

The Hindu

Front Page

Russia strikes Kyiv as G7 summit opens (Page no. 1) (GS Paper 2, International Relations)

Russian missiles struck the Ukrainian capital Kyiv, a day after a key eastern city fell to pro-Russian forces in a major set-back for Ukraine and as world leaders gathered in Europe to discuss further sanctions against Moscow.

Up to four explosions rang out in central Kyiv in the early hours, in the first such attack on the city in weeks. Two more blasts were heard on the southern outskirts of the city later in the day.

As Europe's biggest land conflict since World War Two entered its fifth month the Western alliance supporting Kyiv was starting to show signs of strain as leaders fret about the growing economic cost, including surging food and energy prices.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, speaking as Group of Seven leaders gathered for a summit in Germany, said the West needed to maintain a united front against Russian President Vladimir Putin.

In order to protect that unity, in order to make it work, you've got to have really, really honest discussions about the implications of what's going on, the pressures that individual friends and partners are feeling.

But the price of backing down, the price of allowing Putin to succeed, to hack off huge parts of Ukraine, to continue with his programme of conquest, that price will be far, far higher.

China upgraded firepower on LAC (Page no. 1) (GS Paper 2, International Relations)

Vastly expanded troop accommodation within 100 km from the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the western sector, long-range artillery and rocket systems, upgraded air defence systems, expanded runways and hardened blast pens to house fighter aircraft these are some of the major upgrades undertaken by the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) on its side in the past two years since the stand-off in the eastern Ladakh began, according to intelligence inputs.

In the western sector across the LAC, the accommodation capacity was for 20,000 troops in 2020 before the stand-off began.

That has now been expanded to 1.2 lakh billets - infrastructure and accommodation-wise," an official source said on condition of anonymity, citing intelligence inputs.

They have also set up captive solar energy and small hydel power projects all along the LAC. This enhances their winter sustenance capability manifold.

States

Agnipath scheme against interests of the youth, says Satya Pal Malik (Page no. 6) (GS Paper 3, Defence)

Meghalaya Governor Satya Pal Malik on Sunday said the Agnipath scheme was "against the interests of the youth". He appealed to the Prime Minister to withdraw the scheme and requested the youth not to take the path of violence to register their protest.

Addressing the media during a private visit to Baghpat, Mr. Malik said the scheme would spoil the future of youngsters and they would not be able to find a match in marriage and suitable employment after four years of service.

Referring to the Haryana Chief Minister, Mr. Malik said those who were in their fourth year were promising jobs to the Agniveers.

Reviving cultivation of a traditional crop in Mysuru (Page no. 7) (GS Paper 3, Environment and Biodiversity)

Efforts are under way to popularise the inclusion of Amaranthus a wide variety of leafy vegetables - as part of mixed cropping among farmers in Mysuru.

Though known to be highly nutritious and still consumed but in a limited quantity it has economic benefits too and farmers can have multiple harvest to supplement their income.

But cultivation was gradually on the wane and with it a slice of culinary culture.

Editorial

Making sense of New Delhi's Taliban rapprochement (Page no. 8)

(GS Paper 2, International Relations)

The Pakistan-led coalition's success and luck in toppling a United States-supported constitutional order in Afghanistan has brought to surface unexpected developments.

While a growing number of the Taliban's western and regional lobbyists are distancing themselves from their pyrrhic victory, India pulled a rabbit out of its diplomatic hat by sending a senior diplomatic delegation to the Taliban-occupied Kabul.

The visit was the culmination of Delhi's months of quiet diplomacy and signalling. Just hours after the Taliban's takeover, in 2021, India was the first country to immediately ban all Afghans travelling to India, including students and patients with a valid Indian visa.

In a significant but not widely covered decision, India chose to abstain from the UN Security Council's calling on the Taliban to open girl schools and continues to remain silent about a worsening situation in Afghanistan.

India's apparent reorientation can be described and understood as an example of realpolitik, supremacy of national interest and a superficiality of "values" and "sentiments" in the Hobbesian world of international politics.

India's neutral stance on Russia's entanglement in Ukraine reveals the Indian version of "First India" foreign policy.

OPED

Bringing MSMEs into global value chains G. MOORTHY (Page no. 9)

(GS Paper 3, Economy)

Though the growth and achievements of large businesses in India have received much attention, micro-, small and medium enterprises (MSME) actually account for over 99% of businesses.

MSMEs are the largest employer in India outside of agriculture, employing over 11.1 crore people, or 45% of all workers.

It is no exaggeration to call MSMEs - privately owned enterprise with less than *50 crore in investments in plant and machinery and turnover below *250 crore the backbone of the Indian - economy.

Every year on June 27, World MSME Day provides us with the opportunity to appreciate their valuable contribution to job creation and sustainable development across the world.

Yet, these businesses are the ones that have faced the harshest of environments over the last few years.

The disruption of the pandemic severely impacted MSMEs, especially those in the services sector. Their small size and lack of access to resources meant that many were only beginning to mount a fragile recovery just when renewed war, supply shocks and soaring fuel, food and fertilizer prices presented a host of new threats.

And all of this comes against the backdrop of the ongoing climate crisis, the greatest disruption multiplier of all.

At the same time, the potential of India's small businesses is truly immense. India faces a unique moment in history, a potential demographic dividend of tremendous proportions.

To leverage this opportunity, India needs to create many jobs, especially for the one million young people entering the labour market every month.

How Hanoi and New Delhi are fortifying defence ties (Page no. 9)

(GS Paper 2, International Relations)

The furtherance of India's Act East Policy, maritime multilateralism, maritime security outreach and the building of stronger networks across the Indo-Pacific are some of the key elements which have made New Delhi and Hanoi natural partners.

The two countries recently deepened bilateral cooperation with the signing of the Joint Vision Statement on India-Vietnam Defence Partnership towards 2030 during the recent visit of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to Vietnam.

The Joint Vision Statement is aimed at boosting the scope and scale of the existing defence cooperation between the two nations.

Both sides undertook extensive deliberations to expand avenues of effective and practicable collaboration in bilateral defence engagements pertaining to regional and global issues.

In the meeting with his counterpart, Vietnam's Minister of National Defence General Phan Van Giang, the early finalisation of the \$500 million Defence Line of Credit extended by India to the latter along with the implementation of

existing projects which would complement India's 'Make in India, Make for the world' and Hanoi's defence capabilities were also discussed.

The two sides also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Mutual Logistics Support. This is the first agreement of its kind that Hanoi has entered into with any other country and elevates the standing of Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) which Hanoi shares with New Delhi since 2016 (along with only Russia and China).

Because of the volume of maritime trade that passes through sea lanes of communication in the Indo-Pacific and potential as well as estimated energy reserves in these waters, maritime cooperation between countries in the region have expanded exponentially.

Undoubtedly, for India and Vietnam too, the maritime domain in particular has occupied a central focus.

Both countries find convergence in their approaches towards the maintenance of stability and security of the Indo Pacific which has translated into diplomatic and political support in the context of developments within the region.

Explainer

Indian laws on abortions (Page no. 10)

(GS Paper 2, Polity and Governance)

The story so far: In a significant step backwards for women's rights in the U.S., the Supreme Court overturned the landmark Roe v. Wade judgement of 1973, which gave women in America the right to have an abortion before the foetus is viable outside the womb or before the 24-28 week mark.

With the setting aside of the historic judgement on abortion in the U.S, here's a look at the laws that govern abortion in India.

In the 1960s, in the wake of a high number of induced abortions taking place, the Union government ordered the constitution of the Shantilal Shah Committee to deliberate on the legalisation of abortion in the country.

In order to reduce maternal mortality owing to unsafe abortions, the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act was brought into force in 1971.

This law is an exception to the Indian Penal Code (IPC) provisions of 312 and 313 and sets out the rules of how and when a medical abortion can be carried out.

Under Section 312 of the IPC, a person who "voluntarily causes a woman with child to miscarry" is liable for punishment, attracting a jail term of up to three years or fine or both, unless it was done in good faith where the purpose was to save the life of the pregnant woman.

Section 313 of the IPC states that a person who causes the miscarriage without the consent of the pregnant woman, whether or not she is in the advanced stages of her pregnancy, shall be punished with life imprisonment or a jail term that could extend to 10 years, as well as a fine.

Text and Content

Implications of India's new VPN rules (Page no. 11)

(GS Paper 3, Science and Technology)

The story so far: On April 28, India's cybersecurity agency passed a rule mandating Virtual Private Network (VPN) providers to record and keep their customers' logs for 180 days.

It also asked these firms to collect and store customer data for up to five years. It further mandated that any cybercrime recorded must be reported to the CERT-In (Computer Emergency Response Team) within six hours of the crime.

The new directives, if passed, will be effective from June 28. In response to the CERT-In rules, Nord VPN, one of the world's largest VPN providers, has said it is moving its servers out of the country.

Two other firms, Express VPN and Surfshark, said they will shut down their physical servers in India and cater to users in India through virtual servers located in Singapore and the U.K.

CERT-In directions are applicable to data centres, virtual private server (VPS) providers, cloud service providers, virtual asset service providers, virtual asset exchange providers, custodian wallet providers and government organisations.

Firms that provide Internet proxy-like services through VPN technologies also come under the ambit of the new rule. Corporate entities are not under the scanner.

A virtual server is a simulated server environment built on an actual physical server. It recreates the functionality of a dedicated physical server.

The virtual twin functions like a physical server that runs software and uses resources of the physical server. Multiple virtual servers can run on a single physical server.

News

From July 1, Himachal to buy back single use plastic (Page no. 14)

(GS Paper 3, Environment)

As the Centre has decided to ban the use of single-use plastic from July 1, the hill State of Himachal Pradesh is all set to kick-start a buy-back scheme in schools and colleges to purchase the single-use plastic items from students in a bid to instil a sense of environment preservation by "catching them young".

Under the novel scheme, the students would be encouraged to bring single-use plastic items from their home and deposit it with the school, for which they will be paid 175 a kg by the government.

Across the State, we have 3,000 eco-clubs in schools and in 100 colleges under the National Green Corps programme - these eco-clubs are an association of student-teachers that work to inculcate environmental awareness and protection.

As a pilot project, we will start the buy-back scheme in 100 schools from July 1. Later, we will scale it up and implement the scheme in all the schools and colleges through the eco-clubs.

Odisha to install siren to caution elephant movement in forest (Page no. 14)

(GS Paper 3, Environment)

The Forest Department in Odisha is experimenting with a siren system, which would go off automatically sensing elephant herds crossing the National Highway to reduce human-elephant encounters.

We in association with a non-government organisation have started a pilot project on siren system to alert traffic to elephant movement.

The system has been installed at two places at Ratasingha and Haldihabahal," said Dhenkanal Divisional Forest officer Prakash Chand Gogineni.

The Forest Department officials have been deployed at two places to assess its operability and how seamless it can work to prevent encounters with wild elephants.

World

G7 proposes \$600bn global infra plan to rival China (Page no. 15)

(GS Paper 2, International Relations)

The G7 group on Sunday announced an attempt to compete with China's formidable Belt and Road Initiative by raising \$600 billion for global infrastructure programmes in poor countries.

The Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment, unveiled with fanfare by U.S. President Joe Biden and G7 allies from Canada, Germany, Italy, Japan and the European Union, aims to fill a huge gap left as communist China uses its economic clout to stretch diplomatic tentacles into the furthest reaches of the world.

Mr. Biden said the target was for the U.S. to bring \$200 billion to the table, with the rest of the G7 another \$400 billion by 2027.

Funding the kinds of projects that China currently dominates — everything from roads to harbours in far-flung corners of the world — is not "aid or charity," Mr. Biden said.

Business

Decrypting the crypto myth (Page no. 16)

(GS Paper 3, Economy)

Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies are generally perceived as assets, currencies or both. As impactful as cryptocurrencies have been as tools of speculation in current financial markets, the narrative behind the existing technology holds the key to breaking it and most fads down.

Cryptocurrencies are computer-managed ledger entries that can function as money if someone is willing to value these entries as money and use them in transactions.

Cryptocurrencies inherently possess no value whatsoever, but are valued at high prices. The reason why cryptocurrencies are the behemoth instruments seen today lies in the narratives propagated surrounding them.

The primary narrative which appeals to most cryptocurrency enthusiasts is the idea that cryptocurrencies, due to some advanced technical brilliance, excel as a currency compared with a dull old currency note.

