

1. Centre slashes fuel taxes, sets ₹200 subsidy on LPG cylinders (Page no.- 1)

GS Paper- 3 (Indian Economy)

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman unveiled a slew of measures to rein in runaway inflation on Saturday evening, including duty cuts on petroleum products, a ₹200 subsidy on LPG cylinders for the poor and a rejig of import duties on plastic and steel products.

A reduction in central excise duty per litre of petrol by ₹8, and of diesel by ₹6, will translate into retail prices on these fuels dropping by ₹9.5 per litre and ₹7 per litre, Ms. Sitharaman said.

2. Govt. wants to keep look-out circular details under wraps (Page no.- 1)

GS Paper- 3 (Internal Security)

A string of court orders recently have put the spotlight on the opaque and mechanical way in which the LOCs are generated, but the Union Home Ministry is in no mood to relent.

Under the existing guidelines, LOCs are initiated by a large number of agencies which includes the CBI, Enforcement Directorate, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), Income Tax Department, State police forces and intelligence agencies. It should be done by an officer not below the rank of a district magistrate or superintendent of police.

3. New species of snake found in Meghalaya (Page no.- 7)

GS Paper- 3 (Environment & Ecology)

Meghalaya, the land of the mythical evil spirit that takes the form of a giant serpent called U Thlen, has yielded a new-to-science, venomous green snake.

Recorded simultaneously in Mizoram, the snake has been named Maya's pit viper after the deceased mother of an Army officer, one of seven authors of a study on it. The name of the pit viper, recognised as *Trimeresurus mayaae*. The study was published in the recent edition of PLOS One, a peer-reviewed open access scientific journal published by the Public Library of Science.

4. India registers success with BP treatment, control (Page no.- 9)

GS Paper- 3 (Science & Tech.)

Cardiovascular diseases (CVD) are the leading cause of death among adults in India. One of the major drivers of heart attack and stroke is untreated high blood pressure or hypertension. Hypertension is a silent killer as most patients do not have any symptoms.

India has more than 200 million people with hypertension, and only 14.5% of individuals with hypertension are on treatment. Unlike many other diseases, hypertension is easy to diagnose and can be treated with low-cost generic drugs.

5. Researchers share draft genome sequences of monkeypox virus (Page no.- 9)

GS Paper- 3 (Science & Tech.)

Researchers from the National Institute of Health Doutor Ricardo Jorge (INSA), Lisbon, Portugal have shared the draft genome sequence of the monkeypox virus that is rapidly spreading in many European countries. The draft sequence has been posted at the virological.org site.

The released draft genome sequence covers about 92% of the reference sequence. The sample was obtained from a swab collected on May 4 from skin lesions from a male patient

in Portugal. As on May 19, Portugal had reported over 20 laboratory-confirmed cases of monkeypox.

6. Why is Turkey against SweFin joining NATO? (Page no.- 10)

GS Paper- 2 (IR)

With the Russian invasion of Ukraine nearing three months, Sweden and Finland (SweFin), the two Nordic countries that have historically stayed out of military alliances, have formally applied to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). If President Vladimir Putin ordered the Ukraine attack on February 24, apparently to prevent NATO's further expansion into Russia's neighbourhood, he is now facing the prospects of two countries joining the trans-Atlantic military alliance. But their accession into NATO may not be smooth. Turkey, a NATO member since 1952, has said it would oppose the Nordic countries joining the bloc, citing that they harbour "terrorist groups" — a reference to Kurdish insurgent outfits. Put together, these developments — the continuing war in Ukraine, fresh NATO applications, and Turkey's opposition to SweFin's bid — have shaken up Europe's delicate security equilibrium further.

7. 'Holes' in Biodiversity Bill (Page no.- 10)

GS Paper- 3 (Environment & Ecology)

The Biological Diversity Act, 2002 was framed to give effect to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), 1992, that strives for sustainable, fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilisation of biological resources and associated traditional knowledge. To do this, it formulates a three-tier structure consisting of a National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) at the national level, State Biodiversity Boards (SBBs) at the State level and Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs) at local body levels. The primary responsibility of the BMCs is to document local biodiversity and associated knowledge in the form of a People's Biodiversity Register.

8. Rural food price gains hastened in April (Page no.- 10)

GS Paper- 3 (Indian Economy)

Rising food prices spurred an increase of 10 points each in the all-India Consumer Price Index (CPI) for agricultural and rural labourers, respectively, last month, the Ministry of Labour said in a release on Saturday.

An increase in the prices of rice, wheat-atta, jowar, bajra, ragi, vegetables and fruits contributed the bulk of the spike in the two indices with April's CPI-AL rising to 1108 points and the CPI-RL climbing to 1119. The food group contributed 7.32 and 7.13 points, respectively, to the 10 point jumps in the CPI-AL and CPI-RL.