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1. US President Joe Biden to host ASEAN summit (May 13, 2022)

US President Joe Biden will host leaders and top officials of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in Washington DC.

- Washington has focused on the Russo-Ukraine war as well as battling Chinese influence in the Indo Pacific.
- The ASEAN "special summit" was postponed from late March just days before Biden's first visit to Asia as president.
- ASEAN member state Myanmar, whose government was toppled on 1 February last year, will not participate in the summit.
- The US wanted an 'apolitical' representative from Myanmar to attend the meeting.
- ASEAN's 'five-point Consensus' to end the turmoil in Myanmar has not progressed since its release in April last year.

• About ASEAN

- Association of Southeast Asian Nations or ASEAN is an international organisation formed in Bangkok, Thailand in 1967.
- It promotes economic development, peace, security, social progress and cultural development in the Southeast Asian region.
- ASEAN Secretariat - Indonesia, Jakarta.
- General Secretary of ASEAN - Lim Jock Hoi, Brunei
- Official Languages - Burmese, Filipino, Indonesian, Khmer, Lao, Malay, Mandarin, Tamil, Thai and Vietnamese
- Working Language - English
- ASEAN Summit is the supreme policy making body of ASEAN.
- ASEAN is third largest market in the world
- It is the sixth largest economy in the world, third in Asia.
- ASEAN has Free-trade agreements (FTAs) with China, Japan, South Korea, India, Australia and New Zealand.

• ASEAN Member Countries

- Indonesia
- Malaysia
- Philippines

- Singapore
- Thailand
- Brunei
- Vietnam
- Laos
- Myanmar
- Cambodia

2. Gotabaya appoints Ranil as Sri Lanka Prime Minister (May 13, 2022)

Ranil Wickremesinghe, a veteran opposition MP, was sworn in as the new Prime Minister of Sri Lanka for the sixth time in an effort to end the current political crisis in the country.

- Gotabaya's elder brother Mahinda Rajapaksa resigned as prime minister on May 9.
- Wickremesinghe's United National Party (UNP) was wiped out in the 2020 general elections, with Rajapaksa winning a two-thirds majority.
- Wickremesinghe is currently the only MP from his party.
- **Reason of crisis in Sri Lanka**
- Mahendra Rajapaksa announced huge tax cuts in his manifesto in the 2019 election, leading to a huge drop in revenue.
- Sri Lanka is primarily a tourism-based economy. The Easter bombings in 2019 resulted in a sharp drop in tourist arrivals, which was further exacerbated by the COVID crisis.
- Huge infrastructural debt.
- Misguided policies of the authoritative regime
- Due to Covid, there was a further decline in the export of tea, rubber and the tourism sector came to a standstill.
- Remittances also dropped significantly

3. Country's first "Amrit Sarovar" to be inaugurated by Union Minister for Minority Affairs (May 12, 2022)

The country's first "Amrit Sarovar" will be inaugurated by Union Minority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi and Uttar Pradesh Jal Shakti Minister Swatantra Dev Singh on May 13, 2022 at Patwai, Rampur (UP).

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for making at least 75 ponds in every district in the 75th year of India's independence, calling them 'Amrit Sarovar'.
- The pond will not only help in protecting the environment and conserving water but will also be an attraction for the people.
- Along with various amusements, boating will also be available in this pond.

4. GAIL to set up one of India's largest PEM based Green Hydrogen project (May 12, 2022)

In line with the National Hydrogen Mission, GAIL (India) Limited will set up the largest Proton Exchange Membrane (PEM) electrolyser in India.

- The project will be set up at GAIL's Vijaypur Complex in Guna district of Madhya Pradesh and will be based on renewable energy.
- The project is designed to produce approximately 4.3 metric tons of hydrogen per day (approximately 10 MW capacity) with an purity of about 99.999%.
- It is scheduled to be commissioned by November 2023.
- In January 2022 , GAIL had commenced India's first-of-its-kind project of mixing Hydrogen into Natural Gas systems.
- Hydrogen blended Natural Gas is being supplied by GAIL's Joint Venture (JV) company with HPCL- Avantika Gas Limited (AGL).

5. Skill India International Centre to be set up at Varanasi (May 12, 2022)

NSDC International (NSDCI) and the Indian unit of DP World, Hindustan Ports Private Limited has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to develop a Skill India International Centre at Varanasi to skill Indian youth for pursuing overseas employment opportunities in logistics, port operations.

- The Skill India International Centre in Varanasi will provide skills as per international standards and will prepare candidates for global markets.
- Skill India International Centres aims to provide high quality training to Indian youth.
- The centres would host training facilities, providing skills as per the demand of international employers in countries like the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Canada, Australia and other countries.
- It will also have a wide network of partner organisations and foreign recruiters to facilitate the supply of skilled and certified workforce to other countries.
- These partnering organisations will work with NSDCI for aggregating demand from overseas markets.

• About NSDC International Limited (NSDCI)

- This is a subsidiary of National Skill Development Corporation that is driving Skill India International Mission of making India the Skill Capital of the World.
- Its vision is to transform India into a preferred partner country for sourcing skilled and certified workforce across the globe.
- It provides global job opportunities for NRIs and global career mobility for NRIs.

• About DP World

- Hindustan Ports Pvt Ltd is part of DP World, a leading provider of smart end-to-end supply chain logistics to enable business flow across the globe.
- Its comprehensive range of products and services covers every link of the integrated supply chain.

6. PM Modi addresses 'Utkarsh Samaroh' in Bharuch (May 12, 2022)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the 'Utkarsh Samaroh' organised in Bharuch, Gujarat.

- This program has been organised to commemorate the 100 percent saturation of four major schemes of the state government in the district.
- These schemes will help in providing timely financial assistance to those in need.

• About Utkarsh Initiative

- The Bharuch district administration has launched the 'Utkarsh Initiative' campaign to ensure full coverage of schemes providing assistance to widows, elderly and destitute citizens.
- This initiative includes four schemes Ganga Swaroopa Aarthik Sahay Yojana, Indira Gandhi Vrudh Sahay Yojana, Niradhar Vrudh Aarthik Sahay Yojana and Rashtriya Kutumb Sahay Yojana.
- During the campaign from January to March this year, taluka-wise WhatsApp helpline numbers were announced to collect information about those who were not getting the benefits of the scheme.
- Utkarsh camps were organised in all the villages and wards of the municipal areas of the district to collect the necessary documents for approval on the spot.
- Utkarsh Sahayaks were also given incentives to make the campaign more convenient.

7. Supreme Court stays on sedition law (May 12, 2022)

The Supreme Court suspended pending criminal trials and court proceedings under Section 124A (sedition) of the Indian Penal Code and allowed the British-era law to be reconsidered.

- The Supreme Court also restrained the Centre and the states from filing FRs, continuing investigations or taking punitive action under Section 124A.
- **About Sedition Law**
- Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code provides for the punishment of sedition.
- The IPC was enacted in 1860, under the British Raj.
- The then British government in India feared that religious preachers from the Indian subcontinent would wage war against the government.
- The need for such a law was felt after the successful suppression of the Wahhabi movement by the British.
- This section was used by the British to suppress activists in favour of national independence, including Tilak and Mahatma Gandhi, both of whom were found guilty and imprisoned.
- **Sedition as a cognizable offence**
- It was made a cognizable offence for the first time in history in India during the tenure of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1973.
- A cognizable offence means arrest without a warrant.
- Two High Courts of India found it unconstitutional after independence, as it violates freedom of speech and expression.

8. Govt issues preventive guidelines for schools to combat ill-effects of heat-wave (May 12, 2022)

The Ministry of Education issued guidelines regarding precautions to be observed by schools to combat the ill-effects of the heatwave.

- The ministry said in the guidelines, the school timings may start early and end before noon.
- Timings can be from 7.00 a.m. and the number of school hours per day can be reduced.
- Sports or other outdoor activities that expose students to direct sunlight can be accommodated appropriately in the morning hours.
- School meetings should be held in a covered area or in classrooms with less time.
- The school bus or van should not be overcrowded.
- Drinking water and a first aid kit should be available in buses and vans.
- Students coming to school on foot or bicycle should be advised to keep their head covered.

- The school bus or van can be parked in a shady place.
- Students should carry their own water bottles, caps and umbrellas and use them when out in the open.

9. Indian Railways introduces separate seats for newly-born children in trains (May 12, 2022)

Indian Railways' Northern Railway(NR) zone has introduced separate seats for newly-born children in trains.

- This berth is also being dubbed as 'baby berth'. This baby berth is for little children.
- This facility has been started on a trial basis in Lucknow- New Delhi Mail.
- This berth will prove beneficial for women passengers who go out with their children and can take advantage of this by putting the children travelling with them in an extra berth.
- The railways will also provide a stopper beside the berth as a safety measure so that the young child does not fall down while sleeping.
- The 'baby berth' can be folded as well and as a result of which this seat can be raised and lowered whenever it is required.
- No extra charge will be levied for baby berth.
- **About Northern Railway(NR) zone**
- It was established in 1952.
- Head quarters - New Delhi
- Largest zone in terms of Kilometres
- Northern Railway comprises 5 Divisions-Ambala, Delhi, Ferozepur, Lucknow and Moradabad.
- It extends to Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and the Union Territory of Chandigarh.

10. Ministry of Skill Development signs MoU with ISRO to start Training Program (May 11, 2022)

The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to launch its training program aimed at augmenting the technical workforce in the Department of Space, ISRO.

- The MoU was signed by Shri Rajesh Agarwal, Secretary, Ministry of Skill Development and Shri S Somnath, Chairman, ISRO.

- The objective of this initiative is to establish a formal framework for short-term courses to
- provide training for skill development and capacity building of ISRO technical professionals in the space sector in the country as per the requirements of the industry.
 - The training will take place at MSDE's National Skill Training Institutes (NSTIs) across India.

• **About Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) -**

- Established - 15 August 1969
- Headquarters- Bangalore, Karnataka
- Motto- Space Technology in the Service of Mankind
- Director- S Somnath