

## Testwale Current Affairs PDF

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### **1. Kenya Launched Its First Operational Earth Observation Satellite "Taifa-1" ( April 19, 2023 )**

**Kenya** launched its **first operational Earth observation satellite "Taifa-1"** on a rocket of **Elon Musk's rocket company 'SpaceX'** from **Vandenberg Base in California** on 15 April 2023.

#### **An Overview of the News**

- The launch rocket carried **50 payloads** from various countries, including **Turkey, under SpaceX's 'rideshare programme'**.
- Taifa-1 was designed and developed by **SayariLabs and EnduroSat** and the satellite was built over two years at a cost of **50 million Kenyan shillings (\$372,000)**.
- The satellite's primary purpose is to collect agricultural and environmental data, including floods, droughts and wildfires, to help Kenya deal with disaster management and food insecurity.

#### **Taifa-1**

- It is an optical camera that can take pictures in both multispectral and panchromatic modes.
- The satellite can operate in and out of the visible light spectrum, allowing it to capture images even in low light conditions.
- **Taifa-1** is capable of capturing images in five different multispectral bands.
- The **Ground Sampling Distance (GSD) of Taifa-1 is 32 m** for the multispectral band and 16 m for the panchromatic band.

#### **About Kenya**

Republic - **12 December 1964**

Capital - **Nairobi**

Official languages - **Swahili, English**

Currency - **Kenyan shilling (Kesia)**

Government - **Unitary presidential republic**

President - **William Ruto**

Deputy President - **Rigathi Gachagua**

Senate President - **Amason Kingi**

Assembly Speaker - **Moses Wetangula**

Chief Justice - **Martha Koome**

## **2. Efforts to revive the India-Brazil-South Africa Forum ( April 19, 2023 )**

Diplomatic focus is likely to increase on the long-dormant **trilateral India-Brazil-South Africa forum**.

### **About India-Brazil-South Africa forum (IBSA)**

- It is a trilateral dialogue forum of **India, Brazil and South Africa** which was **created in the year 2003**.
- The grouping was formalized under the name of the **IBSA Dialogue Forum under the Brasilia Declaration**.
- On **June 6, 2003**, at a meeting of the foreign ministers of the three countries in **Brasilia (Brazil)**, the Brasilia Declaration was issued and the grouping was formalized and named the **IBSA Dialogue Forum**.
- It brings together **India, Brazil and South Africa, three large democracies and major economies from three different continents**, facing similar challenges.
- **IBSA Fund was established in 2004** which facilitates the execution of human development projects to advance the fight against poverty and hunger in developing countries.
- **IBSAMAR is a joint multinational maritime exercise, among the Indian, Brazilian and South African navies**.

### **Forum Meetings**

- **Between 2011 and 2022**, the forum has held **only four trilateral ministerial commission meetings**.
- The latest is in **September 2022**, when **senior ministers from the three countries meet in New York**.
- However, there has not been a meeting of their heads of state or government **since 2011**.
- The meetings have become inactive in recent years.

## **3. Central Government notified the Animal Birth Control Rules, 2023 ( April 19, 2023 )**

On April 18, the **central government notified the Animal Birth Control Rules, 2023** and the rules aim to address the Supreme Court guidelines in a writ petition by the **Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) and People for Elimination of Stray Troubles**.

### **An Overview of the News**

- The Supreme Court has specifically mentioned that **transfer of dogs cannot be allowed.**
- Under the new rules, **local bodies including municipalities, municipal corporations and panchayats are responsible for carrying out the Animal Birth Control (ABC) programme.**
- The ABC program aims **to sterilise and vaccinate stray dogs, reduce their population, and address animal welfare issues.**
- The rules provide guidelines on how to handle **conflicts between humans and stray dogs** without relocating the dogs.
- ABC programs should be conducted by AWBI accredited organisations specifically recognized for this purpose.
- The list of such organisations will be available on the website of AWBI and will be updated regularly.

### **About Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI)**

- It is a **statutory advisory body** that provides guidance to the **Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying**, Government of India.
- AWBI is **headquartered in Ballabgarh, Haryana**, and was earlier located in Chennai.
- As an advisory body, AWBI plays an **important role in shaping policies related to animal welfare in India.**
- AWBI was established under the provisions of the **Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960** with the objective of preventing cruelty to animals and promoting their welfare.
- The Board consists of a **Chairman, Vice-Chairman and a number of other members** who are appointed by the Government of India.
- Some of the major functions of the AWBI include conducting research on animal welfare, creating awareness about animal rights, and monitoring the use of animals in animal-related activities such as transportation, slaughter, and entertainment.

Founder - **Rukmini Devi Arundale**

Established - **1962**

### **4. Supreme Court refers same-sex marriage pleas to Constitution bench ( April 18, 2023 )**

The Supreme Court has set up a **five-judge Constitution bench** to hear petitions seeking **legal recognition of same sex marriages.**

### **An overview of the news**

- The bench set up by **Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud** comprises Justices **Sanjay Kishan Kaul, Ravindra Bhat, Hima Kohli and PS Narasimha**, besides the CJI.
- The Supreme Court had on March 13 referred the petitions to the Constitution bench stating the matter raised questions of “**seminal importance**”.
- A three-judge bench, led by Chief Justice of India (CJI) **Dhananjaya Y Chandrachud**, set down the matter for final arguments before a Constitution bench from April 18 after noting that the petitions involve the interplay between constitutional rights and specific legislative enactments, including the **Special Marriage Act, 1954**.

### **Background:**

- The Delhi high court in **July 2009 de-criminalised consensual homosexual acts** in private by declaring as unconstitutional a part of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code that criminalises unnatural sex.
- However, in December 2013, the Supreme Court set aside the HC verdict, holding it was for the legislature to take a call on the controversial provision.

### **Adoption of a child in same-sex marriage**

- The bench said one of the issues raised before it also relates to the rights of transgender couples to marry.
- While hearing the petitions, **CJI Chandrachud** said that it is not necessary that a child adopted by a homosexual couple will be a homosexual.

### **What is the Centre's stance on same-sex marriage?**

- In an affidavit filed before the apex court, the government has opposed the petitions and submitted that despite the **decriminalisation of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code**, the petitioners cannot claim a fundamental right for same-sex marriage to be recognised under the laws of the country.
- At the same time, it submitted that although the Centre limits its recognition to heterosexual relationships, there may be other forms of marriages or unions or personal understandings of relationships between individuals in a society and these "are not unlawful".

### **Is same-sex marriage legal in India?**

- On September 6, 2018, the SC decriminalised consensual gay sex between adults in the **Navtej Singh Johar verdict**.
- It also decriminalised Section 377 of the India Penal Code (IPC) which considered sex with the same gender as a criminal activity.
- However, it said that this should not be meant as conferring any right including the right to marry. So, homosexual couples currently do not have a right to legally marry in India.

## **Which countries have legalised same-sex marriage?**

- Currently, there are **32 countries globally where same-sex marriage is legal.**
- These are Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Uruguay.

## **5. Namami Gange: 8 Projects Worth Rs 638 Crores Approved ( April 18, 2023 )**

The **48th meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)** was held on 18th April under the chairmanship of Director General, National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) **G. Asok Kumar.**

### **An overview of the news**

- **Eight projects worth around Rs. 638 crore** were approved in the meeting.
- In an attempt to clean **River Hindon**, which is a **tributary of River Yamuna**, four projects **worth Rs 407.39 crore** were approved for pollution abatement in the **Shamli district.**
- These projects are part of the comprehensive **Hindon Rejuvenation Plan.**
- **Hindon river is identified as Priority 1 polluted river stretch.**
- The projects which were sanctioned are to prevent the **flow of polluted water into Krishna River.**
- **Krishni is one of the major tributaries of Hindon** which discharges pollution from Shamli district into River Hindon.
- Two more sewerage management projects were approved in the meeting, one each in **Bihar and Madhya Pradesh.**
- In Bihar, a project for construction of 3 STPs (7 MLD, 3.5 MLD and 6 MLD in Zone 1 and 2 respectively) along with other works was approved at an estimated cost of Rs 77.39 crore.
- These projects will arrest the flow of polluted water into the **Kiul River, a tributary of the Ganges.**

### **About Namami Gange**

- It was approved as a '**Flagship Programme**' by the Central Government in **June 2014.**
- It was launched to serve the twin objectives of effective **abatement of pollution and conservation and rejuvenation of the national river Ganga.**

- It is being operated under the **Ministry of Water Resources, Department of River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation and Ministry of Jal Shakti.**
- The program is being implemented by the **National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)** and its **State Program Management Groups (SPMGs).**

## **6. Syria is the world's largest 'narco-state' ( April 18, 2023 )**

**Syria** has **become the world's largest 'narco-state'** and most of its foreign exchange earnings come from the **production and export of Captagon**, a highly addictive amphetamine commonly referred to as "**poor man's coke**".

### **An Overview of the News**

- Drug trafficking, is especially **Captagon**, which is a **significant part of Syria's economy**. It accounts for more than **90 percent of the country's foreign exchange** earnings according to criteria to be classified as a narco-state.
- Experts have indicated that Syria is the **major producer of Captagon**, with much of it exported to the Gulf region. Following a crackdown on protesters by **President Bashar al-Assad in 2011** and subsequent sanctions or trade embargoes with Syria, the Lebanese regime along with Hezbollah increased the production and **export of Captagon** to the Gulf countries.
- The US enacted the **Captagon Act** last year, linking the drug trade to the Assad regime in Syria and labelling it an "**international security threat**".

### **About Syria**

Capital - **Damascus**

Official language - **Arabic**

President - **Bashar al-Assad**

Vice President - **Najah Al-Attar**

Prime Minister - **Hussain Arnoos**

Speaker of the People's Assembly - **Hammouda Sabbagh**

## **7. Govt launches 'Sangathan se Samriddhi' scheme to bring marginalised rural women into SHGs network ( April 18, 2023 )**

Govt launches 'Sangathan se Samriddhi' scheme to bring marginalised rural women into SHGs network

Rural Development Minister **Giriraj Singh** launched the '**Organization to Prosperity**' campaign on 18 April.

### **An overview of the news**

- It will empower **marginal rural households by bringing all eligible rural women into Self Help Groups (SHGs).**
- The government is targeting to bring the existing **9 crore to 10 crore women under the ambit of SHGs.**
- The number of members, which was only 2.35 crore in **May 2014, has now crossed nine crore.**
- The government has set a target that every woman associated with self-help groups should be able **to earn one lakh rupees annually.**

### **What are SHGs?**

- Self-help groups (SHGs) are **informal associations of people** who choose to come together to **find ways to improve their living conditions.**
- It can be defined as a **self-governing, peer-controlled information group** of people having a **similar socio-economic background** and desiring to collectively serve a common purpose.
- SHGs rely on the concept of "**self-help**" to encourage **self-employment and poverty alleviation.**
- Its objective is to build the **functional capacity of the poor and the marginalized** in the field of employment and income generating activities.

### **8. Narendra Modi to inaugurate first Global Buddhist Summit on 20th April ( April 18, 2023 )**

Narendra Modi to inaugurate first Global Buddhist Summit on 20th April

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** will inaugurate the **first Global Buddhist Summit in New Delhi** on 20th April.

#### **An overview of the news**

- The two-day summit will be hosted by the **Ministry of Culture** in association with its grantee body **International Buddhist Confederation.**
- **Eminent scholars, Sangha leaders and Dharma practitioners** from all over the world will attend the Conference.
- The theme of the Global Buddhist Summit is '**Responses to Contemporary Challenges: Philosophy to Praxis**'.
- For the first time prominent Buddhist monks from different countries will come to India and participate in the summit.

- There will be discussions on how to deal with contemporary challenges with the help of
- **Buddhist philosophy and thought.**
  - This global summit will mark the importance of India in Buddhism, as **Buddhism originated in India.**
  - This global summit will also be a medium to enhance **cultural and diplomatic relations with other countries.**
  - **Delegates from around 30 countries** will participate in the event and around 171 delegates from foreign countries and 150 delegates from Indian Buddhist organizations will participate.
  - The main approach of the summit is to reflect on the teachings of **Shakyamuni Buddha**, which have been continuously enriched by the practice of Buddhism over the centuries.

### **Four Themes of Discussions**

1. Buddha Dhamma and Peace
2. Buddha Dhamma: Environmental Crisis, Health and Sustainability
3. Preservation of Nalanda Buddhist Tradition
4. Buddha Dhamma Pilgrimage, Living heritage and Buddha Relics: a resilient foundation to India's centuries-old cultural links to countries in South, Southeast and East Asia.

### **Buddhism in India**

- It is one of the important religions of **South and South-Eastern Asian countries.**
- Buddhism started in India about **2600 years ago.**
- **Gautam Buddha, the founder of Buddhism**, was born in **Lumbini around 563 BC.** He belonged to the **Shakya dynasty.**
- Buddha is considered to be the **eighth incarnation of the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu.**
- The core teachings of Buddhism are contained in the **Four Noble Truths and the core concept of the Eightfold Path.**
- The essence of Buddhism lies in the attainment of **enlightenment or nirvana**, which can be achieved in this life.
- The branches of Buddhism are Mahayana (idolatry), Hinayana, Theravada, Vajrayana (Tantric Buddhism), Zen.

### **UNESCO heritage site related to Buddhism**

- Archaeological site of Nalanda Mahavihara at Nalanda, Bihar
- Buddhist Monuments at Sanchi, Madhya Pradesh



- Mahabodhi Vihara Complex in Bodh Gaya, Bihar
- Ajanta Caves, Aurangabad (Maharashtra)

## **9. Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh launches 'YUVA PORTAL' ( April 18, 2023 )**

Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh launches 'YUVA PORTAL'

Union Minister for Science and Technology **Dr. Jitendra Singh** launched the **Youth Portal in New Delhi.**

### **An Overview of the News**

- It aims to connect and identify **potential youth start-ups.**
- Science and Technology Minister **Dr Jitendra Singh** also launched the **One Week - One Laboratory programme.**
- The event emphasises the need for broad-based participation from stakeholders in the industry for startups to remain sustainable.
- **Each of the 37 CSIR (Council of Scientific and Industrial Research) laboratories** is dedicated to a different specialised area of work.
- The **One Week - One Lab program** will provide an opportunity to CSIR laboratories to showcase their work.

### **About Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)**

- The **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, or CSIR**, is an **autonomous body** established by the Government of India in September 1942.
- Its primary goal is to **promote scientific and industrial research in India.**
- Its research activities cover a wide range of fields, including **aerospace, biotechnology, chemistry, earth science, electronics, engineering, information technology, materials science and physics.**
- It operates a network of laboratories and research institutes across India, which conduct **cutting-edge research** in their respective fields.

Establishment - **26 September 1942**

Founder - **Shanti Swaroop Bhatnagar, Arcot Ramasamy Mudaliar**

President - **Narendra Modi**

Director General - **Dr. N. Kalaiselvi**

Parent Organization - **Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India**

Motto - **CSIR-The Innovation Engine of India**

## **10. India-Russia Business Dialogue 2023 ( April 18, 2023 )**

India-Russia Business Dialogue 2023

External Affairs Minister **S Jaishankar** and Russian Deputy Prime Minister **Denis Manturov** on 17th April attended the inaugural session of "**India-Russia Business Dialogue**" **2023 in New Delhi.**

### **An overview of the news**

- They met representatives of Russian and Indian businesses.
- The participants in the business forum discussed issues of further enhancing Russian-Indian practical cooperation, including the **Inter-Governmental Commission (IGC).**
- The External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said that **India and Russia have crossed the bilateral trade target of 30 billion dollars before the target year of 2025.**
- S Jaishankar talked about the importance of connectivity initiatives.
- The **International North-South Transport Corridor** as well as the Eastern Maritime Corridor, which is the Chennai-Vladivostok Corridor, are being given due consideration.
- He said that the issue of payment needs to be worked out clearly.
- He also referred to the expansion of the network under the scheme of settlement of international trade in Indian Rupees through the Special Rupee Vostro Account System.
- India and Russia are paying special attention to the issues of mutual access of products to the markets of both the countries.
- Russia and the **Eurasian Economic Commission** are trying to speed up negotiations on a free trade agreement with India.

### **International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)**

- It is a multi-modal transport established by **Iran, Russia and India on 12 September 2000 in St Petersburg.**
- It is a **7,200 kilometre long multi-mode network** of shipping, rail and road transport for freight.
- **India, Iran, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Russia, Central Asia and Europe** are involved in the corridor.
- Its main purpose is to **promote transportation cooperation among the Member States.**
- It connects the Indian Ocean to the Caspian Sea via the **Persian Gulf to Russia** and northern Europe.

## **Significance of INSTC**

- It aims to reduce the **cost of movement of goods between India and Russia by about 30 percent** and reduce transit time by more than half.
- It will provide an **alternative connectivity initiative to countries** in the Eurasian region.
- It has the potential to transform countries' **economies into specialized manufacturing, logistics and transit hubs.**
- It opens a sustainable alternative route for India to trade with Afghanistan and Central Asia.

## **About Russia**

- Prime Minister: **Mikhail Mishustin**
- Capital: **Moscow**
- Currency: **Russian ruble**
- President: **Vladimir Putin**
- Official Language: **Russian**