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1. India opens its 16th Visa application center in Bangladesh's Kushtia (April 17, 2023)

India opens its 16th Visa application center in Bangladesh's Kushtia

The **High Commission of India** opened its **16th Visa application center in Kushtia town of Southwestern Bangladesh** on 16th April.

An overview of the news

- The new **Indian Visa Application Center (IVAC) was inaugurated by High Commissioner Pranya Verma.**
- **Mahbubul Alam Hanif**, MP from Kushtia-3 was also present on this occasion.
- This will provide greater ease and convenience to residents of **Kushtia and its surrounding areas** seeking visa services to visit India.
- Continuous efforts are being made to improve visa facilities for the people of Bangladesh.
- The new center will further strengthen people-to-people contact.
- It will serve as a new platform to promote tourism, trade and people-to-people exchanges between India and Bangladesh.
- The High Commission of India operates its largest Visa Operations Center in the world in Bangladesh.
- **Bangladesh accounts for the largest number of foreign tourists in India**, including those availing medical, tourism, business and student visa facilities.
- **In the year 2019-20, more than 16 lakh visas were issued in Dhaka.**

People's Republic of Bangladesh

- Capital: **Dhaka**
- Prime Minister: **Sheikh Hasina Wazed**
- President: **Mohammad Shahabuddin**
- Currency: **Taka**

2. India, Peru hold 2nd Joint Commission Meeting (April 16, 2023)

The **2nd India-Peru Joint Commission Meeting** was held in **New Delhi** on 15th April.

An overview of the news

- In the meeting both sides reviewed their **traditionally friendly relations** and discussed ways to take forward cooperation in areas of mutual interest including trade and investments.
- The meeting was co-chaired by **Saurabh Kumar, Secretary (East)** in the Ministry of External Affairs and **Ignacio Higuera, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Peru.**
- They also discussed **regional and multilateral issues** of current relevance and underlined cooperation between the two countries in multilateral fora and international organizations.
- The two sides also agreed to exchange visits and hold a series of business, cultural, educational and other bilateral events as part of celebrations to mark the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations.

About Peru

- Peru is the **third-largest country in South America after Brazil and Argentina.**
- The **world's largest rainforest, the Amazon covers nearly half of Peru.**
- Capital: **Lima**
- President: **Dina Boluarte**
- Currency: **Nuevo Sol**
- Official Language : **Spanish, Quechua**

3. Bangladesh's capital Dhaka recorded the highest temperature in 58 years (April 16, 2023)

Bangladesh's capital city Dhaka had its hottest day on 15 April in 58 years with the **temperature rising to 40.4 degrees Celsius.**

An overview of the news

- This is the **highest temperature since 1965** when the highest temperature was recorded at **42 degree Celsius.**
- The mid-western city of **Chuadanga** recorded a **maximum temperature of 42.2 degrees** on 15th April.
- Bangladesh experienced its highest temperature of **44.5 degrees at Jashore in 1964.**
- On 15th April, a severe heatwave was experienced in several districts of Bangladesh including **Dhaka, Faridpur, Manikganj, Bagerhat, Pabna, Jashore, Chuadanga, and Kushtia.**

The extraordinary heat wave in Bangladesh continues over large parts of the country.

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4. Army Commanders' Conference to be organized in Hybrid format (April 16, 2023)

The first **Army Commanders' Conference (ACC)** for the year 2023 will be held on the **17th of April in Hybrid format.**

An overview of the news

- The conference is scheduled from **17 to 21 April 2023.**
- For the first time, the ACC is being held in a hybrid format using available technology for secure communication, with the **Army Commander and other senior officers** meeting virtually on the first day.
- On the first day of the conference, the agenda points sponsored by **various Command Headquarters** will be discussed.
- The Forum will also review the progress on the **Agneepath plan, digitization and automation initiatives, Combat Engineers tasks and budget management** as well as activities drawn up as part of the '**Year of Transformation-2023**'.
- The top leadership will also brainstorm on the current and **emerging security scenarios** and review the operational preparedness of the Indian Army.
- Defense Minister **Rajnath Singh** will address the conference on 19 April.
- He will also review the performance of equipment focused on **niche technology, innovation, solutions for surveillance, artificial intelligence, training, robotics and operational logistics.**

About Army Commanders' Conference (ACC)

- It is an **apex-level biannual program** which is an institutional platform for conceptual level discussions.
- In this, important **policy decisions** are taken for the Indian Army.

5. Global Conference on Compressed Biogas (CBG) (April 15, 2023)

According to the **Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas** a two-day **Global Conference on Compressed Biogas** will be held in **New Delhi** from 17 April.

An overview of the news

- The theme of the conference is - **Towards Progressive Policy Framework for a Robust CBG Foundation and Growth.**
- The conference will be held on **17-18 April 2023 at Silver Oak, Indian Habitat Centre, New Delhi.**
- **IFGE- CBG Producers Forum** is organizing this global conference.
- **The objective of the conference** is to appraise the industry about the initiatives taken by the Central Government for the development of compressed biogas industry and identify areas where policy amendments are required.
- Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas and Housing and Urban Affairs **Hardeep Singh Puri** will inaugurate the conference.
- **The topics discussed in the conference are** - Feedstock Availability, CBG Uptake, Fermented Organic Manure, Carbon Credits, Incentives, Investment and Financing for CBG Industry and Biofuel Policies of Various States.

About Indian Federation of Green Energy (IFGE)

- It is an umbrella organization representing the **interests of the national renewable energy sector** in its totality including **bio-energy, solar, wind, mini hydro, tidal, geothermal etc.**
- It is a partnership of visionary and committed groups of stakeholders from diverse industries, trade and services to create a sustainable energy ecosystem and mitigate challenges and concerns.
- It focuses on **green energy with a mission to promote energy security** in a sustainable manner in every area of economic development.

About IFGE : CBG Producer Forum

- This is a dedicated platform for **CBG producers.**
- It aims at training and awareness programs for LOI holders, stakeholders, potential investors including policy support for industry members.

6. Piyush Goyal addresses India - France Business Summit (April 15, 2023)

Piyush Goyal addresses India - France Business Summit

Union Minister of Commerce and Industry **Piyush Goyal** addressed the **India-France Business Summit and CEO Roundtable in Paris, France** on 11 April.

An overview of the news

- The Embassy of India, Paris, France, in association with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), the Mouvement des entreprises de France (MEDEF) and the Indo French Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IFCCI), organised the India - France Business Summit.

Sessions were held on the following topics-

- Building a Green Future
- Critical and Emerging Technologies: The New Strategic Frontier
- Defence Cooperation: Securing a Shared Future Through Atmanirbhar Bharat
- France and India: Springboard to Europe and Indo-Pacific
- CEOs Roundtable

Trade between India and France

- Bilateral trade with France has reached **US\$ 10.75 billion** in the last decade and has shown steady growth. Both sides have taken forward the discussions on the **India-EU Trade and Investment Agreement**.
- Agreements worth **about \$16 billion** have been signed at the trade summit.
- Nearly **1,000 French companies** are present in India while over a hundred Indian businesses have established a presence in France.

India, France bilateral relations

- France is the first country with which India started a **strategic dialogue after its 1998 nuclear tests**.
- Both sides recognized the importance of discussing the **India-EU Trade and Investment Agreement**.
- **In 2005**, an agreement was signed to build **six Scorpene submarines** in India with the help of France.
- There has been an agreement between the Government of **France and India for 36 Rafale aircraft**.

About France

- President: **Emmanuel Macron**
- Prime minister: **Élisabeth Borne**
- Capital: **Paris**
- Currency : **euro**

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8. Minister Purushottam Rupala launches Animal Pandemic Preparedness Initiative (APPI) (April 15, 2023)

Minister Purushottam Rupala launches Animal Epidemic Preparedness Initiative (APPI)

On 14 April, the **Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Purushottam Rupala** launched the **Animal pandemic Preparedness Initiative** to holistically address animal pandemics.

An Overview of the News

- The **initiative aims to enhance the country's preparedness and response to animal pandemics** with a focus on **zoonotic diseases** that pose a threat to both animal and human health.
- The initiative will help in **improving veterinary services** and infrastructure, disease surveillance capabilities and awareness among farmers through community outreach.
- **World Bank funded Animal Health Systems Support for One Health** has also been launched, which aims to create an ecosystem for an improved animal health management system, covering five states.
- India is home to a diverse animal species and the livestock sector plays an important role in the country's economy and food security.
- The **Animal Pandemic Preparedness Initiative** is a proactive step to protect animal resources and ensure the safety and health of people.

About Zoonotic Diseases

- **Definition:** Zoonotic diseases are infections that can be transmitted from animals to humans through various means such as direct contact, consumption of contaminated food or water, inhalation of droplets, or bites from infected animals.
- **Examples:** include rabies, anthrax, Ebola virus, salmonella, Lyme disease, and avian influenza.
- **Causes:** Can be caused by bacteria, viruses, fungi or parasites that are found in the environment or spread by animals.
- **Symptoms:** May include fever, fatigue, headache, muscle aches, diarrhoea, and respiratory symptoms.

9. Bharat Gaurav tourist train flagged off on the occasion of Dr BR Ambedkar's birth anniversary (April 15, 2023)

Bharat Gaurav tourist train flagged off on the occasion of Dr BR Ambedkar's birth anniversary

Union Tourism Minister **G Krishna Reddy** and Social Justice and Empowerment Minister **Dr Virendra Kumar** flagged off the **Bharat Gaurav tourist train** on the occasion of **132nd birth anniversary of Dr BR Ambedkar from Hazrat Nizamuddin Railway Station in New Delhi** on 14 April.

An Overview of the News

- **Bharat Gaurav Tourist Train** will showcase the **rich cultural heritage of India** and the life of BR Ambedkar along with promoting tourism.
- The government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has developed five places associated with Dr. Ambedkar as **Panchatirth**.
- During the 8-day tour, the train will cover cities including **New Delhi, Mhow, Nagpur, Varanasi and holy Buddhist sites like Sanchi, Sarnath, Gaya and Rajgir and Nalanda**.
- The theme-based tourist circuit train, Bharat Gaurav Train, is in line with the Government of India's initiative "**Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat**" and **Dekho Apna Desh to promote domestic tourism**.

Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat:

- It was launched by the Prime Minister on **31 October 2015**, the **140th birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel**, and was later announced in the 2016-17 budget speech of the Finance Minister.
- The objective of the program is **to promote mutual understanding among people of diverse cultures living** in different states and union territories in India.
- Every year, each State/UT will be linked with another State/UT for people-to-people contact. Through this **exchange, the knowledge of language, culture, traditions and practices** of different states will enhance understanding and bonding among them, thereby strengthening the unity and integrity of India.
- The added States/UTs will undertake a mission to enhance their cultural, educational and economic ties by engaging in a wide range of reciprocal activities covering areas such as **music, drama, cuisine, language, history, tourism etc**.

About Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar

- His **132nd birth anniversary** was celebrated as **Ambedkar Jayanti in India on April 14, 2023**.
- He was an **Indian jurist, economist and social reformer**.
- He was the **first Law and Justice Minister** of independent India and the **Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly**.

Some of his notable books:

Annihilation of Caste, Buddha and his Dhamma, Who were the Shudras?, Untouchables: Who were they and why did they become Untouchables?

10. NHAI signs MoU with Nagarjunasagar-Srisaillam Tiger Reserve (April 15, 2023)

NHAI signs MoU with Nagarjunasagar-Srisaillam Tiger Reserve

The **National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)** signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with the **Nagarjunasagar-Srisaillam Tiger Reserve in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.**

An Overview of the News

- The objective of the MoU is to improve the entry process for vehicles entering the forest area by facilitating a seamless and efficient system.
- The initiative proposes a FASTag based **payment system at forest entry points** to avoid long queues and delays.
- The benefit of collection of **Ecosystem Management Coordination Fee through FASTag** will be extended to various entry points of the Tiger Reserve.
- The partnership between the **Highways Management Company of India Limited and the Forest Department** is an important step towards promoting sustainable tourism and conserving natural resources.
- This partnership will help curb vehicular emissions at forest entry points, thereby contributing to environmental protection.

About National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)

- It is an **independent organisation established in 1995** by the Government of India.
- NHAI manages and maintains a vast network of **more than 50,000 km of National Highways across India**, which represents about 40% of the total length of National Highways in the country.
- NHAI is responsible for **maintaining and upgrading the quality of National Highways in India** and ensuring their smooth operation for the benefit of road users.
- As a **nodal agency of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways**, NHAI plays a vital role in formulating policies related to highways and implementing them effectively.

Establishment - **1988**

Headquarters - **New Delhi**

Sector - **Indian National Highway System**

Corporate Address: A102, A Block, Sector 58, Noida, Uttar Pradesh-201301

Objective - **Development and maintenance of National Highways**

Parent Agency - **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways of India**

About Nagarjunasagar-Srisaillam Tiger Reserve

- The Nagarjunasagar-Srisaillam Tiger Reserve, located in **Andhra Pradesh and Telangana**, is the largest tiger reserve in India, covering a total area of **3,728 km (1,439 sq mi)**.
- It was **established in 1983**.
- The tiger reserve is spread over five districts, which are **Nandyal, Prakasam, Palnadu, Nalgonda and Mehboob Nagar**.
- The tiger reserve is located inside the **Nallamala forest area**, which is known for its rich biodiversity and diverse flora and fauna.