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Important News Articles

GS I

1. DAY-NRLM organized workshop on 'Making of Lakhpati Didi's' through Integrating Women SHGs into Service Sector Enterprises-PIB

Relevance: Role of Women and Women's Organization, Population and Associated Issues, Poverty and Developmental issues, Urbanization, their problems and their remedies.

Prelims Takeaway

- SHG
- DAY-NRLM

News:

- Stepping up its efforts further towards making of 3 Crore Lakhpati Didis in line with the Prime Minister's vision,
- The Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana- National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), under the Ministry of Rural Development organized today a National Stakeholders Consultative Workshop on Integrating Women Self-Help Groups into Service Sector Enterprises: Making of Lakhpati Didis.

Highlights:

- The mission is striving for Lakhpati Didis, as envisioned by the Prime Minister and making its forays into strengthening the Lakhpati Initiative while exploring and integrating possibilities of the service sector enterprises.
- Highlighted the fact that the services sector today contributes to about 50% of the GDP, 31 % of the jobs and hence it is of utmost importance to discuss it with an open mind that what kind of sub-scheme can be launched for wider engagement of the SHG community for their economic upliftment and enabling them to become Lakhpati Didis.
- The announcement of the making of Lakhpati Didis by the Prime Minister on 15th August 2023, the National Rural Livelihoods Mission and its State Rural Livelihoods Missions are inspired to make it a reality.
- Convergence is the key to realize the Prime Minister's ambitious dream of Lakhpati Didis and the Ministry with its partners will leverage every possible opportunity to help economic transformation of the SHG Didi's as Lakhpati Didi's.
- The workshop was organized with the objective of understanding the current landscape-opportunities, potential and challenges faced by women SHGs in the service sector, to identify best practices and successful models of integrating women SHGs into service enterprises and to develop a roadmap for way forward and strategies for successful integration of SHG women to service sector of the economy working in collaboration with the various stakeholders.
- The participants included representatives from eleven ministries, ten State Rural Livelihoods Missions and other Stakeholders, Sector Skill Council, National Resource Organizations and Technical Support Agencies.
- The workshop saw open discussion on various ideas and thoughts with the active engagement of the participants.

GS II

2. Screen all pregnant women for gestational diabetes with point-of-care test, say experts- The Hindu

Relevance: Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

News:

- Researchers from India, London, and Africa have proposed that the oral glucose tolerance test (OGTT) be replaced by an HbA1c test

Prelims Takeaway

- HbA1c
- Gestational Diabetes

Highlights:

- They have recommended that this be administered in early pregnancy, during the first trimester itself.
- In a paper published in The Lancet Diabetes and Endocrinology, authors argued that **HbA1c** offers a simple screening test for gestational diabetes, allowing those at highest risk to receive early intervention and greatly reduces the need for OGTTs.
- The proposal is significant for India. As more than 90% of gestational diabetes cases are estimated to occur in low-income and middle-income countries.
- Currently, guidelines recommend that mothers take an OGTT, which is a concentrated 75 g oral solution at fasting, and then wait two to three hours to do a follow-up, at the 24 to 28-week stage.
- This throws up a lot of challenges, particularly in screening women who are in far-flung rural areas and in hard-to-reach areas.
- The study concluded that in India, an HbA1c result of 4.9 rules out diabetes, while women who have a score of 5.4 or above can be 'ruled in' for gestational diabetes.
- If the risk score classifies them in the lowest risk group, they would not have to take an OGTT; only those in the intermediate group between these two values would have to do the more complicated test.
- Advantages of HbA1c test: it confers the ability to identify a high-risk group earlier on in pregnancy, and an opportunity to intervene with diet and exercise.
 - There is data that early intervention helps prevent development of gestational diabetes.

3. India achieves 'outstanding outcome' in FATF evaluation - The Hindu

Relevance: Important International Institutions, agencies and fora - their Structure, Mandate.

Prelims Takeaway

- FATF

News:

- India has achieved an outstanding outcome in the mutual evaluation conducted during 2023-24 by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF)

Highlights:

- The Mutual Evaluation Report of India, which was adopted at the FATF plenary held in Singapore, places India in the "regular follow-up" category, a distinction shared by only four other G-20 countries.
- This marks a significant milestone in the nation's efforts to combat money laundering (ML) and terrorist financing (TF)
- In a statement, the FATF said the plenary concluded that India had reached a high level of technical compliance with its requirements.
- The country's anti-money laundering (AML), countering the financing of terrorism (CFT), and counter-proliferation financing (CPF) regime was achieving good results, including international cooperation, access to basic and beneficial ownership information, use of financial intelligence, and depriving criminals of their assets.
- However, the FATF observed that improvements were needed to strengthen the supervision and implementation of preventive measures in some non-financial sectors.
- Among other things, the FATF has recognised the efforts made by India on the issue of mitigating the risks arising from ML/TF, including the laundering of proceeds from corruption, fraud, and organised crime, and the effective measures implemented by India to transition from a cash-based to a digital economy to reduce ML/TF risks.

4. India slams 'deeply biased' U.S. report on religious freedom- THE HINDU

RELEVANCE: Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.

Prelims Takeaway

- Uniform Civil Code

NEWS:

- India recently slammed the U.S. State Department's report on International Religious Freedom for 2023 as "deeply biased" and said it reflected "one-sided projection of issues".

Excerpts of the report

- In India, we see a concerning increase in anti-conversion laws, hate speech, demolitions of homes and places of worship for members of minority faith communities.
- At the same time, people around the world are also working hard to protect religious freedom.”
- In nearly 69 pages dedicated to the state of religious freedom in India, the report elaborated on apparent complicity between the law enforcement agencies and the majoritarian groups and flagged a number of factors like the campaign for Uniform Civil Code (UCC) as well as the campaign for creating a “Hindu Rashtra” in India.
- Responding to the criticism, India raised the law and order situation in the U.S. and highlighted the crimes committed by racially motivated individuals against Indians and other coloured communities.
- “In 2023, India has officially taken up numerous cases in the U.S. of hate crimes, racial attacks on Indian nationals and other minorities, vandalisation and targeting of places of worship
- In India, for example, Christian communities reported that local police aided mobs that disrupted worship services over accusations of conversion activities or stood by while mobs attacked them and then arrested the victims on conversion charges.”

5. Jaishankar to lead Indian delegation to attend SCO summit in Astana - Indian Express

Relevance: Important International Institutions, agencies and fora - their Structure, Mandate.

Prelims Takeaway

- SCO)

News:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will not attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit this year.

Highlights:

- External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar is set to lead the Indian delegation to Kazakhstan capital Astana
- The summit will take place from July 3-4 in Astana. Kazakhstan took over the SCO presidency from India, which was the president last year.
 - India hosted the SCO summit virtually in July 2023.
- Last year, during the virtual Summit, Jaishankar had expressed concerns over terrorism in the presence of then-Pakistan Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto.
- During his last 10 years as the Prime Minister, Modi has attended five subsequent SCO summits that were held before the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The SCO, comprising India, China, Russia, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, is considered an influential economic and security bloc.
- The summit hosted by Kazakhstan is expected to see participation by Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Pakistan PM Shehbaz Sharif.

6. Russia warns of 'response' against U.S. drones over Black Sea- THE HINDU

RELEVANCE: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora.

Prelims Takeaway

- NTO
- Black sea

NEWS:

- Russia's Defence Minister ordered officials to prepare a “response” to U.S. drone flights over the Black Sea
- It gave an apparent warning that Moscow may take forceful action to ward off the American reconnaissance aircraft.

Key highlights

- The Russian Defence Ministry noted a recent “increased intensity” of U.S. drones over the Black Sea
 - shows an increased involvement of the U.S. and other NATO countries in the conflict in Ukraine on the side of the Kyiv regime,” the Ministry said in a statement.
- Washington and Moscow have clashed before over U.S. drones in the Black Sea.

- In a 2023 incident, a Russian fighter jet damaged an American drone there, causing it to crash.
- A repeat of such a confrontation could further fuel tensions

GS III

7. Interlinked drains to multiple agencies: What's behind Delhi's perennial problem

Relevance: Disaster and Disaster Management.

News: Heavy rains in Delhi resulted in Waterlogging, due to various administrative loopholes.

Prelims Takeaway

- Urban Flooding

Highlights:

- The first monsoon shower may have brought major relief from the heatwave to Delhi, but three hours of heavy rainfall was all it took to throw the national capital into chaos.
- This, despite the PWD claiming to have completed 83% desilting work.
- According to senior PWD officials and experts, key reasons are multiplicity of departments, lack of coordination, poor infrastructure, faulty design, and increasing population.
- Another major reason is the long-pending 'Drainage Master Plan', which is yet to be implemented owing to several problems
- The city's drainage system does not have the capacity. It is also very old and the population is constantly increasing.
 - There is a need for an integrated master plan.

Editorials, Gists and Explainers

8. Delhi Airport roof collapse: A reality check for the state of India's infrastructure- INDIAN EXPRESS

RELEVANCE: Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

CONTEXT:

- Recently, a portion of the roof at Delhi Airport's Terminal 1 collapsed due to heavy rains, resulting in one fatality and six injuries.

Key highlights

- This incident highlights the fragile state of public infrastructure in India and raises critical questions about the safety and integrity of such structures.
- An airport, especially in the capital city, is a symbol of modern engineering excellence and safety. It should not become the site of a tragedy.
- A structure from 2008 is not old by any standard. On the point related to private contractors, questions about accountability and government oversight persist.
- The real concern is why infrastructure audits, essential for maintaining the safety and integrity of such structures, were not being conducted regularly.
- Regular audits and maintenance checks are crucial to prevent such disasters, yet they appear to have been neglected.

Safety is non-negotiable

- A thorough investigation is essential to identify those responsible for this tragedy and hold them accountable.
- the approach to state investment in infrastructure seem to be just about construction, not sustenance
- There is an urgent need for stricter regulations and better oversight of infrastructure projects to prevent such incidents.
- Regular safety audits should be conducted, construction standards should be adhered to, and clear accountability mechanisms that prioritise public safety must be in place.
- There should be an emphasis on quality control and adherence to international safety norms. It is crucial to address the gaps in planning and execution.
- Infrastructure is not just about concrete and steel — it is about the people who use it.
- The failure to ensure safety reflects a deeper societal issue where human life is not given the priority it deserves.
- This incident should serve as a wake-up call to re-evaluate our policies and practices and ensure that the design of infrastructure does not imperil human lives and well-being.

9. Apple, Foxconn and married, working women — where's the imaginary support system? - Indian Express

Relevance: Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Context:

- A Reuters investigation of Apple iPhone maker Foxconn's assembly headquarters in Tamil Nadu has thrown up anomalies in the hiring process. Married women are apparently rejected on grounds of pregnancy, family commitments, and a greater number of leaves.

Scrutiny

- In India, where political parties have focused on women as a constituency and where the PM has repeatedly reiterated his government's commitment to gender parity, equality
 - labor force participation stood at **32.7 per cent in 2023 vis-a-vis 76.8 per cent** for men.
- The loopholes are many and the struggle to enforce it on the ground is bogged down by an inhibiting process perpetuated by a profound lack of imagination.
- It is a failure of the imagination that refuses to consider alternatives, that will not ensure creches at workplaces, beneficial for both male and female employees, or consider the disproportionate care burden on women.

Whose fault is it?

- This failure is not that of the government or of the political parties alone. It begins with individuals and families and seeps into organisations, from society into governments.
- Far too many women are told that they are "fortunate" to have families that "allow" them to work outside or have partners who help around the house.
- **The Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals:** The Gender Snapshot 2023 report by UN Women and UNDESA warned that unless measures were taken, an entire generation of women would end up spending a disproportionate amount of time on housework in comparison to men, hemmed in by prejudicial norms.
- Earlier this year, in **Union of India and Others vs Ex. Lt. Selina John case**, the Supreme Court of India observed that rules which penalise working women on the grounds of marriage are unconstitutional.
- For India to emerge as the **third-largest economy** in the world that puts women at the centre of change, it will need to reorient its metrics of assessment.

10. A fresh start : The GST Council must not lose sight of broader reforms- THE HINDU

RELEVANCE: Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

Context:

- The Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council was convened last week for the first time in nearly nine months.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Apart from several industry-specific measures, a few of which will kick in with retrospective effect
- the Council also opted to waive interest and penalty on tax dues for the first three years of GST, provided they are paid by March 2025.
- Moreover, it lowered the stipulated pre-deposits for filing appeals, including those that will be filed with the upcoming GST Appellate Tribunals
 - and approved a new form for taxpayers to correct errors or oversights in previous returns.
- Beyond nitty-gritties, the Council also signed off on ending the anti-profiteering clause that required firms to pass on any tax cut gains to customers
 - and mandating biometric-based Aadhaar authentication for all GST registrations in a phased manner across India.
- It is refreshing that the Council also plans to take stock of the 2021 plan to rationalise the multiple-rate GST structure, that has been in cold storage for a while, when it meets next.
- The apex GST body must not only revive and expedite GST rate reforms but also incorporate a road map to bring excluded items such as petroleum and electricity into the GST net while rejigging tax rates.

Quick Look

1. Ways and Means Advances (WMA)

- It is a facility for both the Centre and states to borrow from the RBI.
- These borrowings are meant purely to help them to tide over temporary mismatches in cash flows of their receipts and expenditures.
- Section 17(5) of the RBI Act, 1934 authorises the central bank to lend to the Centre and state governments subject to their being repayable not later than three months from the date of the making of the advance
- The interest rate on WMA is the RBI's repo rate, which is basically the rate at which it lends short-term money to banks.

2. Shanghai Cooperation Organization

- The Shanghai Cooperation Organization is a permanent intergovernmental international organization established on June 15, 2001 in Shanghai
- In 2002, the Charter of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization was signed at the meeting of the Council of Heads of States in St. Petersburg, which entered into force on September 19, 2003.
- It is a statute that stipulates the goals, principles, structure and major areas of activities of the organization.
- The goals of the SCO are to strengthen mutual trust, friendship and good-neighborliness between the Member States
- The official languages of the SCO are Russian and Chinese.
- SCO currently has 9 members, India is also a member of SCO.

3. Financial Action Task Force (FATF)

- FATF is an international body formed in 1989 by the Group of Seven (G7) member states with an aim to prevent cases of Anti-money laundering and financing of terrorist activities.
- Its headquarters is located in Paris, France.
- FATF comprises 37 member jurisdictions and 2 regional organizations, including the European Commission and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).
 - India is a member of FATF
- It aims to generate the necessary political will to bring about reforms in the national legislative and regulatory reforms to prevent money laundering and financing of terrorist activities.
- Non-compliance with FATF standards can result in reputational damage, financial isolation, and increased scrutiny from the international community.

4. Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI)

- The Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI) is prepared every month and released by the Office of the Economic Adviser (OEA), Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), and Ministry of Commerce & Industry.
- The ICI measures the combined and individual performance of production of eight core industries viz. Cement, Coal, Crude Oil, Electricity, Fertilizers, Natural Gas, Refinery Products and Steel.
- The Eight Core Industries comprise 40.27 percent of the weight of items included in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).
- The current weightage, of eight core industries is Petroleum Refinery Products (28.04%) > Electricity (19.85%) > Steel (17.92%) > Coal (10.33%) > Crude Oil (8.98%) > Natural Gas (6.88%) > Cement (5.37%) > Fertiliser (2.63%).
- The base year in the current series of ICI is 2011-12.

5. Ingenuity Mars Helicopter

- The Ingenuity Mars Helicopter is a small robotic helicopter that is part of NASA's Mars 2020 mission, which also includes the Perseverance rover.
- It is the first aircraft to attempt powered, controlled flight on another planet.
- Ingenuity's primary mission is to demonstrate the feasibility of flight in the thin atmosphere of Mars and to gather data to support future aerial exploration of the Red Planet.

Prelims Track Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and their impact on women empowerment in India:

1. SHGs have been a key instrument in providing microfinance to rural women, significantly enhancing their financial inclusion.
2. The National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) aims to reach out to 7 crore rural poor households and link them to sustainable livelihoods.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 and 2

Q2. Consider the following statement regarding Gestational Diabetes

1. Women with Gestational Diabetes Mellitus are at a higher risk of developing Type 2 diabetes later in life.
2. Gestational Diabetes Mellitus can only be diagnosed in the second trimester of pregnancy.
3. More than 90% of gestational diabetes cases are estimated to occur in High Income countries

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q3. Consider the following statement regarding Financial Action Task Force (FATF)

1. The FATF was established by the United Nations to combat money laundering and terrorist financing.
2. The FATF issues a list of high-risk and non-cooperative jurisdictions, commonly known as the "blacklist" and "graylist."
3. Compliance with FATF recommendations is mandatory for all member countries.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 2 and 3 only

Q4. Consider the following statements

1. Article 44 states that State shall endeavor to provide for its citizens a uniform civil code (UCC) throughout the territory of India.
2. criminal laws were codified and became common for the whole country, personal laws continue to be governed by separate codes for different communities.

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

Q5. Consider the following statement regarding Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)

1. The SCO was established in 2001 with the primary aim of promoting economic cooperation among member states.
2. India and Pakistan became full members of the SCO in 2017.
3. The official languages of the SCO are Chinese and Russian.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q6. Nord Stream - 2 pipeline which was recently in news is associated with:

1. North Sea
2. Baltic Sea
3. Sea of Azov

4. Gulf of Finland

Select the correct answer using the codes below:

- A. 1 and 2 Only
- B. 1 and 3 Only
- C. 2 and 3 Only
- D. 2 and 4 Only

Q7. With reference to the constitutional provisions regarding municipalities and urban management in India, consider the following statements:

1. The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992, provides for the establishment of Municipalities in urban areas.
2. Article 243Q of the Constitution deals with the constitution of Municipalities.
3. The State Election Commission is responsible for the superintendence, direction, and control of the preparation of electoral rolls and the conduct of all elections to the Municipalities.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Q8. In context of Maritime India Vision 2030, consider the following:

1. It encompasses 150+ initiatives covering all the facets of the Indian maritime sector.
2. It will create the Waterways Connectivity Transport Grid, a project that will develop connectivity with Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar.

Which of the statements above is/are correct?

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

Q9. With reference to the representation of women in the Parliament of India, consider the following statements:

1. The percentage of women members in the Lok Sabha has never exceeded 15%.
2. The Women's Reservation Bill proposes to reserve 33% of seats for women in both the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies.
3. India has the highest percentage of women in Parliament among all South Asian countries.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q10. Consider the following statements regarding the GST Council.

1. It is a constitutional body under Article 279B.
2. The GST Council is chaired by the Prime Minister and other members are the Union State Minister of Revenue or Finance and Ministers in-charge of Finance or Taxation of all the States.

Which among the statements given above is/ are correct?

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

Prelims Track Answer

Answer 1 Option C is Correct

Explanation:

- SHGs have indeed been instrumental in providing microfinance to rural women, which has enhanced their financial inclusion. **Statement 1 is Correct.**
- The NRLM has a target of reaching out to 7 crore rural poor households and providing them with sustainable livelihoods. **Statement 2 is Correct.**

Answer 2 Optional A is correct

Explanation

- Gestational Diabetes Mellitus (GDM) is a type of diabetes that occurs during pregnancy and typically disappears after the baby is born.
- Women who have had GDM are at a higher risk of developing Type 2 diabetes later in life. **Statement 1 is correct.**
- GDM can be diagnosed during any trimester of pregnancy, although it is most commonly diagnosed in the second trimester through routine screening tests. **Statement 2 is incorrect.**
- As more than 90% of gestational diabetes cases are estimated to occur in low-income and middle-income countries. **Statement 3 is incorrect.**

Answer 3 Option B is correct.

Explanation:

- The FATF was established by the G7 countries, not the United Nations. **Statement 1 is Incorrect.**
- The FATF issues lists of high-risk and non-cooperative jurisdictions, commonly referred to as the "blacklist" and "graylist." **Statement 2 is correct.**
- Compliance with FATF recommendations is not mandatory but highly encouraged. Countries that do not comply may face increased scrutiny and potential economic repercussions. **Statement 3 is incorrect.**

Answer 4 Option B is correct

Explanation

- Article 44 corresponds with Directive Principles of State Policy stating that State shall endeavour to provide for its citizens a uniform civil code (UCC) throughout the territory of India.

- while criminal laws were codified and became common for the whole country, personal laws continue to be governed by separate codes for different communities.

Answer 5 Option B is correct.

Explanation:

- The SCO was established in 2001 primarily to address security concerns, particularly terrorism, separatism, and extremism, although economic cooperation is also a significant aspect. **Statement 1 is incorrect.**
- India and Pakistan became full members of the SCO in 2017. **Statement 2 is correct.**
- The official languages of the SCO are Chinese and Russian. **Statement 3 is Correct.**

Answer 6 Option D is Correct

Explanation

- **Nord Stream - 2 pipeline** is a 1,200-km pipeline that runs from Ust-Luga in Russia to Greifswald in Germany. It passes through Baltic Sea and the Gulf of Finland.
- The **Sea of Azov is located in the Black Sea** near Crimea.
- **The North Sea** is surrounded by countries such as the UK, Norway, Denmark etc.

Answer 7 Option D is Correct

Explanation

- The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992, indeed provides for the establishment of Municipalities in urban areas. **Statement 1 is Correct**
- Article 243Q of the Constitution deals with the constitution of Municipalities. **Statement 2 is Correct**
- The State Election Commission is responsible for the superintendence, direction, and control of the preparation of electoral rolls and the conduct of all elections to the

Answer 8 Option C is correct.

Explanation

- MIV 2030 projects cargo traffic to reach 2,570 mtpa by 2030. The vision outlines 10 broad themes. It **encompasses 150+ initiatives covering all the facets of the Indian maritime sector.** It comes as an effort to define and meet national maritime objectives. **(Hence statement 1 is correct)**

- The Maritime India Vision 2030 will create the **Waterways Connectivity Transport Grid, a project that will develop connectivity with Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar.** Additionally, a Riverine Development Fund (RDF) will extend low-cost funding to finance inland vessels and for extending the coverage of the tonnage tax scheme to inland vessels. **(Hence statement 2 is correct)**

Answer 9 Option A is correct

Explanation:

- Historically, the percentage of women members in the Lok Sabha has remained below 15%. **Statement 1 is correct**
- Correct. The Women's Reservation Bill (108th Amendment) proposes to reserve 33% of seats for women in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies. **Statement 2 is correct**
- India does not have the highest percentage of women in Parliament

among all South Asian countries; countries like Nepal and Bangladesh have higher percentages. **Statement 3 is incorrect**

Answer 10 Option D is correct.

Explanation:

GST Council

- It is a constitutional body (Article 279A) for making recommendations to the Union and State Government on issues related to Goods and Services Tax. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
- The GST Council is chaired by the Union Finance Minister and other members are the Union State Minister of Revenue or Finance and Ministers in-charge of Finance or Taxation of all the States. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
- It is considered as a federal body where both the centre and the states get due representation





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