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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

08th May 2024



SOURCES



GS I

1. Will implement Sarna code for tribal people

Source: The Hindu, Page 3

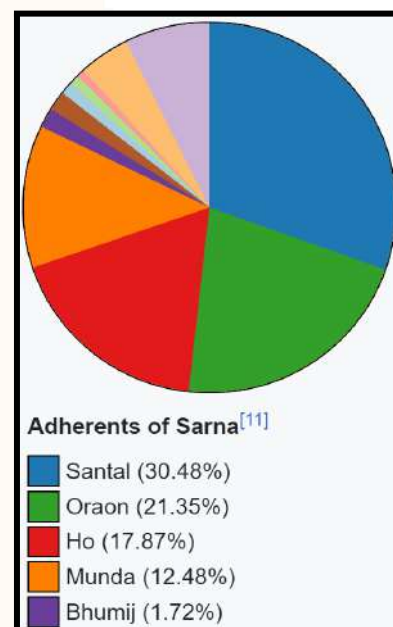
Prelims: Sarna Code

Mains: Indian Culture - Salient aspects of Art Forms, Literature, and Architecture from ancient to modern times.

News: In the ongoing election campaign, some leaders promised to bring back the 'Sarna' religious code for tribal communities.

Sarna Religion:

- It is a nature-worshipping faith that is also known as "Sarna Dharma" or "Religion of the Holy Woods".
- The holy goblet of the Sarna faith is "Jal (water), Jungle (forest), Zameen (land)."
- Individuals who follow the Sarna faith do not believe in heaven, hell, the Varna system, or idol worship.
- In India, these are concentrated in the tribal belt states of Odisha, Jharkhand, Bihar, West Bengal, and Assam.
- In the 2011 census, about 50 lakh tribal people nationwide identified as "Sarna."
- As part of the Sarna religion, the tribal society celebrates the Sarhul celebration, which is the New Year event.
- Among the prominent tribes practising Sarna are Santal (30.48%), Oraon (21.35%), Ho (17.87%), Munda (12.48%), Bhumij (1.72%), Lohar (1.70%), Mahali (1.07%), Kharia (0.87%), and Bedia (0.64%).



GS II

1. Beyond the Semantics

Source: IE, Page 10

Prelims: Recent Judgements.

Mains: Welfare Schemes for Vulnerable Sections of the Population by the Centre and States.

News: In its ruling in *A (Mother of X) v. State of Maharashtra*, the Supreme Court extended the ambit of pregnancy to include non-binary people and transgender men, among other gender identities, in addition to cisgender women.

In Detail:

- The judges used the term "pregnant person/(s)" over 40 times, intentionally to acknowledge a wider, more inclusive gender spectrum.
- It is also a part of its ongoing efforts to sensitize the legal fraternity to use gender-neutral language.
- In 2023, launching its Handbook on Combating Gender Stereotypes, the Court had emphasized how impartiality is critical to the language of judicial conduct, capable of impacting procedural outcomes adversely, making room for paternalistic or prejudicial interpretations.
- **Benefits of the Judgement for LGBTQ+ Community:**
 1. Challenging discriminatory healthcare and legal frameworks when transgender men and non-binary people choose to become pregnant.
 2. Recognizes legal protections for everyone capable of experiencing pregnancy.
 3. In line with the language of its judgment on same-sex marriage last year.
 4. Setting a precedent for other legal systems and lower courts.
 5. Paving the way for a less conservative and more atypical understanding of gender.



GS III

1. Plastic solution

Source: The Hindu, Page 8

Prelims: Global Plastics Treaty, Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules (2021)

Mains: Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment.

News: The Global Plastics Pollution Treaty recently concluded its fourth round of negotiations.

Global Plastic Pollution Treaty:

- **Background:** In 2022, UN Member States agreed to start negotiating a new global plastic pollution treaty to end plastic pollution.
- **About the treaty:** This global plastic pollution treaty will be a legally binding, international agreement to end plastic pollution defining what measures to take, how and when to implement them.
- **UNEA Resolution 5/14:** Under this, the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) was established to deliver a global plastics treaty by 2025.
- **Working of INC:** The INC began its work during the second half of 2022, aiming to finalise a legal document by the end of 2024 with timelines by when countries must agree to curb plastic production, eliminate its uses that create wastage, ban certain chemicals used in its production and set targets for recycling.

End Plastic Pollution: Looking forward

GENEVA ENVIRONMENT NETWORK



Issues with finalising the Treaty:

- **Economic Hurdles:** Oil-producing countries like Saudi Arabia, the United States, Russia, India, and Iran resist hard deadlines to eliminate plastic production due to economic concerns.
- **Disagreement on Timelines:** African countries, backed by European nations, advocate for a reduction timeline around 2040, while others push for more immediate action, creating discord.
- **Decision-Making Process:** Disagreement exists on whether contentious treaty elements should be decided by vote or consensus, with the latter implying veto power for every country.
- **Varied National Concerns:** India, among other nations, seeks considerations for affordability, accessibility, and alternatives, reminiscent of the 'common but differentiated responsibility' principle seen in climate talks.
- **Inconsistent Enforcement:** Even with national regulations like India's Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, enforcement remains inconsistent, posing challenges to global compliance and effectiveness of the treaty.

2. Will higher default limits for pesticides in spices impact health?

Source: IE, Page 14

Prelims: Insecticides, FSSAI

Mains: Science and Technology- Developments and their Applications and Effects in Everyday Life.

News: The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) increased the Maximum Residue Limit (MRL) for pesticide residues present in spices to 0.1 mg/kg, which is a 10-fold increase over the previous 0.01 mg/kg. The default MRL for other food products remains the same at 0.01 mg/kg.

Reasons for increase:

- Pesticides break down into smaller particles - metabolites. As a result, higher levels of pesticide residue is detected during tests.
- To detect them more effectively as pesticide residues are difficult to detect below the level of 0.1 mg/kg.
- Effectively controlling the residue of pesticides below 0.01 mg/kg in agriculture is impractical.

Impact on Health:

- MRLs are based on the maximum pesticide residue expected in a crop and are distinct from safety thresholds.
- MRLs are designed to be much lower than the levels that pose risk to human health.
- However, as Indians consume a lot of spices, these can accumulate over a long period of time.

HOW LIMITS SET BY FSSAI COMPARE WITH INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS				
S. No.	Name of the pesticides /insecticides	Spices	FSSAI MRL (mg/kg)	Codex MRLs (mg/kg)
1	Metalaxyl and Metalaxyl-M	Black pepper	0.5	2
2	Myclobutanil	Chilli, dried	2	20
3	Spiromesifen	Chilli, dried	1	5
4	Thiamethoxam	Chilli, dried	5	7



3. 'Households' net Financial savings drop

Source: The Hindu, Page 13

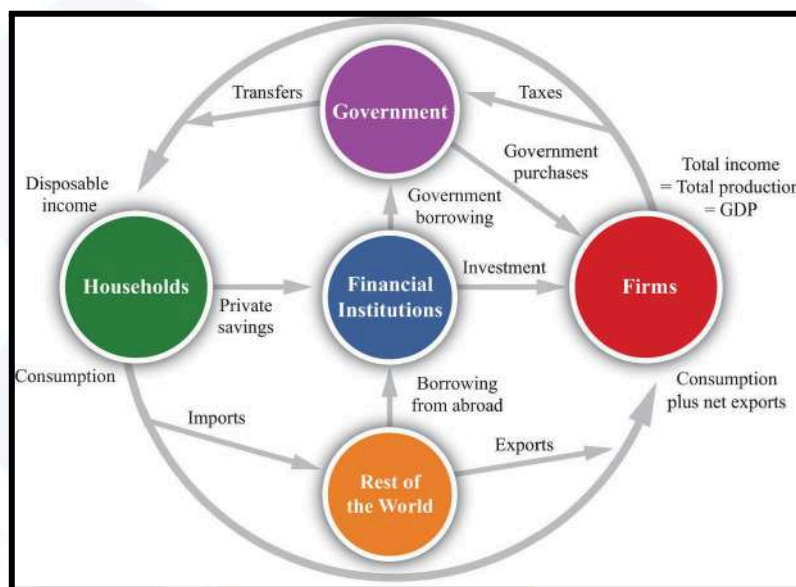
Prelims: Economic terms like Savings and Investments, Leverage etc.

Mains: Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.

News: Household sector's net financial savings dropped to a five year low of ₹14.16 lakh crore in 2022-23. As a percentage to GDP, this net savings came in at 5.3% in 2022-23, substantially lower than the 7.2% in previous fiscal.

Reasons:

- **Increased Borrowing:** The total advances (money borrowed) from banks surged 54% to ₹11.88 lakh crore in 2022-23 from ₹7.69 lakh crore in 2021-22.
- **Economic Uncertainty:** Household sector's net financial savings decreased due to economic uncertainties caused by factors like inflation and job market instability.
- **Increased Consumption:** Higher spending on essential and non-essential items led to a decrease in net financial savings among households.
- **Decline in Income:** Reduced incomes, particularly among lower-income households, due to job losses or salary cuts, resulted in lower financial savings.
- **Inflationary Pressures:** Rising prices of goods and services, coupled with stagnant income levels, eroded the purchasing power of households, leading to decreased savings.



Editorials, Opinions, and Ideas

1. An inheritance tax will help reduce inequality

Source: The Hindu, Page 9

Prelims: About Inheritance Law in India

Mains: Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.

The article highlights why high inequality is harmful and the need for progressive laws like the Inheritance Law in order to reduce inequality in India.

Drawbacks of Inequality

- It harms growth in the medium-to-long run, by hampering farm productivity, reducing labor income, and diverting resources away from rights such as education.
- Inequality perpetuates disparities and limits opportunities based on birth location.
- High inequality fuels political polarisation, increases social conflict, and erodes societal cohesion, posing challenges to stability and governance.
- Inequality creates a negative multiplier effect on the economy, leading to diminished earnings, reduced consumption, lower savings, and increased indebtedness.
- Wealth concentration among the richest 1% in India highlights the stark disparities, necessitating action to address systemic inequalities and uphold constitutional mandates.

The Inheritance Tax

- Also called “Estate Tax”, it is a tax collected on the whole sum of money and assets possessed by a deceased individual before their rightful heirs receive them. The purpose of inheritance tax is to redistribute wealth and reduce economic inequality in a country.
- An inheritance tax differs from a wealth tax in two ways: It is intergenerational and levied once in a lifetime. The Inheritance Tax is:
 1. Progressive: The tax rate increases as the inherited amount increases.
 2. Personal: The receiver pays the tax.
 3. Direct: Depends on the payer’s assets rather than on consumption.
- Inheritance Tax Outside India
 1. In the United States of America, 6 states have levied inheritance tax.
 2. In Japan, the inheritance tax is the highest, the tax rate being ~55%.
 3. South Korea and France levy inheritance tax rates of 50% and 45% respectively.
- In India, It was introduced in 1953 under the Estate Duty Act and was abolished in 1985 due to Procedural delays and high administrative costs while collecting the tax.

Suggestions

- Land Value Tax: It taxes the rental value of land, without considering the property built on it. This is borne by the landowner only.
- Sufficient investment in improving tax compliance can yield revenue up to 10 times the investment.
- A 2% wealth tax and a 33.3% inheritance tax only on the top 1% in India can raise an additional public expenditure of 10% of the GDP.



2. Playing the field

Source: IE, Page 11

Prelims: Maps (EU Countries)

Mains: Effect of Policies and Politics of Developed and Developing Countries on India's Interests.

The Article highlights the recent visit of the Chinese president to Serbia amidst its engagement in the continent of Europe and the consequences on India.

Major Takeaways:

- Some nations like France and Serbia in the EU are actively engaging with China - to boost FDI in various sectors. They seek to balance Russia and the USA with China.
- However, there is still a dicey situation with China with a recent European investigation accusing China of dumping technological equipment in the name of investment.
- Some have underlined the need to build European sovereignty to survive and prosper amid the unfolding political, economic, and technological domination of the US and China - an ambitious quest for "European strategic autonomy".
- In short, China is actively trying to squeeze Europe into a corner and making Europe's trilemma hard to resolve.

Suggestions for India:

- Author suggests India to increase its engagement with individual European countries.
- It needs to diversify its areas of engagement - including security challenges like Ukraine and trade.
- There is a need to find strategic engagement points with European Nations.

WHY EUROPE WANTS CHINA?	WHY EUROPE DOESN'T WANT CHINA?
Chinese Investment in EU Market specially EV Market	China accused of Dumping EVs in European Market
Peacemaker in Russia-Ukraine War as pro-Russia	Recent claims of China aiding Russia in invading Ukraine
Important to balance power with USA	May reduce USA's contribution in EU Defence Budget



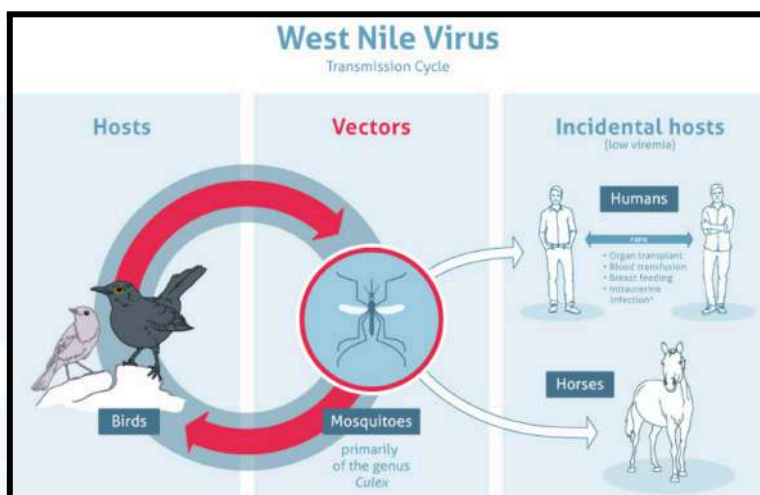
InBrief

1. Kerala on alert as man dies of West Nile fever

Source: The Hindu, Page 3

About West Nile fever

- It is a member of the family Flaviviridae - a single stranded RNA virus, which is related to the flavivirus genus and the Japanese encephalitis antigenic complex.
- It is transmitted by infected mosquitoes between and among humans and animals, including birds, which are the reservoir host of the virus.
- It is frequently found in West Asia, North America, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa.
- Impact :It can cause neurological disease and death in people.
- History: It was identified in birds (crows, doves and pigeons) in the Nile delta region in 1953.
- Treatment: No specific treatment or vaccine is available. Only supportive treatments are given to neuroinvasive WNV patients.

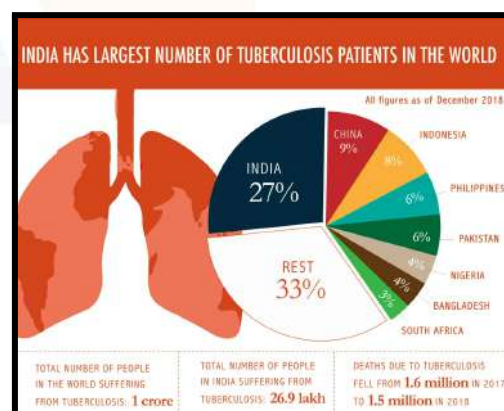


2. TB vaccine MTBVAC gets approval for Phase 2 trials

Source: The Hindu, Page 4

About MTBVAC

- The MTBVAC vaccine is a live-attenuated strain of M. tuberculosis.
- Unlike the BCG vaccination, the MTBVAC TB vaccine is based on a genetically engineered strain of Mycobacterium tuberculosis that has all antigens seen in strains that infect humans.
- With assistance from Dr. Brigitte Gicquel of the Pasteur Institute in Paris, it is being developed in the laboratory of the University of Zaragoza.
- Compared to the BCG vaccination, MTBVAC is intended to provide better and possibly longer-lasting protection,



especially for newborns and in preventing TB in adults and adolescents.

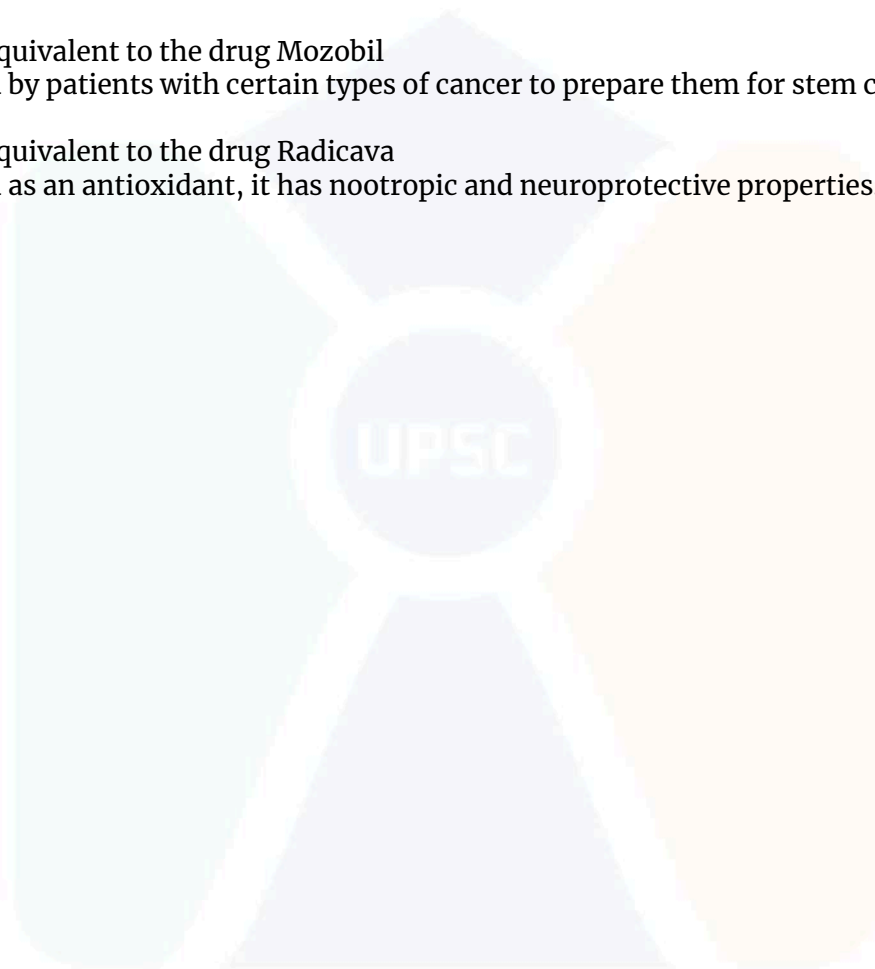
3. U.S. FDA approves Gland's two injections

Source: The Hindu, Page 12

Generic injectable-focused firm Gland Pharma received U.S. Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) approval for two injections.

About Injections:

- Plerixafor
 1. Bioequivalent to the drug Mozobil
 2. Used by patients with certain types of cancer to prepare them for stem cell transplant.
- Edaravone
 1. Bioequivalent to the drug Radicava
 2. Used as an antioxidant, it has nootropic and neuroprotective properties.



Daily Quiz

1. Consider the following tribal groups:

1. Santhal
2. Ho
3. Bhil
4. Khasi
5. Munda

Which of the above-given tribes follow the Sarna Religious Code?

- A. 1, 2 and 3 only
- B. 1, 3 and 4 only
- C. 1, 2 and 5 only
- D. 3, 4 and 5 only

2. Consider the following statements:

Statement I: Recently, the Supreme Court extended the ambit of pregnancy to include non-binary people and transgender men.

Statement II: The judgement is in line with its efforts to sensitise the legal authorities to use a gender neutral language.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- A. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I.
- B. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I.
- C. Statement-I is correct Statement-II is incorrect.
- D. Statement-I is incorrect Statement-II is correct.

3. Consider the following pairs matching rounds of Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) to finalise the Global Plastic Pollution Treaty:

1. INC 1 - Uruguay
2. INC 2 - France
3. INC 3 - Kenya
4. INC 4 - Canada

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2
- C. Only 3
- D. All are correct.

4. With reference to chemicals found in Indian species, “Metalaxyl, Myclobutanil, Spiromesifen, Thiamethoxam” are

- A. Adulterants and Contaminants
- B. Pesticides and Insecticides
- C. Diseases causing Bacteria
- D. Spices digesting enzymes

5. Consider the following statements:

Statement I: Household sector’s net financial savings achieved to a five year high in 2022-23.

Statement II: There is an increase in leverage undertaken by the household sector.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- A. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I.
- B. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I.



- C. Statement-I is correct Statement-II is incorrect.
D. Statement-I is incorrect Statement-II is correct.

6. "It was first identified in birds (crows, doves and pigeons) in the African delta region in 1953. It is a member of the family Flaviviridae - a single stranded RNA virus, which is related to the flavivirus genus and the Japanese encephalitis antigenic complex. It is transmitted by infected mosquitoes between and among humans and animals, including birds, which are the reservoir host of the virus."

Identify the virus discussed above.

- A. H5N1 Avian Influenza
B. Circovirus
C. West Nile Virus
D. Newcastle Virus

7. Consider the following statements regarding the MTBVAC Vaccine, recently in news:

1. MTBVAC Vaccine is a live-attenuated strain of *M. tuberculosis*.
2. Just like BCG Vaccine, contains the full set of antigenic targets of the original pathogen.

Which of the above given statements is/are correct?

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

8. Recently seen in the news, 'Plerixafor and Edaravone' are related to which of the following fields?

- A. Fertiliser Industry
B. Rocket Fuel Technology
C. Pharmaceutical Industry
D. Critical Mineral Extraction Technology

9. Sam inherited a residential Property 'A' from his father after the latter's death. In addition, he also inherited his father's stocks in a company, say 'B'. In addition, he also became heir to his father's owned commercial Building 'C'. Lastly, his father left a luxury car 'D' as a gift to Sam.

Which of the following statements with respect to the taxation in the above case is NOT correct?

- A. Sam will have to pay the tax while inheriting Property A.
B. Sam will have to pay the tax if he sells Stocks B.
C. Sam will have to pay the tax on rent earned through Property C.
D. Sam will not have to pay tax while taking ownership of the car D.

10. Consider the following pairs:

1. Serbia - Russia
2. Germany - Poland
3. France - Portugal

How many of the above pairs of countries share borders with each other?

- A. Only 1
B. Only 2
C. Only 3
D. None



Answers

Answer 1: C

Solution 1: Among the prominent tribes practising Sarna are Santhal (30.48%), Oraon (21.35%), Ho (17.87%), Munda (12.48%), Bhumij (1.72%), Lohar (1.70%), Mahali (1.07%), Kharia (0.87%), and Bedia (0.64%). While other tribes, such as Kisan, Kolha, Gond, Kharwar, Chik Baraik, Asur, Bhunjia, Karmali, Kora, Kol, Kawar, Birja, Mal Paharia, Savar, Birhor, Gorait, Parhaiya, Lodha, Chero, Khanwar, Suria Paharia, Mundari, Baiga, Korwa, Sounti, Binjhar, Nagesia, Mahli, and various generic tribes, collectively constitute 4.42%.

Moreover, it is also there that all tribes are not followers of the Sarna religion, like Bhil follow their religion, Khasi in Meghalaya follow Niam Khasi, and Tani tribes in Arunachal Pradesh follow Denyi - polo.

Hence, Option C is correct.

Answer 2: A

Solution 2:

- Statement 1 is correct: In its ruling in A (Mother of X) v. State of Maharashtra, the Supreme Court extended the ambit of pregnancy to include non-binary people and transgender men, among other gender identities, in addition to cisgender women.
- Statement 2 is correct: The judges used the term "pregnant person/(s)" over 40 times, intentionally to acknowledge a wider, more inclusive gender spectrum. It is also a part of its ongoing efforts to sensitise the legal fraternity to use a gender neutral language.

- Clearly, Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I.

Hence, Option A is correct.

Answer 3: D

Solution 3: Various rounds of negotiations are listed below:

Session	Year	Location
INC-1	2022 (Nov-Dec)	Punta del Este, Uruguay
INC-2	2023 (May-June)	Paris, France
INC-3	2023 (November)	Nairobi, Kenya
INC-4	2024 (April)	Ottawa, Canada

Answer 4: B

Solution 4: With reference to chemicals found in Indian species, "Metalaxyl, Myclobutanil, Spiromesifen, Thiamethoxam" are Pesticides and Insecticides. Recently, The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) increased the Maximum Residue Limit (MRL) for pesticide residues present in spices to 0.1 mg/kg, which is a 10-fold increase over the previous 0.01 mg/kg. The default MRL for other food products remains the same at 0.01 mg/kg.

Hence, Option B is correct.

Answer 5: D

Solution 5:

- Statement 1 is incorrect: Household sector's net financial savings dropped to a five year low of ₹14.16 lakh crore in 2022-23. As a percentage to GDP, this net



savings came in at 5.3% in 2022-23, substantially lower than the 7.2% in previous fiscal.

- Statement 2 is correct: Increased Borrowing: The total advances (money borrowed) from banks surged 54% to ₹11.88 lakh crore in 2022-23 from ₹7.69 lakh crore in 2021-22. SO, there is an increase in leverage undertaken by them.

Hence, option D is correct.

Answer 6: C

Solution 6: About West Nile fever

- It is a member of the family Flaviviridae – a single stranded RNA virus, which is related to the flavivirus genus and the Japanese encephalitis antigenic complex.
- It is transmitted by infected mosquitoes between and among humans and animals, including birds, which are the reservoir host of the virus.
- It was identified in birds (crows, doves and pigeons) in the Nile delta region in 1953.

Hence, Option C is correct.

Answer 7: A

Solution 7:

- Statement 1 is correct: MTBVAC vaccine is a live-attenuated strain of *M. tuberculosis* designed by the research group of Dr. Carlos Martín Montañés from the Department of Microbiology at the University of Zaragoza, Spain.
- Statement 2 is incorrect: Unlike BCG, which lacks over 100 genes compared to the human pathogen, MTBVAC contains the full set of antigenic targets of the original pathogen.

Hence, Option A is correct.

Answer 8: C

Solution 8: Generic injectable-focused firm Gland Pharma received U.S Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) approval for two injections – Plerixafor and Edaravone. Hence, Option C is correct.

Answer 9: A

Solution 9:

- Statement 1 is incorrect: The inheritance or estate tax was abolished in 1985. Hence, no tax is levied while inheriting a property or assets.
- Statement 2 is correct: When heirs sell inherited assets, like stocks or real estate, they are required to pay capital gains tax on the profit made on the sale.
- Statement 3 is correct: If inherited properties or assets produce any income—such as rent, interest, etc.—they are liable to income tax.
- Statement 4 is correct: Gift tax is levied on gifts received during one's lifetime. However, there are few exemptions like Gifts received from blood relations and lineal descendants, and gifts given on special occasions like marriage.

Hence, option A is correct.

Answer 10: A

Solution 10: Serbia and Russia do not share borders. Germany shares its border with Poland. France and Portugal do not share borders.





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