

Current Affairs search results for tag: international-relations

1. Border Haat between India and Bangladesh inaugurated at Bholaganj in Sylhet (May 7, 2023)

Border Haat between India and Bangladesh inaugurated at Bholaganj in Sylhet

On 6 May a new **border-haat** was inaugurated between **India and Bangladesh at Bholaganj under Companyganj Upazila of Sylhet.**

An overview of the news

- Bangladesh's Minister for Migrant Welfare and Overseas Employment **Imran Ahmed** and India's Assistant High Commissioner **Neeraj Kumar Jaiswal** jointly inaugurated the border-haat.
- The opening of the border haat at Bholaganj on the **border between Sylhet in Bangladesh and the East Khasi Hills of Meghalaya** was greeted with great enthusiasm by people on both sides of the border.
- This is the **fourth border haat in Sylhet division**, out of which **three are currently functioning**. There are plans to open three more border haats in Sylhet division.
- The Border Haat will open from **10 am to 4 pm on Wednesdays and Saturdays.**
- The Bholaganj Border Haat will have 26 stalls from India and 24 stalls from Bangladesh, where traditional items from both the countries will be sold duty free.
- The **first border haats were inaugurated in 2011 at Kalaichar in West Garo Hills district of Meghalaya and Kurigram in Bangladesh.**

2. 21st meeting of Bangladesh-India Joint Steering Committee on Cooperation in Power Sector (May 5, 2023)

21st meeting of Bangladesh-India Joint Steering Committee on Cooperation in Power Sector

The **21st meeting of the Bangladesh-India Joint Steering Committee (BIJSC)** on the power sector was held on 4th May at **Khulna, Bangladesh.**

An overview of the news

- Bangladesh's Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Secretary **Habibur Rahman** and his Indian counterpart **Alok Kumar** led their respective sides at the meeting.
- The meeting reviewed the progress of ongoing activities related to **mutual cooperation in the power sector** between Bangladesh and India.
- The meeting also examined the **possibility of power generation projects** in India through **BIFPCL** including power export from Bangladesh to India and setting up of solar power projects.

- The delegation also discussed the signing of an agreement to **import 500 MW of hydro power from Nepal by GMR to Bangladesh** through India.
- The progress in the management of the first unit and the implementation of the second unit of the **1320 MW Maitri Super Thermal Power Project** construction project was also reviewed.

People's Republic of Bangladesh

- Capital: **Dhaka**
- Prime Minister: **Sheikh Hasina Wazed**
- President: **Mohammad Shahabuddin**
- Currency: **Taka**

3. India and Israel sign MoU for cooperation on industrial research and development (May 5, 2023)

India and Israel sign MoU for cooperation on industrial research and development

India and Israel signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** to enhance **industrial research and development cooperation** in high-tech areas such as **AI, quantum, semiconductors, healthcare, aerospace, sustainable energy and agriculture**.

An Overview of the News

- The partnership aims to facilitate **collaborative initiatives for industrial research and development** in a diverse range of high-tech domains, including **artificial intelligence, quantum computing, semiconductor technology, synthetic biology, healthcare, aerospace, sustainable energy and agriculture**.
- The MoU will focus on specific projects and will be monitored by a **Joint Steering Committee** to ensure effective implementation.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU):

- It is a type of agreement between two or more parties that expresses a shared intention to take a **common line of action**.
- Memoranda of Understanding can be used in situations where the **parties do not intend a legal commitment or cannot form a legally enforceable agreement**.
- MOUs are often used by many companies and government agencies to **define relationships between departments, agencies, or closely related companies**.

About Israel

Israel is a **Middle Eastern country** on the **Mediterranean Sea**.

It is considered the **Holy Land of the Bible by Jews**, Christians and Muslims.

Tel Aviv is the financial centre of the country and is known for its **beaches and Bauhaus architecture**.

Capital and largest city - **Jerusalem**

Official language - **Hebrew**

Recognized Language - **Arabic**

Government - **Unitary parliamentary republic**

President - **Isaac Herzog**

Prime Minister - **Benjamin Netanyahu**

Chief Justice - **Esther Hayut**

4. India to build Harbour for Maldivian Coast Guard (May 4, 2023)

India to build Harbour for Maldivian Coast Guard

India and Maldives launched construction of '**Ekatha Harbour**' for the Coast Guard of the **Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF)**.

An overview of the news

- The foundation stone for the Coast Guard '**Ekatha Harbour**' was laid by Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh** and his Maldivian counterpart, **Mariya Didi**, at **Sifavaru in Uthuru Thila Falhu (UTF) atoll**, where India is assisting in construction of a **naval dockyard**.
- This is the **biggest grant-in-aid project of India in Maldives**.

UTF project

- The UTF project, announced during External Affairs Minister **S Jaishankar's visit in February 2021**, has been at the centre of a political controversy in the Maldives.
- Allegations that the project was meant for Indian military presence in the Indian Ocean nation were part of an "India Out" campaign, which was supported by the country's opposition leader, **Abdulla Yameen**.
- Last April, Maldivian President Ibrahim Solih **banned anti-India protests** as a threat to national security.
- Anti-India campaigners allege that Indian troops were stationed in a fast patrol vessel India recently gifted to Maldives Coast Guard.

Recent gifts of India to Maldives

- India gifted a **Dornier aircraft** to Maldives in 2020 and a patrol ship in 2019.
- In 2022, India had also given **Coastal Radar System to Male**.
- Last year, Modi had announced that India would provide **24 vehicles** and a naval boat and build police facilities on the country's **61 islands**.

5. India to hand-over fast Patrol Vessel ship & landing Craft to Maldives (May 2, 2023)

Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh** will hand over a **fast patrol vessel and a landing craft to the Maldives** as India's "**gift**" during his visit to the island nation from May 1 to 3.

An overview of the news

- It will be an "**important landmark**" in building "**strong bonds**" of friendship between the two countries.
- Maldives is one of India's major maritime neighbors **in the Indian Ocean region and overall bilateral relations** between the two countries, including in the areas of **defense and security**, have been on the rise over the years.
- Singh will also review the implementation of various **India-aided projects in the Maldives** and interact with the Indian expatriate.
- India and Maldives are working together to effectively address common challenges including **maritime security, terrorism, radicalism, piracy, smuggling**, organized crime and natural disasters.

About Maldives

- It is also called **Maldives Islands**, an independent island country in the **north-central Indian Ocean**.
- It extends more than **510 miles (820 km)** from north to **south** and **80 miles (130 km)** from east to west.
- Basis of economy -**fisheries, tourism**
- Industries - **handicraft or cottage including the making of coir (coconut-husk fibre) and coir products, fish canning, and boatbuilding**.
- Capital -**Male**
- President -**Ibrahim Mohamed Solih**
- Official Language - **Dhivehi (Maldivian)**
- Official Religion - **Islam**
- Currency -**Rufiyaa**

6. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to visit Maldives (April 30, 2023)

Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh** is set to embark on a **three-day official visit to Maldives** on 30th April.

An overview of the news

- During the visit, Rajnath Singh will hold **bilateral talks** with Maldivian Defense Minister **Ms. Maria Ahmed Didi** and Foreign Minister **Abdulla Shahid**.
- All aspects of defense relations between the two countries will be reviewed during the consultations.
- Rajnath Singh will also meet Maldivian President **Ibrahim Mohamed Solih**.
- In line with India's commitment to capacity building of friendly countries and partners in the region, Rajnath Singh will gift a **Fast Patrol Vessel ship and a landing craft to the Maldivian National Defense Forces**.
- India and Maldives are working together to effectively address common challenges including **maritime security, terrorism, radicalism, piracy, smuggling, organized crime and natural disasters**.
- India's vision of **SAGAR** (Security and Growth for All in the Region) along with its '**Neighbourhood First**' policy as well as Maldives' '**India First**' policy seek to work together to jointly develop the capabilities within the Indian Ocean Region.

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7. 4th India-Mozambique Joint Defence Working Group meeting (April 26, 2023)

The **fourth meeting of the India-Mozambique Joint Defense Working Group** was held in **New Delhi** on 25 April.

An overview of the news

- The meeting was co-chaired by **Amitabh Prasad**, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Defense and **Casimiro Augusto Muio**, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of National Defense of Mozambique.
- Both sides discussed a wide range of issues including **military training, exercises, medicine and capacity building with a view to deepening defense ties.**
- The Indian side highlighted the country's **growing capabilities in the field of defense production** and discussed ways to further strengthen bilateral military ties.
- The Mozambican side held separate talks with representatives of the defense industry.
- The Indian side assured Mozambique of India's continued support and commitment to a strong bilateral defense relationship.

About Mozambique

- Mozambique is a **central African nation.**
- India has sent food and defence equipment to under **Mission Sagar.**
- It was delivered at Port Maputo of Mozambique.
- Capital: **Maputo**
- President: **Philippe Nyusi**
- Prime Minister: **Carlos Agostinho do Rosário**
- Currency: **Mozambican metical (MZN)**
- Joint Maritime Exercise among the Indian, Mozambique and Tanzanian navies - **India-Mozambique-Tanzania Trilateral Exercise (IMT TRILAT).**

8. India, Guyana sign Air Services Agreement (April 24, 2023)

India and Guyana signed an Air Services Agreement (ASA) on 22nd April to **facilitate easier travel between the two nations.**

An overview of the news

- The agreement was signed between Public Works Minister **Bishop Juan Edghill** and India's High Commissioner to Guyana **KJ Srinivas** in the presence of External Affairs Minister **S Jaishankar**, who is on a 3-day visit to Guyana.

- The agreement's signing is consistent with the government's objective to **establish ties between Guyana and the rest of the world.**
- It will also complement the more than 50 air service agreements Guyana has negotiated with other **ICAO governments for the advancement of interstate air travel.**
- The **agreement encourages the development of international air services between the two countries** and the global airline market.

What is an Air Services Agreement?

- Air Services Agreement (ASA) provides the **legal framework for air operations between two countries.**
- It is based on the sovereignty of the nations, the nationality of the carriers and the commercial opportunity for each side's designated airlines.
- **Prior to this there was no Air Services Agreement** between the Government of India and the Government of Guyana.
- **About Guyana**
 - Prime Minister: **Mark Phillips**
 - President: **Mohamed Irfaan Ali**
 - Capital: **Georgetown**
 - Currency : **Guyanese dollar (G\$)**

9. 8th India-Thailand Defence Dialogue (April 20, 2023)

8th India-Thailand Defence Dialogue

The **8th India-Thailand Defence Dialogue** was held in **Bangkok on 20th April.**

An overview of the news

- The meeting was co-chaired by **Nivedita Shukla**, Special Secretary in the Ministry of Defense and **General Nuchit Sribunsong**, Deputy Permanent Secretary of Defense of Thailand.
- They reviewed defence cooperation between the two countries and explored **new initiatives to further strengthen bilateral ties.**
- The two sides also exchanged views on regional and global issues of common interest.
- India and Thailand share a **strategic partnership and defense** is a major pillar of this cooperation.

India-Thailand relations

- India and Thailand share a maritime boundary in the **Andaman Sea.**

- Thailand was one of the first countries to establish **diplomatic relations with India in 1947.**
- Since 2001, **India-Thailand economic and commercial relations** have grown significantly.
- India and Thailand have been cooperating in various multilateral fora such as **ASEAN and BIMSTEC**, a sub-regional grouping consisting of Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Myanmar, Nepal and Bhutan.
- India is a member of the **Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD)** initiated by Thailand in 2002 and the **Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC)** grouping of six countries.
- The **India-AESAN Agreement on Trade in Goods** was implemented in January 2010.
- Since 2015, India has been participating in the largest Asia Pacific military exercise **X-Cobra Gold.**
- Exercise **MAITREE (Army)** and exercise **SIAM BHARAT (Air Force)** are Bilateral exercises between both countries.

About Thailand

- Prime minister - **Prayuth Chan-ocha**
- Capital - **Bangkok**
- Head of State - **King Vajiralongkorn**
- Official Language - **Thai**
- Official Name - **Ratcha Anachak Thai (Kingdom of Thailand)**

10. India-Russia Business Dialogue 2023 (April 18, 2023)

India-Russia Business Dialogue 2023

External Affairs Minister **S Jaishankar** and Russian Deputy Prime Minister **Denis Manturov** on 17th April attended the inaugural session of "**India-Russia Business Dialogue**" **2023 in New Delhi.**

An overview of the news

- They met representatives of Russian and Indian businesses.
- The participants in the business forum discussed issues of further enhancing Russian-Indian practical cooperation, including the **Inter-Governmental Commission (IGC).**
- The External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said that **India and Russia have crossed the bilateral trade target of 30 billion dollars before the target year of 2025.**

- S Jaishankar talked about the importance of connectivity initiatives.
- The **International North-South Transport Corridor** as well as the Eastern Maritime Corridor, which is the Chennai-Vladivostok Corridor, are being given due consideration.
- He said that the issue of payment needs to be worked out clearly.
- He also referred to the expansion of the network under the scheme of settlement of international trade in Indian Rupees through the Special Rupee Vostro Account System.
- India and Russia are paying special attention to the issues of mutual access of products to the markets of both the countries.
- Russia and the **Eurasian Economic Commission** are trying to speed up negotiations on a free trade agreement with India.

International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)

- It is a multi-modal transport established by **Iran, Russia and India on 12 September 2000 in St Petersburg.**
- It is a **7,200 kilometre long multi-mode network** of shipping, rail and road transport for freight.
- **India, Iran, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Russia, Central Asia and Europe** are involved in the corridor.
- Its main purpose is to **promote transportation cooperation among the Member States.**
- It connects the Indian Ocean to the Caspian Sea via the **Persian Gulf to Russia** and northern Europe.

Significance of INSTC

- It aims to reduce the **cost of movement of goods between India and Russia by about 30 percent** and reduce transit time by more than half.
- It will provide an **alternative connectivity initiative to countries** in the Eurasian region.
- It has the potential to transform countries' **economies into specialized manufacturing, logistics and transit hubs.**
- It opens a sustainable alternative route for India to trade with Afghanistan and Central Asia.

About Russia

- Prime Minister: **Mikhail Mishustin**
- Capital: **Moscow**

- Currency: **Russian ruble**
- President: **Vladimir Putin**
- Official Language: **Russian**