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1. PM Modi Unveils Cutting-edge Medical Center in Thimphu (March 27, 2024)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bhutanese counterpart Tshering Tobgay jointly inaugurated Gyaltsuen Jetsun Pema Wangchuck Mother and Child Hospital in Bhutan's capital Thimphu.

An Overview of the News

- This hospital is an example of the strong development cooperation between India and Bhutan.
- The hospital has a state-of-the-art 150-bed facility built with Indian assistance.
- Built in two phases, the first phase costing ₹22 crore became operational in 2019, while the second phase, completed recently, was undertaken as part of Bhutan's 12th Five Year Plan at a cost of ₹119 crore.

Strengthening Bilateral Ties

- Prime Minister Modi's visit aims to bolster the unique and long-standing friendship between India and Bhutan.
- During his visit, PM Modi met with Bhutan's King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck and held talks with Prime Minister Tobgay.

Recognition and Support

- The King of Bhutan confers the prestigious 'Order of the Druk Gyalpo' on PM Modi, making him the first foreign Head of Government to receive this honor.
- India pledges ₹10,000 crore in support to Bhutan over the next five years, reinforcing the enduring partnership between the two nations.

About Bhutan:

Capital- Thimphu

King - Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuk

Currencies - Bhutanese Ngultrum, Indian Rupee

Official language- Dzongkha

2. India and UAE sign MoU for advanced technical cooperation (Oct. 6, 2023)

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was officially signed between India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

An Overview of the News

- The signatories include Piyush Goyal, Minister of Commerce and Industry of India and Dr. Sultan Al Jaber, Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology of the United Arab Emirates.
- The signing took place in Abu Dhabi in the presence of Sheikh Hamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, a Member of the Abu Dhabi Executive Council.

Focus areas of cooperation:

The MoU entails collaborative efforts in several key areas, including:

- Supply chain flexibility
- Clean energy technology
- Health care
- Space exploration
- Industry 4.0
- Advanced technologies
- Industrial standards

These sectors were chosen to facilitate industrial investment, technology transfer and implementation of innovations for mutual benefit.

Strategic Objective:

- The primary goal of this historic agreement is to promote industrial development and technological progress in both countries.
- The agreement seeks to enhance sustainable economic growth and competitiveness by promoting innovation and technological excellence.
- It aims to facilitate the transfer of advanced technologies and promote sustainable practices, including clean energy and climate neutrality.

Seven key areas of focus:

The MoU identifies seven specific areas of cooperation, including:

1. Increase supply chain flexibility
2. Progress in renewable energy and energy efficiency
3. Collaborative efforts in health care and life sciences
4. Strengthening space industries, including commercial development and space exploration
5. Deploying AI technologies in various sectors
6. Emphasis on Industry 4.0 technologies and automation

Standardization and metrology to harmonize industrial standards and certification processes.

Promoting Cooperation:

- The MoU encourages various forms of cooperation including industrial and academic partnerships.
- Collaborative research and development projects are promoted to advance technological advancements.
- Sharing of best practices in science and technology policies is encouraged to ensure the comprehensive nature of the partnership and its potential to benefit both countries.

3. BEL and Israel Aerospace Industries signed MoU (Sept. 5, 2023)

Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) and Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

An Overview of the News

- The signing ceremony was **held in Bengaluru.**
- The MoU focuses **on the area of Short Range Air Defense Systems.**
- BEL and IAI have previously worked together on **joint development, production and product support programs for the Indian Defense Forces.**
- The MoU is in line with India's '**Atmanirbhar Bharat**' (self-reliant India) and '**Make in India**' policies.
- These policies emphasize self-reliance in domestic manufacturing and defense capabilities.
- BEL and IAI aim to contribute **to these national objectives through their collaboration.**

IAI's expertise in aerospace and defense:

- Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) is a **leading aerospace and defense company in Israel.**
- They are known for their **capabilities in aerospace and defense technologies.**
- IAI offers a wide range of solutions, including **space technology, UAVs, missiles, intelligence solutions, air defense systems, radars and more.**
- President and CEO of IAI - **Boaz Levy**
- Establishment of IAI - **1953**

Role of BEL in Self-Reliance in Defense Electronics:

- Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) was established **to enhance India's self-reliance in defense electronics.**
- BEL operates across diverse sectors, producing state-of-the-art products and systems.
- His areas of expertise include **radar, missile systems, military communications and naval systems.**
- The company also expands its efforts into non-defense areas including electronic voting machines, homeland security, smart cities, satellite integration, space electronics and cyber security.
- BEL was established in **1954.**
- BEL Chairman and Managing Director - **Bhanu Prakash Srivastava**

4. Goa Shipyard and Kenya Shipyard sign MoU for ship design and building cooperatio (Aug. 31, 2023)

Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) and Kenya Shipyard Limited (KSL) signed an MoU for cooperation in ship design and construction.

An Overview of the News

- The MoU was formalized during a meeting between India's Union Defense Minister Rajnath Singh and Kenya's Cabinet Secretary Defense Aden Bare Duale on August 29, 2023.
- The signing event took place in New Delhi, Delhi.
- Chief of Defense Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan and Defense Secretary Giridhar Aramane attended the bilateral meeting.
- Aden Bare Duale, serving as the Defense Cabinet Secretary of Kenya, is on a 3-day visit to India.
- Kenya Shipyard Limited is a state-owned company under the Ministry of Defense of Kenya, established in 2020 to meet the operational needs of the Kenya Navy through shipbuilding, repair, maintenance, and marine services.

Highlights of the bilateral meeting between India and Kenya:

Defense Cooperation and Regional Security:

- Discussion Strengthening defense industry ties and cooperation in equipment development.
- Both countries are engaged in dialogue on mutual regional security concerns.

Symbolic gifts and technical assistance:

- Defense Minister Rajnath Singh presented 15 pairs of Glider India Limited parachutes to Aden Beyer Duelle for the Kenyan forces.

India offered assistance in setting up an advanced CT scan facility in Kenya.

Expanded participation in various fields:

- Cooperation commitment for maritime security in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) was expanded.
- It was agreed upon for intensive cooperation in counter-insurgency training.
- Reciprocated commitment to an expanded partnership in UN peacekeeping efforts.

About Goa Shipyard Limited:

- GSL is a Miniratna Central Public Sector Undertaking (CPSU) operating under the Ministry of Defense (MoD) of India.
- Chairman & Managing Director - **Brajesh Kumar Upadhyay**
- Establishment - **1957**
- Headquarters - **Vasco da Gama, Goa**

5. Indian Coast Guard and Philippine Coast Guard sign MoU to strengthen maritime cooperation (Aug. 22, 2023)

The Indian Coast Guard and the Philippine Coast Guard have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen their maritime cooperation.

An Overview of the News

- The objective of the MoU is to enhance bilateral maritime cooperation between the two countries with a focus on ensuring safe, secure, and clean seas in the region.
- The MoU was signed in New Delhi by Rakesh Pal, Director General of, the Indian Coast Guard, and Admiral Artemio M. Abu, Commandant of, the Philippine Coast Guard.
- The two sides held their inaugural bilateral meeting after the signing of the MoU, addressing a range of maritime issues.

Areas of Focus: The key areas of cooperation under the MoU include:

1. Maritime Law Enforcement: Strengthening cooperation in the enforcement of maritime laws.
2. Maritime Search and Rescue: To enhance joint efforts in search and rescue operations at sea.
3. Marine Pollution Response: Collaborating to respond effectively to marine pollution incidents.

Delegation visit: A five-member delegation of the Philippine Coast Guard is on an official visit to India from 20 August to 24 August.

6. Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe's two-day visit to India (July 22, 2023)

Sri-Lankan-President-Ranil-Wickremesinghe's-two-day-visit-to-India

Sri Lankan President **Ranil Wickremesinghe** made a **two-day visit to India** on 20 and 21 July 2023, during which several important agreements were signed between the two countries, which is considered very important in terms of relations between the two countries.

An Overview of the news:

- Delegation level talks were held between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Sri Lankan President on 21 July 2023 in New Delhi.
- This year both the countries are celebrating the **75th anniversary of diplomatic relations**. Apart from this, the **Tamil community** of Indian origin is completing **200 years** of its arrival in Sri Lanka.

Agreement on vision document to strengthen economic partnership:

- During the talks, a vision document has been adopted to take the bilateral economic partnership between the two countries to a new level.
- Through this, both the countries will increase mutual cooperation in **tourism, energy, trade, higher education and skill development**. Through this vision, it has been decided to strengthen **maritime, air, energy and people-to-people connectivity** among people.

India's Long Term Commitment:

- To get Sri Lanka out of the economic crisis, India will increase its economic activities through more investments there.

Economic and Technological Cooperation Agreement (ETCA):

- Both the countries have decided to start negotiations on the Economic and Technological Cooperation Agreement (ETCA) at the earliest. This will open new avenues of bilateral trade and economic cooperation.

Agreements signed for UPI launch in Sri Lanka:

- **India's UPI** will be able to make payments in Sri Lanka. For this, India's UPI technology has now been accepted by Sri Lanka as well. This will also help in increasing fintech connectivity.
- Prior to this, **France, UAE and Singapore** have adopted this app-based service for payment of money.

Connectivity to enhance bilateral cooperation:

- Both countries have decided to **increase air connectivity**. Along with this, it has also been decided to start passenger ferry services between **Nagapattinam in Tamil Nadu and Kanke-Santurai** in Sri Lanka.

- The resumption of flights between **Chennai-Jaffna** is helping in increasing people-to-people contact between the two countries.
- Along with this, both the countries have also agreed to investigate the feasibility of the **land bridge**.

Cooperation in Energy Sector:

- Both countries have decided to expedite the work of connecting the **electricity grid** to enhance energy cooperation.
- Under this, both the countries have decided to conduct a feasibility study to give a realistic shape to the possibility of building a petroleum pipeline between the two countries.
- In this context, India has already provided petroleum products to **Nepal and Bangladesh** through pipelines.

7. Japan becomes second Quad partner to sign semiconductor agreement with India (July 21, 2023)

Japan-becomes-second-Quad-partner

India and Japan recently signed an agreement to jointly develop the semiconductor ecosystem, strengthening their partnership and resilience in the global supply chain.

An Overview of the News

- The memorandum signed by Union Electronics and IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnav and Japan's Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Yasutoshi Nishimura covers various areas of cooperation.
- This marks **Japan as the second Quad partner after the United States** to collaborate with India to enhance the semiconductor industry.
- The agreement covers various areas of cooperation, including semiconductor **design, manufacturing, device research and talent development**, with the aim of **ensuring a robust and reliable semiconductor supply chain**.
- To facilitate efficient cooperation, the two countries will set up an "implementing organisation" to promote government-to-government and industry-to-industry partnerships.

Recognizing Japan's Semiconductor Expertise

- Japan holds a significant position in the semiconductor industry with nearly 100 semiconductor manufacturing plants, making it one of the top five countries with a strong semiconductor ecosystem.
- The projected growth of the semiconductor industry from US\$650 billion to US\$1 trillion requires talent development in multiple locations around the world, and Japan sees India's complementary strengths as a valuable opportunity for mutual benefit.
- Japan has expertise in critical semiconductor elements such as **raw wafer materials, chemicals, gases and chip manufacturing equipment and display technologies**.

- By transferring this knowledge and expertise to India, both countries aim **to achieve**
- **significant milestones in the semiconductor industry.**

About Japan

- It is also called Nihon or Nippon and is an archipelago in the western Pacific Ocean in East Asia.
- It is made up of four main islands Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku and Kyushu and Honshu is the largest island of Japan.
- Its highest mountain is Mount Fuji.
- It is the third largest economy in the world after the United States and China.
- Capital - **Tokyo**
- currency - **yen**
- Prime Minister - **Fumio Kishida**

8. PM Modi's visit to UAE (July 17, 2023)

PM-Modi's-visit-to-UAE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi held talks with President **Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan** in **Abu Dhabi** on July 15, 2023, during his visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

An Overview of the news:

- This is the **fifth visit** of an Indian Prime Minister to UAE in the last eight years.
- In the year 2015, Prime Minister Modi became the first Prime Minister of India to visit UAE in 34 years.

On July 15, the following activities were agreed upon between the two countries:

- Agreed to trade in Rupee and UAE's currency Dirham;
- Approval for linking of UPI and UAE's instant payment platform;
- Agreement on setting up of IIT Delhi campus in UAE;
- India's support for the UAE's chairmanship of COP-28;
- Agreed to increase bilateral trade to USD 100 billion (currently USD 85 billion).

Trade between the two countries:

- India-UAE trade to grow to US\$ 85 billion in 2022, making UAE India's third largest trading partner and India's second largest export destination during 2022-23.
- India is the second largest trading partner of the UAE.

9. PM Narendra Modi's visit to France and United Arab Emirates (July 13, 2023)

PM-Narendra-Modi's-visit-to-France-and-United-Arab-Emirates

Prime Minister Narendra Modi reached **France** on the first leg of his official visit to **France and the United Arab Emirates (UAE)** from 13 to 15 July 2023. This is the **sixth visit** of Prime Minister Modi to France.

An Overview of the news:

- The Prime Minister is on a visit to Paris from 13-14 July 2023 at the invitation of French President **Emmanuel Macron**.
- The Prime Minister is the Chief Guest at the **Bastille Day Parade** on 14 July 2023, in which a contingent of the **Indian Armed Forces** from the three Services is also participating.
- During his visit, he will meet the Prime Minister of France as well as the Presidents of the French Senate and the National Assembly.

25th Anniversary of India-France Strategic Partnership:

- This year also marks the **25th anniversary of the India-France Strategic Partnership** and the Prime Minister's visit will provide an opportunity to chart out a roadmap for the future of the partnership in various areas such as strategic, cultural, scientific, educational and economic cooperation.

Travel to United Arab Emirates:

- The Prime Minister will visit **Abu Dhabi** on 15th July.
- The Prime Minister will hold talks with His Highness **Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan**, President of the UAE and Ruler of Abu Dhabi.
- The **India-UAE Comprehensive Strategic Partnership** continues to grow from strength to strength and the Prime Minister's visit will provide an opportunity to identify means of taking it forward in various sectors such as energy, education, healthcare, food security, fintech, defense and culture.
- The Prime Minister's visit to the UAE will also provide an opportunity to discuss establishing cooperation on global issues.

France:

- Capital: **Paris**
- Currency: **Euro**
- President: **Emmanuel Macron**

United Arab Emirates (UAE):

- Capital: **Abu Dhabi**
- Currency: **UAE Dirham**
- President: **Mohamed bin Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan;**

10. IIT Delhi will open its international campus in Abu Dhabi (UAE) (July 11, 2023)

On 10 July 2023, Union Education Minister **Dharmendra Pradhan** informed that **IIT Delhi** is going to open its international campus in **Abu Dhabi (UAE)**.

An Overview of the news:

- After IIT Madras, now IIT Delhi is also going to open its international campus outside the country in Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates).
- Earlier, IIT Madras had announced to set up its campus in Zanzibar-Tanzania. Whose work is likely to start from October this year.

Relations between the two countries will be further strengthened:

- This initiative will further strengthen the relations between the two countries.
- Meanwhile, IIT Delhi has also announced the inclusion of UAE school students in its Summer Boot Camp, in which talented school students from there will be able to work on their research and other innovations in IIT Delhi's lab.
- Currently, IIT Delhi conducts such summer boot camps only for Indian school students.
- During the event, Pradhan also handed over a set of books (magic box) designed for school children up to class three under the new National Education Policy (NEP) to UAE Minister of Education Sarah Musallam.

First campus of IIT Madras in Zanzibar-Tanzania:

- Prior to this announcement, IIT Madras had decided to open its campus in Zanzibar-Tanzania. Which will also start there from October this year.
- Like IIT Madras and Delhi, some other IITs of the country may also decide to open their international campuses soon.