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1. SEVENTEEN Appointed UNESCO's First - Ever Goodwill Ambassadors for Youth (June 28, 2024)

On June 26, 2024, **Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO**, appointed **K-pop group SEVENTEEN** as UNESCO's first-ever Goodwill Ambassador for Youth.

An Overview of the News

- The appointment was made during a ceremony in **Paris, France**, where SEVENTEEN pledged **USD 1 million towards UNESCO's initiatives**.
- SEVENTEEN and UNESCO launched a joint program aimed at youth, titled **"Going Together For Youth Creativity and Well-Being"**.
- This program includes an ambitious Global Youth Grant Scheme to support youth-led projects worldwide.

Global Youth Grant Scheme

- The scheme targets youth-led projects addressing challenges in well-being and development through music, arts, and sports.
- It supports project leaders aged 18 to 30 from diverse backgrounds and regions globally.

Role of SEVENTEEN as Goodwill Ambassadors

- SEVENTEEN will actively participate in UNESCO's campaigns and events as Goodwill Ambassadors.
- They will promote UNESCO's values during their performances and engagements worldwide.

Previous Initiatives and Collaborations

- In 2022, SEVENTEEN initiated the '#GoingTogether' campaign with the Korean National Commission for UNESCO.
- This initiative supported educational projects in Timor-Leste and provided educational aid in Malawi.

Engagement with UNESCO Youth Forum

- Through the UNESCO Youth Forum, UNESCO fosters direct communication between young people and leaders of its 194 Member States.
- This forum enhances youth engagement and advocacy within UNESCO's global initiatives.

IMPORTANT POINTS:-

- SEVENTEEN participated in the 13th UNESCO Youth Forum in Paris in November 2023.

- They delivered a speech and performed live for the first time in France during the event.
- Their performance reached over 40 million online viewers.
- Members of SEVENTEEN include: **S.Coups, Jeonghan, Joshua, Jun, Hoshi, Wonwoo, Woozi, The8, Mingyu, DK, Seungkwan, Vernon, and Dino.**

NOTE:- The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN Refugee Agency, has named British actor, producer, and model Theo James as its new Global Goodwill Ambassador.

2. External Affairs Ministry to organize the International Lusophone Festival in Goa from 03-06 December 2022 (Nov. 29, 2022)

International Lusophone Festival in Goa

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in partnership with **Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR)** and the **Government of Goa** is organizing the **International Lusophone Festival** in Goa from 03-06 December 2022.

The International Lusophone Festival will be inaugurated on 03 December 2022 by **Pramod Sawant**, Chief Minister of Goa and Smt **Meenakashi Lekhi**, Minister of State for External Affairs and Minister of State for Culture would be the Guest of Honour.

What is Lusophone World?

The Lusophone world are countries that speak **Portuguese** as their official language and were **colonized by Portugal**. With 300 million speakers, Portuguese is the **sixth most spoken language on the planet**.

The Portuguese speaking countries set up the '**Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP)**', in 1996.

The member countries of the CPLP are **Angola, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal, Sao Tome and Principe, [Timor Leste](#) and Equatorial Guinea**.

India joined CPLP as an associate observer in July 2021. As part of India's engagement with CPLP, the Ministry of External Affairs celebrated the World Portuguese Language Day in Delhi on 05 May 2022, soon after joining CPLP.

Goa was also a colony of Portugal and it was liberated by the Indian government in 1961 through an action of the armed forces code named Operation **Vijay**.

3. ASEAN agrees to admit Timor- Leste as its 11th member (Nov. 13, 2022)

ASEAN agrees to admit Timor-

The 10 nations group Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has agreed in principle to admit **Timor- Leste** as its 11th member. This was declared by the ASEAN after its summit meeting held in the Cambodian capital of **Phnom Penh** on 11 November 2022 Timor- Leste applied for membership of the ASEAN in 2011.

The other members of ASEAN are **Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.**

Timor- Leste will be initially granted an **observer status** at a high level ASEAN meeting and it will take years before it becomes a full member of the ASEAN group.

The country would be the first new member of the regional grouping in more than two decades, since **Cambodia** was admitted in 1999.

Timor- Leste President **Jose Ramos-Horta** welcomed the decision, saying a membership would strengthen wider diplomatic relations with ASEAN's partners and will help attract more foreign direct investment in the country.

Timor- Leste

It was earlier called **East Timor** and was a Portuguese colony till 1975 .After the Portuguese left it was occupied by Indonesia. The people of Timor- Leste waged a freedom struggle to gain Independence from Indonesia.

In the 1999 United Nations supervised referendum the people of Timor-Leste voted for Independence from Indonesia.

It was officially recognised as an independent country by the United Nations in 2022, making it Asia's **youngest country**.

Capital of Timor- Leste: **Dilli**

Currency: **Dollar**

President: **Jose Ramos-Horta**

4. Indian Ocean Naval Symposium: (Nov. 19, 2021)

Why in the News?

The 7th edition of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) Conclave of Chiefs was hosted by the French Navy at Paris from 15th-16th Nov 2021.

Key highlights:

- Vice Admiral R Hari Kumar, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command, is leading a two member Indian Naval delegation for this Conclave.
- The Conclaves of Chiefs is being attended by Chiefs of Navies/ Heads of Lead Maritime Agencies of IONS nations.
- Various bilateral interactions were also conducted on the side-lines of the Conclaves to facilitate a greater degree of maritime cooperation and understanding between the IONS nations.

- The 7th edition of IONS Symposium was held at Le-Reunion from 28 Jun - 01 Jul 21 in hybrid format due to COVID protocols.
- During the Symposium, it was agreed upon to conduct the extant Conclave of Chiefs at Paris.

About IONS:

- The Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) is a series of biennial meetings, held between the littoral states of the Indian Ocean region.
- The inaugural edition of IONS was held in Feb 2008 at New Delhi, with the Indian Navy as the Chair for two years.
- **UAE:** 2010-12
- **South Africa:** 2012-14
- **Australia:** 2014-16
- **Bangladesh:** 2016-18
- **Islamic Republic of Iran:** 2018-21.

Objectives:

- As a forum which seeks to enhance maritime cooperation among Navies of the littoral states of the Indian Ocean Region by providing an open and inclusive platform for discussions on regionally relevant maritime issues that would lead to common understanding on the way ahead.
- The IONS acts as a security construct for the Indian Ocean region and apart from its series of symposiums, it conducts numerous other activities like workshops, essay competitions and lectures to promote its objective.
- The IONS is a voluntary and inclusive initiative that brings together navies of Indian Ocean Region (IOR) littoral states to increase maritime co-operation and enhance regional security.
- It also serves to develop an effective response mechanism and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) against natural disasters.

Members:

- There are 36 littoral in the Indian Ocean which have been geographically grouped into the following four sub-regions:
- **South Asian** : Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan, Seychelles, Sri Lanka.
- **West Asian:** Iran, Oman, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar, Yemen
- **East African:** France, Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique
- **South Africa:** Tanzania, Djibouti, Egypt, Eriteria, Comoros, Madagascar, Somalia, Sudan
- **South East Asian and Australian:** Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, Timor Leste

Why is it important For India?

- It will help India to consolidate its sphere of influence from the Straits of Malacca to Hormuz.
- IONS can be used to counterbalance the increasing presence of China in the region.
- It will Strengthening and deepening the relations with the Indian Ocean littoral states.