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1. OPEC chief Mohammad Barkindo dies in Nigeria at 63 (July 8, 2022)

Mohamed Barkindo, Secretary General of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), has died in Nigeria at the age of 63.

- **Important facts**

- Barkindo was on a visit to his home country of Nigeria to attend the Energy Conference where he passed away.
- Born in April 1959 in Adamawa State in northeastern Nigeria, Barkindo assumed the position of Secretary General of OPEC in 2016.
- His term was to end in July.

- **About OPEC**

- It is a permanent, intergovernmental organisation that was established in 1960 at the Baghdad Conference by Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela.
- The purpose of this organisation is to coordinate and integrate the petroleum policies of its member countries and to ensure the stabilisation of oil markets to ensure efficient, economic and regular supply of petroleum to the consumer.
- Headquarters - Vienna (Austria)
- OPEC has 14 member states (Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Libya, Nigeria, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Republic of the Congo, Angola, Ecuador and Venezuela).

- **OPEC plus**

- It is a coalition of OPEC members and the world's 10 major non-OPEC oil exporting countries.
- Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Brunei, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mexico, Oman, Russia, South Sudan and Sudan.

2. India elected to UNESCO panel on Intangible Cultural Heritage (July 8, 2022)

India has been selected in the 'Intergovernmental Committee of UNESCO's 2003 Agreement for the Protection Standards of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)' for the period 2022-2026.

- **Important facts**

- India has previously been a member of the ICH committee twice, from 2006 to 2010 and from 2014 to 2018.
- India is included in two prestigious committees of UNESCO. Among these are the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2022-2026) and World Heritage (2021-2025) committees.

- This will be another opportunity for India to re-establish the values of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'."
- According to the Union Ministry of Culture, four seats were vacant in the Asia-Pacific grouping and six countries - India, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia and Thailand - had submitted their candidatures.
- According to the statement, India got 110 votes out of 155 countries.
- The Intergovernmental Committee on the 2003 Agreement has 24 members.
- **India's 'Intangible Cultural Heritage' recognized by UNESCO**
- (1) Tradition of Vedic chanting (3) Ramlila, traditional performance of Ramayana (3) Kutiyattam, Sanskrit theatre (4) Ramman, religious festivals and rituals of the Garhwal Himalayas, India (5) Mudi yettu, ritual theatre and dance drama of Kerala (6) Kalbelia Folk Songs and Dances of Rajasthan (7) Chhau Dance (8) Buddhist Chanting of Ladakh: Recitation of Sacred Buddhist Scriptures in the Ladakh Region of the Himalayas, Jammu and Kashmir, India (9) Sankirtana, Traditional Singing, Nagade of Manipur and dance (10) Brass and copper utensils made by Thathers of Punjab (11) Yoga (12) Navroz, (13) Kumbh Mela (14) Durga Puja, Kolkata.
- UNESCO was established in the year 1945 to develop the "intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind" in the form of lasting peacekeeping.
- UNESCO officially recognizes sites of cultural and natural importance as World Heritage.
- India has a total of 40 Tangible Heritage Sites (31 Cultural, 8 Natural and 1 Mixed) and 14 Intangible Cultural Heritages recognized by UNESCO.
- **Abstract culture**
- Intangible culture is the wealth of a community, nation, etc., which continues to prosper over the centuries, overwhelming the subconscious of that community or nation.
- Intangible culture is available in the form of heritage to the present generation by assimilating the characteristics of its contemporary generations over time.

3. Hariyali Mahotsav - 2022 (July 8, 2022)

“Hariyali Mahotsav 2022” was organised by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change on July 8, 2022 at Talkatora Stadium, New Delhi in the spirit of “Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav”.

- **Important facts**
- It was organised with the aim of raising awareness on the importance of trees in sustaining the lives of the present generations as well as in securing the lives of the generations to come.
- This festival was celebrated as an effective tool to generate enthusiasm among the public towards forest conservation and plantation.
- **Hariyali Mahotsav**

- Hariyali Mahotsav is an effective means of generating enthusiasm among the public for the conservation of forests and plantation.
- Hariyali Mahotsav 2020 was organised by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in Delhi in collaboration with the State Government, Police and Schools to carry out a tree plantation drive on the occasion.
- To mark the event, tree plantation drives were organised across India. In the tree plantation drive, 75 police stations across India, 75 city forests, 75 schools in Delhi/NCR and 75 plantation sites across India joined in honouring 75 years of Indian Independence.
- The event complements the government-led initiatives and policies for environmental protection.
- **Major Fairs/Festivals of 2022**

Festival	Venue
40th Hunar Haat Festival	Mumbai
Sarhul Mahotsav 2022	Jharkhand
35th Surajkund International Crafts Mela	Haryana (Partner Nation - Uzbekistan)
National Youth Parliament Festival 2022	New Delhi
Vigyan Sarvatra Pujate	New Delhi
Medaram Jatara Festival 2022	Telangana
Hearth Mahotsav 2022	Jammu and Kashmir
Maru Mahotsav 2022	Jaisalmer (Rajasthan)
Kanchoth Mahotsav 2022	Jammu and Kashmir
18th Kachai Lemon Festival	Kanchi, Manipur

4. Akasa Air Airlines gets Air Operator Certificate (July 8, 2022)

The country's newest airline Akasa Air has received the Air Operator Certificate (AOC) from aviation regulator Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on 7 July to start its commercial operations.

• Important facts

- The AOC Certificate signifies the airline's operational readiness to satisfactorily meet all regulatory and compliance requirements.
- Under the supervision of DGCA, the airline concluded the process with a number of flights proving to be successfully operated.
- The airline, backed by stock market investor Rakesh Jhunjhunwala, took delivery of its first Boeing 737 MAX aircraft in India on June 21.
- Akasa Air is the first airline in India whose end-to-end AOC process was conducted using the government's progressive EGCA digital platform.
- It will commence commercial operations at the end in July 2022.
- By the end of the financial year 2022-23, the airline will have 18 aircraft and after that, 12-14 aircraft will be added per year.
- Last November, Akasa Air announced the order for 72 '737 MAX' aircraft from Boeing.

• Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)

- It is a statutory body and formed under the Aircraft (Amendment) Bill, 2020.
- It investigates aviation accidents and enforces all regulations related to aviation.
- It registers and provides certificates to civil aircrafts.
- It is attached to the Ministry of Civil Aviation, Government of India.
- It coordinates all regulatory functions with the International Civil Aviation Organisation.

5. Former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe shot dead in Nara (July 8, 2022)

Former Japan Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was assassinated in Nara (Western Japan) on 8 July while campaigning for the upcoming election.

• Important facts

- The assailant shot Abe from behind with a shotgun with two bullets in the chest.
- The 67-year-old world leader was taken to hospital in critical condition but could not be saved.
- The incident happened around 11.30 am (8 am Indian time).
- He was delivering an election speech on the street outside a railway station in the context of elections to the Upper House of Japan's parliament.
- Abe was shot in the left side of his chest as the attacker fired multiple shots.

- Tetsuya Yamagami, a 41-year-old man from the city of Nara, has been arrested on suspicion of shooting Abe with intent to kill.

- **Who was Shinzo Abe?**

- **Early life**

- Abe was born in Tokyo on 21 September 1954, he was the son of Shintaro Abe, who served as Japan's foreign minister.
- He got a bachelor's degree in political science from Seiki University in Tokyo in 1977.
- He then went to the U.S. to study public policy at the University of Southern California.
- In 1979 he began working at Kobe Steel as the firm was expanding its presence abroad.
- He left the company in 1982 to join the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the ruling Liberal Democratic Party.

- **Political career**

- He was first elected as a Liberal Democratic Party legislator representing the southwestern prefecture of Yamaguchi in 1993.
- Abe is seen as a conservative who was a member of the party's Mori faction, once led by his father, who died in 1991.
- In 2005 Abe was appointed chief cabinet secretary under Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi.
- In the same year, he was elected head of the LDP, preparing him to take over as prime minister.
- On September 26, 2006, Abe became Prime Minister of Japan for the first time, taking a tough stance on North Korea and implementing economic reforms.
- After the electoral defeat in 2007 saw the LDP lose control of the legislature for the first time in 52 years, Abe resigned as prime minister.
- In 2012 he was elected LDP president and became Prime Minister for the second time.
- In 2013 seeking to boost growth, Abe launched his "Abenomics" policies featuring easy lending and structural reforms.
- During 2014-2020 he was re-elected LDP leader and he served two additional terms as Prime Minister.
- On August 28, 2020 he announced he will step down as Prime Minister due to health reasons.
- Abe became Japan's longest-serving prime minister.
- Abe served as prime minister for eight years between 2012 and 2020, and before that from 2006 to 2007.
- On July 8, 2022, Abe was shot and seriously injured during an election campaign in the city of Nara, and later died.

Japan

- Present Prime Minister - Fumio Kishida
- Japan's Capital - Tokyo
- Japan's Currency - Yen

6. Vivo India transferred Rs 62,476 crore to China to avoid taxes (July 8, 2022)

According to a statement issued by the Enforcement Directorate, Rs 62,476 crore has been "illegally" transferred to China by smartphone maker Vivo to evade payment of taxes in India between 2017 and 2021.

• Important facts

- 18 companies that were incorporated fraudulently helped the smartphone maker Vivo to transfer 50 percent of the turnover outside India to mainly China.
- Under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 119 bank accounts of entities with a gross balance of Rs 465 crore have been seized so far.
- While transferring money to China, Vivo India has shown losses in most of its associate firms.
- The Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) has filed a police complaint against Vivo's subsidiary Grand Prospect International Communication Pvt Ltd (GPICPL), its directors, shareholders, certifying professionals etc.

• Prevention of Money Laundering Act

- It was enacted in 2002 and came into force in 2005.
- The objective of the Act is to prevent money laundering, that is, the process of converting black money into white.
- The Act empowers government officials to confiscate property acquired through illegal sources and money laundering.
- Under the Act the burden of proof lies with the accused, who has to prove that the suspect property has not been obtained through unfair means.

• Enforcement Directorate

- It is a specialised financial investigation agency under the Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance, Government of India.
- It is a law enforcement and economic intelligence agency responsible for enforcing economic laws and fighting economic crime in India.
- Its name was changed to Enforcement Directorate (ED) in 1957.
- Its headquarters is in New Delhi and has many regional offices all over the country.

The Directorate of Enforcement (ED) - Sanjay Kumar Mishra

7. Centre to promote dragon fruit cultivation in 50,000 hectares (July 8, 2022)

Following in the footsteps of the Gujarat and Haryana governments, the Center has decided to promote the cultivation of dragon fruit, which is known as "super fruit" for its health benefits.

- The centre is planning to expand dragon fruit cultivation in India considering nutritional values, cost-effectiveness and global demand.
- Currently, this exotic fruit is being cultivated in India in 3,000 hectares, which is planned to be increased to 50,000 hectares in five years.

• About dragon fruit (Kamalam)

- Dragon fruit originated in Central and South America and has also spread to Asian countries.
- It is the fruit of a species of wild cactus indigenous to South and Central America.
- It is also called pitaya or pitahaya.
- It belongs to the cacti family.
- The fruit is fleshy with tiny black seeds.
- The inner part of the fruit is consumed while the outer part is discarded.
- The plant grows nearly five to six feet in height during which time it requires support.

• Cultivation of Dragon fruit

- Dragon fruit is also cultivated in Thailand, Taiwan, China, Australia, Israel, and Sri Lanka apart from its native Latin America.
- It was introduced to India in the 1990s, and is grown in Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Odisha, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- It is grown in all types of soil and does not require much water.
- At present, Mizoram is at the forefront in the states cultivating this fruit.
- The export of the fruit has made a huge contribution to Vietnam's GDP.
- All the states of India except the cold regions are suitable for dragon fruit plants.

• Nutritional benefit

- It is considered beneficial for diabetic patients, is low in calories and is rich in nutrients like iron, calcium, potassium and zinc.
- It is rich in Vitamin C and is believed to be helpful in improving the platelet count during infectious diseases.

Farmers benefit

- It doesn't need much water and can be cultivated on dry land.
- It gives maximum production from non-productive, less fertile areas.
- This is beneficial for a lot of farmers.

8. Boris Johnson resigns as Prime Minister of Britain (July 8, 2022)

Boris Johnson resigned as Prime Minister of Britain on 7 July. He also announced his resignation as leader of the Conservative Party.

- Earlier, more than 50 of Johnson's ministers and aides had resigned leaving his side.
- It has become clear that the Conservative Party will have a new leader and Britain will have a new Prime Minister.
- Johnson, 58, will remain in charge of 10 Downing Street (British Prime Minister's residence) until the process of electing a new leader is completed at a Conservative Party convention.
- The country's new Finance Minister Nadeem Jahavi had demanded Johnson's resignation.
- Johnson had appointed him as the new finance minister, 36 hours after which he demanded his resignation.

• Reason of resignation

- Defeats of Conservative Party in by-elections for two parliamentary districts, Wakefield, and Tiverton.
- The defeat was especially significant because it overturned the Conservative Party's 24,000 majority in the district, the biggest ever majority to be overturned in a by-election.
- On June 24, the co-chairman of the party resigned.
- The elections for both the seats were due to the resignations of Conservative Party MPs facing sex scandals.
- One of them had quit after being found guilty of sexually assaulting a teenage boy, and the other was caught watching porn in Parliament.
- The Pincher scandal - party colleague Chris Pincher had to resign as Deputy Chief Whip last week over allegations of sexual misconduct.

9. S Jaishankar attends G20 Foreign Ministers' meeting in Bali (July 7, 2022)

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar visited Bali, Indonesia on July 7 and participated in the G20 Foreign ministers' meeting.

• Important facts

- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia is organising this meeting within the framework of the Indonesia G20 Presidency.
- External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar met his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi and discussed pending issues related to bilateral ties, including the status of the border dispute in eastern Ladakh.
- The meeting focused on pending issues related to bilateral relations, including the situation on the border.
- Other issues including students and flights were also discussed between the two.
- Jaishankar reiterated the need to restore peace and stability in the border areas.
- It is noteworthy that since May 5, 2020, the armed forces of India and China have maintained tense relations along the border in eastern Ladakh.
- India and China have so far held several rounds of talks at the military and diplomatic level to resolve the Eastern Ladakh dispute.
- In this regard, the two ministers reaffirmed that military and diplomatic officials from both sides should maintain regular contact and look forward to the next round of senior commanders' meeting at the earliest.
- The two Ministers also exchanged their perspectives on other regional and global developments.

• About G-20

- It is an informal group of 19 countries and the European Union.
- The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank are its representatives.
- The G-20 group is the world's largest advanced and emerging economies.
- It represents about two-thirds of the world's population, 85% of global gross domestic product, 80% of global investment and over 75% of global trade.
- Member countries - Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States and the European Union.
- It has no permanent secretariat or headquarters.
- Italy will chair the G-20 in 2021, Indonesia will assume the role in 2022 and India will chair it in 2023.

10. 6th Deputy NSA level meeting of Colombo Security Conclave held in Kochi (July 7, 2022)

The 6th Deputy National Security Advisor-level meeting of the Colombo Security Conference is being held in Kochi, Kerala.

- The seven-member Indian delegation is led by Deputy National Security Advisor Vikram Misri.
- Apart from India, delegations from Maldives, Sri Lanka and Mauritius are participating in the meeting.
- Representatives of Bangladesh and Seychelles are also attending the meeting as observers.
- The delegates called for cooperation among member states on issues such as maritime defense and security, counter-terrorism, countering radicalization, smuggling and organized crime, as well as protecting critical infrastructure.
- **Colombo Security Conclave (CSC)**
 - It started in 2011 as a trilateral maritime cooperation mechanism between India, Maldives and Sri Lanka.
 - The Secretariat of CSC is located in Colombo, Sri Lanka.
 - The membership of the group was extended with the inclusion of Mauritius in March 2022.
 - So far five meetings of the CSC have been held at the level of National Security Advisor and Deputy National Security Advisor.
 - Since 2011, the mandate of the CSC mechanism has been enhanced to cover other issues of mutual interest.
- **Five pillars for cooperation**
 - Maritime Safety and Security
 - Countering Terrorism and Radicalization
 - Combating trafficking and organized crime
 - Cyber Security
 - Protection of critical infrastructure, technology, humanitarian aid and disaster relief