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1. NASA announces four-member team of astronauts to travel to the Moon (April 4, 2023)

NASA announces four-member team of astronauts to travel to the Moon

For the first time in five decades, **NASA** announced a team of **four astronauts for its human spaceflight mission to the Moon.**

An overview of the news

- The team of **four astronauts will fly around the moon for a 10-day mission next year.**
- NASA has announced the four astronauts who will go to lunar orbit and return with the Artemis 2 mission.

Who are these Artemis 2 astronauts?

- These four Artemis 2 astronauts are - **Reid Wiseman, Victor Glover, Jeremy Hansen and Christina Koch.**
- NASA's **Reid Wiseman** will be the commander of the **Artemis 2 mission.**
- **Victor Glover** will serve as the **pilot for Artemis 2.** Glover was previously the pilot of NASA's SpaceX Crew-1 mission.
- **Jeremy Hansen** will represent the **Canadian Space Agency** during the mission.
- NASA astronaut **Christina Koch** will be the **mission specialist for Artemis 3.**
- Koch visited the space station in 2019, where she was part of the first all-woman spacewalk in history.
- The Artemis II flight team will have three American and one Canadian astronauts, the first since the historic Apollo mission ended in 1972.

Artemis 2 mission

- The Artemis 1 mission will allow NASA to test the foundation of its **latest human space exploration capabilities.**
- This includes the **Space Launch System (SLS) rocket, the Orion spacecraft, and all associated ground systems.**
- Artemis 2 will be the first crewed mission to test all of these.

About NASA

- NASA was formed under the **National Aeronautics and Space Act** on July 19, 1948, in place of its predecessor, the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA).

- NASA - **National Aeronautics and Space Administration**
- Headquarters- **Washington D.C.**
- Administrator - **Bill Nelson**

2. 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**

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4. 5th International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (April 4, 2023)

5th International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure

The Prime Minister, **Narendra Modi** on 4 April addressed the **5th International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (ICDRI) 2023** via a video message.

An overview of the news

- He called upon the world for an **integrated approach to deal with the impact of disasters.**
- The PM pointed out that in a few years, more than **40 countries have become part of the CDRI.**
- The summit is becoming an important forum for both advanced economies and developing economies, large and small countries.
- CDRI's **theme** for this year's conference is '**Delivering Resilient and Inclusive Infrastructure**'.
- Last year, the **Infrastructure Resilience Accelerator Fund** was announced and this **50 million-dollar fund** has generated immense interest among developing countries.

About Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)

- **India officially launched the CDRI on 23 September 2019 at the 2019 United Nations Climate Action Summit in New York.**

- It is an international coalition of countries, United Nations agencies, multilateral development banks, the private sector and academic institutions.
- Its aim is to **promote disaster-resilient infrastructure.**
- Headquarters: **New Delhi, India (Interim Secretariat)**
- Founder countries - **India, Australia, Bhutan, Fiji, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Maldives, Mexico, Mongolia, Rwanda, Sri Lanka and the United Kingdom. (13 countries).**

5. Bandipur completes 50 years as a Project Tiger Reserve (April 4, 2023)

Bandipur completes 50 years as a Project Tiger Reserve

Bandipur completed **50 years as a Project Tiger Reserve** 1 April 2023.

About Bandipur Tiger Reserve

- This reserve is located in the state of **Karnataka** and is **spread over an area of 912.04 sq km.**
- It is located in two districts of Karnataka, **Mysore and Chamarajanagar.**
- It is considered **one of the world's premier tiger habitats** and is an important component of the **country's first biosphere reserve - the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve.**
- It was launched by the then Prime Minister **Indira Gandhi in 1973** with the aim of arresting the decline in the tiger population.
- Bandipur was **one of the first nine sanctuaries** to be brought under the flagship program of **Project Tiger in 1973.**
- **Bandipur Tiger Reserve is surrounded by-**
 1. Nagarhole Tiger Reserve (Tamil Nadu) in the North West (Kabini Reservoir separates the two).
 2. Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (Tamil Nadu) in the South.
 3. Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary (Kerala) in the South West.

Project Tiger

- Project Tiger was started by the **Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in the year 1973.**
- Under this program, **central assistance** is provided to the states having tiger populations for conservation of tigers.

- The initial reserves covered under Project Tiger were **Jim Corbett, Manas, Ranthambore, Simlipal, Bandipur, Palamu, Sundarbans, Melghata and Kanha National Parks.**
- At the time of the launch of Project Tiger in the year 1973, there were only **9 Tiger Reserves** in the country, at present the total number of **Tiger Reserves in the country has increased to 54.**

Other Tiger Reserves in Karnataka

- Bhadra Tiger Reserve
- Nagarahole Tiger Reserve
- Dandeli-Anshi Tiger Reserve

6. India and Romania sign agreement for 'Practical Cooperation between Armed Forces' (April 3, 2023)

India and Romania signed a defence agreement during a meeting between **Romania's Deputy Defense Minister Simona Cojocaru and India's Defense Secretary Giridhar Aramane in New Delhi.**

An Overview of the News

- This agreement is the **first defence cooperation agreement** between the two countries and is a practical cooperation between the armed forces of India and Romania.
- The defence pact represents the basis for the establishment and expansion of military relations between the two countries. It will provide more opportunities to work together in various fields such as military education, training, cyber defence, military medicine, military history and other areas that can benefit both the countries.
- Representatives from the **Romanian Institute for Political Studies of Defense and Military History** are part of the delegation accompanying Cojocaru, and they are set to collaborate with the Indian Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses.
- Romania and India have worked together in multinational environments such as UN missions, and both countries are making important contributions to enhancing stability and strengthening peace and security in regions marked by the horrors of war.

About Romania

- It is located in **southeastern Europe, bordering Hungary, Ukraine, Moldova, Bulgaria, and the Black Sea.**
- Its rich history includes influences from the Roman Empire, the Ottoman Empire and the Soviet Union. **It gained independence in 1877** and became a **republic in 1947 after World War II.**

- Most Romanians are **Orthodox Christians**, but there are also populations of **Catholics, Protestants and Muslims**.
- The economy is mixed with manufacturing, agriculture and services as its main industries.

President - **Klaus Iohannis**

Capital - **Bucharest**

Official languages - **Romanian, Romanian Sign Language**

Government - **republic, unitary state, parliamentary republic, semi-presidential system**

Continent - **Europe**

Currency - **Romanian leu**

7. OPEC members announce cut in oil production exceeding one million barrels per day from next month (April 3, 2023)

OPEC members announce cut in oil production exceeding one million barrels per day from next month

On April 2, **Saudi Arabia and other OPEC Plus members** announced that they would further **reduce oil production amounting to around 1.16 million barrels per day**.

An overview of the news

- The move is aimed at **bringing stability to the market**.
- The announcement was made at a **virtual meeting of the OPEC Plus ministerial panel**.
- The unexpected cuts announced by **Saudi Arabia, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Algeria and Oman** will begin in May and last until the end of the year.
- This would be the **biggest reduction** since oil producers cut two million barrels per day in October 2022.
- The move follows a drop in oil prices last month (down to \$70 a barrel) and concerns that the global banking crisis could hit demand.

Production cuts announced by OPEC Plus members, as per their official statements-

- **Russia** - 500,000 bpd
- **Saudi Arabia** -500,000 bpd
- **UAE** - 144,000 bpd

- **Kuwait** - 128,000 bpd
- **Kazakhstan** - 78,000 bpd
- **Algeria** - 48,000 bpd
- **Oman** - 40,000 bpd

About OPEC

- The **Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)** is a **permanent, intergovernmental organisation** that was **established in 1960** at the **Baghdad Conference** by **Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela**.
- The purpose of this organisation is to coordinate and integrate the petroleum policies of its member countries and to ensure the stabilisation of oil markets to ensure efficient, economic and regular supply of petroleum to the consumer.
- Headquarters - **Vienna (Austria)**.
- Member Countries (15)- **Algeria, Angola, Congo, Ecuador, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, IR Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Venezuela**.

OPEC plus

- It is a coalition of OPEC members and the **world's 10 major non-OPEC oil exporting countries**.
- **Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Brunei, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mexico, Oman, Russia, South Sudan and Sudan**.

8. India, Malaysia can now trade in Indian rupee (April 3, 2023)

The **Ministry of External Affairs** announced on 1 April that **India and Malaysia have agreed to settle trade in the Indian rupee**.

An overview of the news

- In July 2022, the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** allowed settlement of **international trade in Indian currency**.
- This step has been taken only after this **decision of the RBI**.
- According to the Ministry of External Affairs, **trade between India and Malaysia** can now be **settled in Indian Rupee (INR)** in addition to the existing methods of settlement in other currencies.
- The RBI initiative is aimed at **facilitating trade growth and supporting the interests** of the global trading community in the Indian Rupee.

- **Kuala Lumpur-based India International Bank of Malaysia (IIBM)** has introduced this system in India by opening a special Rupee Vostro account through Union Bank of India.
- Vostro accounts are used to make payments in domestic currency.

What is a Vostro Account?

- Vostro is a Latin word meaning "**your**", hence, Vostro Account means "**your account**".
- Vostro account is defined as an account maintained by a **correspondent bank on behalf of another bank**.
- For example **HSBC's Vostro account is being handled by SBI in India**.
- A Vostro account is established to enable a foreign correspondent bank to act as an agent or provide services as an intermediary for a domestic bank.

About Malaysia

- Prime Minister - **Anwar Ibrahim**
- Capital - **Kuala Lumpur**
- Currency - **Malaysian ringgit**
- Official Language - **Malay**
- Official Religion - **Islam**

9. PM Modi invited to France for Bastille Day parade (April 3, 2023)

France has invited Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** to visit **Paris** as a **guest at the annual Bastille Day parade** in July.

About Bastille Day Parade

- The **National Day of France**, also known as **Bastille Day**, is celebrated every year on **14 July**.
- Known in French as **La Fête Nationale or Le 14 Juillet**, the day is celebrated with fireworks and parades.
- This day is considered as one of the **most important days in the history of France**.
- It marks the fall of the Bastille, a military fortress and political prison, which was then considered a symbol of the monarchy and the Armory.

About Bastille Day Parade

- The Bastille Day military parade is a **French military parade** held on the morning of **14 July each year in Paris since 1880**.
- It is one of the **oldest regular military parades** in the world.
- The fall of the **Bastille on July 14, 1789** is widely regarded as the beginning of the **French Revolution**.
- The Bastille was a fortress prison located in the heart of Paris, which became a symbol of royal tyranny and oppression.

10. MOIL Limited records 2nd highest Production since inception in FY'23 (April 3, 2023)

capital expenditure of Rs 245 crore in FY23, which is 14% higher than FY2021-22.

MOIL Limited has registered its **second highest production** since inception with **production of 13.02 lakh tonnes of manganese (Mn) ore** in the financial year 2022-23, registering a **growth of 6% over the previous year**.

An overview of the news

- The company has also achieved a **capital expenditure of Rs 245 crore** in FY23, which is **14% higher than FY2021-22**.
- MOIL has achieved the best ever exploratory core drilling of **41,762 meters in FY23, which is 2.7 times** the average exploration achieved in the last 5 years.
- The sales turnover of **electrolytic manganese dioxide (EMD)** reached a new high, **more than 2 times** that of the previous year.
- **EMD is a 100% import** substitution product, mostly used for manufacturing of pharmaceuticals and batteries.

About MOIL

- MOIL is a **Schedule "A" Miniratna Category-I Company** under the **Union Ministry of Steel**.
- It was originally incorporated as **Manganese Ore (India) Limited in 1962** and its name was changed to **MOIL Limited during 2010-11**.
- The company operates **11 manganese ore mines in India**. It has **7 mines** located in the **Nagpur and Bhandara** districts of Maharashtra and **four in the Balaghat district of Madhya Pradesh**.
- At present the Government of India **owns 53.35% shares** in the company, **Government of Maharashtra (5.96%), Government of Madhya Pradesh (5.38%) and Public (35.31%)**.

- Headquarter: **Nagpur, Maharashtra**
- CMD MOIL Limited : **Ajit Kumar Saxena**