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1. World Bank Approves \$47 Million Loan For Indian Govt's 'Mission Karmayogi' Program For Civil Services (May 2, 2022)

The World Bank has approved a USD 47 million project for the Government of India's National Program for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB) - 'Mission Karmayogi'.

- The World Bank's funding is intended to support the government's objectives of enhancing the functional and practical competencies of approximately 4 million civil servants.
- The project will help support Mission Karmayogi by developing a competency framework for central ministries, departments and agencies.
- The program will focus on three components- development and implementation of competency framework, development of integrated learning platform and program monitoring, evaluation and management.
- The project is also aligned with the World Bank's twin goals of ending extreme poverty and building shared prosperity.

• About Mission Karmayogi Scheme-

- Mission Karmayogi Yojana was launched on 2nd September 2020.
- This scheme is operated under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- The main objective of the Mission Karmayogi scheme is to develop the capabilities of government employees.
- Under the Mission Karmayogi scheme, a budget of Rs 510.86 crore has been set by the government for a period of 5 years for about 46 lakh central employees.
- For the successful operation of the scheme iGOT Karmayogi platform has also been formed through which online contact is made available.

2. PM participates in unveiling of Sardar Patel's statue in Canada (May 2, 2022)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended a ceremony in Markham, Canada on May 1, where a statue of Sardar Patel was unveiled at the Sanatan Mandir Cultural Centre.

- PM Modi lauded the unveiling of the statue as a great initiative by the diaspora to deepen cultural ties with India.
- He said that the statue of Sardar Patel would not only strengthen the cultural values but would also become a symbol of relations between the two countries.
- He said, India is not only a nation, but also an idea and culture.
- He said that India is that high level idea which talks of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'.

• India-Canada relation

- India-Canada bilateral relationship is based on the shared values of democracy, pluralism, and extended economic engagement.
- Relations between the two countries are based on shared democratic values, the multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious nature of the two societies, and people-to-people ties.
- The visit of the Prime Minister of India to Canada in 2015 has transformed the bilateral relationship into a strategic partnership.
- Both the countries pursue bilateral relations through the following dialogue mechanisms-

1. Joint Working Group on Higher Education(Since 2019)
2. Ministerial Level – Strategic, Trade and Energy Dialogue
3. Other sector specific joint working groups
4. Joint Committee Meeting on Civil Nuclear cooperation
5. India-Canada Strategic Dialogue by the External Affairs Ministers of both nations

- Bilateral trade between India and Canada is worth US\$ 5 billion.
- More than 400 Canadian companies have a presence in India, and over 1,000 companies are actively trading in the Indian market.
- India exports pharma, iron and steel, chemicals, gems and jewellery, nuclear reactors and boilers to Canada.
- Imports include minerals, ores, vegetables, fertiliser, paper and pulp.

3. Sheikh Hasina offered Chittagong port to India (May 2, 2022)

In a major development in India-Bangladesh ties, India has now gained significant access to the Chittagong port after it was offered to India by Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

About Chittagong Port

- The Chittagong Port is the major seaport of Bangladesh.
- It is situated in the port city of Chittagong and on the banks of river Karnaphuli.
- Due to the sea port's proximity to the North-East Indian states, it has the potential to boost economic activity in the North-East Indian states, providing access to global shipping lanes.
- In the year 2010, India and Bangladesh signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to allow the use of Chittagong and Mongla ports in Bangladesh for movement of goods to and from India.
- In 2018, the Bangladesh cabinet approved a proposed agreement with New Delhi to allow the use of the two ports for the transport of goods.

- The port handles eighty percent of Bangladesh's export-import trade, and is used for transshipment by Bhutan, Nepal and India.
- Chittagong port is being developed and modernised with Chinese investment.

- **Benefits for India**

- An additional connectivity route which is economical and environment friendly.
- States like Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura get access to a port for transportation of goods.
- Promote multi-modal connectivity between India and Bangladesh.
- Important route for India to reach Southeast Asia, East Asia and beyond.

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5. Pakistan gets \$8 billion in financial support from Saudi Arabia (May 2, 2022)

Saudi Arabia has agreed to provide a relief package of about 8 billion US dollars to Pakistan.

- This package is expected to give a big help to Pakistan in recovering its dwindling foreign exchange reserves and troubled economy.
- At present, Pakistan is beset with serious financial challenges due to high rate of inflation, dwindling foreign exchange reserves, severe current account deficit and weakening of its currency.
- The agreement was signed during the visit of Pakistan Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif to Saudi Arabia.
- It provides for funding for oil, additional funds through deposits or succulents, and advances of \$4.2 billion in facilities.
- Pakistan had proposed to increase the funding for oil from \$ 1.2 billion to \$ 2.4 billion, which Saudi Arabia accepted.
- It was also agreed that the existing deposits of \$3 billion would be rolled over for an extended period up to June 2023.
- **Other Financial support of UAE to Pakistan**
- Saudi Arabia provided a \$3 billion deposit to the State Bank of Pakistan in December 2021.
- The Saudi oil facility became operational in March 2022, receiving \$100 million for Pakistan to purchase oil.
- This oil-rich Gulf country had given a package of \$ 7.5 billion to Pakistan during the last term of the PML-N government (2013-18).
- In the PTI-led government headed by former prime minister Imran Khan, Saudi Arabia provided a \$4.2 billion package, including a \$3 billion deposit and a \$1.2 billion oil facility for one year, and linked it to the IMF program
- Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves have depleted by \$6 billion in the last six to seven weeks and nosedived to \$10.5 billion.
- Pakistan needs financial assistance of \$ 9-12 billion by June 2022 to prevent depletion of foreign exchange reserves.

6. GST Revenue collection for April 2022 highest ever at Rs 1.68 lakh crore (May 2, 2022)

According to the data released by the Union Finance Ministry, the highest level of collection recorded since the implementation of GST in July 2017 rose to Rs 1.68 lakh crore in April.

- The gross GST revenue collected in the month of April, 2022 is-

- CGST is Rs 33,159 crore
- SGST is Rs 41,793 crore
- IGST is Rs 81,939 crore (including Rs 36,705 crore collected on import of goods).
- Cess is Rs 10,649 crore (including Rs 857 crore collected on import of goods).
- Gross GST collection in April 2022 is the highest ever, an increase of Rs 25,000 crore over the previous month's highest collection of Rs 1,42,095 crore.
- The revenue for the month of April 2022 is 20% more than the GST revenue in the corresponding month of last year.
- During April, revenues from import of goods were 30% higher and the revenues from domestic transactions were 17% higher than the revenues from during the same month last year.

7. India's Pharma exports grow by 103% since 2013-14 (May 2, 2022)

Indian pharma exports witnessed a growth of 103% since 2013-14, from Rs 90,415 crore in 2013-14 to Rs 1,83,422 crore in 2021-22.

- The exports achieved in 2021-22 is the best ever export performance of the pharma sector.
- This is a remarkable increase with exports increasing by about US\$ 10 billion in 8 years.
- The trade balance remains in India's favour with a surplus of USD 15175.81 million.
- **India's Pharma industry**
- India is the world's third-largest pharmaceutical producer.
- Indian pharma companies have made India a global mark with 60% of the world's vaccines and 20% of generic drugs.
- The share of the drug in India's global exports is 5.92 percent.
- Currently, more than 80% of the antiretroviral drugs used globally to combat AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) are supplied by Indian pharmaceutical companies.
- It contributes 1.5% to the Indian GDP.
- India's top five pharma export destinations are the US, UK, South Africa, Russia and Nigeria.
- The pharmaceutical industry in India offers 60,000 generic brands across 60 therapeutic categories.

8. Biggest bilateral trade pact between India, UAE comes into force (May 2, 2022)

The historic India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) which was signed between the two countries on 18 February 2022, officially came into force from 1 May.

- Under the agreement, domestic exporters of products of textiles, agriculture, dry fruits, gems and jewellery will get duty-free access to the UAE market.
- In a symbolic start to the implementation of the agreement, Commerce Secretary BVR Subramaniam handed over the place of origin certificates to three exporters from the gems and jewellery sector.
- Under the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), these consignments sent to Dubai will not attract customs duty.

- **Background**

- CEPA, a comprehensive path-breaking trade agreement between India and the United Arab Emirates, was signed on February 18 during a virtual summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.
- The agreement was signed and exchanged by Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal and UAE Minister of Economy Abdullah bin Touq Al Marri.

- **Significance of the agreement**

- The agreement will provide significant benefits to Indian and UAE businesses, including increased market access and lower tariffs.
- Through CEPA, the target is to increase bilateral trade from the current \$60 billion to \$100 billion in the next five years.
- Overall, India will benefit from the preferential market access provided by the UAE on over 97% of its tariff lines.

9. Core Industries grow by 10.4% during FY 2021-22 (April 30, 2022)

The cumulative growth rate of the Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI) posted robust growth of 10.4 percent during 2021-22 fiscal as compared to the corresponding period of previous Financial Year.

- According to data from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the combined index of eight core industries rose 4.3% in March this year compared to the index for March 2021.
- The growth in the production of natural gas stood at 7.6%, steel index appreciated 3.7%, cement index grew 8.8% and electricity stood at 4.9% during the month of March 2022.
- Refinery Products grew 6.2% and fertiliser output grew by 15.3% in March this year.
- ICI measures combined and individual performance of production in selected eight core industries viz Coal, Natural Gas, Crude Oil, Fertilisers, Refinery Products, Steel, Cement and Electricity.
- The eight core industries comprise 40.27 per cent of the weight of the items included in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).

10. FDA proposes ban on menthol cigarettes, flavoured cigars (April 30, 2022)

The US Food and Drug Administration issued a long-awaited proposal to ban menthol cigarettes and flavoured cigars.

- The proposal aims to ban menthol as a specific flavouring in cigarettes and all characteristic flavours in cigars.
- The proposed rule will help prevent children from becoming the next generation of smokers and help in quitting adult smoking addiction.
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- Brazil was the first country in the world to ban menthol cigarettes in 2012.
- In 2019, the Government of India banned electronic cigarettes and different states have their own rules for banning the consumption of hookah in public places.
- **Tobacco Consumption in India**
- As per the Global Youth Tobacco Survey, India has the second largest number (268 million) of tobacco users in the world.
- Every year 1.3 million people in India die due to tobacco-related diseases.
- One million deaths are caused by smoking.
- In India, about 270 million people above 15 years of age and 8.5% of school children in the age group of 13-15 years use tobacco in some form or the other.
- Tobacco consumption incurs an economic burden of Rs 1,77,340 crore annually in India.
- About 27 percent of cancers in India are caused by tobacco use.