

● POLITY

● ECONOMICS

● TECHNOLOGY

● ECOLOGY

ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT

DIRECT TAX KITTY PICKS UP PACE, UP 20.25% BY FEB. 10

CONTEXT: India's net direct tax collections for the current fiscal year have shown a notable uptick, with Personal Income Tax revenues surpassing Corporate Income Tax inflows, contributing to an optimistic outlook towards meeting revised estimates set by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

BACK GROUND: Against the backdrop of India's fiscal landscape, the Finance Ministry's recent data release highlights a notable surge in net direct tax collections, with Personal Income Tax revenues leading the growth trajectory, reflecting optimism towards meeting revised annual targets.

ISSUES: India's net direct tax collections surged 20.25% year-on-year by February 10, outpacing January's 19.4% uptick, with Personal Income Tax (PIT) revenues rising 26.91% compared to Corporate Income Tax (CIT) inflows' 13.6% increase. By February 10, collections reached ₹15.6 lakh crore, constituting 80.23% of revised estimates for the fiscal year. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman raised expectations, aiming for ₹19.5 lakh crore, up from ₹18.23 lakh crore. Gross collections hit ₹18.38 lakh crore, with ₹2.77 lakh crore refunds issued. Prior to refunds, corporate income tax revenue rose 9.2%, while personal income tax surged 25.7%, and combined with Securities Transaction Tax (STT), gross growth stood at 25.93%.

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS

CONTEXT: As the 17th Lok Sabha concludes, Prime Minister Modi targets Congress, while Opposition parties navigate issues like privilege cases and communal agendas. Conclusion of 17th Lok Sabha Session:

STORY SO FAR

- Prime Minister Modi's sharp attack on Congress.
 - Return of suspended members marked a cheerful start.
- Privilege Cases and Oath Taking:
 - AAP's Sanjay Singh unable to take oath due to pending privilege cases.
 - Clearance of names of MPs referred to privilege committees.
- Session Extension and Communal Agenda:
 - Extension for Ram Temple resolution debate.
 - Left parties boycott communal agenda; others find different reasons to stay away.
- Decline of Opposition Influence:
 - Shift to larger Parliament precincts amid criticism.
 - Erosion of Opposition role; Lok Sabha without Deputy Speaker.

- Decline in Opposition's bench strength in Rajya Sabha, with BJP dominance.
- Government dominance while Opposition remains sidelined.

CONCLUSION: The conclusion of the 17th Lok Sabha session witnessed Prime Minister Modi's strong criticism of Congress, the return of previously suspended members, extension of session for Ram Temple debate, Left parties' boycott of communal agenda, and a notable decline in Opposition influence, with the BJP's dominance evident in both Houses of Parliament.

INTERNATIONAL REALTIONS

A PRIVILEGED STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP, WITHOUT A GULF

CONTEXT: Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to pay an official visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) from February 13-14, 2024 which will include inaugurating a temple built by the Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha in Abu Dhabi.

MAJOR ISSUES: Visit Overview:

- Prime Minister Modi's scheduled visit to the UAE from February 13-14, 2024.
- Inauguration of a Hindu temple in Abu Dhabi and address at the World Government Summit in Dubai.

Bilateral Relationship:

- Evolution into one of the most prominent bilateral relationships for India.
- Close rapport between PM Modi and UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

Pillars of Ties:

- Beyond temples and faith, including strategic partnerships and climate initiatives.
- Strong economic partnership with bilateral trade reaching \$85 billion.

Fintech and Energy Security:

- Mutual convergence in fintech, exemplified by acceptance of RuPay card and rupee transactions.
- UAE as a trusted partner in India's energy security, with strategic oil reserves stored in India.

Exceptional Gestures:

- Instances of exceptional treatment, such as invitations to key events and conferral of honors.
- Collaboration in strategic groupings like the I2U2 and IMEEC infrastructure project.

Strategic Ties:

- Close coordination within the region and participation in

significant projects.

- Potential for the partnership to grow stronger amid global challenges like the Gaza conflict.

CONCLUSION: The India-UAE partnership stands as a model of convergence and mutual respect, poised to further strengthen amid shared strategic goals and challenges.

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

CONJURING A CATHARSIS

CONTEXT: The Finance Ministry's White Paper on the economy accuses the UPA of mismanagement, countered by the Congress's Black Paper highlighting current government failures.

MAJOR POINTS:

1. Accusations and Counterarguments:
 - Finance Ministry accuses UPA of economic mismanagement.
 - Congress counters with Black Paper citing current government failures.
2. White Paper Highlights:
 - NDA claims credit for economic repair and reform since 2014.
 - Lists UPA "scams" and praises NDA achievements.
3. Critique of White Paper:
 - Curious absence of GDP growth and employment data.
 - Criticized for selective portrayal of UPA failures and NDA successes.
4. Analysis of Reforms:
 - NDA's majority mandate questioned amid pending reforms.
 - UPA's role in past reforms acknowledged, despite criticisms.
5. Political Implications:
 - White Paper seen as attempt to manage voter expectations.
 - Illustrates ongoing political divergence and finger-pointing.

CONCLUSION: The White Paper on the economy reveals deep political divisions, highlighting the ongoing blame game between the NDA and UPA.

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

2023 SAW THE MOST PRISONERS ON DEATH ROW IN NEARLY 2 DECADES

CONTEXT: The 'Death Penalty in India: Annual Statistics 2023' report by Project 39A reveals declining confirmation rates, high death row population, and legal developments.

MAJOR POINTS:

High Court Confirmation Rates:

In 2023, High Courts confirmed only 1% of death sentences, the lowest since 2000.

Sole confirmation occurred in Karnataka High Court for a murder simpliciter case.

Commutations and Acquittals:

45% of death sentences were commuted, and an equal share of prisoners were acquitted.

6% of cases were remanded to trial courts.

Decrease in Confirmation Proceedings:

Disposal rate of death penalty confirmation cases decreased by 15%.

120 death sentences imposed led to 561 prisoners on death row by December 2023.

Supreme Court Actions:

Supreme Court did not confirm any death sentences in 2023.

Acquitted six death row prisoners and remanded two cases due to negligence in investigation and trials.

Trends in Trial Courts:

Majority of death penalty cases involved sexual offences.

87% of cases sentenced without adequate information on accused, contrary to Supreme Court mandate.

Legislative Changes:

Parliament passed three Bills to repeal criminal codes, expanding death penalty offences.

Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, increased punishable offences to 18 from 12 under IPC, 1860.

International Comparison:

Ghana abolished death penalty for ordinary crimes; China executed most death row inmates in 2022 according to Amnesty International.

CONCLUSION: The data from 2023 reflects a significant decline in High Court confirmation rates for death sentences and an increase in commutations and acquittals. The Supreme Court's actions, legislative changes, and international comparisons highlight ongoing debates and developments surrounding the death penalty, underscoring its complexity and global context.

CRACKING
CIVIL SERVICES
NO MORE A
DIFFICULT TASK

COME JOIN WITH US



+91 9383 432 123

+91 7777 875 588

0484 452 77 77

**Excellence through
Education & Dedication**

ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT

DECODING INDIA'S ECONOMIC REALITIES

CONTEXT: The interim budget shifts focus to fiscal consolidation amid economic challenges, with the BJP-led government aiming to reduce fiscal deficits.

Economic Outlook:

- Interim Budget emphasizes fiscal consolidation, aiming to reduce fiscal deficit to 4.5% of GDP by 2025-26.
- Cutbacks in public expenditure signal challenges amid nominal GDP growth of 9%, down from 10.5%.
- Real GDP growth at 7.3% faces scrutiny, with IMF questioning official growth estimates.

Budget and Public Finance:

- "White Paper" alleges UPA left a damaged economy, claims NDA rebuilt it.
- Fiscal trends over 20 years show mixed records between UPA and NDA regimes.
- NDA's revenue strategy focused on indirect taxes and income tax base expansion, but corporate tax collections declined.

Growth and Inflation:

- Real GDP growth under NDA lower than UPA by at least one percentage point on average.
- UPA era witnessed higher real investment and export growth despite global recession.
- Inflation, particularly food inflation, remained a challenge under both UPA and NDA, despite RBI's efforts.

CONCLUSION: India's economic trajectory under the BJP-led government reflects a shift towards fiscal consolidation amid challenges of slowing economic activity. The "White Paper" narrative contrasts UPA's alleged economic damage with NDA's rebuilding efforts, yet fiscal trends and growth indicators suggest a more nuanced reality requiring further scrutiny and evaluation.

INTERNATIONAL REALITIONS

SRI LANKA'S BAN ON FOREIGN SHIPS WAS TO BUILD TECHNICAL CAPACITY'

CONTEXT: Sri Lankan Foreign Minister discusses foreign relations, economic recovery, and regional cooperation, emphasizing investment over loans and addressing concerns over research vessel ban.

MAJOR ISSUES:

1. No Pressure on Research Vessel Ban:

Sri Lankan Foreign Minister clarifies that India and China did not exert pressure regarding the decision to ban research vessels for a year.

2. Economic Recovery and Collaboration:

Sri Lanka's economy is recovering, focusing on collaboration and investment rather than seeking more loans, amid challenges in debt restructuring.

3. Engagement with India:

Sri Lanka seeks investment, technical collaboration, and knowledge sharing from India, prioritizing these over credit lines and loans.

4. Delay in Joint Projects with India:

Joint oil storage and connectivity projects with India face delays due to the need for establishing regulations and involving the private sector for commercial viability.

5. Indian Ocean Rivalries and Sovereignty:

Sri Lanka aims to maintain sovereignty amidst U.S.-China tensions in the Indian Ocean, advocating for a multi-aligned foreign policy.

6. Research Vessel Ban and Decision Making:

The one-year ban on foreign research vessels entering Sri Lankan ports is a technical decision to improve capacity and data sharing, not influenced by external pressure.

7. Regional Groupings and SAARC:

Emphasis shifts towards BIMSTEC over SAARC due to tensions between India and other SAARC members, with Sri Lanka advocating for alternative regional partnerships.

CONCLUSION: Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister underscores the nation's commitment to economic recovery, regional cooperation, and sovereignty. The clarification on the research vessel ban, emphasis on investment, and engagement with India highlight Sri Lanka's strategic approach to navigate regional dynamics and foster sustainable development.



VEDHIK
IAS ACADEMY
The New Learning Mantra

MASTER THE NEW LEARNING MANTRA

www.vedhikiasacademy.org

CRACKING
CIVIL SERVICES
NO MORE A
DIFFICULT TASK
COME JOIN WITH US

VEDHIK
IAS ACADEMY
The New Learning Mantra



SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

THE PATTERNS OF GLOBAL WARMING ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN ITS LEVELS

CONTEXT: The controversy surrounding whether the Earth crossed the 1.5 degrees Celsius warming threshold in 2023, emphasizing the importance of understanding global warming patterns.

THE GIST

- Palaeo proxies use chemical evidence stored in various organic matter, such as corals, stalactites, and stalagmites, to approximate the temperature at some point in the past
- Even the amount and distribution of the monsoon of 2023 has defied explanation, and it is unclear how the combination of the El Niño, its unusual pattern, and global warming conspired together to produce the monsoons India experienced
- Accurate predictions of warming patterns are essential to manage climate change impacts. Predictions are needed to adapt to changing seasons and the harm they cause to lives, livelihoods, and economies

MAJOR POINTS:

Introduction:

- 2023 witnessed numerous climate disasters and a focus on whether the 1.5 degrees Celsius warming threshold was crossed.
- This threshold is a product of political negotiations, not scientific certainty.

Measuring the Crossing:

- A recent study suggests the Earth's surface has warmed over 1.5°C from pre-industrial levels using palaeo-thermometry.
- his technique utilizes chemical evidence from organic matter but offers only local temperature estimates.

No Explanation for Patterns:

- The significance of crossing 1.5°C lacks clear explanations for exceptional warming and its correlation with disasters.
- Understanding warming patterns is crucial for managing associated disasters effectively.

El Niño as a Warming Paradigm:

- El Niño events impact global warming patterns, influencing phenomena like monsoons and droughts.
- The location of warming, influenced by El Niño, affects local and global temperatures differently.

Need for Accurate Predictions:

- Accurate predictions of warming patterns are essential to mitigate climate change's impacts on lives and economies.
- Understanding event-to-event variations and seasonal changes is vital for adaptation.

Conclusion:

Emphasize the importance of considering global warming patterns over arbitrary thresholds to effectively address climate change challenges.



**START YOUR
JOURNEY WITH THE
BEST**

COME JOIN WITH US





VEDHIK

IAS ACADEMY

The New Learning Mantra

START YOUR JOURNEY WITH THE BEST

**INDIA'S
TOP MOST
CIVIL SERVANTS
FOR COACHING**

www.vedhikiasacademy.org

Head Office:

Vedhik IAS Academy
Mercy Estate,
MG Road, Ravipuram,
Ernakulam-682 015,

Corporate office:

Vedhik IAS Academy
Samkalp Bhawan, Plot No.15,
Sector 4, Rama Krishna Puram,
New Delhi, Delhi-110022

Regional office

Vedhik IAS Academy
202, Raheja Chambers, 12,
Museum Road. Bangalore -
560001. Karnataka, India.

GCC Office:

Bobscoedu,
Bobsco Trading & Contracting Co. W. L . L
Office 22, Dream Tower 1,
Road: 2701, Adliya, Kingdom of Bahrain
www.bobscoedu.com