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1. Rajnath Singh signs MoU with Egypt on Defence Cooperation (Sept. 20, 2022)

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, who is on a three-day visit to Egypt, met the Egyptian Defence Minister, General Mohamed Zaki in Cairo on 20 September and signed a MoU on Defence Cooperation to further expand the bilateral defence ties between the two countries.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- During the meeting, both sides discussed steps to strengthen defense ties and a consensus was reached for **joint military exercises and training**, especially in the area of counter-terrorism.
- In addition, they also exchanged views on regional security and acknowledged the contribution of India and Egypt to peace and stability in the world.
- Egyptian President **Abdel Fattah el-Sisi** agreed to focus on enhancing bilateral cooperation and security aspects.
- Singh has also invited his Egyptian counterpart to the **India-Africa Defence Dialogue and the IOR Defence Ministers' Conference**, which is scheduled to be held in Gujarat from **October 18-22** this year as part of the **12th DefExpo**.
- Egypt is one of the largest investment destinations for India in the region with an existing Indian investment of USD 3.15 billion.

India - Egypt defence cooperation :

- To boost defence cooperation between the two countries, an Indian Air Force team arrived in Egypt on **22 June** to participate in a bilateral 'Strategic Leadership Program' with the Egyptian Air Force.
- The year 2022 has special significance as it marks the **75th anniversary** of diplomatic relations between India and Egypt.
- There was close cooperation between the Air Forces of both countries, with efforts at jointly developing a fighter aircraft in the **1960s**.
- Indian Air Force pilots had also trained **Egyptian pilots from the 1960s until 1984**.
- In recent times, since 2015, there have been a number of high-level exchanges of visits by defense delegations.

2. Nanmadol Typhoon wreaks havoc in Japan, high alert issued (Sept. 19, 2022)

Due to the Nanmadol typhoon in Japan, people living in the southwest have been warned to move to safer places.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- Due to the storm, there has been heavy rain with strong winds throughout the night of 19 September and landslides have also occurred at many places.
- One person was killed and fifty others were injured as the storm passed through the island of Kyushu.
- Government sources have said that Prime Minister **Fomyo Kishida** was to attend the UN General Assembly but has stopped to take stock of the damage caused by the storm and will now go a day later.
- Nanmadol is the **14th Pacific hurricane** of the season, and the largest to hit Japan.

3. India Overtakes China To Become Sri Lanka's Largest Lender (Sept. 19, 2022)

According to a media report, India has emerged as the largest bilateral lender to Sri Lanka, overtaking China in the process, with a total loan of USD 968 million in the four months of 2022.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- In the last five years from 2017-2021, China has been the largest bilateral lender to Sri Lanka.
- **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** has been the largest multilateral lender in the past five years and disbursed funds amounting to **610 million dollars** in year 2021.
- India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations **Ruchira Kamboj** had said that India has provided food and financial assistance of about **\$ 4 billion to Sri Lanka.**
- On 22 August, India provided 21,000 tonnes of fertilizers to the beleaguered Sri Lanka.
- India has been at the forefront of providing financial assistance to Sri Lanka as per requirements of this country and is one of the countries which has provided maximum assistance in times of need.
- Since the beginning of 2022, Sri Lanka has been grappling with an economic crisis.

4. Defence Minister reaches Cairo on two-day official visit to Egypt (Sept. 19, 2022)

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh reached Cairo on 19 September on a two-day official visit to Egypt.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- During the visit, Rajnath Singh will hold bilateral talks with the Minister of Defence and Defence Production, General Mohammad Zaki.
- Rajnath Singh's visit aims to further strengthen defence cooperation and friendship between **India and Egypt**.
- The two ministers will review bilateral defence ties, explore new initiatives to intensify military ties and focus on deepening cooperation between the defence industries of the two countries.
- An MoU will also be signed to promote defence cooperation between India and Egypt.
- Singh will also meet Egyptian **President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi**.

India - Egypt Relations :

- Egypt is one of the largest investment destinations for India with the current Indian investment of **USD 3.15 billion**.
- Indian companies are working on several projects in Egypt.
- To strengthen defence cooperation between the two countries, an Indian Air Force team arrived in Egypt on 22 June to participate in a bilateral '**Strategic Leadership Program**' with the Egyptian Air Force.
- Earlier in November last year, Chief of **Air Staff Chief Marshal VR Chowdhury** had gone to Egypt for his five-day visit to attend the Air Power Symposium and **Defence Exhibition (EDEX) in Cairo**.
- The year 2022 has special significance as it marks the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between India and Egypt.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION -

About Egypt :

- Capital - **Cairo**
- President - **Abdel Fattah al-Sisi**
- Official Language - **Arabic**
- Official Religion - **Islam**
- Currency - **Egyptian pound**

5. MAS and IFSCA sign agreement to advance cross-border fintech innovations (Sept. 19, 2022)

The Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) and the International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) on 18 September signed a FinTech Co-operation Agreement (CA) to facilitate regulatory collaboration and partnership in FinTech.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- This formal treaty is called the **Fintech Cooperation Agreement (CA)**.
- Sopanendu Mohanty, Chief Fintech Officer, MAS and Joseph Joshi, Chief Technology Officer, IFSCA were present at the signing of the agreement.

Objectives of agreement :

- Through the CA, the two collaborating bodies aim to overlook sandbox collaboration and promote objectives such as the dissemination of information.
- MAS and IFSCA will maximise the use of existing sandboxes in their respective jurisdictions.
- This is to support the use of technological innovations.

What steps will be taken to achieve this ?

- Both bodies will refer and connect companies to each others' sandboxes.
- They will innovatie cross-border experimentation in both jurisdictions.
- This agreement will allow IFSCA and MAS to determine suitable use cases which could benefit from these kinds of cross-border experiments.
- Inviting relevant jurisdictions to participate in this global regulation would be another initiative taken under this agreement.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION -

What is Financial Technology (Fintech) ?

- Fintech refers to the integration of technology by financial services companies to improve their use and delivery to consumers.
- Fintech is used to help companies, business owners and consumers to better manage their financial operations and processes etc.
- Examples of fintech applications are - robo advisors, payments apps, peer-to-peer (P2P) lending apps, investment apps, and crypto apps etc.

6. Union Minister Jitendra Singh to lead Indian delegation at the Global Clean Energy Action Forum meeting in America (Sept. 18, 2022)

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science and Technology Dr Jitendra Singh will lead a Joint Indian Ministerial official delegation of Ministry of Power, New & Renewable Energy and the Ministry of Science & Technology on a 5-day (19-23 September) visit to USA, to participate in Global Clean Energy Action Forum. The delegation includes Minister for Power and New and Renewable Energy R K Singh.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

Meeting in the United States of America :

- They will take part in the joint convening of the Clean Energy Ministerial (CEM13) and Mission Innovation (MI-7) which will take place from 21st to 23rd September at **Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, United States of America.**
- They will also participate in the **1st Roundtable on Sustainable Bioenergy and Bio-refineries** and the **2nd Roundtable on Net Zero Built Environment with Connected Communities.**
- At the Clean Energy Action Forum the ministers are likely to underline India's commitment to a low-carbon future that aims to transform the energy landscape of the country by accelerating clean energy innovations.

India's commitment on clean energy :

- The government of India has committed itself to reach **500 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2030** and increase the contribution of **renewable energy in total energy to 50%.**
- It has also committed to **reduce carbon emissions by one billion tons**, reduce carbon intensity of the economy **by 45 per cent** over 2005 levels and finally achieve **net zero emissions by 2070.**

7. Tajikistan -Kyrgyzstan border clash at 'Vorukh' leaves at least 54 people dead (Sept. 18, 2022)

The old border dispute at Vorukh area between the two former Soviet Central Asian republics of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan flared up again on 16 September leading to the death of at least 54 persons. The bloody clash in the Vorukh area has seen frequent clashes between the two sides.

Both the sides accused each other of using tanks, mortars, rocket artillery and assault drones to attack outposts and nearby settlements.

The border clash came at the time when the leaders of both the countries, **Tajik President Emomali Rakhmon** and **Kyrgyz President Sadyr Japarov** were attending the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit meeting in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

Border Dispute :

- Both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan were part of the Soviet Union. Both gained Independence in 1991 after the collapse of the Soviet Union.
- The current boundary dispute between the two countries lies in the demarcation of boundaries during the Soviet era.
- **Vorukh is an enclave of Tajik territory surrounded by Kyrgyzstan.** Many times there have been clashes over the issue of the access of the Tajiks living in Vorukh to Tajikistan. The Tajiks living in the Vorukh territory has to cross the Kyrgyz territory to go to Tajikistan.
- Tajikistan has proposed an exchange of territory with Kyrgyzstan so that Vorukh can have access to Tajikistan but so far Kyrgyzstan has refused to accept this offer.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION -

Kyrgyzstan :

- Capital: **Bishkek**
- Currency: Kyrgyzstan **Som**
- President: **Sadyr Japarov**
- **Tajikistan**
- Capital: **Dushanbe**
- Currency: **Somoni**
- President: **Emomali Rakhmon**

8. Kazakhstan renames its capital to Astana and bars second term for President (Sept. 18, 2022)

The Parliament of Kazakhstan voted to amend the constitution on 16 September 2022 to revert back the name of the nation's capital to Astana. It also extended the term of the President and barred a person from becoming President more than once.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

Term of the President :

- The term of the President has been extended **to seven years** from the present **five years**.
- Also a person can become the President of Kazakhstan **only once**. Earlier a person can become the President for a maximum two consecutive times.

Renaming of the Capital :

- It also passed a constitutional amendment to change the name of the capital to **Astana** from **Nur-Sultan**.
- Kazakhstan moved its capital from Almaty to **Astana in 1997** after it became an Independent country in 1991. In Soviet times Astana was called Tselinograd.
- Later when Kazakhstan first **President Nur Sultan Nazarbayev** resigned after being in power for almost thirty years in 2019, his successor the current President **Kassym-Jomart Tokayev** renamed Astana to Nur-Sultan in honour of the ex-leader.
- However, now again the name has been changed back to Astana.

Parliament of Kazakhstan :

- The Parliament of Kazakhstan is bicameral. It consists of the upper house **senate** and a lower house called **National Assembly (Mazhilis)**.

Republic of Kazakhstan :

- Kazakhstan was part of the Soviet Union which gained Independence on 16 December 1991, after the disintegration of the Soviet Union.
- It lies in Central Asia. It is the largest country in central Asia and 9th largest country in the world.
- It has the **Baikonur Cosmodrome**, which is the world's first spaceport. The Soviet Union used to launch its space rocket from here.
- The **first Indian astronaut Rakesh Sharma** was launched into space from here on the Soviet Soyuz T-11 rocket on 3 April 1984.
- Now it has been leased to the Russians.
- Capital: Astana
- Currency: **Tenge**
- President: Kassym-Jomart Tokayev

9. SCO summit 2022 : India to host SCO summit next year (Sept. 17, 2022)

The SCO summit was held two years later in Samarkand, Uzbekistan on 15 and 16 September. The next meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of State will be held in 2023 in India.

Agenda of the summit :

- The technological and digital divide, continued turbulence in global financial markets, instability in supply chains, increased protectionist measures and uncertainty in the global economy.
- Member States also highlighted the impacts of global climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic, which have posed additional challenges to economic growth, social welfare and food security.

Samarkand Declaration :

- The leaders of the member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) signed the Samarkand Declaration at a meeting of the **Council of Heads of State**.
- The declaration states that the SCO will be headed by India for the next period.
- In the declaration, the member states supported the efforts of the countries of the region to ensure prosperity, peace and sustainable development.
- They advocated for strengthening the role of SCO in promoting stability and socio-economic development in the region.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- The leaders stressed the need to adopt new approaches to promote more equitable and effective international cooperation and sustainable economic development.
- Member States expressed deep concern over the security threat posed by terrorism, separatism and extremism and strongly condemned terrorist acts around the world.
- They also resolved to take measures to contain the spread of terrorism, to eliminate terrorist financing channels.
- They supported the establishment of Afghanistan as a free, neutral, united, democratic and peaceful state, free from terrorism, war and drugs.
- Member States called for strengthening the effectiveness of the World Trade Organization as the principal forum for discussing the international trade agenda and adopting the rules of the multilateral trading system.
- Member States have decided to set up an expert working group on start-ups and innovation, poverty reduction and traditional medicine.

PM Modi's participation in the Summit :

- In the summit PM Modi said the Indian economy is expected to grow by 7.5 per cent this year and thus will be the highest among the largest economies in the world.
- PM Modi holds bilateral talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION -***Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) :***

- It is a permanent intergovernmental international organization.
- It was founded in **2001**.
- The **SCO Charter was signed in 2002, and came into force in 2003**.
- It is a Eurasian political, economic and military organization.
- Its aim is to maintain peace, security and stability in the region.

- China, Russia and four Central Asian states – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan – were founding members of the SCO.
- Its members include China, Russia, India and Pakistan, as well as 4 Central Asian countries - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.
- Official Languages - Russian and Chinese
- **Chairmanship - On the basis of rotation for a year by Member States**

10. PM Narendra Modi releases 8 Cheetahs in MP's Kuno National Park (Sept. 17, 2022)

The first batch of cheetahs, translocated from Namibia to India, has been released into the Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on September 17.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- Cheetahs (**5 females and 3 males**) have been brought from Namibia in Africa as part of '**Project Cheetah**'.
- Eight cheetahs were brought in a cargo plane to Gwalior as part of an intercontinental **cheetah translocation project**.
- Later, helicopters from the Indian Air Force transported the cheetahs from Gwalior Air Force Station to **Kuno National Park**.
- This is the first time in the world that a large carnivore has been transferred from one continent to another.
- The cheetahs have been brought under a memorandum of understanding signed earlier this year.

Reintroduction Action Plan :

- Reintroduction of a species means releasing it in an area where it is capable of surviving.
- Under the scheme, 50 cheetahs will be released in various national parks of the country over a period of 5 years.

Extinction of cheetahs :

- The last cheetah of the country was found dead in the year **1947 in Chhattisgarh** and in the year **1952** it was declared extinct in the country.
- Habitat loss, conflict with humans, poaching and high susceptibility to diseases are the major causes of their extinction.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION -

About 'Project Cheetah' :

- This is a one of its kind project in which a species is being brought out of the country (from **South Africa / Namibia**) and restored to the country.
- The subspecies of the extinct cheetah in India was the **Asiatic cheetah (Acinonyx jubatus venaticus)** and the subspecies of the cheetah being brought back to the country is the **African cheetah (Acinonyx jubatus jubatus)**.
- Research has shown that the genes of both these subspecies are similar.