

Mains Practice Questions of the Day

1. Critically analyze the impact of simultaneous elections on India's federal structure and the autonomy of state governments. [GS II Section I: 38 Marks]
2. Writes short notes on: [GS I Section II: 8 marks]
 - India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor.
 - 2nd India-CARICOM Summit

International Relations

AUSSOM

Why in the news?

The U.N. Security Council approved a new African Union force in Somalia

- ❖ **Objective:** It is meant to take on the Islamist armed group al-Shabab, with the soldiers due to deploy in January 2025.
 - Somalia is one of the world's poorest countries, enduring decades of civil war, a bloody insurgency by the al-Qaida-linked al-Shabab and frequent climate disasters.
- ❖ The resolution was adopted by 14 of the council's 15 member states, while the United States abstained due to reservations about funding.

- ❖ It provides for the replacement of the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia, whose mandate ends on Dec. 31, 2024 by the African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM).



Science And Technology

SpaDeX mission

Why in the news?

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully launched the Space Docking Experiment (SpaDeX) mission on 30th December, 2024.

About the mission:

- ❖ It aims to demonstrate advanced in-space docking technology, a crucial capability for future missions, including lunar expeditions and the Bharatiya Antariksh Station (BAS).
- ❖ ISRO's PSLV-C60 rocket carrying two spacecraft that would aid in demonstration of space docking lifted off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota.

- ❖ PSLV-C60 successfully deployed two satellites SDXO1 (the Chaser) and SDXO2 (the Target) in low earth orbit shortly after its launch.
 - In the next few days the two satellites SDXO1 called Chaser and SDXO2 called Target will travel 20 kms and then the rendezvous and docking process will begin when both satellites will come closer and dock together in space.
- ❖ **Significance:**
 - It represents a critical step in advancing India's capabilities in orbital docking.
 - Successful completion of this mission will enhance ISRO's ability to conduct complex operations in space and lay the groundwork for future interplanetary missions.



Schemes In News

Vivad se Vishwas Scheme:

Why in the news?

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has extended the deadline of the Vivad Se Vishwas Scheme from 31st December 2024 to January 31, 2025.

- ❖ In her Budget speech in 2024, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced the Vivad Se Vishwas Scheme, aimed at helping taxpayers resolve disputes with the income tax department.
- ❖ The extension allows taxpayers additional time to determine the amount payable as specified in the scheme.
- ❖ **Significance:** The scheme enables taxpayers to settle their outstanding tax liabilities by paying the disputed amount along with a specified percentage.

LOWERING LITIGATION LOAD

Nature of tax arrears	Appeal filing period	If scheme availed on or before:	
		Dec 31, 2024	Jan 1, 2025
Tax, interest and penalty	After Jan 31, 2020 but on or before July 22, 2024	Disputed tax	Disputed tax + 10% of disputed tax
	On or before Jan 31, 2020	Disputed tax + 10% of disputed tax	Disputed tax + 20% of disputed tax
Interest or penalty	After Jan 31, 2020 but on or before July 22, 2024	25% of disputed interest or penalty	30% of disputed interest or penalty
	On or before Jan 31, 2020	30% of disputed interest or penalty	35% of disputed interest or penalty

Settlement amounts payable to be reduced to 50% in following cases:

- Where appeal/ writ/ Special Leave Petition is filed by tax authorities
- Where the issue is covered by a favourable ITAT/ High Court decision in taxpayer's own case

Persons In News

Kaamya Karthikeyan

Why in the news?

Kaamya Karthikeyan became the youngest woman to scale the highest peaks on all seven continents.

- ❖ She is a 17-year-old student from the Indian Navy Children's School in Mumbai.
- ❖ She achieved this remarkable milestone on December 24 when she scaled Antarctica's Mount Vinson.
 - The climb completed her Seven Summits Challenge, a prestigious feat in mountaineering.
- ❖ She scaled Mount Kilimanjaro in Africa, Mount Elbrus in Europe, Mount Kosciuszko in Australia, Mount Aconcagua in South America, Mount Denali in North America, Mount Everest in Asia, and finally, Mount Vinson in Antarctica.



Obituary

Jimmy Carter

Why in the news?

Jimmy Carter, 39th president of the United States and winner of the 2002 Nobel Peace Prize passed away on 29th December, 2024.

- ❖ He was 100, the longest-lived president in U.S. history.



News in Short

- ❖ BEML Ltd, a leading name in heavy equipment manufacturing, has unveiled the BD475-2 Dozer, India's largest and most advanced crawler dozer.
- ❖ Association of Democratic Reforms (ADR) on assets:
 - N Chandrababu Naidu (Andhra Pradesh), Pema Khandu (Arunachal Pradesh) and Siddaramaiah (Karnataka) have emerged as the country's top three chief ministers with high assets.

- Mamata Banerjee (West Bengal), Omar Abdullah (J&K) and Pinarayi Vijayan (Kerala) top the list of chief ministers with the lowest assets.
- ❖ The central government has declared the devastating Wayanad landslides that occurred on 30th July in Kerala a disaster of "severe nature," acknowledging its significant impact.
 - It took place in Wayanad's Chooralmala and Mundakkai areas, caused by heavy rainfall, claimed over 200 lives, injured many, and displaced thousands of residents.
- ❖ A majestic statue of Shri Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was inaugurated on the banks of Pangong Tso at an altitude of 14,300 feet in Eastern Ladakh.
- ❖ The Bihar government has decided to extend the ongoing process of land survey and settlement for another one year. Now the deadline for completion of the survey across the state has been fixed for July 2026.

- ❖ Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) has earned the prestigious 'Great Place to Work' certification for January 2025 to January 2026, awarded by the Great Place to Work Institute, India.
 - This marks the second consecutive certification for SAIL, having first been certified from December 2023 to December 2024.
- ❖ Ace Indian rider, Hemanth Muddappa bagged a record 15th National title as he was crowned a triple champion in the Indian National Motorcycle Drag Racing Championship 2024 at the Madras International Circuit in Chennai.



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