



### Daily Current Affairs Prelims Quiz 25-04-2024 (Online Prelims Test)

1) Consider the following statements with respect to Blackbuck

1. Blackbuck is the best example of a solitary animal.
2. They are mainly sedentary, but in summer may move longer distances in search of water and forage.
3. It has been categorised as Least Concern under the Red List of Threatened Species.

How many of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a. Only one
- b. Only two
- c. All Three
- d. None of the above

Answer : b

### Blackbucks (Antilope cervicapra)

- Blackbuck or Antilope cervicapra is also known as Indian Antelope.
- **Distribution** - Formerly occurred across almost the whole of the Indian subcontinent south of the Himalaya.
- Their range decreased during the 20th century and they are now **extinct in Bangladesh and Pakistan**.
- Blackbuck require water daily, which restricts its distribution to areas where surface water is available for the greater part of the year.
- *They are mainly sedentary, but in summer may move longer distances in search of water and forage.*
- **Type** - Blackbucks are gregarious and social animals with herds.
- **Communication** - They use a wide variety of sounds as a means of communication.
- For instance, they use *dik-diks whistle*, which represent warning or anxiety.
- **Increase in population** - They are increasing in many protected areas and areas dominated by Vishnoi communities in Rajasthan and Haryana.
- Conversion of dense scrub and woodland to grassland and agriculture also increases the area of suitable habitat.
- **Social animal** - Blackbucks are social animals, living in herds that include from 5 to 50 individuals and **not a best example of a solitary animal**.
- **Conservation Status**
  - IUCN - Least Concern
  - WPA - Schedule I
  - CITES - Appendix III

2) Consider the following statements with respect to the PMAY-U

**Statement-I:** It aims to provide all weather pucca houses to all eligible beneficiaries in the urban areas of the country.

**Statement-II:** It has addressed 75% of the housing shortage, which has resulted in declining urban housing shortage.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I
- Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I
- Statement-I is correct but Statement-II is incorrect
- Statement-I is incorrect but Statement-II is correct

Answer : c

### Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U)

The current Union government have recently completed two terms, one of its flagship programmes was Housing for All (HfA) by 2022, both in urban and rural areas, planned under the PMAY scheme in 2015.

- PMAY is a **centrally sponsored scheme**, both the Union and the State governments are supposed to financially contribute to it.
- Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U), was started in 2015, under *Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)*.
- It aims to provide **all weather pucca houses to all eligible beneficiaries in the urban areas** of the country through States/UTs/Central Nodal Agencies.
- The scheme covers the entire urban area of the country, i.e., all statutory towns as per *Census 2011* and towns notified subsequently, including Notified Planning/ Development Areas.
- The scheme is being implemented through 4 verticals:
  - Beneficiary Led Construction/ Enhancement (BLC)
  - Affordable Housing in Partnership (AHP) with public and private sectors
  - In-situ Slum Redevelopment (ISSR)
  - Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme (CLSS)
- In 2022, the *Union Cabinet approved continuation of PMAY-U up to December 2024* with all verticals, except CLSS, for the completion of already sanctioned houses till 31st March 2022.
- All houses under PMAY-U have basic amenities like toilet, water supply, electricity and kitchen.
- The Mission promotes women empowerment* by providing the ownership of houses in name of female member or in joint name.
- Preference has also been given to differently abled persons, senior citizens, SCs, STs, OBCs, Minority, single women, transgender and other weaker & vulnerable sections of the society.
- According to the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER), **urban housing shortage increased** by 54%, making the PMAY-U has actually faltered.
- According to another report by Newslaundry, **the PMAY-U has only addressed a 25.15% of the housing shortage** by delivering 80 lakh homes.

3) Consider the following statements with respect to Sympathetic Flares

- They originate from multiple eruptions occurs across the Sun's magnetic field.
- These are signs that the Sun is at the peak of its 11-year solar cycle, known as solar maximum.
- They are a consequence of coronal mass ejections (CMEs).
- If directed towards Earth, they have the capacity to disrupt terrestrial power grids, telecommunication networks and orbiting satellites.

How many of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?


- Only one

- b. Only two
- c. Only three
- d. All four

Answer : d

## Sympathetic Flares

*The sight of “sympathetic solar flares” in different regions of the Sun was recently captured by NASA’s Solar Dynamics Observatory.*

- **Sympathetic flares are caused by multiple eruptions across the Sun's magnetic field, connected by huge loops above the solar surface.**
- When one flare happens, others tend to follow.
- When one spot detonates, others follow suit.
- **This leads to coronal mass ejections (CMEs) and massive bursts of plasma.**
- These flares are signs that the Sun is at the peak of its 11-year solar cycle, known as solar maximum. During this time, solar events like flares and CMEs become more frequent.
- Most of the time, these sympathetic flares involve two linked flares, ranging from small to very powerful X-class flares. But when four flares happen together, it's called a "super-sympathetic" event.
- **If directed towards the Earth, they have the potential to disrupt power grids, telecommunication networks and orbiting satellites** and expose astronauts to dangerous doses of radiation. 

4) Consider the following statements with respect to Ethylene Oxide

1. It is a pesticide that has been classified as a Group 1 carcinogen by the International Agency for Research on Cancer.
2. It is used by the spice industry as a fumigant to reduce microbial contamination.
3. It is a colourless, highly flammable and very reactive gas that kills bacteria, viruses and fungi.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- a. Only one
- b. Only two
- c. All Three
- d. None of the above

Answer : c

## Ethylene Oxide

*Recently, a report published by the Hong Kong’s food regulatory authority, Centre for Food Safety (CFS) have mentioned that three spice products in India have cancer-causing chemicals that contain a pesticide known as ethylene oxide.*

- Ethylene oxide is a *pesticide* that has been *classified as a Group 1 carcinogen* by the International Agency for Research on Cancer.
- It is used by the spice industry as a fumigant to reduce microbial contamination, such as E. coli and Salmonella.
- It is a *colourless, highly flammable and very reactive gas* that kills bacteria, viruses and fungi.
- It is an industrial chemical and can damage DNA during sterilisation procedures.
- FSSAI has started sampling the products while Spice Board of India is also investigating the

ban imposed by Hong Kong and Singapore.

- According to the Centre for Food Safety (CFS), Hong Kong's food regulatory authority, three spice products from two big Indian companies have exceeded the permissible limit of chemicals.
- *There is no immediate risk to consuming foods with low levels of ethylene oxide.*
- But the carcinogenic properties of this pesticide may trigger cancer cells on prolonged consumption and may lead to health hazards in the long run.
- Use of Ethylene oxide in species can lead to chronic and persistent exposure over time and has been linked to an increased risk of cancers like leukemia, stomach cancer and breast cancer.
- It can even lead to respiratory irritation and lung injury, headache, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea and shortness of breath.
- *India is the world's largest producer, consumer and exporter of spices.*

## The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC)

- It is a *specialized cancer agency* of the *World Health Organization (WHO)*.
- It was established in 1965 by a resolution of the World Health Assembly.
- The IARC and the Joint Organization Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) are both groups of the WHO.

5) Which of the following statements is **incorrect** with respect to the Maximum residue limit (MRL) of Pesticides?

- a. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) defines MRL as the highest legally tolerable level of pesticide in food or animal feed.
- b. The MRLs of pesticides for food and commodities are specified under the Food Safety and Standards (FSS) Act, 2006.
- c. The MRLs are fixed based on the field trial data received through the Central Insecticides Board and Registration Committee (CIBRC), Ministry of Agriculture and Family Welfare.
- d. MRL to food commodities besides spices and culinary herbs is also applicable under Codex Alimentarius.

Answer : b

## Maximum residue limit (MRL) of Pesticides

*The Food Safety Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) have recently increased the Maximum Residue Limit (MRL) of pesticides in herbs and spices from 0.01 milligrammes per kilogramme (mg / kg) to 0.1 mg / kg.*

- The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) defines Maximum residue limit (MRL) as the highest legally tolerable level of pesticide in food or animal feed.
- The MRLs of pesticides for food and commodities, including spices and culinary herbs, are specified under the **Food Safety and Standards (Contaminants, Toxins and Residues) Regulation, 2011**.
- **Central Insecticides Board and Registration Committee (CIBRC) - These MRLs are fixed based on the field trial data received through the CIBRC**, Union Ministry of Agriculture and Family Welfare.
- CIBRC does not conduct field trials of pesticides. The manufacturing companies generally provide the data, which is reviewed by CIBRC to approve pesticides.
- The CIBRC never sets any limits on residues.
- *There is no declared procedure of using this data to fix MRLs.*
- If the pesticide is not registered with CIBRC, then the MRL of 0.1 mg / kg will be applicable for the spices and herbs.
- **Centre's Monitoring of Pesticide Residues at National Level (MPRNL) scheme** - For certain pesticides without field trial data available, the MRL was arrived at based on data generated by the Centre's Monitoring of Pesticide Residues at National Level (MPRNL)

scheme.

- *But MPRNL does not have data on all pesticides and neither does it include spices in monitoring.*
- MPRNL scheme was started in 2005-06 by the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare (DAC&FW), Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare.
- The scheme regularly monitors pesticide residues in food commodities and environmental samples, such as soil.
- The *All India Network Project on Pesticide Residues* (AINP-PR), ICAR-Indian Agricultural Research Institute (ICAR) implements the scheme.
- The Information has been gathered through the provisions of the Right to Information Act, 2005, from the AINP-PR for the last five years.
- It indicates that the percentage of samples detected with the presence of residues has increased from 22.6 % in 2018-19 to 35.9 % in 2022-23.
- **Codex Alimentarius** - MRLs specified by [Codex Alimentarius](#), a collection of internationally adopted food standards, *are to be applied*.
- It was established by FAO and the World Health Organization in 1963.
- In the absence of Codex, regulating authorities in the country of export will specify the MRLs.
- ***For food commodities besides spices and culinary herbs, MRL is applicable under Codex.***

