

1. Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement

Topic: International Affairs

In News: India has signed the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

More on the Topic:

- UAE is India's third-largest trade partner globally after the US and China.
- UAE is the ninth biggest source of FDI in India. The UAE is likely to invest in ports, railways, and industrial corridors in India.

About Comprehensive Economic Partnership

Agreements:

- It is a kind of free trade pact which covers negotiation on the trade in services and investment, and other areas of economic partnership.
- It may even consider negotiation on areas such as trade facilitation and customs cooperation, competition, and Intellectual Property Rights.
- The partnership agreement or cooperation agreement is more comprehensive than an FTA.
- CECA/CEPA also looks into the regulatory aspect of trade and encompasses an agreement covering the regulatory issues.
- CECA has the widest coverage.

Source: Down To Earth



2. Equalisation levy

Topic: Economy

In News: Justifying the 2 per cent equalisation levy (EL) imposed by India on the supply of services by multinational enterprises, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said it is a sovereign right to tax revenues earned from operations in the country.

More on the Topic:

- In October 2021, **G20 countries approved a global deal to adopt a 15 per cent minimum corporate tax and reallocate taxing rights** for large profitable multinational enterprises (MNEs) to countries where they sell products and services.
- India was the one of the first countries to introduce a **6 per cent equalisation levy in 2016**, but the levy was restricted to online advertisement services.



- However, **India introduced the digital tax in April 2020 for foreign companies selling goods and services online** to customers in India and showing annual revenues more than INR 20 million.
- While the levy applied only to digital advertising services till 2019-20 at the rate of 6 percent, the government in April 2020 **widened the scope to impose a 2 per cent tax on non-resident e-commerce players with a turnover of Rs 2 crore.**
- The scope was further widened in the **Finance Act 2021-22 to cover e-commerce supply or service when any activity takes place online.**
- Since May 2021, this also includes any entity that systematically and continuously does business with more than 3 lakh users in India.

Significance of Equalisation Levy:

- The equalisation levy was imposed **“to give level playing field** between Indian businesses who pay tax in India and foreign e-commerce companies who do business in India but do not pay any income tax here.

Source: Indian Express

3.The Tigers of the Sunderbans

Topic: Environment and Ecology

In News: The Wildlife Institute of India has told the state forest department in its preliminary report that The Sunderbans in West Bengal has more tigers than the mangrove delta can carry.

More on the Topic:

- The peak density of tiger population depends on several parameters like prey base, human interference, and male-female ration of the tigers.
- The carrying capacity of Sunderbnas is three to five tigers per 100 sq km and in multiple blocks the density is more than that.
- As a result, **young big cats might be forced to move out in search of new territories** and weaker ones might look for a new home with easier hunting skills.
- At least eight tigers have strayed into villages in Sunderbans since December last year and all of them were captured and released into the wild.
- The WII has advised the forest department to release the tigers that are captured in those parts of the forest that have comparatively less tiger population.



About the Sunderbans:

- The Sunderbans, the world’s largest mangrove delta is the home to Royal Bengal Tigers.
- It is located in the coastal region of Bay of Bengal spread over India and Bangladesh on the delta (world’s largest) of the **Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna rivers**.
- **It is the only mangrove forest in the world inhabited by tigers.**
- Sundarbans Tiger Reserve was created in 1973. Sundarbans National Park constitutes a core region within the tiger reserve.
- It was designated a UNESCO World Heritage. Sunderbans was designated as a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO in 2001.
- Sundarban Wetland, India was recognised as the ‘Wetland of International Importance’ under the Ramsar Convention.

Source: Indian Express

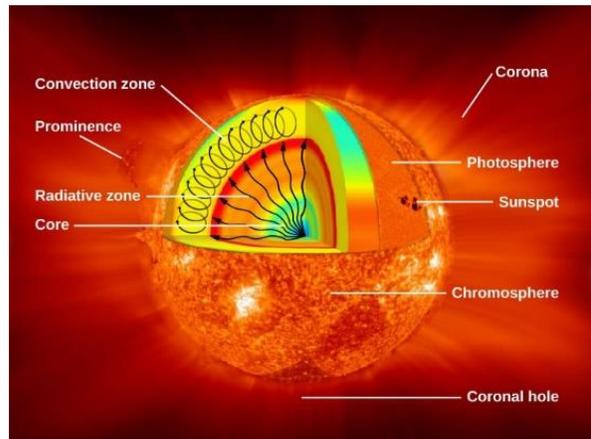
4. Plasma jets

Topic: Science and Technology

In News: Astronomers have resolved the decades-old mystery of plasma jets by taking the "heartbeat" of a black hole.

More on the Topic:

- Scientists have unravelled the science behind **the jets of plasma - the fourth state of matter**.
- It consist of **electrically charged particles that occur just about everywhere in the sun’s chromosphere**, which is the atmospheric layer just above the Sun's visible surface.
- These jets, or spicules, appear as thin grass-like plasma structures that constantly shoot up from the surface and are then brought down by gravity.
- The processes by which plasma is supplied to the solar wind, and the solar atmosphere is heated to a million degrees Celsius, still remain a puzzle.



About the new research:

- Scientists have explained the origin of ‘spicules’ or ‘jets’ on the Sun.
- They explained that the plasma right below the visible solar surface (photosphere) is perpetually in a state of convection, much like boiling water in a vessel heated at the bottom. This is ultimately **powered by the nuclear energy released in the hot-dense core**.
- The convection serves almost periodic but strong kicks to the plasma in the solar chromosphere, the shallow semi-transparent layer right above the visible solar disk. **The chromosphere is 500 times lighter than the plasma in the photosphere.**

- Therefore, these strong kicks from the bottom shoot the chromospheric plasma outward at ultrasonic speeds in the form of spicules or jets.

Source: The Hindu

5. Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)

Topic: International Relations

In News: Ukraine war may delay India Eurasian Economic Union free trade agreement talks.

More on the Topic:

- The Eurasian Economic Union is an **international organization for regional economic integration** that came into existence in January 2015.
- The EAEU provides for free movement of goods, services, capital, and labor within its borders.
- It pursues, coordinates, & harmonizes the policies in the sectors determined by the Treaty and international agreements within the Union.
- The member states of the Eurasian Economic Union are Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, and The Russian Federation.



Source: PIB

6. 'Start-up village entrepreneurship programme' (SVEP)

Topic: Government Schemes



In News: The Union Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) and the National Institute of Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (NIESBUD) have signed a memorandum understanding (MoU) to develop a sustainable model for promoting entrepreneurship at the grass roots by initiating the 'start-up village entrepreneurship programme' (SVEP).

More on the Topic:

- **NIESBUD is an autonomous organisation** under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE).



- The partnership will enable the rural community by helping them set up their trades and provide complete support till they are stabilized.
- SVEP is a sub-component of **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) which aims to support entrepreneurs in rural areas to set-up enterprises at the village-level** in non-agricultural sectors.
- The rural entrepreneurs will be able to access banking systems for receiving financial support for starting their enterprises, including support from MUDRA bank.
- Integrated ICT techniques and tools will also be provided for training and capacity building along with enterprise advisory services to augment the entrepreneurship ecosystem in India's villages.
- The beneficiaries of the project are from the self-help group (SHG) ecosystem of DAY-NRLM and the scheme not only supports existing enterprises but new enterprises as well.

Source: Indian Express

7. Donate a Pension Initiative

Topic: Government Schemes

In News: Labour Ministry has launched Donate a Pension initiative.

More on the Topic:

- It will be under Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan (PM-SYM) for people to contribute to the pension fund of their support staff.
- Under this, citizens can donate the premium contribution of their immediate support staff such as domestic workers, drivers, helpers etc.
- PM-SYM is a 50:50 voluntary and contributory pension scheme in which the beneficiary makes a stipulated age-specific contribution and the Central Government matches it.
- **The Ministry of Labour and Employment** will oversee PM-SYM, which will be implemented by Life Insurance Corporation of India and CSC eGovernance Services India Limited (CSC SPV).

Source: Indian Express

MCQs:

1. Which of the following statement/s is/are true?

1. The Start-up Village Entrepreneurship Programme (SVEP) is a sub-scheme of the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM)

2. It is being implemented by Ministry of Skill development.

(a) 1 only



- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: a

2. 'Perform Achieve Trade' is related with?

- (a) Nuclear Industry
- (b) Energy Efficiency
- (c) Priority Sector Lending
- (d) Production Linked Subsidy

Ans: b

3. Mission Innovation (MI), a global initiative to accelerate clean energy innovation has been launched by?

- (a) Energy Efficiency Limited
- (b) UNEP
- (c) European Commission
- (d) World Bank

Ans: c

4. Which of the following statement/s are true?

1. Globally, China has the maximum number of supercomputers.

2. India's first supercomputer was PARAM 8000.

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans c



5. Messenger spacecraft is associated with?

- (a) Mercury
- (b) Venous
- (c) Saturn
- (d) Neptune

Ans: a