

Current Affairs 29th September 2023 by Saurabh Pandey

Cookies

The digital world of cookies plays a significant role in any online experience. In the digital realm, cookies help in personalisation and user convenience.

These unassuming bits of code, stored on a device when one visits websites, play a pivotal role in shaping any online experience. Cookies can track online behaviour, leading to privacy concerns about digital privacy.

Inadequate security of cookies can create opportunities for cybercriminals to steal personal information. The Digital Personal Data Protection Act 2023 in India mandates explicit consent for collecting or processing personal data via cookies.

The updated law emphasizes the need for transparent and well-informed consent. Third party cookies have sparked debates, resulting in web browsers limiting their usage to protect user privacy.

The excessive use of cookies can

slow down web browsers, affecting the user experience. Cookies enhance online experiences but pose privacy and security challenges.

Their usage and regulation are evolving in the digital landscape.

The Hindu

Five eyes intelligence alliance

Who are the 'Five Eyes'?

The 'Five Eyes' is a multilateral intelligence sharing network of five countries, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the U.K. and the U.S.

It is both surveillance based and tracks signals intelligence (SIGINT).

Intelligence documents shared between the member countries are classified as 'Secret AUS/CAN/NZ/UK/US Eyes Only,' which gave the group its title 'Five Eyes.'

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

Current Affairs 29th September 2023 by Saurabh Pandey

successfully deciphered German and Japanese codes during the war, forged a collaboration to share intelligence related to signals such as radio, satellite and internet communications.

In 1946, the alliance was formalised through an agreement for cooperation in signals intelligence. The treaty called the British U.S.

Communication Intelligence Agreement, or BRUSA (now known as the UKUSA Agreement), was signed between the State Army Navy Communication Intelligence Board (STANCIB) of the U.S. and the London Signal Intelligence Board (SIGINT) of Britain.

Its scope was limited to “communication intelligence matters only” related to the “unrestricted” exchange of intelligence products in six areas: a collection of traffic; acquisition of communication documents and equipment;

Traffic analysis; cryptanalysis; decryption and translation; and acquisition of information regarding communication organizations,

practices, procedures, and equipment.

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

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 Hindu

Ms swaminathan

M.S. Swaminathan was named the first World Food Prize Laureate for developing and spearheading the introduction of high-yielding wheat and rice varieties into India during

the 1960s when that country faced the prospect of widespread famine.

Wheat production doubled in just a few years, making the country self-sufficient and saving millions from extreme food deprivation.

The Hindu

Social audit

What is a social audit?

A social audit is a way of measuring, understanding, reporting and ultimately improving an organization's social and ethical performance.

A social audit helps to narrow gaps between vision/goal and reality, between efficiency and effectiveness. It is a technique to understand, measure, verify, report on and to improve the social performance of the organization.

Social auditing creates an impact upon governance. It values the voice of stakeholders, including marginalized/poor groups whose voices are rarely heard.

Social auditing is taken up for the purpose of enhancing local governance, particularly for strengthening accountability and transparency in local bodies.

The key difference between development and social audit is that a social audit focuses on the neglected issue of social impacts, while a development audit has a broader focus including environment and economic issues, such as the efficiency of a project or programme.

Objectives of social audit

1. Assessing the physical and financial gaps between needs and resources available for local development.
2. Creating awareness among beneficiaries and providers of local social and productive services.
3. Increasing efficacy and effectiveness of local development programmes.
4. Scrutiny of various policy decisions, keeping in view stakeholder interests and priorities, particularly of rural poor.

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5. Estimation of the opportunity cost for stakeholders of not getting timely access to public services.

The Hindu

Pneumococcal vaccines

Vaccines help prevent pneumococcal disease, which is any type of illness caused by *Streptococcus pneumoniae* bacteria. There are two kinds of pneumococcal vaccines

Pneumococcal conjugate vaccines (PCVs, specifically PCV15 and PCV20)

Pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PPSV23)

	A	B	C
1	Current Account (\$mn)	Values	
2	Merchandise Exported	350	
3	Merchandise Imported	-175	
4	Balance of Merchandise Trade	175	
5	Services Exported	95	
6	Services Imported	-120	
7	Balance of Services	-25	
8	Balance of Goods and Services	150	
9	Employee Compensation	65	
10	Income from Investment in Foreign Country	140	
11	Total Income	205	
12	Government Transfer	-240	
13	Other Transfer	-60	
14			

A conjugate vaccine is a type of

subunit vaccine which combines a weak antigen with a strong antigen as a carrier so that the immune system has a stronger response to the weak antigen.

The Hindu

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, as exports of goods shrank even as imports rose and net receipts from services also declined sequentially, data from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) show

The widening of CAD on a quarter on quarter basis was primarily on account of a higher trade deficit coupled with a lower surplus in net services and decline in private transfer receipts,"

Net services receipts fell sequentially, primarily due to a decline in exports of computer, travel and business services, though they remained higher on a year on year (yoy) basis,

the central bank noted.

Private transfer receipts, mainly representing remittances by Indians employed overseas, moderated to \$27.1 billion in the last quarter, from \$28.6 billion in Q4 of FY23.

“The fall in remittances is worrisome and will bear watching, more so because of slowing global growth,”.

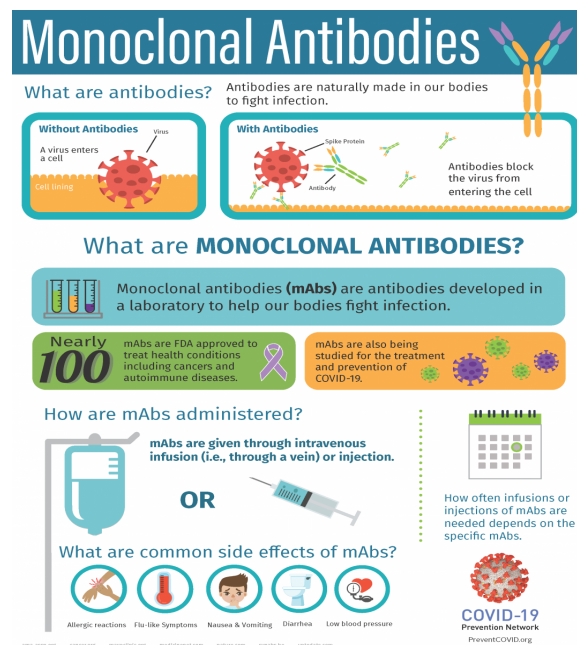
Net foreign direct investment declined to \$5.1 billion, from \$13.4 billion a year earlier.

Net foreign portfolio investment recorded inflows of \$15.7 billion, compared with net outflows of \$14.6 billion in the year earlier quarter.

Net external commercial borrowings recorded an inflow of \$5.6 billion in Q1, as against an outflow of \$2.9 billion a year earlier.

The Hindu

Monoclonal antibodies



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

What is a monoclonal antibody?

Monoclonal antibodies are laboratory made proteins that mimic the behavior 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.

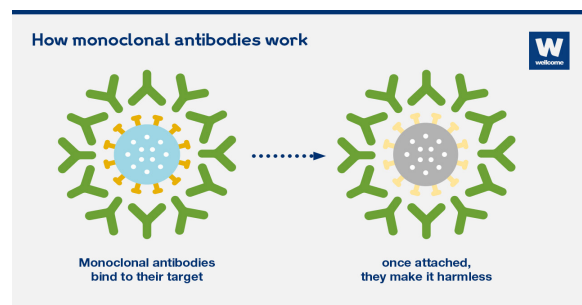
Niels K. Jerne, Georges J.F. Köhler and César Milstein were awarded the medicine Nobel Prize in 1984 for their work on the “the principle for production of monoclonal antibodies”.

What is m102.4?

m102.4 is a “potent, fully human” monoclonal antibody that neutralizes Hendra and Nipah viruses, both outside and inside of living organisms.

The antibody has passed phase one clinical trials which means that researchers tested it with a relatively small number of people to estimate the right dose of treatment that also doesn't cause side effects.

As of now, the drug is used on a ‘compassionate use’ basis as a

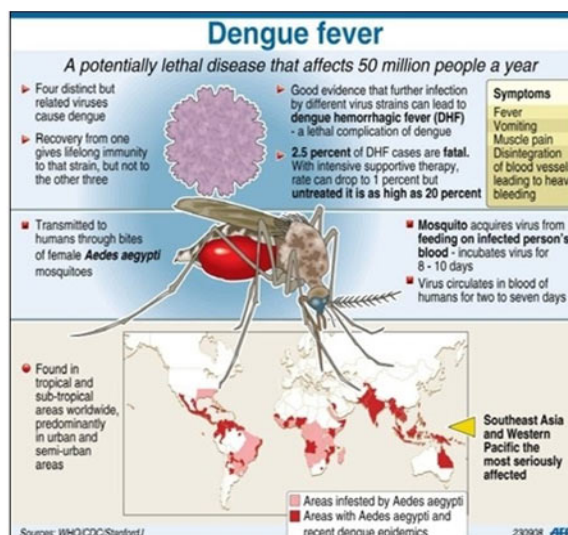


treatment option that allows the use of an unauthorized medicine under strict conditions among people where no other alternative and/or satisfactory authorized treatment is known to be possible and where patients cannot enter clinical trials for various reasons.

Both Hendra and Nipah viruses are batborne Paramyxoviridae, a family of viruses that contain a single strand RNA of negative sense genome, similar to the ones that cause diseases like measles, influenza etc., and replicate within infected cells.

The Hindu

Dengue



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