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1. 75th session of the World Health Assembly organised in Geneva (May 24, 2022)

The 75th World Health Assembly is being organised in Geneva, Switzerland from 22 to 28 May 2022.

- This is the first individual health gathering since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- On behalf of India, the Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya addressed this 75th session.
- He said that the figures released by WHO for India regarding covid deaths were quite disappointing and confusing.
- Some time ago, a detailed report was released by WHO regarding corona deaths.
- The report claimed that within two years, more than 47 lakh people died due to corona in India.
- That report was rejected by the Indian government and questions were raised on the WHO model.
- They called for strengthening the WHO to streamline the WHO approval process for vaccines and therapeutic devices and to create a more resilient global health security infrastructure.
- He reiterated India's commitment to building a more resilient global health security infrastructure.

- **The theme of the year 2022** : Health for peace, peace for health.

- **About 75th World Health Assembly**

- The World Health Assembly is the decision-making body of the WHO.
- The Health Assembly is held annually in Geneva, Switzerland.

- **Functions of world health assembly**

1. To determine the policies of the Organisation,
2. appoint the Director-General,
3. supervise financial policies, and review
4. approve the proposed programme budget.

- **About WHO**

- Founded - 7 April, 1948

- World Health Day is celebrated Every year on 7 April.
- It is the United Nations agency
- It leads global efforts to extend universal health coverage.
- It operates in 6 regions with 194 member states and over 150 locations.
- Headquarters - Geneva, Switzerland

2. India joins Biden's new trade initiative for Indo-Pacific (May 24, 2022)

US President Joe Biden launched the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) along with 12 initial partners in Tokyo on May 23.

- The initial partner countries are India, Australia, Japan, Brunei, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.
- These 13 countries together represent 40% of the world's GDP.
- **About IPEF initiative**
- It is expected to focus on four main pillars including trade, supply chain resilience, clean energy and decarbonisation, and taxes and anti-corruption measures.
- The group includes seven of the 10 members of the Association of SouthEast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and all four Quad countries and New Zealand.
- India will work closely with other IPEF countries to build an inclusive and resilient Indo-Pacific Economic Framework.
- The main roles of the IPEF in the Indo-Pacific will be to set and adhere to standards for the digital economy and cross-border data flows and data localization.
- **About Indo-Pacific**
- It covers half of the world's population and more than 60 percent of the global GDP.
- It is a geopolitical region that spans two regions of the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean.
- Extending from the west coast of the United States of America to the west coast of India, the Indo-Pacific is a regional structure of 24 countries.
- It includes the tropical waters of the Indian Ocean, western and central Pacific Ocean.

3. North East Research Conclave 2022 inaugurated (May 23, 2022)

The North East Research Conclave (NERC) 2022 was inaugurated at IIT, Guwahati by the Union Minister of Education and Skill Development, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan.

- The conclave will strengthen linkages between industry, academia and policy makers and further strengthen the research, start-up and entrepreneurship ecosystem in the resource-rich North Eastern Region states and the country.
- **Key points related to the Conclave -**
- NERC 2022 will prove to be a global benchmark in meeting the R&D priorities of India and the world.
- On the occasion, an MoU “Assam Advanced Health Innovation Institute (AAHI)” was also signed between the Government of Assam and IIT, Guwahati.
- North East Research Conclave 2022 is being organised to showcase the best research and development activities of academic and research institutes from all the states of North East India.
- The North-East Research Conclave is a platform for entrepreneurs and research institutions to showcase their innovations.
- The North East Research Conclave will help the younger generation to fulfil their dreams in the near future.

4. Single National Portal For Biotech Researchers And Start-Ups Launched (May 23, 2022)

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh launched a single national portal for biotech researchers and start-ups on 21st May.

- The name of the Portal is “BioRRAP”
- It will help all those seeking regulatory approval for biological research and development activity in the country.
- This provides a huge relief to "ease of science as well as ease of business".
- India is poised to become a global bio-manufacturing hub and will be among the top 5 countries in the world by 2025.
- This unique portal of DBT is a step towards Ease of Doing Science and Scientific Research and Ease of Start-ups in India.

5. Finland and Sweden apply to join NATO (May 23, 2022)

Finland and Sweden have officially applied to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) amid heightened concerns over Russia's attack on Ukraine.

- Finland and Sweden have a non-aligned policy, but they have always been close to NATO. The 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine prompted him to join NATO.

NATO membership process

- First a country must formally apply for NATO membership.
- The joining country must meet the criteria set out in NATO's 1995 "Study on Expansion". These criteria include a functioning democratic political system based on a market economy, the ability to make a military contribution to NATO, etc.
- A country can join NATO only if all its 30 member countries support its membership.
- A country can become a member of NATO after ratification of accession protocols, which may take 8 to 12 months.
- At present, Turkey has not agreed to give NATO membership to Finland and Sweden.
- **About North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) -**
- NATO is an intergovernmental military alliance consisting of 30 member states belonging to Europe and North America (28 European states, the US and Canada).
- NATO aims to guarantee the security of its members through political and military means.
- According to Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, an armed attack against any NATO member in Europe or North America shall be deemed an attack against all NATO members.
- Article 5 has been invoked only once so far after the 9/11 terrorist attacks against the US.
- The last country to join NATO was North Macedonia in 2020.
- Headquarters- Brussels, Belgium

6. Supreme Court orders setting up of 25 special courts for check bounce cases (May 23, 2022)

In the wake of pending check bounce cases, the Supreme Court has given a green signal to a pilot study in which special courts, headed by retired judicial officers, will be set up to deal exclusively with cases.

- The pilot study will be conducted for a period of 1 year from September 1, 2022 to August 31, 2023.
- 25 special courts will be set up in five districts each of Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh, where a maximum number of check bounce cases are pending.
- After evaluating the performance of one year, these courts will be expanded across the country.
- Special courts set up for pilot studies shall follow the same procedure in respect of trial as mandated by the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973.
- These special courts will deal with these cases under the Negotiable Instruments Act.

There are 44 lakh cases of check bounce pending in the whole country, out of which

- maximum cases are pending in Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh.

- **Supreme Court of India**

- The Supreme Court of India came into existence on 28 January 1950.
- The Supreme Court of India was constituted in accordance with Chapter IV of Part V of the Constitution of India. The fourth chapter of the Indian Constitution is "Union Judiciary".
- The Chief Justice of India is the head of the Supreme Court, which has a maximum of 34 judges.

- **Major Articles related to Supreme Court**

- Article 124 - Constitution and establishment of the Supreme Court of India
- Article 129 - Supreme Court to be court of record
- Article 132, 133, 134 - Appellate jurisdiction of Supreme Court is empowered
- Article 135 - The power of the Federal Court is given to the Supreme Court
- Article 138 - Regarding extension of jurisdiction of Supreme Court
- Chief Justice of Supreme Court - Justice Nathalapati Venkata Ramana (48th)

7. World's highest meteorological station installed on Mount Everest (May 23, 2022)

The world's highest meteorological station has been established on Mount Everest to study various weather phenomena.

- According to Nepal's Department of Water and Meteorology, this meteorological station has been established at 8,830 metres just below the summit point of the mountain range (maximum height 8848.86 m).
- The centre was facing difficulty in setting up the summit point due to the snow.
- The solar-powered weather station will measure short- and long-distance radiation, along with changes in temperature, wind speed and direction, wind pressure and snow height.
- **Important point -**
- Nepal's Hydrology and Meteorological Department and National Geographic signed a Memorandum of Understanding to operate all five automated weather stations set up by NetGeo to provide real-time information about mountain conditions.
- Under this agreement, the National Geographic team will operate these centres till 2025. After which the technology will be transferred to the Government of Nepal in the year 2026.

- The NetGeo team, led by Baker Perry, a climate scientist at the US's Appalachian State University, included climbers and scientists, many of whom climbed the world's highest peak while setting up the weather station.
- According to Chinese media reports, Mount Everest in Beijing has eight stations from 5,200 metres to 8,800 metres, with four stations over 7,000 metres at 7,028 metres, 7,790 metres, 8,300 metres and 8,800 metres.
 - **About Mount Everest -**
 - Mount Everest is the highest peak of the Greater Himalaya mountain range located on the border of Nepal and China (Tibet) in Asia.
 - Mount Everest is called Devagiri in Sanskrit, Chomolungma in Tibetan, Chu-mu-long-ma-feng in Chinese and Sagarmatha in Nepali.
 - On 29 May 1953, Edmund Hillary of New Zealand and Tensing Norgay Sherpa, an Indian citizen of Nepalese origin, climbed Mount Everest for the first time.
 - Junko Tabei (Japan) is the first woman to reach the summit of Mount Everest, as well as the first woman to climb the highest peaks on each of the 7 continents.
 - Bachendri Pal is the first Indian woman to climb Mount Everest in 1984.
 - Santosh Yadav is the first Indian woman to climb Everest twice in a row.
 - Kami Rita Sherpa, a 52-year-old mountaineer from Nepal, has completed the most number of climbs on the world's highest mountain peak, Mount Everest. She has managed to climb Mount Everest 25 times.

8. Labor Party leader Albanese elected Prime Minister of Australia (May 23, 2022)

Labor Party leader Anthony Albanese has been elected the new Prime Minister of Australia.

- Albanese, 59, will be the 31st Prime Minister of Australia.
- The country's incumbent Prime Minister Scott Morrison and his team's failure to deal with several issues such as climate and Covid-19, besides women's rights, political integrity and natural disasters led to their defeat in the election.
- In Australia, voting was held for 151 seats in the Lower Chamber, in which 76 seats are needed to form a government.
- The Labor Party, which won 71 seats with a vote count of 67 percent, was declared the winner. The Liberal National Coalition got only 52 seats.
- **Other facts**
- Australia has two houses, the Upper House (Senate) and the Lower House.
- Here the tenure of the upper house is 6 years and that of the lower house is of three years, that is, elections are held after every three years.

- Voting in Australia always takes place on Saturdays.
- Voting is compulsory here, and those who do not vote have to pay a fine of up to \$14.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi, US President Joe, in Tokyo, taking oath as the caretaker Prime Minister of Australia's elected Prime Minister Anthony Albanese. Biden and Japan's Prime Minister Fumiya Kishida may attend the Quad summit.

• **About Australia -**

- Australia is the only place that is considered to be a continent, a nation and an island at the same time.
- It is the smallest continent in the world and also the largest island in the world.
- Capital- Canberra
- Prime Minister- Anthony Albanese
- Currency- Australian Dollar

9. 8th BRICS Environment Ministers Meeting (May 21, 2022)

The Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Bhupendra Yadav participated in the 8th BRICS Environment Ministers' Meeting on 20 May.

- The meeting was held virtually under the chairmanship of the People's Republic of China.
- Ministers and representatives of Brazil, Russia and South Africa also participated in the meeting.
- **The theme of the meeting - 'Foster High-Quality BRICS Partnership, Usher in a New Era for Global Development'.**
- The Joint Statement of the 8th BRICS Environment Ministers' Meeting was also accepted in the meeting after extensive deliberations among the BRICS countries.

• **About BRICS**

- The full form of BRICS is Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.
- Goldman Sachs economist Jim O'Neill coined the term BRIC (without South Africa) in 2001.
- He claimed that by 2050, the four BRIC economies would dominate the global economy by 2050.
- South Africa was included in the list in 2010.
- The presidency of the Forum is rotated annually among the members.
- BRICS accounts for about 40% of the world's population.

It accounts for 30% of the world's GDP (Gross Domestic Product).

10. EPFO adds 15.32 lakh net subscribers in March (May 21, 2022)

As per provisional payroll data, Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has added 15.32 lakh new subscribers in the month of March 2022.

- This is almost 20 per cent more than the 12.85 lakh subscribers enrolled in February this year.
- Age-wise comparison of payroll data revealed that highest net enrollment in March 2022 was recorded by youth in the age group of 22-25 years.
- Age-wise payroll data indicates that most first-time job seekers are joining the organised sector workforce in large numbers.
- Establishments comprising Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Haryana and Delhi lead the way by adding around 10.14 lakh net customers during March, accounting for 66.18 per cent of the total net payroll growth across all age groups.
- The share of female enrollment is 22.70 per cent of the total net subscriber base during March 2022.
- There is a positive trend in the participation of women in the organised workforce since October 2021.
- **About Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)**
 - It is one of the largest social security organisations in the world in terms of customers and the volume of financial transactions made.
 - It is a statutory body established by the Government of India.
 - It came into existence with the Employees' Provident Fund Ordinance on November 15, 1951.
 - Headquarters - New Delhi
 - It was replaced by the Employees' Provident Fund Act, 1952.
 - Founded - 4th March 1952
 - Owned By - Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India
 - It aims to meet the emerging needs of comprehensive social security in a transparent, contactless, faceless and paperless manner.