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1. Russia uses Hypersonic Missile In Ukraine (March 21, 2022)

Russia said on 19 March 2022 that it had used hypersonic Kinzhal (Kh-47M2) missiles to destroy a large weapons depot in Ukraine's western Ivano-Frankivsk region.

It was the first time Russia had deployed the hypersonic Kinzhal system since it sent its troops into Ukraine on February 24, 2022.

The Kinzhal missile can be fired from Mig-31 fighter aircraft. The missile can carry both conventional warheads or nuclear weapons.

Hypersonic Missile

- Hypersonic missiles are those missiles which can fly five times the speed of sound in the upper atmosphere or about 6,200 km per hour.
- The main feature of the missile is its manoeuvrability which makes its detection by radar very difficult.
- At present China has tested the missile and North Korea has also claimed to have tested it. The United States of America do not have these types of missiles.

Defence and Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is also working on developing this technology in India. In 2020 it successfully conducted the maiden test of the High-Speed Technology Demonstrator Vehicle (HSTDV) using an indigenously developed propulsion system.

2. 14th India-Japan Annual Summit held in New Delhi (March 21, 2022)

The 14th India-Japan annual summit meeting was held in New Delhi on 19 March 2022. The Japanese Prime Minister Mr. Kishida Fumio visited India on 19 and 20th for a two day bilateral meeting with the Indian prime Minister Narendra Modi. Both the leader issued a joint statement titled "**Joint Statement Partnership for a Peaceful, Stable and Prosperous Post-COVID World**".

- This was the first visit of Mr. Kishida Fumio as a Japanese Prime Minister to India . He visited India as a foreign minister earlier.
- The Summit between the Indian and Japanese PMs is taking place three and a half years after the last Summit in Japan in 2018.
- This year also marks the 70th anniversary of the establishment of India-Japan diplomatic relations (28 April 1952).

Highlights of the Visit

- Japan will invest \$42 billion (Rs 3.2lakh crore)in India in the next five years.
- Six agreements on cooperation between the countries were signed. These agreements are on cybersecurity, economic partnerships, waste-water management, urban development, a clean energy partnership and an agreement on promoting bamboo-based products from the northeast region.

- The Japanese Prime Minister Invited the Indian Prime Minister for the QUAD summit 2022 meeting to be held in Japan.
- There was no agreement on Russian invasion of Ukraine. While the Japanese government has consistently criticised the Russian Invasion of Ukraine and imposed sanctions on Russia, India has refrained from criticising Russia and has also abstained on any UN resolution criticising Russia.

Importance of Japan for India

- Japan is the fifth largest source of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in India after Singapore, USA, Mauritius, Netherlands (April 2014 to August 2021).
- It has invested \$36.2 billion in India since 2000.
- Japan is the largest provider of assistance to India amongst all countries.
- There are 1,455 Japanese companies in India. Eleven Japan Industrial Townships (JIT) have been established, with Neemrana in Rajasthan and Sri City in Andhra Pradesh having the maximum number of companies.
- Japan is helping in setting up a High Speed Rail corridor between Mumbai and Ahmedabad.

Fact File Japan

- Japan is also called as Nihon or Nippon
- It is an archipelago in the western pacific ocean in East Asia.
- It is composed of four main islands Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu. Honshu is the largest island of Japan.
- It is separated from the Asian mainland by the Sea of Japan.
- Its highest mountain is Mount Fuji.
- It is the third largest economy in the world after the United States and China.
- It is the only country in the world where atom bomb was dropped. In 1945 the U.S. dropped atomic bomb on Hiroshima on 6 August (bomb name Little Boy) and Nagasaki on 9 August (Bomb name Fat Man).

The capital of Japan : **Tokyo**

Currency of Japan : **Yen**

3. Prime Minister inaugurates the centenary celebration of Mathrubhumi (March 19, 2022)

The Prime Minister, Narendra Modi inaugurated centenary year celebrations of **Mathrubhumi virtually on 18 March 2022**. The celebration was held at **Kozhikode, Kerala**.

Mathrubhumi newspaper was established in **1923** by the noted freedom fighter **K. Madhvan Nair**. It was initially published in **Malayalam** and now it is published in **English also**.

4. Finland is the Happiest country in the world (March 19, 2022)

For the fifth year in a row, Finland is the world's happiest country, according to the World Happiness Report 2022, of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network.

Denmark was ranked 2nd followed by Iceland, Switzerland and the Netherlands.

India was ranked 136 in 2022 as compared to 139 in 2021.

Afghanistan was ranked the most unhappy country in the world and was ranked at the bottom 146th .

The World Happiness Report is released by the United Nation Sustainable Development Solutions Network. It ranks the countries on the basis of:

- healthy life expectancy;
- GDP per capita;
- social support in times of trouble,;
- low corruption and high social trust;
- generosity in a community where people look after each other and
- freedom to make key life decisions.

The first World Happiness report was released in 2012.

UN Sustainable Sustainable Development Solutions Network

It is a non -profit organisation set up by the United Nation in 2012.

Its Headquarters : New York, United States of America.

Factfile Finland

Finland is located in Northern Europe .

Capital : Helsinki

Currency : Euro

Prime Minister : Sanna Marin

Nokia company is from Finland

5. India to provide fresh \$1 billion line of credit to Sri Lanka (March 19, 2022)

The Government of India has agreed to provide another **USD 1 billion** line of credit to Sri Lanka. An agreement was signed between the **State Bank of India and Sri Lankan government** on 17 March during the visit of the Sri Lankan finance minister's **Basil Rajapakse to India.**

- The loan has been given to Sri Lanka to buy **food, medicine and other essential items.**
- This is the second visit of the Sri Lanka Finance minister's Basil Rajapakse who is the brother of the Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapakse and the Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse, since December 2021.
- Sri Lanka's economy is facing a huge economic crisis and ever increasing foreign debt. It has to repay USD 7 billion of foreign loans this year and it is facing an unprecedented food and fuel shortage. It is dependent on imported food and fuel and it has almost no foreign exchange reserves to buy food or fuel. Almost 10% of its external debt is to China.
- The main source of foreign exchange earner for the Sri Lankan economy is tourism. Due to covid situation there has been no flow of international tourists to Sri Lanka in the past two years.

Helping Hand of India

The government of India has provided loans to Sri Lanka to deal with its economic crisis, under its neighbourhood first policy. During Basil Rajapakse's visit to India on December 21, India agreed to help Sri Lanka under its neighbourhood policy. The decision included a four pillar initiative to help Sri Lanka.

The four pillar initiative comprises-

- India will provide loans to Sri Lanka to enable it to purchase food, medicines and fuel from India.
- A **currency swap agreement** to deal with **Sri Lanka's balance of payment issues,**
- An "early" modernisation project of the **Trincomalee oil farms** that India has been pursuing for several years, and
- Sri Lankan commitment to facilitate Indian investments in various sectors

Excluding this loan amount of USD 1 billion, India has provided USD 1.4 billion support to Sri Lanka in 2022. It has provided USD 500 million for import of fuels, deferred repayment of USD 500 billion debt repayment and extended a \$400-million RBI currency swap facility.

Fact File Sri Lanka

- Officially it is called the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka .
- It is a country in the Indian Ocean and is separated from India by the Palk Strait.
- It was called Serendib by the Arabs and the Europeans called it Ceylon .
- It officially became Sri Lanka in 1972.

It became independent in 1948 from Britain.

Capital : Sri Jayewardenepura

President : Mahinda Rajapakse

Currency : Sri Lankan Rupee

6. Government restores E-Visa to 156 countries (March 17, 2022)

The Union Home Ministry has restored the electronic tourist visa (e-visa) for 156 countries. This comes after the government of India decided to resume international flights from India from 27 March 2022.

- The normal international flights were suspended on 23 March 2020 from India following the covid outbreak in the country .
- The Home Ministry order has restored the valid five years e-visa to 156 eligible countries and they are also now eligible for new e-visa.
- The order has also restored the valid regular (paper) tourist visa with validity of five years, issued to foreign nationals of all countries..
- However all land and riverine borders, including the Attari-Wagah post along Pakistan, will continue to remain shut, except for those with special permission.
- This order of the home ministry is not applicable to the Afghan nationals.
- The Government of India has started a “new category of electronic visa called e-Emergency X-Misc Visa”.

Visa

It is an official document issued by a government to a foreigner to enter, leave or stay in the country for a specified time period.

In India Visa is issued by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs

Union Minister of Home Affairs : Amit Shah

7. Supreme Court upheld OROP (March 17, 2022)

The Supreme Court has upheld the central government One Rank One Pension (OROP) scheme for the defence personnels. A three judge bench headed by Justice D.Y.Chandrachud held that “government of India order of 7, November 2015 on the implementation of the pension scheme was valid.

The Supreme Court accepted the government order that states that pension shall be reviewed every five years.

What is OROP

- One rank one pension means that defence personnel who retire at the same rank shall get the same pension. But in reality it does not happen .

- In the military ,the soldiers normally retire at the age of 35 years and the officers , depending upon their ranks retiers at different ages .
- From 1950 to 1973, there was a concept known as the Standard Rate of Pension, which was similar to OROP.
- The 1973 Central Pay commission and later pay commission made certain changes in the pension and it resulted that military personnel who retired earlier were denied the benefit of revision in pension .
- Government of India set up Brigadier K.P.Singh committee in 1983 which recommended a system similar to Standard Rate of Pension.
- This was accepted by the Modi Government and implemented in November 2015, and it was made applicable from July 1, 2014.

8. ICJ ask Russia to stop military operation in Ukraine (March 17, 2022)

The top United Nation court , International Court of Justice(ICJ), has asked Russia to immediately stop its military operations in Ukraine. In a 13-2 judgement pronounced on 16 March 2022 the court ordered the"Russian Federation to immediately suspend the military operations that it commenced on Feb 24, 2022 on the territory of Ukraine."

- The court also ordered that Russia must also ensure that other forces under its control or supported by Moscow should not continue the military operation.
- Ukraine filed its case at the ICJ shortly after Russia's invasion began on Feb. 24, saying that Moscow's stated justification, that it was acting to prevent a genocide in eastern Ukraine, was unfounded.
- During hearings earlier this month, Ukraine said there was no threat of genocide in eastern Ukraine, and that the U.N.'s 1948 Genocide Convention, which both countries have signed, does not allow an invasion to prevent one.
- Although the rulings of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) are binding, it has no direct means of enforcing them, and in rare cases in the past countries have ignored them.
- Russia never participated in the ICJ hearing on the Ukraine case and it has rejected the ICJ ruling.

International Court of Justice(ICJ)

- The International Court of Justice is successor to the Permanent Court of Justice set up in 1920 by the League of Nations.
- After the Second World war, it was replaced by the International Court of Justice in 1945. The United Nation replaced the League of Nation in 1945.
- ICJ is one of the six principal organs of the United Nation and is also called the World Court.
- It hears cases relating to disputes between the member states of the United Nations according to International law.
- Headquarters of the ICJ : **The Hague, Netherlands**

ICJ is composed of 15 Judges elected by the UN for a term of Nine Years .

Four Indian has so far been elected as the Judge of the ICJ

- B.N RAU, in 1952 -53
- NAGENDRA SINGH (He was the President of the ICJ from 1985-1988). He was the first Indian judge to have been elected for a 9 years term
- R.S.Pathak (1989-91)
- DALVEER BHANDARI (2012- till date)

9. Covid risk surveillance centre set up by IIT Kanpur (March 16, 2022)

Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur in collaboration with the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) has set up IIT Kanpur – CII Risk Surveillance Centre to monitor and control the spread of Covid-19 and other such infections in the future.

The IIT-CII Centre would work on mathematical forecast models based on health data that would help minimise the impact of infectious diseases. It would assist in understanding the transmission of infections and identify risk factors involved.

Important for Exam

CII : Confederation of Indian Industries

Founded in 1895.

President : T.V. Narendran

Headquarters : New Delhi

CII is a lobby group of industrialists which try to influence the government's in India to make policies which are favourable to the industrialists in India.

10. Karnataka High Court rule that Hijab is not a part of Islamic culture (March 16, 2022)

A three judge bench of the Karnataka High Court headed by Chief Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi and which also included justice Krishna S Dixit and Justice Jaibunnisa M Khazi has dismissed petition filed by some muslim students which challenged the Karnataka government order to ban the wearing of hijab in educational institutions where uniform were prescribed.

The petition challenged the state government order dated 05.02.2022 issued under sections 7 & 133 of the Karnataka Education Act, 1983. This order directs the College Development Committees all over the State to prescribe 'Student Uniform',

In the **RESHAM AND ANOTHER VS. STATE OF KARNATAKA AND OTHERS 2022** main issues raised by the petitioners in the court were as follows :

- Whether wearing the hijab or the headscarf is part of essential religious practice in Islamic faith under article 25 of the Constitution?"

- Second issue was ;Whether wearing school uniform is violation of petitioners
- fundamental rights guaranteed under article 19 (1) a of the constitution that is freedom of expression and article 21 that is privacy?
 - Third Issue was ; The government order of 5 February 2022 which made uniform compulsory in educational institution was violative of fundamental rights of article 14 ,which guarantees equality before law and article 15 which prohibits the dicrimination by state on the basis of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them?

The High Court Judgement

- The High Court held that “wearing of the hijab by Muslim women does not make up an essential religious practice in Islamic faith” as per the article 25 of the constitution which provides freedom to practice and propagate of religion in India.
- On the second issue the court held that the government has the power to impose reasonable restrictions on the right to freedom under Article 19 of the constitution. Hence the government move to prescribe uniforms for the students is a reasonable restriction under article 19 of the constitution. The state can make this rule.
- On the third issue the court held that the government was competent to issue the 5 February order 2022 which made uniform compulsory for students and banned hijab was valid.

Seat of Karnataka High Court : Bangalore