



Current Affairs of the Day

GS II

- 'Sri Lanka has prioritised ties with China'
- 'Childhood vaccinations must not be delayed'
- Delhi govt.'s responsibilities remain: Centre

GS III

- Indian pharma frets as China airline uncertainty hits supply
- China launches key module for its permanent space station



‘Sri Lanka has prioritised ties with China’

News: Sri Lanka has prioritised developing relations with China and “firmly supports” China’s position on issues concerning its core interests

Highlights:

1. The Sri Lankan President said his country “has been pursuing an independent foreign policy and will never bend to pressure from major powers outside the region as well as never forge an alliance with any country”, the Chinese news agency reported on Wednesday.
2. Sri Lanka and China vowed to enhance pragmatic cooperation in all sectors, “including the military”. Sri Lankan Defence officials and the visiting Chinese delegation signed a “Military Assistance Protocol”.
3. General Wei, in his talks with the Sri Lankan leadership, seems to have reiterated his message in Dhaka on Tuesday slamming “powers from outside the region” for forging military alliances in South Asia.
4. His apparent attack on the India-U.S.-Australia-Japan Quad grouping echoed reservations voiced by Sri Lanka earlier. Earlier, Sri Lanka had said, “We are observing the rise of Quad as an exclusive military alliance. If Quad is aiming at economic revival, there are no issues.”

‘Childhood vaccinations must not be delayed’

News: Childhood vaccinations are crucial to ensure the health and well-being of children, and must not be delayed or missed, said experts

Highlights:

1. Primary vaccinations (those given in the first nine months), should not be postponed if possible — the aim is to protect the baby from deadly diseases that can kill them in the first year of life. Though pandemic is affecting routine vaccinations of babies.
2. On the vaccination card, experts stressed its importance as a health record and said parents could even maintain a digital record in order to ensure that the information stayed secure.
3. The doctors also gave a strong message about misinformation around vaccines and said this needed to be combated with vaccine advocacy and education.
4. An adult having missed the polio vaccine as a child and could take the injectable polio vaccine.



Delhi govt.'s responsibilities remain: Centre

News: The Union Home Ministry said that the Government of National Capital Territory (GNCTD) Amendment Act, 2021 “in no way alters the constitutional and legal responsibilities of the elected government” to take necessary action in areas of health and education.

Highlights:

1. In a press statement, the Ministry issued a notification that the provisions of the Act would come into effect from April 27. The Act passed by Parliament gives more teeth to the office of the Lieutenant Governor (L-G) of Delhi.
2. The Act amended Sections 21, 24, 33 and 44 of the 1991 Act saying that “government” in the national capital territory of Delhi means the Lieutenant-Governor of Delhi.
3. The Act gives discretionary powers to the L-G even in matters where the Legislative Assembly of Delhi is empowered to make laws.
4. The Act also seeks to ensure that the L-G is “necessarily granted an opportunity” to give an opinion before any decision taken by the Council of Ministers (or the Delhi Cabinet) is implemented.
5. “The amendments to the GNCTD Act, 1991, in no way alter the constitutional and legal responsibilities of the elected government to take necessary action, in respect of the subjects transferred to them in the State and Concurrent Lists of the Constitution of India, including subjects such as health, education, etc,” the Ministry said.

In line with SC

It added that the amendments are consistent with the existing legal and constitutional provisions and are in line with the two judgments of the Supreme Court on July 2018, and February 2019, respectively.

Background:

Delhi is a Union Territory with a legislature and it came into being in 1991 under Article 239AA of the Constitution inserted by ‘the Constitution (Sixty-ninth Amendment) Act, 1991. As per the parent Act, the legislative assembly of Delhi has the power to make laws in all matters except public order, police and land.



Indian pharma frets as China airline uncertainty hits supply

News: India's pharmaceuticals industry is concerned that the disruption to Chinese carrier Sichuan Airlines' cargo services to the country may seriously hit the imports of key raw materials and has appealed to the Indian envoy to help find a solution.

Highlights:

1. The decision of Chinese state-owned Sichuan Airlines to suspend its cargo services to India for 15 days is worrisome. Notwithstanding reports that the airline was mulling a new plan to resume its cargo flights to the region, an industry official said the carrier's services to India remained suspended for a few days now. Sichuan operated to 6 Indian cities and other industries too depend on its services.
2. There is a real risk of disruption to "frantic efforts" by the industry to import medical supplies, including oxygen concentrators, key starting materials (KSMs) and active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) at a time when the country was battling COVID.
3. Industry fears this could lead to shortages of essential medicines as well as hit exports. As per reports 60-70% of drug intermediates, KSM and API requirements are sourced from China. About 45-50% of all APIs imported feature in the National List of Essential Medicines.

China launches key module for its permanent space station

News: China launched the main module of its first permanent space station that will host astronauts for the long term, in the latest success for a programme that has realised a number of its growing ambitions in recent years.

Highlights:

1. The Tianhe, or the "Heavenly Harmony" module, blasted into space. The launch kicks off the first of 11 missions necessary to complete, supply and crew the station by the end of next year.
2. China's space programme also recently brought back the first new lunar samples in more than 40 years and it also expects to land a probe and rover on the surface of Mars later next month.



Background:

ISS retiring in 2024, both china and Russia have announced separate space stations

A space station is essentially a large spacecraft that remains in low-earth orbit for extended periods of time. It is like a large laboratory in space and allows astronauts to come aboard and stay for weeks or months to carry out experiments in microgravity.

The Mir space station of the former Soviet Union, and later operated by Russia, was functional from 1986 to 2001. The ISS has been in space since 1998 and has been known for the exemplary cooperation between the five participating space agencies that have been running it: NASA (United States), Roscosmos (Russia), JAXA (Japan), ESA (Europe), and CSA (Canada).

For over 20 years since its launch, humans have continuously lived and carried out scientific investigations on the \$150 billion ISS under microgravity conditions, being able to make breakthroughs in research not possible on Earth.

As per NASA, 243 people from 19 countries have so far visited the ISS, and the floating laboratory has hosted more than 3,000 research and educational investigations from researchers in 108 countries and areas, carrying out cutting edge research in various disciplines, including biology, human physiology, and physical, material and space science.

For the past two decades, the International Space Station has been humanity's home away from home. It's hosted hundreds of astronauts from 18 countries. It's served as the platform for groundbreaking science experiments that have fundamentally changed our understanding of human biology, climate change, and the universe itself. It's been a proving ground for futuristic technologies like organs on a chip and quantum communication terminals, and it's fostered the birth of vibrant commercial space industry. The ISS is arguably the best thing we've ever done. But all good things must come to an end.

The ISS will mark 20 years of continuous human occupation on Saturday, but it's unlikely to last another 20 years. Funding for the space station is scheduled to dry up this decade, although exactly when that will happen is still unclear. NASA and the agency's international partners have guaranteed support for the ISS until 2024, and some supporters in Congress have advocated extending the agency's space station budget through 2028. What happens next is anyone's guess, but



there's a good chance it will involve scrapping the ISS and using privately operated commercial space stations instead.