

Current Affairs search results for tag: national-news

1. Prime Minister inaugurates Saryu Nahar National Project (Dec. 12, 2021)

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the ₹9,800 crore Saryu Nahar National Project in Balrampur district of Uttar Pradesh .
- The 6,623-kilometre-long canal system will provide assured water for irrigation of over 14 lakh hectares of land to the benefit of about 29 lakh farmers of nine districts in the region – Bahraich, Shravasti, Gonda, Balrampur, Siddharthnagar, Basti, Sant Kabir Nagar, Gorakhpur, and Maharajganj.
- Five rivers—Ghagra, Saryu, Rapti, Banganga, and Rohini—have been interlinked under the project to ensure optimum usage of water resources of the region.
- The Saryu Nahar National project was started in 1978.
- Union Jal Shakti minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat

2. Punjab approach Supreme Court on BSF jurisdiction in the state (Dec. 12, 2021)

- Punjab has filed a suit in the Supreme Court against the Centre's move to increase the limits of jurisdiction of the Border Security Force (BSF) from 15 km to 50 km along the India-Pakistan International Border.
- The State has filed an original suit challenging the October 11,2021 notification issued by the Union Home Ministry extending the Central force's area of jurisdiction, calling it a breach of the federal form of governance under the Constitution.
- **The border area with Pakistan and Bangladesh is guarded by Border Security Forces(BSF)**

Background to the Issue

- October 11, 2021, the Centre invoked section 139(1) (i) of the BSF Act, 1968 to authorise the force to undertake search, seizure and arrest within a larger 50 km stretch, instead of the existing 15 kms, from the international border in Punjab, West Bengal and Assam.
- In Gujarat, which shares a border with Pakistan, the same limit was reduced from 80 km to 50 km, and in Rajasthan, it was kept unchanged at 50 km.
- Section 139 (1) (i) of the BSF Act, 1968 empowers the Central Government to confer powers and duties on members of the force in respect of any Central Acts for the purposes specified therein.
- According to the Central government it was done for better and more effective control on trans-border crimes in conjunction and co-operation with the State Police.
- Later the BSF chief Pankaj Kumar said that the jurisdiction of the BSF was increased in these states to curb illegal infiltration from Bangladesh which was causing a demographic change in the border district of these States creating a security threat to these states and to India.
- However, Punjab and West Bengal governments have opposed the move and said that it was an encroachment on state rights by the central government.
- The Punjab legislative Assembly passed a resolution against this move of the center .

Supreme Court's Original Jurisdiction

There are certain type of cases which only the Supreme Court of India can hear ,which is called the original jurisdiction of the Supreme Court

Article 131 of the Indian Constitution provides for the original jurisdiction of the Supreme Court

Only the Supreme Court shall hear the following cases :

- (a) any dispute between the Government of India and one or more States; or
- (b) dispute between the Government of India and any State or States on one side and one or more other States on the other; or
- (c) dispute between two or more States, if the dispute involves any question of law or fact.

3. UN General Assembly Grants Observer Status To International Solar Alliance (Dec. 11, 2021)

- The **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** has granted **Observer Status to International Solar Alliance (ISA)**, India's Permanent Ambassador to the United Nations.
- A total of **108 countries participated in the Assembly**, including 74 Member Countries and 34 Observer and Prospective Countries, 23 Partner Organizations and 33 Special Invitee Organisations.
- The launch of the ISA was announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and former French President Francois Hollande in November 2015, at the 21st session of the UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties in Paris, France.
- In 6 years, the International Solar Alliance has become an example of positive global climate action through partnerships to benefit global energy growth and development.

Observer Status

Observer status is a privilege granted by some organizations to non-members to give them an ability to participate in the organization's activities. Observer status is often granted by intergovernmental organizations (IGO) to non-member parties and international nongovernmental organizations (INGO) that have an interest in the IGO's activities.

United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)

The United Nations General Assembly is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations, serving as the main deliberative, **policymaking**, and **representative organ of the UN**.

Responsibilities of UNGA includes:

- preparing the UN budget
- appointing the non-permanent members to the Security Council
- appointing the Secretary-General of the United Nations
- receiving reports from other parts of the UN system
- making recommendations through resolutions.

It also establishes numerous subsidiary organs to advance or assist in its broad mandate.

Headquarters: **New York, United States**

President: **Abdulla Shahid**

Convened: **10 January 1946**

India's Permanent Ambassador to the UN, T S Tirumurti.

International Solar Alliance

The **International Solar Alliance (ISA)** is an *alliance of 124 countries initiated by India, most of them being the sunshine countries, which lie either completely or partly between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn.*

The primary objective of the alliance:

- to work for efficient consumption of solar energy to reduce dependence on fossil fuels.
- to endorse clean energy, sustainable environment, public transport and climate

Formation: **30 November 2015**

Headquarters: **Gurugram, Haryana, India**

Director General: **Ajay Mathur**

4. PM Modi Addresses Democracy Summit (Dec. 11, 2021)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in a virtual address on 10th December 2021 at the Summit for Democracy, hosted by U.S. President Joe Biden, that Democracies should jointly deal with social media and cryptocurrencies.

The PM further added that, we all need to constantly improve our democratic practices and systems. And, we all need to continuously enhance inclusion, transparency, human dignity, responsive grievance redressal and decentralization of power.

In this context, today's assembly provides a timely platform for furthering cooperation among democracies. India would be happy to share its expertise in holding free and fair elections, and in enhancing transparency in all areas of governance through innovative digital solutions. We must also jointly shape global norms for emerging technologies like social media and cryptocurrencies, so that they are used to empower democracy, not to undermine it.

For more information about the Democracy Summit, see news of 10th December.

5. Nicaragua cut its diplomatic relation with Taiwan (Dec. 11, 2021)

- The Central American country Nicaragua has become the latest country to cut diplomatic ties with Taiwan in favour of China.
- The decision was praised by China, which demands that any country that wants diplomatic relations with it must cut existing ties with Taipei.
- Beijing sees Taiwan as a breakaway province to be reunified with the mainland one day.
- However, Taiwan sees itself as a democratically-governed, independent country, though it has never formally declared independence from the mainland.
- Taiwan's list of international allies has dwindled from 21 down to 14 since President Tsai Ing-wen took office in May 2016.
- Before Nicaragua, the Pacific Island nations of Kiribati and the Solomon Islands were the latest countries to cut ties with Taiwan in favour of China in 2019.

Capital of Nicaragua: Managua

President of Nicaragua : Daniel Ortega

Capital of Taiwan : Taipei

6. India co-chairs Global Methane Initiative Steering Leadership Meeting (Dec. 11, 2021)

A Steering Leadership meeting of **Global Methane Initiative (GMI)** has been held virtually in which the **Additional Secretary, Ministry of Coal, V.K. Tiwari** as the **Vice Chairman** of this global initiative informed the participants about the work being carried out by India to mitigate the emission of methane.

Global Methane Initiative(GMI)

A voluntary Government and an informal international partnership having members from 45 countries including the United States and Canada.

- The forum was created in 2004 to achieve a global reduction in anthropogenic methane emission through a partnership among developed and developing countries having economies in transition.
- India is one of the members since its inception and has taken up Vice-Chairmanship for the first time in the Steering Leadership along with USA.
- The Chairperson of the Steering Leadership is from Canada.

7. Funds for Beti Bachao Andolan used in advertisement (Dec. 11, 2021)

According to a report submitted in Parliament on 9th December, by the committee on **Empowerment of Women**, out of a total of **Rs 446.72 crore released under the scheme between 2016 and 2019, 78.91 percent was spent on media advocacy**, and not on sectoral intervention on health and education for women.

- The committee is chaired by **Heena Vijaykumar Gavit** and the report is titled **“Empowerment of women through education with special reference to Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao(BBBP).”**
- Committee found that the total utilization under the scheme was also poor.
- Since the inception of **BBBP in 2014-15 till 2019-20**, the **total budgetary allocation** under the scheme was **₹848 crore**, excluding the COVID-19 stricken financial year of 2020-21.
- During this period, **₹622.48 crore was released to the States** but only **25.13% of the funds, i.e. ₹156.46 crore**, had been spent.

Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (BBBP) Yojana

Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao is a campaign of the Government of India that aims to generate awareness and improve the efficiency of welfare services intended for girls in India.

- The scheme was launched with an initial funding of ₹100 crore (US\$13 million).
- It mainly targets the clusters in **Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Bihar** and **Delhi**.

Launched on: **22nd January 2015** by **PM Narendra Modi**

Related Ministries:

Ministry of Women and Child Development

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

Ministry of Education

8. No proposal under consideration to scrap Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) (Dec. 11, 2021)

Stating the Government of India position ,Law Minister Kiren Rijiju informed the Lok Sabha that the section 124 A of the Indian Penal Code(IPC) 1860 which deals with sedition in sub -judice before the Supreme Court and the government has no intention of scrapping the section.

Sedition law in India

Section 124 A which defines sedition was introduced by the British in 1870 by amending the Indian Penal Code (IPC) 1860.

It defines sedition as :

"Whoever by words, either spoken or written, or by signs, or by visible representation, or otherwise, brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards, the Government established by law in [India], shall be punished with [imprisonment for life], to which fine may be added, or with imprisonment which may extend to three years, to which fine may be added."

- The law was used by the British to target the freedom fighters like Mahatma Gandhi , Bal Gangadhar Tilak etc and to crush the freedom struggle .
- After Independence there was demand to scrap the section as it was against the spirit of democracy and liberty.
- In 1961 the Punjab High Court held that the sedition law violated the freedom of speech guaranteed under article 19 and declared it unconstitutional.
- In the Kedar Nath Vs State of Bihar 1962 supreme court upheld the constitutional validity of the section 124 A.

9. Nagaland Government demands withdrawal of AFSPA from Nagaland (Dec. 6, 2021)

- Nagaland Chief Minister Mr. Neiphiu Rio has demanded the withdrawal of the Armed Forces Special powers Act from the state following the death of 14 civilians in the Army operation against the Naga insurgents in the Mon district of Nagaland on 4 December 2021. Nagaland's Mon district
- Nagaland's Mon district borders Myanmar from where members of the NSCN (Khaplang-Yung Aung) are said to carry out hit-and-run operations.
- The Konyak Union, the apex body of the Konyak Naga Tribe from the Mon district of Nagaland has also demanded the repeal of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act or, AFSPA, from the entire Northeast of India and withdrawal of Assam Rifles from the Mon district of Nagaland .
- The Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma has also demanded the withdrawal of AFSPA from Manipur .
- The Nagaland government has two member Special Investigation Team (SIT) to investigate the circumstances leading to the killing of the civilians by the armed forces.

10. Opening day of Summit for Democracy (Dec. 10, 2021)

Theme of the Summit: “combating authoritarianism, fighting corruption and promoting human rights”

It has been organised by the State Department of the United States.

While inaugurating the summit the US President Joe Biden said that

“Democracy doesn't happen by accident. We have to renew it with each generation,” in a message, which will bring together leaders of 100 countries, civil society and private sector representatives.

Sitting beside his Secretary of State **Antony Blinken**, and addressing over **50 Countries**, **Biden** said, “We have to stand for justice and the rule of law for free speech, free assembly, a free press, freedom of religion, for all the inherent human rights of every individual,”.

- Biden announced plans for the U.S. to spend up to \$424 millions around the world to support **Independent media, anti-corruption work and more.**

Indian Prime Minister Mr Narendra Modi also participated in the summit virtually .

The PM said that the “four pillars of Indian democratic governments” are “**sensitivity, accountability, participation and reform orientation**”.

Major countries like Russia, China, Saudi Arabia have not been invited to the summit.

Pakistan was invited to the summit but it chose to back off from the summit over the fear that it will offend its close ally China.

Summit for Democracy

This is a virtual summit hosted by the United States of America to “renew democracy at home and confront autocracy abroad”.

- 111 nations were invited to join this Summit Virtually.
- Dates : 9-10 December 2021