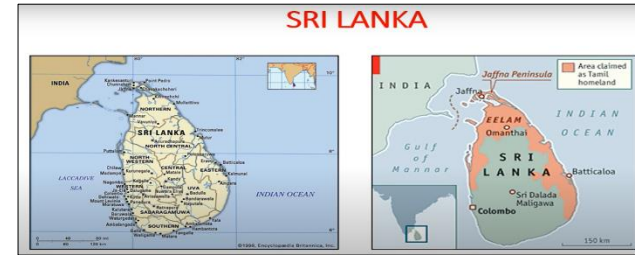


The 13th Amendment of Srilankan Constitution



❖ Context

- At the 51st session of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva, India voiced concern over the “lack of measurable progress” by Sri Lanka on full implementation of the 13th Amendment.

❖ About the Amendment

- It is an outcome of the Indo-Lanka Accord of July 1987, signed by the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and President J.R. Jayawardene.
- It was an attempt to resolve Sri Lanka’s ethnic conflict that had aggravated into a full-fledged civil war, between the armed forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).
- Sri Lanka is a unitary country with all powers concentrated in the centre. The objective of the India-Sri Lanka Peace Accord was to find a way to devolve political powers to the then Northern and Eastern provinces that comprised Tamil-dominated areas of the country.
- The 13th Amendment led to the creation of ‘Provincial Councils’. Under this, the Sri Lankan government had committed to a power-sharing arrangement to enable all nine provinces in the country, including Sinhala majority areas, the right to self-govern.
- Once implemented fully, the provincial councils will have the right to self-govern over issues such as education, health, agriculture, housing, land & police.
- It also states that Tamil will be one of Sri Lanka’s official languages.

❖ Issues with the Amendment

- It was opposed vociferously by both Sinhala nationalist parties and the LTTE. The former thought it was too much power to share, while the Tigers deemed it too little.
- A large section of the Sinhala polity saw the Accord and the consequent legislation as an imprint of Indian intervention.
- Subjects such as education, health, agriculture, housing, land and police are devolved to the provincial administrations, but because of restrictions on financial powers and overriding powers given to the President, the provincial administrations have not made much headway.
- India has been urging Sri Lanka to implement and enforce the amendment ever since the country’s war with Tamil separatists ended in 2009.

What is the significance of the 13th amendment?

- **It solves the ethnic clashes:** The autonomy within the constitutional framework of Sri Lanka was expected to meet the demands of the Tamilian minority without disturbing the unity of the island nation.
- **Decentralization of political power:** The provincial councils were expected to lead to a higher grassroots presence and participation in Sri Lankan democracy.
- **Homogeneous development:** The northern and eastern regions of Sri Lanka which had to bear the wrath of the civil war lag in socio economic development.

National Health Account Estimates



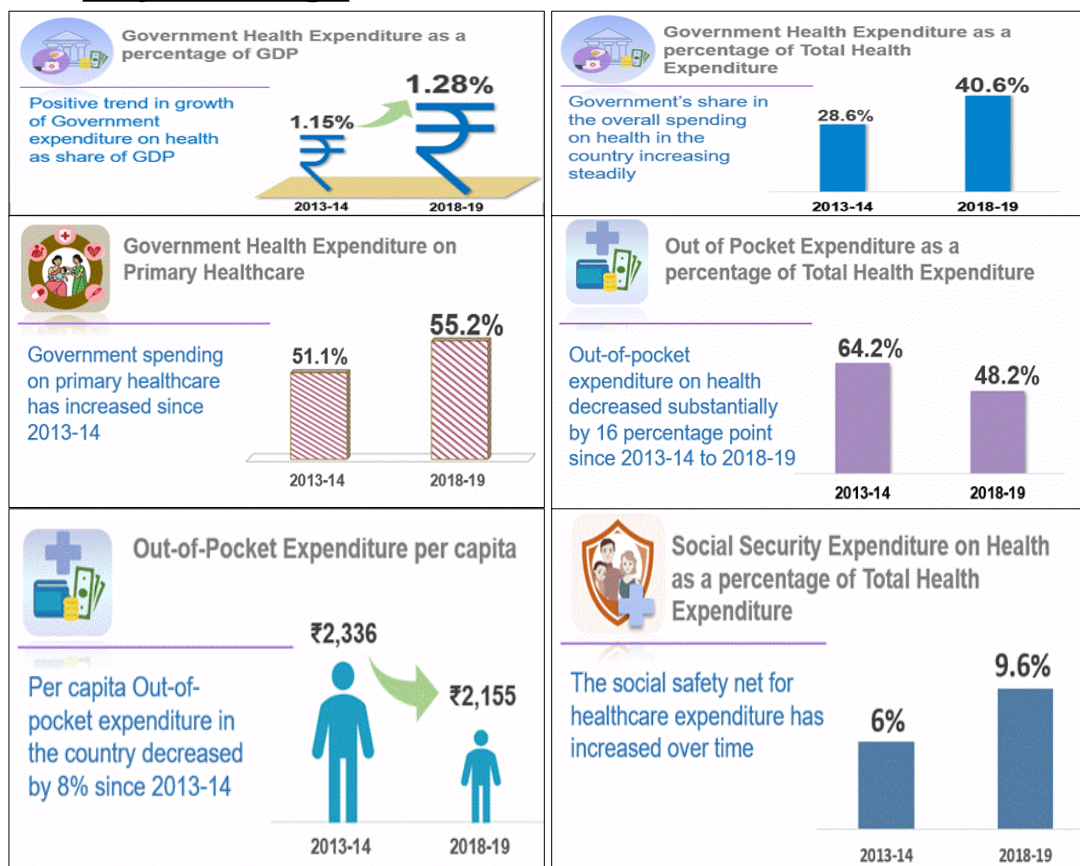
❖ Context

- The National Health Accounts (NHA) Estimates for India for 2018-19 were released.

❖ About the NHA

- The 2018-19 report is the sixth consecutive NHA estimates report prepared by NHSRC.
- National Health Systems Resource Centre (NHSRC) has been set up under the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) of Government of India to serve as an apex body for technical assistance.
- It was designated as National Health Accounts Technical Secretariat (NHATS) in 2014 by the Union Health Ministry.
- The accounting framework used is based on the internationally accepted standard of System of Health Accounts, 2011, developed by the World Health Organisation (WHO).
- The report also provides a comparison of the per-capita out-of-pocket expenditure (OOPE) of India with other countries, using the Global Health Expenditure Database provided by WHO.
- In the group of 189 countries, India ranks 66th for per capita OOPE.

❖ Key Findings



Face to Face Centres

Unrecognized Political Party

❖ Context

- The Election Commission recently declared 253 **Registered Unrecognized Political Parties (RUPPs)** as inactive and barred them from availing benefits of the Symbol Order, 1968.



❖ Key Highlights

- As per statutory requirements under the Representation of the People Act, every political party has to communicate any change in its name, head office, office bearers, address, PAN to the Commission without delay.
- This decision against 253 non-compliant RUPPs has been taken based on reports received from Chief Electoral Officers of seven states Bihar, Delhi, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh.

❖ Recognised Party

- The Commission offers some special facilities to the large and established parties.
 - A party recognised by the ECI enjoys certain privileges such as a reserved party symbol,
 - free broadcast time on state-run television and radio,
 - consultation in the setting of election dates, etc.
- As per latest publication dated 23 September 2021 from Election Commission of India, the total number of parties registered was 2858, with 8 national parties, 54 state parties and 2796 unrecognised parties.

Saving the Blue Whales From Ship Strikes

❖ Context

- The Mediterranean Shipping Company is rerouting its course to avoid collision with the endangered mammal.



❖ Key Highlights

- For years, the massive blue whales have been on a deadly collision course with large ships in one of the busiest shipping lanes off the Sri Lankan coast in the Northern Indian Ocean.
- It has encouraged other shipping lines to take a more southerly route south of the **official Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS)** shipping lane.
- The massive blue whales are non-migratory and resident in these waters year-round, where nearly 200 ships transit through every day and threaten their survival.

❖ About Blue Whale

- Blue whales are the largest animals ever to live on our planet.
 - They are the largest animal ever recorded to live on earth
 - They are 80 to 100 feet long and 441,000 pounds
 - Their tongue weighs as much as an elephant
 - They are the loudest animals on the planet
- They feed almost exclusively on krill, straining huge volumes of ocean water through their baleen plates (which hang from the roof of the mouth and work like a sieve).
- Blue whales are found in all oceans except the **Arctic Ocean**.
- There are **5** currently recognized subspecies of blue whales.
- **IUCN Status** : Endangered.

National List Of Essential Medicines

❖ Context

- Twenty-six drugs, have been deleted from the revised **National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM) 2022** released recently.



❖ Key Highlights

- 384 drugs find place in the NLEM, 2022 with the addition of 34 drugs, while 26 from the previous list have been dropped.
- The medicines have been categorised into **27 therapeutic categories**.
- The National List of Essential Medicines was first compiled in **1996** and it was revised thrice earlier in 2003, 2011, and 2015.
- ❖ **Criteria for Drug Removal from the List**
 - The NLEM doesn't include medicines banned in India and those having reports of concerns on the safety profile.
 - Drugs also go off the list if medicine with better efficacy or favourable safety profile and better cost-effectiveness become available.

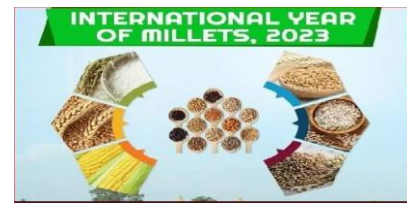
- Also if the disease burden for which a medicine is indicated is no longer a national health concern, it is deleted from the NLEM
- In case of antimicrobials, if the resistance pattern has rendered them ineffective, the drugs are taken off the list.
- ❖ **Significance**
 - The primary purpose of the NLEM is to promote rational use of medicines considering the three important aspects - **cost, safety and efficacy**.
 - It also helps in optimum utilisation of healthcare resources and budget;
 - drug procurement policies,
 - health insurance;
 - improving prescribing habits;
 - medical education & drafting pharmaceutical policies,".

DRUGS LIST GETS A REJIG

- Four major anti-cancer drugs – bendamustine hydrochloride (leukemia), irinotecan HCl trihydrate (pancreatic cancer), lenalidomide (multiple myeloma), and leuprolide acetate (prostate and uterine cancer) – added to NLEM 2022
- Insulin glargine and anti-diabetic drug teneligliptin also included
- Patented drugs dolutegravir (anti-HIV), daclatasvir (Hepatitis C), and bedaquiline and delamanid (anti-TB) also part of the list
- Common gastrointestinal drug ranitidine removed
- Disinfectants like bleaching powder also taken off the list

Face to Face Centres

The International Year of Millets 2023

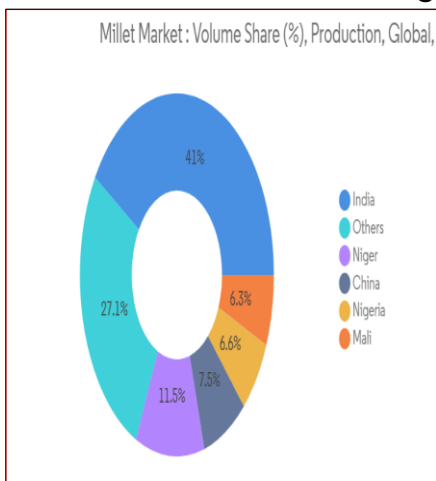


❖ Context

- Agriculture Ministry has launched several initiatives as run-up to the International Year of Millets 2023 to create awareness about the ancient and forgotten golden grains.

❖ Various Initiatives

- A contest for designing a comic story, with the theme 'India's Wealth, Millets for Health' had been launched on 5th of September 2022.
- It is intended to showcase the health benefits of millets to raise awareness among the masses.



- **The Millet Startup Innovation Challenge:** This initiative encourages young minds to offer technological & business solutions to the existing problems in the millets ecosystem.
- A competition for an audio song and documentary film on the importance of millets, will also be launched.

- To create domestic & global demand & to provide nutritional food to the people, Government of India spearheaded the United Nations General Assembly, UNGA resolution for declaring 2023 as International Year of Millets.

❖ About Millets

- **Millets** are a highly varied group of small-seeded grasses, widely grown around the world as cereal crops or grains for fodder and human food.



- Most species generally referred to as millets belong to the tribe Paniceae, but some millets also belong to various other taxa.
- Millets are important crops in the semiarid tropics of Asia and Africa (especially in India, Mali, Nigeria, and Niger), with 97% of millet production in developing countries.

- This crop is favored due to its productivity and short growing season under dry, high-temperature conditions.
- The most widely grown millets are **sorghum & pearl millets**, which are important crops in India and parts of Africa.

India to Host G-20 Leaders

❖ Context

- The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) announced recently India will host the G-20 leaders' summit in New Delhi on September 9 and 10 in 2023 under its Presidency,



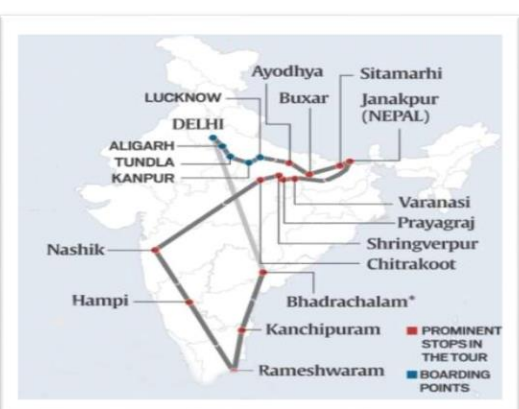
❖ Key Highlights

- India will assume the Presidency of the G20 for one year from December 1, 2022, to November 30, 2023.
- The G20, or Group of Twenty, is an intergovernmental forum of the world's major developed and developing economies.
- It comprises 19 countries - Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the UK, and the US and the European Union (EU).

- Collectively, the G20 accounts for **85% of global GDP, 75% of international trade** and two-thirds of the world population, making it the premier forum for international economic cooperation.
- India is currently part of the G20 Troika (current, previous and incoming G20 Presidencies) comprising Indonesia, Italy and India.
- **Note:** As a Troika-member, India works closely with Indonesia and Italy to ensure consistency and continuity of the G20's agenda.

News in Between the Lines

Ramayana Circuit



❖ Context

- India and Nepal recently agreed to "expeditiously progress" on the Ramayana Circuit.

❖ Ramayana Circuit

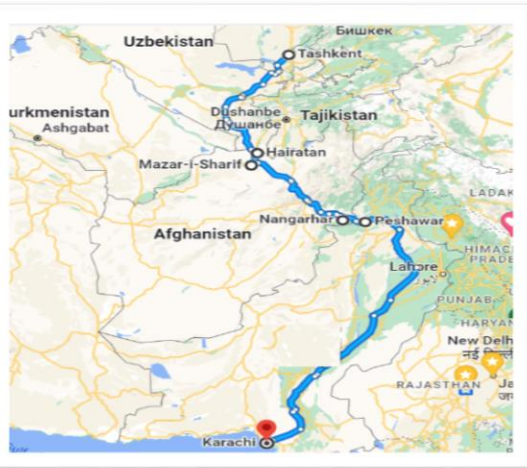
- It includes major pilgrimage sites from India and Nepal that are related to the Ramayana, such as Ayodhya where a temple is being built for Lord Ram as well as Janakpur (in Nepal) which is believed to be the birthplace of Sita, the consort of Ram.
- Ramayana Circuit is one of the fifteen thematic circuits identified for development under the Swadesh Darshan scheme of Ministry of Tourism.



Face to Face Centres



Trans Afghan Railway Project



❖ Context

- The Uzbekistan President, ahead of the **SCO summit**, has stated that the construction of the **trans-Afghan corridor** can become a symbol of mutually beneficial inter-regional cooperation.

❖ Key Highlights

- The Trans-Afghan Railway project, **strongly pushed by Uzbekistan**, is a bid to **connect** the country with major potential export markets, including **China** and the **EU**, through Pakistan seaports.
- It was first proposed in **December 2018** by Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan is **one of the only two doubly landlocked countries** in the world (the other being Liechtenstein in Europe).
- It aims at extending the Afghan rail network from **Mazar-e-Sharif to Kabul** and then to **Nangarhar** province, where the railway would cross the Torkham border and run into Pakistan via **Peshawar**.
- Goods will then be transported to Pakistan seaports of **Karachi, Qasim & Gwadar**, through the Pakistan rail system.
- Uzbekistan had already built a 75-kilometre rail link connecting **Hairatan** on the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan border to the city of **Mazar-e-Sharif** in northern Afghanistan back in **2011**.

Arash-2

❖ Context

- Iran has developed an **advanced long-range suicide drone**.

❖ Key Highlights

- Improved version of the **Arash-1 drone**, according to Iran, it has been specifically developed to attack Israeli cities, Tel Aviv & Haifa.



State Support Mission



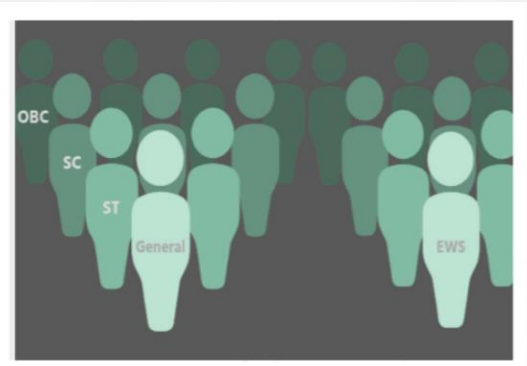
❖ Context

- The **NITI Aayog** will handhold each state to set up similar bodies, replacing their planning boards for faster and inclusive economic growth.

❖ Key Highlights

- In the Independence Day speech, the PM set an ambitious target of making India a developed nation by **2047**. Most state's planning departments are defunct who earlier used to work with the Planning Commission.
- The NITI Aayog has initiated the mission by holding a meeting of state planning secretaries to establish the **State Institution for Transformation (SIT)**.
- The move is in recognition of the fact that except for sectors like defence, railways and highways, the **national GDP growth is an aggregation of the state's rate of growth**. Initially, it is aimed for 8-10 states - Karnataka, UP, MP, Assam, Maharashtra, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat.

Three Questions Validity Test for EWS Quota



❖ Context

- The **five-judge constitution bench** of the Supreme Court is going to examine whether the **103rd Amendment** violates the basic structure of the Constitution.

❖ Key Highlights

- The bench will consider whether the **basic structure** is violated by :
 - Permitting the state to make special provisions, including reservation, based on economic criteria.
 - Permitting the state to make special provisions, in relation to admission to private unaided institutions.
 - Excluding the SEBCs (Socially and Educationally Backward Classes)/OBCs/SCs/STs from the scope of EWS reservation.
- The EWS reservation was granted based on the recommendation by the **Major General (retd) S R Sinho commission**.
- The commission recommended BPL families within the general category and all families, whose annual family income from all sources is below the taxable limit, should be identified as EBCs (economically backward classes).

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