

The Hindu EDITORIAL ANALYSIS

4th April 2025

**PREPARE FOR BANK (PO/ CLERK), SSC, UPSC,
State PSC, CAT, CTET, RAILWAY EXAMS, CDS,
TET, NDA/AIRFORCE, NET and all Govt.
Exams**

1. Sparse (विरल)

- **Meaning:** Thinly dispersed or scattered.
- **Synonyms:** Scanty, meager, limited
- **Antonyms:** Dense, abundant, plentiful
- **Example:** The remote village had sparse cellular network coverage, making communication difficult.

2. Flashpoint (संकट बिंदु)

- Meaning: A situation or place where violence or conflict is likely to occur.**
- Synonyms: Crisis point, hotspot, critical juncture**
- Antonyms: Stability, harmony, peace**
- Example: The border region has become a flashpoint for military tensions between the two nations.**

3. Contentious (विवादास्पद)

- **Meaning:** Causing or likely to cause an argument.
- **Synonyms:** Controversial, debatable, disputed
- **Antonyms:** Uncontroversial, agreeable, peaceful
- **Example:** The taxation policy has been a contentious issue in the political sphere.

4. Panacea (सर्वरोगहर औषधि)

- **Meaning: A solution for all difficulties or diseases.**
- **Synonyms: Cure-all, remedy, universal solution**
- **Example: While technology can improve education, it is not a panacea for all learning challenges.**

5. Scrutiny (गहन जांच/परिक्षण)

- **Meaning:** Critical observation or examination.
- **Synonyms:** Inspection, analysis, investigation
- **Antonyms:** Neglect, ignorance, inattention
- **Example:** The government's new policies have come under intense scrutiny from opposition leaders.

6. Parochial (संकीर्ण/क्षेत्रीय)

- **Meaning:** Having a narrow or limited perspective, especially focused on a small area or community.
- **Synonyms:** Narrow-minded, provincial, insular
- **Antonyms:** Open-minded, cosmopolitan, broad-minded
- **Example:** The discussion on language policies should not be limited to parochial interests but should consider national unity.

7. Reconcile (समझौता करना)

- **Meaning:** To restore friendly relations; to settle a disagreement.
- **Synonyms:** Settle, resolve, harmonize
- **Antonyms:** Disagree, separate, alienate
- **Example:** The leaders worked hard to reconcile their differences for the sake of the community.

8. Ambiguous (अस्पष्ट)

- **Meaning:** Open to more than one interpretation; not having one obvious meaning.
- **Synonyms:** Unclear, vague, equivocal
- **Antonyms:** Clear, definite, explicit
- **Example:** The ambiguous statement left everyone confused about his intentions.

9. Abysmal (बहुत खराब)

- **Meaning:** Extremely bad or appalling.
- **Synonyms:** Terrible, dreadful, appalling.
- **Antonyms:** Excellent, commendable, admirable.
- **Example:** The abysmal state of primary healthcare in urban areas is concerning.

10. Inextricably (अविच्छेद्य रूप से)

- **Meaning:** In a way that is impossible to separate.
- **Synonyms:** Inseparably, inevitably, indistinguishably
- **Antonyms:** Loosely, separably, disconnectably
- **Example:** The fate of the environment is inextricably linked to human actions.

VOCABULARY

One-word substitute:

1. Sociable; enjoying the company of others:

Gregarious

2. Diligent and careful; showing dedication and perseverance:

Sedulous

3. To shine or burn with a wavering or unsteady light:

Flicker

4. The act of being freed from restrictions or control:

Emancipation

VOCABULARY

Phrasal Verbs:

1. Step up to

Meaning: To take on a choice or responsibility when called upon.

2. Sort through

Meaning: To go through a collection and choose items selectively.

3. Come down to

Meaning: To make a decision based on the most important factors.

4. Stick to

Meaning: To remain with a particular choice or decision.

VOCABULARY

Idioms & Phrases

1. On the same wavelength

Meaning: to have a mutual understanding or shared views with someone

2. Break the internet

Meaning: to cause a sensation or go viral online, drawing massive attention

3. Bend over backward

Meaning: to make a great effort to help or accommodate someone

VOCABULARY

4. Bring to the table

Meaning: to contribute something of value, especially in a collaborative effort

5. Off the hook

Meaning: to be relieved from a difficult situation or responsibility

Article for Reading

**Data and federalism:
On the NITI NCAER
States Economic
Forum portal**

This week, NITI Aayog, in partnership with the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), launched the NITI NCAER States Economic Forum — a portal aggregating data and analysis on State finances. It presents State-wise reports covering macroeconomic indicators including tax and non-tax revenues, as well as human development statistics such as school dropout rates, literacy levels, employment, and historical trends in the devolution of central funds. At a time when Centre-State relations are under renewed scrutiny, particularly in the southern States, where fiscal federalism has been a long-standing flashpoint, this portal is a timely and welcome move. The data is not new, drawn as it is from established sources such as the 2011 Census, the Periodic Labour Force Survey, and the Reserve Bank of India's State Finances Report.

However, its comparative presentation across States brings clarity to the diverse fiscal realities of India, offering a structured lens through which to assess disparities and development. Concerns persist about the quality of economic data in India, and this portal is not immune to these, relying as it does on existing sources. Yet, by organising the data in a user-friendly and comparative format, it can help anchor contentious debates — such as those around revenue-sharing and parliamentary delimitation — in facts rather than sentiment. While these issues are serious, they are part of a much larger set of challenges tied to fiscal relations and political power-sharing between the Union and the States. The effective use of such data depends on ongoing engagement by States, especially through institutions such as the Sixteenth Finance Commission. For India's federal structure to work equitably, regional data must be translated into policies that ensure fair representation, resource allocation, and administrative responsibility.

Unfortunately, discussions on federalism often get reduced to narrow and polarised frames such as debates around the three-language policy or calls to defer delimitation. Over-centralisation can breed discontent, while regional resistance often risks turning parochial. Navigating this balance requires cooperation rooted in evidence and mutual recognition of diverse State realities. Leaders in both New Delhi and the State capitals must engage in a spirit of transparency and trust. The new data platform is not a panacea but offers a credible starting point — a tool for fostering informed, pragmatic conversations around governance, development, and the future of Indian federalism.

Summary

The passage discusses the launch of the NITI NCAER States Economic Forum, a new portal created by NITI Aayog and the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER). This platform compiles and presents comparative data on State-level finances and development indicators, such as revenue, education, employment, and fund devolution. While the data itself is not new, the comparative and structured presentation is valuable in clarifying India's diverse fiscal realities. The initiative comes at a time when Centre-State relations, particularly in southern India, are under scrutiny. The portal aims to ground debates on fiscal federalism, revenue-sharing, and delimitation in facts rather than emotion. However, its usefulness depends on active engagement from States and institutions like the Finance Commission. The article argues that India's federal structure requires equitable resource distribution, representation, and cooperative policymaking. While the platform isn't a complete solution, it is a constructive step toward more informed and balanced discussions on governance and federalism.

Tone:

Analytical – The author examines the role and potential impact of the new data platform.

Constructive – The piece emphasizes the positive potential of the portal in aiding governance debates.

Cautiously optimistic – While acknowledging the limitations of existing data and challenges in federal relations, it appreciates the move as a good starting point.

Advisory – Urges political leaders to engage in cooperative and evidence-based dialogue.

Reading Comprehension

Based on the above passage, answer the following questions:

Question 1:

Which of the following is an underlying challenge that may impact the effectiveness of the NITI NCAER portal?

- A) The absence of regional economic data in the portal.**
- B) The lack of transparency in how the portal presents its findings.**
- C) The forum's dependence on pre-existing economic data sources that may have accuracy issues.**
- D) The reluctance of the Union government to share financial data with the public.**
- E) None of the above**

Question 2:

Which of the following best describes the passage's stance on over-centralization?

- A) It is necessary to ensure the economic stability of all States.**
- B) It can increase regional discontent and weaken Centre-State relations.**
- C) It ensures that all States follow uniform financial policies.**
- D) It is not relevant in the current federal structure of India.**
- E) None of the above**

Question 3:

What is the primary purpose of the NITI NCAER States Economic Forum, as highlighted in the passage?

- A) To introduce new economic policies aimed at fiscal restructuring.**
- B) To ensure the southern States receive more financial support from the Centre.**
- C) To provide State-wise comparative data for understanding fiscal and human development indicators.**
- D) To replace the Sixteenth Finance Commission as the key decision-making body on fiscal federalism.**
- E) None of the above**

Article for Skimming

**The other space race
— the geopolitics of
satellite net**

India still has regions where fiber optic cables have never reached and cellular towers remain sparse. SpaceX's recent partnerships with Airtel and Jio to expand Starlink services across India could be looked at as a fundamental shift in the conceptions of connectivity, national sovereignty, and economic power in the digital age. It is not a zero-sum game for both sides. There are economic benefits for all. For Airtel and Jio, Starlink allows them to provide high-speed Internet to India's most remote regions without the infrastructure costs of terrestrial networks. For SpaceX, the deal opens up a huge market. It also takes care of India's complex regulatory landscape by channelling Starlink's technology through domestic players. Yet, these arrangements are not just business strategy. There is a lot of geopolitics involved too. Communications infrastructure has always been intertwined with national security and sovereignty, a reality made even more pronounced when that infrastructure orbits 550 kilometres above earth.

With the intertwining of business and political interests globally, it cannot be denied that there are fears that the United States-based Starlink network gives the U.S. an advantage in the competition for digital influence, particularly as China develops its rival GuoWang constellation. India's options were to wait for homegrown alternatives or partnering with other countries (potentially even China). But choosing Starlink could indicate a geopolitical realignment in the Indo-Pacific region. India chose a (seemingly) democratic alliance rather than an authoritarian one. The monopolistic concerns surrounding Starlink cannot be dismissed. With around 7,000 satellites already in orbit, SpaceX enjoys first-mover advantages in the low earth orbit internet market. OneWeb, its closest competitor, operates fewer than 650 satellites, while Amazon's Project Kuiper remains very small. This is tending towards a monopolistic market structure. This also has its attendant economic problems of competition, pricing, and dependency.

It runs the risk too of having private companies wield nation-state levels of influence over critical infrastructure, as was evident when SpaceX briefly cut Ukraine's Starlink access during critical military operations in 2022. Let us analyse these aspects of satellite Internet through a framework that captures both economic value and geopolitical control. The high economic value, high geopolitical control scenario can be called the "Digital Sovereignty" scenario, where nations have both profitable telecommunications and strategic independence. China's GuoWang constellation aims for this position, designing its system explicitly as a state-controlled asset. In the high economic value but low geopolitical control equation is the category of "Market Dominance", where Starlink currently operates, offering tremendous commercial potential but placing control largely outside the host nation's hands. This can be mitigated to some extent by routing it via domestic telecommunications companies, though this could be termed as just a face-saver, as effective control still sits with Starlink.

Question 4:

What geopolitical concern does the passage highlight about the dominance of Starlink?

- A) Starlink's military applications could pose a security risk to non-U.S. nations.**
- B) The United States could gain disproportionate control over digital communications worldwide.**
- C) The European Union has raised concerns about U.S. technology dominance in global markets.**
- D) Starlink's rapid expansion could violate international space regulations on satellite deployment.**
- E) None of the above**

Question 5:

What does the passage imply about Amazon's Project Kuiper in comparison to Starlink?

- A) Project Kuiper has already surpassed Starlink in technological capability.**
- B) Project Kuiper is focused on defense applications, whereas Starlink is commercial.**
- C) Project Kuiper is a government-funded initiative, unlike Starlink.**
- D) Project Kuiper is still in its early stages and has limited market presence.**
- E) None of the above**

Today's Descriptive Question

Precis Writing:

Original Text:

Nuclear fusion energy is considered one of the most promising and revolutionary energy sources of the future. It is the process by which two light atomic nuclei fuse together to form a heavier nucleus, releasing an immense amount of energy in the process. This is the same reaction that powers the sun and other stars, making it a potential source of clean, virtually limitless energy for the Earth. Unlike nuclear fission, which splits atoms and produces radioactive waste, fusion produces minimal long-lived radioactive waste and poses no risk of a meltdown. The primary fuels for fusion— isotopes of hydrogen like deuterium and tritium—are abundant in nature, with deuterium available in seawater and tritium producible from lithium. For decades, scientists have been attempting to replicate fusion on Earth in a controlled and sustained manner. However, achieving the extremely high temperatures and pressures necessary to initiate and maintain fusion has proven challenging.

Experimental reactors like ITER (International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor) in France and other national projects aim to demonstrate that net energy gain—producing more energy than is consumed—can be achieved through fusion. In December 2022, a major milestone was reached when scientists in the United States achieved net energy gain in a fusion experiment using lasers at the National Ignition Facility. Although this was a small-scale experiment, it marked significant progress in the quest for commercial fusion power. Nuclear fusion holds the potential to solve the world's energy problems by providing a sustainable, safe, and environmentally friendly source of energy. However, large-scale commercial application is still likely a few decades away, as technical, financial, and engineering challenges remain. Continued investment in research and international collaboration is essential to making nuclear fusion a practical reality in the coming years.

Precis:

Nuclear fusion energy, the process powering the sun, offers a clean, abundant, and safe energy alternative. Unlike nuclear fission, fusion produces minimal waste and no meltdown risk. While the technology promises sustainable power, it requires extremely high temperatures and pressures, making it technically challenging. Projects like ITER and recent breakthroughs in the U.S. mark significant progress. Though commercial use remains years away, fusion could revolutionize global energy with continued research and collaboration.

- **Your colleague is applying for a job in another department. Write an email to the hiring manager recommending them.**

To:@gmail.com

Subject: Strong Recommendation for [Colleague's Full Name]

Dear [Hiring Manager's Name],

I hope this message finds you well.

I am writing to highly recommend my colleague, [Colleague's Full Name], for the [Job Title] position in your department. I have had the pleasure of working closely with [him/her/them] for the past [duration], and I can confidently say that [he/she/they] would be a tremendous asset to your team.

[Colleague's Name] consistently demonstrates exceptional [mention key skills relevant to the job – e.g., analytical thinking, communication, teamwork], and approaches every project with a high level of

professionalism and dedication. [He/She/They] have played a key role in [mention a specific achievement or responsibility], which has significantly contributed to our team's success.

What sets [Colleague's Name] apart is [his/her/their] proactive attitude and eagerness to learn and grow. I believe [his/her/their] skills and work ethic make [him/her/them] an ideal candidate for the role.

Please feel free to reach out if you'd like to discuss [his/her/their] qualifications further.

**Best regards,
[Your Full Name]
[Your Job Title]
[Your Department]**

Match the column

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1. On the same wavelength | A. to make a great effort to help someone |
| 2. Break the internet | B. to contribute something of value |
| 3. Bend over backward | C. to have a mutual understanding |
| 4. Bring to the table | D. to be relieved from a difficult situation |
| 5. Off the hook | E. to cause a sensation or go viral online |

Answer:

1-c

2-e

3-a

4-b

5-d

Vocabulary

1. Sparse:
2. Flashpoint:
3. Contentious:
4. Panacea:
5. Scrutiny:
6. Parochial:
7. Reconcile:
8. Ambiguous:
9. Abysmal:
10. Inextricably:

Rc ans

1.

Ans: C

Explanation:

The passage notes that while the portal is useful, concerns persist about the quality of economic data in India, since the portal relies on established sources such as the Census, RBI, and the Labour Force Survey (“Concerns persist about the quality of economic data in India, and this portal is not immune to these, relying as it does on existing sources.”).

Why the other options are incorrect?

A) Absence of regional economic data – The portal does include regional economic data (“It presents State-wise reports covering macroeconomic indicators...”).

B) Lack of transparency – The passage does not suggest that the portal lacks transparency; in fact, it highlights that the portal organizes data clearly (“However, its comparative presentation across States brings clarity to the diverse fiscal realities of India.”).

D) Reluctance of the Union government – The passage does not indicate that the Centre is unwilling to share financial data.

2.

Ans: B

Explanation:

The passage warns that excessive central control can lead to discontent among States (“Over-centralisation can breed discontent, while regional resistance often risks turning parochial.”).

Why the other options are incorrect?

- A) Necessary for stability – The passage does not support over-centralization as a requirement for stability.
- C) Ensures uniform policies – The passage argues against one-size-fits-all policies.
- D) Not relevant – The passage discusses federalism in detail, proving its relevance.

3.

Ans: C

Explanation:

The passage states that the forum aggregates data and analysis on State finances, presenting macroeconomic indicators, tax revenues, literacy levels, and historical financial trends. It is meant to bring clarity to fiscal disparities and support data-driven discussions on federalism (Reference: “It presents State-wise reports covering macroeconomic indicators including tax and non-tax revenues, as well as human development statistics...”).

Why the other options are incorrect?

A) Introducing new economic policies – The passage does not mention that the forum is responsible for crafting policies; rather, it presents data to aid decision-making.

B) Ensuring southern States receive more financial support – While the passage mentions that southern States have concerns about fiscal federalism, it does not claim that the portal is designed to favor them.

D) Replacing the Sixteenth Finance Commission – The passage explicitly states that the forum complements institutions like the Sixteenth Finance Commission, not replaces them (“The effective use of such data depends on ongoing engagement by States, especially through institutions such as the Sixteenth Finance Commission.”).

4.

Ans: B

Explanation:

The passage states: “It cannot be denied that there are fears that the United States-based Starlink network gives the U.S. an advantage in the competition for digital influence.” This directly supports Option B.

Why the other options are incorrect?

Option A is incorrect because while the passage mentions Starlink’s impact on military operations in Ukraine, it does not claim military applications are a primary risk for India.

Option C is incorrect because the European Union is not mentioned in the passage.

Option D is incorrect because the passage does not discuss violations of space regulations.

5.

Ans: D

Explanation:

The passage states: "OneWeb, its closest competitor, operates fewer than 650 satellites, while Amazon's Project Kuiper remains very small." This directly supports Option B.

Why the other options are incorrect?

Option A is incorrect because the passage does not suggest that Project Kuiper has surpassed Starlink technologically.

Option B is incorrect because there is no mention of Project Kuiper being defense-focused.

Option C is incorrect because Project Kuiper is not described as a government-funded initiative.

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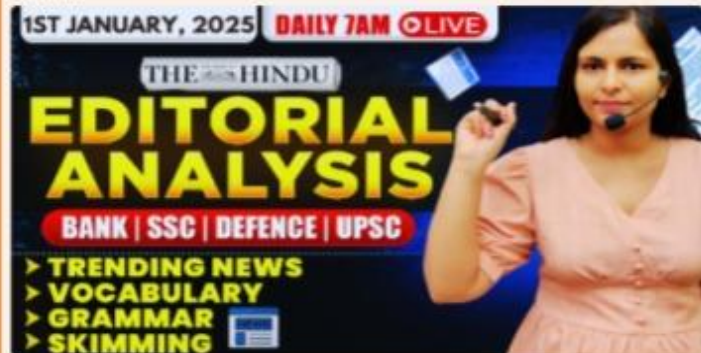
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