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Current Affairs of the Day

The U.K. asks India to update climate goals

- UK is urging India to announce a "more ambitious" Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) ahead of a United Nations climate change summit in the U.K. in a few weeks. The two leaders also spoke about the issue of vaccine certifications and the Afghanistan situation.
- Prime Minister conveyed India's commitment to Climate Action, as seen in its ambitious target for expansion of renewable energy and the recently announced National Hydrogen Mission.

U.K. asks India to update climate goals

Johnson calls Modi they speak about vaccine certifications and Afghanistan situation

BY ANSHU MATHUR

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday, urging India to announce a "more ambitious" Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) ahead of a United Nations climate change summit in the U.K. in a few weeks. The two leaders also spoke about the issue of vaccine certifications and the Afghanistan situation.



British Prime Minister Narendra Modi with his British counterpart, Boris Johnson, in this photograph.

Johnson and Modi spoke at the UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow from October 31 to November 12, but has not confirmed his attendance yet. He had been due to attend the G7 summit as a special invitee in the U.K. in June last, but had to cancel the visit due to the second wave of the pandemic. Mr. Johnson is also expected to schedule his proposed visit to India in January and April this year, which had to be put off due to the pandemic as well.

Foreign Secretary said: "Johnson, high-level talks by our ministers, including the new British Foreign Secretary Liz Truss are expected shortly, and could include visits to India. It would be an opportunity for the U.K. and the U.S. to discuss the U.K. Green Deal and the U.S. Inflation Reduction Act, and to discuss firm deadlines for achieving net-zero carbon emissions and ending the use of coal for generating electricity, so as to keep global warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius. Mr. Modi has

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He noted that India already leads the world in renewable technology and expressed his hope that they will consent to a more ambitious Nationally Determined Contribution and in achieving Net Zero emissions," said an official release from the U.K. government on the occasion.

One hundred and ninety-three countries filed their first NDCs, but only 19 have so far updated them. India filed its first NDC in 2016, committing at the time to cut emissions by 33% by 2030 (from 2005 levels) and to ensure that about 40% of its installed power capacity comes from renewable energy, targets that the government says it is on track to reach.

However, the U.K. and the U.S. have been asking India to do more in terms of declaring its second NDC, which includes India's promise of installing 450 GW of renewable energy by 2030, and to declare firm deadlines for achieving net-zero carbon emissions and ending the use of coal for generating electricity, so as to keep global warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius. Mr. Modi has

Updating NDC:

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Covishield recognition

- The U.K. agreed to recognise Indian-administered Covishield and waived the need for nationals from India and 36 other countries to undertake home



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quarantines as long as they are vaccinated. However, the U.K. does not yet recognise Covaxin, which is awaiting clearances from the World Health Organization.

- The leaders also talked about Afghanistan, both sides said. In this context, they agreed on the need to develop a common international perspective on issues regarding extremism and terrorism, as well as the Human Rights and rights of women and minorities.

Over 2 lakh RTI pleas pending

Twelve State Information Commissions plus the Central Information Commission (CIC) would need at least a year to dispose of their appeals, and the nationwide backlog has crossed 2.55 lakh cases, according to an analysis by the Satark Nagrik Sangathan (SNS).

The RTI used a lot

- Sixteen years after the RTI Act came into force on October 12, 2005, it is a tool for citizens to demand accountability in governance, with an estimated 40 lakh to 60 lakh RTI requests being filed every year.
- When a request for information is denied by a government body, however, appeals are filed in the Central and State Information Commissions, which act as transparency watchdogs under the law.
- The SNS report documented the performance of these commissions, highlighting the delays in disposing of cases due to both shortage of personnel and inefficient operations.

Unanswered pleas

The table shows the 10 panels with the highest pendencies for which data were available

Information Commission	Till Dec. 31, 2020	Till June 30, 2021
Maharashtra*	62,534	74,240
Uttar Pradesh	48,444	48,514
Central Information Commission	38,590	36,788
Rajasthan	16,771	17,922
Odisha	17,658	17,464
Telangana	10,814	11,207
West Bengal	8,694	9,097
Kerala**	6,835	7,486
Madhya Pradesh	6,893	6,577
Andhra Pradesh	4,153	5,123

*Latest data as on May 31, 2021; **Latest data as on Aug. 8, 2021



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NGT need not 'wait for Godot' to save the environment, says SC

The National Green Tribunal

1. The Supreme Court has declared the National Green Tribunal's (NGT) position as a "unique" forum endowed with suo motu powers to take up environmental issues across the country.
 2. The exercise of power by the NGT is not circumscribed by the receipt of applications. When substantial questions relating to the environment arise and the issue is civil in nature and those relating to the Act, the NGT, in SC opinion, even in the absence of an application, can self-ignite action either towards amelioration or towards prevention of harm.
 3. The court, speaking through Justice Roy, explained that the role of the NGT was not simply adjudicatory in nature. The tribunal has to perform equally vital roles that were preventative, ameliorative or remedial in nature.
 4. The judgment described the NGT "as a complimentary, competent, specialised forum to deal with all environmental multidisciplinary issues both as original and also as an appellate authority, which complex issues were hitherto dealt with by the High Courts and the Supreme Court".
- The National Green Tribunal has been established on 18.10.2010 under the National Green Tribunal Act 2010 for effective and expeditious disposal of cases relating to environmental protection and conservation of forests and other natural resources
 - The Tribunal shall not be bound by the procedure laid down under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, but shall be guided by principles of natural justice.
 - New Delhi is the Principal Place of Sitting of the Tribunal and Bhopal, Pune, Kolkata and Chennai shall be the other 4 place of sitting of the Tribunal.

Key UN biodiversity summit opens in China

1. A key UN summit tasked with protecting biodiversity opened in China and online, as countries meet to protect ecosystems and prevent mass extinction weeks before the COP26 climate conference.
2. Beijing, the world's biggest polluter, has sought to position itself in recent years as a world leader on environmental issues after Washington's withdrawal from international commitments.
3. The online summit — setting the stage for a face-to-face meeting in 2022 — will see parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) discuss new targets for protecting ecosystems by 2030.



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- Up for debate are the “30 by 30” plan to give 30% of land and oceans protected status by 2030 — a measure supported by a broad coalition of nations, as well as a goal to halve the use of chemicals in agriculture and stop creating plastic waste.

‘OneWeb likely to use ISRO’s platforms for 2022 launches’

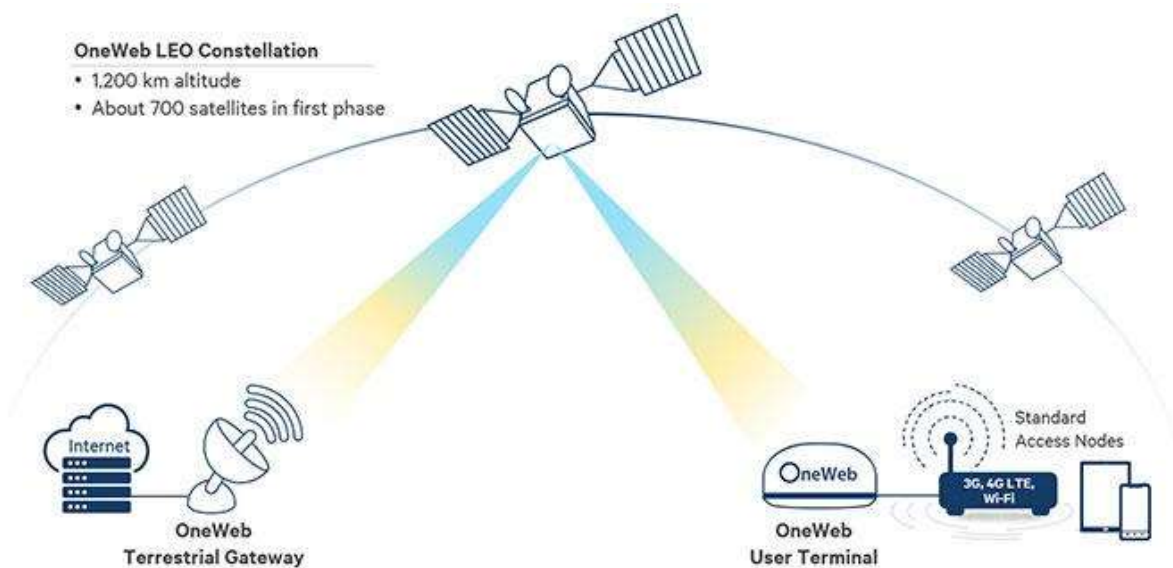
The “space race” had truly begun and the private sector should ensure that India remained on the cutting edge of the space industry.

OneWeb

- OneWeb already had 322 satellites in orbit, will use India-built PSLV (Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle) and the heavier GSLV-MkIII (Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle) as potential platforms to launch OneWeb’s satellites in India from 2022.
- It was time for the private sector now to take advantage and ensure that India remained on the cutting edge of the space industry.
- OneWeb had entered into an arrangement through Letter of Intent with NewSpace India Ltd. the commercial arm of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), to use PSLV and the GSLV-MkIII as potential platforms to launch OneWeb’s satellites in India from 2022.

What is OneWeb?

OneWeb is a global communications company that aims to deliver broadband satellite Internet around the world through its fleet of LEO satellites.





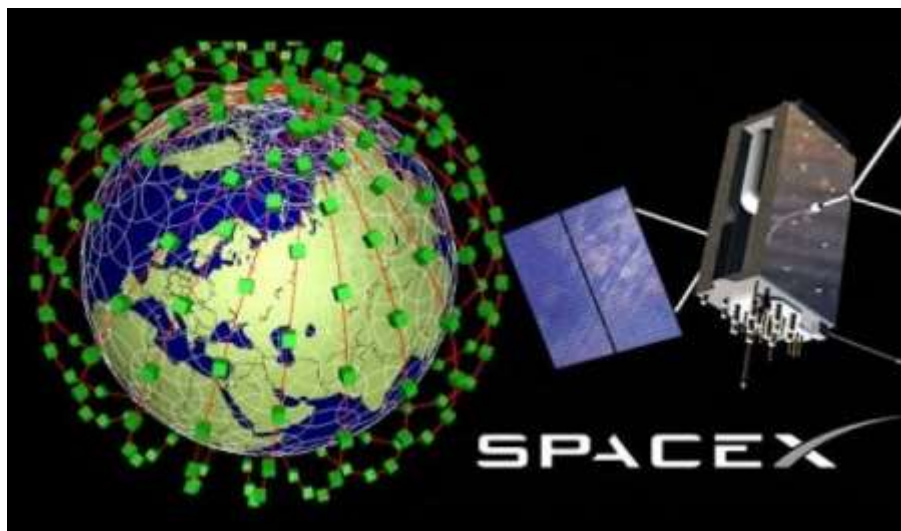
LEO Satellite Internet Technology

1. LEO satellites have been orbiting the planet since the 1990s, providing companies and individuals with various communication services. LEO satellites are positioned around 500km-2000km from earth, compared to stationary orbit satellites which are approximately 36,000km away.
2. Latency, or the time needed for data to be sent and received, is contingent on proximity. As LEO satellites orbit closer to the earth, they are able to provide stronger signals and faster speeds than traditional fixed-satellite systems.
3. Additionally, because signals travel faster through space than through fibre-optic cables, they also have the potential to rival if not exceed existing ground-based networks.
4. However, LEO satellites travel at a speed of 27,000 kph and complete a full circuit of the planet in 90-120 minutes. As a result, individual satellites can only make direct contact with a land transmitter for a short period of time thus requiring massive LEO satellite fleets and consequently, a significant capital investment.
5. Due to these costs, of the three mediums of the Internet – fibre, spectrum and satellite – the latter is the most expensive.

Starlink

OneWeb's chief competitor is Starlink, a venture led by Elon Musk's SpaceX. Starlink currently has 1,385 satellites in orbit and has already started beta testing in North America and initiating pre-orders in countries like India. However,

Starlink's satellites fly closer to the earth and therefore, the company requires a larger fleet to provide global connectivity than OneWeb.





'India invited to become full-time IEA member'

1. International Energy Agency (IEA) has invited India, the world's third-largest energy consumer, to become its full-time member — a proposal, if accepted, will require New Delhi to raise strategic oil reserves to 90 days' requirement.
2. In 2017, India became an associate member of the agency. On its website, IEA states: "India is becoming increasingly influential in global energy trends."
3. India's current strategic oil reserves equal 9.5 days of its requirement.

International Energy Agency

- ◉ Founded in 1974, the IEA was initially designed to help countries co-ordinate a collective response to major disruptions in the supply of oil, such as the crisis of 1973.
- ◉ It is at the heart of global dialogue on energy, providing authoritative analysis through a wide range of publications, including the flagship **World Energy Outlook and the IEA Market Reports**; data and statistics.
- ◉ The four main areas of IEA focus are: Energy Security, Economic Development, Environmental Awareness: and Engagement Worldwide.
- ◉ **India is not a member of IEA.**



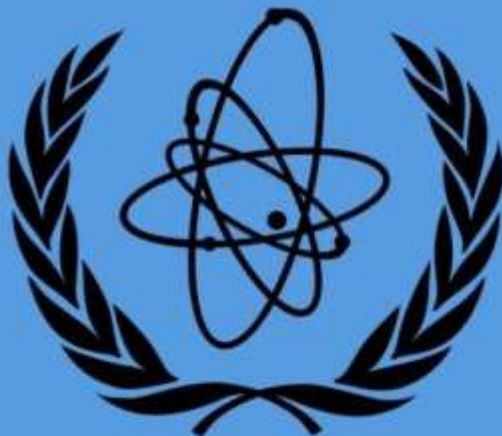
IRENA

International Renewable Energy Agency

An Intergovernmental Organisation

*Advices Governments on renewable
Energy*

India is a member of IRENA



IAEA

Name: United Nation's
International Atomic Energy Agency

Year of Formation: 1957

Headquarters: Vienna, Austria

Sector: Nuclear Energy

Is India a member: Yes

Initially established as 'Atoms for Peace'.

In 2019, the 63rd general conference of the IAEA, India launched a global cancer care network, "NCG-Vishwam Cancer Care Connect" (NCG-Vishwam 3C)



MAINS DAWP	<p>Q1. Presently, any investment in health care has failed to translate into a sense of security and sanctuary for many Indians. The lesson here is the need for the constitutional 'Right to Health for all. Critically Discuss.</p>
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MCQ	<p>Q1. Consider the following statements</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. India is a member of the International Energy Agency (IEA)2. IEA members countries need strategic oil reserves to 90 days requirement3. India's current strategic oil reserves equal 9.5 days of its requirement <p>Which of the above statements is/are correct?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">a. 1 and 2 onlyb. 2 and 3 onlyc. 1 and 3 onlyd. 1, 2 and 3
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