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1. Paraguay Joins International Solar Alliance as 100th Full Member (June 26, 2024)

Paraguay has achieved full membership status in the International Solar Alliance, marking its entry as the 100th country to join.

An Overview of the News

- The External Affairs Ministry confirmed this development, noting that Paraguay submitted its Instrument of Ratification.
- Ambassador Fleming Raul Duarte of Paraguay met with Abhishek Singh, the Head of Depository and Joint Secretary in the Ministry, during a meeting in New Delhi on June 26th.
- On 23 May 2024, Spain joined the International Solar Alliance (ISA) as the 99th member, reaffirming its commitment to the solar energy initiative.

About International Solar Alliance (ISA)

- Formation: Established on **30 November 2015 in Paris, France.**
- Purpose: Unite over 120 nations, primarily within the Tropics, to promote solar energy and reduce reliance on fossil fuels.
- Headquarters: Located at the **National Institute of Solar Energy in Gurugram, Haryana, India.**
- Director General: Led by **Dr. Ajay Mathur**, the alliance fosters clean energy, sustainability, public transport, and climate initiatives.

About Paraguay

- Paraguay, a landlocked nation, is situated between **Argentina, Brazil, and Bolivia.**
- It features extensive areas of swampland, subtropical forests, and chaco, which are wild expanses of savanna and scrubland.
 - Capital:- **Asunción**
 - Official languages:- **Paraguayan Guaraní, Spanish**
 - President:- **Santiago Peña**
 - Continent:- **South America**

2. PM Modi Inaugurates New Nalanda University Campus (June 19, 2024)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the newly built campus of Nalanda University in Rajgir, Bihar.

An Overview of the News

- The event was held at Sushma Swaraj Auditorium at Nalanda University.
- External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, Bihar Governor Rajendra Arlekar, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, Deputy Chief Ministers Samrat Choudhary and Vijay Sinha, along with other delegates, were present at the new campus of Nalanda University. The event was also attended by ambassadors from 17 countries.

Prime Minister Modi's Address

- PM Modi emphasized the role of knowledge in making India developed by 2047.
- Stressed that strengthening education and knowledge systems can help India achieve superpower status.
- Mentioned the International Solar Alliance as an example of such initiatives.
- The government aims to re-establish India as a major knowledge centre with a new identity in the education sector.

Remarks by Other Leaders

- External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar:
 - Spoke on the revival of Nalanda as a global bridge of learning.
 - Highlighted education, training, and capacity building as effective ways to promote international understanding.
- Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar:
 - Praised the glorious history of ancient Nalanda University.
 - Acknowledged the ruins of ancient Nalanda University as a World Heritage site.

Historical Significance of Nalanda

- Nalanda University, founded in Rajagriha (now Rajgir) in Bihar in the 5th century BC by Kumararagupta of the Gupta Dynasty, was among the earliest educational institutions globally.
- It thrived under Gupta kings like Kumaragupta, Emperor Harsha of Kannauj, and later under the Pala empire.
- Nalanda functioned not only as a university but also as a Buddhist monastery.
- According to Chinese traveler Hiuen Tsang, the university housed 10,000 monks and 2,000 teachers.
- Aryabhata, the renowned mathematician and astronomer, led Nalanda University.
- Prominent figures such as Harshavardhana, Nagarjuna, and Vasubandhu were among its notable students.

Nalanda boasted an illustrious 800-year tradition as a center of learning.

UNESCO recognizes two world heritage sites in Bihar: the Mahabodhi Mahavihara in Bodh Gaya and the remnants of the ancient Nalanda University.

3. Spain Joins International Solar Alliance as 99th Member (May 23, 2024)

Spain becomes the 99th member of the International Solar Alliance (ISA), marking its commitment to solar energy initiatives.

An Overview of the News

- Spain handed over the International Solar Alliance Instrument of Ratification during a meeting in New Delhi.
- The ratification was completed by Ambassador José María Ridao Domínguez of Spain and the Head of Depository, Joint Secretary Abhishek Singh of the External Affairs Ministry.

ISA's Objectives:

- The International Solar Alliance (ISA) serves as a collaborative platform to boost the deployment of solar energy technologies.
- Its primary goals include enhancing energy access, ensuring energy security, and driving energy transition in member countries.

Origin of ISA:

- The ISA originated as a joint initiative by India and France to combat climate change by promoting solar energy solutions.
- It was conceptualized during the 21st Conference of Parties (COP21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change held in Paris in 2015.

About Spain

- King - Felipe VI of Spain
- Prime Minister - Pedro Sánchez
- Capital - Madrid
- Official language - Spanish

4. 4th India-CARICOM Ministerial meeting (April 22, 2023)

4th India-CARICOM Ministerial meeting

External Affairs Minister **S. Jaishankar** co-chaired the **4th India-CARICOM ministerial meeting in Guyana's capital of Georgetown** on 22nd April.

An overview of the news

- S Jaishankar co-chaired the meeting with his **Jamaican counterpart Kaminaj Smith**.
- Both leaders discussed a range of issues, including **trade, climate change and counterterrorism**.
- During the bilateral meetings, the minister spoke on various issues including **cooperation, trade, climate change, digital transformation, health domain, agriculture and expansion of the International Solar Alliance (ISA)**.
- The Minister also met the **Bahamas Parliamentary Secretary Jamahl Strachan**, an Indian alumnus and discussed the International Solar Alliance (ISA), **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) as well as UNSC reforms**.
- Jaishankar began his nine-day trip to **Guyana, Panama, Colombia and the Dominican Republic** on 21st April by meeting his counterpart from **Surinam Albert Ramdin**.

What is CARICOM (Caribbean Community and Commons Market)?

- CARICOM is an **intergovernmental organisation** that is a **political and economic union of 15 member states** throughout the **Americas and the Atlantic Ocean**.
- Its main purposes are to **promote economic integration and cooperation** among its members, to ensure that the benefits of integration are equitably shared, and to coordinate foreign policy.
- It was **established in 1973** by the Treaty of Chaguaramas.

About Guyana

Prime Minister: **Mark Phillips**

President: **Mohamed Irfaan Ali**

Capital: **Georgetown**

Currency : **Guyanese dollar (G\$)**

5. G20 meeting of chief agricultural scientists begins in Varanasi (April 17, 2023)

G20 meeting of chief agricultural scientists begins in Varanasi

The **G20 Meeting of Agricultural Chief Scientists (MACS)** began on 17 April in **Varanasi**.

An overview of the news

- The three-day meet is being organized by the **Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare**.

- The theme of the meeting is “**Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems for Healthy People and the Planet.**”
- Around **80 foreign delegates from G20 member states** are participating in the event.
- Director General of Indian Council of Agricultural Research **Dr. Himanshu Pathak** told that this is the 100th event related to G20.
- The discussions covered various issues of agricultural research and development including food security and nutrition, climate smart agriculture, digital agriculture, public private partnership etc.

Invited guest countries

- Bangladesh, Egypt, Mauritius, Netherlands, Nigeria, Oman, Singapore, Spain, UAE, Vietnam and international bodies like United Nations, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, World Health Organization will participate in the meeting.
- International Solar Alliance, CDR and Asian Development Bank will also be participating as special invitees in the three-day meeting.

Millets and other Ancient Grains International Research Initiative (MAHARISHI)

- This initiative is also proposed for discussion as a **G20 initiative during India's chairmanship.**
- MAHARISHI aims to advance research collaboration and create awareness about millets and other ancient grains during the International Years of 2023 and beyond.

About the G20

- It is an **international forum** of the **world's leading economies established in 1999.**
- Its primary objective is to promote **international financial stability and sustainable economic growth.**
- The G20 serves as a forum to discuss and coordinate policies related to a wide range of economic and financial issues such as **trade, investment, employment, energy and climate change.**

6. India, Netherlands hold first Ministerial-level meeting of Joint Working Group (April 4, 2023)

1st Ministerial-level meeting of the Joint Working Group between India and the Netherlands
The **1st Ministerial-level meeting of the Joint Working Group** between **India and the Netherlands** was held on 3 April in New Delhi.

An overview of the news

- The meeting was held in the presence of Union Jal Shakti Minister **Gajendra Singh Shekhawat** and Minister for Infrastructure and Water Management, Government of the Netherlands, **Mark Harbours**.
- The '**Strategic Water Partnership**' was launched during a virtual meeting between the Prime Ministers of India and the Netherlands in April 2021.
- The partnership provides the necessary impetus to expand bilateral water cooperation.
- The Netherlands is associated with various states and municipalities, including **Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Gujarat, Punjab, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Maharashtra**, in various water resources projects.
- River-city alliance between the two countries for river-sensitive cities and technologically driven nature-based solutions for river rejuvenation.

India-Netherlands Relations

- **India and the Netherlands** enjoy long-standing warm and friendly relations based on shared values of democracy, rule of law, human rights and historical bonds of friendship.
- Both countries share **common ideals of democracy, pluralism and rule of law**.
- Bilateral relations have been marked by strong economic and commercial ties.
- The Netherlands signed the **Framework Agreement of the International Solar Alliance (ISA)** and became the **64th signatory member** country.
- There are over **200 Indian companies** operating in the Netherlands.
- The total bilateral trade stood at **US\$ 6.28 billion in the financial year 2018-2019**.
- The Netherlands was India's fourth largest trading partner in the European Union after Britain, Germany and Belgium.

About Netherlands

- The Netherlands, also known as **Holland**, is a country located in northwestern Europe.
- Monarch: **King Willem-Alexander**
- Prime Minister: **Mark Rutte**
- Capital: **Amsterdam**
- Currency: **euro**

7. The first meeting of the G-20 Energy Transition Working Group under the chairmanship of India will be held in Bengaluru from 5 to 7 February. An overview of the news Representatives of G-20 countries and guest countries will be part of the working gr (Feb. 4, 2023)

The **first meeting of the G-20 Energy Transition Working Group** under the chairmanship of India will be held in **Bengaluru** from 5 to 7 February.

An overview of the news

- Representatives of **G-20 countries and guest countries** will be part of the working group.
- In addition, representatives of major international organizations such as the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the United National Development Program, the International Energy Agency, the Clean Energy Ministerial, and the International Solar Alliance will participate in the meeting.
- The delegates will visit the **Infosys Green Building Campus in Bengaluru** and the **Mega Solar Park in Pavagada** as evidence of efforts to mitigate climate change.

Topics of discussion

- Technology gaps in energy transition,
- Low-cost financing for energy transition,
- Energy security and diversified supply chain,
- Industrial carbon transition
- Fuel for the future
- A roadmap for doubling the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency by 2030,
- An action plan for enhancing and promoting bio-energy cooperation,
- Recommendations on global best practices for supporting affordable, and inclusive energy transitions

Planned Energy Transition Ministerial Meeting (ETMM)

- To set the agenda and identify action areas, the ETWG will hold three working group meetings in **Gandhinagar** (April), **Mumbai** (May), and **Goa** (July).

8. India welcomes Congo into International Solar Alliance (Feb. 3, 2023)

India welcomes Congo into International Solar Alliance

India has welcomed **Congo** into the International Solar Alliance.

An overview of the news

- According to the Ministry of External Affairs, the **International Solar Alliance Framework Agreement** was signed by **Raymond Serge Bell**, Ambassador of the Republic of Congo in the presence of Joint Secretary (Economic Diplomacy).

International Solar Alliance

- It is a treaty-based **intergovernmental organization** whose primary function is to promote solar development by reducing the cost of financing and technology.
- It is the nodal agency to implement '**One Sun, One World, One Grid**'.
- It aims to transfer the solar energy generated in a specific region to meet the electricity demand of another region.
- It was launched by the Prime Minister of India and the President of France on **30 November 2015** at the Conference of the **Parties (COP-21)** to the UNFCCC in **France (Paris)** along with 121 solar resource rich nations.
- Its key objectives include achieving a global potential of over **1000 GW** of solar power generation capacity and mobilising about \$1000 billion to invest in solar energy by 2030.
- Member-**113 countries** have signed this Framework Agreement. 86 out of 106 countries have signed and ratified this Framework Agreement.
- Headquarters - **Gurugram, India**

Democratic Republic of Congo

- It is located in **Central Africa**. It is the second largest country in Africa after **Algeria**.
- Capital : **Kinshasa**. It is on the bank of **River Congo**.
- Congo is the only river in the world to cross the **equator twice**.
- Currency : **Congo franc**

9. India, Cyprus signs three agreement during S. Jaishankar visits to Nicosia (Dec. 29, 2022)

Nicosia on 29 December 2022. This is the first visit of S. Jaishankar to Cyprus.

External Affairs Minister **S Jaishankar** who is on a three day visit (29-31 December 2022) to Cyprus signed a number of agreements with his Cypriot counterpart **Ioannis Kasoulides** in the capital **Nicosia** on 29 December 2022. This is the first visit of S. Jaishankar to Cyprus.

Three agreement signed

Both the ministers signed agreements to;

- Increase defence and military cooperation between the two countries ,
- Letter of Intent on immigration and mobility to check illegal migrations , as well as the agreement on
- Cyprus joining the International Solar Alliance (ISA).

S. Jaishankar also released the **commemorative stamp** on the **75 years of Indian Independence** and **60 years of establishing diplomatic ties with Cyprus**.

The minister said India and Cyprus were collectively working on pressing issues such as food and energy security, maritime security, as well as on sustainable environment.

During his three-day visit to Cyprus, Jaishankar will call **Annita Demetriou**, President of the Cyprus Parliament's House of Representatives.

He will also address the business and investment community of Cyprus, apart from an interaction with the Indian Diaspora.

Republic of Cyprus

It is an island European country in the eastern Mediterranean Sea.

It gained its Independence from Britain in 1960. The country has a majority population which are of Greece descent while the minority population are of Turkish origin.

Turkey invaded Cyprus in 1974 and created a Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in 1983. Except Turkey no country recognises Turkish Cyprus.

India also recognises the Cyprus government.

Capital: **Nicosia**

Currency: **Euro**

President: **Nicos Anastasiades**

10. International Civil Aviation Day (Dec. 7, 2022)

International Civil Aviation Day

Every year 7 December is observed as International Civil Aviation Day. This day is observed to raise awareness about the importance of civil aviation and its contribution in the world. The day honours civil aviation workers, air traffic controllers and everyone who works towards keeping flights and flying safe for passengers.

Background to the Day

The first Civil Aviation day was observed on 7 December 1994 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Chicago convention.

The Chicago convention held on 7 December 1944 led to the establishment of the [International Civil Aviation Organization \(ICAO\)](#). The ICAO is a United Nations agency which was formally established on 4 April 1947.

Later in 1996, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution to observe 7 December as an International Civil Aviation Day. Since then, the day has been observed on a global scale.

Theme of the International Civil Aviation Day

In 2019 the ICAO decided that till 2023 the theme of the International Civil Aviation Day will be **“Advancing Innovation for Global Aviation Development”**.