

CURRENT AFFAIRS

July 22nd



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2023

1. Modi raises aspirations of Tamils with Ranil: The Hindu – Page 1,8

Why is it in news?	India expects Sri Lanka to implement the 13th Amendment and ensure a “life of dignity and respect” for its Tamil population, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said.
UPSC SYLLABUS RELEVANCE for prelims and Mains	Prelims: International Relations. Mains: General Studies II - India and its neighbourhood- relations.
Important concepts	13 th Amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution

Prelims PYQ Exercise-Find answer:

Q. Where is Bundala Biosphere Reserve which has been recently added to the UNESCO’s Man and Biosphere (MAB) network located? (2006)

- (a) Russia
- (b) India
- (c) Sri Lanka
- (d) Bangladesh

Today's prelims practice question:

Q. Consider the following statements about the 13th Amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution:

1. The Indo-Lanka Accord of July 1987 was signed by then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and President J.R. Jayawardene.

2. The 13th amendment was passed in the year 1998.

Which among the statements mentioned above is/are correct?

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

Correct answer: A

Explanation: The 13th Amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution is an outcome of the Indo-Lanka Accord of July 1987, signed by then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and President J.R. Jayawardene, in 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, which led the struggle for Tamils' self-determination and sought a separate state. It was passed in 1987.

Mains PYQ exercise:	India is an age-old friend of Sri Lanka.' Discuss India's role in the recent crisis in Sri Lanka in the light of the preceding statement. (2022)
Today's mains practice question:	What do you know about the 13 th amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution? What are the concerns regarding the 13 th amendment?

DETAILED EXPLANATION OF IMPORTANT CONCEPTS

13th Amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution:

- Sri Lanka's current Constitution, adopted in 1978, has had 21 amendments to date, but arguably, none as controversial as this.
- Passed in November 1987, months after Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Sri Lankan President J.R. Jayewardene signed the Indo-Lanka Accord, the 13th Amendment is the only legislative guarantee of a measure of power devolution to the island's provinces.
- It provided for setting up provincial governments across the country — there are nine provincial councils — and made Tamil, too, an official language, and English, a link language.
- It was, in some measure, an antidote to the 'Sinhala Only Act' of 1956, one of the most discriminatory laws passed targeting the island's Tamil minorities, after the Ceylon Citizenship Act of 1948 that rendered Sri Lanka's Malaiyaha Tamils of Indian origin stateless.
- It also sought to address the Tamils' right to self-determination which, by the 1980s, had become a raging political call.

- With the 1983 anti-Tamil pogrom laying bare violent Sinhala majoritarianism and racism, it was hard for the world and India not to appreciate a legitimate demand.
- However, for successive governments, devolving power to the provinces as per the 13th Amendment, including in the Tamil-majority north and east, was hardly on their ‘must do’ list.
- Despite public promises, leaders from the Sinhala-majority south failed to implement in letter and spirit what was already in the Constitution.
- Detractors construe the 13th Amendment as an “Indian imposition”, despite it being an outcome of a bilateral Accord signed by J. R. Jayewardene, one of the island’s most powerful Presidents.
- The provincial councils function, but nominally.
- The rule book gave provinces legislative power over agriculture, education, health, housing, local government, planning, road transport and social services.
- But an ambiguous concurrent list and overriding clauses in the Constitution allow the Centre to remain all-powerful.
- The executive President still wields enormous power and the provincial Governors, representing the country’s highest office, possess similar power at the regional level.
- The last three decades are rife with attempts by the Centre to take back power, Tamils point out.

2. Can’t ask govt. to recognise a language as official one: SC: The Hindu – Page 10

Why is it in news?	The Supreme Court said it cannot direct the Centre to include Rajasthani as an official language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.
UPSC SYLLABUS RELEVANCE for prelims and Mains	Prelims: Indian Polity and Governance.

	Mains: General Studies II - Indian Constitution- historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.
Important concepts	Eighth Schedule
<p align="center">Prelims PYQ Exercise-Find answer:</p> <p>Q. Under which one of the following Constitution Amendments Acts, four languages were added to the languages under the Eighth schedule of the Constitution of India, thereby raising their number to 222 (2001)</p> <p>(a) Constitution (Ninetieth Amendment) Act</p> <p>(b) Constitution (Ninety-first Amendment) Act</p> <p>(c) Constitution (Ninety-second Amendment) Act</p> <p>(d) Constitution (Ninety-third Amendment) Act</p>	
<p align="center">Today's prelims practice question:</p> <p>Q. Consider the following statements about the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sindhi language was added by the 71st Amendment Act of 1992. 2. Courts can issue the writ of Mandamus to include any language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. <p>Which among the statements mentioned above is/are correct?</p> <p>A. 1 only</p> <p>B. 2 only</p> <p>C. Both 1 and 2</p> <p>D. Neither 1 nor 2</p> <p>Correct answer: D</p> <p>Explanation: To include any language as an official language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution is a policy matter and not for the courts to give a mandamus. Sindhi language was added by the 21st Amendment Act of 1967. Konkani, Manipuri, and Nepali were included by the 71st Amendment Act of 1992.</p>	
<p align="center">DETAILED EXPLANATION OF IMPORTANT CONCEPTS</p>	

Eighth Schedule:

About the Eighth Schedule:

- The 8th Schedule of Indian Constitution is responsible for listing the authorized and official Indian languages of the Republic.
- The part of the constitution that deals with the official speeches in India are XVII, included in Articles 343 to 351.
- The Constitutional provisions related to the Eighth Schedule are:
- Article 344: Article 344(1) provides for the constitution of a Commission by the President on expiration of five years from the commencement of the Constitution.
- Article 351: It provides for the spread of the Hindi language to develop it so that it may serve as a medium of expression for all the elements of the composite culture of India.
- However, it can be noted that there is no fixed criteria for any language to be considered for inclusion in the Eighth Schedule.
- No specific benchmark is considered for incorporating any Indian language in the 8th Schedule of Indian Constitution.
- The Indian Government has committed to uplifting these fundamental Indian languages so that they evolve as an effective medium of communication for modern learning.
- The Eighth Schedule to the Constitution consists of the following 22 languages: Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, Bodo, Santhali, Maithili and Dogri.
- Of these languages, 14 were initially included in the Constitution.
- Sindhi language was added by the 21st Amendment Act of 1967.
- Konkani, Manipuri, and Nepali were included by the 71st Amendment Act of 1992.
- Bodo, Dogri, Maithili, and Santhali were added by the 92nd Amendment Act of 2003 which came into force in 2004.

Recent developments related to the Eighth Schedule:

- The Supreme Court recently said it cannot direct the Centre to include Rajasthani as an official language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.
- It is a policy matter and not for the courts to give a mandamus.
- The court referred to a 1997 reported decision of the Supreme Court in the Kanhaiya Lal Sethia case to note that “to include or not to include a particular language in the VIII Schedule is a policy matter of the Union”.

MODEL MAINS ANSWER FOR TODAY’S EXPECTED MAINS QUESTION

Q. What do you know about the 13th amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution? What are the concerns regarding the 13th amendment?

<p>Why this question</p>	<p>The question theme is reflected several times in UPSC (including prelims) and APPSC mains.</p> <p>UPSC PYQs</p> <p>India is an age-old friend of Sri Lanka.’ Discuss India’s role in the recent crisis in Sri Lanka in the light of the preceding statement. (2022)</p>				
<p><u>First step is to understand the demand of the question</u></p>	<p>Question has two parts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. About the 13th amendment 2. Concerns regarding the 13th amendment 				
<p>Introduction</p>	<p>The 13th Amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution is an outcome of the Indo-Lanka Accord of July 1987, signed by then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and President J.R. Jayawardene, in 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, which led the struggle for Tamils’ self-determination and sought a separate state. It was passed in 1987.</p>				
<p>Body</p>	<p>About the 13th amendment</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="424 1977 652 2038">Dimension</th><th data-bbox="652 1977 1318 2038">Content</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Dimension	Content		
Dimension	Content				

	About 13th Amendment	It was an attempt to resolve the ethnic conflict and civil war.	
		It provided for setting up provincial governments across the country — there are nine provincial councils — and made Tamil, too, an official language, and English, a link language.	
		It led to the creation of Provincial Councils, assured a power-sharing arrangement to enable all nine provinces in the country, including Sinhala majority areas, to self-govern.	
		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.	
		In particular, the provisions relating to police and land have never been implemented.	
	Concerns regarding the 13th amendment		
	Dimension	Content	
	Concerns with 13th Amendment	The opposition within Sri Lanka saw the Accord and the consequent legislation as an imprint of Indian intervention.	

		Sri Lanka is especially wary of sharing land and police powers, and resolutely controls the subjects.	
		The island’s southern leaders are reluctant to share power with the Tamil minorities, as well as their own people governing the provinces	
		For the Tamils, on the other hand, the 13th Amendment is too little. The LTTE rejected it. Among the current Tamil polity, almost all see it as inadequate.	
		The problem, though, is not just to do with the Amendment, but Sri Lanka’s unitary Constitution	
		Tamils have rejected it on the grounds that for as long as the structure of the State remains Unitary, no meaningful autonomy and self-government can be achieved.	
		The 13th Amendment carries considerable baggage from the country’s civil war years. It was opposed vociferously by both Sinhala nationalist parties and the LTTE.	
		It was widely perceived as an imposition by a neighbour wielding hegemonic influence.	
		The Tamil polity, especially its dominant nationalist strain, does not find the 13th Amendment sufficient in its ambit or substance. However, some find it as an important starting point, something to build upon.	
Conclusion:	The 13th Amendment is significant because till date it represents the only		

constitutional provision on the settlement of the long-pending Tamil question. In addition to assuring a measure of devolution, it is considered part of the few significant gains since the 1980s, in the face of growing Sinhala-Buddhist majoritarianism from the time Sri Lanka became independent in 1948. India has always supported both political and economic stability in Sri Lanka. So, India expects Sri Lanka to implement the 13th Amendment and ensure a “life of dignity and respect” for its Tamil population. India hopes that Sri Lanka will fulfil its commitment to implement the Thirteenth Amendment and to hold Provincial Council elections.