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1. India Placed in 'Regular Follow-Up' Category by FATF (July 1, 2024)

India has been categorized under the 'regular follow-up' by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

An Overview of the News

- The FATF held its plenary meeting in Singapore from June 26-28, 2024.
- This decision follows a review of India's efforts in implementing anti-money laundering, anti-terrorism financing, and anti-proliferation financing measures.
- Alongside India, Russia, France, Italy, and the United Kingdom were also placed in the 'regular follow-up' category.
- One country was added to the grey list, and others were categorized under 'enhanced follow-up'.
- The FATF acknowledged India's efforts in combating money laundering and terrorist financing but highlighted the need to address delays in concluding prosecutions related to these crimes.

FATF Evaluation of India:

- India joined FATF in 2010 and underwent its first evaluation in the same year.
- The next evaluation was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and occurred in 2023.
- India must submit a report addressing FATF concerns by October 2027.

Implications for India:

- Being in the regular follow-up category enhances ease of financial transactions globally.
- Easier access to international capital markets at lower costs for Indian companies.
- Increased foreign investment due to enhanced confidence in India's legal and payment systems, including UPI.

About FATF:

- Established in 1989 by G-7 countries to set global standards on AML/CFT/PF.
- Inter-governmental body issuing recommendations and assessing countries' actions against financial crimes.
- Collaborates with IMF, World Bank, UN, and FATF-style regional bodies.
- Headquartered in Paris, France, with 39 current members excluding Russia (suspended since 2023).
- President: T Raja Kumar of Singapore.

PMLA 2002:

- Based on FATF recommendations, Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) 2002 combats money laundering in India.
- Enforced by the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) since July 1, 2005.

2. Japan Introduces New 3D Holographic Banknotes (July 1, 2024)

Japan will start issuing new banknotes on July 3.

An Overview of the News

- These banknotes feature cutting-edge holography, making the portraits of historic figures appear to rotate in 3D.
- The new technology allows visually impaired people to feel and discern the banknotes they are holding.
- Tactile marks will make the banknotes recognizable by touch.
- By the end of March next year, nearly 7.5 billion new banknotes will be printed.
- Existing banknotes will remain valid after the introduction of the new banknotes.

About Japan

- Capital: Tokyo
- King: Prince Naruhito (The reign of the 126th king will be known as 'Riwa'.)
- Prime Minister: Fumio Kishida
- Currency: Japanese Yen

3. South Korea, US, Japan Launch First Trilateral Exercise (June 28, 2024)

South Korea, the US and Japan on **June 27** began their **first trilateral multi-domain exercise**, codenamed **Freedom Edge**.

An Overview of the News

- The exercise is taking place over **three days** on **Jeju Island in South Korea**.
- It aims to enhance security cooperation against threats posed by North Korea and its deepening relationship with Russia.
- Areas of focus include **ballistic missile defense, air defense, antisubmarine warfare, search and rescue operations, maritime interdiction, and defensive cyber training**.

- Previously, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and Russian President Vladimir Putin held a summit in Pyongyang, resulting in a comprehensive strategic partnership treaty. This treaty includes provisions for military assistance in case of an attack on either party.

Jeju Island

- It is the largest island in South Korea, with an area of 1,833.2 km².
- It constitutes 1.83% of the total land area of South Korea.
- Jeju Island, along with its outlying islands, forms Jeju Province.
- Situated in the Korea Strait, it lies south of the Korean Peninsula and South Jeolla Province.

South Korea

- It is located in East Asia on the southern portion of the Korean Peninsula.
- It shares one of the world's most heavily militarized borders with North Korea.
 - Capital - Seoul
 - Currency - South Korean won
 - President - Yoon Suk Yeol
 - Prime Minister - Han Duck-soo

Japan

- Capital: Tokyo
- King: Prince Naruhito (The reign of the 126th king will be known as 'Riwa'.)
- Prime Minister: Fumio Kishida
- Currency: Japanese Yen

United States

- Capital - Washington, D.C.
- President - Joe Biden
- Vice President - Kamala Harris

4. Hunar Indian folk and tribal art exhibition opens in Dubai (June 27, 2024)

The Dubai Art Centre, a prominent and long-standing art institution, is hosting the "Hunar" exhibition.

An Overview of the News

- The exhibition showcases a captivating display of Indian folk and tribal art.
- Each piece offers a glimpse into the soul of Indian traditions.
- Cultural Highlights
- It highlights the rich cultural heritage of India's folk and tribal art forms.

Artistic Styles Featured

- Visitors can explore various artistic styles from across India, including:
 - Aipan Art from Uttarakhand
 - Madhubani Art from Bihar
 - Warli Art from Maharashtra
 - Vibrant Murals from Kerala
 - Intricate Muria Art from Chhattisgarh

Unique Opportunity for Art Enthusiasts

- The "Hunar" exhibition provides a unique opportunity for art enthusiasts in Dubai to immerse themselves in the diverse world of Indian folk and tribal art.
- Attendees can experience firsthand the cultural richness and artistic heritage of India.

About United Arab Emirates (UAE)

- Location: It is located in Western Asia.
- Geographical Boundaries: It shares borders with Oman and Saudi Arabia.
- Maritime Borders: It also has maritime borders with Qatar and Iran in the Persian Gulf.
- Religion: Islam is the dominant religion in the UAE, with the majority of the population being Sunni Muslim.
 - Capital - **Abu Dhabi**
 - Official language - **Arabic**
 - President/Crown Prince - **Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan**
 - Prime Minister - **Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum**
 - Vice President - **Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum and Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan**

5. Paraguay Joins International Solar Alliance as 100th Full Member (June 26, 2024)

Paraguay has achieved full membership status in the International Solar Alliance, marking its entry as the 100th country to join.

An Overview of the News

- The External Affairs Ministry confirmed this development, noting that Paraguay submitted its Instrument of Ratification.
- Ambassador Fleming Raul Duarte of Paraguay met with Abhishek Singh, the Head of Depository and Joint Secretary in the Ministry, during a meeting in New Delhi on June 26th.
- On 23 May 2024, Spain joined the International Solar Alliance (ISA) as the 99th member, reaffirming its commitment to the solar energy initiative.

About International Solar Alliance (ISA)

- Formation: Established on **30 November 2015 in Paris, France.**
- Purpose: Unite over 120 nations, primarily within the Tropics, to promote solar energy and reduce reliance on fossil fuels.
- Headquarters: Located at the **National Institute of Solar Energy in Gurugram, Haryana, India.**
- Director General: Led by **Dr. Ajay Mathur**, the alliance fosters clean energy, sustainability, public transport, and climate initiatives.

About Paraguay

- Paraguay, a landlocked nation, is situated between **Argentina, Brazil, and Bolivia.**
- It features extensive areas of swampland, subtropical forests, and chaco, which are wild expanses of savanna and scrubland.
 - Capital:- **Asunción**
 - Official languages:- **Paraguayan Guaraní, Spanish**
 - President:- **Santiago Peña**
 - Continent:- **South America**

6. Wärtsilä Unveils World's First Large-Scale 100% Hydrogen-Ready Engine Power Plant (June 21, 2024)

Wärtsilä Oyj Abp, a Finland-based company, has launched the world's first large-scale 100% hydrogen-ready engine power plant to support net-zero power systems.

An Overview of the News

- The Wärtsilä 31 is a highly efficient medium-speed 4-stroke marine engine that:
 - Synchronises with the grid within 30 seconds from the start command.
 - Ensures energy security through fuel flexibility.
 - Offers unparalleled load-following capabilities and high part-load efficiency.
- The engine can run on natural gas and 25% hydrogen (H₂) by volume blends.
- It has completed over 1 million running hours with more than 1,000 MegaWatt (MW) installed capacity globally.
- The hydrogen-ready engine power plant concept is certified by TÜV SÜD (Technischer Überwachungsverein - Technical Inspection Association).
- The H₂-Readiness certification includes three stages with three corresponding certificates.
- Wärtsilä has achieved the first stage with a Concept Certificate for the engine power plant's conceptual design.
- The 100% hydrogen-ready engine is expected to be available for orders in 2025 and for delivery from 2026.

About Finland

- It is a northern European nation.
- It shares borders with Sweden, Norway and Russia.
- Finland's arctic Lapland province is famous for the Northern Lights, a spectacular natural phenomenon.
- Lapland is a vast wilderness area with national parks and ski resorts, making it a popular destination.
 - Capital - **Helsinki**
 - Helsinki is situated on a peninsula and is surrounded by islands in the Baltic Sea.
 - President - **Alexander Stubb**
 - Prime Minister - **Petteri Orpo**
 - Currency- **Euro**
 - **Nokia company is from Finland.**

7. Ukraine Launches World's First Unmanned Systems Forces (June 20, 2024)

Ukraine has established the world's first stand-alone military branch solely dedicated to unmanned systems, known as the Unmanned Systems Forces (USF).

An Overview of the News

- The USF was officially launched by the Ukrainian Armed Forces and the Ministry of Defence (MoD) in Kyiv, Ukraine.

Objectives of USF:

- USF aims to enhance capabilities in unmanned and robotic warfare across air, sea, and ground domains during combat operations.
- It focuses on advancing the development and deployment of unmanned systems for military purposes.

Leadership and Command:

- Colonel Vadym Sukharevsky, former Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, has been appointed as the inaugural Commander of the USF.
- He will lead the strategic direction and operational readiness of the USF.

Symbolism:

- The symbol representing the USF is a "**steel swallow**," which was designed by a neural network.
- The swallow holds cultural significance in Ukrainian tradition as a symbol of victory.

Functions and Responsibilities:

- The USF is responsible for providing operational units with drones and ensuring their logistical support.
- It oversees the recruitment and training of specialists in unmanned systems.
- It plays a crucial role in planning and executing military operations that involve unmanned technologies.

8. 'Nepal International Tourism Expo' Kick Starts in Kathmandu (June 15, 2024)

The two-day 'Nepal International Tourism Expo (NITE)' kicked off in Kathmandu on June 14 to promote Nepal's tourism globally.

An Overview of the News

- Held from June 14-15, 2024 at Bhrikutimandap Exhibition Hall.
- Organised in collaboration with Kathmandu Metropolitan City in collaboration with Nepal Tourism Board and other associations.

Inauguration and Goals

- Inaugurated by Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Minister Hit Bahadur Tamang.
- Minister Tamang emphasised the event's potential to boost Nepal's international tourism presence.
- Minister Tamang noted ongoing efforts to meet the government's target of 1.6 million tourists this year, including resolving tourism sector issues and waiving VAT and unnecessary taxes on air tickets.

Participation and Networking

- It aims to unite tourism related businesses such as hotels, resorts, homestays, travel/tour/trekking/mountaineering agencies, airlines and stakeholders from both domestic and international sectors.
- Participating countries include Nepal, India, Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Maldives, USA, Netherlands, Sri Lanka, China, Thailand, UAE, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Malaysia and Bhutan, with a total of 155 entrepreneurs.
- Government of Bihar participated to promote tourism opportunities in ecotourism in Guru Circuit, Jain Circuit, Ramayana Circuit, Buddhist Circuit and Valmiki Tiger Reserve.
- Provides a two-day networking opportunity for national and international tourism stakeholders to foster collaboration and lasting partnerships.

About Nepal

- The kingdom of Nepal was established by the Shah dynasty.
- It is a landlocked country in South Asia.
- Prime Minister - Pushpa Kamal Dahal
- President - Ram Chandra Paudel
- Capital - Kathmandu
- Currency - Nepalese Rupee

9. Cyril Ramaphosa Re-Elected South African President (June 15, 2024)

Cyril Ramaphosa has been re-elected as the President of South Africa.

An Overview of the News

- This follows a landmark coalition deal between his African National Congress (ANC) and opposition parties.
- The new government combines Ramaphosa's ANC, the centre-right Democratic Alliance, and other smaller parties.

Parliament Vote

- Ramaphosa won convincingly in a Parliament vote.
- He received 283 votes against Julius Malema's 44 in the 400-member house.
- Malema is the leader of the far-left Economic Freedom Fighters.

Crucial Agreement

- Ramaphosa secured his second term after an agreement with the Democratic Alliance.
- This agreement was struck just hours before the presidential vote.
- The ANC lost its 30-year majority in Africa's national assembly.

Election Results

- In the recent elections, the ANC's vote share dropped to 40%.
- The Democratic Alliance emerged as the second-largest party with 22% of the votes.

Co-Governance

- The parties will now co-govern South Africa.
- This marks the first national coalition where no party has a majority.

About South Africa

- It is located at the southernmost tip of the African continent and is known for its diverse ecosystems.
- Capital:- Pretoria (executive), Cape Town (legislative) and Bloemfontein (judicial)
- Largest city:- Johannesburg

10. India Sends Humanitarian Aid to Papua New Guinea (June 13, 2024)

India dispatched a flight with 19 tons of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief supplies to Papua New Guinea.

An Overview of the News

- Response to Disaster: The aid is in response to a devastating landslide in Enga province, Papua New Guinea.

Aid Details

- Disaster Relief Material: 13 tons of supplies, including temporary shelters, water tanks, hygiene kits, and ready-to-eat meals.

- Medical Supplies: 6 tons of emergency use medicine and medical equipment, including dengue and malaria diagnostic kits and baby food.

Geographical Background Of Papua New Guinea:

- New Guinea, the world's second-largest island, covers an area of 785,753 km².
- Situated in Oceania, it lies in the southwestern Pacific Ocean, adjacent to Australia, separated by the Torres Strait.
- The island is surrounded by numerous smaller islands to the west and east.

India-Papua New Guinea Relations:

- Diplomatic ties between India and Papua New Guinea were established in 1975 upon PNG's independence from Australia.
- India opened its resident mission in Port Moresby in 1996, reciprocated by PNG with a resident mission in New Delhi in 2006.
- Both nations, being Commonwealth countries, share warm relations, aligning closely on various global issues.
- Collaboration extends to international forums like the Commonwealth, Non-Aligned Movement, and the United Nations Organization.

Humanitarian Aid and Assistance:

- India extends humanitarian aid and disaster relief to PNG periodically.
- In 2023, assistance included drugs for HIV/AIDS patients.
- A grant-in-aid totaling US \$760,000 provided computers and peripherals to PNG in 2017-18.
- Capacity-building efforts involve training through programs like Indian Technical & Economic Cooperation Programme (ITEC) and the Colombo Plan.
- Ongoing implementation of aid proposals in various fields submitted by PNG under the annual grant-in-aid.
- A Centre of Excellence in Information Technology was established at the University of PNG with Indian financial and technical assistance.
- In 2018, Government of India provided assistance of US\$1 million for earthquake relief in areas affected by the PNG earthquake.