

Current Affairs search results for tag: international-news

1. William Ruto declared winner of Kenya presidential election (Aug. 16, 2022)

In Kenya, Deputy President William Ruto has been declared the winner of Kenya's presidential election on 16 August.

Important facts

- He defeated his rival Raila Odinga by a very small margin, securing 50.5 percent of the vote.
- The worst drought in 40 years has ravaged the northern part of the country, leaving 4.1 million people dependent on food aid, while the country's debt levels have risen.
- Ruto was the Vice President of Kenya for the last 9 years.
- Significantly, President Uhuru Kenyatta remained in power for a decade.

History of violence

- In 2017, over 100 people were killed after the Supreme Court quashed preliminary results over irregularities in the electoral process.
- Amid fears that allegations of vote rigging had led to bloody conflicts after the presidential elections in 2007 and 2017, the courts were urged to control any disputes.
- The US Embassy in Kenya urged all parties to work together to peacefully resolve concerns about the election.
- Economic issues such as rising food and fuel prices, government debt, unemployment and widespread corruption were central to the election in the country.
- People here were more worried about fuel prices after the Russia-Ukraine war.

About Kenya

- Capital - Nairobi
- Official Languages - Swahili, English
- Currency - Kenyan Shilling

2. Latvia and Estonia withdraw from cooperation group between China and Central and Eastern European countries (Aug. 12, 2022)

Latvia and Estonia have withdrawn from a cooperation group between China and more than a dozen Central and Eastern European countries.

Important facts

- The move comes amid Western criticism of China over increasing military pressure on Taiwan.
- Relations between Lithuania and China deteriorated after Taiwan was allowed to open a de facto embassy late last year.
- Latvia and Estonia said they would continue to work towards a constructive and pragmatic relationship with China while respecting a rules-based international order and human rights.

China and Central & Eastern European (CEE) 17+1 cooperation group

- It is a China-led format founded in 2012 in Budapest.
- It aims to expand cooperation between Beijing and Central and Eastern European (CEE) member states with investment and trade for the development of the CEE region.
- It also aims at the development of infrastructure projects such as modernization of bridges, motorways, railway lines and ports in the member states.
- It includes twelve EU member states and five Balkan states.
- Name of the countries in 17+1 - Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia.

3. India-UK conclude fifth round of FTA talks (Aug. 12, 2022)

India and the United Kingdom (UK) concluded the fifth round of talks for an FTA on the 29th of last month.

Important facts

- In the fifth round of talks, technical experts from both sides came together to discuss 15 policy areas.
- Currently, India is holding FTA talks with some of its trading partners including the European Union, Canada and Israel.

Consensus between both countries

- Officials in India and the UK will continue to work intensively throughout the summer to finalize talks on a comprehensive and balanced free trade agreement by the end of October 2022.
- UK agrees to end duties on Indian rice and textile items.
- India may allow duty-free entry of British apples, medical equipment and machinery manufactured in the UK.
- India initially proposed an early harvest agreement or interim FTA that would be ready by Diwali.

- Through this agreement, India-UK bilateral trade is estimated to double to about \$100 billion by 2030.
- An agreement is also expected to be reached on mutual recognition of higher education qualifications.
- India is likely to get more skill visas, as the UK currently faces a shortage of experts in the IT and programming sectors.
- The India-UK FTA agreement is also expected to give a boost to the domestic textile sectors.

What is Free Trade Agreement (FTA)?

- Under this agreement, customs duties, regulatory laws, subsidies and quotas etc. are simplified on the products under import-export between two countries.
- Its main objective is to simplify trade.
- A major advantage of FTA is that the cost of production of the two countries between which this agreement is made becomes cheaper as compared to other countries.
- This encourages trade and gives impetus to the economy.

4. India expresses concern over shelling near Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant (Aug. 12, 2022)

India has expressed concern over reports of shelling near the **Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant** in Ukraine and called for mutual restraint to ensure that the safety and security of nuclear facilities is not endangered.

Important facts

- India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ruchira Kamboj said that India expresses its concern over reports of shelling near the Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant.
- The statement came as Ukraine again accused Russia of shelling the Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) on 11 August.
- India attaches high importance to ensuring the safety and security of nuclear plants, as any accidents involving nuclear facilities can potentially have serious consequences for public health and the environment.
- In March 2022, the Russian military took control of Europe's largest nuclear power plant, the Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant.
- An emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council was held on this development regarding the plant.
- On February 24, Russia launched a "special military operation" in Ukraine, which the West called a "war without cause".
- As a result, Western countries have also imposed severe sanctions on Moscow.

About Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant

- It was built between 1984 and 1995, is the largest nuclear power plant in Europe and the sixth largest in the world.
- It is located in south-east Ukraine in Enerhodar on the banks of the Kakhovka reservoir on the Dnieper river.
- It is located about 200 km from the disputed Donbass region and 550 km south-east of Kyiv.
- In normal times it generates one-fifth of Ukraine's total electricity.

World's largest nuclear power plants

1. **Kashiwazaki-Kariwa** - Japan - capacity - 7,965 megawatts
2. **Bruce Nuclear Generating Station** - Canada - 6,384 MW
3. **Kori Nuclear Power Plant** - South Korea - 6,040 MW
4. **Hanul Nuclear Power Plant** - South Korea - 5,928 MW
5. **Hanbit Nuclear Power Plant** - South Korea - 5,875 MW
6. **Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant** - Ukraine - 5,700 MW

5. Argentine Rear Admiral Guillermo Pablo Ríos appointed Chief Military Observer of UNMOGIP (Aug. 12, 2022)

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has appointed a veteran Argentine naval officer as Head of Mission and Chief Military Observer for the United Nations Military Observer Group (UNMOGIP) in India and Pakistan.

Important facts

- Rear Admiral Guillermo Pablo Ríos of Argentina has replaced Major General Jose Eladio Alcán of Uruguay.
- After graduating as a Middle Shipman from the Naval Academy, Rear Admiral Ríos has had a distinguished career in the Argentine Navy since 1988.
- He, most recently, served as the General Director of Education, Training and Doctrine of the Joint Staff (2022).
- Prior to this, he was Marine Infantry Commander (Core Commander) (2020-2021).
- He has also served as Marine Infantry Fleet Commander (Brigade Commander) (2019), Head of Education, Navy Warfare School (2018) and Defence, Military, Navy and Air Force in Russia (2016-2018).
- He has also been a training officer in the United States Marine Corps Regiment under the United States and Argentina Marine Exchange Program (2002-2003).

- Ríos has served in two peacekeeping missions, including the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) in 1993 and 1994, and the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO) in 2007.
- He has also served as a Humanitarian Mining Observer with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in Angola (1997–1998).
- He holds a master's degree from the Naval University Institute and E-Salad University in Argentina.

About UNMOGIP

- UNMOGIP was established in January 1949.
- Following the Indo-Pakistani War and the Armistice Agreement in 1971, UNMOGIP's main tasks are to oversee developments related to strict adherence to the ceasefire.
- It has 44 military observers, 25 international civilian personnel from 10 countries and 47 local civilian staff.
- India has maintained that UNMOGIP has outlived its utility and is irrelevant after the Simla Agreement and the establishment of the Line of Control (LoC).
- The last report of the Secretary-General of the Security Council on UNMOGIP was published in 1972.
- The group is financed by the United Nations.

Simla Agreement

- It was signed by India and Pakistan in July 1972.
- It established the Line of Control (LoC) in Kashmir, which was similar to the ceasefire line established by the Karachi Accords.
- Under this, India and Pakistan mutually agreed on certain principles.
- They emphasised respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, not interfering in each other's internal affairs.

6. Ceasefire between Palestine, Israel takes effect in Gaza (Aug. 9, 2022)

A ceasefire between Israel and Palestinian militants went into effect on 8 August and was agreed to end nearly three days of violence that left dozens of Palestinians dead.

Important facts

- In early 2022, tensions escalated between Palestinians and Israeli police at the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem.
- Israeli jets hit targets of Islamic Jihad leaders in Gaza.

- In response, the Iranian-backed Palestinian Jihad terrorist group fired dozens of rockets at Israel.
- According to an Israeli military statement, militants fired about 580 rockets towards Israel in Gaza.

UNSC meeting

- The United Nations Security Council has scheduled an emergency meeting to end the violence.
- China scheduled the session in response to a request from the United Arab Emirates.
- China will preside over the UNSC for August 2022, representing Arab countries in the council.

What is the dispute between Israel and Palestine?

- Under the United Nations Original Partition Plan of 1947, Jerusalem was proposed as an international city.
- In the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, the Israelis captured half of the city of Jerusalem.
- The eastern part of this city where Haram al-Sharif is located was captured by Jordan.
- In 1967, the Six-Day War was followed by an armed conflict between Israel and a coalition of Arab states that mainly included Jordan, Syria and Egypt.
- Israel annexed Jordan-controlled East Jerusalem in the 1967 Six-Day War.
- Israel sees the entire city as its "unified, eternal capital".
- Whereas Palestine does not want to accept any settlement for a future Palestinian state until East Jerusalem is recognized as its capital.

7. India begins cooperation with Bahrain-based Combined Maritime Forces (Aug. 9, 2022)

India began cooperation with Bahrain-based Combined Maritime Forces (CMF)

Background

- In April 2022, during the India-US 2+2 talks, India announced that it would join the CMF as an associate partner to strengthen cooperation in regional security in the western Indian Ocean.
- In July 2022, India formally commenced cooperation with the Joint Maritime Force (CMF), a multilateral partnership based in Bahrain.

What are Combined Maritime Forces (CMF)?

- The CMF is a multinational naval partnership to promote security, stability and prosperity in the approximately 3.2 million square miles of international waters, which include some of the world's most important shipping lanes.
- The Group of 34 Nations is commanded by a Vice Admiral of the US Navy, who also serves as Commander US Naval Forces Centcom and US Fifth Fleet.
- All three commands are co-located in US Naval Support Activity Bahrain. Pakistan is a full member of the CMF.
- India is the 35th member of this group.
- **It consists of four task forces -**

1. CTF 150 (maritime security and counter-terrorism)
2. CTF 151 (counter-piracy)
3. CTF 152 (Arabian Gulf security and cooperation)
4. CTF 153 (Maritime security in the Red Sea & Gulf of Aden)

Significance of CMF

- Curb illegal fishing
- Counter-piracy
- Counter-terrorism
- Protection of trade routes

About Bahrain

- Prime Minister - Salman ibn Hamad Al Khalifah
- Capital - Manama
- Official Language - Arabic
- Official Religion - Islam
- Currency - Bahraini Dinars

8. Gustavo Petro sworn in as Colombia's first leftist President (Aug. 8, 2022)

Gustavo Petro was sworn in as the first leftist president of Colombia on 7 August.

Important facts

- He has promised to fight inequality in the country and bring about a significant change in the history of a country ravaged by a prolonged war between the government and guerrilla groups.
- Petro (62) has promised to address Colombia's social and economic inequalities by increasing spending money on poverty alleviation programs and investing in rural areas.
- Gustavo Petro, a former member of Colombia's M-19 guerrilla group, won the presidential election in June by defeating conservative parties by a huge margin.
- The victory of former rebel Petro was an extraordinary event for the country Colombia, as voters in the country did not support leftist leaders.
- Left leaders are often accused of being soft on crimes or sympathising with the guerrillas.
- He has described US-led anti narcotics policies, such as the forced elimination of illegal coca crops, as a major failure.

About Colombia

- Capital - Bogota
- Name - Republic of Colombia
- Official Language - Spanish
- Currency - Colombian peso

9. ASEAN bars Myanmar from ASEAN meetings (Aug. 6, 2022)

The ASEAN Regional Group has said that Myanmar will not be allowed to participate in any ASEAN meetings until it shows progress on the peace plan.

Important facts

- ASEAN has said that Myanmar should act in a way that shows progress has been made in the peace plan.
- The regional group expressed concern over the long-running political crisis in Myanmar and the executions of four opposition activists.
- ASEAN expressed its deep disappointment at the limited progress and highlighted the lack of commitment of the Nay Pyi Taw officials towards the implementation of the Five Point Consensus.
- ASEAN's five-point agreement was reached in Jakarta, Indonesia on April 24, 2021, calling for an immediate end to violence in Myanmar and constructive dialogue among all parties to seek a peaceful solution.
- On the Rohingya issue, ASEAN reiterated its support for facilitating the voluntary return of displaced persons in a safe and dignified manner in accordance with the bilateral agreement between Myanmar and Bangladesh.

About ASEAN

- Association of Southeast Asian Nations or ASEAN is an international organisation formed in Bangkok, Thailand in 1967.
- It promotes economic development, peace, security, social progress and cultural development in the Southeast Asian region.
- ASEAN Secretariat – Indonesia, Jakarta.
- General Secretary of ASEAN - Lim Jock Hoi, Brunei
- Official Languages - Burmese, Filipino, Indonesian, Khmer, Lao, Malay, Mandarin, Tamil, Thai and Vietnamese
- Working Language - English
- ASEAN Summit is the supreme policy making body of ASEAN.
- ASEAN is third largest market in the world
- It is the sixth largest economy in the world, third in Asia.
- ASEAN has Free-trade agreements (FTAs) with China, Japan, South Korea, India, Australia and New Zealand.

ASEAN Member Countries

- Indonesia
- Malaysia
- Philippines
- Singapore
- Thailand
- Brunei
- Vietnam
- Laos
- Myanmar
- Cambodia

10. 9 Indian companies in Fortune 500 Global list 2022 (Aug. 5, 2022)

Recently, Life Insurance Corporation listed on the stock exchange has joined the list of Fortune's Global 500 companies. With this, now nine Indian companies have made their place in the list.

Important facts

- LIC, the country's largest life insurer with a revenue of USD 97.26 billion and profit of USD 553.8 million, is ranked 98th in the recently released Fortune 500 list.
- Reliance Industries jumped 51 places to 104 in the 2022 list.
- Reliance has been on the list for 19 years with a revenue of USD 93.98 billion and a net profit of USD 8.15 billion in the latest year.
- Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) jumped 28 places to 142nd position, while Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) moved up 16 places to 190th.
- The list includes two Tata group companies - Tata Motors at 370th position and Tata Steel at 435th position.
- State Bank of India (SBI) climbed 17 places to 236th and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited climbed 19 places to 295th.
- The Fortune Global 500 list ranks companies based on total revenue for the respective fiscal years ended on or before March 31, 2022.

Global position

- American retail company Walmart tops the list of Fortune Global 500.
- Amazon is in second position.
- Chinese energy giant's State Grid, China National Petroleum and Sinopec rounded out the top five.

Top 10 companies in 2022 Fortune Global 500 list

1. Walmart, U.S
2. Amazon, U.S
3. State Grid, China
4. China National Petroleum, China
5. Sinopec, China
6. Saudi Aramco, Saudi Arabia
7. Apple, U.S
8. Volkswagen, Germany
9. China State Construction Engineering, China
10. CVS Health, U.S.