

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

By



SOURCES



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Important News Articles

GS II

1. Iran announces 15-day visa-free policy for Indian tourists-The Hindu

Relevance: India and its neighbourhood – International relations.

News:

- Iran has announced the initiation of a **15-day visa-free policy** for Indian tourists visiting the country.

What is the Policy?

- Indian citizens would be allowed to enter Iran **with ordinary passports** once every **six months**
- The maximum period of stay is 15 days which **will not be extended**.

Other Features of the Policy

- The visa abolition only applies to individuals entering the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran for **tourism purposes**.
- If Indian nationals wish to stay for a longer period or **make multiple entries** within a **six-month period** require other types of visas.
- The visa abolition outlined in this approval specifically applies to Indian nationals who enter the country **just through the air border**.

Other countries allowing Visa Free Access to India

- Iran has become the **latest country** in the past few months to give visa-free access to India tourists.
- Vietnam, Thailand, Sri Lanka** have also eased visa rules for Indian tourists.
- In 2023, Malaysia's Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim announced that visitors from **India and China** will be granted 30-day visa-free entry into Malaysia from December 1.
- The visa exemption in Malaysia is still subject to security screenings for records of **crime or violence**.
- Similarly, **Thailand** announced that Indian tourists will be allowed visa-free entry to the country for a **period of six months** starting November 10.
- Thailand agreed to exempt tourists from **India and Taiwan** from requiring an entry visa to stay in Thailand for up to 30 days, **effective till May 10, 2024**.
- Moreover, **Sri Lanka** has also allowed visa-free entry to visitors from seven countries, including **India, China and Russia**.

Prelims Takeaway

- Henley Passport Index
- Visa Free Access to Indians

2. Affluent sub-castes among backward classes may be excluded from quota list, observes Supreme Court-The Hindu

Relevance: Mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

News:

- A seven-judge Constitution Bench questioned why affluent sub-castes among backward classes **should not be "excluded"** from the reservation list.
- The court observed that these castes should be **made to compete with the general category**.

Observations of the Court

- These advanced sub-castes could exit the domain of reservation to make room for sub-castes who were relatively **more marginalised or most backward**.
- The court interpreted that **exclusion implicit** in reservation.
- The 'forwards' among 'backwards' should make ground for the marginalised.
- This will lead the nation to the **substantive equality** and not **formal equality**,

Prelims Takeaway

- Punjab Scheduled Caste and Backward Classes (Reservation in Services) Act of 2006.
- Article 341 and 342 of the Constitution of India
- Indira Sawhney v Union of India

- States can identify and sub-classify groups within the Scheduled Caste (SC) category who **deserve greater reservation**.

The Case of Punjab Government on Reservation

- The Punjab government is defending its law that **sub-classifies groups within the Scheduled Caste (SC) category** to provide greater reservation.
- Punjab argues that states have the **authority to identify sub-castes** within SCs and grant them more reservation based on their level of marginalization.
- This power of the President of India **does not take away the power** of the States
 - To identify more backward sub-castes or groups among them who require special attention and benefits.
- The State defends the validity of the **Punjab Scheduled Caste and Backward Classes (Reservation in Services) Act of 2006**.
- The act gives preference to specific sub-groups within the SC category. This provision was **initially struck down by the State High Court** based on a previous Supreme Court judgment.
- However, Punjab argues that sub-classification aids equality by targeting the **most marginalized within the SC community**.
- The state emphasizes that its goal is **inclusivity** and ensuring benefits reach all backward groups.
- The **debate** includes discussions on
 - Whether reservation leads to exclusion
 - The efficiency of government
 - The varying degrees of marginalization within backward communities.
- The Supreme Court bench is considering these arguments regarding the **constitutionality and effectiveness** of sub-classification within reservation policies.
- The President, under **Articles 341 and 342**, has designated castes and tribes for the entire nation.

3. After Uttarakhand, Rajasthan will table UCC Bill, say ministers-The Indian Express

Relevance: Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability,

News:

- The states of Uttarakhand and Rajasthan are considering the implementation of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC).

Rajasthan After Uttarakhand on UCC

- Following Uttarakhand's initiative, Rajasthan's ministers have indicated their plans to introduce the UCC Bill in the **upcoming Assembly session**.
- The Rajasthan Government expressed the **intention to introduce** the UCC in Rajasthan.
- The Government emphasised the **need for a uniform law applicable** to everyone, citing damage caused by disparate laws and advocating for national unity.
- There is the proposal to establish a **Draft Committee for the UCC** in a forthcoming cabinet meeting, ensuring adherence to **constitutional procedures**.
- There is the hope of aspirations for **nationwide adoption** of UCC

Overview of Uttarakhand's UCC Bill

- The Uttarakhand Assembly **recently tabled** the UCC Bill.
- Key provisions include:
 - Exemption of **Scheduled Tribes** from the UCC's scope.
 - Proposal for a **unified law** concerning **marriage, divorce, inheritance** of property, and **live-in** relationships, applicable to all citizens irrespective of religion.

Prelims Takeaway

- Article 44 of the Constitution of India
- Uttarakhand's Bill on UCC

4. Karnataka, Kerala bring campaign against 'financial atrocities' of Centre to Delhi-The Indian Express

Relevance: Issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure,

News:

- The Karnataka government, led by CM, is set to stage a **sit-in protest at Jantar Mantar in Delhi**
 - Denouncing the alleged **biased fiscal policies** of the Centre.

Solidarity of other States with Karnataka

- Kerala Government will **also join the protest** against the Centre's neglect of the state's revenue rights.
- The Tamil Nadu Government also supported a **united front against** what they perceive as unjust fiscal policies by the Centre.

Key Issues Raised

- Karnataka's protest emphasizes the **perceived financial injustices** inflicted on the state by the Central government
- The Government cited reductions in revenue shares and **faulty GST implementation**.
- Kerala's grievances center on the **alleged slashing of its borrowing limit** and reductions in **revenue shares**,
 - Prompting the state **to take legal action** against the Union government.
- Tamil Nadu accuses the Centre of exploiting its powers **to limit state borrowing capacity**
- It alleged unfair imposition of restrictive **conditions on funding for state-owned enterprises** by the Centre Government.
- These states allege discriminatory fiscal policies favoring BJP-led states.
- All protesting states demands for a collective response to uphold the principles of fiscal federalism.

Response of Centre Government

- Tax devolution follows the recommendations of the Finance Commission.
- The Centre Government alleged the political grounds for such protest instead of having any some economic basis.

Prelims Takeaway

- Fiscal Federalism
- The Right to Protest

GS III

5. Indigenous CAR-T cell therapy now available for commercial use: 'first' patient declared free of cancer-The Indian Express

Relevance: Indigenisation of technology and developing new technology.

News:

- The commercial use of **CAR-T cell therapy** has shown significant advancements have been **observed in cancer treatment**.

About CAR-T Cell Therapy

- The **pioneering treatment** that genetically reprograms a patient's immune system to fight cancer
- The therapy is showcasing **promising results post-treatment**.
- It is a **revolutionary therapy** that modifies immune cells, specifically T-cells, into potent cancer fighters known as CAR-T cells.
- The therapy involves collecting and genetically modifying the patient's T-cells to express **chimeric antigen receptors (CARs)** specific to cancer cells.
- These modified cells are then infused back into the patient to target and attack cancer cells
- This offers a **targeted immunotherapy** approach.

Success of Therapy

- CAR-T cell therapy highlights its **efficacy in treating B-cell cancers**, particularly acute lymphoblastic leukaemia.

Prelims Takeaway

- CAR-T Cell Therapy
- Chimeric Antigen Receptors

- Initial findings suggest promising **survival rates** and **lower remission rates**.
- This indicates the potential to reduce cancer-related mortality and **revolutionise cancer treatment**.

Indigenously Developed Therapy

- NexCAR19(the title of therapy) is **developed collaboratively** by ImmunoACT, IIT Bombay, and Tata Memorial Hospital.
- ImmunoACT's is the **first CAR-T cell therapy** to get CDSCO approval.
- The **therapy received approval** from the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) in October 2023,
- The development of the therapy is marking a **significant milestone** in cancer treatment in India.

6. India's tax-to-GDP ratio to hit a record high of 11.7% of GDP in 2024-25: Revenue Secretary-The Hindu

Relevance: Government Budgeting.

News:

- India's tax-to-GDP ratio is projected to **reach 11.7% in 2024-25**.

Relevance of the Rise in Ration

- This marks a **historic high**.
- This surge is attributed to an **increase in direct taxes**
- This aims for a **fairer tax structure**.

Efforts of the Government to raise the Tax Collection

- The government is making efforts to **simplifying** and **rationalizing** the tax regime to mitigate disputes, litigation, and intrusive enforcement methods.
- Direct taxes **are anticipated to play a pivotal role** in achieving this objective.
- Recent reductions in **corporate** and **personal income taxes** have been further given a flip to this effort.

The New Tax Regime

- The **introduction of a new tax regime** has made significant changes
- It is **offering a higher tax-free income** threshold but without deductions.
- It is expected to **attract a significant portion** of income taxpayers.
- Personal income tax collections have witnessed substantial growth, albeit with a **projected moderation by year-end**.

Prospects for GST Rationalization

- A Group of Ministers (GoM) tasked with reviewing the **GST rate structure** has been reconstituted.
- Continuous adjustments to **rationalize rates on various items** remain a priority for the GST Council.

Expectations for Future

- Revenue growth projections for **2024-25 are modest**, with a buoyancy rate expected to decline slightly.
- Tax revenues are forecasted to grow at a rate slightly higher than the **nominal GDP growth of 10.5%**.

Corporate Tax Regime

- The **deadline for new manufacturing units** to benefit from a reduced corporate tax rate is approaching,
 - With many companies having **already availed this benefit**.
- A significant portion of corporate tax income is being filed at the reduced **rate of 22%**, indicating uptake since its **introduction in 2019**.

Prelims Takeaway

- Tax-to-GDP Ratio
- Corporate Taxation in India

7. India to see USD 67 billion investments in gas sector in 5-6 years: PM-The Hindustan Times

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

News:

- Prime Minister, at India Energy Week 2024, projects significant **investment influx** into India's natural gas supply chain.
- The projection anticipates **USD 67 billion within 5-6 years**.

Prelims Takeaway

- Green Hydrogen Mission
- Natural Gas Production in India

Reform-Driven Growth in Natural Gas Production

- Prime Minister highlights government **reforms propelling domestic natural gas production**
 - Aiming to elevate its share in the **energy mix to 15% by 2030** from the current 6.3%.
- India's trajectory towards **net zero carbon emissions by 2070** is underscored,
 - Positioning natural gas as a cleaner alternative to coal in **electricity generation, fertiliser production, CNG for automobiles, and cooking**.

India's Energy Landscape and Growth Prospects

- India's robust economic growth fuels **escalating energy demands**,
 - Making it the world's **third-largest** consumer of **energy, oil, and LPG**, and the **fourth-largest** importer of **LNG and automobile** market.
- India's GDP growth rate surpasses **7.5%**, **outstripping** global estimates
 - positioning India as the **world's fastest-growing economy**.
- IMF forecasts align with India's potential ascent as the **third-largest global economy**.

Investment Opportunities in India's Energy Market

- PM urges global **investors to capitalize** on India's
 - Burgeoning energy **market**
 - Fostering **prosperity**
 - **Environmental sustainability**
- Government endeavors ensure **sustainable and affordable fuel** accessibility
- India's **energy mix expansion** encompasses conventional fuels alongside renewable sources like biofuels and hydrogen
 - With **record investments** earmarked for energy sector expansion.

Embracing Circular Economy and Biofuels

- PM highlights India's embrace of **circular economy principles**,
 - With ethanol blending initiatives
 - Global alliances fostering biofuel adoption
 - Unlocking economic opportunities worth USD 500 billion.

Environmental Commitment and Carbon Emission Reduction

- There are modest carbon emissions share in India despite its substantial population
 - with a focus on developing environmentally sensitive energy sources.

Renewable Energy Leadership and Solar Expansion

- India **ranks fourth globally** in renewable energy capacity,
 - with solar energy witnessing **exponential growth**
 - including a **nationwide mission** to install solar rooftop panels in one crore homes.
- India's strides in the **green hydrogen sector**,
 - envisioning India as a **hub for hydrogen production** and export
 - offering **lucrative opportunities** for investors and industries.

India Energy Week 2024: A Confluence of Energy Innovation

- The event was held from **February 6 to 9 in Goa**.
- It serves as India's **premier energy exhibition** and conference
- It unites stakeholders across the **entire energy value chain**.

8. Petronet LNG, QatarEnergy extend key LNG supply deal by another 20 years beyond 2028- The Indian Express

Relevance: Infrastructure – Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

Prelims Takeaway

- DES Basis
- LNG Imports of India

News:

- Petronet LNG and QatarEnergy have finalized a significant deal to extend the supply of **liquefied natural gas (LNG)** beyond the current contract expiration date.
- The contract extends the supply of **7.5 million tonnes per annum (mtpa)** of LNG for an additional **20 years, starting from 2028.**

Negotiation Process and Contractual Terms

- The negotiation process involved discussions between the **governments of India and Qatar**
- Under the new agreement, LNG supplies will transition from a **Free On Board (FOB)** basis to **Delivered Ex Ship (DES) basis**, with no fixed charge mentioned.
- The **pricing terms** under the new contract are expected to result in significant savings for Indian buyers,
 - Potentially saving around **\$6 billion over the 20-year period.**

Impact on India's Energy Goals

- The extension of the contract aligns with India's aim to increase the share of **natural gas in its primary energy**
 - **mix to 15 per cent by 2030** with little over 6 % at present.

Importance of the Contract

- The existing long-term agreement holds national importance, accounting for approximately **35 per cent of India's LNG imports.**
- Qatar remains the **largest exporter of LNG to India**, accounting for over half of India's LNG imports.
- India's LNG imports from Qatar play a significant role in its economy, with LNG imports alone valued at **\$8.32 billion in FY23.**

Environmental Considerations

- Natural gas is viewed as a **cleaner alternative** to conventional petroleum fuels, aligning with India's energy transition objectives.
- The extension of the contract **ensures continued LNG supplies** to various sectors, facilitating India's energy security and economic development.

Editorials, Gists and Explainers

9. Wages of inequality: The income-growth gap- The Indian Express

Relevance: Inclusive growth and associated issues/challenges

Context:

- The interim Union budget presented on February 1 offers insights into the government's **macroeconomic policy objectives.**
- It is amidst **impending general elections.**
- It prompts a critical examination of the **government's approach** vis-à-vis the **challenges confronting the Indian economy.**

Budgetary Overview

- The budgeted total expenditure stands at **Rs 47.8 lakh crore**,
 - Indicating a modest 6.1% increase over the revised estimates for 2023-24
 - Marking the lowest increment in two decades.
- The capital expenditure witnesses a substantial rise of 16.9% to **Rs 11.1 lakh crore**, albeit less than the previous year.
- Excluding interest payments on government debt, revenue expenditure experiences a marginal decline of 0.8%, contrasting with a sharper contraction of 3% in the preceding year.
- Adjusting for a presumed inflation rate of 5%, total expenditure appears largely stagnant
 - With non-interest revenue expenditure decreasing by 5.5%.
- The budget is continuing the trend of shifting expenditure composition towards capital expenditure.

Fiscal Policy Framework

- The current fiscal policy framework rests on dual objectives:
- Debt-to-GDP Reduction:
 - Aiming to lower the debt-to-GDP ratio
 - Aligning with the targeted ratio of 40% set by the FRBM review committee.
 - Significantly lower than the present 58%.
- Mitigating Expenditure Reduction Effects:
 - Striving to counter the adverse impact of expenditure reduction on GDP growth,
 - primarily by transitioning expenditure composition from revenue to capital expenditure.

Addressing Debt-to-GDP Ratio

- Reducing the debt-to-GDP ratio entails managing two key factors:
- Growth Rate vs. Interest Rate:
 - The ratio hinges on the gap between GDP growth rate (g) and the interest rate (r).
 - A higher g relative to r results in a lower ratio.
- Primary Deficit-GDP Ratio:
 - Dependent on the excess of expenditures net of interest payment over non-debt receipts,
 - aiming for a lower primary deficit-GDP ratio to reduce the debt ratio.

Policy Implications and Challenges

- The reduction of primary deficit to GDP ratio.
- Structural change prompting employment generation.
- Promoting employment and income dynamics mutualism.
- Analysing and correcting structural employment shift.
- Income distribution concerns.

Conclusion

- The interim budget's analysis underscores the imperative of aligning fiscal policies with broader developmental objectives
- It emphasises the need for sustainable debt management
 - alongside initiatives to foster inclusive growth and employment generation.

10. The Union's reins on financial transfers to States-The Hindu

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

Context:

- There has been a **reduction in fiscal transfers** from Centre to States **since** the Fourteenth Finance Commission.
- The Fourteenth Finance Commission recommended **devolving 42% of Union tax revenues to States**, an increase over the previous recommendation.
- However, the Union government's actions **have not aligned** with this recommendation.

Analysis of Tax Revenue Milieu

- The Finance Commissions recommended higher shares for States.
- The actual share of gross tax revenue allocated to States has decreased over the years.
- The increasing revenue collection through cess and surcharge has further reduced the share of States in gross tax revenue.

Influence of Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS)

- The Union government's allocation for CSS has increased substantially.
- This is influencing State priorities and financial commitments.
- The implementation of CSS creates disparities among States in terms of financial commitments and resource leverage.

Centre Sector Schemes

- Centre Sector Schemes, fully funded by the Union government, play a significant role in resource allocation,
 - Potentially benefiting specific regions or constituencies.
- Despite significant allocations, only a fraction of funds are devolved to States under CSec Schemes.

Impact of Non-Statutory Grants

- Financial transfers through CSS and CSec Schemes are non-statutory
- This is reducing States' expenditure freedom.
- The Union government retains a significant portion of gross tax revenue, limiting States' fiscal autonomy.

Conclusion

- The Union government's push for **downward revisions** in States' share in Union tax revenue challenges the principle of **cooperative federalism**.
- **Future Finance Commissions** may face similar arguments from the Union government.
- This will potentially undermine cooperative federalism principles.

Quick Look

1. Image Correction Algorithm

- Scientists at India's Raman Research Institute (RRI) have developed a novel image-correction algorithm
- It aimed at enhancing images used in the study of ultracold atoms.
- These atoms, cooled to temperatures near absolute zero, exhibit intriguing quantum mechanics properties.
- Current imaging methods, which rely on fluorescence, absorption, and phase-contrast techniques, suffer from flaws such as interference fringes that obscure the true images.
- The new algorithm significantly reduces these fringes by 50%
- This leads to clearer images and enables more precise calculations of parameters like atom number and temperature uncertainty.
- This advancement holds promise for deeper insights into the behaviour of ultracold atoms and their quantum properties.

2. Extension to Subsidised Sugar Scheme

- The Union Cabinet has extended the Subsidised Sugar Scheme.
- It is aimed at providing sugar at subsidized rates to Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) families until March 31, 2026.
- This initiative is intended to enhance the nutritional intake of the poorest citizens. Under this scheme, the Central Government provides a subsidy of Rs. 18.50 per kg per month of sugar to AAY families in participating States.
- The extension of the scheme is projected to provide benefits exceeding Rs. 1850 crore during the period of the 15th Finance Commission (2020-21 to 2025-26). Additionally, the Government of India offers free ration under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PM-GKAY).
- It sells essential food items like 'Bharat Atta,' 'Bharat Dal,' 'Bharat Rice,' tomatoes, and onions at affordable prices to support vulnerable sections of society.

3. Reservation to OBC in Jammu and Kashmir

- The Union government has introduced a new bill in the Lok Sabha to provide reservation for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in local bodies of Jammu and Kashmir.
- This legislation aims to align existing laws with constitutional provisions.
- It will ensure representation for OBCs in panchayats and municipalities for the first time since India's independence.
- The proposed Jammu and Kashmir Local Bodies Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024 seeks to amend relevant acts to bring them in line with constitutional provisions.
- The bill will affect the provisions related to the reservations for backward classes in local governance.
- Currently, there is no provision for OBC reservations in these local bodies in Jammu and Kashmir.
- The bill aims to address this gap by empowering a commission to determine the number of reserved seats once the legislation is passed.

4. Vyomitra

- India is preparing for its manned space mission, Gaganyaan, in 2025.
- The country plans to send a humanoid robot named Vyommitra to space first to test critical systems.
- Vyommitra, weighing 40 kg and developed by ISRO.
- It will simulate human functions within the spacecraft's orbit.
- It is equipped to operate control panels, monitor parameters, perform life support operations, and engage in conversations using artificial intelligence.
- Vyommitra aims to ensure the habitability and safety of the Gaganyaan module before crewed flights.
- Her deployment marks a significant step toward future Gaganyaan missions.



Mentorship
India

Prelims Track Question

Q1. Consider the following countries

1. Iran
2. Vietnam
3. Thailand
4. Sri Lanka
5. Malaysia

How many of the above countries provide visa free travel to Indians?

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

Q2. With reference to the history of reservation in India, consider the following statements

1. William Hunter in 1882 originally conceived the idea of caste-based reservation system.
2. The Reservation System is the outcome of the Communal Award of 1932.
3. The Poona Pact between Mahatma Gandhi and B.R. Ambedkar was based on reservation.
4. After independence, initially reservations were provided for SCs, STs and OBC.

How many of the above given statements are incorrect?

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

Q3. Consider the following statements about Uniform Civil Code

1. It is a constitutional provision.
2. It is legally enforceable.
3. It discriminates against women.
4. Goa is the first state to introduce it.
5. Only Muslims have personal laws in India.

How many of the above given statements are incorrect?

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

Q4. Consider the following

1. Constitutional Assignment of Taxation and Expenditure Powers
2. The Finance Commission

3. Grants-in-Aid System

How many of the above are the tools of fiscal federalism in India ?

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

Q5. Consider the following statements about CAR-T Cell Therapy

1. It genetically reprograms a patient's immune system.
2. It uses chimeric antigen receptors.
3. It is primarily related to the treatment of the nervous system.

How many of the above given statements are correct?

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

Q6. With reference to Tax to GDP Ratio, consider the following statements

1. The tax-to-GDP ratio measures a nation's tax revenue relative to the size of its economy.
2. It determines how well a nation's government directs its economic resources via taxation.
3. Developing nations typically have higher tax-to-GDP ratios than developed nations.

How many of the above given statements are correct?

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

Q7. With reference to Net Zero Carbon target of India, consider the following statements

1. It requires heavy investment.
2. Nationally Determined Contributions will help in achieving this target.
3. Under target assessment, India could peak in emissions as soon as 2030.

How many of the above given statements are incorrect?

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

Q8. With reference to India's energy targets consider the following statements

1. Coal's share in the power mix is projected to decline from 73% in 2022-23 to 55% in 2030.
2. The target of Solar Capacity is from 109 GW to 392 GW by 2030.
3. Large hydro generation is expected to increase from 8% to 9% by 2030.
4. Renewable sources, including small hydro, pumped hydro, solar, wind, and biomass, are expected to account for 20% of the power mix in 2030

How many of the above given statements are correct?

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

Q9. The difference between the current year's fiscal deficit (total revenue minus total government expenditures) and the interest paid on the previous year's borrowings is called

- A. Primary Deficit
- B. Fiscal Deficit
- C. Current Account Deficit
- D. Capital Account Deficit

Q10. With reference to the Statutory Grants, consider the following statements

1. These grants are granted to all states in India.
2. These grants are granted according to recommendations by the Finance Commission.
3. Under Article 282 of the Constitution, the Centre gives the States the Post Devolution Revenue Deficit Grant.

How many of the above given statements are incorrect?

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

Prelims Track Answer

Answer 1 Option D is correct

Explanation

- Iran has become the latest country in the past few months to give visa-free access to India tourists. **Hence, Statement 1 is correct.**
- Vietnam, Thailand, Sri Lanka have also eased visa rules for Indian tourists. **Hence, Statements 2, 3 and 4 are correct.**
- In 2023, Malaysia's Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim announced that visitors from India and China will be granted 30-day visa-free entry into Malaysia from December 1. **Hence, Statement 5 is correct.**
- The visa exemption in Malaysia is still subject to security screenings for records of crime or violence.

Answer 2 Option A is correct

Explanation

- William Hunter and Jyotirao Phule in 1882 originally conceived the idea of caste-based reservation system. Hence, **Statement 1 is correct.**
- The reservation system that exists today, in its true sense, was introduced in 1933 when British Prime-Minister Ramsay Macdonald presented the 'Communal Award'. Hence, **Statement 2 is correct.**
- The award made provision for separate electorates for Muslims, Sikhs, Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians, Europeans and the Dalits.
- After long negotiations, Gandhi and Ambedkar signed the 'Poona Pact', where it was decided that there would be a single Hindu electorate with certain reservations in it. Hence, **Statement 3 is correct.**
- After independence, initially reservations were provided only for SCs and STs.
- OBCs were included in the ambit of reservation in 1991 on the recommendations of the Mandal Commission. Hence, **Statement 4 is incorrect.**

Answer 3 Option B is correct

Explanation

- The Uniform Civil Code is mentioned in Article 44 of the Indian Constitution. **Hence, Statement 1 is correct.**
- These principles are not legally enforceable but are meant to guide the state in making policies. Hence, **Statement 2 is incorrect.**

- It has been supported by some as a way to promote national integration and gender justice. **Hence, Statement 3 is incorrect.**
- It is opposed as a threat to religious freedom and diversity.
- The first state in India that has a UCC is Goa, which retained its common family law known as the Goa Civil Code after it was liberated from Portuguese rule in 1961. Hence, **Statement 4 is correct.**
- The rest of India follows different personal laws based on their religious or community identity.
- Currently, not only Muslims but also Hindus, Jains, Buddhists, Sikhs, Parsis, and Jews are governed by their own personal laws. Hence, **Statement 5 is incorrect.**

Answer 4 Option C is correct

Explanation

Tools of Fiscal federalism in India are as follows:

- Constitutional Assignment of Taxation and Expenditure Powers. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- The Finance Commission. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- Goods and Services Tax (GST).
- Grants-in-Aid System. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

Answer 5 Option B is correct

Explanation

- The CAR-T Cell Therapy is the pioneering treatment that genetically reprograms a patient's immune system to fight cancer. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- The therapy is showcasing promising results post-treatment.
- It is a revolutionary therapy that modifies immune cells, specifically T-cells, into potent cancer fighters known as CAR-T cells.
- The therapy involves collecting and genetically modifying the patient's T-cells to express chimeric antigen receptors (CARs) specific to cancer cells. Hence, **statement 2 is correct.**
- These modified cells are then infused back into the patient to target and attack cancer cells. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.**
- This offers a targeted immunotherapy approach.

Answer 6 Option B is correct**Explanation**

- The tax-to-GDP ratio measures a nation's tax revenue relative to the size of its economy. Hence, **statement 1 is correct.**
- This ratio is used with other metrics to determine how well a nation's government directs its economic resources via taxation. Hence, **statement 2 is correct.**
- Developed nations typically have higher tax-to-GDP ratios than developing nations. Hence, **statement 3 is incorrect.**
- Higher tax revenues mean a country can spend more on improving infrastructure, health, and education—keys to the long-term prospects for a country's economy and people.
- According to the World Bank, tax revenues above 15% of a country's gross domestic product (GDP) are a key ingredient for economic growth and poverty reduction.

Answer 7 Option D is correct**Explanation**

- The investment required by India would be USD 13.5 trillion if the net zero emission target is to be met by 2050. Hence, **statement 1 is correct.**
- India's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) targets set in 2015 are likely to be met early within the next few years through current policies to achieve this target. Hence, **statement 2 is correct.**
- Under the target assessment, India could peak in emissions as soon as 2030. Hence, **statement 3 is correct.**
- Achieving net zero by 2070 would increase annual GDP by up to 4.7% by 2036. and create 15 million new jobs by 2047.

Answer 8 Option C is correct**Explanation**

- Coal's share in the power mix is projected to decline from 73% in 2022-23 to 55% in 2030. Hence, **statement 1 is correct.**
- Projections indicate a quadrupling of solar capacity from 109 GW to 392 GW by 2030. Hence, **statement 2 is correct.**
- Large hydro generation is expected to increase from 8% to 9% by 2030. Hence, **statement 3 is correct**

- Wind generation, on the other hand, is projected to decrease to 9% in the updated version (from 12% in the previous report).
- Renewable sources, including small hydro, pumped hydro, solar, wind, and biomass, are expected to account for 31% of the power mix in 2030, compared to the current 12%. Hence, **statement 4 is incorrect.**

Answer 9 Option A is correct**Explanation**

- The Primary Deficit is the difference between the current year's fiscal deficit (total revenue minus total government expenditures) and the interest paid on the previous year's borrowings. **Hence Option A is correct.**
- In simpler words, the primary deficit refers to the government's borrowing needs, excluding interest. It depicts the amount of borrowing required to cover the government's spending needs.

Answer 10 Option A is correct**Explanation**

- Statutory Grants as the name suggests are the grants given by the Parliament of India to specific states (not all the states) from the Consolidated Fund of India. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- 'These grants are according to recommendations by the Finance Commission. Hence, **statement 2 is correct.**
- About a third of the Centre's total revenue is distributed directly to states as their portion of the divisible pool.
- The Finance Commission, on the other hand, provides a mechanism for compensating states for any losses suffered, known as post-devolution revenue deficit awards.
- Under Article 275 of the Constitution, the Centre gives the States the Post Devolution Revenue Deficit Grant. Hence, **statement 3 is incorrect.**
- The grants are disbursed in monthly instalments in accordance with the Finance Commission's recommendations to close the deficit in the States' Revenue Accounts following devolution (of the divisible tax pool of the Centre).

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