

Current Affairs search results for tag: international-news

### **1. Dinesh Gunawardena sworn in as 15th Prime Minister of Sri Lanka ( July 22, 2022 )**

Dinesh Gunawardena was sworn in as the 15th prime minister of Sri Lanka by President Ranil Wickremesinghe on 22 July along with 17 other cabinet ministers.

#### **Important facts**

- Gunawardena is parliamentarian of the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) party.
- Gunawardene was appointed Home Minister by the President Gotabaya Rajapaksa in April.
- Gunawardena, 73, earlier served as the foreign minister and education minister for the nation.
- The Sri Lankan economic and political crisis, resulted in economic mismanagement and conflict in Ukraine, sparked months of mass protests and eventually forced then-president Gotabaya Rajapaksa to flee the country.
- Wickremesinghe was elected as the new president of Sri Lanka on 20 July and was sworn in as Sri Lankan president on 21 July.
- Wickremesinghe declared a state of emergency, demanding a bailout from the International Monetary Fund.

#### **About Sri Lanka**

- The Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka is a tropical island nation off the southeast coast of the Indian subcontinent. It is separated from the Indian subcontinent by the Gulf of Munnar and the Palk Strait.
- Capitals: Colombo (Executive and Judicial) and Sri Jayawardenepura (Legislative).
- Official Languages: Sinhala and Tamil
- Currency: Sri Lankan Rupee

### **2. Russia resumes Nord Stream natural-gas supply to Europe ( July 22, 2022 )**

Russia has started sending natural gas to Europe via the Nord Stream pipeline system after a pause, bringing relief to Europe, whose economy is wobbly under pressure from short supplies.

#### **Important facts**

- Germany, which is heavily dependent on Russia's gas, had feared that Moscow would not reopen the pipeline after the scheduled work.
- Germany believes Russia is reducing supplies in retaliation for Western sanctions on the Ukraine war.

**Nord Stream Pipeline**

Nord Stream has two pipelines, each containing two lines.

**1. Nord Stream 1**

It was completed in 2011 and runs from Vyborg in Leningrad (Russia) to Lubmin near Greifswald, Germany.

**1. Nord Stream 2**

In 2015, Russian energy major Gazprom and five other European firms decided to form Nord Stream 2.

It runs from Ust-Luga in Russia to Greifswald in Germany through the Baltic Sea and was completed in September 2021.

It will carry 55 billion cubic metres of gas every year.

Nord Stream 1 and 2 together will supply an aggregate of 110 billion cubic metres of gas to Germany per year.

The pipeline falls in the territory of EU members Germany and Denmark.

In December 2019, work on the project was suspended due to the threat of US sanctions.

In January 2021, the US sanctioned a Russian ship carrying out pipe laying work for the project.

An agreement was reached between the US and Germany on the Nord Stream 2 pipeline.

**Top 5 Natural Gas producing Countries**

1. United States - 914.6 billion Cubic Meters
2. Russia - 638.5 billion Cubic Meters
3. Iran - 250.8 billion Cubic Meters
4. China - 194 billion Cubic Meters
5. Qatar 171.3 billion Cubic Meters

**Top 5 Countries that Consume the Most Natural Gas**

1. United States
2. Russia
3. China
4. Iran
5. Canada

**Top 5 Countries with the Largest Natural Gas Reserves**

1. Russia
2. Iran
3. Qatar
4. Turkmenistan
5. United States

**3. US House approves CAATSA waiver for India ( July 21, 2022 )**

The US House of Representatives passed an amendment, which approves an exemption to India against CAATSA sanctions.

**Important facts**

- This amendment was passed by voice vote.
- This gives India an exemption to purchase S-400 missile defence systems from Russia under CAATSA sanctions.
- America's relaxation is in the direction of countering China.
- The amendment was passed during the floor consideration of the National Defence Authorization Act.

**CAATSA Amendment**

- The CAATSA amendment was drafted and introduced by Indian-American Congressman Ro Khanna.
- The amendment seeks the Joe Biden administration to grant India exemptions under CAATSA to help deter aggressive countries like China.

**What is CAATSA?**

- CAATSA stands for Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act.
- The law authorises the US administration to impose sanctions on countries that buy major defence equipment from Russia.
- The US government is free to take punitive action under CAATSA against countries involved in transactions with the Russian defence and intelligence sectors.

**4. 9th ASEAN-India meet on transnational crimes ( July 21, 2022 )**

The 9th ASEAN-India Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crimes was held in a virtual mode on 20 July.

**Important facts**

- Both sides strongly condemned terrorism in all its forms, stressing the need to promote international cooperation to combat terrorism and transnational crimes.
- The consultation was co-chaired by Joint Secretary (Counter Terrorism), Ministry of External Affairs Government of India, Mahaveer Singhvi, from the Indian side.
- Deputy Secretary (Policy), Ministry of Home Affairs, Singapore Government, Puah Kok Keong co-chaired the Consultation from the ASEAN side.
- Both sides stressed the need to strengthen international cooperation to combat terrorism and transnational crimes in a comprehensive and sustained manner.
- They discussed ways to enhance cooperation in the areas of terrorism, illicit drug trafficking, trafficking in persons, transnational economic crimes and cybercrime within the framework of the ASEAN-India Action Plan to combat transnational crimes.
- Institutional linkages and capacity building programs between the two sides were also discussed.
- The 10th ASEAN-India SOMTC Consultation on International Crimes will be held in Indonesia in 2023.

**ASEAN-India dialogue**

- It was initiated in 1992 with the establishment of the Regional Partnership, which evolved into a Full Dialogue in December 1995, a Summit-level Partnership in 2002, and a Strategic Partnership in 2012.
- At present, the ASEAN-India Strategic Partnership stands on a strong foundation.
- ASEAN is central to India's Act East Policy and the Comprehensive Indo-Pacific Strategy.
- This multi-faceted partnership includes several regional dialogue mechanisms and working groups that meet regularly at various levels and include annual summits, ministerial and senior officials' meetings.
- Ongoing India-ASEAN cooperation is guided by the 2021-2025 Action Plan that was adopted in 2020.

**About ASEAN**

- Association of Southeast Asian Nations or ASEAN is an international organisation formed in Bangkok, Thailand in 1967.
- It promotes economic development, peace, security, social progress and cultural development in the Southeast Asian region.
- ASEAN Secretariat – Indonesia, Jakarta.
- General Secretary of ASEAN - Lim Jock Hoi, Brunei

- Official Languages - Burmese, Filipino, Indonesian, Khmer, Lao, Malay, Mandarin, Tamil, Thai and Vietnamese
- Working Language - English
- ASEAN Summit is the supreme policy making body of ASEAN.
- ASEAN is third largest market in the world
- It is the sixth largest economy in the world, third in Asia.
- ASEAN has Free-trade agreements (FTAs) with China, Japan, South Korea, India, Australia and New Zealand.

**ASEAN Member Countries**

- Indonesia
- Malaysia
- Philippines
- Singapore
- Thailand
- Brunei
- Vietnam
- Laos
- Myanmar
- Cambodia

**5. India And Namibia Sign MoU For Wildlife Conservation ( July 20, 2022 )**

India and Namibia on 20 July signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Wildlife Conservation and Sustainable Biodiversity Use to place the Cheetah in the Historic Category in India.

**Thrust areas of the MoU**

- Biodiversity conservation with a special focus on the conservation and restoration of cheetahs in areas where they became extinct.
- Exchange of expertise and capabilities with the aim of promoting cheetah conservation between the two countries.
- Wildlife conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity by sharing good practices
- Technological applications, mechanisms of livelihood generation for local communities living in wildlife habitats and sustainable management of biodiversity.

- Cooperation in climate change, environmental governance, environmental impact assessment, pollution and waste management and other areas of mutual interest.
- Training and exchange of trained personnel in wildlife management including sharing of technical expertise, wherever relevant.

### **About Cheetah**

- The cheetah is one of the oldest of the big cat species, whose ancestors can be traced back more than five million years to the Miocene era.
- It is the world's fastest land mammal that lives in Africa and Asia.
- Human-wildlife conflict, habitat loss and hunting and illegal trafficking are the reasons for their extinction in India.

### **Cheetah reintroduction project in India**

- The main goal of the project is to establish viable cheetah metapopulation in India that allows the cheetah to perform its functional role as a top predator.
- The surveys were conducted at 10 locations between 2010 and 2012.
- Under this project, 50 cheetahs will be introduced in various national parks of the country over a period of 5 years.

## **6. Cabinet approves MoU on Judicial Cooperation with Maldives ( July 20, 2022 )**

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the field of judicial cooperation between India and the Judicial Service Commission of the Republic of Maldives.

### **Important facts**

- It will provide a platform to tap the benefits of Information Technology for court digitization.
- It can be a potential growth area for the IT companies and start-ups in both the countries.
- With the signing of this agreement on cooperation in the field of law and justice, better relations between the two countries will gain further impetus.
- This will not only enable the exchange of knowledge and technology in judicial and other legal areas between the two countries but will also advance the objectives of the "Neighbourhood First" policy.
- In recent years, the close relations between India and Maldives have deepened multidimensionally.

### **About Maldives**

- It is also called Maldives, an independent island country in the north-central Indian Ocean.
- It extends more than 510 miles (820 km) from north to south and 80 miles (130 km) from east to west.
- Basis of economy - fisheries, tourism
- Industries - handicraft or cottage including the making of coir (coconut-husk fibre) and coir products, fish canning, and boatbuilding.
- Capital - Male
- President - Ibrahim Mohamed Solih
- Official Language - Dhivehi (Maldivian)
- Official Religion - Islam
- Currency - Rufiyaa

## **7. U.K. records its highest-ever temperature ( July 20, 2022 )**

Britain broke its record for the highest temperature ever recorded, with a temperature of 39.1 °C (102.4 °F) on 19 July.

### **Important facts**

- The United Kingdom had earlier recorded the highest temperature in 2019 at 38.7 C (101.7 F).
- This new record has been set in Charleswood, England.
- For the past week, the highest temperature has been recorded in the whole of Europe due to the scorching heat.
- "Extreme" heat warnings were issued for London in the south and Manchester and Leeds in the north on 19 July.
- The "extreme" warning means there is danger to human life.

### **Effects of Extreme Heat**

- According to the World Health Organization (WHO), extreme heat can exacerbate respiratory diseases, heart conditions and kidney diseases.
- Its immediate effects on the human body include dehydration and potentially fatal heat stroke.
- It can also have serious impacts on agriculture and forests.
- Due to this the plants wither and dry up and the disease spreads among the plants.
- It causes forest fires which lead to reduction in forest cover and death of living beings.

**Highest Temperature ever on Earth**

- California's Death Valley registered a temperature of 54.4 degrees Celsius or 129.9 degrees Fahrenheit on August 16, 2020.
- Once verified, this could be the highest ever recorded temperature on Earth.
- Temperature is specified as preliminary, not final as it requires verification.
- Death Valley is a desert valley in Eastern California.

**8. Wildfires and heat wave across Europe ( July 19, 2022 )**

Europe, along with countries such as Spain, Greece and France, is battling fierce wildfires and heat waves and struggling to extinguish fires and prevent damage.

**Important facts**

- Thousands of hectares of forest land has been burnt to ashes amid the scorching heat.
- The fire has forced thousands to flee their homes and killed many relief workers.

**Cause of the wildfires**

- As far as Europe is concerned, the region has come under fire for being unusually dry and hot.
- Experts are citing climate change as the reason.
- They say that above-normal temperatures and drought conditions are causing fire incidents in some parts.
- Rising temperatures absorb moisture from plants, producing abundant dry fuel.
- Drought and extreme heat can kill plants and dead grass, and dry forest fires are more likely to occur.
- Lightning from the sky or sparks generated by the carelessness of the local population also causes fire.

**Forest fires in India**

- About 22 percent of the forest area in India comes under the highly fire prone category.
- Recently, there have been incidents of fire in Sariska Tiger Reserve of Rajasthan, Simlipal Wildlife Sanctuary in Odisha, Ladkui forests and forest areas of Mazhagawan region of Madhya Pradesh.

**Impacts of wildfire**

- Air pollution caused by forest fires is more intense than other types of air pollution.

- Wildfire smoke can affect the respiratory and cardiovascular systems.
- Forest fires not only destroy flora (trees, herbs, grasslands, meadows, etc.) and their diversity, but also have significant long-term negative effects on fauna, including wild endangered species.
- Forest fires destroy organic matter in the soil and expose the top layer to erosion.
- It can disrupt transportation, communications, electricity and gas services, and water supplies.

## **9. Microblogging platform Twitter launched an "Unmentioning feature" ( July 18, 2022 )**

Microblogging platform Twitter has launched an "Unmentioning feature". This feature will allow users to remove themselves from any conversation.

### **Important facts**

- This feature will allow users to disengage themselves from conversations they no longer wish to be a part of.
- It will help protect the peace of the people by removing themselves from unwanted conversations.
- Twitter was testing the unmanaging feature on a limited number of users so far. Now it has been launched for everyone.
- The feature has been launched amid the ongoing stir over the walkout of Elon Musk's USD 44 billion deal to buy Twitter.

### **Elon Musk's walkout**

- In premarket trading, Twitter shares fell nearly 6 percent amid Elon Musk's recent walkout.
- Musk recently cancelled his \$44 billion deal to buy Twitter.
- After this Twitter announced the prosecution of Elon Musk.

### **About Twitter**

- Twitter was founded in March 2006 by Jack Dorsey, Biz Stone, Noah Glass and Evan Williams.
- It is an American communications company headquartered in San Francisco, California.
- Twitter is a microblogging and social networking service on which users post and interact with messages called "tweets".
- CEO - Parag Agarwal

**10. International Nelson Mandela Day ( July 18, 2022 )**

International Nelson Mandela Day is celebrated across the world on 18 July every year to mark the birth anniversary of Nelson Mandela, the Nobel Peace Prize laureate and former President of South Africa.

**Important facts**

- The observance of this day seeks to celebrate the idea that every individual has the power to change the world, the ability to make an impact.
- It aims to inspire individuals to take action to help change the world for the better.
- In November 2009, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) officially declared 18 July as "International Nelson Mandela Day" in honour of the former President of South Africa's contribution to a culture of peace and freedom.
- It also reflects the anti-apartheid icon's commitment to promoting the values of democracy, racial justice and human rights in the field of racial relations, and his dedication to serving humanity.

**About Nelson Mandela**

- Nelson Mandela was born on 18 July 1918 in Mvezo, Eastern Cape, South Africa.
- On 5 August 1962, he was arrested for inciting the workers to strike and leaving the country without permission.
- He was tried and sentenced to life imprisonment on 12 July 1964.
- He was released on 11 February 1990 after spending 27 years in prison.
- On 10 May 1994, Mandela became the first black president of South Africa.
- Nelson Mandela is called the Gandhi of South Africa.

**Prize**

- Nobel Peace Prize in 1993 jointly with Frederick Willem de Klerk, former President of South Africa
- order of lenin
- Bharat Ratna (1990)
- Nishan-e-Pakistan
- Gandhi Peace Prize (2008)