

1. Consider the following statements about the Delimitation Commission of India.

1. It is a constitutional body.
2. The Commission is tasked with identifying seats reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: **B**

Explanation:

- The Delimitation Commission is appointed by the **President of India** and works in **collaboration with the Election Commission of India**.
- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** Delimitation Commission is a statutory body.
- It is appointed for the purpose of drawing up the boundaries of constituencies all over the country. A quota of constituencies to be reserved in each State is fixed depending on the proportion of SC or ST in that State.
- In India, Delimitation Commissions have been **constituted 4 times** – in 1952 under the Delimitation Commission Act, 1952, in 1963 under Delimitation Commission Act, 1962, in 1973 under Delimitation Act, 1972 and in 2002 under Delimitation Act, 2002.
- The Delimitation Commission in India is a high power body whose orders have the **force of law** and **cannot be called in question before any court**.
- These orders come into force on a date to be specified by the President of India on this behalf.
- The copies of its orders are laid before the House of the People and the State Legislative Assembly concerned, but **no modifications are permissible therein by them**.

What is Delimitation?

- Delimitation is the act of redrawing boundaries of Lok Sabha and state Assembly seats to represent changes in population.
- The main objective of delimitation is to provide **equal representation to equal segments of a population**. It also aims at a fair division of geographical areas so that one political party doesn't have an advantage over others in an election (i.e. to prevent *Gerrymandering*).
- Delimitation is carried out by an independent Delimitation Commission.

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How is delimitation carried out?

- Under Article 82, the Parliament enacts a Delimitation Act **after every Census**.
- Once the Act is in force, the Delimitation Commission is appointed by the **President of India** which works in **collaboration with the Election Commission of India**.
- The Delimitation Commission consists of
 - a retired Supreme Court judge,
 - the Chief Election Commissioner and
 - the respective State Election Commissioners.
- The Commission is supposed to determine the number and boundaries of constituencies in a way that the population of all seats, so far as practicable, is the same.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** The Commission is also tasked with identifying seats reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes; these are where their population is relatively large.
- All this is done on the **basis of the latest Census** and, in case of difference of opinion among members of the Commission, the **opinion of the majority prevails**.

Special powers of the Delimitation Commission

- The orders of the Delimitation Commission have the force of law and **cannot be called in question before any court** as it would hold up an election indefinitely.
- The copies of its orders are laid before the House of the People and the State Legislative Assembly concerned, but **no modifications are permissible therein by them**.

INTERVIEW

How often has delimitation been done in the past?

- In India, Delimitation Commissions have been **constituted 4 times** – 1952, 1963, 1973 and 2002 under the Acts of 1952, 1962, 1972 and 2002.
- There was **no delimitation after the 1981 and 1991 Censuses** because the union government had suspended delimitation in 1976 until after the 2001 census so that states' family planning programs would not affect their political representation in the Lok Sabha.
- This freeze on the number of seats in Lok Sabha and Assemblies was **postponed until 2026** by another amendment.
- So, the last delimitation exercise was based on the 2001 Census and **only readjusted boundaries of existing Lok Sabha and Assembly seats and reworked the number of reserved seats** (without changing the number of seats in Lok Sabha and Assemblies).

2. The objective of the Astana Declaration is

- A. Gradually reduce the consumption and production of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs).
- B. Phasing out the production of numerous substances that are responsible for ozone depletion.
- C. Strengthening primary health care systems as an essential step toward achieving universal health coverage.
- D. Protection of privacy on global networks.

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Answer: C

Explanation:

- In Astana on October 27, 2018, the Global Conference on Primary Health Care organized by the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF welcomed a declaration to strengthen primary health care in pursuit of health and well-being, and pursue universal health coverage—access for all to high-quality health care, without undue financial burden.
- Countries around the world agreed to the Declaration of Astana, vowing to strengthen their primary health care systems as an essential step toward achieving universal health coverage.
- The Declaration of Astana reaffirms the historic **1978 Declaration of Alma-Ata**, the first time world leaders committed to primary health care.

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/reversing-health-sector-neglect-with-a-reform-agenda/article32432569.ece>

3. Consider the following statements about cess and surcharge.

1. Cess and surcharge are earmarked for a specific purpose.
2. The Union government does not have to share cesses and surcharges with the states.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: B

Explanation:

- A cess is a tax that is levied by the government to raise funds for a specific purpose. Collections from the Education Cess and Secondary and Higher Education Cess, for instance, are supposed to be used for funding primary and higher and secondary education respectively.
- Surcharge is an additional charge or tax. For example: A surcharge of 10% on a tax rate of 30% effectively raises the combined tax burden to 33%.
- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** The main difference between surcharge and cess is that surcharge can be spent like any other taxes, the cess should be spent only for a specific purpose for which it is created.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** The Union government does not have to share cesses and surcharges with the states as they are not part of the divisible pool that needs to be shared with states.

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<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/gst-council-urged-to-hike-compensation-cess-on-tobacco-products/article32430594.ece>

4. The vivad se vishwas scheme, sometimes seen in the news, is related to

- A. Initiative to create an ecosystem that fosters innovation and technology development for Defence and Aerospace.
- B. Providing basic civic amenities to improve the quality of life for all especially the poor and the disadvantaged.
- C. Bringing together urban planning, economic growth and heritage conservation in an inclusive manner.
- D. Settling tax disputes between individuals and the income tax department.

Answer: D

Explanation:

- The vivad se vishwas scheme is a direct tax scheme announced in Budget 2020, for settling tax disputes between individuals and the income tax department.
- Earlier, the scheme offered complete waiver on interest and penalty to the taxpayers with a full and final settlement of the dispute if the scheme was availed by March 31, 2020.
- An individual opting for settlement after March 31, 2020 was required to pay an additional 10 per cent penalty on the disputed tax amount. However, now till December 31, 2020, there is no need to pay any penalty.

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/the-challenge-of-catching-elusive-taxpayers/article32431928.ece>

5. Consider the following statements about the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

- 1. IAEA reports annually to the UN General Assembly.
- 2. India is one of the members of IAEA.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: C

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Explanation:

- The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is the world's central intergovernmental forum for scientific and technical co-operation in the nuclear field.
- It works for the safe, secure and peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology, contributing to international peace and security and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.
- The IAEA is an autonomous international organization within the United Nations system. It partners with more than a dozen UN organizations, thereby helping extend the reach of its services.
- **Statement 1 is correct:** IAEA reports annually to the UN General Assembly.
- Created in 1957, the IAEA Secretariat is headquartered in Vienna, Austria.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** Total Membership: 171 (including India).

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=United-Nations-atomic-watchdog-agency-head-visits-Iran-amid-US-sanctions-push&id=398131>

