

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

By



SOURCES



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1. Antony Blinken, Lloyd Austin to visit New Delhi next week for '2+2' dialogue - The Hindu/ Blinken and Austin to visit India next week for 2+2 meet - Indian Express
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3. SC Collegium proposes new Chief Justices for three HCs - The Hindu
4. NCERT to introduce electoral literacy content in textbooks - The Hindu
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Important News Articles

GS II

1. Antony Blinken, Lloyd Austin to visit New Delhi next week for '2+2' dialogue - The Hindu/ Blinken and Austin to visit India next week for 2+2 meet - Indian Express

Relevance : Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

News :

- The US Secretary of State and the Defence Secretary **will be visiting India** for the **India-US 2+2 ministerial dialogue**.
- This visit is in the **backdrop of the Israel-Hamas war**.

Prelims Takeaway

- Indo-Pacific Region
- 2 + 2 Ministerial Dialogue

2+2 ministerial dialogue

- The 2+2 ministerial dialogue is **the highest level** of stock-taking encompassing a wide range of issues including
 - defence to nuclear
 - space to cyber security
 - visas to health

Other Developments related to the Visit

- The External Affairs Minister and Defence Minister **will host** the two visiting US Cabinet ministers.
- The US Secretary of State **will travel** to Tel Aviv, Amman, Tokyo, Seoul and New Delhi in a scheduled span.
- The **concerns of India and US in the Indo-Pacific**
 - The Russia-Ukraine war
 - The Israel-Hamas war escalating
 - China's assertiveness continues in the Indo-Pacific

Other India - US Visits

- India **will be hosting** the US Cabinet ministers after US President Joe Biden visited India for the G20 leaders' summit.
- India has **invited Biden** for the Republic Day celebrations.
- Biden's visit **will be part of** India's plan to host the Quad leaders' summit in January 2023.

China- A Perspective of Indo-US Relations

- The **major challenge** confronting the two countries is Beijing's belligerence
 - India and China are locked in a border standoff since May 2020.
- The US, too, has a **tense relationship** with China.
- Recently, the US President held a **bilateral meeting** with China's Director of the CCP Central Foreign Affairs Commission and Foreign Minister in Washington.

2. Bhutan King arrives on week-long visit today, 1st stop Assam - Indian Express

Relevance : India and its neighbourhood- relations.

News:

- Bhutanese King is coming to India on an **official visit**
- During the visit, he will **meet the Prime Minister** and External Affairs Minister of India.
- He **will also visit** Assam and Maharashtra.

Significance of the Visit

- The trip **comes weeks after** China and Bhutan held the 25th round of boundary talks in Beijing.

Prelims Takeaway

- Kaziranga National Park
- India-Bhutan Border

- Both countries **signed an agreement** on the “responsibilities and functions of the joint technical team on the delimitation and demarcation of the Bhutan-China boundary”.
- The Bhutanese King had **also visited India** earlier in 2023.

Bhutan-Assam Developments

- This is the **first trip by any monarch** of the neighbouring country to the northeastern state.
 - The Bhutanese King will make his first stop in Assam.
- During his visit to Assam, the Bhutanese King **will visit** Kaziranga National Park
 - a UNESCO World Heritage Site famous for its one-horned rhinos.
- Ahead of the visit, the Assam government approved the **reservation of five seats** for Bhutanese nationals in medical colleges in the state.
- Assam shares a 265.8-km-long **international border** with Bhutan.

3. SC Collegium proposes new Chief Justices for three HCs - The Hindu

Relevance: Constitution of India —historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.

News:

- The **Supreme Court Collegium** headed by Chief Justice of India recently recommended the **appointment of three new Chief Justices to the High Courts** of Uttarakhand, Orissa, and Meghalaya.

Prelims Takeaway

- Chief Justice of HC
- The Collegium System
- Third Judges Case, 1998

Constitutional Provisions: Article 217 of the Constitution

- It states that the Judge of a High Court shall be **appointed by the President** in consultation with the **Chief Justice of India (CJI), the Governor of the State**.
- In the case of appointment of a Judge other than the Chief Justice of the High Court, the **Chief Justice of the High Court** is consulted.

Consultation Process

- High Court judges are recommended by a **Collegium** comprising the **Chief Justice of High Court and two senior-most judges**.
- The proposal, however, is **initiated by the Chief Justice of the High Court concerned** in consultation with **two senior-most colleagues**.
- The **recommendation is sent to the Chief Minister**, who advises the Governor to send the **proposal to the Union Law Minister**.
- The **Chief Justice of the High Court** is appointed as per the policy of **having Chief Justices from outside the respective States**.

4. NCERT to introduce electoral literacy content in textbooks - The Hindu

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

News:

- The NCERT will **both introduce and update textbooks** to include content on electoral literacy in textbooks.
- It will also **advise the State Education Boards** and other Boards to follow suit.
- It is an **effort to address voter apathy** among young Indians,

Prelims Takeaway

- SVEEP
- Continuous Electoral and Democracy Education- CEDE

Education and Electoral Literacy

- The initiative **will begin** with classes 6 to 12 in all schools.
- This integration **will also extend to** the curricular framework for all colleges and universities.
- The curriculum **will be tailored to suit** different disciplines and credited accordingly.

Governance of Electoral Literacy

- An MoU was **signed between** the Election Commission of India and the Education Ministry in this regard.

- It is aimed at **extending the ECI's** flagship Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) in schools and colleges.
- The MoU aims to address issues such as **voter apathy among urban and young Indians.**

Significance of Electoral Literacy

- There were **almost 297 million electors** (out of 910 million), who did not cast their votes in the General Election to the Lok Sabha in 2019.
- This MoU is **signed with the long-term vision** of instilling electoral literacy in the young people through the educational institutions.
- This initiative is **expected to help** in the Election Commission's endeavour to address the urban and youth apathy,
- This will lead to **better electoral participation** in the next general elections.
- It will help in **handing over the voter ID** cards to every student immediately after their attaining the age of 18.

Execution of the Plan of Electoral Literacy

- **Orientation and training of teachers** in effectively imparting electoral literacy in classrooms,
- Establishing **Electoral Literacy Clubs (ELCs)** in schools and colleges
- Encouraging various activities to **promote voter awareness** among students.
- Inclusion of electoral **literacy section** in the curriculum for adult literacy and basic education
- Designating one of the rooms in every senior secondary school as the '**Democracy Room**' for the regular display of voter education materials
- The conduct of **Continuous Electoral and Democracy Education (CEDE)** activities throughout the year

5. Difficult to accept voter has no right to know source of funding: SC to Govt - Indian Express

Relevance : Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability.

News :

- The Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court recently **reserved its judgement** on petitions challenging the constitutional validity of the **Electoral Bond Scheme, 2018.**
- It opined that it is slightly **difficult to accept** that voters do not have the right to know the source of funding of political parties.

Prelims Takeaway

- Electoral Bond Scheme
- Right to Know in India

Judicial Activism in Electoral Matters

- The Bench suggested that a **better poll bond scheme** can be formulated taking care of the serious deficiencies in the present scheme.
- It directed the ECI to submit in two weeks the details of **contributions received** by political parties by way of electoral bonds until September 30, 2023.
- The **obiter dictum** of the court is, if a political party is aware of the donor's identity, then the voter holds a **valid right to be informed** about the donor as well.

Government's Stance on Electoral Bonds

- It argues that transparency in electoral bonds would **defeat the confidentiality deliberately built** into the scheme to protect the donor from victimisation.
- It also argued that **too much transparency** will encourage cash flows and, in turn, encourage black money.

6. Putin withdraws Russia's ratification of CTBT, sparking fears of nuke test - Indian Express/ Putin withdraws Russia's ratification of global nuclear test ban treaty-India Today

Relevance : Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

News :

- Recently, Russia **withdrew** its ratification of CTBT.

Russia's Stand on the Move

- Russia claims that its **de-ratification of the** Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) is **merely designed** to bring Russia into line with the United States.
- The United States has **signed but never ratified** the treaty.
- Russia assured that it **will not resume** nuclear testing.

Prelims Takeaway

- CTBT
- Federal Assembly of Russia

Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)

- The treaty established a **global network of observation** posts that can detect the sound, shockwaves or radioactive fallout from a nuclear explosion.
- The CTBT is **aimed at** building up its verification regime to ensure no nuclear tests go undetected.

Impact of the Move on Russia-US Relations

- It is **expected to deepen** the chill between the United States and Russia.
- The ties between the US and Russia are **at their lowest level** since the 1962 Cuban missile crisis.
- The **main reason** for the chill is war in Ukraine
- Russia blames the US for **creating instability** to demote multipolarity.

Current Status of Russia as Nuclear Power

- Russia, holds the **world's largest** nuclear arsenal.
- Russia will **keep sharing its knowledge** of nuclear arse
- There is **an apprehension** that Russia may be inching towards a nuclear test.
- This test will be to **intimidate and evoke fear** amid the Ukraine war.
- Such a move **could usher in** a new era of big-power nuclear testing.

Nuclear Testing History

- Post-Soviet Russia **has not carried out** a nuclear test.
- The Soviet Union **last tested in** 1990 and the United States in 1992.
- No country except North Korea has **conducted a test** involving a nuclear explosion this century.
- Russia's parliament has **already approved** the step.

GS III

7. 'CBAM will kill manufacturing in EU; India to levy carbon tax' - The Hindu

Relevance: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation

News:

- The European Union's proposed **Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)** has faced criticism from India.
- Recently, the **Indian Commerce and Industry Minister** called the proposal "**ill-conceived**" and expressed concerns about its **impact on the Indian manufacturing sector**.
- India plans to counter the EU's carbon tax by **implementing its own carbon tax** if the EU's plan goes into effect in 2026.

Prelims Takeaway

- Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism
- Carbon Tax

Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)

- CBAM is part of the "Fit for 55 in 2030 package", which is the EU's plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels.
- It is a policy tool aimed at reducing Carbon Emissions by ensuring that imported goods are subject to the same carbon costs as products produced within the EU.

Unfairness of the CBAM

- CBAM was labelled as "unfair," emphasizing the **disparity in carbon pricing between India and Europe**.
- He argued that the carbon pricing approach **couldn't be the same** for both regions due to **differing circumstances and levels of development**.
- The EU should differentiate carbon values for **less developed and developing countries to create a fairer global playing field**.
- He emphasized the need for **smarter ways to address carbon emissions** rather than imposing punitive taxes.

Impact on European Auto Sector

- He predicted that the **European auto sector**, particularly **industries using steel and aluminium**, would be severely affected by the CBAM.
- He saw this as an **opportunity for India to develop a competitive auto sector** since increased input costs in Europe would provide India with a **competitive edge in global markets**.

Potential Indian Carbon Tax and Green Energy Transition

- If India were to **collect its own carbon tax and use it for its green energy transition**, it would **indirectly help exporters** reduce their carbon footprint.
- This strategy could **eliminate the need for additional CBAM taxes** at the European border.
- The Indian government is **currently in discussions with its EU counterparts** regarding the **proposed carbon tax and its fairness**.

8. Developing countries need at least 10 times more funds for climate adaptation: UN report - Indian Express

Relevance: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation

News:

- According to the **UNEP's Adaptation Gap Report**, in 2021, **funding for adaptation projects** in developing countries **decreased by 15% to \$21 billion**.
- Developing countries require **at least \$215 billion annually** this decade for effective adaptation.

Prelims Takeaway

- The Adaptation Gap Report
- United Nations Environment Programme
- Nationally Determined Contributions

The Adaptation Gap Report

- It is an **annual publication from UNEP** that presents the **global situation of adaptation to climate change**.
- This year's report focuses on **adaptation finance**, or the availability of money to carry out the adaptation projects.

Significance of Adaptation

- Adaptation is crucial for **saving lives, livelihoods, and ecosystems**, especially in **vulnerable countries with low resilience**.
- Adaptation **measures range** from coastline strengthening to temperature-resistant food crops, climate-resilient infrastructure and securing water sources.

International Commitments and the Adaptation Finance Gap

- Developed countries are mandated to **provide funding and technology** to help developing countries **adapt to climate change**.
- Developing countries have listed their **adaptation requirements** in their **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)**, which exceed the available funding.
- The Adaptation Gap Report reveals an **increasing gap between required and available funds**.

Assessing the Adaptation Finance Gap

- The report assessed **adaptation finance needs** in two ways viz.
 - **NDC requirements** (\$387 billion per year)
 - **Global modelling** (\$215 billion per year).
- **Climate finance goals set in 2009 have not been met** and the need for climate finance has grown significantly.

Ambitious Climate Finance Goals

- Developed countries committed to **doubling funding for adaptation** at the **2021 Glasgow climate conference**.
- A **new climate financing goal**, in addition to the \$100 billion per year, is under consideration.
- However, the report suggests that **these ambitions may not be sufficient**.

Diversifying Sources of Adaptation Finance

- Countries may need to depend more on their **own resources and private finance** for adaptation efforts.
- Domestic budgets and private-sector investments could be **significant sources of funding**.

Bridging the Adaptation Gap

- The report **outlines seven strategies** to bridge the adaptation gap, including **increased international finance** and **domestic resource mobilization**.
- It calls for a **reform of global financial architecture** to improve access to climate-related finance from multilateral agencies.

**Mentorship**
India

Editorials, Gists and Explainers

1. Biosphere reserves are evolving as pockets of hope - The Hindu

Relevance: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation

Context:

- As tourist season approaches, the **use of single-use plastic**, especially plastic water bottles, is **expected to rise**.
- The **accumulation of discarded plastic bottles** in natural beauty spots, particularly coastal areas, **threatens the environment**.
- **UNESCO biosphere reserves**, like the Island of Principe Biosphere Reserve in Sao Tome and Principe, **serve as pockets of hope in addressing the climate crisis**.

World Biosphere Reserve Day

- World Biosphere Reserve Day is celebrated annually on November 3 to raise awareness about the importance of these reserves and promote their conservation and sustainable use.
- Each biosphere reserve has a core zone, buffer zone and transition zone, supporting various human-nature interactions and scientific research.

UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Program

- The program combines natural and social sciences to improve livelihoods, safeguard ecosystems, and promote sustainable economic development while enhancing the human-environment relationship.

Significance of Biosphere Reserves

- Biosphere reserves, supported by UNESCO and other UN agencies, exist in 134 countries, with 748 sites worldwide.
- They are home to a wide variety of ecosystems, from tropical rainforests to alpine deserts and thereby provide home to countless unique and endangered plants and animals species.
- They play a crucial role in conserving biodiversity, ensuring sustainable resource use, and supporting sustainable economic development.
- These reserves are increasingly essential in the fight against climate change, serving as carbon sinks that absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Local Initiatives in Biosphere Reserves

- There have been significant advancements in the conservation of biosphere reserves on the local level.
- Local communities in biosphere reserves, such as the Sundarban Biosphere Reserve in India, actively participate in mangrove forest management and biodiversity protection.
- Initiatives like “plastic checkpoints” in the Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve involve communities in recycling efforts and sustainable practices.

Ongoing Threats and Challenges

- Biosphere reserves face threats such as deforestation, invasive species, and changes in land use.
- Increasing urbanisation and population growth put additional pressure on these vital ecosystems.

Reflection on Progress and Collaborations

- On the occasion of World Biosphere Reserve Day, there is a need to reflect on the progress made in conserving and sustainably using these ecosystems.
- UNESCO, in partnership with the MoEFCC and the National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management, concluded the 10th South and Central Asian Biosphere Reserve Network Meeting (SACAM) in Chennai, India.
 - The SACAM provided a platform for exchanging knowledge and fostering collaborations in the realm of sustainable environmental practices in the South and Central Asia Region.

2. Understanding worker productivity - The Hindu

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

News:

- The Infosys founder sparked a debate recently by urging young Indians to **work 70 hours per week**.
- He gave **Japan and Germany as examples** of countries that grew because their **citizens worked harder and for longer hours** to rebuild their nations in the aftermath of the Second World War.
- He further stated that **India’s worker productivity is one of the lowest in the world**.

Worker Productivity vs Labour Productivity

- Worker productivity and labour productivity share a conceptual difference where the former encompasses mental activities, while the latter primarily relates to manual tasks.
- Productivity of an activity is usually measured as the quantum of output value per unit of labour (time) cost at a micro level.
- At a macro level, it is measured in terms of the labour-output ratio or change in Net Domestic Product (NDP) per worker in each sector.
- However, in certain types of services, especially ones involving intellectual labour, measuring the value of the output independently is very difficult.
 - In such cases, the income of workers is usually taken as proxies to suggest productivity.
- Also, productivity is not solely linked to working hours; it also depends on skill and human capital development.
- Increasing working hours without commensurate pay is seen as profit-maximising at the expense of workers.

Link Between Worker Productivity and Economic Growth

- An increase in productivity within any sector can contribute to economic growth, but the relationship can be complex.
- Economic growth does not always translate to prosperity for all; income distribution disparities can persist.
- Income groups in India, particularly the top 10%, have experienced significant income growth, which may not be directly linked to their productivity.
- This prosperity may be related to hereditary wealth transfers and arbitrary pay decisions rather than productivity.

Is India's Worker Productivity Really Low?

- Inferences about India's low worker productivity based on income as a proxy for productivity are questioned.
- Studies suggest that Indians are among the hardest-working employees globally, but average wages in India remain low.

Role of Informal Labour in Productivity Calculations

- The rise of informal employment in both organised and unorganised sectors complicates worker productivity calculations.
- Formalisation efforts have primarily focused on tax compliance without substantial improvements in labour standards.
- Cost-cutting through wage reductions is common, especially in labour-intensive Micro-Small-Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

Inappropriate Comparisons with Japan and Germany

- Comparisons between India's economy and those of Japan and Germany are considered inappropriate.
- India's unique characteristics, such as labour force size, technological trajectory, socio-cultural aspects and political structures, require distinct policy considerations.
- Focusing on social investments, domestic consumption potential, and human-centric development is the way to a more sustainable approach.

Quick Look

1. UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

- It was established by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1991.
 - It replaced the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator(UNDRO).
- It is responsible for bringing together humanitarian actors to ensure a coherent response to emergencies.
- It also ensures there is a framework within which each actor can contribute to the overall response effort.
- On-Site Operations Coordination Centres (OSOCC), an OCHA tool, provide a platform for the coordination of international response activities after a sudden-onset emergency or a rapid change in a complex emergency.
- Funds: There are two types of pooled funds viz.
 - Central Emergency Response Fund(CERF), which can fund an emergency anywhere in the world.
 - Country-Based Pooled Funds(CBPFs), which are country-specific.
- It has two headquarters locations, Geneva and New York, which act as centres of global operations.

2. Awaous Motla

- Recently, scientists discovered an edible freshwater fish available in the markets of western Odisha.
- It is a fish with a vibrant yellow-coloured body and a fleshy upper lip.
- It was collected from the Mahanadi River.
- The species belongs to the family 'Awaous' (Oxudercidae) and is thus named 'Awaous motla'.

3. White Hydrogen

- White hydrogen is also referred to as “natural,” “gold” or “geologic” hydrogen.
- It is naturally produced in the Earth’s crust and is considered a potential source of clean energy.
- It has several advantages over other types of hydrogen
 - It causes no CO₂ emissions when used as a fuel.
 - It is compatible with existing infrastructure and technologies for hydrogen production and utilisation.
 - It is cheaper and more efficient than steam reforming or electrolysis.
 - It is abundant and renewable.
- Its deposits have been found across the world including the US, Eastern Europe, Russia, Australia, France and other countries.
- It is estimated that globally, there could be tens of billions of tonnes of white hydrogen.

4. Propane

- It is a colourless, easily liquefied, gaseous hydrocarbon.
- It is an alkane, which means it consists of only single covalent bonds between carbon and hydrogen atoms.
- It is the third member of the paraffin series, following methane and ethane.

- It is commercially available as liquefied propane or as a major constituent of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG).
- It has a high octane rating, making it an excellent choice for spark-ignited internal combustion engines.
- Its main uses include home and water heating, cooking and refrigerating food, drying clothes, and powering farm and industrial equipment.
- The chemical industry also uses propane as a raw material for making plastics and other compounds.
- Source
 - It is a byproduct of natural gas processing and petroleum refining.
 - It is also produced during the fractional distillation of crude oil.

5. Bletchley Park: Birthplace of modern computing

- It is located about 80-odd km north of London.
- It is considered by many to be the birthplace of modern computing.
- Advances made there in cryptographic and intelligence processes during World War II contributed greatly to the Allied effort.
- It may have shortened the War by a couple of years.
- Bletchley Park is most known for cracking the 'unbreakable' Enigma code.
- Enigma machines were cipher machines used by the Nazis to encrypt their radio messages.



Mentorship
India

Prelims Track Question

Q1. With reference to 2 + 2 Ministerial Dialogue of India , consider the following statements

1. Under it , the Union Ministry of Home Affairs and Union Ministry of Foreign Affairs meet with their counterparts from another country.
2. India has 2+2 dialogues with the US, Australia, Japan, and Russia.

Which of the statements given above is/are incorrect?

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

Q2. With reference to Kaziranga National Park, consider the following statements

1. It is a national park and also a Tiger Reserve.
2. It has been identified as an Important Bird Area by the Birdlife International Society.
3. It is situated on the banks of the river Brahmaputra.
4. It is majorly known for the 'big four' species namely Rhino, Elephant, Royal Bengal tiger, and Asiatic water buffalo.

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

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

Q3. Consider the following statements with reference to the appointment of High Court Judges

1. The Indian Constitution states that the Judge of a High Court shall be appointed by the President in consultation with the Governor of the State only.
2. The Chief Justice of the High Court is appointed as per the policy of having Chief Justices from outside the respective States.

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

Q4. The SVEEP Program, seen in the news recently, is related to the

- A. Voter's Education
- B. Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan
- C. Paris Olympics Preparation
- D. Net Zero by 2070

Q5. With reference to the Electoral Bonds Scheme, consider the following statements

1. The scheme was introduced as a part of the Finance Bill.
2. The maximum denomination of the bond is Rs 10 Lakh.
3. The bond is valid for fifteen calendar days.
4. The bond is payable to the bearer on demand.

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

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

Q6. With reference to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, consider the following statements

1. The treaty was negotiated at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.
2. The treaty prohibits sub-critical hydrodynamic nuclear tests.
3. India, Iran and Israel have not ratified the treaty.
4. The treaty is legally enforceable.

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

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

Q7. What does the term "Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism" (CBAM) refer to?

- A. A system for taxing carbon emissions from imported goods.

- B. An international treaty to reduce carbon emissions.
- C. A tool for measuring carbon emissions in various industries.
- D. A mechanism to regulate international carbon trading.

How many of the statements given above is/are incorrect?

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

Q8. Consider the following pairs

- 1. Adaptation Gap Report: UNDP
- 2. World Environment Outlook: WMO
- 3. World State of Forest Report: UNEP

How many of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?

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

Q9. Consider the following statements regarding Biosphere Reserves

- 1. They can be declared by both the Centre and the States.
- 2. They are declared under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- 3. Each biosphere reserve has a core zone, buffer zone and transition zone.

Q10. Consider the following statements

- 1. Labour productivity encompasses mental activities, while worker productivity primarily relates to manual tasks.
- 2. In certain cases, where measuring the value of the output independently is very difficult, the income of workers is usually taken as proxies to suggest productivity.

Which of the statements given above is/are incorrect?

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

Prelims Track Answer

Ans.1 Option A is correct

Explanation

- 2+2 Ministerial is the highest-level institutional mechanism between the two countries.
- It is a format of dialogue where the defence and foreign ministers or secretaries meet with their counterparts from another country. **Hence, Statement 1 is incorrect.**
- India has 2+2 dialogues with its key strategic partners: the US, Australia, Japan, and Russia. **Hence, Statement 2 is correct.**
- India, Australia, Japan and Russia are part of the Quad countries.

Ans. 2 Option D is correct

Explanation

- Kaziranga National Park is a district of Golaghat and Nagaon in the state of Assam
- It was created in the year of 1904.
- It was declared a National Park in 1974.
- It was declared a tiger reserve in 2007. **Hence, Statement 1 is correct.**
- Kaziranga was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO for its unique natural environment in the year of 1985.
- The park has been identified as an Important Bird Area by the Birdlife International Society. **Hence, Statement 2 is correct.**
- It is situated on the banks of the river Brahmaputra. **Hence, Statement 3 is correct.**
- It is majorly known for the 'big four' species - Rhino, Elephant, Royal Bengal tiger, and Asiatic water buffalo. **Hence, Statement 4 is correct.**

Ans.3 Option B is correct

Explanation

- Article 217 of the Constitution states that the Judge of a High Court shall be appointed by the President in consultation with the Chief Justice of India (CJI), the Governor of the State. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.**
- In the case of appointment of a Judge other than the Chief Justice of the High Court, the Chief Justice of the High Court is consulted.
- High Court judges are recommended by a Collegium comprising the Chief Justice of High Court and two senior-most judges.
- The proposal, however, is initiated by the Chief Justice of the High Court concerned in consultation with two senior-most colleagues.

- The recommendation is sent to the Chief Minister, who advises the Governor to send the proposal to the Union Law Minister.
- The Chief Justice of the High Court is appointed as per the policy of having Chief Justices from outside the respective States. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

Ans. 4 Option A is correct

Explanation

- SVEEP is the flagship program of the ECI for voter education. **Hence, Option A is correct.**
- Primary goal is to build an inclusive & participative democracy by encouraging all eligible citizens to vote and make an informed decision & ethical choice.

Ans. 5 Option C is correct

Explanation

- The electoral bonds system was introduced in 2017.
- It was introduced by way of a Finance bill. **Hence, Statement 1 is correct.**
- They serve as a means for individuals and entities to make donations to registered political parties while maintaining donor anonymity.
- State Bank of India (SBI) issues the bonds in denominations of Rs 1,000, Rs 10,000, Rs 1 lakh, Rs 10 lakh, and Rs 1 crore. **Hence, Statement 2 is incorrect.**
- Purchased by Indian citizens or entities established in India.
- Can be bought individually or jointly with other individuals.
- Valid for 15 calendar days from the date of issue. **Hence, Statement 3 is correct.**
- Payable to the bearer on demand and interest-free. **Hence, Statement 4 is correct.**

Ans. 6 Option B is correct

Explanation

- CTBT was negotiated at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. **Hence, Statement 1 is correct.**
- It was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1996.
- The Treaty intends to ban all nuclear explosions - everywhere, by everyone.
- A comprehensive test ban has been defined as a "zero yield" test ban that would prohibit supercritical hydro-nuclear tests but not

sub-critical hydrodynamic nuclear tests. **Hence, Statement 2 is incorrect.**

- The Treaty will enter into force after all 44 States listed in Annex 2 to the Treaty will ratify it.
- Eight States still need to do so: China, North Korea, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, Pakistan and the United States.
- India, North Korea and Pakistan have not yet signed the Treaty. **Hence, Statement 3 is correct.**
- The CTBT has therefore not entered into force and lacks legal authority. **Hence, Statement 4 is incorrect.**

Ans. 7 Option A is correct

Explanation

- Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) is part of the "Fit for 55 in 2030 package", which is the EU's plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels.
- It is a policy tool aimed at reducing Carbon Emissions by ensuring that imported goods are subject to the same carbon costs as products produced within the EU. **Hence, option A is correct.**

Ans. 8 Option D is correct

Explanation

- Adaptation Gap Report: UNEP
- World Environment Outlook: UNEP
- World State of Forest Report: Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO). **Hence, option D is correct.**

Ans. 9 Option B is correct

Explanation

- Biosphere Reserve (BR) are areas of natural and cultural landscapes extending over large areas of terrestrial or marine ecosystems or its amalgamation.
- Objective: To promote sustainable development based on local community efforts and sound science.

- Unlike National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries, Biosphere reserves are declared by the Centre only as per the UNESCO MAB Programme. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.**
- They aren't notified under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**
- Each biosphere reserve has a core zone, buffer zone and transition zone, supporting various human-nature interactions and scientific research. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

Ans. 10 Option A is correct

Explanation

- Worker productivity and labour productivity share a conceptual difference where the former encompasses mental activities, while the latter primarily relates to manual tasks. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.**
- Productivity of an activity is usually measured as the quantum of output value per unit of labour (time) cost at a micro level.
- At a macro level, it is measured in terms of the labour-output ratio or change in Net Domestic Product (NDP) per worker in each sector.
- However, in certain types of services, especially ones involving intellectual labour, measuring the value of the output independently is very difficult.
- In such cases, the income of workers is usually taken as proxies to suggest productivity. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- Also, productivity is not solely linked to working hours; it also depends on skill and human capital development.

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