged by a prolonged war between the government and guerrilla groups.
- Petro (62) has promised to address Colombia's social and economic inequalities by increasing spending money on poverty alleviation programs and investing in rural areas.
- Gustavo Petro, a former member of Colombia's M-19 guerrilla group, won the presidential election in June by defeating conservative parties by a huge margin.
- The victory of former rebel Petro was an extraordinary event for the country Colombia, as voters in the country did not support leftist leaders.
- Left leaders are often accused of being soft on crimes or sympathising with the guerrillas.
- He has described US-led anti narcotics policies, such as the forced elimination of illegal coca crops, as a major failure.

About Colombia

- Capital - Bogota
- Name - Republic of Colombia
- Official Language - Spanish
- Currency - Colombian peso

2. ITU's Regional Standardization Forum for Asia and Oceania Region held in New Delhi (Aug. 8, 2022)

International Telecommunication Union's Regional Standardization Forum for Asia and Oceania region will begin in New Delhi on 8 August.

Important facts

- The Ministry of Communication is hosting the International Telecommunication Union's Regional Standardization Forum (RSF) for Asia and Oceania region.
- The theme of the Forum - "Regulatory and Policy aspects of Telecommunications/ICTs".
- Minister of State for Communications Devusinh Chouhan inaugurated this Forum.
- It will be organised from 8th August 2022 to 12th August 2022.

- More than 250 delegates from 20 countries will participate in the forum.
- It aims to provide an insight into the experience of the Asia and Oceania region from a policy and regulatory perspective under various sub-themes.
- The meeting of the Regional Group of Asia and Oceania is being held after a gap of three years due to Kovid-19.
- It will be led by Dr Bilel Jamousi, head of study groups at ITU Geneva.

Objective of the meeting

- To contribute to the standardization work of ITU-T Study Group 3 and to safeguard the interests of the Asia and Oceania region.

About the Regional Standardization Forum

- It is a platform for creative exchange of ideas, discussion on standardization topics in various areas of technology and role of ITU standards, use of technologies for digital and financial inclusion in emerging markets, development of data value chain and digital health.

What is the Oceania region?

- It is the collective name for the islands spanning most of the Pacific Ocean.
- Oceania covers the entire island region between Asia and the Americas.
- It has traditionally been divided into four parts - Australasia (Australia and New Zealand), Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia.

About International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

- Founded - in 1865
- **Objective** - To allocate global radio spectrum and satellite orbits to facilitate international connectivity in communication networks, develop technical standards that enable seamless interconnection of networks and technologies.

3. US Navy ship docks in India for the first time for repairs (Aug. 8, 2022)

American Naval Ship Charles Drew arrived in India for the first time on 7 August for repairs and maintenance at L&T Kattupalli Shipyard at Ennore near Chennai.

Important facts

- This will be the first time that a US Navy ship is being repaired at an Indian shipyard.
- India had proposed during the 2+2 dialogue in April that the US Navy could leverage the services and expertise of the Indian shipyard.

- The repair of US Navy ships at the Indian shipyard has been enabled due to the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) in 2016.
- LEMOA facilitates the exchange of goods and munitions between the two navies.
- The USNS Charles Drew will be at Kattupalli shipyard for 11 days and undergo repairs in various areas.
- It is a new dimension to the fast expanding Indo-US strategic partnership.

Major Shipyards in India

- Cochin Shipyard Limited - Cochin/Kochi - Kerala
- Hindustan Shipyard Limited - Visakhapatnam - Andhra Pradesh
- Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers - Kolkata - West Bengal
- Goa Shipyard Limited - Goa - Goa
- L&T Shipbuilding Limited - Hazira - Gujarat
- ABG Shipyard Limited - Mumbai - Maharashtra

Largest Shipyard in India and the world

- Cochin Shipyard is the largest shipyard in India.
- In terms of revenue, the largest revenue generated by Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers is ₹1,658.79 crore.
- INS Vikrant, India's first indigenous aircraft carrier is being built by Cochin Shipyard.
- Hyundai Heavy Industries in Ulsan, South Korea is the largest dockyard in the world.
- Seawise Giant is the largest ship ever built in history. It was made in Japan by Sumitomo Heavy Industries.
- INS Vikramaditya is India's largest aircraft carrier and warship.

4. ASEAN bars Myanmar from ASEAN meetings (Aug. 6, 2022)

The ASEAN Regional Group has said that Myanmar will not be allowed to participate in any ASEAN meetings until it shows progress on the peace plan.

Important facts

- ASEAN has said that Myanmar should act in a way that shows progress has been made in the peace plan.
- The regional group expressed concern over the long-running political crisis in Myanmar and the executions of four opposition activists.

- ASEAN expressed its deep disappointment at the limited progress and highlighted the lack of commitment of the Nay Pyi Taw officials towards the implementation of the Five Point Consensus.
- ASEAN's five-point agreement was reached in Jakarta, Indonesia on April 24, 2021, calling for an immediate end to violence in Myanmar and constructive dialogue among all parties to seek a peaceful solution.
- On the Rohingya issue, ASEAN reiterated its support for facilitating the voluntary return of displaced persons in a safe and dignified manner in accordance with the bilateral agreement between Myanmar and Bangladesh.

About ASEAN

- Association of Southeast Asian Nations or ASEAN is an international organisation formed in Bangkok, Thailand in 1967.
- It promotes economic development, peace, security, social progress and cultural development in the Southeast Asian region.
- ASEAN Secretariat - Indonesia, Jakarta.
- General Secretary of ASEAN - Lim Jock Hoi, Brunei
- Official Languages - Burmese, Filipino, Indonesian, Khmer, Lao, Malay, Mandarin, Tamil, Thai and Vietnamese
- Working Language - English
- ASEAN Summit is the supreme policy making body of ASEAN.
- ASEAN is third largest market in the world
- It is the sixth largest economy in the world, third in Asia.
- ASEAN has Free-trade agreements (FTAs) with China, Japan, South Korea, India, Australia and New Zealand.

ASEAN Member Countries

- Indonesia
- Malaysia
- Philippines
- Singapore
- Thailand
- Brunei
- Vietnam
- Laos
- Myanmar

• Cambodia

5. Govt to make 1.5 lakh Ayushman Bharat Health, Wellness centres functional by December (Aug. 6, 2022)

Union Health Minister Dr Mansukh Mandaviya has said that the target of setting up 1.50 lakh Ayushman Bharat-Health and Wellness Centers (AB-HWCs) will be made operational by December this year.

Important facts

- Mandaviya said that out of the total target of setting up 1.50 lakh such centres, one lakh 22 thousand are working now.
- The Prime Minister had decided to set up 1.5 lakh health and wellness centers in 2017-18.
- These centers will also organize yoga classes for health twice a week.

Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres

- The central government has announced the setting up of 1,50,000 Ayushman Bharat-Health and Wellness Centers (AB-HWCs) in February 2018.
- These centers provide comprehensive primary health care (CPHC) including child and maternal health services, non-communicable diseases, diagnostic services, and free essential medicines.
- These centers provide comprehensive health care including non-communicable diseases and maternal and child health services.
- They will also provide free essential medicines and diagnostic services.

6. PM Narendra Modi to chair NITI Aayog governing council meeting (Aug. 6, 2022)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will chair the 7th Governing Council meeting of NITI Aayog at Rashtrapati Bhawan Cultural Centre, New Delhi on 7 August.

- PM will pave the way for a new era of collaboration between the Centre and the States.
- This will be the first physical meeting of the council after July 2019 and its members will include all chief ministers.
- On the 75th anniversary of independence, the states need to be agile, resilient and self-reliant and move towards "Atmanirbhar Bharat" in the spirit of cooperative federalism.
- In June this year, a National Conference of Chief Secretaries was held in Dharamsala, which was presided over by the Prime Minister.

The agenda of the meeting

- The agenda of the meeting includes crop diversification, achieving self-sufficiency in oilseeds, pulses and agro-communities, implementation of the National Education Policy and urban governance.
- The Governing Council meeting will try to finalize a roadmap and result-oriented action plan on each subject.
- The meeting will also emphasize the importance of the presidency for India in a federal system and the role of states in highlighting India's progress on the G-20 platform.

Governing Council of NITI Aayog

- This includes the Chief Ministers of all the states and the Lieutenant Governors of the Union Territories.
- It also includes ex-officio members of NITI Aayog, Vice-Chairman and whole-time members of NITI Aayog.
- It presents a platform to discuss inter-sectoral, inter-departmental and federal issues.

About NITI Aayog

- It is the premier policy think tank of the Government of India, it provides directional and policy inputs.
- It designs strategic and long-term policies.
- It also provides relevant technical advice to the Centre, States, and Union Territories.
- The Governing Council of NITI Aayog is chaired by the Prime Minister and includes the Chief Ministers of all the States and Union Territories and the Lieutenant Governors of other Union Territories.
- It was constituted on January 1, 2015.
- NITI stands for National Institution for Transforming India.
- The Government of India constituted the NITI Aayog to replace the Planning Commission, which was set up in 1950.
- This step was taken to better meet the needs and aspirations of the people.

7. 9 Indian companies in Fortune 500 Global list 2022 (Aug. 5, 2022)

Recently, Life Insurance Corporation listed on the stock exchange has joined the list of Fortune's Global 500 companies. With this, now nine Indian companies have made their place in the list.

Important facts

- LIC, the country's largest life insurer with a revenue of USD 97.26 billion and profit of USD 553.8 million, is ranked 98th in the recently released Fortune 500 list.
- Reliance Industries jumped 51 places to 104 in the 2022 list.
- Reliance has been on the list for 19 years with a revenue of USD 93.98 billion and a net profit of USD 8.15 billion in the latest year.
- Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) jumped 28 places to 142nd position, while Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) moved up 16 places to 190th.
- The list includes two Tata group companies - Tata Motors at 370th position and Tata Steel at 435th position.
- State Bank of India (SBI) climbed 17 places to 236th and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited climbed 19 places to 295th.
- The Fortune Global 500 list ranks companies based on total revenue for the respective fiscal years ended on or before March 31, 2022.

Global position

- American retail company Walmart tops the list of Fortune Global 500.
- Amazon is in second position.
- Chinese energy giant's State Grid, China National Petroleum and Sinopec rounded out the top five.

Top 10 companies in 2022 Fortune Global 500 list

1. Walmart, U.S
2. Amazon, U.S
3. State Grid, China
4. China National Petroleum, China
5. Sinopec, China
6. Saudi Aramco, Saudi Arabia
7. Apple, U.S
8. Volkswagen, Germany
9. China State Construction Engineering, China
10. CVS Health, U.S.

8. Water shortage officially in Netherlands due to drought (Aug. 5, 2022)

The Netherlands government has officially declared a water shortage due to the ongoing drought in the country, national water levels at an all-time low.

Important facts

- According to the Water Shortage Management Team of the country, continuous drought in the country has led to 'water shortage'.
- The scarcity of water is so bad that the waters of the Rhine River are supplying 50% less water than normal.
- The water shortage is already having a negative effect on shipping and agriculture in particular.
- Water used for irrigation of crops is banned in some parts of the country.
- Prolonged water scarcity can lead to salinization of the soil, affecting the agricultural industry.
- Despite the fact that the Netherlands is known for its abundance of water, it has declared a water shortage for the fifth time in the last 22 years.
- The water scarcity situation has now escalated to the third level threat in 2003. Threat of the third level means a specified national crisis.
- Drought means that the supply of fresh water must be comparatively less, but it can also affect the quality of drinking water.

9. Minerals Security Partnership (Aug. 5, 2022)

India is to join an 11-member US-led partnership for critical mineral supply chains called the 'Mineral Security Partnership (MSP)'.

Important facts

- A group of Western countries are collaborating to develop alternatives to China to ensure key industrial supplies.
- The Mineral Security Partnership is a new ambitious US-led partnership to secure the supply chain of rare minerals with the aim of reducing dependence on China.
- India is not a part of this arrangement but is working to gain entry through diplomatic efforts.
- Demand for rare minerals, which are essential for clean energy and other technologies, is projected to increase significantly in the coming decades.

What is the Minerals Security Partnership (MSP)?

- It is an initiative by the United States to strengthen rare mineral supply chains.
- Partner countries - Australia, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, Republic of Korea, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States and European Commission.

- Its purpose is to ensure that rare minerals are produced, processed and recycled in such a way that countries benefit from the full economic development of their geological management.
- This new group will focus on the supply chains of cobalt, nickel, lithium and the 17 "rare minerals" found on Earth.

Rare Earth Elements

- The 17 rare earth elements (REE) include the 15 Lanthanides (atomic numbers 57 — which is Lanthanum — to 71 in the periodic table) plus Scandium (atomic number 21) and Yttrium (39).
- REEs are classified as light RE elements (LREE) and heavy RE elements (HREE).
- Some REs are available in India such as Lanthanum, Cerium, Neodymium, Praseodymium and Samarium, while others such as Dysprosium, Terbium, Europium that are classified as HREE are not available in India.
- Hence, there is a dependence on countries such as China for HREE.

Importance of these minerals

- The batteries used in electric vehicles require minerals such as cobalt, nickel and lithium.
- REE is an essential component for over 200 consumer products such as mobile phones, computer hard drives, electric and hybrid vehicles, semiconductors, etc.

10. ICMR starts new initiative in northeast (Aug. 5, 2022)

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) on 4 August inaugurated the Foodborne Pathogen Survey Network (ICMR-FoodNet) in the northeastern States of India.

Important facts

- This latest initiative is part of the project launched by ICMR in 2020.
- The Integrated Task Force Project coordinates various operations, monitors outbreaks of foodborne enteric disease, and conducts intensive systematic laboratory-based surveillance in four north-eastern Indian states in collaboration with research and medical institutions and the food sectors.
- The project also includes assessment of disease burden, detection of specific pathogens responsible for outbreaks, and documentation of antimicrobial resistance patterns among intestinal bacteria.

Foodborne Pathogen Survey Network (ICMR-FoodNet)

- FoodNet determines the incidence of laboratory-diagnosed infections for bacterial pathogens typically transmitted through food.
- It provides a foundation for food safety policy and prevention efforts.

- It estimates the number of foodborne illnesses, tracks the incidence of specific foodborne illnesses over time, and disseminates information.

Northeast India

- Northeast India comprises seven states : Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura.
- The northeast is bordered by Bhutan, China, Myanmar and Bangladesh with a total length of over 2000 km and is connected to the rest of India by a narrow 20 km wide corridor of land.
- Northeast India is also known as the “Seven Sisters”.