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1. MRF emerges as 'second strongest tyre brand in the world' (April 17, 2023)

MRF Ltd has emerged as the **second-strongest tyre brand** in the **world** according to the latest report by **Brand Finance** on the '**Most Valuable and Strongest Tyre Brands**' in the world.

An overview of the news

- MRF has **scored high in almost all parameters** and is also recognized as the **second fastest growing tire brand in the world**.
- It has **scored 83.2 out of 100 in brand strength** and has been awarded **AAA-brand rating**.
- MRF scored high in the **Sustainability Perception Value** and is the only Indian tire manufacturer to feature in the **top 10**.
- Brand Finance's annual report on the **Most Valuable and Strongest Automobile, Auto Component, Tire and Mobility 2023** analyzes the value of brands across these industries.
- Brand value is understood as the net economic benefit that a brand owner would gain by licensing it on the open market.
- A brand's strength is assessed through a balanced scorecard of factors such as marketing investment, stakeholder equity and business performance.

About MRF Ltd

- **MRF (Madras Rubber Factory)** is India's No.1 tyre manufacturing company.
- It was **started in 1946 by K M Mammen Mappillai** as a small toy balloon unit.
- In November **1960 it ventured into manufacturing of tyres**.
- The company entered into a **technical collaboration with Tire & Rubber company, USA**.
- Currently MRF exports tyres to over **65 countries including America, Europe, Middle East, Japan, and the Pacific region**.
- It has overseas offices in **Dubai, Vietnam and Australia**.

2. Sixth meeting of the Steering Committee on the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 (April 17, 2023)

The **sixth meeting of the Steering Committee** on matters relating to the **Indus Waters Treaty of 1960** was held in **New Delhi** on 17 April.

An Overview of the News

- **The purpose of the meeting** was to take stock of the ongoing amendment process of the **Indus Water Treaty**.
- The meeting was presided over by Secretary, Department of Water Resources, Ministry of Jal Shakti, **Pankaj Kumar**.

About Indus Water Treaty (IWT)

- The Indus Water Treaty (IWT) is a **water-distribution treaty** between **India and Pakistan**, arranged and negotiated by the **World Bank**, to utilise the water available in the **Indus River and its tributaries**.
- The treaty was **signed in Karachi on 19 September 1960** by the then Indian Prime Minister **Jawaharlal Nehru** and the then Pakistani President **Ayub Khan**.
- The treaty gives control over the waters of **three "eastern rivers"** - the Beas, the Ravi and the Sutlej with an average annual flow of **41 billion m³ (33 million acre feet)** - while controlling the waters of all three. The **"Western Rivers"** - the Indus, the Chenab and the Jhelum, with an average annual flow of **99 billion cubic metres** - flow to Pakistan.
- India has about **20% of the total water** carried by the Indus system while **Pakistan has 80%**.
- The treaty allows India to use the waters of the western river for limited irrigation use and unlimited non-consumptive use for applications such as **power generation, navigation, floating of assets, fisheries, etc.**

3. Nepal became a founding member of the International Big Cats Alliance (April 17, 2023)

Nepal became a founding member of the International Big Cats Alliance

Nepal has become a **founding member of the International Big Cats Alliance** launched by India on 13 April.

An Overview of the News

- The alliance was launched under India's initiative, and during the launch event, Nepal's Energy Minister **Shakti Bahadur Basnet** presented a letter indicating Nepal's membership as a founding member to India's Forest and Climate Change Minister Bhupendra Yadav. Handed over
- The International Big Cats Alliance aims **to conserve seven big cat species including tigers, lions, leopards, snow leopards, cheetahs, jaguars and pumas**.
- Nepal's tiger population has seen a significant increase, increasing **from 121 in 2010 to 335 in 2022**.

- Nepal successfully achieved its target of doubling the tiger population by 2022, as done • during the **first Tiger Summit in 2010 in St. Petersburg.**

About the International Big Cats Alliance

- The International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) was launched by the Prime Minister of India, Shri **Narendra Modi** on April 9, 2023, for the conservation of **seven big cat species including tiger, lion, leopard, snow leopard, cheetah, jaguar, and puma.**
- The alliance aims **to reach 97 range countries covering the natural habitats** of these big cats and strengthen global cooperation and efforts for their conservation.
- Ministers from **Bhutan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Kenya, Nepal, Ethiopia and Malaysia** expressed their support for India's efforts in alliance and conservation.

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**

President - **Ram Chandra Paudel**

Capital - **Kathmandu**

Currency - **Nepalese Rupee**

4. UAE India's second largest export destination and third largest source of imports (April 17, 2023)

UAE India's second largest export destination and third largest source of imports

According to the **annual trade data released by the Ministry of Commerce**, Government of India, **UAE is the second most important export destination of India.**

An Overview of the News

- The **US and the UAE** retained their **first and second positions**, respectively, as India's top export destinations during the financial year 2022-23.
- India's total **exports of goods and services grew by six per cent** during the fiscal year that ended last month.
- The **Netherlands replaced China last year** due to higher levels of imports of refined petroleum products through the maritime nation and moved up to the **third spot in India's overall export ranking during the same period.**
- The commerce ministry also released India's trade data for March 2023, which showed UAE as second only to the US among India's export destinations.

The UAE ranked third among India's import sources in March 2023, after China and Russia.

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

5. Union Minister of Steel Jyotiraditya Scindia to inaugurate India Steel 2023 in Mumbai (April 17, 2023)

Union Minister of Steel **Jyotiraditya Scindia** will inaugurate **India Steel 2023** on 19th April at the **Mumbai Exhibition Centre in Goregaon, Mumbai**.

An overview of the news

- The Union Ministry of Steel, in association with the **Department of Commerce, Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and FICCI** is organising India Steel 2023.
- The **conference and International Exhibition on the steel industry** will be held from April 19-21.
- The **main objective** of the event is to bring together industry leaders, policy makers and experts to discuss the latest developments, challenges and opportunities in the steel industry.
- The India Steel 2023 exhibition will showcase advanced **technologies, products and solutions** from the Indian steel industry.
- This biennial event will provide a unique platform for attendees to engage with industry leaders, gain insight into future growth prospects and explore collaboration opportunities in the Indian steel industry.

Topics of sessions

- Augmentation of Enabling Logistics Infrastructure.
- Demand Dynamics for Indian Steel Industry.
- Sustainability Goals via Green Steel: Challenges and Way Forward.
- Conducive Policy Framework & Key Enablers for Indian Steel.
- Technology Solutions for Enhancing Productivity & Efficiency.

Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)

- It is a **business lobby group** of top business houses in India which was **founded by Ghanshyam Das Birla**.
- It was **set up in 1927**
- It articulates the views and concerns of industry and tries to influence the government to make policy which is in favour of the industry and business.
- Headquarters: **New Delhi**
- President: **Subhrakant Panda**

6. Buzi Bridge in Mozambique inaugurated by External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar (April 17, 2023)

Buzi Bridge in Mozambique inaugurated by External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar

On 14 April, India's External Affairs Minister **Dr. S. Jaishankar** virtually inaugurated the **Buzi Bridge built by India in Mozambique**.

The bridge is part of the **132 km long Tika-Buzi-Nova-Sofala road project** and was constructed by India.

An Overview of the News

- The **bridge represents the strong bond of friendship and solidarity between India and Mozambique**.
- Dr Jaishankar took a train ride from Maputo to Machava in an Indian made train and showcased India's contribution to the development of Mozambique's rail infrastructure.

About Mozambique

- Mozambique is located in **southeastern Africa**, with the **Indian Ocean to the east and several neighbouring countries** to the **north, northwest, west, and southwest**.

The **Portuguese arrived in 1498** and colonised Mozambique for four centuries before the country gained independence in 1975.

- Mozambique descended into a **civil war from 1977 to 1992**, but has since held multi-party elections and become a relatively stable presidential republic.
- Christianity is the largest religion in **Mozambique, with Islam and African traditional religions** also present.

Government - **Unitary major-party semi-presidential republic**

President - **Filipe Nyusi**

Prime Minister - **Adriano Maleiane**

Capital - **Maputo**

Official language - **Portuguese**

Currency - **Mozambican metical**

7. G20 Second Digital Economy Working Group meeting begins in Hyderabad (April 17, 2023)

G20 Second Digital Economy Working Group meeting begins in Hyderabad

The **G20 Second Digital Economy Working Group meeting** began on April 17 in **Hyderabad**, India, with **140 representatives** from member and invited countries and international organisations.

An Overview of the News

- The three-day meet focused on **digital public infrastructure, cyber security and skills**.
- Highlighted the government's objective of bridging the **digital divide and providing broadband facilities to all villages** in the country by 2025.
- The meeting stressed the importance of multi-stakeholder participation in creating an inclusive and robust digital economy and the use of digital technologies and the empowerment of **vulnerable sections in the digital economy**.
- Indian Minister of State for Communications and Information Technology - **Dev Singh Chauhan**
- Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment - **A Narayanaswamy**

About Telangana

- It is a state **located in south-central India on the high Deccan Plateau**.
- It is the **eleventh largest state of India by area**.

- Telangana was carved out of the northwestern part of Andhra Pradesh on **2 June 2014**
- and became the newly formed state of Telangana with **Hyderabad as the capital**.
 - Telangana is bordered by **Maharashtra to the north, Chhattisgarh to the northeast, Karnataka to the west, and Andhra Pradesh to the east and south.**

Formed (by split) - **2 June 2014**

Capital - **Hyderabad**

District - **33**

Governor - **Tamilisai Soundararajan**

Chief Minister - **K Chandrasekhar Rao (BRS)**

State Legislature - **Bicameral**

Rajya Sabha - **7 seats**

Lok Sabha - **17 seats**

High Court - **Telangana High Court**

8. Second Health Working Group meeting begins in Goa (April 17, 2023)

The **second Health Working Group meeting** under the chairmanship of the Indian G20 began in **Goa** on 17 April and will conclude on 19 April.

An Overview of the News

The meeting was attended by over **180 delegates from 19 G20 member states, 10 invited states and 22 international organisations**.

- **Prevention, preparedness and response to health emergencies**, including strengthening cooperation in the **pharmaceutical sector**, were discussed at the second G20 health working group meeting.
- Which will focus on access to **safe, effective, quality and affordable medical interventions** and **digital health innovations** and solutions to aid universal health coverage and improve healthcare delivery.
- Cultural programs infused with flavours of Goan culture were planned to showcase the rich diversity and culture of India based on the Indian philosophy of '**Atithi Devo Bhava**'.
- Additional Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare - **Mr. Lav Agarwal**

About the G20

- It is an international forum of the **world's leading economies established in 1999.**
- Its primary objective is to promote **international financial stability and sustainable economic growth.**
- The G20 serves as a forum to discuss and coordinate policies related to a wide range of economic and financial issues such as **trade, investment, employment, energy and climate change.**

About Goa

- It is a state **located on the west coast of India**, bordering the **Arabian Sea.**
- It is the **smallest state of India** by area.

Formation (as a state) - **30 May 1987**

Capital - **Panaji (Executive Branch)**

State Legislature - **Unicameral**

Accession to the Union - **19 December 1961**

Official Animal - **Gaur**

Official Bird - **Yellow Throated Bulbul**

Official Sport - **Football**

Official Tree - **Terminalia elliptica**

Rajya Sabha - **1 seat**

Lok Sabha - **2 seats**

High Court - **Bombay High Court**

Governor - **PS Sreedharan Pillai**

Chief Minister - **Pramod Sawant**

9. G20 meeting of chief agricultural scientists begins in Varanasi (April 17, 2023)

G20 meeting of chief agricultural scientists begins in Varanasi

The **G20 Meeting of Agricultural Chief Scientists (MACS)** began on 17 April in **Varanasi.**

An overview of the news

- The three-day meet is being organized by the **Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.**
- The theme of the meeting is "**Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems for Healthy People and the Planet.**"
- Around **80 foreign delegates from G20 member states** are participating in the event.
- Director General of Indian Council of Agricultural Research **Dr. Himanshu Pathak** told that this is the 100th event related to G20.
- The discussions covered various issues of agricultural research and development including food security and nutrition, climate smart agriculture, digital agriculture, public private partnership etc.

Invited guest countries

- Bangladesh, Egypt, Mauritius, Netherlands, Nigeria, Oman, Singapore, Spain, UAE, Vietnam and international bodies like United Nations, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, World Health Organization will participate in the meeting.
- International Solar Alliance, CDR and Asian Development Bank will also be participating as special invitees in the three-day meeting.

Millets and other Ancient Grains International Research Initiative (MAHARISHI)

- This initiative is also proposed for discussion as a **G20 initiative during India's chairmanship.**
- MAHARISHI aims to advance research collaboration and create awareness about millets and other ancient grains during the International Years of 2023 and beyond.

About the G20

- It is an **international forum** of the **world's leading economies established in 1999.**
- Its primary objective is to promote **international financial stability and sustainable economic growth.**
- The G20 serves as a forum to discuss and coordinate policies related to a wide range of economic and financial issues such as **trade, investment, employment, energy and climate change.**

10. India opens its 16th Visa application center in Bangladesh's Kushtia (April 17, 2023)

India opens its 16th Visa application center in Bangladesh's Kushtia

The **High Commission of India** opened its **16th Visa application center in Kushtia town of Southwestern Bangladesh** on 16th April.

An overview of the news

- The new **Indian Visa Application Center (IVAC) was inaugurated by High Commissioner Pranya Verma.**
- **Mahbubul Alam Hanif**, MP from Kushtia-3 was also present on this occasion.
- This will provide greater ease and convenience to residents of **Kushtia and its surrounding areas** seeking visa services to visit India.
- Continuous efforts are being made to improve visa facilities for the people of Bangladesh.
- The new center will further strengthen people-to-people contact.
- It will serve as a new platform to promote tourism, trade and people-to-people exchanges between India and Bangladesh.
- The High Commission of India operates its largest Visa Operations Center in the world in Bangladesh.
- **Bangladesh accounts for the largest number of foreign tourists in India**, including those availing medical, tourism, business and student visa facilities.
- **In the year 2019-20, more than 16 lakh visas were issued in Dhaka.**

People's Republic of Bangladesh

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