



Observer Status to International Solar Alliance: UN

Why in News

Recently, the [United Nations General Assembly\(UNGA\)](#) has granted Observer Status to the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)**.

- It will help provide **for regular and well-defined cooperation between the Alliance and the United Nations** that would benefit global energy growth and development.
- Earlier, the [fourth general assembly of the ISA](#) was held, where a total of 108 countries participated in the assembly, including 74 member countries, 34 observer and prospective countries, 23 partner organisations and 33 special invitee organisations.

United Nation General Assembly

▪ About:

- UNGA is the **main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ** of the UN.
- All **193 Member States** of the UN are **represented in the General Assembly**, making it the only UN body with universal representation.
- The President of the General Assembly is **elected each year by assembly to serve a one-year term** of office.

▪ Meetings:

- Each year, in September, the full UN membership meets in the General Assembly Hall in New York for the annual General Assembly session, and general debate, which many heads of state attend and address.
 - **Decisions** on important questions, such as those on peace and security, admission of new members and budgetary matters, require a two-thirds majority of the General Assembly.
 - **Decisions** on other questions are by simple majority.

Key Points

▪ About ISA:

- The ISA is an intergovernmental treaty-based organisation with a global mandate to catalyse solar growth by helping to reduce the cost of financing and technology.
- ISA is the nodal agency for implementing [One Sun One World One Grid \(OSOWOG\)](#), which seeks to transfer solar power generated in one region to feed the electricity demands of others.

▪ Launch:

- It is an **Indian initiative that was launched by the Prime Minister of India and the President of France on 30th November 2015 in Paris**, France on the side-lines of the UNFCCC [Conference of the Parties \(COP-21\)](#), with 121 solar resource rich countries

lying fully or partially between the tropic of Cancer and tropic of Capricorn as prospective members.

- **Members:**
 - **101 members**, after being joined by the US.
- **Headquarters:**
 - The Headquarters is in India with its Interim Secretariat being set up in **Gurugram**.
- **Objectives:**
 - To collectively **address key common challenges to the scaling up of [solar energy](#)** in ISA member countries.
- **New ISA Programmes:**
 - New ISA programmes have been launched on **management of solar PV panels & battery usage waste and solar hydrogen programme**.
 - The new Hydrogen initiative is aimed at enabling the use of solar electricity to produce hydrogen at a more affordable rate than what is available currently (USD 5 per KG), by bringing it down to USD 2 per KG.
- **Some Solar Energy Initiatives of India:**
 - **[National Solar Mission](#)** (a part of National Action Plan on Climate Change): **To establish India as a global leader in solar energy**, by creating the policy conditions for its diffusion across the country as quickly as possible.
 - **[INDC's target](#)**: It targets installing **100 GW grid-connected solar power plants by the year 2022**.
 - This is in line with India's Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) target to achieve about 40% cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel based energy resources and to reduce the emission intensity of its GDP by 33 to 35% from 2005 level by 2030.
 - **International Solar Alliance (ISA) and One Sun One World One Grid (OSOWOG):**
 - **Government Schemes**: Such as Solar Park Scheme, Canal bank & Canal top Scheme, Bundling Scheme, Grid Connected **[Solar Rooftop Scheme](#)** etc.
 - **[First Green Hydrogen Mobility project](#)**: National Thermal Power Corporation Limited (NTPC) Renewable Energy Ltd (REL) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Union Territory of Ladakh to set up the country's first Green Hydrogen Mobility project.
 - **Green hydrogen** is produced by electrolysis of water using renewable energy (like Solar, Wind) and has a lower carbon footprint.

Solar Energy

- **About:**
 - It is radiation from the Sun **capable of producing heat, causing chemical reactions, or generating electricity**.
 - The total amount of solar energy incident on Earth is **vastly in excess of the world's current and anticipated energy requirements**. If suitably harnessed, this highly diffused source has the potential to satisfy all future energy needs.
- **Significance:**
 - Solar Energy is available throughout the day **which is the peak load demand time**.
 - Solar energy **conversion equipment have longer life and need lesser maintenance** and hence provide higher energy infrastructure security.
 - **Low running costs** & grid tie-up capital returns (Net Metering).
 - Unlike conventional thermal power generation from coal, **they do not cause pollution and generate clean power**.
 - **Abundance of free solar energy** in almost all parts of the country.
 - No overhead wires- **no transmission loss**.

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