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1. S Jaishankar meets US Secretary of Defense Lloyd J Austin in Washington (Sept. 27, 2022)

External Affairs Minister **Dr. S Jaishankar** met US Secretary of Defense **Lloyd J Austin** in **Washington** on 26 September.

Important facts

- Jaishankar said defence and security cooperation is a key pillar of the contemporary **India-US partnership**.
- The two leaders noted continued progress in policy exchange, interoperability, defence trade, services and military-industrial cooperation.
- They also exchanged their perspectives on the **Ukraine conflict, Indo-Pacific development, maritime challenges and regional issues**.
- Jaishankar also met US Commerce Secretary **Gina Raimondo**.
- The main topics of interaction were - **Resilient Supply Chain, Indo-Pacific Economic Framework, High Technology Cooperation, Semiconductors and Trade Promotion**.
- The External Affairs Minister began his Washington DC program with a round table organized by the **National Science Foundation (NSF)**.
- The session covered technical security, credible research and talent development.
- S Jaishankar is in the US on a **10-day visit** to hold bilateral consultations with several US cabinet ministers.

2. INS Tarkash at Port Gentil, first-ever visit by an Indian Navy ship to Gabon (Sept. 27, 2022)

The Defence Ministry said on 26 September that **INS Tarkash** has visited a port in **Gabon** as part of an ongoing deployment in the Gulf of Guinea for anti-piracy patrols.

Important facts

- This marks the **first visit by any Indian Naval Ship to Gabon**.
- During its stay in port, the ship and its crew will participate in official and professional interactions as well as sport fixtures.
- Their professional interactions will include discussions and exercises on firefighting and damage control, medical and casualty evacuation issues, and dive operations.
- Apart from this, yoga sessions and social interactions are also planned.

About INS Tarkash

- INS Tarkash is a state-of-the-art stealth frigate of the **Indian Navy**.
- It is built by Yantar Shipyard at **Kaliningrad, Russia**.
- It is equipped with a versatile range of weapons and sensors capable of addressing threats in all three dimensions.
- The ship incorporates the latest stealth features such as low radar, infra-red, acoustic and magnetic signatures, making it difficult to detect at sea.
- The ship is part of the Western Fleet of the Indian Navy based at Mumbai under the Western Naval Command.

About Gabon

- It is a country on the west coast of **Central Africa**.
- Prime Minister - **Rose Christiane Ossouka Raponda**
- President - **Ali Ben Bongo Ondimba**
- Capital - **Libreville**
- Official Language - **French**

3. Giorgia Meloni to become the first female Prime Minister of Italy (Sept. 26, 2022)

A coalition of the right wing alliance has won a majority in the recently held Italian parliamentary election on 25 September 2022.

The coalition has won 235 seats in the 400 member Italian Parliament's lower house, Chamber of Deputies.

The Brother of Italy party led by **Giorgia Meloni** emerged the largest single party with 118 seats.

She is likely to be the first female Prime minister of Italy after the foundation of the Italian Republic in 1946.

She will be the **31st Prime Minister of Italy**.

The Italian parliament has two houses. The upper house called the Senate has 200 members and the lower house called the Chamber of deputies has 400 members.

President of Italy: **Sergio Mattarella**

Currency of Italy: **Euro**

Capital of Italy: **Rome**

4. Prime Minister Modi arrives in Japan to attend the state funeral of former Japanese PM Shinzo Abe (Sept. 26, 2022)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has reached Tokyo on 26 September 2022 to participate in the state funeral of the former Japanese Prime minister Shinzo Abe to be held on 27 September 2022.

Shinzo Abe was shot dead on 8 July 2022 while campaigning for a parliamentary election.

The state funeral to be held in Budokan will be attended by representatives of over 100 countries including 20 heads of state or head of government.

Pm Modi would meet separately with his Japanese counterpart **Fumio Kishida** and Shinzo Abe's wife in Japan.

Indian and Japan relationship during Shinzo Abe leadership

- PM Modi and Shinzo Abe shared very close ties and the latter had gone on record to call PM Modi his most dependable friend. The close ties between the two leaders helped bolster Indo-Japan ties to a special strategic and global partnership.
- In 2017, he visited Ahmedabad to lay the foundation of India's first bullet train (from Ahmedabad to Mumbai).
- He was also the chief guest at the Republic Day parade in 2014 during the UPA government.
- He addressed the joint session of the Indian Parliament in 2007.
- He was given India's second-highest civilian award Padma Vibhushan in 2021.

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).

Prime Minister: Fumio **Kishida**

Capital of Japan: **Tokyo**

Currency of Japan: **Yen**

5. A red alert issued in the Philippines due to Super Typhoon Noru (Sept. 26, 2022)

Officials issued a **red alert** on September 25 as **Super Typhoon Noru** advanced in the **Philippines**.

Important facts

- As the cyclone devastated the country's **eastern islands**, citizens have been asked to evacuate high-risk areas immediately.
- Due to the Typhoon, winds gusting up to **240 kilometers per hour** have increased the risk of **landslides, floods and cyclones in the capital Manila**.
- The intensity of the cyclone has increased by **90 kmph in 24 hours**.
- A warning has also been issued for the **island of Luzon** in the Philippines.
- Fishermen in **Quezon province** have been advised not to venture into the sea due to Typhoon Noru.
- In December 2021, **Cyclone Rai** caused widespread destruction in the Philippines and killed around 400 people.
- Cyclone 'Noru' is believed to be the most powerful cyclone to hit the **Southeast Asian country this year**.

About the Philippines

- It is a country located in **Southeast Asia**.
- The official name of this country, made up of a group of islands located in the western Pacific Ocean, is '**Republic of the Philippines**'.
- Its capital is **Manila**.
The Philippines is bounded on the east by the Philippines Ocean, on the west by the South China Sea, and on the south by the **Celebes Sea**.

6. INS Sunayna in Seychelles (Sept. 26, 2022)

INS Sunayna entered **Port Victoria Seychelles** on 24 Sep 22 to participate in the annual training exercise **Operation Southern Readiness of Combined Maritime Forces (CMF)**.

Important facts

- This reaffirms the commitment of the Indian Navy to maritime security in the **Indian Ocean region**.
- It also marks the first participation of an Indian Navy ship in the **CMF exercise**.
- The ship is scheduled to participate as an associate participant in the capacity building exercise organized by the CMF.
- Representative delegations from **USA, Italy, Australia, Canada, New Zealand** and **ships from UK, Spain and India** are participating in the joint training exercise.

INS Sunayna

- It is the second **Saryu-class patrol vessel** of the Indian Navy.
- It was designed and constructed indigenously by the **Goa Shipyard Limited**.
- It is designed for fleet operations, coastal and offshore patrol, maritime surveillance and monitoring of sea lines of communication, and offshore asset and maintenance work.
- In **June 2018**, it was deployed as part of "**Operation Nistar**", a HADR mission to evacuate Indian citizens from cyclone-hit **Socotra islands**.

About Combined Maritime Forces (CMF)

- It is a multi-national naval partnership to promote security, stability and prosperity across approximately 3.2 million square miles of international waters.
- Its main focus areas are counter-narcotics, counter-smuggling, suppressing piracy, encouraging regional cooperation etc.

7. Significant positive impact on India-UAE trade from India-UAE CEPA (Sept. 26, 2022)

The **India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)** that came into force on 1 May 2022 is creating a significant positive impact on India-UAE trade.

Important facts

- Indian exports to the UAE, **excluding petroleum products**, grew from US\$ 5.17 billion during June-August 2021 to US\$ 5.92 billion during June-August 2022.
- It denotes an increase of **14%** of Indian exports.
- India's global non-petroleum exports during the same period (**Jun-Aug 2022**) grew by **3%** on an annual basis.
- This implies that the growth rate of India's non-petroleum exports to UAE is about 5 times that of India's non-petroleum exports to the world.
- According to the Commerce and Industry Ministry Indian imports from the UAE during the same period also grew from 5.56 billion dollar to 5.61 billion dollar.

India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)

- It was signed on **18 February 2022**, during the India-UAE Virtual Summit.
- It came into force on **1 May 2022**.
- It provides for an institutional mechanism to encourage and improve trade between the two countries.
- CEPA is a type of free trade agreement that covers trade in services and investment and negotiations on other areas of economic partnership.

8. Piyush Goel attends G 20 ministers WTO Dispute Settlement reforms meeting in Bali (Sept. 24, 2022)

The Indian Commerce minister **Piyush Goel** in a tweet said that he participated in a discussion on WTO's Dispute Settlement Reform that was convened by the United States Trade Representative (USTR) **Katherine Tai** on the sidelines of the G20 ministerial meeting in **Bali, Indonesia** on 21 September 2022.

The 12th World Trade Organization (WTO) ministerial conference held in Geneva, Switzerland from 12-17 June 2022, had promised to revive the dispute settlement body in the next two years.

WTO Dispute Settlement System

WTO is a global body which was set up in 1995 to promote rule based trading systems in the world and it also settles trade related disputes between the member countries.

A member country can complain against another member country to the WTO if it believes that the country is not following WTO rules regarding trade.

The Dispute Settlement Mechanism is a **two tier process** in the WTO.

First, the member countries are encouraged to settle their dispute through consultation.

If this fails then the WTO's Dispute Settlement Body appoints a panel to look into the dispute.

The countries have the right to appeal against the ruling of the panel to an Appellate Body set up by the Dispute Settlement Body. The ruling of the Appellate body is binding on the countries of WTO.

Objection of the United States to the Dispute Settlement System

The United States government has blocked the appointment of members to the **Appellate Body since 2019**. The Appellate body structure is at present not working but the panel system is still functioning.

The United States wants to abolish the Appellate system of the WTO as it believes that it has become synonymous with litigation and has become prolonged, complicated and expensive.

However the developing countries are of the view that a two tier dispute settlement system is essential for the functioning of the WTO dispute settlement system.

World Trade Organisation (WTO)

- It was set up on 1st January 1995 replacing the General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT).
- Its main purpose is to promote rule based trading systems in the world and it also settles trade related disputes between the member countries.
- The headquarters of WTO is in **Geneva, Switzerland**.
- There are **164 member countries**.
- Director General of WTO : **Dr Ngozi -Okonjo-Iweala of Nigeria**
- Report released by WTO : **World Trade Report**

9. Booker Prize winner British author Hilary Mantel dies at 70 (Sept. 24, 2022)

Hilary Mantel, the first woman to be awarded the Booker Prize twice and author of the popular novel 'Wolf Hall', died in London on September 22, 2022, at the age of 70.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- Mantel was awarded the **Booker Prize in 2009** for the first novel in the Thomas Cromwell series, **Wolf Hall**, and in **2012** for the novel **Bring Up the Bodies**.
- The third novel of the series '**The Mirror and the Light**' was published in the year 2020 which was well received by the readers and was listed for the Booker Prize, 2020 for a long time.
- The Wolf Hall has sold over five million copies worldwide and has been translated into more than 40 languages.
- Its TV adaptation became a hit West End show and won a **Golden Globe**.
- She was born on July 6, 1952 in **Glossop, Derbyshire, England**.
- She graduated in law from the University of Sheffield.
- In 1973, she married Gerald McEwen, a geologist.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION -

About International Booker Prize :

- The International Booker Prize is awarded annually to a translation of a novel published in the UK or Ireland.
- The Booker Prize was established in 1969 by the Booker McConnell Company of England.
- Under this, the amount of 50 thousand pounds i.e. 44 lakh rupees received is divided between the translator and the writer.
- French novelist David Diop was awarded the 'International Booker Prize 2021'.
- In May 2022 renowned Indian author **Geetanjali Shree** was awarded the International Booker Prize for her novel '**Tomb of Sand**'.

10. 20th Meeting of Prosecutors General of SCO Member States takes place in Kazakhstan (Sept. 24, 2022)

The 20th Meeting of Prosecutors General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Member States was held in Astana, Kazakhstan on September 23.

The next (21st) meeting of the Prosecutor Generals of the SCO member states will be held in **China in 2023.**

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- From India's side, learned Solicitor General of India **Tushar Mehta** and Additional Secretary, Department of Legal Affairs **Dr. Anju Rathi Rana** participated in the meeting.
- Mehta highlighted the initiatives taken by the Government of India to address international economic offences at the international level by ratification of two United Nations Conventions.
- These two UN Conventions are - **the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC)** and its three protocols and the **United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC).**
- He said, in order to curb the threat of international economic crimes at the national level, India has implemented a number of legislative measures to prevent, detect and punish money laundering by special legislation.
- **A Protocol** incorporating the deliberations of the 20th meeting of the Prosecutor General of the SCO Member States was signed and adopted by the SCO Member States.

Salient features of the Protocol :

- Strengthening cooperation in relation to recovery of proceeds made through money laundering.
- Cooperation on issues relating to dealing with economic offences such as money laundering, search, confiscation and recovery of proceeds of crime from the States.
- Using the forums of bilateral and multilateral gatherings to discuss ways to strengthen the system to deal with economic offences.
- Continuing to exchange information on domestic laws governing the recovery of proceeds of each seizure and offence.
- To develop cooperation between the General Offices of Prosecutors of the SCO Member States in the field of advanced training of prosecutors.
- To conduct and participate in bilateral and multilateral programs to combat economic crimes.