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1. US and Ukraine Forge Long-Term Security Pact Amid G7 Summit in Italy (June 14, 2024)

The US and Ukraine signed a long-term security agreement during the G7 summit in Italy.

An Overview of the News

- On June 13, 2024, during the 2024 G7 summit in Italy, President Joe Biden of the USA and President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine concluded a **10-year bilateral security agreement**.
- Similar agreements have been reached previously with 15 other countries, such as Britain, France, and Germany.
- The agreement covers a wide range of cooperation levels between the US and Ukraine, including military equipment, training, and maneuvers.
- However, it does not include commitments to supply specific weapons systems to Ukraine.

About G7

- The G7 is a group of seven major industrialized countries, including Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
- The G7 holds annual meetings to discuss various global issues, but these meetings are usually held in different locations each year.
- The 48th G7 summit was hosted by Germany in 2022.
- The city of Hiroshima in Hiroshima Prefecture hosted the 49th G7 summit from May 19th to May 21st, 2023.
- The 50th G7 summit is currently taking place from June 13th to June 15th, 2024, at Borgo Egnazia in Fasano, Apulia, Italy. Italy is hosting the 50th G7 summit.

2. PM Modi Participates in G7 Outreach Summit in Italy (June 14, 2024)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended the G7 Outreach Summit in Apulia, Italy on June 14.

An Overview of the News

- India has been invited to the G7 Summit as an Outreach Country.
- Modi attended bilateral meetings with G7 leaders, Outreach countries and international organisations.

Scheduled Bilateral Meetings:

- French President Emmanuel Macron

- UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak
- German Chancellor Olaf Scholz
- Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni
- Japanese PM Fumio Kishida
- Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky

Significance of the Visit:

- Modi's first overseas visit after assuming office for the third consecutive term.
- Emphasis on strengthening the India-Italy strategic partnership and cooperation in the Indo-Pacific and Mediterranean regions.

Focus Areas:

- Discussions on artificial intelligence, energy, Africa, and the Mediterranean.
- Enhancing synergy between outcomes of the G20 Summit under India's presidency and the G7 Summit.

Historical Context:

- India's 11th participation in the G7 Summit.
- Modi's fifth consecutive participation at the summit.
- Reflects India's growing recognition and contributions to global challenges.

Follow-up Opportunities:

- The G7 Summit provides an opportunity to build on the outcomes of the previous G20 Summit.
- Italy, holding the G7 presidency, has extended invitations to several countries and international organizations.
- Apart from India, Italy has invited Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, Egypt, Kenya, Mauritania, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Tunisia, Turkey, and the UAE.
- Additionally, Italy has invited various international organizations, including the United Nations, to participate in the discussions.

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3. Prime Minister inaugurates the 'International Lawyers Conference 2023' at Vigyan Bhawan (Sept. 24, 2023)

On September 23, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 'International Lawyers Conference 2023' at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.

An Overview of the News

- The Bar Council of India organized the International Lawyers Conference 2023 focusing on the theme 'Emerging Challenges in Justice Delivery System' from September 23 to 24, 2023.
- The conference is the first of its kind in India and discussed various legal topics including emerging legal trends, challenges in cross-border litigation, legal technology and environmental law.
- The objective of the conference is to provide a platform for meaningful interaction and discussion on national and international legal issues. Its goal is to promote the exchange of ideas and experiences and to enhance international cooperation and understanding in legal matters.
- The primary objective is to establish a strong, independent and impartial basis for the Indian legal system, which will contribute to the development of India as a nation.

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR):

- The objective of the conference is to strengthen ADR methods.
- The Government of India has enacted an Arbitration Act to formalize informal dispute resolution practices. Similarly, Lok Adalats have successfully resolved about 7 lakh cases in the last 6 years.

Simplification of legal language:

- There are discussions going on to present the laws in two languages - one for legal professionals and the other for common citizens.
- The government is trying to formulate new laws in simple language, as seen in the data protection law.
- The Supreme Court of India has taken steps to translate its judgments into four local languages, namely Hindi, Tamil, Gujarati and Oriya.
- This initiative marks a significant change in the judicial system of India.

4. G20 Infrastructure Working Group meeting started in Madhya Pradesh (Sept. 21, 2023)

The 4th International Infrastructure Working Group meeting under India's G20 chairmanship began on 21 September 2023 at the Maharaja Chhatrasal Convention Center in Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh.

An Overview of the News

- More than 50 delegates representing different countries participated in the two-day meeting.
- The primary agenda of the meeting revolves around several aspects of infrastructure investment, such as:
 - To develop infrastructure as an asset class.
 - To promote the development of high-quality urban infrastructure.
 - Exploration of Infratech (Technology in Infrastructure).
 - To identify innovative financial instruments to mobilize funds to invest in resilient, sustainable, and inclusive urban infrastructure.
- The Ministry of Finance is hosting and chairing the meeting with co-chair support from Australia and Brazil.

About G20

- It is an international forum of the world's leading economies established in 1999.
- Its primary objective is to promote international financial stability and sustainable economic growth.
- The G20 serves as a forum to discuss and coordinate policies related to a wide range of economic and financial issues such as trade, investment, employment, energy and climate change.

5. African Union becomes permanent member of G20 (Sept. 11, 2023)

African leaders expressed unanimous support for the G20's decision to admit the African Union as a permanent member of the grouping.

An Overview of the News

- During the 18th G20 meeting in New Delhi, India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi officially announced **the induction of the African Union (AU) as the 21st permanent member.**
- **AU Commission Chair Moussa Faki Mahamat** accepted Africa's full membership in the G20.
- South African President and former AU Chair Cyril Ramaphosa was among the first to support the decision.

- Prior to this decision, the G20 had only granted observer status to the African Union since its establishment in 1999 in response to global economic crises.

African Union (AU):-

- The African Union (AU) is a continental union of **55 member states in Africa.**
- The AU was officially launched on **9 July 2002 in Durban, South Africa.**
- Its main purpose was **to replace the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which began on 25 May 1963 in Addis Ababa and was dissolved on 9 July 2002.**
- The Assembly of the African Union, a semi-annual meeting of heads of state and government of member states, makes the most important decisions within the AU.
- Chairman - **Azali Assoumani**
- Chairman of the Commission - **Moussa Faki**
- Parliamentary Speaker - **Fortune Jade Charumbira**

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President of Kenya - **William Ruto**

President of Egypt - **Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi**

6. World's tallest Nataraja statue unveiled at G20 Summit Venue (Sept. 9, 2023)

The world's tallest Nataraja statue crafted by skilled artisans was unveiled at the G20 summit venue.

An Overview of the News

- The G20 summit venue is now adorned with a stunning 27-foot tall statue of Nataraja, which depicts Lord Shiva in his cosmic dance.
- This magnificent statue is carved from Ashtadhatu, an eight-metal alloy, and weighs a remarkable 18 tonnes. A trailer with 36 tires was required for transportation to Delhi.

- The skilled artisans of Swamimalai, Thanjavur district of Tamil Nadu are responsible for creating this masterpiece, which beautifully blends tradition with modernity, taking inspiration from the ancient Nataraja sculptures.

Master Sculptor of Swamimalai

- The primary sculptors of this statue are Srikanda Sthapati (61 years old) and his brothers Radhakrishna Sthapati and Swaminath Sthapati. His family boasts an impressive lineage in sculpture, spanning 34 generations, with origins dating back to the Chola era.
- The Sthapathi family received their training through the ancient Gurukul system passed down for generations. She was selected for the Nataraja Project based on stringent criteria outlined by the Indira Gandhi National Center for the Arts, Ministry of Culture.
- The project draws inspiration from three iconic Nataraja sculptures: the Thillai Nataraja Temple in Chidambaram, the Uma Maheswara Temple in Konerirajapuram, and the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brihadeeswara Temple in Thanjavur.

Traditional 'lost-wax' casting method

- The crafting process adopted for this statue was the traditional 'lost-wax' casting method, an indigenous technique of the Chola era.
- The process began with the creation of a highly detailed wax model adorned with intricate ornaments.
- A unique alluvial clay paste, found exclusively in Swamimalai, was used to cover the entire mold, with Kaveri clay from a specific part of the river at Swamimalai playing a key role.

Investing in Artistry:

- The construction of this remarkable Nataraja statue cost Rs 10 crore including GST.

7. 43rd ASEAN Summit to begin in Jakarta on September 5 (Sept. 4, 2023)

The 43rd ASEAN Summit is scheduled to be held in Jakarta from September 5 to 7.

An Overview of the News

- This summit is taking place in the context of increased tension in the South China Sea. Some ASEAN member countries have expressed protest over China's recent release of a new map claiming disputed areas.
- **Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong** will lead a delegation to the summit.
- During the summit, ASEAN leaders will also discuss the crisis in Myanmar among other pressing regional issues.
- Singapore's Prime Minister's Office issued a statement emphasizing that ASEAN leaders will focus on strategies to maintain the bloc's relevance and central role in the emerging regional landscape.

- The leaders will also discuss strengthening ASEAN integration and enhancing cooperation in key areas such as the digital and green economy.

About ASEAN

- ASEAN was officially **established on August 8, 1967**, through the signing of the ASEAN Declaration by the **foreign ministers of five countries: Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.**
- Brunei Darussalam joined ASEAN on 7 January 1984.
- Vietnam became a member on 28 July 1995.
- Lao PDR and Myanmar joined on 23 July 1997.
- Cambodia became a member on 30 April 1999.
- ASEAN currently consists of ten member states.

8. The 2nd edition of Naval Commanders' Conference, 2023 begins in New Delhi (Sept. 4, 2023)

The second edition of the Naval Commanders' Conference, 2023 began in New Delhi on 4 September.

An Overview of the News

- The conference serves as the highest-level biennial event, which facilitates discussion and policy formulation among naval commanders.
- During the three-day conference, to be held in a hybrid format, the senior leadership of the Indian Navy will review major operational, material, logistics, training, and administrative activities undertaken during the last six months.
- The objective of the conference is to establish a structured platform for naval commanders to engage with senior government officials with a focus on taking forward various inter-ministerial initiatives aimed at ensuring a safe and secure maritime environment.

Indian Navy (IN):-

- It is the marine branch of the Indian Armed Forces.
- The President of India is the supreme commander of the Indian Navy.
- The Chief of Naval Staff, a four-star admiral, leads the Navy.
- The Navy operates as a blue-water force in areas such as the Persian Gulf, the Horn of Africa, and the Malacca Straits.
- Established - **26 January 1950**
- Headquarters - **New Delhi**

Navy Day - **4 December**

9. India to host the first edition of the 'Global IndiaAI 2023' conference in October (Aug. 31, 2023)

The inaugural edition of 'Global IndiaAI 2023' will be hosted by India in October.

An Overview of the News

- The responsibility for organizing this program will be of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
- The conference will attract leading figures in the field of AI, such as key players, researchers, startups, and investors from India and around the world.
- A variety of topics will be covered during the program, ranging from next-generation learning and foundational AI models to applications of AI in healthcare, governance and the advancement of electric vehicles.
- The conference will also discuss future trends in AI research, AI computing systems, investment prospects and strategies to promote AI talent.
- The proceedings of the conference are being monitored by Rajiv Chandrashekhar, Union Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and Electronics and IT.

10. G20 One Health Workshop inaugurated in Bengaluru (Aug. 29, 2023)

Union Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Shobha Karandlaje inaugurated the G20 One Health Workshop in Bengaluru.

An Overview of the News

- The workshop focused on the theme **“One Health - Opportunities and Challenges”**.
- Representatives of G20 member states and invited countries are participating in the **three-day event**.
- India's G20 chairmanship is focused on the theme **"One Earth, One Family, and One Future"**.
- Its goal is to **create a harmonious system for sharing knowledge, experience, and resources among nations**.

About the G20

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