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1. India elected as Chair of the Association of Asian Election Authorities (AAEA) for 2022-24 (May 11, 2022)

India has been unanimously elected as the new Chair of the Association of Asian Election Authorities (AAEA) for 2022-2024 at the recently held meeting of the Executive board and General Assembly at Manila, Philippines.

- The Election Commission, Manila was the current chairman of the AAEA.
- The new members in the Executive Board now include Russia, Uzbekistan, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Taiwan and Philippines.
- The Election Commission of India's three-member delegation headed by deputy election commissioner Nitesh Vyas, along with CEO Manipur Rajesh Agrawal and CEO Rajasthan Praveen Gupta, attended the executive board meeting in Manila.
- 62 officials from 12 AAEA members participated in the 3rd International Virtual Election Visitors Programme (IEVP) hosted by ECI during Assembly Elections in 2022.
- **About AAEA**
- The AAEA provides a non-partisan forum in the Asian region for sharing experiences and best practices among election authorities.
- It discusses and acts upon ways to promote open and transparent elections.
- The objective to do so is to support good governance and democracy.
- AAEA is also an Associate Member of the 118 member Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB).
- It was established in pursuance of the resolution passed by participants of the Symposium on Asian Elections in the Twenty First Century held from January 26-29, 1997 in Manila, Philippines.
- It was established in 1998.
- Currently 20 Asian EMBs are members of AAEA.

2. State of the World's Birds Report (May 11, 2022)

According to the State of the World's Birds report, populations of 48% of all bird species are declining globally, mainly due to man-made factors such as loss or degradation of habitats, changes in land use, overexploitation and climate change.

- The report is published by Manchester Metropolitan University.
- It is a study of changes in the biodiversity of birds and describes the risk to birds around the world.

- The study draws from BirdLife International's latest assessment of all birds for the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List.

- **Key findings of the study**

- The study found that 5,245 of the extant bird species worldwide, or about 48%, are in decline or are suspected to be in decline.
- 4,295 or 39% of the species have stable trends.
- About 7% or 778 species have increasing population trends.
- The study indicates that 1,481 or 13.5% of species are currently threatened with extinction globally.
- More threatened bird species (86.4%) have been found in tropical regions than in temperate latitudes (31.7%).
- The main hotspots are tropical Andes, southeast Brazil, eastern Himalayas, eastern Madagascar, and Southeast Asian islands.

3. Monkeypox virus case confirmed in U.K. (May 10, 2022)

A case of monkeypox virus has been reported in Britain, a person who returned after travelling to Nigeria has been confirmed with monkeypox virus.

- Monkeypox was first discovered in 1958.
- According to the World Health Organisation, the first case of monkeypox was reported in humans in the year 1970.

- **What is monkeypox virus ?**

- Monkeypox is a disease caused by a virus that is transmitted mostly from rats and monkeys to humans.
- The disease belongs to the orthopoxvirus genus, which includes variola virus, vaccinia virus, and cowpox virus.
- Monkeypox is a zoonosis, meaning it is a disease that spreads from an infected animal to humans.

- **Symptoms of monkeypox**

- Dark red spots on the body.
- Red rash on the skin.
- flu symptoms.
- symptoms of pneumonia.
- Fever and headache.
- Muscle pain.

- To get cold
- **treatment**

- There is no cure available for this disease. But smallpox vaccines, antivirals and VIG can be used to prevent this disease.

4. G7 countries pledge to phase out imports of Russian oil (May 9, 2022)

The Group of Seven (G7) countries have pledged to ban or phase out Russian oil imports over the Ukraine dispute.

- The announcement came as the G7 held its third meeting this year via video conference, which was also attended by Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky.
- The meeting was called to discuss support for Ukraine, and additional measures against Moscow, including on energy.
- G7 leaders have personally criticised President Vladimir Putin for his actions in Ukraine.
- The leaders celebrated the end of World War II in Europe following the surrender of German forces to the Allied Powers on 9 May 1945.
- Russia has been accused of violating international rules-based order, in particular the United Nations Charter.
- All participants were called upon to join the G7's support for the Ukrainian people and refugees and help rebuild Ukraine.

- **About G7**

- The G7 or the Group of Seven is a group of the seven most advanced economies.
- The seven countries are Canada, the USA, UK, France, Germany, Japan and Italy.
- It was formed in 1975.
- G7 countries meet annually to discuss issues of common interest like global economic governance, international security and energy policy.
- All the G7 countries and India are a part of G20.
- The G7 does not have a fixed headquarters.
- The UK currently chairs the G7 and has invited India along with Australia, the Republic of Korea and South Africa as guest countries for the G7 summit.

5. Sri Lankan president declares state of emergency for second time (May 7, 2022)

Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa declared a state of emergency for the second time in five weeks on 6 May. Extensive powers have been given to the security forces.

- Trade Unions halted public transport, blaming Rajapaksa for the economic crisis.
- There has been unrest in Sri Lanka for several weeks due to the economic crisis.
- As street protests intensified in Sri Lanka, Gotabaya first declared a state of emergency on 1 April, as citizens went through an economic crunch for food, fuel and medicines.
- **Process of declaring an Emergency in Sri Lanka**
- The power to declare a state of Emergency is vested in the President.
- It is imposed under Article 155 of the Constitution of Sri Lanka.
- The Public Security Ordinance (PSO) of 1947 provides the legal framework for a proclamation of emergency.
- Under the Ordinance, a state of emergency may be declared "where the President is of the opinion that it is expedient to do so in the interest of public safety and the preservation of public order."
- Emergency rules are valid for one month, but the President must seek ratification every 14 days for proclamations or extensions beyond one month.
- **Causes of economic crisis in Srilanka**
- Organic agricultural policy cut the government's tax revenue.
- Policy failure
- COVID-19 hit Sri Lanka's key foreign revenue earning sectors
- Fast draining foreign reserves, a glaring trade deficit, and a related Balance of Payments problem.
- Huge foreign loan and the drop in domestic production
- The value of the Sri Lankan rupee has fallen to 300 against the US dollar, putting importers in trouble.

6. Ukraine and Britain (UK) have signed a preferential trade agreement (May 6, 2022)

Ukraine and Britain (UK) have signed a preferential trade agreement for the abolition of import duties and tariff quotas.

- By signing this agreement Ukraine and the UK have legally abolished import duties and tariff quotas in bilateral trade.
- The Preferential Trade Agreement will be valid for 12 months.
- The agreement is set to promote exports of high value-added goods such as flour, cereals, dairy products, poultry, tomato paste, honey, corn, wheat, juice, mushrooms and sugar from Ukraine.

- Recently the European Union also decided to abolish tariffs and quotas on Ukrainian industrial goods and food items.

- **About Ukraine-**

- Ukraine is a country located in Eastern Europe. It borders Russia in the east, Belarus, Poland, Slovakia in the north, Hungary in the west, Romania in the south and Moldova and the Black Sea in the south and the Black Sea and Azov Sea.
- Capital - Kyiv
- President- Volodymyr Zelensky
- Prime Minister- Volodymyr Groysman
- currency - hryvnia

7. North Korea fires ballistic missile (May 5, 2022)

North Korea has test fired an intercontinental ballistic missile. Regarding the test of this missile, Kim Jong Un, describing it as a display of his nuclear power, said that it has been prepared to prevent any kind of military action from the US.

- Pyongyang, which is the nuclear arsenal of North Korea, has conducted 14 weapons tests since January, including firing an intercontinental ballistic missile at full-range for the first time since 2017.
- Last week, Kim oversaw a huge military parade, vowed to rapidly expand and improve his nuclear arsenal, and warned of possible attacks.
- North Korea fired the ballistic missile from the Sunan Airfield near Pyongyang, the site of recent ICBM tests.
- The missile flew 470KM (300 miles) and reached an altitude of 780KM, it was a "blatant violation of UN Security Council resolutions."
- The name of this intercontinental missile of North Korea is known as Hwasong-17.
- This ballistic missile is the largest liquid-fueled missile ever launched by any country from a road mobile launcher.

- **About Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs)**

- It is a land-based, nuclear-armed ballistic missile with a range of more than 5,600 km.
- The first ICBMs were deployed by the Soviet Union in 1958, the US followed the next year.
- India, Russia, the United States, China, Israel, the United Kingdom, France and North Korea are the only countries that have ICBMs.

8. India will be the official country of honour at Cannes Film Market (May 4, 2022)

India will take part as the official country of honour at the Cannes Film Festival to be held from May 17 to May 28.

- This is the first time a country will take part in the 'Honour of Country' at the Cannes Film Festival.
- The Cannes Film Festival, held annually in Cannes, France, is the 75th edition of Cannes.
- **India at Cannes Film Festival 2022-**
- India's Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Singh Thakur will participate in the festival and deliver the welcome address.
- Actress Deepika Padukone will be seen as a jury in the main feature film competition at this year's Cannes Festival.
- Renowned Indian author Satyajit Ray's "Pratidwandi" (1970) and Aravindan Govindan's "The Circus Tent" will be screened at the Cannes Classics strand of the festival.
- In addition, the festival will also see a special screening of Indian filmmaker Shaunak Sen's Sundance Grand Jury Prize winner "All That Breathes".

9. 4th edition of the International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (May 4, 2022)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi today addressed the inaugural session of the 4th edition of the International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (ICDRI) via video message.

- The fourth edition of ICDRI was organised in a hybrid format in New Delhi from 4-6 May 2022.
- ICDRI 2022 will engage with decision makers, practitioners and communities around the world to discuss challenges, identify good practices, develop collaborations and promote concrete actions.
- This will include multi-sectoral and multi-country discussions around ecologically sensitive design for infrastructure transition, risk governance and finance, innovation and building human-centred, resilient.
- **About ICDRI**
- The International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (ICDRI) is the annual conference of the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI).
- It brings together member states, organisations and institutions to strengthen global discussion on disaster and climate resilient infrastructure.
- In 2018 and 2019, the first and second international workshops on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure took place in New Delhi, India.
- ICDRI 2021 was hosted virtually.

10. World Press Freedom Index : India slips to 150th position from 142nd (May 4, 2022)

India's ranking in the World Press Freedom Index has fallen down to 150th position from last year's 142nd rank out of 180 countries.

Highlights of the 2022 report**• Best performing countries**

1. Norway- 1st
2. Denmark- 2nd
3. Sweden- 3rd
4. Estonia- 4th
5. Finland- 5th

• Worst performing countries

- North Korea remained at the bottom of the list.
- Russia is placed at 155th position, slipping from 150th last year.
- According to the global media watchdog, China climbed two places to the 175th position, from 177th place last year.

• Performance of India; neighbourhood countries

- Apart from India, the ranking of its neighbouring countries has also declined except Nepal.
- While Pakistan is ranked 157th, Sri Lanka is at 146th, Bangladesh at 162nd and Myanmar at 176th.

• About Press Freedom Index

- It has been published by Reporters Without Borders every year since 2002.
- This is based on the organisation's own assessment of countries' press freedom records in the last year.
- The index ranks 180 countries and territories according to the level of freedom available to journalists.
- The index is prepared on the basis of assessment of the level of pluralism, media freedom, media environment and self-censorship, legal framework, transparency as well as the quality of the existing infrastructure for news and information.