

1. Quad is a 'force for good': Modi (Page no.- 1)

GS Paper- 2 (IR)

The Quadrilateral alliance (Quad) is a “force for good”, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in his opening remarks at its summit in Tokyo on Tuesday. The event witnessed the launch of several initiatives, including a maritime project that will allow the tracking of “dark shipping” across the Indo-Pacific region.

2. Piyush Goyal bats for local supply chains at Davos meet (Page no.- 1)

GS Paper- 3 (Indian Economy)

Indian industry should strengthen domestic supply chains by sourcing supplies locally, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said at Davos, Switzerland. Speaking at the ‘Breakfast session Discussion on Trade 4.0’ at the World Economic Forum (WEF), Mr. Goyal said that there is a lot of optimism globally regarding India, despite challenges like the pandemic and the Ukraine conflict.

3. India, U.S., to work on tech, investment (Page no.- 1)

GS Paper- 2 (IR)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and U.S. President Joe Biden met along the sidelines of the Tokyo Quad leaders’ meeting for a bilateral meeting, their second one in little over a month, with the two leaders having met virtually on April 11 before the India-U.S. 2+2 Defence and Foreign Ministries dialogue.

The two countries announced a technology cooperation initiative and investment initiative with the U.S. development agency. Mr. Biden, expressing an idea he has articulated for years, said he would work for the U.S.-India relationship to be “among the closest” in the world.

4. A new road for India’s fiscal federalism (Page no.- 6)

GS Paper- 3 (Indian Economy)

On May 19, in Union of India vs Mohit Minerals, the Supreme Court of India delivered a ruling which is likely to have an impact far wider than what the Centre might have imagined when it brought the case up on appeal. At stake was the validity of a levy imposed on importers, of Integrated Goods and Services Tax (IGST) on ocean freight paid by foreign sellers to foreign shipping lines. The Gujarat High Court had declared the tax illegal. The Supreme Court affirmed the ruling through Justice D.Y. Chandrachud’s judgment and held that the levy constituted double taxation — that is, that the importer, which was already paying tax on the “composite” supply of goods, could not be asked to pay an additional tax on a perceived “service” that it may have received.

5. The executive seems more fragile than hurt sentiment (Page no.- 6)

GS Paper- 3 (Indian Polity)

In yet another brute show of power, Dr. Ratan Lal, a Dalit academician, was arrested for an ‘objectionable’ post on the Gyanvapi mosque row. He is alleged to have promoted disharmony or enmity between religious groups (Section 153A in the Indian Penal Code) and intentionally and maliciously hurt religious sentiments (Section 295A in the IPC). His arrest adds to the trend of increased use of the two provisions.

The latest annual report of the National Crime Records Bureau records more than four jumps (458%) of cases registered under Section 153A since 2014; it almost doubled in the last two years. This does not necessarily mean hurtful comments surged all of a sudden, as conviction could only be secured in merely 20.4% of cases. Though no separate data is available on Section 295A, anecdotal evidence suggests its increased use by the executive.

6. Caution and clarity (Page no.- 6)

GS Paper- 3 (IR)

In a sudden decision not previously intimated, India became one of a 13-nation economic initiative led by the U.S., on Monday, as President Joseph Biden unveiled plans for an Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF). The initiative is touted as a substantial step by the U.S. as part of its decade-old “pivot to Asia”, and an attempt at putting some “economic heft” into its Indo-Pacific presence that has been on the decline after its decision to quit the Trans Pacific Free Trade Agreement, the CPTPP, in 2017.

7. Serving those who serve (Page no.- 6)

GS Paper- 2 (Social Justice)

Recognition very often goes to those at the top of the pecking order, and stays there. Credit seldom trickles down to the worker at the bottom. The World Health Organization’s act of recognising India’s ASHA (accredited social health activists) and the polio workers of Afghanistan is an attempt to right that wrong.

8. Lessons from Russia for India (Page no.- 7)

GS Paper- 2 (IR)

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has had many impacts, but one area which merits more attention is whether it has produced effects sufficient to alter our understanding of warfare. A perusal of the evidence suggests that there is not any significant change in the nature of warfare. However, there are some key takeaways which have implications for the Indian military, which uses a significant amount of Russian-origin weapons systems.

9. On Quad; its origins, goals and future plans (Page no.- 8)

GS Paper- 2 (IR)

India, the U.S., Australia, and Japan are meeting for the second in-person summit of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue or Quad in Tokyo which commenced yesterday on May 24. The Quad is an informal multilateral grouping of India, the U.S., Australia, and Japan aimed at cooperation for a free and open Indo-Pacific region. A major basis for the grouping is to check China’s growing influence in the region.

Mr. Biden unveiled the ‘Indo-Pacific Economic Framework’ (IPEF) on May 23, which, according to Reuters is a programme to bind countries in the region more closely through common standards in areas including supply-chain resilience, clean energy, infrastructure and digital trade.

10. Centre scraps import duties on crude sunflower, soyabean oils (Page no.- 10)

GS Paper- 3 (Indian Economy)

In a bid to cool inflation in edible oils, the Centre on Tuesday allowed duty-free import of 20 lakh tonnes each of crude soyabean oil and crude sunflower oil for this year as well as 2023-24.

Retail inflation in edible oils and fats was 18.8% in March and 17.3% in April, and sunflower oil imports have been constricted due to the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict since February 24.

11. 60% e-waste recycling likely by 2023 oils (Page no.- 12)

GS Paper- 3 (Environment)

Consumer goods companies and makers of electronics goods have to ensure at least 60% of their electronic waste is collected and recycled by 2023 with targets to increase them to 70%

and 80% in 2024 and 2025, respectively, according to a draft notification by the Environment Ministry made public this week.

The rules bring into effect a system of trading in certificates, akin to carbon credits, that will allow companies to temporarily bridge shortfalls.

A wide range of electronic goods, including laptops, landline and mobile phones, cameras, recorders, music systems, microwaves, refrigerators and medical equipment, have been specified in the notification.