

1. India to join Biden's new trade initiative for Indo-Pacific region (Page no.- 1)

GS Paper- 2 (IR)

India signalled its readiness to be part of a new economic initiative led by the U.S. for the region, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi joined U.S. President Joseph Biden, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and leaders of 10 countries, who participated virtually, for the launch of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) in Tokyo on Monday. The negotiations for the IPEF, which will begin on Tuesday, are expected to centre around four main pillars, including trade, supply chain resiliency, clean energy and decarbonisation, and taxes and anti-corruption measures. The grouping, which includes seven out of 10 members of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), all four Quad countries, and New Zealand, represents about 40% of global GDP.

2. U.S. to defend Taiwan against China: Biden (Page no.- 1)

GS Paper- 2 (IR)

U.S. President Joe Biden said on Monday he would be willing to use force to defend Taiwan against Chinese aggression. The comment seemed to stretch the limits of the ambiguous U.S. policy towards the self-ruled island.

3. India to be the leader of green hydrogen: Puri (Page no.- 1)

GS Paper- 2 (Indian Economy)

India will emerge as the leader of green hydrogen, Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri said on Monday. Mr. Puri made the remarks while attending the World Economic Forum at Davos, Switzerland, where he is part of the Indian delegation led by Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal.

4. World may have lost 11.2 crore jobs: ILO (Page no.- 1)

GS Paper- 2 (Indian Economy)

The "world of work" is being buffeted by multiple crises, says the ninth edition of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Monitor. The report says that after significant gains during the last quarter of 2021, the number of hours worked globally dropped in the first quarter of 2022, to 3.8% below the employment situation before the pandemic. About 11.2 crore jobs might have lost between this period, according to the report.

5. All hands on deck (Page no.- 6)

GS Paper- 2 (Indian Economy)

The Union government's decision on Saturday to cut the excise duty on petrol and diesel by ₹8 and ₹6, respectively, is a belated acknowledgement that April's multi-year highs in inflation were spurred in significant measure by high fuel prices. Coming more than six months after its last duty reduction — on Deepavali eve — the latest cut is a welcome step to ease the burgeoning cost burden on producers and consumers.

6. A Harvard branch in India, prospects and challenges (Page no.- 6)

GS Paper- 2 (Social Justice)

India, after half a century of keeping its higher education doors closed to foreigners, is on the cusp of opening itself to the world. The traditional orientation to swadeshi that has characterised much of Indian thinking, at least in higher education, is changing. The wide-ranging National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 promises higher education reforms in many areas, and internationalisation is prominent among them. Among the underlying ideas is to strengthen India's "soft power" through higher education collaboration, bringing new ideas

and institutions from abroad to stimulate reform and show “best practice”, and in general to ensure that Indian higher education, for the first time, is a global player.

7. Why vaccine mandates are essential (Page no.- 7)

GS Paper- 2 (Social Justice)

The recent Supreme Court verdict upholding the government’s current vaccination policy deserves to be lauded. The court, however, held that restrictions imposed by States and Union Territories on unvaccinated individuals cannot be said to be proportionate as they sought to invade an individual’s bodily integrity and personal autonomy under Article 21 of the Constitution. The court used the test of proportionality to scrutinise these vaccine mandates. The proportionality test is a standard of review that is invoked to keep a check on the infringement of bodily integrity and privacy of an individual by the state.

8. Meeting family planning goals (Page no.- 8)

GS Paper- 1 (Indian Society)

India’s family planning programme has improved access to contraceptives. This has led to a reduction in the Total Fertility Rate from 3.4 in 1990-92 to 2.0 in 2019-21, according to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS). However, there are two themes that need further attention. First, according to NFHS-5 and the 2022 report by the United Nations Population Fund, there is a rise in adolescent childbearing in some States such as Tripura and Meghalaya. Second, COVID-19 has had a severe impact on economic resources and access to education, thereby influencing the choices women and the youth make about their sexual and reproductive health. In order to meet the Sustainable Development Goal of Family Planning by 2030, India now needs to focus on improving access to family planning services for not just the adult population, but also the youth.

9. The devastation in Dima Hasao and its after-effects (Page no.- 8)

GS Paper- 3 (Environment)

Disaster has struck Dima Hasao after incessant heavy rainfall which severely affected the 170 km railway line connecting Lumding in the Brahmaputra Valley’s Hojai district and Badarpur in the Barak Valley’s Karimganj district.

Dima Hasao is the geographical link to a vast region comprising southern Assam’s Barak Valley, parts of Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura. Moreover, the railway track is vital for shipping goods to and from Bangladesh’s Chittagong port via Tripura’s border points.

A project to convert the metre gauge track to broad gauge, completed in 2015, came under scrutiny through a 2009-10 audit report which revealed that the project had been undertaken without proper planning.

10. Engineering tomatoes to produce vitamin D (Page no.- 9)

GS Paper- 3 (Science & Tech.)

According to estimates made in 2020 nearly 690 million people, who make up close to 8.9% of the world’s population, are hungry. One of the main reasons for this hunger is micronutrient malnutrition.

A paper in Nature Plants by Jie Li et al tries to address vitamin D deficiency by genetically modifying tomato plants so that the fruit contains a significant amount of provitamin D3 which is a precursor from which humans can make vitamin D.

Vitamin D is needed for a process known as calcium homeostasis which is the maintenance of constant concentration of calcium ions in the body.

11. Heat waves could worsen inflation pressures, affect growth, says Moody's (Page no.- 14)
GS Paper- 3 (Indian Economy)

Moody's Investors Service said on Monday that the prolonged heatwaves seen in India this summer were credit negative as they would exacerbate inflation pressures and challenges to growth. The agency added that the ban on wheat exports would hurt growth and reflected a missed opportunity to capture the global market.