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News Digest

NATIONAL

G20 Foreign Ministers' Meet Concludes in New Delhi

Leaders from around the world gathered in India for the G20 Foreign Ministers Meeting held on 1st - 2nd March 2023. The meeting focused on achieving common and concrete objectives, with a particular emphasis on the need for resilience in societies, healthcare systems, and economies. Addressing the meeting, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi highlighted the crisis facing multilateralism today, with global governance failing in its mandates to prevent future wars and foster international cooperation on issues of common interest. "Developing countries are particularly affected by this failure, facing unsustainable debt and struggling to ensure food and energy security for their people. India's G20 Presidency is seeking to give a voice to the Global South, ensuring that those most affected by global decisions are heard," he said. The Prime Minister urged the leaders to draw inspiration from India's civilisational ethos and focus on what unites them all.

India and Italy Elevate Bilateral Partnership to Strategic Partnership Status

India and Italy have decided to elevate their bilateral partnership to Strategic Partnership Status. The decision was taken in New Delhi on 1st March 2023 during the visit of Italy's Prime Minister Ms. Giorgia Meloni. Both the countries have emphasised on further strengthening their economic ties, particularly in the areas of Renewable Energy, Green Hydrogen, IT, semiconductors, telecom, and space. In addition, the two countries have established a Startup Bridge to promote greater collaboration in the field of entrepreneurship and innovation. The bilateral talks between Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and Ms. Goirgia Meloni centered on ways to enhance defence cooperation, with opportunities being created for co-production and co-development in the defence manufacturing sector in India, which can be beneficial for both countries. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi welcomed Italy's decision to join the Indo-Pacific Ocean Initiative, which will enable India and Italy to identify concrete themes for enhancing their cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. The leaders also discussed the need for reforms in multilateral institutions to reflect global realities in a better manner. The visit of Italy's Prime Minister to India is significant as it marks the 75th anniversary of the bilateral relations between the two countries.

India and Australia Sign Agreement on Mutual Recognition of Qualifications

India and Australia have signed an agreement for establishing a framework mechanism for mutual recognition of qualifications, aimed at facilitating two-way mobility of young people for education and employment purposes. The agreement covers both education and skill qualifications of the two countries, will create more opportunities for students and professionals, and pave the way for making education the biggest enabler in taking India-Australia bilateral relationship to greater heights. The two countries have also agreed to explore ways of enhancing research and academic collaborations between universities through the mechanism of Joint/ Dual/ Twinning degrees that have been introduced under India's National Education Policy 2020.

Deakin University to Become First Foreign University to Set Up Campus in GIFT City

Australia's Deakin University has become the first foreign university to receive approval from the International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) to set up an International Branch Campus (IBC) in GIFT City, Gujarat. With this, Deakin University will be able to offer the same courses and Degree it offers in Australia in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Financial Management to both Indian and foreign students. The degree offered shall be identical or similar to that offered in the home jurisdiction. The establishment of world-class educational institutions in GIFT City will help develop a robust extended ecosystem and make available high-end human resources to the financial institutions. This move will also promote deep collaboration between academia and industry, resulting in financial innovations.

NSDC Signs MoU with Swiss Institute for Enhancing Skill Development in Hospitality

In a bid to enhance the skill development initiatives in the hospitality sector and make apprenticeship aspirational, the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Switzerland-based Hotel and Tourism Management Institute (HTMI). The collaboration will offer certificate, diploma, advanced diploma, and certification courses in hospitality trades to aspiring students. Under the partnership, students will receive training in three modules over the course of six months. The program will cover topics such as English for hospitality operations, front office operations and administration, housekeeping operations, food and beverage production and services, and guest services, among others.

INTERNATIONAL

Quad Foreign Ministers Reaffirm Commitment to a Free and Open Indo-Pacific

In a display of solidarity and commitment to regional stability, the Foreign Ministers of the Quad member countries have once again expressed their unwavering support for a free and open Indo-Pacific that is inclusive and resilient. At a recent meeting chaired by External Affairs Minister Shri S Jaishankar in New Delhi, the leaders of the Quad - the United States, Japan, Australia, and India - reiterated their adherence to the principles of freedom, rule of law, sovereignty, territorial integrity, peaceful settlement of disputes, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region. The Quad Foreign Ministers expressed their concern over the escalating Ukraine-Russia conflict and the need for a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace in accordance with international law, including the UN Charter. Additionally, the Quad leaders condemned the launch of an Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) by North Korea on 16th February 2023 as a violation of UN Security Council resolutions. They called for the complete denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula and urged North Korea to comply with its obligations under UNSCRs. The Quad leaders also strongly emphasised the importance of maintaining peace, stability, and prosperity in Myanmar, expressing deep concern at the deteriorating situation in the country. They called for a complete cessation of violence and the release of all those arbitrarily detained.

ECONOMY

India Gets GSMA GLOMO Award for Telecom Reforms

India has been awarded the prestigious GSMA GLOMO Award (Groupe Speciale Mobile Association Global Mobile Award) for its telecom reforms. Receiving the award at the Mobile World Congress held in Barcelona on 27th February 2023, Minister for Communications, Electronics & IT and Railways, Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw, said that it is a testimony to the transformative changes brought in by the Indian government's Digital India vision, which aimed to bring connectivity to every corner of the country. In his address, the minister noted that India's 5G rollout is one of the fastest in the world, with nearly one lakh sites in 387 districts. The Indian government's structural and procedural reforms for the telecom sector announced in September 2021 included notable changes in licensing, spectrum allocation, satellite, RoW (Rights of Way) reforms, as well as the creation of the PM Gati Shakti Sanchar Portal.

GeM Celebrates Success of SWAYATT Scheme Promoting Presence of Under-Served Sellers

A commemorative function was held in New Delhi to celebrate the success of "SWAYATT," an initiative to promote Start-ups, Women, and Youth Advantage through e-Transactions on the Government eMarketplace (GeM). Smt Radha S Chauhan, Secretary, Ministry of Personnel and Training applauded the efforts of the GeM in ramping up the presence of under-served seller groups, such as MSEs, women, Divyangjan and tribal entrepreneurs, Start-ups, self-help groups, artisan, and weavers, and giving them direct access to government procurement. GeM is a Section 8 company set up under the administrative control of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Social inclusion is a core value at GeM, and the company is focused on increasing participation from under-served sellers who face challenges in public procurement.

SPORTS

Argentina Captain Lionel Messi Bags Best FIFA Football Player Award

Argentina captain Lionel Messi has been named the best player in men's football by FIFA, at 'The Best FIFA Football Awards' held in Paris. Messi won this award for his outstanding performances in men's football from August 2021 to December 2022. The 35-year-old forward scored two goals in the final against France. France's Kylian Mbappe, also nominated for the highly anticipated award of the night, netted a hat-trick in the World Cup final. However, Mbappe's achievement was overshadowed as Messi finally won the most coveted trophy. Spain's Alexia Putellas won the best women's footballer award for the second year in a row.

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