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1. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's visit to Uganda and Mozambique (April 10, 2023)

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's visit to Uganda and Mozambique

The Union External Affairs Minister **S Jaishankar** is on a visit of two **African** countries **Uganda and Mozambique** from April 10 to 15, 2023.

An overview of the news:

- According to the Union Ministry of External Affairs, the External Affairs Minister will be on a visit to Uganda from 10 to 12 April. During this he will hold delegation level talks with Ugandan Foreign Minister General JJ Odongo.
- S Jaishankar is also expected to meet prominent leaders of the country Uganda and other ministers.
- He is also likely to meet the country's leadership and other ministers.
- The External Affairs Minister will inaugurate the transit campus of the **National Forensic Science University (NFSU)** to be set up in collaboration with India.
 - This will be the first campus of this university outside India. Jaishankar will also address a group of Ugandan businessmen and industrialists.
- During this, MoU is also expected to be signed between India and Uganda for setting up the first campus of NFSU outside India.

Mozambique Visit:

- The External Affairs Minister will visit Mozambique from 13 to 15 April. This will be the first visit by an External Affairs Minister of India to Mozambique.
- The fifth meeting of the **India-Mozambique Joint Commission** will be chaired by the Foreign Ministers of both the countries.
- During the visit, various types of assistance will be announced from the Indian side to both these countries. There will also be talk on defense cooperation with these two countries.
- In March 2023, India conducted military exercises with nine countries in Africa, as well as a separate meeting with the military chiefs of African countries.
- In March 2023, **Cyclone Freddy** caused havoc in **Malawi, Mozambique and Madagascar**.

Uganda:

- Capital: **Kampala**
- President: **Yoweri Museveni**
- Prime Minister: **Robinhood Nabanza**
- Currency: **Uganda Shilling**

Mozambique:

- Capital: **Maputo**
- President: **Philippe Nyusi**
- Prime Minister: **Carlos Agostinho do Rosário**

- Currency: **Mozambican metical (MZN)**

2. 7th India-Japan Defense Policy Dialogue held in New Delhi (April 5, 2023)

7th India-Japan Defense Policy Dialogue held in New Delhi

The dialogue on April 05, 2023 was **co-chaired by Mr. Giridhar Armane, Defense Secretary of India** and **Mr. Oka Masami**, Defense Minister of International Affairs of Japan.

An Overview of the News

- The two countries discussed a wide range of issues, including **service-level exercises and engagements, regional security issues and cooperation in defence equipment and technology.**
- Defense Secretary **Shri Giridhar Armane** stressed the need for both the countries to deepen cooperation between their respective defence industries.
- He also invited Japanese defence industries to **explore investment opportunities in India** under the '**Make in India**' initiative.
- Both sides agreed to diversify cooperation in new and emerging domains such as the **defence sector and cyber.**
- India and Japan reiterated their commitment to a strong defence partnership and agreed to explore opportunities to further enhance bilateral cooperation.
- **Defense Policy Dialogue is an institutional mechanism** between India and Japan to discuss bilateral defence cooperation.

About Japan

- It is also called **Nihon or Nippon** and is an archipelago in the **western Pacific Ocean in East Asia.**
- It is made up of four main islands **Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku and Kyushu** and **Honshu** is the largest island of Japan.
- Its highest mountain is **Mount Fuji.**
- It is the **third largest economy in the world after the United States and China.**

Capital - **Tokyo**

currency - **Yen**

Prime Minister - **Fumio Kishida**

3. India, Netherlands hold first Ministerial-level meeting of Joint Working Group (April 4, 2023)

1st Ministerial-level meeting of the Joint Working Group between India and the Netherlands
The **1st Ministerial-level meeting of the Joint Working Group** between **India and the Netherlands** was held on 3 April in New Delhi.

An overview of the news

- The meeting was held in the presence of Union Jal Shakti Minister **Gajendra Singh Shekhawat** and Minister for Infrastructure and Water Management, Government of the Netherlands, **Mark Harbours**.
- The '**Strategic Water Partnership**' was launched during a virtual meeting between the Prime Ministers of India and the Netherlands in April 2021.
- The partnership provides the necessary impetus to expand bilateral water cooperation.
- The Netherlands is associated with various states and municipalities, including **Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Gujarat, Punjab, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Maharashtra**, in various water resources projects.
- River-city alliance between the two countries for river-sensitive cities and technologically driven nature-based solutions for river rejuvenation.

India-Netherlands Relations

- **India and the Netherlands** enjoy long-standing warm and friendly relations based on shared values of democracy, rule of law, human rights and historical bonds of friendship.
- Both countries share **common ideals of democracy, pluralism and rule of law**.
- Bilateral relations have been marked by strong economic and commercial ties.
- The Netherlands signed the **Framework Agreement of the International Solar Alliance (ISA)** and became the **64th signatory member** country.
- There are over **200 Indian companies** operating in the Netherlands.
- The total bilateral trade stood at **US\$ 6.28 billion in the financial year 2018-2019**.
- The Netherlands was India's fourth largest trading partner in the European Union after Britain, Germany and Belgium.

About Netherlands

- The Netherlands, also known as **Holland**, is a country located in northwestern Europe.
- Monarch: **King Willem-Alexander**

- Prime Minister: **Mark Rutte**
- Capital: **Amsterdam**
- Currency: **euro**

4. India summons Canadian High Commissioner over actions of separatist elements (March 27, 2023)

India summons Canadian High Commissioner over actions of separatist elements

The Government of India summoned the High Commissioner of Canada on 26 March 2023 and the purpose of the summons was to express strong concern over the actions of separatist and extremist elements against India's diplomatic missions and consulates in Canada.

An Overview of the News

- The Government of India sought an explanation on how such elements were able to breach the security of diplomatic missions and consulates despite the presence of the police.
- The Government of India requested that the Government of Canada arrest and prosecute individuals who have already been identified as having been involved in such acts.
- India's Ministry of External Affairs expects the Government of Canada to take all necessary steps to ensure the safety of diplomats and the security of diplomatic premises.

About Canada

Geography: Canada is the second largest country in the world by land area. It shares a border with the United States to the south.

Government: Canada is a parliamentary democracy with a constitutional monarchy. The current monarch is Queen Elizabeth II.

Languages: Canada has two official languages, English and French. French is primarily spoken in the province of Quebec, while English is the most widely spoken language in the rest of the country.

Culture: Hockey is considered the national sport of Canada, and the country is also known for its winter sports such as skiing and snowboarding.

Nature: Some of the country's most famous natural sites include Niagara Falls, Banff National Park, and the Canadian Rockies.

Capital - **Ottawa**

Prime Minister - **Justin Trudeau**

Currency - **Canadian Dollar**

5. India invited to attend G7 Hiroshima summit in Japan (March 21, 2023)

Narendra Modi and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida

After a meeting between Indian Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** and Japanese Prime Minister **Fumio Kishida**, Japan was **invited to attend the G7 Hiroshima summit**.

An Overview of the News

- Indian Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** and Japanese Prime Minister **Fumio Kishida** signed two agreements during their bilateral talks: the renewal of the **Memorandum of Cooperation in Japanese and the exchange of notes on the JICA loan for 300 billion yen** for the **Mumbai-Ahmedabad high-speed railway project**.
- The objective of the meeting is **to strengthen India-Japan relations** and provide a voice for the Global South.
- Foreign Secretary **Vinay Mohan Kwatra**

About the G7

- The **G7 is a group of seven major industrialised countries**, including **Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States**.
- The G7 holds annual meetings to discuss various global issues, but these meetings are usually held in different locations each year.
- The **48th G7 summit was hosted by Germany in 2022**.

6. 4th Defence Cooperation Dialogue between India and Maldives held in Male (March 20, 2023)

4th Defence Cooperation Dialogue between India and Maldives held in Male

India and Maldives held the **4th Defense Cooperation Dialogue (DCD) in Male** on March 19, 2023.

An overview of the news

- The dialogue was co-chaired by Defence Secretary **Giridhar Aramane** and his Maldivian counterpart, Chief of Defence Force **Major General Abdulla Shamaal**.
- During the talks, the ongoing bilateral defense cooperation activities were reviewed.
- The talks covered existing **bilateral exercises**, with both countries agreeing to increase the complexity of these exercises.
- There is bilateral cooperation between the armed forces of India and Maldives in a number of fields, a positive sign for the future of bilateral relations.

About Defense Cooperation Dialogue (DCD)

- The Defense Cooperation Dialogue is the **highest institutionalized interactive mechanism** between the two countries.
- The Dialogue is one of **India's policy-level frameworks** that aim to strengthen long-standing and mutually beneficial bilateral defence ties.
- The first Defense Cooperation Dialogue was **held in 2016 and the second in 2019**.
- **Since 1988**, defense and security have been a major area of cooperation between India and Maldives.
- **In 2016**, the two countries signed a **comprehensive action plan to strengthen defense partnership**.

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**

7. Nepal, India agree to formulate modality to supply electricity to Indian states via Bihar (March 19, 2023)

Nepal, India agree to formulate modality to supply electricity to Indian states via Bihar

Nepal and India have agreed to formulate a **modality to supply electricity from Nepal to multiple states of India through central transmission line via Bihar grid**.

An overview of the news

- The **14th meeting of the Nepal-India Power Exchange Committee** concluded on March 17 in New Delhi.

- It was decided in the meeting to work out modalities for **export of power from Nepal to various states of India via Bihar** within a month.
- **Kulman Ghising**, Executive Director, Nepal Electricity Authority, and **Ashok Kumar Rajput**, Power System Member, Central Electricity Authority of India, agreed to finalize the modalities within a month.
- The agreement has ensured the **additional market for the sale of surplus electricity during the rainy season**.
- Under the power exchange agreement in the meeting, the **price of electricity per unit has been fixed at Rs 11.54** for the financial year 2022-23.
- **Kataiya (Bihar)-Kushaha (Nepal) and Raxaul-Parawanipur 132-KV transmission line** are connected with Bihar.
- Nepal imports power from India when needed through the **Power Exchange Agreement and competition with the Mahakali Treaty**.
- Power is being imported into Nepal through the **Dhalkebar-Muzaffarpur cross-border 400 KV double circuit transmission line** and other transmission lines.
- The Nepal Electricity Authority has been importing electricity from India's **Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand** as per the electricity exchange agreement.
- Only **Bihar and Uttar Pradesh** are connected to Nepal through **132 KV transmission lines**.

8. India and Australia target \$100 billion bilateral trade in next five years (March 11, 2023)

Union Commerce and Industry Minister **Piyush Goyal** said on 11 March, **Australia and India** will target **\$100 billion trade in the next five years**.

An overview of the news

- Both the countries are currently dissatisfied with the **\$30 billion trade**.
- Both countries expressed their commitment to **complete negotiations to expand the scope of the existing Free Trade Agreement** by the end of this year.
- He was addressing the media in New Delhi on the **India-Australia 18th Joint Ministerial Commission** along with Australian Trade and Tourism Minister **Don Farrell**.
- On 29 December 2022 India and Australia implemented an **economic cooperation and trade agreement (ECTA)**.
- They are now negotiating to expand its scope for a **comprehensive economic cooperation agreement (CECA)**.
- Both sides are looking at firming up the ambitious **CECA by 2023**.

India-Australia Trade Relations

- Australia is the **17th largest trading partner** of India and India is Australia's 9th largest trading partner.
- India-Australia bilateral trade in goods and services is pegged at **US\$ 27.5 billion in 2021**.
- India's merchandise exports to Australia grew by **135% between 2019 and 2021**.
- **India's exports to Australia** - Manufactured goods such as petroleum, medicaments, diamonds, jewellery, railway coaches and vehicles, milled rice and herbicides.
- **India's imports to Australia** - 82% of its imports from Australia are coal, gold, copper ore, aluminum oxide, liquified natural gas, manganese ore, aluminum waste, pigments, lentils, etc.

9. India-US 5th Commercial Dialogue meeting held in New Delhi (March 11, 2023)

The **India-US Fifth Commercial Dialogue** meeting was held in **New Delhi** on 10 March.

An overview of the news

- The meeting was attended by Union Commerce and Industry Minister **Piyush Goyal** and US Commerce Secretary **Gina Raimondo**.
- The two leaders acknowledged that bilateral goods and services trade is **set to almost double since 2014**, surpassing a recorded **US\$ 191 billion in 2022**.
- Both sides welcomed the steps taken to enhance their commercial cooperation and tap the market potential in several sectors.
- Both sides welcomed the efforts being made to enable an environment for investment by small and medium-sized industries and startups.
- Both ministers recognized that small businesses and entrepreneurs are the lifeblood of the US and Indian economies.
- In this context, both sides announced the launch of **a new working group on talent, innovation and inclusive growth** under the Commercial Dialogue.
- It will take forward **cooperation on start-ups, SMEs, skill development and entrepreneurship**, including digital and emerging technologies.
- **An MoU was signed between the two countries** on establishing a semiconductor supply chain and innovation partnership under the framework of the Indo-US Commercial Dialogue.

India-US Commercial Dialogue

- It aims to facilitate trade and maximize investment opportunities in a wide range of economic sectors.

- The last India-US commercial dialogue was held in **February 2019**.
- Since then, it could not be held due to the pandemic and other factors.
- After a gap of three years, it is proposed to relaunch the commercial dialogue with a strategic approach with a **focus on supply chain resilience and diversification and new emerging sectors**.

India- US trade relation

- According to the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**, India is the **ninth largest trading partner for the US**, while the US is India's largest trading partner and largest export destination.
- During the calendar year 2022, bilateral trade in goods is expected to increase significantly, **crossing USD 131 billion**, thus doubling from 2014 (in 8 years).
- The US is also the **third largest source of foreign direct investment (FDI)** for India, and the US is among the top five investment destinations for India.

10. Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's visit to India (March 9, 2023)

Free Trade Agreement

Australian Prime Minister **Anthony Albanese** arrived in **Ahmedabad** on 8 March on a four-day (8-11 March) visit to India to participate in the **India-Australia Annual Summit**.

An Overview of the news:

- After reaching Ahmedabad, the Prime Minister of Australia visited the Sabarmati Ashram and paid homage to Mahatma Gandhi. He also participated in a cultural program at the **Raj Bhavan in Gandhinagar**, followed by a program at an Australian university in Albany Ahmedabad.
- Albanese will visit Ahmedabad, Mumbai and Delhi respectively during his visit. This is the first visit to India by an Australian Prime Minister since 2017.
- On the first day of his visit, the Prime Minister of Australia participated in the **Holi program at the Raj Bhavan beside the Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad**.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister of Australia Anthony Albanese watched part of the **4th Memorial Cricket Test match of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad**.
- On March 9 itself, the Australian Prime Minister went to Mumbai, where he was given a **guard of honour at INS Vikrant**.
- This is the first visit of Anthony Albanese, who became the Prime Minister of Australia in May 2022, and during this time there will be talks on various bilateral issues ranging from economic cooperation, defence cooperation.
- Australia and India have committed to a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) to further economic cooperation and trade agreement.

Free Trade Agreement (FTA):

- FTA is an agreement between two or more countries to reduce barriers to imports and exports.
- Goods and services can be bought and sold across international borders with little or no government tariffs, quotas, subsidies, or prohibitions to constrain their exchange.

FTAs of India:

- India has signed 13 Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with its trading partners, including 3 agreements:
- India-Mauritius Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA).
- India-UAE Comprehensive Partnership Agreement (CEPA).
- India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (IndAus ECTA).

India-Australia ECTA:

- Australia exports largely raw materials to India, while India exports finished goods.
- ECTA is based on this complementarity, creating better opportunities for both countries.
- India's imports from Australia are estimated at US\$17 billion, while its exports to Australia are estimated at US\$10.5 billion in 2022.
- However, India's imports from Australia are mainly (96%) raw materials and intermediate goods.