

Current Affairs:03.05.2022

PAKISTAN – SAUDI ARABIA RELATIONS

Saudi Arabia has agreed to provide Pakistan with a “sizeable package” of around \$8



billion to help the cash-starved country bolster dwindling forex reserves and revive its ailing economy.

Pakistan secured the deal during the visit of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to Saudi Arabia. Pakistan has faced growing economic challenges, with high inflation, sliding forex reserves, a widening current account deficit and a depreciating currency. The financial package includes a doubling of the oil financing facility, additional

money either through deposits or Sukuks (Islamic financial certificate), and rolling over of the existing \$4.2 billion facilities. Pakistan had proposed doubling the oil facility from \$1.2 billion to \$2.4 billion and Saudi Arabia agreed to it. It was also agreed that the existing deposits of \$3 billion would be rolled over for an extended period of up to June 2023.

RESTRUCTURING OF INDIAN RAILWAYS

Going ahead with its downsizing plan, the Indian Railways has announced the closure of the Special Railway Establishment for Strategic Technology and Holistic Advancement (SRESTHA), Lucknow.



About:

Established in 2016, the SRESTHA directorate, part of the Research Designs and Standards Organisation (RDSO), was tasked with the role of taking up long-term railway research projects requiring technological advancement. As part of the restructuring plan, the Railways also decided to merge 32 directorates of the RDSO and brought them under seven verticals — administration, infrastructure, rolling stock, traction and power supply, signal and telecommunication, resource and testing and traffic and psychology. Another notification is that the Geotech Engineering Directorate will be merged with the Track and Bridges & Structures Directorate. The Railways also proposed to create new posts in the rank of Executive Director, Design, to be posted at the Integral Coach Factory, Chennai, Rail Coach Factory, Kapurthala and Modern Coach Factory, Rae Bareilly, under the Railway Board’s Rolling Stock Directorate. The restructuring plan of the Indian Railways is in line with the recommendations for rationalisation of government bodies made by Principal Economic Adviser Sanjeev Sanyal.

ANABOLIC STEROIDS

Anabolic steroids have often been in news, be it for two Tokyo Olympians being banned for using it to Noida Police seizing fake drugs and supplements worth Rs 2 crore.

About: Anabolic steroids are essentially lab-made versions of the male hormone testosterone and have a similar effect of increasing muscle mass as the natural hormone does. It also increases male characteristics in a person, such as facial hair and a deeper voice. The anabolic steroids have a very limited medical role and are mainly used by doctors to help patients gain weight after a

Cross & Climb, Rohtak



severe illness or injury. It could also be prescribed in small doses to the elderly to build muscle mass and in some cases also helps to treat anaemia. More than being a drug prescribed by doctors, anabolic steroids are usually used by bodybuilders. The anabolic steroids are misused mainly by those who want to bulk up as it helps increase one's muscle mass.

Health impacts? Use of anabolic steroids in the short-term can cause acne and hairfall. Extended misuse of the substance can also lead to gynaecomastia (growth of breasts in men) and erectile dysfunction. In women, it can lead to growth of facial hair. It may also cause extreme anger, paranoia, and impaired judgement.

INDIA-CANADA RELATIONS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed virtually the Sanatan Mandir Cultural Centre in Ontario, Canada on the occasion of inauguration of Sardar Patel's statue. He said the statue of Sardar Patel will become a symbol of the relationship between the two countries.

About: Prime Minister (PM) Modi's visit to Canada in April 2015 elevated the bilateral relation to a strategic partnership. A Nuclear Cooperation Agreement (NCA) with Canada was signed in June 2010 and came into force in September 2013. Canada hosts one of the largest Indian diasporas in the world, numbering 1.6 million (PIOs and NRIs) which account for more than 4% of its total population.

INTEGRATED TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME (ITEP)

National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) has invited online application for the 4 Year Integrated Teacher Education Programmes (ITEP) for Academic Session 2023-24.

ITEP, as notified on 22nd October 2021, is a dual-major holistic bachelor's degree offering B.A. B.Ed./ B. Sc. B. Ed. and B.Com. B.Ed. It is one of the major mandates of the National Education Policy 2020 related to Teacher Education. It will be offered in pilot mode initially in multidisciplinary Central/State Government Universities/Institutions across the country. Admission for the same will be carried out by the National Testing Agency (NTA) through the National Common Entrance Test (NCET). NCTE under Ministry of Education has devised the curriculum for this course as per NEP 2020 in such a way that it enables a student-teacher to get a degree in education as well as a specialized discipline such as history, mathematics, science, arts, economics, or commerce. The 4 Year ITEP will be available for all students who choose teaching as a profession after secondary, by choice. This integrated course will benefit students since they will save one year by finishing it in four years rather than the customary five years required by the present B.Ed. plan.

INDIA-UAE COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT (CEPA)

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

About: Overall, India will benefit from preferential market access provided by the UAE on over 97 % of its tariff lines which account for 99% of Indian exports to the UAE in value terms particularly from labour-intensive sectors such as Gems and Jewellery, Textiles, leather, footwear etc. As regards trade in services, Indian service providers will have enhanced access to around 111 sub-sectors from the 11 broad service sectors.