

PLUTUS IAS



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1. TATA group to construct New Parliament Building

Key Facts

- The TATA Group had the lowest bid.
- The L and T had a bid of Rs 865 crores.

Construction Plan

- The development project will have a common Central Secretariat, a new triangular Parliament building.
- The central chamber will be enlarged in order to accommodate 1400 members.
- The project will also revamp the three-kilometre-long Rajpath that extends from Rashtrapati Bhawan to India Gate.
- The entire project will be maintained by The Central Public Works.
- Shastri Bhawan and Krishi Bhawan will be demolished to facilitate the new Central Secretariat under the project.
- Further, the North and South Block will be converted into museums.
- The Rashtrapati Bhawan area to the ridge will be converted into biodiversity arboretum in order to showcase India's biological diversity.

Background

- The Current Parliament was designed by Edwin Lutyens in 1912-1913.
- He was nominated after King George V announced to shift the capital of India from Calcutta to Delhi in December 1911.
- The Parliament was opened on 8 January 1927 by the then Viceroy of India, Lord Irwin.
- Under the current plan, the secretariat including the North and South Block was designed by Herbert Baker.

- The Parliament House, Rashtrapati Bhavan, North and South Block, India Gate, and national archives are currently clubbed as the Central Vista.
- In 2006, The Parliament Museum was opened. It stands next to the Parliament House in the Parliamentary Library Building.

2.10th virtual meeting of BRICS NSAs

The 10th Meeting of the BRICS High Representatives on National Security will be held today, September 17, 2020. The virtual meeting would be chaired by Russia.

Key facts

- The National Security Advisors of the BRICS nations will discuss the issues related to strengthening of the political security and cooperation among the BRICS nations.
- Countries will also exchange their views on international security, biosafety, cooperation on counter-terrorism and cybersecurity.

BRICS Nations

BRICS is an association of five economies including Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. This was formed in 2009. These countries have their significant influence on regional affairs. BRICS members meet annually at formal summits. The most recent summit was the 11th BRICS summit that was held on 13–14 November 2019.

Background

Originally there were four members grouped together as “BRIC” members. In 2010, South Africa was added to the group and the acronym became BRICS.

More About BRICS countries

- Four out of five members, excluding South Africa, are among world’s ten largest countries by population and area.
- These countries are also members of G20 nations.
- These five nations had a combined nominal GDP of about 23.2% of the gross world product.
- Bilateral relations between these countries are based on the principle of non-interference, equality, and mutual benefit.
- India, Russia and China are also the members of BRICS, Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and Russia-India-China (RIC) grouping.
- These countries make up 25 percent of the world’s land mass.
- Since 2012, the BRICS countries are planning to construct an optical fibre submarine communications cable system. The system would be used to carry telecommunications between the BRICS countries. The cable to be known as the BRICS Cable.

3. Abraham Accord: UAE and Bahrain to deal with Israel

US President Donald Trump, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and foreign ministers of Bahrain and UAE signed the first ever peace agreement in 26 years. The deal is named as the Abraham Accord. The parties have agreed to establish a diplomatic tie in order to stop the annexation of occupied land by the Palestine for their future state.

Key Facts

- It took an Arab country three decades to recognise Israel. Egypt had signed the first ever peace treaty with Israel.
- Jordan is the second Arab country to establish peace with Israel. Jordan took 15 more years to establish the peace.
- 26 years after Jordan, UAE signed a peace deal with Israel.
- Now, Israel and Bahrain have signed the peace deal. making Bahrain the fourth country to do so.

Arab Peace Initiative

Under the Trump administration, there is a scope of transformation regarding the oldest conflict in modern west Asia as Arab countries are coming forth to have peace deal with Israel. The administration speculates that more countries including Morocco, Sudan and Oman might come in line with UAE and Bahrain on a peace deal in future.

Palestine's Stand

The agreement between Bahrain and Israel makes no mention of Palestinian land. The UAE and Bahrain have supported the Arab Peace Initiative since 2002 that officially mentioned the question of Palestinian land. But the recent agreements made by Bahrain and the UAE have broken the consensus. So, the Palestinian leadership is considering this step to blow off the Arab Peace Initiative which is against the Palestinian people. The Palestinians have called for an Arab League session and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to reconsider their agreement.

India's stand

India had recognized Israel in 1950. Also, India was the first non-Arab country to recognize Palestine Liberation Organization as well which happens to be the only representative of Palestine. India in 2018 had de-hyphenated its relationship with both Israel and Palestine by treating both countries independently. The ritual to visit both Israel and Palestine simultaneously was done away with. This was a major step to treat both the counties exclusively. Later, India voted in favour of decision of Israel in UN

ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council) that grant consultative status to the Palestinian NGO.

4.Parliament passed Institute of Teaching and Research in Ayurveda Bill, 2020

Parliament passed the Institute of Teaching and Research in Ayurveda Bill, 2020 with approval from Rajya Sabha on September 16, 2020. Earlier, the lower house (Lok Sabha) had also passed the bill.

Key Provisions of the Bill

- The bill seeks to establish an Institute of Teaching and Research (IoTR) in Ayurveda.
- The bill also proposes to declare the IoTR as an Institute of National importance.
- The bill proposes to merge three Ayurveda institutes situated in Jamnagar, Gujarat into one. The three institutes are,
 1. The Institute of Post-Graduate Teaching and Research in Ayurveda,
 2. Shree Gulabkunverba Ayurved Mahavidyalaya and
 3. the Indian Institute of Ayurvedic Pharmaceutical Sciences.

Institute of Teaching and Research (IoTR) in Ayurveda

- The institute is being established with following objectives,
 1. To develop the patterns of teaching in Ayurveda and pharmacy.
 2. To bring educational facilities of training of personnel in all branches, together.
 3. To attain self-sufficiency in post-graduation.
 4. To meet the needs of specialists and medical teachers.
 5. To make a thorough and in-depth study.
- The institution will be providing UG (Under Graduate) and PG (Post Graduate) courses in Ayurveda including the pharmacy.
- These institutions will prescribe courses and curricula for colleges in India and abroad.
- They would maintain well-equipped hospitals for Ayurveda and supporting staffs including pharmacists and nurses.
- These institutions will also provide facilities for research in various branches of Ayurveda.
- The funds for the institutions will be received from the central government. Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) would be authorised to audit the funds.

5.What is the Djibouti Code of Conduct?

Djibouti Code of Conduct

- It is a regional maritime security cooperation agreement.
- The conduct was established by International Maritime Organization (IMO) in 2008.
- It consists of 19 member states surrounding the Gulf of Aden, Red Sea, East Coast of Africa and Indian Ocean Region.
- The member countries include- Eritrea, Egypt, Ethiopia, Oman, Comoros, Jordan, Djibouti, Maldives, Kenya, Somalia, Madagascar, Mozambique, Mauritius, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Seychelles, Yemen, UAE (United Arab Emirates), and United Republic of Tanzania.
- The observers include- Norway, Japan, UK, US.
- **India also became an observer state** under the grouping recently.

Objectives of the Grouping

Under the Djibouti Code of Conduct, the countries work with following objectives:

1. To investigate, arrest and prosecute persons who are suspected to commit the piracy acts in the region.
2. To intercept and seize suspected ships and property.
3. To rescue the persons, property and ships that are subjected to piracy and armed robbery.
4. To provide proper care and treatment of seafarers, fishermen and passengers.
5. To hire authorised officials to keep a check on patrol ships.

Jeddah Agreement

The Jeddah Agreement is the revised Djibouti Code of Conduct. Under the agreement, the countries have agreed to work together to build national and regional capacity so as to address maritime security issues. The agreement emphasises on the Blue Economy that will support the sustainable economic growth, employment, food security, prosperity, maritime security and stability in the region.

6. Bangladesh Grants Special Permission for Export of Hilsa Fish to India

The Bangladesh Government granted permission to India so as to export Hilsa fish. in the view of. Earlier, in 2012, the Government of Bangladesh imposed a ban on export of Hilsa fish to. However, India continues to export fish during the Durga Puja with the government's permission. Around 500 tonnes were imported from Bangladesh during the 2019 Durga puja.

Why did Bangladesh ban the export?

Bangladesh banned the export of Hilsa fish to India because,

- The Construction of dams and dumping of domestic and industrial wastes in to water bodies was affecting the population of the fish.

- Gradual oil spills from the old boats carrying fish from Bangladesh to India had also affected the fish ecosystem.
- Another reason was overexploitation of the fish. As per a report, more than 4 million fishermen were involved in Hilsa fishing alone.
- Further, the required amount of plankton was reduced.

Hilsa Fish

- The Hilsa Fish, also called as Ilish Fish, is an endemic species of Bangladesh.
- It has a pleasant flavour and soft texture. Reason being this, the fish is usually called “King of Fish”.
- The Hilsa fish has been designated as the National Fish of Bangladesh.
- It is also the state symbol of West Bengal.
- The fish is categorised as **Threatened** species under the **IUCN red list**.
- **Natural Habitat** – Sundarbans is the natural habitat of the fish. Apart from it, the fish is also found in Godavari river of Andhra Pradesh.
- **Cultural importance**– Bengalis offer the fish to goddess Lakshmi during Durga Puja.

The fish is found in 11 countries namely, Bangladesh, Iran, Iraq, India, Myanmar, Pakistan, Kuwait, Bahrain, Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia. However, Bangladesh accounts for 75% world Hilsa fish production.

7.Global Initiative to reduce Land Degradation and Coral Reef program launched

The G20 Environment Ministers Meeting took place on September 16, 2020 as a part of the **Sherpa Track** for the G20 Leaders’ Summit 2020. The summit was hosted by Saudi Arabia.

Key Highlights

- In the meeting, The **Global Initiative on Reducing Land Degradation** was launched.
- Theme of the meeting has been selected as- “Realizing Opportunities of the 21st Century for All”
- The meeting addressed 3 key agenda under the theme,
 1. Empowering People, by creating the conditions in which all people can live, work and thrive. Special emphasis given on women and youth.
 2. Safeguarding the Planet, through collective efforts in order to protect the global commons
 3. Shaping the New Frontiers, by adopting some long-term and bold strategies in order to share benefits of innovation and emerging technologies.
- The meeting was attended by Union Minister Prakash Javedkar.

Global Initiative on Reducing Land Degradation

The primary aim of the initiative is to strengthen the implementation of existing frameworks in order to prevent, halt, and reverse land degradation within G20 member states and globally. The implementation has to be done by taking into account possible implications on the achievement of other sustainable development goals (SDGs) and adhering to the principle of doing no harm.

G20 meeting

- For the annual G20 meeting, consultations are conducted through three tracks.
- Under the finance and Sherpa track, Government discussions takes place.
- Civil society organizations participate through several Engagement Groups.
- **The Sherpa Track** includes meetings of Ministers and relevant senior officials.
- The Sherpa Track is mainly focused on socioeconomic issues including agriculture, climate, anti-corruption, education, digital economy, energy, employment, health, environment, tourism, trade and investment.

G20 countries

The G20 includes 19 countries and the European Union. The 19 countries that makes the grouping include- Argentina, Brazil, Australia, China, Canada, India, France, Germany, Italy, Indonesia, Turkey, Japan, Mexico, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, the UK, and the US.

8. Seva Saptah

The Seva Saptah is being observed from September 14, 2020 to September 20, 2020 in light of Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi's birthday that happens to be on September 17.

Key Facts

- This year marks the 70th birthday of the Prime Minister.
- Gujarat Government will launch projects and schemes to commemorate the day.
- The Chief Minister of Gujarat will launch a cow-based organic farming.
- State government would also provide a monthly assistance of Rs 900 to the farmers.
- The Gujarat Government is going to sign 10 Memorandum of Understandings on Climate Change.
- Kits would also be provided to the farmer on this occasion in order to make Jivamrut (natural fertiliser).
- The government would also launch water supply projects for 205 villages of Tapi and Narmada districts.

- Women would be provided an assistance of Rs 1,000 in Gujarat to help them start their own business.
- Surat will plant 70,000 saplings to commemorate PM Modi's birthday.

Seva Saptah

To mark the birthday of PM Narendra Modi, the Bharatiya Janata Party observes the Seva Saptah from September 14 to September 20 every year. The theme of 2020 Seva Saptah is "Seventy" in order to mark the 70th birthday of the PM. On this occasion, party will provide artificial limbs and spectacles to 70 people, distribute fruits to 70 hospitals and 70 blood donation camps will be organised.

Seva Diwas

September 17 is celebrated as Seva Divas by the Bharatiya Janata party every year which happens to be the birthday of PM Modi.

9.Meeting of IBSA Foreign Ministers

On September 16, 2020, External Affairs Minister Dr S. Jaishankar, chaired the customary meeting of IBSA Foreign Ministers through video conferencing. The ministers adopted the IBSA Joint Ministerial Statement on the Reform of the UN Security Council which will be a common endeavour of the Global South.

Key Facts

- The ministers during the meet agreed,
 1. On issues including the peace, security, terrorism, climate change, disarmament, multilateral trade agreements, non-proliferation issues and South-South Cooperation.
 2. To renew their commitment towards the United Nations Security Council.
 3. To cooperate with international organizations including the African Union Peace and Security Council, United Nations, etc.
 4. To extend their support to Ezulwini Consensus and Sirte Declaration.

About IBSA (India, Brazil and South Africa)

- IBSA is a Forum that brings together India, Brazil and South Africa which are the three large democracies and major economies from three different continents. The trio is also facing similar challenges.
- IBSA was established in June 2003.
- IBSA does not have any headquarters or permanent executive secretariat. It counts on the Summits of Heads of State and Government at the highest level.

- Following summits have been held by the head of the states,
 1. 1st IBSA Summit – 13 September 2006 – Brasilia, Brazil
 2. 2nd IBSA Summit – 17 October, 2007 – Tshwane, South Africa
 3. 3rd IBSA Summit – 15 October 2008, New Delhi, India
 4. 4th IBSA Summit – 15 April 2010 – Brasilia, Brazil
 5. 5th IBSA Summit – 18 October 2011 – Tshwane, South Africa
- Also, the Foreign Ministers meet about once a year. Following meeting have been held:
 1. 1st: March 5th, 2004, in New Delhi;
 2. 2nd: March 3rd, 2005, in Cape Town;
 3. 3rd: March 30th, 2006, in Rio de Janeiro;
 4. 4th: July 16th and 17th, 2007, in New Delhi;
 5. 5th: May 11th, 2008, in Somerset West;
 6. 6th: August 31st to September 1st, 2009, in Brasília;
 7. 7th: March 8th, 2011, in New Delhi
 8. 8th: October 17th, 2017, in Durban
 9. 9th: September 27th, 2018, in New York

Ezulwini Consensus

The consensus, which was agreed by African Unions, calls for having a representative and democratic security council where Africa shall be represented just like other regions of the world.

Sirte Declaration

The Sirte Declaration was made with an objective to establish African Union and to create African Court of Justice, African Central Bank, African Economic Community and Pan-African Parliament.

African Union

The African union was founded in 2001 in Addis Ababa. It comprises 55 member states. The union aims to achieve greater unity among the African countries and to promote and defend social economic integration.