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1. Ram Chandra Paudel elected as the new President of Nepal (March 10, 2023)

On 9 March 2023, senior Nepali Congress leader **Ram Chandra Paudel** has been elected as the **new President of Nepal**.

News Overview

- Ram Chandra Paudel got votes **by 214 MPs of Parliament and 352 Members of Provincial Assemblies**.
- The President is elected by an electoral college consisting of members of the provincial assemblies and the federal parliament.
- The total number of electors for the presidential election in Nepal is 882, including 332 members of the parliament as well as 550 members of the provincial assemblies of the 7 provinces.
- He will succeed **Bidya Devi Bhandari** as the head of state of Nepal.

About Ram Chandra Paudel

- He also served as the **Deputy Prime Minister, Cabinet Minister and President of Nepal**.
- He served as the **Vice President of Nepali Congress** Tanhu District Committee in 1980, General Secretary in 2005, Vice President in 2007 and Acting President of the party in 2015.
- Ram Chandra Paudel served as **Minister of Local Development** in May 1991, Minister of Agriculture in 1992 and Speaker from December 1994 to March 1999.

About Nepal

- The kingdom of Nepal was established by the **Shah dynasty**.
- It is a landlocked country in **South Asia**.
- Prime Minister: **Pushpa Kamal Dahal**
- Capital: **Kathmandu**
- Currency: **Nepalese Rupee**

2. Former Malaysian PM Muhyiddin Yassin arrested on corruption charges (March 10, 2023)

The **Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission** on 9 March arrested former Malaysian Prime Minister **Muhyiddin Yassin** on the **charges of corruption**.

An overview of the news

- Muhyiddin, who was Malaysia's prime minister for 17 months **between 2020 and 2021**, has been charged under laws related to abuse of power and money laundering.
- He and his party have faced a corruption investigation after losing the November election to Prime Minister **Anwar Ibrahim**.
- Prime Minister Ibrahim last year ordered a review of **billions of dollars of government projects** approved by Muhyiddin, including **Covid-19 relief programmes**, alleging that he did not follow proper procedures.
- Muhyiddin, who is also **chairman of Bersatu**, a major opposition party in Malaysia's ruling coalition, would be the second former prime minister to be indicted.
- Another former Malaysian prime minister, **Najib Razak**, is also serving a 12-year prison sentence for corruption.

About Malaysia

- Prime Minister - **Anwar Ibrahim**
- Capital - **Kuala Lumpur**
- Currency - **Malaysian ringgit**
- Official Language - **Malay**
- Official Religion - **Islam**

3. UN inks first 'High Seas Treaty' in a bid to protect ocean bodies of the world (March 6, 2023)

world's oceans located outside national boundaries.

For the first time in history, the **United Nations** signed the '**High Seas Treaty**' to protect the **world's oceans located outside national boundaries**.

An overview of the news

- The treaty is the result of nearly a decade of negotiations on environmental concerns.
- The treaty was agreed upon on 4 March after 38 hours of negotiations at the **United Nations Headquarters in New York**.
- The last international agreement on ocean conservation was signed 40 years ago **in 1982**.

What is the UN High Seas Treaty?

- The treaty will create a **new body to manage the conservation of marine life** and establish marine protected areas in the high seas.

- The treaty brings **30 percent of the world's oceans** into a protected area, spends more on marine conservation, and sets new rules for ocean mining.
- The treaty aims to protect against potential impacts such as **deep-sea mining**.
- The treaty would put restrictions on how much fish could be caught in the high seas.

What are High Seas?

- **International water bodies** that cross the boundaries of nations are considered high seas.
- They cover about **two-thirds of the world's oceans**.
- These are water bodies where all countries have the right to **fish, sail and conduct research**.
- But so far only about **1% of this water** – known as the high seas – has been protected.
- These are also important areas for exploration of **valuable minerals, pharmaceuticals, oil and gas reserves**.

Vulnerable marine species

- According to the **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)**, about **10% of marine species** are at risk of extinction.
- In addition, **41% of threatened species** are affected by climate change.
- **Shellfish, sharks and whales** are under particular pressure due to their use as seafood and medicines.

4. Belarus court jails Nobel Peace Prize winner Ales Bialiatski for 10 years (March 4, 2023)

A court in Belarus on March 3 sentenced **2022 Nobel Peace Prize winner** and human rights activist **Ales Bialiatski** to **10 years in prison** for financing protests and other crimes.

An overview of the news

- He has been given this sentence in the case of activities disturbing public order, financing and smuggling.
- A fine of 65 thousand US dollars has also been imposed on **60-year-old Bialiatsky**.
- He is co-founder of the **Viasna human rights group**.
- In October 2022, he was awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize for his work on human rights and democracy**.

- Along with Bialyatsky, representatives of the Vesna Human Rights Center, **Valentin Stefanovich and Vladimir Labkovich**, were also sentenced to **9 years and 7 years**, respectively.
- Investigation revealed that Ales Bialyatsky and other members received funds from various organizations in Lithuania during April **2016 to July 2021**.
- After this these funds were sent outside the Eurasian Economic Union with the help of many people.
- According to the law of Belarus, this is a crime and the maximum **punishment for this crime is 12 years**.
- Bialyatsky, a Belarusian litterateur, school teacher and museum director, has been involved in pro-democracy protests since the **1980s**.
- He was an avid supporter of Belarus' independence from the **Soviet Union in the early 1980s**, organizing anti-Soviet protests across the country.

5. Jan Aushadhi Train flagged off by Mansukh Mandaviya and Ashwini Vaishnav (March 4, 2023)

Union Health and Family Welfare Minister **Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya** and Railway Minister **Ashwini Vaishnav** flagged off the **Jan Aushadhi train (Chhattisgarh Sampark Kranti Express)** in **New Delhi** on 3 March.

An overview of the news

- The train is dedicated to the **Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP)**.
- The train has been wrapped with branding of **Jan Aushadhi scheme** to spread the awareness among public about generic medicines available at **Jan Aushadhi centers**.
- Medicines are available at affordable prices in more than **nine thousand Jan Aushadhi Kendras** in India.
- This train will travel through **184 stations** covering more than four states in two months.
- Jan Aushadhi Kendras** provide quality and affordable medicines.
- Indian Railways is also running a special campaign for promotion of affordable generic medicines to create awareness among the public.
- The Ministry of Railways has decided to open Jan Aushadhi Kendras at some major railway stations which will prove beneficial for the passengers.
- This train will travel to more than **4 states in 2 months**.

About Jan Aushadhi Scheme

- The Jan aushadhi scheme was launched in **2008 by the UPA government**.

- This scheme was **relaunched in the year 2015**, by the **Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi**.
- This campaign was started across the country by selling generic medicines through “**Jan Aushadhi Medical Stores**”.
 - In 2015, the name of '**Jan Aushadhi Yojana**' was changed to '**Pradhan Mantri Jan Aushadhi Yojana (PMJAY)**', but it was changed to "**Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Yojana**" in November 2016.
 - Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) scheme was launched by the **Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers**, Government of India with the objective of providing quality generic medicines available at affordable prices to all.

6. Vo Van Thuong elected as new President of Vietnam (March 3, 2023)

Vo Van Thuong, a member of the Politburo of the **Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV)**, was elected as the **country's new President** by the National Assembly of Vietnam.

Overview of the news

- Thuong's election came after the sudden resignation of the previous president, **Nguyen Xuan Phuc**.
- Thuong is the youngest member of the party's Politburo, the country's top decision-making body.

About Vo Van Thuong

- Thuong began his political career in **1993**.
- In 2003, Thuong became secretary of the Communist Youth Union of **Ho Chi Minh City**.
- Thuong was elected as a member of the **SPV Central Committee** for the third time in 2021 and became a member of the Politburo for the second time.

About Vietnam

- It lies in **South East Asia** and it is a member of **Association of Southeast Asian Nation (ASEAN)**
- Capital: **Hanoi**
- Currency: **Dong**
- President: **Vo Van Thuong**

7. India and Australia sign a framework mechanism for mutual recognition of qualifications (March 3, 2023)

India and Australia on March 2 signed a framework mechanism for mutual recognition of qualifications that will help ease the movement of students and professionals between the two countries.

An overview of the news

- The agreement was signed after a bilateral meeting between India's Education Minister **Dharmendra Pradhan** and Australian Education Minister **Jason Clare** in New Delhi.
- The agreement is part of the commitment shown by the Prime Ministers of both the countries at the **2nd India-Australia Virtual Summit to be held on 21 March 2022**.
- Under this, the two leaders agreed to set up a joint task force for mutual recognition of qualifications.
- Accordingly, a task force was constituted consisting of senior officials from the Ministries of Education and Skills and regulatory bodies from both sides.

About Australia

- Head of State: **British Monarch, King Charles III**
- Prime Minister: **Anthony Albanese**
- Currency: **Australian Dollar**
- Capital: Canberra

8. China launches Zhongxing-26 satellite (Feb. 27, 2023)

China has launched the **Zhongxing-26 satellite** in February 2023 at a cost of \$333 million.

An overview of the news

- The Zhongxing-26 satellite was launched on a **Long March 3B rocket**. The main objective of this satellite is to provide broadband connectivity for aviation and shipping related operations.
- Zhongxing-26 was launched by the China Academy of Space Technology (CAST). CAST plans to launch 60 more in 2023.
- The rocket uses **liquid hydrogen and liquid oxygen fuel** in the third stage. Liquid rocket fuel requires controlled temperature to remain in its form.
- China is about to launch more than 200 spacecraft in its 60 missions in the coming time.
- China plans to launch **Tianzhou-6**, a cargo craft, by the end of 2023.

- Also, to strengthen its **Tiangong Space Station**, there are plans to launch crewed missions like **Shenzhou-16 and Shenzhou-17**.

9. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz calls on President Droupadi Murmu (Feb. 26, 2023)

German Chancellor **Olaf Scholz** called on President **Draupadi Murmu**, in New Delhi on February 25.

An overview of the news

- India and Germany enjoy a **long-standing relationship**, based on shared values and shared goals for both countries.
- Bilateral relations cover a wide spectrum, reflecting the mutual trust that has been nurtured over the decades.
- Germany is **India's largest trading partner in Europe** and also among the top investors in India.
- Germany is also **India's second largest development cooperation partner** and has played an important role in India's development journey.
- In recent years, Germany has emerged as a **preferred destination for Indian students** and researchers seeking to pursue higher education, especially in science and technology.
- India and Germany also have strong cultural ties, with a long tradition of German Indologists working in India.
- India and Germany share a common objective in maintaining democratic values, rules-based international order, multilateralism, as well as reform of multilateral institutions.

Federal Republic of Germany

- Germany is also known as **Deutschland**.
- Capital : **Berlin**
- Currency : **Euro**
- President : **Frank-Walter Steinmeier**
- Chancellor : **Olaf Scholz**
- The German Chancellor is equivalent to the **Prime Minister in India**.

10. Indian Air Force contingent reaches in UAE to participate in Exercise Desert Flag VIII (Feb. 26, 2023)

An **Indian Air Force contingent of 110 Air Warriors** reached **Al Dahfra airbase of United Arab Emirates** on 25 February for participating in **Exercise 'Desert Flag VIII'**.

An overview of the news

- Tejas, the **Light Combat Aircraft (LCA)** made in India, will make its first appearance at a multinational exercise in the **United Arab Emirates (UAE)**.
- The IAF would be participating with five **LCA Tejas and two C-17 Globemaster III aircraft**.

About Exercise Desert Flag

- It is a **multilateral air exercise** in which air forces from the **United Arab Emirates, France, Kuwait, Australia, United Kingdom, Bahrain, Morocco, Spain, Republic of Korea and the United States** will also participate.
- This exercise will run from **27 February to 17 March**.
- The objective of the exercise is to participate in multiple combat events and learn from best practices of air forces of different countries.

TEJAS fighter aircraft

- It is an '**Indigenous Light Combat Aircraft**'.
- It has been jointly developed by '**Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA)**' and '**Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)**'.
- It is the smallest-lightweight single-engine '**Multirole Tactical Fighter Aircraft**'.
- It has been designed with an aim to reduce India's dependence on **Russia's MiG-21 fighter jets** and move towards self-reliance in the field of national security.
- It is designed to carry a range of **air-to-air, air-to-surface weapons**.
- It is capable of refueling in the sky during the journey and has a maximum **payload capacity of 4000 kg**.
- It can achieve a **maximum speed of Mach 1.8 and has a range of 3,000 km**.