

Current Affairs search results for tag: international-news

1. World Water Week - 2022 (Aug. 23, 2022)

World Water Week - 2022 is being held in Stockholm, Sweden from 23 August to 1 September.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- Theme of World Water Week 2022 - **“Seeing the unseen: The value of water”**.
- The event has been organised by the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI).
- The theme of World Water Week 2022 is covered under three main approaches -
 1. The value of water for people and sustainable development
 2. the value of water for nature and climate change
 3. the financial and economic value of water
- The event will provide many opportunities for people around the world to unite, promote ideas, innovate and discuss the future.
- Around 300 sessions will be organised under World Water Week on water related topics including food security, health, agriculture, technology, biodiversity, climate change etc.
- World Water Week will attract top scientists, UN experts, local community groups, entrepreneurs, top politicians, students, CEOs and many more.
- This will help in achieving reforms towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

2. India handed over 21,000 tonnes of urea to crisis-hit Sri Lanka (Aug. 23, 2022)

India on 22 August handed over 21,000 tonnes of chemical fertiliser to the crisis-ridden neighbour Sri Lanka.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- This has been done under a special assistance program that will help farmers in Sri Lanka and help strengthen bilateral cooperation for food security,
- This is India's second such aid to the beleaguered island nation in recent months.
- In May 2022, India had assured to supply 65,000 metric tonnes of urea to Sri Lanka immediately to avoid any disruption in the current **Yala farming** season in Sri Lanka.

Yala is the paddy cultivation season in Sri Lanka which lasts between May and August.

Ban of Fertiliser in Sri Lanka :

- To move towards a green economy, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa last year decided to ban imports of chemical fertilizers, causing a food shortage that has reduced crop yields by 50%.
- This decision of the government badly affected the food production.
- As a result, the President of Sri Lanka declared an economic emergency to curb rising food prices.

India's support to Sri Lanka :

- India has pledged about \$4 billion in loans, lines of credit and credit swaps to the debt-ridden Sri Lanka from January this year.
- Sri Lanka's annual fertilizer imports cost is USD 400 million.
- India has provided financial assistance of about USD 3.5 billion to help safeguard Sri Lanka's food, health and energy security by supplying food, medicines, fuel, kerosene and other essential commodities.
- In addition, India has recently supplied around 40,000 tonnes of rice under the extended USD 1 billion line of credit.

3. US, South Korea begin biggest joint military drills since 2018 (Aug. 22, 2022)

South Korea and the United States began their biggest joint military exercise 'Ulchi Freedom Shield' since 2018 on 22 August with the resumption of field training.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- Known as Ulchi Freedom Shield, thousands of military personnel are expected to participate in the exercise.
- It will run for two weeks starting 22 August.
- The US and South Korea have said they are defensive in nature and will conduct exercises to coordinate security forces in response to North Korea's aggression.
- The exercise is likely to involve warships, aircraft and armoured vehicles.
- The US, South Korea and Japan conducted a joint missile defence exercise in Hawaii earlier this month.
- The US, Japan and South Korea have warned that North Korea is preparing for its first nuclear test since 2017.

- North Korea is trying to develop smaller weapons to attack US allies in Asia and could increase the power of those weapons that would be carried to the US by intercontinental ballistic missiles.
- The US still has about 28,500 troops in South Korea and military leaders on both sides have said the exercises are necessary to prepare for any provocation by Pyongyang (North Korea).
- Ulchi Freedom Shield exercise will improve South Korea's combat capability.

South Korea :

- It is in East Asia. It is located on the southern part of the Korean Peninsula.
- In 2017 South Korea had the fastest internet connectivity globally.
- President - **Yoon Suk-Yeol**
- Prime Minister - **Kim Boo-Kyum**
- Capital - **Seoul**
- Official Language - **Korean**

4. S Jaishankar unveils Gandhi's bust in Paraguay (Aug. 22, 2022)

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, who is on his first ever official visit to South America, unveiled a bust of Mahatma Gandhi in Paraguay on 21 August.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- He appreciated the decision of Asuncion Municipality to establish it on the main waterfront of the city.
- The External Affairs Minister also visited the historic **Casa de la Independencia** from where Paraguay's independence movement began more than two centuries ago.
- External Affairs Minister, S Jaishankar is on an official visit to Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina from 22-27 August.
- In Paraguay, S Jaishankar will also inaugurate the new **Indian Embassy complex**, which started functioning in January 2022.
- EAM's visit is aimed at exploring new areas of cooperation in the post-pandemic era.

About Paraguay :

- It is a land-locked country in **south-central South America**.
- It is one of the world's largest exporters of **hydropower**.
- The rivers provide access to the Atlantic Ocean and serve as sites for hydroelectric power plants.

- Paraguay is a member of **MERCOSUR**.
- The Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) is a regional integration process, initially established by **Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, and later joined by Venezuela and Bolivia**.
- India has a preferential trade agreement with MERCOSUR.
- Diplomatic relations between India and Paraguay were established in year 1961.
- President - **Mario Abdo Benitez**
- Capital - **Asuncion**
- Currency - **The guarani**

5. US announces 775 million dollars additional military assistance for Ukraine (Aug. 20, 2022)

On August 19, the United States government announced additional military aid of up to \$775 million for Ukraine.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- This is the 19th Presidential Drawdown Authority (PDA) package that the US Department of Defence has provided to Ukraine since August 2021.
- The USA will provide Ukraine with ScanEagle surveillance drones, mine-resistant vehicles, anti-armor rounds and howitzers to help the Ukrainian military retaliate against Russian invaders.
- The US sent eight HIMARS to Ukraine - which significantly strengthened Ukraine's defence against Russian weapons depots.
- The US has promised to send four more HIMARS.
- In the context of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the US is helping Ukraine's military by providing them with weapons to strengthen it.
- The latest aid comes as Russia's attack on Ukraine turns six months old.

HIMARS — a key weapon against Russia :

- The US-made High Mobility Artillery Rocket System is known as HIMARS.
- The M142 HIMARS system (High Mobility Artillery Rocket System) is a modernized, lighter and more agile wheel-mounted missile for US and allied forces.
- The use of HIMARS has been effective in deterring Russian military positions.
- It can hit targets up to 70 kilometres away.

- Ukrainian troops can deploy this wheeled, high-tech lightweight rocket launcher outside the range of most Russian artillery.

US' military aid to Ukraine :

- This military assistance forms part of a long history of US support to Ukraine.
- On 24 February this year, Moscow launched an invasion of Ukraine.
- The United States has committed about \$9.8 billion in security assistance to Ukraine.
- Since 2014, the United States has given Ukraine more than \$11.8 billion in security aid.

6. 65th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Canada (Aug. 20, 2022)

An Indian parliamentary delegation led by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla is participating in the 65th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPA) in Halifax, Canada.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- The conference is being held in Halifax, Canada from **20-26 August**.
- The delegation included Anurag Sharma, MP (Lok Sabha) and CPA executive committee member, Sunita Duggal, MP (Lok Sabha) and member of CWP steering committee, Neeraj Shekhar, MP (Rajya Sabha), Santosh Kumar, MP (Lok Sabha), Anubhav Mohanty, MP (Lok Sabha), Dr. Kanimozhi NVN Somu, MP (Rajya Sabha) and Utpal Kumar Singh, General Secretary, Lok Sabha.
- The conference will also be attended by 23 Presiding Officers of India and 16 Secretaries of State Legislatures who are also members of the CPA.
- Eight workshops on various topics will be organized during the conference.
- The Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla will participate as a panellist in the Workshop 'C' titled **"A People's Parliament : Accessibility through Innovation"**.
- The Speaker will also interact with his counterparts from other Commonwealth countries to discuss matters of mutual interest and parliamentary cooperation.

About Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) :

- The conference is the largest gathering of Commonwealth Parliamentarians who come together to discuss and debate major global political issues and developments.
- Between 1948 and 1959, this conference was held biennially, since 1961 it has been held annually.
- Due to COVID-19 global pandemic, the Conference has not been held since 2019.
- The 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) was held in Uganda (2019).

Members of the Commonwealth of Nations :

- The head of the Commonwealth is the Queen of Great Britain Elizabeth II.
- He received this title as a result of elections following the resignation of his father.
- The title of head cannot be inherited, so the new head of the Commonwealth of Nations is elected by voting at each meeting.
- The Commonwealth comprises 54 countries of the world in all 6 continents.
- The members have a total population of 2.1 billion, which is about a third of the world's population.
- Of its total population, 1.17 billion live in India.
- After India, the next largest Commonwealth countries by population are Pakistan (176 million), Bangladesh (156 million), Nigeria (149 million).
- The land area of the Commonwealth of Nations accounts for about 21% of the total world land area.
- The largest Commonwealth nations by area are Canada, Australia and India.

7. China's army to take part in Vostok-2022 exercise in Russia (Aug. 19, 2022)

The People's Liberation Army of China will participate in the strategic command and staff exercise Vostok-2022 in Russia from 1 - 5 September.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- India, Belarus, Tajikistan, Mongolia and other countries will also participate in the exercise.
- The exercise will be held under the command of the chief of Russia's General Staff, Valery Gerasimov, at 13 training grounds of the Eastern Military District.
- During the exercise, the participating forces will practice measures to maintain military security in the eastern sector.
- The exercise will contribute to "friendly cooperation between the armed forces of all countries".
- It will advance the level of strategic dialogue by all parties and strengthen the ability to respond to various security threats.
- Last year, India participated in Exercise ZAPAD 2021 in Russia, in which 17 countries including China and Pakistan participated.

India's Exercises with China & Russia :

- **China** - Exercise Hand-in-Hand
- **Russia** - Exercise Indra, Exercise TSENTR

8. China's funding for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor down 56% (Aug. 19, 2022)

China's funding to Pakistan for the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) declined by about 56% in the first half of 2022.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- Other countries such as Russia, Egypt and Sri Lanka saw a 100% drop of BRI engagement compared to 2021.
- The project is running from Gwadar port in Pakistan to Kashgar city in Xinjiang, China.
- The project is not running as per the initial promise due to lack of transparency, debt problem, poor management and corruption.
- The project is facing local opposition and frequent attacks on the project and its personnel in Pakistan and other security challenges.
- Apart from this, the deteriorating economic condition of Pakistan is also affecting the project.
- According to reports, China has recently asked for its military presence in Pakistan to safeguard and look after the project.
- China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) project, on the other hand, is also facing global criticism for its inadequate transparency of loans.

China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) :

- It is a project connecting China's northwestern Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region and Gwadar Port in Pakistan's western province of Balochistan.
- The length of this project is 3,000 km.
- It is a bilateral project between Pakistan and China.
- It aims to promote connectivity across Pakistan through a network of energy, industrial and other infrastructure development projects, highways, railways and pipelines.
- It is a part of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

9. HAL to open office in Kuala Lumpur for business operations in Southeast Asia (Aug. 18, 2022)

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) signed a MoU to set up an office in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- This office will help HAL to tap new business opportunities for Fighter Lead-in Trainer (FLIT) and other requirements of Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) such as Su-30 MKM and Hawk upgrade.
- This will strengthen India's commitment in supporting the Malaysian Defence Forces and industry for a sustainable aerospace and defence landscape in Malaysia.
- HAL had submitted a proposal in October 2021 for the supply of 18 FLIT LCAs against a global tender issued by RMAF to the Ministry of Defence, Malaysia.
- Being one of the largest producers of Russian-origin Su-30 aircraft, HAL stated that it has the capability to provide necessary support to the RMAF for the Su-30 MKM fleet, which is facing low serviceability due to the Russia-Ukraine crisis.
- Other HAL platforms such as HTT-40, Do-228, Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH), and Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) are likely to be inducted by the RMAF in the future.
- HAL's office in Kuala Lumpur will market promotion of HAL's range of products and services not only in Malaysia but throughout Southeast Asia.

10. Thai Public Broadcasting Service signs MoU with Prasar Bharati (Aug. 18, 2022)

The Thai Public Broadcasting Service (Thai PBS) on 18 August signed a Memorandum of Understanding with India's public broadcaster Prasar Bharati for comprehensive cooperation between Thailand and India to strengthen their bilateral ties.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- Thai PBS and Prasar Bharati share the same values as public broadcasters.
- The MoU will contribute to better understanding between the peoples of the two countries and is the first step in cooperation in exchange of news and programmes.
- Indian Ambassador to Thailand Suchitra Durai represented Prasar Bharati in signing the MoU.
- Both countries also signed MoU on Health and Medical Research Cooperation between Indian Council of Medical Research and Department of Medical Sciences, Thailand.

India -Thailand relations :

- **The year 2022 is the 75th year of diplomatic relations between the two countries.**
- Both countries share a maritime boundary in the Andaman Sea.
- Thailand was one of the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with India in 1947.
- In 2021, Thailand became India's fourth largest trading partner in ASEAN.
- In 2021-22, Thailand was India's 22nd top trading partner, with a total trade of US\$6.6 billion.
- The MoU on Defence Cooperation between India and Thailand was signed on 25 January 2012.
- Since 2015, India has participated in the largest Asia Pacific military exercise Ex-Cobra Gold as an 'Observer Plus' category.