

IMPORTANT NEWS

Prime Minister participates in the third in-person Quad Leaders' Summit

Inside Story of the News:

- Along with Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, and American President Joseph Biden, **Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi attended the third in-person Quad Leaders' Summit** on May 20, 2023, in Hiroshima, Japan.
- The Leaders held a fruitful discussion regarding Indo-Pacific developments that confirmed their shared democratic ideals and strategic interests.
- They emphasised the significance of respecting the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and peaceful resolution of disputes, which guides their vision for a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific.
- They released the Quad Leaders' Vision Statement - Enduring Partners for the Indo-Pacific in this context, which outlines their moral stance.
- The Leaders announced the following initiatives, which would support the development priorities of the region, to increase the Indo-Pacific's resilience and prosperity:
 - Clean Energy Supply Chains Initiative, which would speed up research and development and aid in the energy transition in the Indo-Pacific region. In order to direct engagement with the area on the development of clean energy supply chains, the Quad Principles of Clean Energy Supply Chains were also approved.
 - 'Quad Infrastructure Fellowships Programme' to assist regional policymakers and practitioners in designing, constructing, and managing sustainable and workable infrastructure in their countries.
 - 'Partnership for Cable Connectivity and Resilience' will make use of Quad's aggregate expertise in undersea cable designing, manufacturing, laying, and maintenance to safeguard and diversify these vital networks.
 - Quad assistance for the first ORAN deployment in the Pacific, on a limited scale, in Palau. To encourage industry investment in open, interoperable, and secure telecom platforms, they also released the ORAN Security Report.
 - In order to enable investments in strategic technologies, the private sector-led Quad Investors' Network platform has been launched.
 - The Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness, which was introduced at their summit in Tokyo last year, has made progress, which was appreciated by the Leaders. They pointed out that data exchange under this plan is already taking place with partners in the South East and the Pacific and will soon also include partners in the Indian Ocean region. The prime minister emphasised the role that India's strategy for demand-driven development cooperation with the area was playing in these efforts.
- The Leaders concurred on the importance of maintaining the UN's integrity, as well as that of its Charter and agencies. They decided to continue their efforts to improve and restructure the multilateral system, particularly by increasing the number of permanent and non-permanent members of the UNSC.
- The Prime Minister emphasised the significance of bringing the Quad's positive agenda together and producing concrete results for the region.

- The Leaders decided to keep up their routine conversations and the momentum of the Quad engagement.
- The Prime Minister extended an invitation to the Quad Leaders to visit India for the upcoming Quad Summit in 2024.

G20 India's 3rd ECSWG meeting concludes

Inside Story of the News:

- **The three-day 3rd Environment and Climate Sustainability Working Group (ECSWG) meeting** under India's G20 Presidency recently concluded in Mumbai, witnessing a participation of 141 delegates from G20 countries and 10 invitee countries, with a commitment to facilitating tangible outcomes through a consensus-driven approach.
- The 3 days of deliberations were also attended by the representatives of 14 international and regional organisations.
- The ECSWG outlined three priorities:
 - arresting land degradation
 - promoting circular economy
 - giving impetus to blue economy
- Out of these three themes, a certain theme was the emphasis of each meeting.
- The first day of the meeting featured the Ocean 20 Dialogue and the Mega Beach Clean Up Event, two side events that complemented the 3rd ECSWG's Blue Economy theme.
- With the participation of 20 nations and 37 Indian beaches from coastal states and union territories, the Mega Beach Clean-Up Event at Juhu in Mumbai was a tremendous success.
- In keeping with the Prime Minister's message on "Swachhta" (cleanliness) and "Jan Bhagidari" (public participation), the event sought to increase awareness of and sensitise people to the value of a clean environment.
- It emphasised the value of the "Lifestyle for Environment" (LiFE) concept and the contribution that each person can make to the fight against marine pollution.
- At the event, about 16,000 enthusiastic volunteers made a commitment to maintain clean beaches while highlighting sustainable coastal management and the ocean economy.
- The Ocean 20 Dialogue brought together international experts, innovators, community representatives, policymakers, and industry leaders to discuss advanced science and technology, innovation-driven solutions to problems in effective and inclusive policy and governance, as well as financing mechanisms to support blue economy initiatives at the national and regional levels.
- The inaugural address was given on the second day by Union Minister of State for Panchayati Raj Kapil M. Patil, who congratulated the Working Group on the success of the Mega Beach Clean-Up Event. He applauded the ECSWG's work to address environmental and climate change challenges.
- Leena Nandan, Secretary of the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change and Chair of the G20 India thanked the participants for their active participation in the first two ECSWG meetings. As the Working Group nears the conclusion of its work under the India Presidency, she urged G20 nations to continue participating in the Communique discussion to guarantee inclusive, ambitious, decisive conclusions.

- The draft Ministerial Communique was the main item on the agenda for the third ECSWG conference, and in-depth discussions about it included productive debates and discussions of priority topics.
- The discussions aimed to be inclusive and collaborative, building on the Focus Group Discussions the Indian Presidency held during the previous three weeks on each of the three thematic goals.
- As the conclusion documents were discussed line-by-line, member nations gave their perspectives.
- The third ECSWG meeting came to a close with discussions about the Communique, which will be further discussed and refined in virtual meetings scheduled over the coming weeks prior to the fourth and final ECSWG meeting, which will take place in Chennai from July 26–27, 2023.
- The Minister's Meet is scheduled for July 28, 2023.

PM Narendra Modi releases Tamil Classic 'Thirukkural' in Tok Pisin

Inside Story of the News:

- **The Tamil classic "Thirukkural" was recently released in Tok Pisin** by Prime Minister Narendra Modi while he was in Papua New Guinea.
- The release of the Tamil classic "Thirukkural" into Tok Pisin shows Papua New Guinea's and India's dedication to intercultural dialogue and understanding.
- The initiative serves as a link between the people of Papua New Guinea and India's rich literary heritage.
- It presents a chance for the citizens of this Pacific country to discover and cherish the rich knowledge and principles preserved in the Thirukkural.

About Tok Pisin:

- Approximately three-quarters of Papua New Guinea's population speaks Tok Pisin, which is the lingua franca of the entire country.
- It is, in fact, the most widely used language of the urban areas.
- The Pidgin language Tok Pisin evolved into a Creole language over time.
- As Tok Pisin developed from a pidgin to a creole, its vocabulary, which was derived from English, grew to include a variety of communication-related terms.
- While the majority of words have English roots, Tok Pisin also incorporates German, Kuanua (spoken by the Tolai people), Malay, and Portuguese influences.
- The historical interactions and cultural exchanges that have shaped Papua New Guinea are reflected in this rich linguistic tapestry.
- Tok Pisin is one of the national languages of Papua New Guinea, according to the constitution of that nation.
- Although English is more widely used for government business, much of the debate in Parliament is in Tok Pisin.

MoE calls first meet aimed at unifying 60 school boards

Inside Story of the News:

- **In order to bring together under one roof, the 60 school examination boards operating in various States and Union territories**, the Ministry of Education convened a workshop in New Delhi recently.
- The aim is to examine test-taking procedures, examination standards, and equivalence of boards across the country.
- The main component of this plan is **PARAKH** or the National Assessment Centre which has been set up as an organisation under the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT).
- The goal of PARAKH is to strive towards unifying the platforms of the educational boards in all of the States and Union Territories.
- The emphasis is to provide a single framework that permits smooth transitions for students moving between multiple boards or regions, with the focus being placed on the requirement for board equivalency. This entails coordinating curriculum requirements, grading schemes, and evaluation procedures to improve the validity and acceptance of certificates and grades earned across boards.
- The conversation focused on the requirement to re-evaluate the prevalent culture of rote assessment in our educational system.
- The discussion also emphasised the necessity of well-crafted, uniform exam papers to guarantee fairness and uniformity amongst boards and schools.
- There is also a demand to balance formative and summative tests in order to lessen the strain of high-stakes exams while still accurately gauging a student's progress.
- Also given was an analysis of the secondary and higher secondary boards' examination results.

MoCA launches UDAN 5.1, specifically designed for helicopter routes

Inside Story of the News:

- **The Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) - Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik (UDAN)** has had four successful rounds, and the fifth round's version 5.0 is currently under way. The Ministry of Civil Aviation has now **launched UDAN 5.1** to improve connectivity to remote areas of the nation and achieve last mile connectivity using helicopters.
- This round is intended **exclusively for routes for helicopters** under RCS-UDAN for the first time.
- The main features include:
 - An increase in the scope of operations for operators wherein the scheme will now allow routes where one of the origin or destination locations is in a priority area. Earlier both points had to be in priority areas.
 - To make helicopter travel more accessible for passengers, airfare caps have been decreased by as much as 25%.
 - Viability Gap Funding (VGF) caps for the operators have been increased substantially for both single and twin-engine helicopters to enhance financial viability for operating the awarded routes.
- The latest round of the UDAN scheme is evidence of two new trends in Indian civil aviation: first, a more thorough democratisation of air travel with an emphasis on last-mile connectivity. Second, there is an increasing demand for helicopters to promote tourism.
- 46 helicopter routes have already been operationalized as part of earlier rounds of the scheme, which benefited several hilly and North Eastern states. This round, however, aims to cover a far greater number of routes.

- Passengers have benefited from air connectivity under the UDAN scheme, airlines received concessions to operate regional routes, and unserved regions have benefited both directly and indirectly from air connectivity for their economic growth.

India's AI supercomputer 'AIRAWAT' ranked 75th in Global Supercomputing list

Inside Story of the News:

- **The AI supercomputer 'AIRAWAT' of India has earned the 75th spot in the esteemed Top 500 Global Supercomputing List**, demonstrating the country's technological supremacy.
- The announcement was made at the 61st International Supercomputing Conference (ISC 2023) that took place in Germany.
- In line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of "AI for ALL," this propels India to the forefront of the list of AI supercomputing nations worldwide.
- The installation of 'AIRAWAT' at C-DAC Pune is part of the National Program on AI initiated by the Government of India.
- Around 3 billion calculations can be performed on a modern laptop or desktop each second. Even if it appears to be incredibly fast, HPC solutions, which can carry out quadrillions of calculations per second, are still considerably superior.
- Building HPC systems, however, can cost anywhere from \$25,000 to \$1 billion, depending on the scale of the project, with the recurring operational cost involved.
- The AIRAWAT PoC of 200 AI Petaflops integrated with PARAM Siddhi – AI of 210 AI Petaflops gives a total peak compute of 410 AI Petaflops Mixed Precision and sustained compute capacity of 8.5 Petaflops (Rmax) Double Precision. The peak compute capacity (Double Precision, Rpeak) is 13 Petaflops.
- AIRAWAT is consistent with the country's aim of using technology and artificial intelligence for the benefit of the general public and to promote socioeconomic development.
- To meet the present demands for AI computation, MeitY has already envisioned a path for increasing AIRAWAT to 1,000 AI Petaflops Mixed Precision compute capacity.

DoLR Secretary reviews REWARD Program with World Bank Team

Inside Story of the News:

- **The World Bank-assisted Rejuvenating Watersheds for Agricultural Resilience through Innovative Development (REWARD) program's Implementation Support Mission was recently reviewed** by Shri Ajay Tirkey, Secretary, Department of Land Resources (DoLR), Government of India (GoI).
- The World Bank team, led by Smt. Preeti Kumar, visited the DoLR and REWARD States as part of the third Implementation Support Mission (ISM) to assess progress and talk about the action plan for the following six months.

About REWARD program:

- REWARD is a World Bank assisted Watershed development program which is being implemented from 2021 to 2026.

- "Strengthening capacities of National and State institutions to adopt improved watershed management for increasing farmers' resilience and supporting value chains in selected watersheds of participating States" is the development objective of the REWARD program.
- The Department of Land Resources in the Ministry of Rural Development, as well as the States of Karnataka and Odisha, are implementing the program to bring modern watershed practises into use.
- The REWARD program has a total budget outlay of USD 167.71 million during a 4.5-year program duration. This includes USD 115 million from World Bank [Karnataka (USD 60 million), Odisha (USD 49 million) and DoLR (USD 6 million)], USD 46.71 million from two participating States [Karnataka (USD 25.71) and Odisha (USD 21.0 million)] and USD 6 million from DoLR.
- The funding pattern is 70:30, between World Bank and States whereas it is 50:50 between World Bank and DoLR.
- At the central level, the scope of the REWARD program covers management, monitoring, communication and knowledge sharing functions by DoLR.
- At the State level, the REWARD program will be contiguous in scope to the WDC-PMKSY 2.0, and support implementation of key science-based activities and demonstrations which eventually aims at synergising broader perspective of WDC-PMKSY 2.0 in other States in India.

Three day G20 Anti-Corruption Working Group meeting concludes at Tehri

Inside Story of the News:

- **The three day Anti-Corruption Working Group meeting under the G20 India Presidency** recently concluded at the Tehri, Uttarakhand.
- The meeting was chaired by Rahul Singh, Additional Secretary, Department of Personnel and Training and Chairman G20 Anti-Corruption Working Group Meeting.
- In-depth and fruitful discussions on a number of important subjects and areas, including asset recovery, fugitive economic offenders, formal and informal channels of cooperation for information sharing, an institutional framework to combat corruption, and mutual legal assistance, had taken place over those three days.
- Three high-level principles for preventing and combating corruption were adopted by the delegates.
- The guiding principles included enhancing international law enforcement cooperation and information sharing to fight corruption, as well as promoting the efficacy and integrity of accountable public organisations and authorities.
- The three-day meeting had more than 90 delegates from 20 member states, 10 invitees, and 9 international organisations.

Praveen Kumar Srivastava sworn in as Central Vigilance Commissioner

Inside Story of the News:

- Recently, **Vigilance Commissioner Praveen Kumar Srivastava was sworn in by President Droupadi Murmu, as the Central Vigilance Commissioner (CVC).**

- Since the term of his predecessor Suresh N. Patel as Central Vigilance Commissioner (CVC) expired in December of last year, Mr. Srivastava has been serving in that capacity.
- On January 31, 2022, the 1988-batch Indian Administrative Service officer of Assam-Meghalaya cadre had retired as Secretary (Coordination), Cabinet Secretariat.
- As Director/Deputy Secretary in the Department of Commerce during his tenure with the Central government, he assisted in the World Trade Organisation negotiations pertaining to trade in services.
- He also served as the Chief Vigilance Officer in RITES Limited and Joint Secretary and Mission Director, Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission.
- Mr. Srivastava handled matters relating to cadre management of the Indian Police Service, Personnel and General Administration of Central Armed Police Forces and Union Territories while serving as Special Secretary and Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Astronomers discover a quasi-moon called 2023 FW13

Inside Story of the News:

- An asteroid that behaves like **a quasi-moon and orbits the Earth while being gravitationally bound by the Sun** has recently been discovered by astronomers.
- The discovery of this newfound celestial object, known as **2023 FW13**, has excited space enthusiasts and presents a unique chance for scientific exploration.
- Experts used the powerful Pan-STARRS telescope atop Hawaii's magnificent Haleakala volcano to observe this celestial body.
- Researchers have gained exceptional insights into the nature and behaviour of this extraordinary quasi-moon because of the precise observations made by this telescope.
- The loop in which the quasi-moon travels is estimated to have a radius of about 0.18 astronomical units.
- This large radius further emphasises how special 2023 FW13's orbit is and sets it apart as a remarkable quasi-moon.

About Quasi-Moons:

- Quasi-moons, the Earth's Orbiting Companions, often referred to as quasi-satellites, follow an orbital path around our planet that is comparable to that of the Moon, our natural satellite.
- These objects appear to orbit Earth while being influenced by the Sun's gravitational pull.
- This distinctive quality makes them fascinating objects of study and arouses the interest of astronomers.

Previous Discoveries and Comparisons:

- It is not the first of its sort that 2023 FW13 has been identified as a quasi-moon.
- A famous object known as 469219 Kamooalewa was discovered by astronomers in 2016; at the time, it was considered to be the tiniest, closest, and most stable known quasi-satellite.
- Multiple quasi-moons demonstrate the variety and dynamic nature of celestial objects in the area around Earth.

Underwater Volcano Discovered In Barents Sea

Inside Story of the News:

- Off the coast of Norway, scientists have found **a volcano at the bottom of the Barents Sea.**
- The research vessel Kronprins Haakon used the piloted submersible vehicle ROV Aurora to find the unusual geological phenomenon.
- At a depth of 400 metres, the volcano is located 70 nautical miles south of Bear Island.
- This is the second mud volcano that has been discovered within Norwegian waters.
- The **Borealis Mud Volcano** is the name given to the recently discovered volcano.
- It is most likely the result of a catastrophic, natural blow out that unexpectedly released huge methane just after the last glaciation period (18,000 years ago), leaving a crater that is 300 metres wide and 25 metres deep.
- The 2.5-meter-tall volcano has a 7-meter diameter and continuously vents fluids that are methane-rich.
- Since they erupt primarily water and fine sediments from depths of several hundred metres to several kilometres, researchers claim that volcanoes like this are direct windows into the Earth's interior and provide a window into past environments.
- In Norwegian waters, there is only one mud volcano, the 1995-discovered Hakon Mosby Mud Volcano.