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1. AIIB to open its first overseas office in Abu Dhabi (April 21, 2023)

AIIB to open its first overseas office in Abu Dhabi

The **Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)** signed an agreement to **set up its first overseas office in Abu Dhabi Global Market.**

An Overview of the News

- The AIIB is a **multilateral development bank** that prioritises financing infrastructure projects focused on sustainability.
- The new foreign office in Abu Dhabi will support the AIIB's development agenda by funding sustainable economic development projects, primarily in areas where it is most needed.
- The **strategic location of the office in the Middle East** will enable AIIB to make a **global impact in achieving its goals.**
- AIIB was **established in 2016** with a mission to promote sustainable economic growth, create wealth and improve infrastructure connectivity in Asia by investing in productive sectors.
- It is **headquartered in Beijing, China** and has over **100 member countries**, including major economies such as the **United Kingdom, Germany and Australia.**

About United Arab Emirates (UAE)

- Location: **It is located in Western Asia.**
- Geographical Boundaries: **It shares borders with Oman and Saudi Arabia.**
- Maritime Borders: **It also has maritime borders with Qatar and Iran in the Persian Gulf.**
- Religion: **Islam is the dominant religion in the UAE, with the majority of the population being Sunni Muslim.**

Capital - **Abu Dhabi**

Official language - **Arabic**

Government - **Federal Islamic parliamentary elective semi-constitutional monarchy**

President/Crown Prince - **Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan**

Prime Minister - **Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum**

Vice President - **Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum and Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan**

2. Miguel Diaz-Canel re-elected as the President of the Republic of Cuba (April 21, 2023)

Miguel Diaz-Canel re-elected as the President of the Republic of Cuba

Miguel Díaz-Canel has been re-elected as **President of the Republic of Cuba** for a **second five-year term** on April 19, 2023 by the **National Assembly of the People's Power**.

An Overview of the News

- **Salvador Valdés Mesa** has also been re-elected as **Vice President**.
- **Díaz-Canel** received **97.66% of the vote**, while **Valdés Mesa** received **93.4%**.
- The leadership body of the National Assembly was re-elected by parliamentarians.
- **Juan Esteban Lazo Hernández, Ana María Mari Machado and Homero Acosta Álvarez** were re-elected as **President, Vice President and Secretary of the National Assembly, respectively**.
- The deputies also elected 18 members to the Council of State, including eight re-elections and ten new appointments.

About Cuba

President - **Miguel Diaz-Canel**

Capital - **Havana**

Currency - **Cuban peso**

Prime Minister - **Manuel Marrero Cruz**

Official language - **Spanish**

3. Exercise INIOCHOS-23 (April 21, 2023)

EU-India Aviation Summit begins in New Delhi

The **Indian Air Force (IAF)** will be participating in **Exercise INIOCHOS-23**, a **multi-national air exercise** hosted by the **Hellenic Air Force, the air force of Greece**.

An overview of the news

- The exercise will be conducted at the **Andravida Air Base in Greece from 24 Apr 2023 to 4 May 2023**.
- The Indian Air Force will be participating with **four Su-30 MKI and two C-17 aircraft**.
- The exercise will be conducted in a **realistic combat scenario** involving a wide variety of air and surface assets.

- It will also enable participating parties to engage in professional interactions, providing
- valuable insight into each other's best practices.

Objective of Exercise INIOCHOS-23

- The exercise aims to enhance **international cooperation, synergy and interoperability** among the participating air forces.

About exercise INIOCHOS-23

- This exercise to be held at **Greece's Andravida Air Base** is considered to be **Europe's biggest air exercise**.
- Many countries like **France, Italy** are participating in this. **The Indian Air Force will participate in this exercise for the first time**.
- The exercise will see participation of air assets from countries like **France, USA, Italy, Saudi Arabia and Jordan** apart from India's Su-30MKIs.

4. EU-India Aviation Summit begins in New Delhi (April 20, 2023)

EU-India Aviation Summit begins in New Delhi

The two day European Union (EU)-India Aviation Summit began in New Delhi on 20th April.

An overview of the news

- During the summit, a declaration of intent was signed by the Airport Authority of India with Eurocontrol.
- A letter of intent memorandum of understanding was also signed by DGCA with the European Union Aviation Safety for closer cooperation.
- The Union Minister of Civil Aviation and Steel Jyotiraditya Scindia addressed the summit virtually.
- The summit focused on the EU-India air transport relationship and the mutually shared challenges and opportunities of the two regions.
- The theme of the summit was COVID recovery of air traffic, increasing sustainability, maintaining safety and development of unmanned aircraft systems.

Eurocontrol

- Eurocontrol is a pan-European, civil-military organisation dedicated to supporting European aviation.

About Airports Authority of India

- Airports Authority of India is an organisation/authority functioning under the **Ministry of Civil Aviation**, Government of India.
- The Airports Authority of India (AAI) **manages a total of 125 airports** which include 11 international airports, 8 customs airports, 81 domestic airports and 25 civil enclaves in defence airfields.
- Established- **1st April, 1995**
- President- **Sanjeev Kumar**
- Headquarters - **New Delhi**

About European Union

- The European Union is a **group of 27 European countries**.
- The **United Kingdom** which was the founding member of the European Union has left the organisation.
- It was **founded on 1 November 1993**
- Headquarters: **Brussels, Belgium**

5. Culture Working Group organises Global Thematic Webinar (April 20, 2023)

The **Culture Working Group (CWG)** under India's G20 Presidency organised a **Global Thematic Webinar** on the "**Promotion of Cultural and Creative Industries and Creative Economy**" on 19th April.

An overview of the news

- This was the **third in a series of four webinars** focused on the priority areas expressed by the **CWG**.
- The objective of the webinar was **to foster an inclusive dialogue and facilitate in-depth discussions** from an expert-driven perspective.
- **Govind Mohan**, Secretary, **Ministry of Culture** and Chairman, CWG, emphasized on fostering a vibrant and inclusive cultural ecosystem, which values and supports creativity, which can have a positive impact on individuals, communities and society.
- The webinar featured fruitful discussion and sharing of best practices on promoting the cultural and creative industries and the creative economy.
- The webinar also brought together **43 experts from 28 countries, including G20 members and guest nations, as well as 13 international organizations** and related institutions.
- The **first G20 Culture Group (CWG) meeting was held from 22 to 25 February 2023 in Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh**.

Four priority areas of India's CWG

- Protection and restitution of cultural property
- Harnessing living heritage for a sustainable future
- Promotion of cultural and creative industries
- Creative economy; and leveraging digital technologies for Protection and promotion of culture

6. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the first Global Buddhist Summit (April 20, 2023)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the first Global Buddhist Summit

On 20 April, Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** inaugurated the [first Global Buddhist Summit](#) in New Delhi. Summit was hosted by the **Ministry of Culture in association with the International Buddhist Confederation.**

An Overview of the news

- The summit is a two-day event that brought together **eminent scholars, union leaders and religious practitioners** from around the world.
- Theme: "**Responses to Contemporary Challenges: Philosophy to Praxis**".
- The summit was attended by delegates from around **30 countries, including 171 delegates** from foreign countries and 150 delegates from **Indian Buddhist organisations.**
- The primary focus of the summit is to examine the teachings of **Shakyamuni Buddha**, which have been continuously enriched by the practice of Buddhism over the centuries.
- Prominent Buddhist monks from various countries came to India for the first time and participated in the summit.
- The summit will explore how **Buddhist philosophy and thought** can help address contemporary challenges.
- The summit highlights the significance and importance of India in Buddhism, as **Buddhism originated in India.**
- The summit is also an opportunity to enhance cultural and diplomatic ties with other countries.

Buddhism in India

- It is one of the important religions of **South and South-Eastern Asian countries.**
- Buddhism started in India about **2600 years ago.**
- Gautam Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, was **born in Lumbini around 563 BC.** He belonged to the **Shakya dynasty.**

- Buddha is considered to be the **eighth incarnation of the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu.**
- The core teachings of Buddhism are contained in the **Four Noble Truths and the core concept of the Eightfold Path.**
- The essence of Buddhism lies in the attainment of **enlightenment or nirvana**, which can be achieved in this life.
- The branches of Buddhism are **Mahayana (idolatry), Hinayana, Theravada, Vajrayana (Tantric Buddhism), and Zen.**

7. Amit Shah chairs meeting of heads of departments of SCO member-states (April 20, 2023)

Amit Shah chairs meeting of heads of departments of SCO member-states

Home Minister **Amit Shah** chaired the meeting of **Heads of Departments of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member-states** in New Delhi on 20 April.

An Overview of the news

- The meeting focused on the **prevention and elimination of emergency situations.**
- Representatives of SCO member states shared information about large-scale emergency situations occurring in their regions and measures taken to deal with them.
- Ideas were shared on **innovative practices, technologies and future prospects for cooperation** in the field of prevention and elimination of emergency situations.
- Based on these consultations, Member-States will within the framework of the SCO enhance cooperation in the field of **preparedness, emergency response** and jointly mitigate the impact arising from natural and man-made disasters.
- India has been actively participating in the SCO and providing substantial support to various mechanisms in the Forum.
- India is focusing on initiating proposals of mutual benefit to SCO member states, observers and dialogue partners.

About Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

- It is an intergovernmental organisation **established in 2001 in Shanghai, China.**
- The organisation consists of eight member states, including **China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India, and Pakistan.**
- The purpose of the SCO is to promote regional cooperation in the fields of **politics, security, economy, culture and education.**
- The organisation serves as a forum for member states to engage in regular **dialogue and consultation on issues of mutual interest.**

- The SCO has been instrumental in promoting regional security and stability by countering **terrorism, extremism and separatism.**
- The organisation has observer states and dialogue partners, including countries such as **Afghanistan, Iran, Belarus and Mongolia.**

8. 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)**

9. Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar launches SATHI Portal & Mobile App (April 19, 2023)

Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Narendra Singh Tomar on 19th April launched the SATHI (Seed Traceability, Authentication and Holistic Inventory) Portal and Mobile App to deal with the challenges of seed production, quality seed identification, and seed certification.

An overview of the news

- It has been created by NIC in collaboration with the **Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare** on the theme of '**Best Seeds - Prosperous Farmer**'.
- The Government of India is constantly trying to overcome the challenges and difficulties faced by agriculture through various schemes and programmes.
- SATHI portal is also an important step in this direction. When its use starts till the bottom, it will prove to be a **revolutionary step in the field of agriculture**.
- There will be a **QR code under this system, through which the seeds can be traced**.
- Training in this regard is being imparted through the **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)**, Krishi Vigyan Kendras, State Governments.
- All the states will be connected with the Seed Traceability System.
- Sathi portal will ensure quality assurance system, identify the source of seed in the seed production chain.

Integrated 7 verticals of seed chain in the system

- Research Organization
- Seed Certification
- Seed Licensing, Seed Catalog
- Sale from dealer to farmer
- Farmer registration
- Seed DBT

About Indian Council of Agricultural Research

- It is an **autonomous body** formerly known as the **Imperial Council of Agricultural Research**.
- Headquarters - **New Delhi**
- Established - **1929**
- The **Union Minister of Agriculture** serves as its **president**. Presently its president is Narendra Singh Tomar.
- ICAR is the largest network of agricultural research and education institutes in the world.

10. Union Cabinet Approves National Quantum Mission (April 19, 2023)

Union Cabinet on 19th April approved the **National Quantum Mission** to nurture and scale up scientific and **industrial research and development in quantum technology**.

An overview of the news

- The Union Cabinet approved **Rs 6,003.65 crore** for the mission from 2023-24 to 2030-31.
- The Mission will accelerate **quantum technology-led economic growth and nurture the ecosystem in the country**.
- The Mission will be implemented by the **Department of Science and Technology** in partnership with other departments.
- India will be the **sixth country** to have a dedicated quantum mission after the **US, Austria, Finland, France and China**.
- The mission will help develop **high-sensitivity magnetometers in nuclear systems and atomic clocks for precise timing**, communication and navigation.
- The mission envisages developing an intermediate-scale quantum computer with a capacity of **50-1000 physical qubits** in eight years on various platforms such as superconducting and photonic techniques.

What is Quantum Technology?

- **Quantum technology is based on quantum theory**, which explains the nature of energy and matter at the **atomic and sub-atomic** level.
- With the help of this technology, data and information can be **processed in minimum time**.