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1. Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi invited to be the chief guest of the Republic day 2023 (Nov. 25, 2022)

chief guest of the Republic day 2023

The Indian government has invited [Egyptian](#) President **Abdel Fattah el-Sisi** as the chief guest for the Republic day parade 2022. He will be the first Egyptian leader to be hosted by India for the Republic Day celebrations. Abdel Fattah Sisi is a former Army officer who was elected as the president of Egypt in 2014 and was re-elected in 2018. The last foreign chief guest was the Brazilian President **Jair Bolsonaro** in 2020.

About Republic Day Celebration

Every year Republic day is observed on 26 January. It was on this day the constitution of India was promulgated in 1950 and India became a republic.

The President of India presides over the Republic day functions. It is customary to invite a foreign country leader as an honoured guest at the Republic day function.

Some important facts to remember:

Duration of the Republic day celebration

Earlier, the Republic day celebration started on 24 January and ended on 29 January. However from this year (2022) the government has decided to start the Republic day celebration from **23 January** and end on **30 January**.

23 January is celebrated as **Parakram Diwas** to mark the birth anniversary of Subhash Chandra Bose and 30 January is the **Martyr's day** to mark the assassination of Gandhiji.

Place of the Republic day celebration

Between 1950 and 1954, Republic Day celebrations were organized at different venues like Irwin Stadium, Kingsway, Red Fort and Ramlila Grounds in Delhi.

In **1955 Rajpath** (Now Kartavya Path) became the permanent place for the Republic day parade.

The chief Guest was the Governor-General of Pakistan **Malik Ghulam Muhammad**.

President of Indonesia, Sukarno was the first guest at 1950 Republic day parade.

Chief Guest of the Republic Day parade

The **first chief guest** of the Republic day parade was the former President of Indonesia **Sukarno** in 1950.

Only once has an **American President** been the chief guest at the Republic day parade. The first black President of the United States **Barack Obama** was the chief guest at the 2015 Republic day parade.

The **first women chief guest** was Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom in 1961.

Two **Nobel Prize winners** have been the chief guest of the Republic day parade. The first black President of South Africa, Nelson **Mandel** was the chief guest at the 1995 Republic day function. He won the Nobel peace prize in 1993.

The other Nobel Prize winner who was a chief guest at Republic day was **Aung San Suu Kyi** of Myanmar who won the Nobel peace prize in 1991.

There were **no foreign chief guests** in the years 1952, 1953, 1966, 2021, 2022 due to various reason.

Which ministry organises the Republic day functions?

The Republic day function is organized by the **Union Ministry of Defence**.

2. External Affairs minister S.Jaishankar to visit Egypt on his first official tour (Oct. 13, 2022)

According to the Ministry of External Affairs, External Affairs Minister **Dr S.Jaishankar** will be on his **first official visit** to Egypt from 15-16 October 2022. He is going there on the invitation of Egypt's Foreign minister **Sameh Hassan Shoukry**. According to the ministry both the leaders will discuss a range of bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual interest.

India and Egypt traditionally enjoy warm and friendly relations underpinned by historical and cultural linkages. India is trying to deepen its relation with Egypt.

Recently in the month of September Defence minister [Rajnath Singh](#) was on a visit to Egypt to deepen defence ties.

Both countries are celebrating **75 years of establishment of diplomatic relations this year**.

Egypt has been invited as a 'Guest Country' during India's Presidency of G-20 in 2022-23.

Economic relations

Egypt has been one of India's largest trading partners in Africa and the promotion of bilateral trade, commerce and investments will be one of the focus areas during the visit.

India - Egypt bilateral trade touched a record high at US\$ 7.26 billion during the financial year 2021-22.

Indian investment in Egypt exceeds US\$ 3.15 billion. Over 50 Indian companies are actively present in Egypt in a range of sectors like manufacturing, chemicals, energy, infrastructure, retail etc.

Arab Republic of Egypt

It is an Arab country which is located on the African continent.

President: **Abdel Fattah al-Sisi**

Capital: **Cairo**

Currency: **Egyptian pound**

3. Rajnath Singh signs MoU with Egypt on Defence Cooperation (Sept. 20, 2022)

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, who is on a three-day visit to Egypt, met the Egyptian Defence Minister, General Mohamed Zaki in Cairo on 20 September and signed a MoU on Defence Cooperation to further expand the bilateral defence ties between the two countries.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- During the meeting, both sides discussed steps to strengthen defense ties and a consensus was reached for **joint military exercises and training**, especially in the area of counter-terrorism.
- In addition, they also exchanged views on regional security and acknowledged the contribution of India and Egypt to peace and stability in the world.
- Egyptian President **Abdel Fattah el-Sisi** agreed to focus on enhancing bilateral cooperation and security aspects.
- Singh has also invited his Egyptian counterpart to the **India-Africa Defence Dialogue and the IOR Defence Ministers' Conference**, which is scheduled to be held in Gujarat from **October 18-22** this year as part of the **12th DefExpo**.
- Egypt is one of the largest investment destinations for India in the region with an existing Indian investment of USD 3.15 billion.

India - Egypt defence cooperation :

- To boost defence cooperation between the two countries, an Indian Air Force team arrived in Egypt on **22 June** to participate in a bilateral 'Strategic Leadership Program' with the Egyptian Air Force.
- The year 2022 has special significance as it marks the **75th anniversary** of diplomatic relations between India and Egypt.
- There was close cooperation between the Air Forces of both countries, with efforts at jointly developing a fighter aircraft in the **1960s**.
- Indian Air Force pilots had also trained **Egyptian pilots from the 1960s until 1984**.
- In recent times, since 2015, there have been a number of high-level exchanges of visits by defense delegations.

4. Defence Minister reaches Cairo on two-day official visit to Egypt (Sept. 19, 2022)

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh reached Cairo on 19 September on a two-day official visit to Egypt.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- During the visit, Rajnath Singh will hold bilateral talks with the Minister of Defence and Defence Production, General Mohammad Zaki.
- Rajnath Singh's visit aims to further strengthen defence cooperation and friendship between **India and Egypt**.
- The two ministers will review bilateral defence ties, explore new initiatives to intensify military ties and focus on deepening cooperation between the defence industries of the two countries.
- An MoU will also be signed to promote defence cooperation between India and Egypt.
- Singh will also meet Egyptian **President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi**.

India - Egypt Relations :

- Egypt is one of the largest investment destinations for India with the current Indian investment of **USD 3.15 billion**.
- Indian companies are working on several projects in Egypt.
- To strengthen defence cooperation between the two countries, an Indian Air Force team arrived in Egypt on 22 June to participate in a bilateral '**Strategic Leadership Program**' with the Egyptian Air Force.
- Earlier in November last year, Chief of **Air Staff Chief Marshal VR Chowdhury** had gone to Egypt for his five-day visit to attend the Air Power Symposium and **Defence Exhibition (EDEX) in Cairo**.
- The year 2022 has special significance as it marks the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between India and Egypt.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION -***About Egypt :***

- Capital - **Cairo**
- President - **Abdel Fattah al-Sisi**
- Official Language - **Arabic**
- Official Religion - **Islam**

Currency - **Egyptian pound**

5. International News (Dec. 19, 2021)

1. G-7 Foreign and Development Ministers Meeting

- The United Kingdom, which is currently the chairman of the Group of 7 countries, hosted the foreign ministers meeting of the member countries at Liverpool in England on 11-12 December 2021.
- The meeting was held in the midst of concern that Russia is going to attack Ukraine which is denied by Russia.
- The Foreign Ministers of India, European Union, Australia, South Korea, along with representatives from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN} will take part in G-7 foreign ministers as guests.

2. India to supply medicines to the Afghan people

- The **Government of India has joined Qatar, the UAE, Turkmenistan and Pakistan** that have sent humanitarian support to Taliban-ruled Afghanistan.
- **India has sent medical relief material to the Indira Gandhi Children Hospital in Kabul.**
- The **medical relief material will be handed to the WHO (World Health Organisation) in Kabul** as the Indian does not recognise the **Taliban government in Kabul led by Habitullah Akhunzada .**
- The **relief material was sent back by special Kam Air flights that had brought 10 Indians and 94 Afghan minority community members** from Afghanistan to India.

3. Saudi Arabia bans Tablighi Jamaat

- Saudi Arabia has stunned the Islamic World by banning the Tablighi Jamaat, the Islamist proselytizing(conversion) movement.
- The Saudi Ministry of Islamic Affairs announced the measure on its social media platform terming the Sunni Islamic organisation as "one of the gates of terrorism" and that Tablighi Jamaat poses "a danger to society".

Saudi Arabia

Capital of Saudi Arabia: **Riyadh**

Currency: **Saudi Riyal**

4. Tigray rebels retake Ethiopian world heritage Lalibela

- **Tigray rebels on 12th December recaptured the north Ethiopian town of Lalibela,** home to a UNESCO world heritage site from the Ethiopian government forces.
- **Ethiopian Civil War**
- The conflict started on 4 November, when the Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed ordered a military offensive against the northern regional forces in Tigray.
- The escalation came after months of feuding between Mr Abiy's government and leaders of Tigray's dominant political party, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) .

5. New Caledonia votes to remain part of France

- Voters in the French island territory of New Caledonia chose overwhelmingly to stay part of France, in a referendum held on 12 December which was boycotted by pro-independence forces.
- Official results showed 96% of those who took part chose to stay in France. However the overall turnout was less than 44%.
- The referendum held on 12 December was the third and last in a decades-long process aimed at settling tensions between native Kanaks seeking independence and those who want the territory to remain part of France.
- Capital of New Caledonia: **Noumea.**
- Currency: **CFP Franc**

6. Israeli PM's historic visit to UAE

- **Israel's Prime Minister Naftali Bennett** arrived in the United Arab Emirates for the first ever official visit by a Prime Minister of Israel to the UAE..
- The UAE last year became the third Arab nation to establish full diplomatic relations with Israel after Egypt and Jordan.
- Bahrain and Morocco then followed as part of a series of deals referred to as Abraham Accords brokered by former U.S. President Donald Trump.
- Sudan also agreed to normalise ties with Israel under the Abraham Accords, but full relations have not yet materialised.

For details of the Abraham accord refer to the 25 November post.

7. "India" 4th Most Powerful Country in Asia

- In the Asia Power Index for 2021 that ranks 26 nations and territories in Asia- Pacific, prepared by the Lowy Institute of Sydney, India has been ranked 4th most powerful Asian country.
- Rank of the powerful countries:
 - United States 82.2 points
 - China 74.6
 - Japan 38.7
 - India 37.7
 - Russia 33.0

Highlights of the report:

- India lost 2.0 points (-5% change) in overall score in 2021 (compared to 2020).
- India performed better in future resource measures where it finished behind only the United States and China.
- India finishes in 4th place in four other measures, i.e. Economic Capability, Military Capability (+0.5), Resilience (+1.7) and Cultural Influence.
- India remains in the 7th place in its "Defence Networks", reflecting progress in its regional defence diplomacy - notably with the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue which includes: Australia, Japan and the United States.
- On the other hand, India has slipped into 8th position for economic relationships, as it falls further behind in regional trade integration efforts.

8. India votes against UN draft resolution on climate change

- India voted against a draft resolution at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) linking climate to security. This resolution was moved by Niger, which holds the UNSC presidency for December. It was also sponsored by Ireland.
- Niger organized a debate titled 'Maintenance of international peace and security: security in the context of terrorism and climate change'. One of the objectives of the debate was to examine how terrorism and security risks could be linked to climate change.
- The resolution was vetoed by Russia even though 12 countries voted in its favour with China abstaining from the vote and India voting against it.
- **Government of India's views were put forward by India's Permanent Representative and Ambassador to the United Nations, T.S. Tirumurti.**

9. Super Typhoon Rai lashes Philippines

- Super Typhoon Rai, known locally as Odette, continued to wreak havoc across the Philippines, as the storm moved west across the archipelago, bringing with it heavy rain and widespread flooding.
- Rai, the 15th typhoon to hit the Philippines this year, weakened slightly from a Category 5 to a Category 3 storm (as per Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale) after making landfall Thursday on Siargao Island, a popular tourist and surfing destination on the central east coast.

10. 488 journalists jailed, 46 killed across the world in 2021 - Reporters without Borders

Reporters without Borders (RSF)'s the international non-profit organization for safeguarding the right to freedom of information, has released their latest annual roundup of violence and abuse suffered by journalists across the world.

Report Highlights-

- **There are currently 488 media professionals imprisoned around the world.**
- **The number killed this year — 46 —** was the lowest since it began issuing annual tallies.
- **China once again has the highest number of imprisoned journalists at 127.**
- The most dangerous countries were Mexico and Afghanistan, with seven and six journalist deaths respectively, followed by Yemen and India with four deaths each.

11. The World Health Organisation has granted emergency approval to Covovax (NVX-CoV2373)

- It is manufactured by the Serum Institute of India under license from the U.S. based Novavax.
- **It will be distributed as part of global vaccine sharing system COVAX(COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access).**
- COVAX is a worldwide initiative **through the alliance of GAVI (Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization), the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), and the World Health Organization (WHO).**

It is the 3rd vaccine from India after **CoviShield and Covaxin** to receive WHO emergency use listing (EUL).

12. President Kovind inaugurates Kalibari Temple in Dhaka

President Ram Nath Kovind **inaugurated the renovated Sri Ramna Kali Mandir** in Dhaka on 17th December 2021.

- The temple was **destroyed by the Pakistani Army's operation codenamed 'Operation Searchlight' in 1971**, targeting the resistance movement in the country.
- The President and First Lady Savita Kovind offered prayers at the renovated temple.