

INDIA and EU carbon border tax

- The European Union (EU) proposes to introduce a framework for levying a carbon tax on imports of products that rely on non-green or sub-optimally sustainable processes and where carbon emissions are deemed to have not been adequately priced.
- This Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) will begin with an import monitoring mechanism and culminate in the levy of duties as determined from January 2026.
- The EU argues that the CBAM will ensure its climate objectives are not undermined by carbon-intensive imports and spur cleaner production in the rest of the world.
- This poses a significant threat to some of India's biggest exports to the trading bloc, including iron ore and steel, with carbon levies estimated to range from 19.8% to 52.7%...
- Last year, about a third of India's iron, steel, and aluminium exports, for instance, were shipped to EU members.
- Engineering products, the largest export growth driver in recent years, would be impacted too.
- Larger players across sectors are gradually turning to greener technologies, but the transition needs time even more so for smaller businesses to move away from legacy carbon-heavy technologies (such as blast furnaces for steel making).
- The EU believes the carbon tax is compatible with World Trade Organization norms, but India is looking to challenge that.
- It may also flag the incompatibility with the UN's climate change framework which moots common but differentiated responsibilities for developed and developing nations.
- So, a threat of retaliatory tariffs on EU imports is also being weighed even as plans are afoot to quantify the various carbon taxes levied in India.
- Having positioned itself as the voice of the global South, India must play that part to the hilt while at the helm of the G-20 this year and galvanize other nations to take on the EU's carbon tax framework.



Syria in Arab League

- The Arab League's decision to readmit Syria, after over a decade of isolation, signals a growing desire of regional powers to set aside intra-Arab rivalries and work towards establishing a more predictable, stable relationship with one another.
- Ironically, it is Saudi Arabia, which had rallied the Arab countries to expel Syria in 2011 amid the regime's crackdown on protests that pushed for Syria's readmission.
- The move is also a recognition that Syria's President Bashar al-Assad has practically won the civil war and signals the weakening influence of the U.S., which still imposes heavy sanctions on the regime and is upset with the League's decision.
- When protests broke out in Syria in 2011, inspired by similar protests elsewhere in the Arab Street, the regime's response was one of violent repression.
- When the protesters took up arms and got support from Mr. Assad's regional rivals such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Jordan, and Turkey, the crisis turned into civil war. Over the years, the Assad regime, backed by Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah, managed to stabilize and push back the rebels and jihadists.
- The Arab countries realized that their policy of regime change and isolation of Syria had only boomeranged on them.
- As Syria was expelled from the Arab League and Arab countries backed ant regime forces in the civil war, Damascus moved closer to Iran.
- Today, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Jordan, and others want to re-establish the lost balance in their ties with Syria.
- The Arab countries and Turkey, which host millions of Syrian refugees, want to send them back.
- For that, they need to cooperate with and help sanctions-hit Syria, which was battered by a devastating earthquake in February, sustain itself economically.
- The changing geopolitical environment in West Asia in which rivals Saudi Arabia and Iran are warming up to each other has also helped the Arab rapprochement with Syria. As a token gesture, Syria has agreed to take back 1,000 refugees from Jordan and cooperate with neighbors to crack down on drug smuggling.
- But this is only the beginning. Mr. Assad might have won the civil war, but the wounds of the war, in which his regime used brutal methods to

crush the opposition, are still festering.



THE HINDU



THE HINDU

Israel port

- Arab train networks in future would be carrying Indian goods to the Israeli port of Haifa,



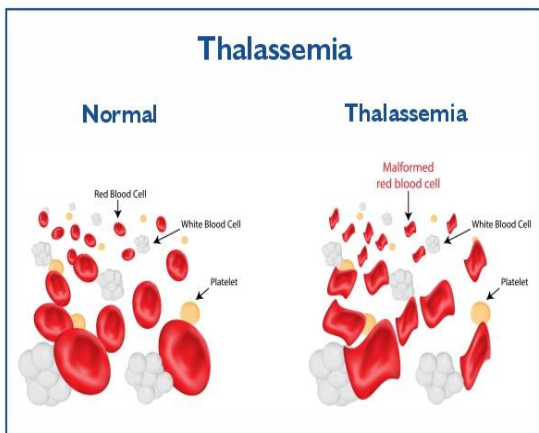
Press freedom index

- On World Press Freedom Day (WPFDD) (3rd May), the World Press Freedom Index 2023 was published by Reporters without Borders (RSF).
- India ranked 161st among the 180 countries with a score of 36.62. In 2022, India's rank was 150.
- Sri Lanka also made significant improvement on the index, ranking 135th this year as against 146th in 2022.
- Pakistan is ranked at 150th position.
- The situation has gone from 'problematic' to 'very bad' in three other countries: Tajikistan (down 1 at 153rd), India (down 11 at 161st) and Turkey (down 16 at 165th).



Thalassemia

- Thalassemia is an inherited (i.e., passed from parents to children through genes) blood disorder caused when the body doesn't make enough of a protein called hemoglobin, an important part of red blood cells.
- Thalassemia is a treatable disorder that can be well-managed with blood transfusions and chelation therapy.



- Variants (also known as mutations) in the HBB gene cause beta-thalassemia.
- The HBB gene provides instructions for making a protein called beta-globin. Beta-globin is a component (subunit) of hemoglobin.

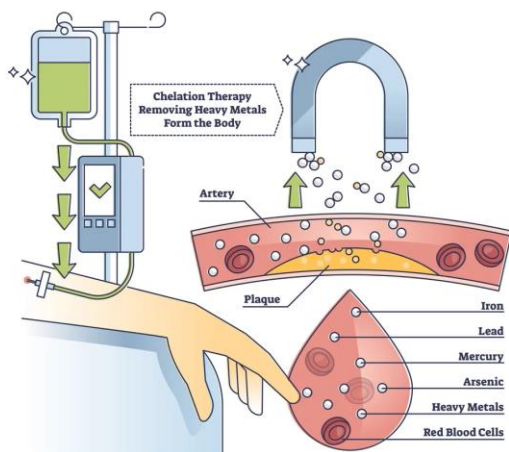
THE HINDU

CPEC in Afghanistan



- Pakistan, China, and Af- Associated Press Afghanistan have agreed to forge closer economic ties by extending the Beijing-backed China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to Afghanistan to fully harness the country's potential as a hub for regional connectivity.

CHELATION THERAPY





THE HINDU

GES
REPORTER