

Current Affairs search results for tag: international-news

1. Tsunami alert in US coast as Volcano erupts in Tonga (Jan. 16, 2022)

Tsunami warnings were issued on 15 January 2022 for the entire US West Coast after a massive volcanic eruption across the Pacific Ocean in Tonga, with tsunami waves triggering low-level flooding in Hawaii island.

- The latest eruption of Tonga's **Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai volcano** lasted at least eight minutes and sent plumes of gas, ash and smoke several kilometres into the air.
- The US National Weather Service issued tsunami advisories from the bottom of California to the tip of Alaska's Aleutian islands, predicting waves of up to 60cm, strong rip currents and coastal flooding.
- Similar warnings were issued by nations throughout the Pacific, including New Zealand, Fiji, Vanuatu and Australia as well as for coastal Chile.

Tsunami is a Japanese word which means giant waves . It is created due to earthquakes or volcanic eruptions under seas.

2. Tesla to accept dogecoin as payment for merchandise (Jan. 15, 2022)

Tesla CEO Elon Musk on Friday said the electric carmaker will accept meme-based digital currency dogecoin for merchandise.

- Products such as the "Cyberwhistle" and "Cyberquad for Kids" could be bought using the cryptocurrency, according to the Tesla website.
- Dogecoin is a cryptocurrency invented by software engineers Billy Markus and Jackson Palmer, who decided to create a payment system.

3. POWERGRID and Africa50 will jointly pioneer Africa's first transmission PPP project in Kenya (Jan. 13, 2022)

Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID) has signed a Joint Development Agreement with Africa50, the pan-African infrastructure investment platform to continue to develop the Kenya Transmission Project on a public-private partnership basis.

POWERGRID and Africa50 will jointly pioneer Africa's first transmission PPP project in Kenya

- The project entails the development, financing, construction, and operation of the 400kV Lessos - Loosuk and 220kV Kisumu - Musaga transmission lines under a public-private partnership (PPP) framework.
- Once completed, the project will be the first Independent Power Transmission (IPT) in Kenya and will set a reference point in Africa as the first financing of transmission lines on a PPP basis.
- In this development partnership, POWERGRID, will provide technical and operational know-how to the project, while Africa50 will bring its project development and finance expertise and will act as a bridge between the Kenyan government and private investors.

About Africa50:

- Africa50 is an infrastructure investment platform that contributes to Africa's economic growth by developing and investing in bankable infrastructure projects, catalyzing public sector capital, and mobilizing private sector funding, with differentiated financial returns and impact.
- Africa50 currently has 31 shareholders, comprising 28 African countries, the African Development Bank, the Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO), and Bank Al-Maghrib.

4. NATO- Russia talk fails (Jan. 13, 2022)

The talks between the 30 member western military alliance **North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)** and Russia held at **Brussels**, Belgium on 12 January 2022 ended in a deadlock.

NATO- Russia talk fails

- The talks were held under the NATO-Russia Council Platform .The Secretary General of NATO, General Jens Stoltenberg said that it was impossible to meet the Russian demands regarding expansion of NATO and threat to Ukraine.
- The Russian delegation was led by deputy foreign minister, Aleksandr V. Grushko.

Russia had earlier submitted a list of demands to the United States which leads the NATO military alliance before the NATO -Russia Council platform meeting

The Russian demands were:

- A formal halt to NATO's eastern enlargement. It means that NATO shall not make Ukraine, Georgia and Finland its members.
- A permanent freeze on further expansion of the alliance's military infrastructure (such as bases and weapons systems) in the former Soviet allies which are now a part of NATO(these countries are Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Montenegro)
- End to Western military assistance to Ukraine and a ban on intermediate-range missiles deployment in Europe.

Gen. Stoltenberg said it would be impossible for the 30 NATO members to agree to Moscow's core demands for a new security order in Europe, and in particular added that Russia would have no veto on Ukraine's right to eventually join the alliance.

Russia has already deployed around 100,000 troops at the Ukraine border and Western intelligence agency has warned that Russia plans to invade Ukraine. Russia denies that it has such a plan.

Kindly also see 3 December 2021 post

5. India agrees to allow import of U.S. pork products (Jan. 12, 2022)

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack and Trade Representative Katherine Tai announced on 11 January 2022, that the Government of India has agreed to allow imports of U.S. pork and pork products into India.

India agrees to allow import of U.S. pork products

- This is a part of a deal with the Government of India **where India will import Pork and pork products, Alfalfa hay and cherries from the US and will export mangoes and pomegranate to the US.**
- This news follows the successful revitalization of the U.S.-India Trade Policy Forum held in New Delhi in November 2021 during the visit of Katherine Tai to India.
- The export of Indian mangoes has been restricted by the USA since 2020 as USDA (US Department of Agriculture) inspectors were unable to visit India for inspection of irradiation facilities due to restrictions imposed on international travel because of Covid-19 pandemic,”
- In 2019-20, India exported 1,095 Million Tonnes of mangoes worth \$4.35 million to the United States.

6. U.S. announces \$308 mn in aid for Afghanistan as crisis grows (Jan. 12, 2022)

The United States has announced **\$308 million** in **additional humanitarian assistance for Afghanistan** as it edges towards a humanitarian crisis since the Taliban takeover in 2021.

U.S. announces \$308 mn in aid for Afghanistan as crisis grows

- The United States will donate an extra \$308m in humanitarian aid to Afghanistan, the White House has announced, bringing the total of US aid for Afghanistan and Afghan refugees in the region to nearly \$782m since October.
- The aid will be channelled through the US Agency for International Development (USAID) to humanitarian organisations providing shelter, healthcare, and emergency food aid, among other services.
- In August 2021 the US government froze nearly \$9.5 billion in assets belonging to the Afghan central bank and stopped shipments of cash to the nation after Taliban took over the country. The US has designated the Taliban in its sanction list and no funds can be provided to the Taliban government by the US government or by its banks.
- No country in the world recognises Taliban government in Kabul.

United Nation's biggest appeal:

- Meanwhile, the United Nations said that it needed \$5 billion in aid for Afghanistan in 2022 to avert a humanitarian catastrophe and offer the ravaged country a future after 40 years of suffering.

7. Historic decision by UNESCO on World Hindi Day (Jan. 11, 2022)

The permanent delegation of India to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in Paris, Vishal Sharma announced that on the occasion of World Hindi Day (10th January 2022), UNESCO's World Heritage Centre (WHC) has agreed to publish Hindi descriptions of India's UNESCO World Heritage Sites on WHC (Vishwa Dharohar Samiti) website.

Historic decision by UNESCO on World Hindi Day

- This decision was welcomed by the Union Education and Skill Development minister Shri Dharmendra Pradhan. He said that Hindi is a matter of pride for every Indian and Hindi lover. The popularity of Indian languages on the global stage is welcoming and encouraging.

About UNESCO:

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN).

- It seeks to build peace through international cooperation in Education, the Sciences and Culture.
- It is also a member of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG), a coalition of UN agencies and organizations aimed at fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Headquarters: **Paris, France**
- Director General: **Audrey Azoulay**
- Founded: **16 November 1945 in London, United Kingdom**
- The organisation has 193 members and 11 Associate members.

8. Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi sentenced to 4 years in prison (Jan. 11, 2022)

On 10th Jan 2020, a court in military ruled Myanmar sentenced ousted leader of National League for Democracy(NLD) party, Aung San Suu Kyi to four years in jail on charges including possession of unlicensed walkie talkies. She denies all charges.

Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi
sentenced to 4 years in prison

- Ms. Suu Kyi was detained on the day of the February 1 coup and days later, police said six illegally imported walkie talkies were recovered during a search of her home. The court handed her a two year sentence for breaching an export-import law by possessing the handheld radios and one year for having a set of signal jammers.
- She was also sentenced to two years on another charge of breaching a natural disaster management law related to coronavirus rules.
- The junta said that Ms. Suu Kyi is being given due process by an independent court.
- Her trial has been closed to the media and Ms. Suu Kyi's lawyers have been barred from communicating with the media and public.
- The military has not even disclosed where she is detained.

For more details refer to the post on December 7, 2021.

9. 22 stranded tourists freeze to death in Pakistan after heavy snowfall (Jan. 10, 2022)

At least 22 people, including 10 children, froze to death in their vehicles after heavy snowfall at the popular hill station **Murree** in Punjab province of Pakistan.

22 stranded tourists freeze to death in Pakistan after heavy snowfall

- Due to heavy snowfall, all routes leading to the hill station were closed causing all cars to remain stranded.
- Government has declared Murree as a calamity-hit area after heavy snowfall wreaked havoc in the city

10. Maldives inks key deals with China (Jan. 9, 2022)

Maldives and China on 8th January 2022 signed key bilateral agreements during **Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi's visit**, on developing and maintaining infrastructure in the Indian Ocean archipelago, besides agreeing on a visa-free travel arrangement for Maldivians intending to travel to China.

Maldives inks key deals with China

Highlights of his visit:

- **Maldivian Foreign Minister Abdulla Shahid** and his Chinese counterpart unveiled a special official logo to mark 50 years of diplomatic relations between the countries.
- The visa-waiver agreement between the two countries would allow Maldivians to travel to China on a 30-day visa free basis once the pandemic restrictions are lifted.
- The two governments signed an agreement of 'Economic and Technical Cooperation' on grant aid, focusing on social, livelihood, and infrastructure projects.
- The Government of Maldives signed a 'Letter of Exchange' on a 'Feasibility Study of Management and Maintenance of China-Maldives Friendship Bridge', for Chinese assistance in maintaining the 1.4-km bridge connecting capital Male with the island of Hulhumale.
 - The bridge is considered China's flagship project in the Maldives. Male owes Beijing about \$1.4 billion from past loans, which President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih's government has sought to "restructure".
- China also agreed to back a sea-water desalination project and cooperate in the health sector