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1. India and Luxembourg release joint Commemorative Postage Stamp (March 16, 2023)

India and Luxembourg celebrating **75 years of friendship** on March 15, 2023. To mark the occasion, both the countries launched a **joint Commemorative Postage Stamp**.

An Overview of the News

- The Postage Stamp symbolises the **long standing and strong ties between India and Luxembourg**.
- Both the countries have been cooperating in the steel sector for the **last 20 years**.
- The **Paul Worth company of Luxembourg** has been working in India for the last two decades under this collaboration.
- In **November 2015**, Luxembourg hosted the **12th Asia-Europe Foreign Ministers' Meeting**.
- The partnership between India and Luxembourg in various fields reflects their commitment to strengthen their friendship and explore future opportunities for cooperation.

About Luxembourg

- Luxembourg is a small nation located in **Europe and shares borders with Belgium, France, and Germany**.
- **In 1994, Luxembourg City** was recognized as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**.
- From 2013 to 2014, Luxembourg served on the **United Nations Security Council for the first time**.
- Prime Minister - **Xavier Bettel**
- Currency - **Euro**
- Official languages - **Luxembourgish, French, German**

2. 2.18 Crore pucca houses completed till 11th March under Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin (March 16, 2023)

2.18 Crore pucca houses completed till 11th March under Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin

According to the government, **2 crore 18 lakh pucca houses** have been **built till March 11, 2023**, under the **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G)**.

An overview of the news

- In a written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for Rural Development **Sadhvi Niranjan Jyoti** said that under the scheme, states and union territories have **already sanctioned 2.85 crore pucca houses to the beneficiaries.**
- Out of these, a total of **two crore 94 lakh houses have been allotted** to the beneficiaries.
- The government has set a target of constructing **two crore 95 lakh pucca houses** with basic facilities by March 2024.

About Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana

- The **Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation** launched the **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana rural in 2016.**
- The scheme was initiated with the objective of '**Housing for All by 2022**'.
- The scheme has 2 Components - **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) and Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Rural).**
- Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Gramin was earlier called **Indira Awas Yojana** which was renamed in **March 2016.**

3. PM Modi greets Sikh community on commencement of Nanakshahi Sammat 555 (March 16, 2023)

Narendra Modi has congratulated the Sikh community across the world on the launch of Nanakshahi Sammat 555.

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** has congratulated the **Sikh community** across the world on the launch of **Nanakshahi Sammat 555.**

About Nanakshahi Sammat 555

- It is a calendar system that was introduced by the **Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) in 2003.**
- It is named after the founder of **Sikhism, Guru Nanak Dev Ji**, on his **500th birth anniversary.**
- It is a **tropical solar calendar** used in Sikhism.
- This calendar is used by Sikhs around the world to mark important dates and festivals in the Sikh calendar, including the birth anniversaries of the ten **Sikh Gurus, the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev, and the anniversary of the establishment of the Khalsa Panth.**
- The year begins with the month of Chet, which falls on **14 March.**

4. US recognizes McMahon Line as international border (March 16, 2023)

The United States has recognized the **McMahon Line** as the **international boundary between Arunachal Pradesh and China** in a recently passed **bipartisan resolution**, calling it an **"integral part of India"**.

An overview of the news

- The resolution rejected Beijing's claim that the northeastern state Arunachal Pradesh falls under Chinese territory.
- In addition to recognizing the McMahon Line, the resolution also condemned **Chinese provocations in the region**, including the use of military force by China to change the status quo at the Line of Actual Control.
- The resolution also condemned the construction of villages in disputed areas, the publication of maps of cities in Arunachal Pradesh, and the expansion of Beijing's territorial claims on Bhutan.
- The resolution, titled '**Reaffirmation of Arunachal Pradesh as Indian territory and condemnation of China's provocative activities in South Asia**', came after a major clash between the Indian and Chinese forces in **Arunachal's Tawang** in December last year.

What is the McMahon Line?

- **India and China** share a **3,500 km long border which is disputed**.
- The line that delineates the **boundary between the two countries is called the McMahon Line**.
- The border of India and China can be divided into three parts. **Western Zone, Central Zone and Eastern Zone**.
- The line separating India and China is the McMahon Line although **China considers the McMahon Line illegal**.
- The McMahon Line was drawn during the **Simla Convention of 1914**, officially described as a convention between Great Britain, China and Tibet.

5. Govt introduces bill in Lok Sabha to strengthen tri-services commanders' powers (March 16, 2023)

Govt introduces bill in Lok Sabha to strengthen tri-services commanders' powers

The **Defense Ministry introduced a bill in Parliament** on March 15, giving the **three service chiefs disciplinary powers** over all personnel of the three forces serving under them.

An overview of the news

- The name of the bill is "**Inter-Services Organisations (Command, Control and Discipline) Bill, 2023**".
- Minister of State for Defense **Ajay Bhatt** introduced the bill.
- The Bill seeks to empower the **Commander-in-Chief or the Officer-in-Command of Inter-Services Organizations** for the maintenance of discipline and proper discharge of their duties in relation to service personnel.
- According to the bill, the central government can constitute an **Inter-Services Organization** through a notification.
- Presently the **Indian Air Force, Army and Navy** are governed by the **Air Force Act, 1950, the Army Act, 1950 and the Navy Act, 1957** respectively.
- Therefore, only the officers of these three armed forces are given **disciplinary powers**.
- This has implications for the inter-service organizations of the services, such as the **Andaman and Nicobar Command, the Defense Space Agency and joint training establishments such as the National Defense Academy (NDA)**.
- Therefore, the Command-in-Chief or Officer-in-Command of such military organizations does not get disciplinary and administrative powers when attached to other services.

6. Green national highway corridor project to be implemented in four states (March 16, 2023)

India and the World Bank have signed a **loan agreement for the construction of the Green National Highway Corridors Project (GNHCP) in four States**.

An overview of the news

- These four states are- **Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh**.
- Agreement has been signed for construction of **781 kilometer green national highway corridor** in these states with a line of credit of \$500 million.
- Road Transport and Highways Minister **Nitin Gadkari** gave this information in a written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha on March 15.

About Green National Highways Corridor Project

- It will assist the **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH)** to construct 781 km of highways.
- It will integrate safe and green technology designs such as **local and marginal materials, industrial by-products** and other bioengineering solutions.
- It will also support the **Bharatmala Pariyojana programme**.

Components of the project

- Sustainable development and maintenance of National Highways.
- Institutional Capacity Enhancement and Road Safety.
- Research and Development.

Objective of GNHCP

- To demonstrate safe and green highways keeping in mind climate resilience and use of green technologies by incorporating provisions for conservation of natural resources, use of cement-treated reclaimed asphalt pavement.
- Use of local/marginal materials such as lime, fly ash, waste plastic, bio-engineering measures such as hydroseeding, coco/jute fibre, etc.
- It will enhance the capacity of the Ministry to mainstream green technologies.

7. Denmark becomes the first country in the world to import CO2 and store it under the sea (March 15, 2023)

Denmark has launched a project to store carbon dioxide 1,800 metres below the North Sea,

Denmark has launched a project to store carbon dioxide 1,800 metres below the North Sea, making it the **first country in the world to bury CO2 imported** from another country.

News Overview

- **CO2 burial project**, where carbon is injected into the site of an old oil field to prevent further warming of the atmosphere.
- The project is called "**Greensand**" and is being led by **British chemical Giant Ineos and German oil company Wintershall Dia**.
- The project aims to store **eight million tonnes of CO2 per year by 2030**.
- The **North Sea was chosen for the project** because it already has pipelines and potential storage sites due to decades of oil and gas production.
- According to the **European Environment Agency (EEA)**, EU member states released **3.7 billion tonnes of greenhouse gases in 2020 alone**.

About Denmark

- Capital - **Copenhagen**
- Prime Minister - **Mette Frederiksen**
- Official name - **Kingdom of Denmark**
- Official language - **Danish**

- Currency - **Krone**
- Form of Government - **constitutional monarchy**

8. India world's largest arms importer: SIPRI report 2023 (March 15, 2023)

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's (SIPRI) 2023 report, India will become the world's leading arms importer in 2022.

According to the **Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's (SIPRI) 2023 report, India will become the world's leading arms importer in 2022.**

News Overview

- According to this report, between the years 2013-17 and 2018-22, **India's arms imports have decreased by 11 percent.**
- According to the report's findings, over the past five years, the **US had the world's largest military expenditure**, accounting for **40%** of the global share, followed by **Russia (16%), and France (11%).**

About SIPRI

- The **Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)** is a global non-profit research institute.
- SIPRI focuses on **resolving conflicts, controlling arms and promoting disarmament.**
- The institute provides data, analysis and advice regarding armed conflicts, military expenditure and the arms trade.
- Establishment - **6 May 1966**
- Founders - **Tage Erlander, Alva Myrdal**
- Chairman - **Stefan Lofven**
- Director - **Dan Smith**
- Headquarter - **Solna**

9. Tim Mayopoulos has been appointed CEO of Silicon Valley Bank by the FDIC (March 15, 2023)

Tim Mayopoulos, the **former CEO of Fannie Mae**, has been selected by the **Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC)** as the **CEO of Silicon Valley Bank**, a subsidiary of the defunct SVB Financial Group.

News Overview

- Prior to joining StartupBlend, Mayopoulos was CEO of mortgage financier Fannie Mae for more than six years.

About Silicon Valley Bank

- Establishment - **1983**
- Founder - **Roger V Smith**
- President - **Gregory W. Baker**
- Headquarters - **Santa Clara, California (United States)**

About the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC)

- Formed - **1933**
- Jurisdiction - **United States federal government**
- Founder - **Franklin D. Roosevelt**
- Headquarters - **Washington, D.C. (United States)**

10. Atal Innovation Mission launches ATL Sarthi to strengthen ecosystem of Atal Tinkering Labs (March 15, 2023)

NITI Aayog on 14 March launched 'ATL Sarthi',

Atal Innovation Mission - NITI Aayog on 14 March launched '**ATL Sarthi**', a comprehensive self-monitoring framework to strengthen the ecosystem of Atal Tinkering Labs (ATL).

An overview of the news

- Atal Innovation Mission is setting up Atal Tinkering Labs in schools across the country to foster curiosity, creativity and imagination in young minds.
- Atal Tinkering Labs **Sarathi** will act as a charioteer and enable Atal Tinkering Labs to be efficient and effective.
- **ATL Sarthi** will provide a monitoring and evaluation framework to enhance the performance of Atal Tinkering Labs.

Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)

- This is an important initiative taken by the Government of India to promote the culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the country.

Objective of AIM

- Developing new programs and policies to **promote innovation in various sectors of the economy.**
- Providing forums and opportunities for collaboration for various stakeholders.
- To create an umbrella structure to create awareness and monitor the innovation ecosystem of the country.
- Mission Director AIM - **Dr Chintan Vaishnav**

Atal Tinkering Labs

- The **Atal Innovation Mission** has set up **Atal Tinkering Laboratories (ATL)** in schools across India.
- The scheme aims to foster curiosity, creativity and imagination in young minds.
- It develops skills like design mindset, computational thinking, adaptive learning, physical computing etc.