

# DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

By



SOURCES



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## **Important News Articles**

1. Architect of India's Green Revolution departs
2. What is the 'Five Eyes' intelligence alliance?
3. Mizoram not to collect data of Myanmar 'refugees'
4. MGNREGA social audit unit in a state of paralysis in many States
5. Current account deficit widens QoQ to \$9.2 bn on trade gap
6. From Rajasthan to Haryana, a pest is wreaking havoc on cotton fields
7. Tobacco warnings on OTT: Amid pushback from platforms, Govt looking for a solution
8. Glaciers in Switzerland lose 10% of their ice volume in two years

## **Editorials, Gists and Explainers**

1. Nipah virus outbreak: What are monoclonal antibodies?
2. Man of science and humanity

## Important News Articles

### GSI

#### 1. Architect of India's Green Revolution departs

**Relevance:** Distribution of key natural resources across the world (including South Asia and the Indian sub-continent); factors responsible for the location of primary, secondary, and tertiary sector industries in various parts of the world (including India).

**News:**

- **M.S. Swaminathan, the agricultural scientist** known as the father of the Green Revolution in India, died at his residence in Chennai.
- He played a pivotal role in **defining India's tryst with scientific agriculture.**

Prelims Takeaway

- Carbon fixation

**the Green Revolution**

- A period of rapid, **scientific agricultural advancement in the mid-1960s** that involved growing a high-yielding, disease-resistant variety of wheat, primarily in Punjab.
- He was the **key architect of this movement**
- **Short-straw or dwarf varieties of crops** like rice and wheat formed the basis of India's Green Revolution.
- Dwarf strains have a higher Harvest Index, which means that the plant puts more of its energy resources into seeds rather than leaves or other plant structures.

**high-yielding varieties of crops (HYVs)**

- HYVs produced a **higher yield of crop per hectare in comparison to traditional variants.**
- These variants are produced using a combination of traditional breeding steps and **biotechnology**, which includes genetic diversity.
- The resulting **HYVs are usually disease-resistant and have a higher tolerance to conditions like drought.**
- **IR8, a variety of rice developed by the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI)**
- **This "miracle rice" was first introduced in the Philippines**

**Yield gap**

- The **difference between the potential or maximum achievable yield of a crop and the actual realized yield for a given area** is called the yield gap.
- During the **Green Revolution, one of the main areas of focus was the increase productivity** from existing farmlands using HYVs in order to tackle the threat of famine.

**Cytogenetics**

- Cytogenetics is the **study of chromosomes (DNA-carrying structures) and how they relate to hereditary characteristics and traits.**
- Identifying traits such as **resistance to diseases, drought, and pests in crops** are applications of **cytogenetics.**

**Hexaploid wheat**

- Scientifically known as **Triticum aestivum, hexaploid wheat contains six sets of chromosomes and is among the most widely cultivated cereal crops** across the world.
- It is also called "**bread wheat**"
- **Dr. Swaminathan is associated with research on the cytogenetics** of hexaploid wheat.

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**GS II**


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**2. What is the 'Five Eyes' intelligence alliance?**

**Relevance:** Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora.

**News:**

- Recently, tussle between India and Canada over the killing of a Khalistani leader has put the spotlight on the **intelligence-sharing alliance 'Five Eyes' (or FVEY), which is believed to have provided the information that "helped" Canada.**

**Prelims Takeaway**

- 'Five Eyes'

**Who are the 'Five Eyes'?**

- The 'Five Eyes' is a multilateral intelligence-sharing network shared by over 20 different agencies of five English-speaking countries**
  - Australia,
  - Canada
  - New Zealand
  - the United Kingdom
  - the United States.
- It is both **surveillance-based and signals intelligence (SIGINT).**
- Intelligence documents shared between the member countries are classified **'Secret—AUS/CAN/NZ/UK/US Eyes Only,'** which gave the group its title 'Five Eyes.'

**How did the alliance come into being?**

- The alliance **between the U.S. and the U.K.** evolved around the Second World War to counter the Cold War Soviet threat.
- The **two countries, which had successfully deciphered German and Japanese codes** during the World War, forged a collaboration to share intelligence related to signals such as radio, satellite and internet communications.
- In the **aftermath of the war in 1946, the alliance was formalised through an agreement** for cooperation in signals intelligence.
- Its scope was **limited to "communication intelligence matters only"** related to "unrestricted" exchange of intelligence products in six areas
- The **arrangement was later extended to 'second party' countries** —Canada joined in 1948, while Australia and New Zealand became part of the alliance in 1956.
- In fact, **no government officially acknowledged the arrangement by name until 1999** and the text of the agreement was first officially released in public after over 60 years in 2010.
- The **goalpost of the Five Eyes, however, has shifted following the collapse of the Soviet Union** and the emergence of new global challenges like terrorism and the growing influence of China.
- he Five Eyes have become involved in ocean and maritime surveillance, scientific and defence intelligence analysis, medical intelligence, geospatial intelligence, counterintelligence, counterterrorism, and the continuous sharing of intelligence products via a secret collective database** known as 'Stone Ghost',
- To increase **cooperation and maintain closeness, the Five Eyes Intelligence Oversight and Review Council (FIORC) was created** in September 2016

**What are the concerns?**

- There have been **several concerns regarding the privacy, security and methods of working of the intelligence alliance, which remained shrouded in mystery for long.**
- The alliance was **embroiled in a major controversy in 2013 following the disclosure of classified documents** by Edward Snowden, a former National Security Agency (NSA) contractor.
- The **papers documented the mass surveillance programme jointly operated by the Five Eyes to monitor the citizens of member countries.**
- In 2013, a **Canda court rebuked the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) for using the alliance to monitor the electronic communications of Canadian terror suspects overseas.**

### 3. Mizoram not to collect data of Myanmar 'refugees'

**Relevance:** Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.

**News:**

- **Mizoram has decided not to collect biometric and biographic data of Myanmar refugees** in the state as it would lead to discrimination.

**Prelims Takeaway**

- The 1951 Refugee Convention

**Key points**

- **Refugees from neighbouring countries cannot be given the refugee status** in Mizoram
  - India is not a signatory to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the protocol.
- the **Mizoram government allowed refugees to take shelter in the state** and provided the necessary humanitarian assistance and healthcare.

**The 1951 Refugee Convention**

- It is a UN treaty that defines **who a refugee is and establishes the rights of such persons and also of those who are granted asylum.**
- It is the main **legal document that governs the working of the UNHCR.**
- It is also called the **Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees or the Geneva Convention of 28 July 1951.**
- It also talks about the **responsibilities and legal obligations of countries that grant asylum status to people.**
- Apart from that, the **Convention also defines those who are not eligible for asylum status, such as war criminals.**
- This Convention is **the central guiding document of international refugee protection today.**
- The Convention defines a **refugee as someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear** of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.
- The **Convention is both a status and rights-based instrument and is underpinned by a number of fundamental principles**, most notably non-discrimination, non-penalization and non-refoulement.

### 4. MGNREGA social audit unit in a state of paralysis in many States

**Relevance:** Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

**News:**

- An oft-repeated **criticism against the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)** scheme is its alleged high rate of corruption.
- **the social audit units meant to detect any cases of malpractice** — has not been backed by the effective recovery of embezzled funds.

**Prelims Takeaway**

- Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)

**Key Points**

- As per the **statistics available with the Union Rural Development Ministry** in the ongoing financial year, **less than 14% of the amount flagged by the auditors has been recovered so far.**
- In the ongoing financial year, **the social audit units have flagged misappropriation** to the tune of ₹27.5 crore.
- **After action was taken in some of these cases, the amount came down** to ₹9.5 crore out of which only ₹1.31 crore has been recovered so far, merely 13.8% of the total.
- In 2021-22, **one of the social audit units flagged one of the highest amounts of misappropriation** at ₹171 crore but only ₹26 crore, 15% of the total, was recovered.
- Section 17 of the **Act governing the scheme says that the gram sabha “shall monitor the execution of works**
- **Each State has social audit units** which are supposed to work independent of the implementing authorities.
- But the **Ministry, which directly funds the social audit units** so that they are able to maintain their independence from the States, **is not getting funds to them in time.**

- For example, **units in Karnataka and Bihar have not got funds for nearly two years now,**
- Poor monitoring**
- Over the last three years, **there has been a consistent trend of the same States reporting “zero number of cases” and making “zero recoveries”.**

### GS III

#### 5. Current account deficit widens QoQ to \$9.2 bn on trade gap

**Relevance:** Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

**News:**

##### Prelims Takeaway

- Current Account Deficit

- India's **current account deficit (CAD) widened to \$9.2 billion** (1.1% of GDP) in the April-June quarter, from \$1.3 billion (0.2% of GDP) in the preceding three months,
- **exports of goods shrank even as imports rose** and net receipts from services also declined quarter-on-quarter, data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)

**Current Account Deficit**

- Current account deficit (CAD) **is when the value of a country's imports of goods and services is greater than its exports.**
- **CAD and fiscal deficit together make up twin deficits** that can impact the stock market and investors.
- **Fiscal Deficit is the gap between the government's expenditure** requirements and its **receipts.**
- This equals the **money the government needs to borrow during the year.**

**Implication**

- **The CAD is significant because it affects the economy,** stock markets, and people's investments.
- A **lower CAD can boost investor sentiment** and make the country's currency more attractive to investors.
- A surplus in the **current account indicates that money** is flowing into the country, which can boost foreign exchange reserves and the value of the local currency.

#### 6. From Rajasthan to Haryana, a pest is wreaking havoc on cotton fields

**Relevance:** Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

**News:**

- The **Pink Bollworm is more widespread and serious than ever** before in the states of Rajasthan and Haryana which is affecting cotton crop.

##### Prelims Takeaway

- Pink bollworm

**Pink bollworm**

- It is one of the **most destructive pests of cotton.**
- Originally native to India, **it is now recorded in nearly all the cotton-growing countries of the world.**
- **The adults are small moths about 3/8 inch long** and are dark brown with markings on the fore wing.
- The larval stage **is the destructive and identifiable stage.**
- The **larvae have distinctive pink bands** and can reach a length of ½ inches right before they pupate.
- Adults lay **eggs on cotton balls;** once hatched, the larvae eat the seeds and damage the fibers of the cotton, reducing the yield and quality.
- **When the larvae mature, they cut out the boll and drop to the ground** and cocoon near the soil surface.
- **It has also been observed to attack hibiscus, okra, and hollyhock plants.**
- **The PBW larvae burrow into the developing fruits (bolls)** of cotton plants, and the damage affects both the weight and quality of the harvested bolls containing the lint fibre and seeds inside.

## 7. Tobacco warnings on OTT: Amid pushback from platforms, Govt looking for a solution

**Relevance:** Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.

**News:**

- the **Government is working to find “pragmatic solutions” to the OTT industry’s concerns** over the practicability of the order mandating display of anti-tobacco warnings,
- Under the **new rules, which came into force September 1, OTT platforms** are required to insert static health warnings during smoking scenes, much like those for theatres and TV.

### Prelims Takeaway

- OTT or over-the-top platforms,

**OTT or over-the-top platforms,**

- These are **audio and video hosting and streaming services which started out as content hosting platforms,**
- It soon **branched out into the production and release of short movies, feature films, documentaries and web-series themselves.**
- These platforms **offer a range of content and use artificial intelligence** to suggest to users the content they are likely to view based on their past viewership on the platform.
- Most **OTT platforms generally offer some content for free** and charge a monthly subscription fee for premium content which is generally unavailable elsewhere.
- Examples: Netflix, Disney+, Hulu, Amazon Prime Video, Hulu, Peacock, CuriosityStream, Pluto TV, and so many more.
- In February 2022, **the government had notified the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021** to regulate OTT platforms.
- The rules establish a **soft-touch self-regulatory architecture with a Code of Ethics and three-tier grievance redressal mechanism for OTT platforms.**

## 8. Glaciers in Switzerland lose 10% of their ice volume in two years

**Relevance:** Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

**News:**

- according to figures released recently, **Glaciers in Switzerland are shrinking**
- it have lost **a total of ten per cent of their ice volume** over a period of two years as a combination of low snowfall and soaring temperatures which caused unprecedented melting,

### Prelims Takeaway

- REDD+

**Key points**

- The glaciers lost four per cent of their total volume in 2023,** according to data from the Swiss Commission for Cryosphere Observation of the Swiss Academy of Sciences.
- This level of **melting is second only to the record set in 2022** when six per cent of glaciers were destroyed.
- Swiss **glaciers have lost as much ice** over this two-year period as was lost over the three decades between 1960 and 1990.
- Even **though glaciers have constantly and quickly been** losing mass for many decades, this is a tremendous acceleration, these extremes "would have been impossible without climate change.
- The St. Annafirn glacier, for example,** in the Uri canton in central Switzerland, has shrunk.

**melting of glaciers:**

- Greenland Ice Sheet** - losing about 280 billion tons of ice per year;
- Himalayan glaciers** could disappear entirely by 2100.
- Glaciers in the European Alps** have been in retreat since the mid-19th century,

**Reason**

- Rising temperatures cause glaciers to melt** faster than they can accumulate new snow.

- **Deforestation, burning of fossil fuels**, and industrial processes etc. contribute to the emission of greenhouse gases, which are a key driver of global warming, which in turn leads to the melting of glaciers.
- **Natural factors such as volcanic activity** and changes in solar radiation can also affect glacier melting.

**Impact**

- **Melting glaciers contribute** to rising sea levels, which can have devastating effects on coastal communities and infrastructure.
- **Glaciers are an important source** of freshwater for many communities around the world.
- **As glaciers melt and retreat, it** can lead to water scarcity and affect agriculture and other industries.
- **Melting glaciers can affect weather patterns**, leading to changes in temperature, precipitation, and other weather-related phenomena.
- **As glaciers melt, they reduce the earth's ability** to reflect sunlight back into space, leading to increased absorption of solar radiation and warmer temperatures.

**Way forward**

- **Carbon emissions reduction can be done** by increasing the use of alternative energy sources such as wind and solar power, and by implementing policies to reduce energy consumption. e.g. fulfilling the net zero emission targets.
- **measures such as improving building insulation** and promoting the use of energy-efficient appliances. e.g. Green Housing Scheme by National Housing Bank.
- **Public transportation can reduce** the use of private cars and consequently the emission of greenhouse gases.
- **Deforestation causes** a loss of natural carbon sinks, decreasing the earth's capacity to absorb carbon dioxide. e.g. REDD+

  
**Mentorship**  
India



## Editorials, Gists and Explainers

### 1. Nipah virus outbreak: What are monoclonal antibodies?

**Relevance:** Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

**Context:**

- Last week, **India reached out to Australia to procure monoclonal antibody** doses to combat the Nipah virus outbreak in Kerala.

**Monoclonal Antibody**

- Monoclonal antibodies are laboratory-made proteins that mimic the behaviour of antibodies** produced by the immune system to protect against diseases and foreign substances.
- An antibody **attaches itself to an antigen – a foreign substance, usually a disease-causing molecule** – and helps the immune system eliminate it from the body.
- Monoclonal antibodies are specifically designed to target certain antigens.
- Niels K. Jerne, Georges J.F. Köhler and César Milstein were awarded the medicine Nobel Prize in 1984 for their work on “the principle for production of monoclonal antibodies”.

#### m102.4 Antibody

- According to research published in The Lancet journal of Infectious Diseases, m102.4 is a “potent, fully human” monoclonal antibody that neutralises Hendra and Nipah viruses, both outside and inside of living organisms.
- The antibody has passed phase-one clinical trials
- As of now, the drug is used on a ‘compassionate use’ basis — a treatment option that allows the use of an unauthorised medicine under strict conditions among people

#### How does it work?

- Monoclonal antibodies are specifically engineered and generated to target a disease.
- They are meant to attach themselves to the specific disease-causing antigen. An antigen is most likely to be a protein.
- The binding prevented the protein from exercising its regular functions, including its ability to infect other cells.
- These hybrid cells allowed the researchers to produce a single antibody clone, which came to be known as a monoclonal antibody.
- The initial technology of producing hybridoma in mice was unsustainable.
- Today, these antibodies are made using recombinant DNA technology.
- Here, the gene that codes for the monoclonal antibody’s binding region – also known as the variable region – is isolated from a B cell or synthesised in the laboratory.
- This antibody is then introduced into a host cell, often a bacterium or a mammalian cell, using recombinant DNA technology
- The host cells, called bioreactors, produce large quantities of the monoclonal antibodies which are extracted, purified, and readied for use as desired.
- The m102.4 monoclonal antibody binds itself to the immunodominant receptor-binding glycoprotein of the Nipah virus, potentially neutralising it.

**Conclusion**

- Despite their significant benefits, monoclonal antibodies can have limitations, such as high production costs and the potential for immune responses.
- Advances in technology, such as the development of humanized antibodies (antibodies with human components to reduce immune reactions), have addressed some of these challenges.

### 2. Man of science and humanity

**Relevance:** Distribution of key natural resources across the world (including South Asia and the Indian sub-continent); factors responsible for the location of primary, secondary, and tertiary sector industries in various parts of the world (including India).

**Context:**

- Recently, **India’s eminent agricultural scientist MS Swaminathan passes away**

He is most widely known for **working with Norman Borlaug to usher in the Green Revolution** in India in the mid-1960s when India was **facing back-to-back droughts**.

#### Role of MS Swaminathan in green revolution

- India was already termed as a “ship to mouth” economy, as the country was importing 10 million tonnes from the US under P.L.480 scheme.
- India had no foreign exchange to pay for it.
- It was at that time that Swaminathan worked hard to convince our political leadership to import 18,000 tonnes of seeds of high-yielding dwarf wheat varieties, Lerma Rojo and Sonora-64, from Mexico.
- The seeds had to be indigenised to local conditions.
- With Kalyan Sona and Sonalika, the new indigenised wheat varieties, India changed its agriculture paradigm under Swaminathan’s leadership.
- India experienced a wheat and rice revolution.
- This gave the country much-needed respite and confidence to turn the tables on food security in a short time.
- As a result of his effort, India emerges as a significant exporter of cereals. In the last three years, 2020-21 to 2022-23, India exported 85 million tonnes of cereals contributing to global food security.
- Currently, nearly Forty per cent of global exports of rice come from India.
- The seeds of this transformation were sown by Swaminathan and his team of Indian agri-scientists, working closely with Borlaug. They deserve all the credit and our gratitude.

#### MS Swaminathan as an administrator and recognising his contribution

- It is well known that Swaminathan was a geneticist as well as an administrator.
- He headed the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), and later became the Director General of the International Rice Research Institute in the Philippines.
- He was rightly awarded the first World Food Prize in 1987, which incidentally was set up by Norman Borlaug, who had received the Nobel Peace Prize, as there is no Nobel Prize for Agriculture.
- Borlaug then set up an institution to recognise contributions to agriculture – the World Food Prize is a product of his endeavours.

#### MS Swaminathan recommendation on MSP for farmers

- His efforts to improve productivity and profitability in agriculture went beyond technology, the National Commission on Farmers (NCF) which he chaired and submitted five reports from.
- One of NCF’s key recommendations was to have minimum support prices (MSP) for farmers based on the cost of production plus 50 per cent return.
- The right cost later became a matter with different governments.
- One view was interpreting it as the comprehensive cost, which includes not only out-of-pocket expenses of farmers (Cost A2) but also imputed wages of family labour (FL), imputed rent on owned land and imputed interest on owned capital.
- The NDA government went halfway and accepted at least a 50 per cent return over Cost A2+FL.
- But we still hear that market prices do go below even that in many parts of the country at harvest time.
- The government does not have the wherewithal to ensure that all those commodities get MSP. But it’s also debatable to what extent the policy of restricting markets (export controls, stocking limit) for farmers is justified.

#### Conclusion

- Though many dreams of Swaminathan remain unfulfilled, it is expected that the younger generation would conduct more research not just in technologies to raise productivity
- It will work on pricing policies to improve farmers’ profitability.
- The challenge is bigger with climate change and depleting natural resources. May Swaminathan’s inspiration guide us all.

## Prelims Track Question

**Q1. With reference to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), consider the following statements**

1. It was established by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO)
2. Participation in the IPCC is open to all member countries of the WMO and UN.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

**Q2. Consider the following statements regarding Non-Performing Assets (NPAs)**

1. NPAs refer to loans or advances for which the principal or interest payment has remained overdue for a period of 90 days.
2. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has the authority to define the criteria for identifying an asset as an NPA.
3. Banks need to make provisions for NPAs based on the category of the asset and the length of time it has been classified as an NPA.

**How many of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. All three
- D. None

**Q3. Consider the following statements regarding Primary Forests**

1. Primary forests are mature, natural forests that have remained undisturbed in recent history.
2. They sequester more carbon than the other forests
3. Primary forest loss is almost irreversible in nature

**How many of the statements given above is/are not correct?**

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. All three
- D. None

**Q4. Consider the following statements on electric vehicles (EVs)**

1. EVs have lower maintenance costs compared to conventional internal combustion engine vehicles.
2. The production and disposal of EV batteries have significant environmental impacts, outweighing their benefits.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

**Q5. Consider the following statements with reference to the Contempt of Court in India**

1. The Indian Constitution empowers Supreme Court to punish for their contempt
2. In cases of contempt of subordinate courts, the power to punish lies with the concerned High Court
3. The expression 'contempt of court' has been defined by the Constitution of India

**How many of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. All three
- D. None

**Q6. Consider the following statements**

1. India, France, UAE Trilateral Initiative is aimed at ensuring maritime domain awareness and security from the east coast of Africa to the far Pacific.
2. Despite having good relations, France and India don't have a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between them.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. None of them

**Q7. With reference to FDI, consider the following statements**

1. In FDI the investor has no control over the management or functioning of the firm or business entity whose asset is bought.
2. FDI is much more volatile to adverse shocks than FPI
3. An investor remains active under FDI
4. In FDI, investments are made for short term

**How many of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. Only three
- D. All four

**Q8. With reference to Balance of Payments, which of the following constitutes the Capital Account?**

1. Balance of Trade
2. External Commercial Borrowings
3. Foreign Direct Investment
4. Balance of Invisibles

**Select the correct code**

- A. 2 and 3 only
- B. 1 and 4 only
- C. 1, 2 and 3 only
- D. All the above

**Q9. Consider the following statements with reference to internet shutdowns in India**

1. No one below the level of a Joint Secretary can impose a shutdown.

2. A review committee has to be formed within 24 hours of issue of directions for suspension of services
3. The Supreme Court in Anuradha Bhasin case stated that access to the Internet needs to be preserved.

**How many of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. All three
- D. None

**Q10. Consider the following about 1951 Refugee Convention**

1. It is a UN treaty that defines who a refugee is and establishes the rights of such persons and also of those who are granted asylum.
2. It is the main legal document that governs the working of the UNHCR.
3. It is also called the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees or the Geneva Convention of 28 July 1951.
4. India is not its signatory

**How many of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. Only three
- D. All four

## Prelims Track Answer

### Ans. 1 Option B is correct

#### EXPLANATION

- The IPCC is the UN body for assessing the science related to climate change.
- It was set up in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organization and United Nations Environment Programme to provide policymakers with regular assessments of the scientific basis of climate change, its impacts and future risks, and options for adaptation and mitigation.
- Participation in the IPCC is open to all member countries of the WMO and United Nations. It currently has 195 members. The Panel, made up of representatives of the member states, meets in Plenary Sessions to take major decisions.

### Ans.2 Option C is correct

#### EXPLANATION

- A Non-performing Asset is a loan or advance for which the principal or interest payment has remained overdue for a period of 90 days.
- The NPA ratio is the proportion of such NPAs in total loans.
- Banks are required to classify NPAs further into Substandard, Doubtful and Loss assets.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has the authority to define the criteria for identifying an asset as an NPA.
- Banks need to make provisions for NPAs based on the category of the asset and the length of time it has been classified as an NPA.

### Ans.3 Option D is correct

#### EXPLANATION

- Primary forests are mature, natural forests that have remained undisturbed in recent history.
- They often store more carbon than other forests and are rich sources of biodiversity.
- Primary forest loss is almost irreversible in nature
- Even if the green cover regrows, a secondary forest is unlikely to match the extent of biodiversity and carbon sequestering capabilities of a primary forest.
- According to the University of Maryland, primary forest cover loss in tropical areas in 2022 was 10% more than in 2021.

### Ans.4 Option A is correct

#### EXPLANATION

- Electric vehicles run on electricity stored in batteries, and they do not emit any tailpipe

emissions like conventional internal combustion engine vehicles.

- As a result, they contribute to reducing air pollution and improving air quality.
- EVs have lower maintenance costs compared to conventional internal combustion engine vehicles.
- EVs do not require oil changes, and their regenerative braking systems reduce wear on brake pads, among other factors that contribute to lower maintenance costs.
- While the production and disposal of EV batteries do have environmental impacts, studies have shown that the overall environmental benefits of electric vehicles outweigh these impacts.

### Ans. 5 Option B is correct

#### EXPLANATION

- The power to punish for contempt is a constitutional power vested in this court which cannot be abridged or taken away even by legislative enactment.
- It emphasised that the rationale behind the contempt jurisdiction is to maintain the dignity of the institution of judicial forums.
- The expression 'contempt of court' has not been defined by the Constitution.
- However, Article 129 of the Constitution conferred on the Supreme Court the power to punish contempt of itself.
  - Article 215 conferred a corresponding power on the High Courts.
- The Contempt of Courts Act, 1971 defines both civil and criminal contempt.
- Civil contempt refers to wilful disobedience to any judgement of the court.
- Criminal contempt can be invoked if an act:
  - Tends to scandalise or lower the authority of the court.
  - Tends to interfere with the due course of any judicial proceeding.
  - Obstruct the administration of justice.

### Ans. 6 Option C is correct

#### EXPLANATION

- This year 2023, India and France are celebrating 25 years of their strategic partnership
- India, France, UAE Trilateral Initiative is aimed at ensuring maritime domain awareness and security from the east coast of Africa to the far Pacific.

- Despite having good relations, France and India don't have a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between them.
- FTA is an agreement between the countries or regional blocks to reduce or eliminate trade barriers, through mutual negotiations with a view to enhancing trade.

**Ans. 7 Option A is correct**

**EXPLANATION**

- Foreign direct investment or FDI pertains to international investment in which the investor obtains a lasting interest in an enterprise in another country
- The investor has control over the management or functioning of the firm or business entity whose asset is bought.
- An investor is active under FDI
- Direct investments in assets are made
- Investments made are long term in nature
- FDI are stable in nature when compared to FPI

**Ans. 8 Option A is correct**

**EXPLANATION**

- For preparing BoP accounts, economic transactions between a country and the rest of the world are grouped under - Current account and Capital account
- Current Account
  - It shows export and import of visibles (also called merchandise or goods - represent trade balance) and invisibles (also called non-merchandise).
  - Invisibles include services, transfers and income.
- Capital Account
  - It shows capital expenditure and income for a country.
  - It gives a summary of the net flow of both private and public investment into an economy.
  - External Commercial Borrowing (ECB), Foreign Direct Investment, Foreign Portfolio Investment, etc form a part of capital account.

**Ans. 9 Option B is correct**

**EXPLANATION**

- Between 2016 and 2022, 60% of Internet shutdowns across the world took place in India.
- The Home Secretary has the power to decide on shutdowns and the review takes place in a committee.
- No one below the level of a Joint Secretary can impose a shutdown.
- Rule 5 of the Temporary Suspension Rules says that a review committee has to be formed within five working days (of issue of directions for suspension of services)
- The Supreme Court has held in various decisions, including in Anuradha Bhasin and Faheema Shirin, that access to the Internet has to be preserved.
  - A shutdown needs to be temporary, limited in scope, lawful and proportionate.
  - The grounds include a threat to the nation, to national sovereignty, integrity and defence, or to avoid incitement to, or commission of, a cognisable offence.

**Ans. 10 Option D is correct**

**Explanation**

- It is a UN treaty that defines who a refugee is and establishes the rights of such persons and also of those who are granted asylum.
- It is the main legal document that governs the working of the UNHCR.
- It is also called the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees or the Geneva Convention of 28 July 1951.
- It also talks about the responsibilities and legal obligations of countries that grant asylum status to people.
- Apart from that, the Convention also defines those who are not eligible for asylum status, such as war criminals.
- India is not its signatory

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