



CURRENT AFFAIRS THIS WEEK

22 DECEMBER 2024

BAJIRAO IAS ACADEMY

US commits to 61% emissions cut by 2035: What does its updated NDC plan say?

- ❖ The United States has announced its **emission reduction target for 2035**, promising to reduce its emissions to 61-66 per cent below 2005 levels by that time.
- ❖ This builds on the current **US target for 2030 which aims to attain 50-52 per cent reductions** over 2005 levels.
- ❖ The new target for 2035 has been disclosed in the updated **Nationally Determined Contribution**, or NDC, that the US submitted to the UN Climate Change .
- ❖ **The 2015 Paris Agreement** asks every country to periodically prepare and submit their plans for climate action.

- ❖ The first round of NDCs contained climate targets that countries intended to achieve by 2030.
- ❖ The second round of NDCs, for 2035, are now due, and have to be submitted by February next year.
- ❖ The US also claimed that its 2035 target was the “highest level of ambition possible” and was consistent with the requirement of keeping global rise in temperature to within 1.5 degree Celsius from pre-industrial times.
- ❖ According to the **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)**, global emissions must fall 43 per cent below 2019 levels by 2030 to keep alive any hopes of meeting the 1.5 degree Celsius target.

- ❖ Under the **international climate change framework**, developed countries like the US are supposed to take the major share of responsibility of dealing with climate change.
- ❖ They are expected to **make bigger emission cuts, and also provide assistance**, through provision of finance and technology, to the developing countries to help them adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change.
- ❖ Coming just after the COP29 meeting in Baku where the developed countries agreed to triple their current annual financial obligations from **100 billion dollars to 300 billion dollars by 2035.**

PM MAKES FIVE PLEDGES

- 1** India will increase its non-fossil energy capacity to 500GW by 2030
- 2** India will meet 50% of its energy requirements from renewable energy by 2030
- 3** India will reduce the total projected carbon emissions by one billion tonnes from now to 2030
- 4** By 2030, India will reduce the carbon intensity of its economy by 45% (from a previous target of 35%)
- 5** By 2070, India will achieve the target of net zero

Colombo security conclave

- ❖ Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake's visit to India this week, his first abroad tour since becoming the country's leader, featured some classic diplomatic deal-making, with give and take on both sides.
- ❖ According to the joint statement, the two leaders recognised the **“positive and impactful role of India's development assistance to Sri Lanka** that has significantly contributed to its socioeconomic growth” in bilateral development cooperation.
- ❖ In terms of **physical connection**, the two leaders agreed to **resuming passenger ferry service between Nagapattinam and Kankesanthurai**, as soon as possible.

- ❖ They will also look into the possibilities of working on the restoration of Sri Lanka's **Kankesanthurai port**.
- ❖ PM Modi highlighted the importance of **maritime security, cyber security, and counter-terrorism** as problems to be addressed through the Colombo Security Conclave framework.



- ❖ The Colombo Security Conclave was **established in 2011** as a trilateral maritime security alliance between **India, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives**.
- ❖ The activity roadmap was later expanded, with **Mauritius joining as the fourth member** and Bangladesh and Seychelles as observer countries.
- ❖ The Conclave emphasises regional collaboration and common security goals for the littoral nations in the Indian Ocean Region.
- ❖ It intends to prioritise maritime security, marine pollution response, and maritime search and rescue throughout the region.



Ganges river dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*) was tagged in Bihar.

- ❖ The first Ganges river dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*) was tagged in **Assam**, marking a historic milestone for **Project Dolphin**, a conservation initiative dedicated to India's national aquatic animal.
- ❖ The tagging exercise will aid in **understanding the species' seasonal and migratory behaviours, range**, distribution, and habitat use, particularly in fragmented or degraded river systems.

Save Dolphin to save Ganga

The Centre has declared the dolphin a national aquatic animal to save the rare freshwater species from disappearing from the country's aqua map

Know about **Platanista gangetica**

1.67m

Males grow up to **2.12m** | Females grow up to **2.67m**

Females give birth to only one calf, once in **2-3 yrs**

Generally blind, they catch their prey by emitting ultrasonic sound to gauge distance, mass etc

Assam, UP, MP, Rajasthan, Bihar, Jharkhand & W Bengal in the rivers **Chambal, Sone, Kosi, Brahmaputra** Prefer deep waters, in & around Indian river confluences

GANGETIC DOLPHIN:
A rare specie almost extinct

Lost cousin: The Yangtze dolphin, Baiji, of China

Grim Future

Once counted in 10's of 1000's, the amount has reduced in last century to **1,500**

"Endangered" & placed in **Schedule-I of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**

Dwindling number due to killing, habitat fragmentation

India Tops Global Remittances for 2024

- ❖ India continues to lead the world in remittances, with non-resident Indians (NRIs) sending home a **remarkable \$129 billion in 2024**, marking an increase from the previous year's remittance of Rs 8.95 lakh crore.
- ❖ The **World Bank report** confirms India's position as the largest recipient, outpacing Mexico, China, the Philippines, and Pakistan. **Growth in Global Remittances**
- ❖ Traditionally, **Gulf countries have been major contributors to remittances**. However, developed nations such as the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada are becoming increasingly sources.

- ❖ This shift reflects changing migration patterns and economic opportunities in these countries.

REMITTANCES ARRIVE TO INDIA

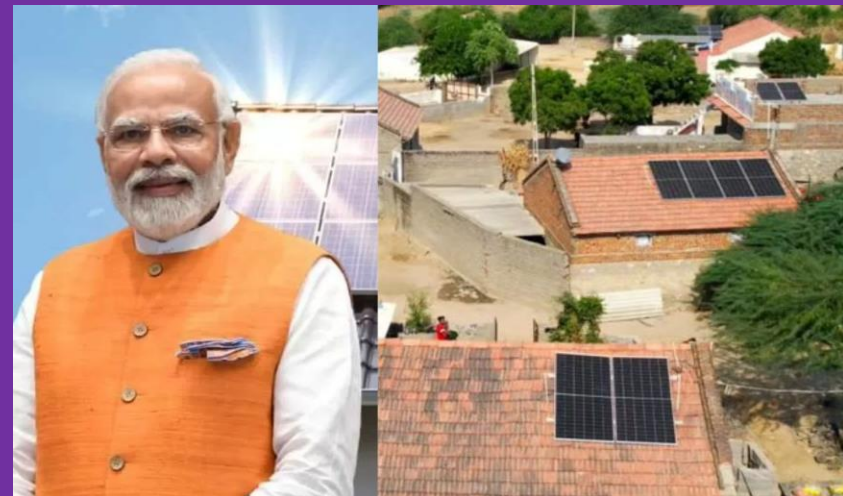
Countries	Remittance Inflow (\$ million)
UAE	12,845
USA	11,193
Saudi Arabia	10,737
Pakistan	4,794
Kuwait	4,665
Qatar	4,072
U.K.	3,693
Oman	3,101
Nepal	2,783



Masali: India's First Border Solar Village Established

- ❖ **Masali village, located in Suigam** taluka of Banaskantha, has recently achieved the distinction of being India's first solar-powered border village.
- ❖ Situated approximately **40 kilometres from the Pakistan border**, it is home to around 800 residents, which is part of a **broader Border Development Project** aimed at transforming 17 villages into solar-powered communities.
- ❖ The solar project in Masali village is valued at Rs 1.16 crore.

- ❖ This achievement puts stress on the potential for renewable energy solutions in remote and border communities.
- ❖ **PM Suryaghar Yojana:** This scheme provides financial support for solar energy projects. It aims to promote renewable energy in households. The initiative contributes to sustainable development across India.



New Delhi to Host 2025 Para Athletics World Championship

- ❖ **New Delhi** will be the venue for the 2025 World Para Athletics Championships, marking a milestone as it is the first time India will host this prestigious event.
- ❖ Scheduled from September 26 to October 5, the championships will showcase the talents of para-athletes from around the globe.
- ❖ The 2025 World Para Athletics Championships will be the 12th edition of the event. It will also be the fourth time the championships are held in Asia.
- ❖ Previous Asian hosts include Doha in 2015, Dubai in 2019, and Kobe in 2024.

- ❖ The **Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in New Delhi** will serve as the main venue.

Significance of the Events

- ❖ Hosting these events marks India's commitment to promoting para sports, offers a platform for athletes to showcase their abilities and gain international exposure.
- ❖ The events are expected to inspire many and raise awareness about para athletics.

Easterine Kire's 'Spirit Nights' Wins the 2024 Sahitya Akademi Award in English Language

- ❖ **Easterine Kire, a prominent writer from Nagaland**, has been honored with the **Sahitya Akademi Award for 2024** and announced its annual awards in 21 languages recently.
- ❖ Kire received the award for her **novel Spirit Nights**, published by Simon and Schuster India, which explores a haunting tale from the **Chang Naga tribe of Nagaland**.
- ❖ The **Sahitya Akademi** recognizes literary excellence across various languages. Kire's win in the English category marks her contribution to literature.

- ❖ Other notable winners from the North East include **Sameer Tanti, awarded for his Assamese work Pharingbore Bator Katha Jane**
- ❖ **Haobam Satyabati Devi** received recognition for her Manipuri poetry collection **Mainu Bora Nungshi Sheirol**. Aron Raja was honored for his Bodo novel Swrni Thakhai.



ISRO Launches XPoSat for Cosmic Research

- ❖ The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** commenced 2024 with a milestone by successfully launching the **X-ray Polarimeter Satellite (XPoSat)**, aims to enhance our understanding of **black holes and neutron stars**.
- ❖ It was deployed into orbit using the **PSLV-C58 rocket**, showcasing ISRO's continued excellence in space exploration.
- ❖ **XPoSat is ISRO's inaugural satellite** focused on X-ray polarisation studies and is equipped with two primary instruments – **POLIX and XSPECT**.

Mission Objectives

- ❖ The satellite is projected to **operate for five years**, and will investigate around 50 cosmic sources within the **energy range of 8–30 keV**.
- ❖ This mission will provide valuable data on the **polarisation of X-rays, offering vital information** about the behaviour of extreme astrophysical phenomena.
- ❖ The **Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV)** has a proven track record, having been instrumental in missions such as Chandrayaan-1 and the Mars Orbiter Mission.

Eastern Maritime Corridor Boosts India and Russia Trade

- ❖ Recently, India emerged as the **largest purchaser of Russian oil**, overtaking China, which coincided with the establishment of the **Eastern Maritime Corridor**, which has enhanced trade between India and Russia.
- ❖ The new sea route from **Chennai to Vladivostok** has streamlined the transport of various commodities.

New Maritime Route Overview

- ❖ The **Chennai-Vladivostok route spans approximately 5,600 nautical miles**, and has reduced transit times by up to 16 days, allowing goods to reach their destinations in just 24 days.

- ❖ In contrast, the traditional route via Europe takes over 40 days.
- ❖ Since early 2024, the route has facilitated the transport of crude oil, coal, liquefied natural gas (LNG), fertilizers, and containerized cargo.



World Meditation Day Observed on December 21

- ❖ **The United Nations General Assembly** has recently declared **December 21 as World Meditation Day**, which aims to promote awareness of meditation's benefits for health and well-being.
- ❖ It was co-sponsored by several nations, **including India and Mexico**, and emphasizes the right to good physical and mental health.
- ❖ The inaugural theme for 2024 is **"Inner Peace, Global Harmony."**

- ❖ Meditation traces its roots back approximately **4,000 years to India**, which has evolved over centuries and is now embraced globally.
- ❖ Various cultures have adapted meditation practices, contributing to its diverse forms.



Russia Develops mRNA Cancer Vaccine, Offers It For Free

- ❖ **Russia** has made strides in cancer treatment with the announcement of a **new mRNA vaccine**.
- ❖ This vaccine aims to be available to patients **free of charge by early 2025** and has undergone promising pre-clinical trials, showing **potential to suppress tumor growth and prevent cancer spread**.
- ❖ The development of this vaccine has been expedited through the use of **artificial intelligence**. Traditional methods of designing personalized cancer vaccines are complex and time-consuming.
- ❖ There are two main types of cancer vaccines – **therapeutic and preventive**.
- ❖ **Therapeutic vaccines** are designed to treat existing cancer by improving the immune response against cancer cells.
- ❖ **Preventive vaccines**, like the HPV vaccine, aim to reduce the risk of cancers associated with specific viruses, such as cervical cancer.



Thank you

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