

Croatia joined Eurozone (GS Paper 2, International Relation)

Why in news?

- Croatia formally became the **20th member of the euro common currency** as European Union finance ministers approved the country's request.
- The approval will come into being at the start of 2023.



Background:

- The European Council, the grouping of 27 EU governments, adopted three legal acts required to allow Croatia - an EU member since 2013 - to introduce the euro on January 1.
- One of those acts set the conversion rate for entry at one euro to 7.53450 Croatian kuna, with Croatia now having a few months to prepare the practicalities for the currency switch.

Key Highlights:

- Croatia is the first country to join the euro since Lithuania in 2015.
- It will help stabilize interest rates, making it easier and cheaper for people and companies to borrow and it brings a positive impact on growth thanks to the full integration into EU single market.
- To adopt the euro, Croatia had to fulfil criteria of price and exchange rate stability, sound public finances and moderate long-term interest rates, all measured against EU benchmarks.

Seven previous enlargements:

- Created in 1999 among 11 countries, including Germany and France, the euro has gone through seven previous enlargements starting with Greece in 2001.
- The appeal of euro membership is reflected by the last three expansions, which brought in Baltic states between 2011 and 2015.

Croatia:

- Croatia, in southeastern Europe, has been an independent country since 1991 when it left then-federal Yugoslavia.
- The country applied for EU membership in 2003 and joined the bloc in 2013. That was the last time the EU expanded.
- Neighbouring Slovenia, also an ex-Yugoslav republic and now EU member, adopted the euro in 2007.

Amendment to the National Emblem (GS Paper 2, Polity and Constitution)

Why in news?

- The unveiling of the national emblem cast on the roof of the new Parliament building by Prime Minister sparked a huge controversy.



Claims:

- The Modi government is being called out for **modifying and 'distorting' the emblem**. Many people took to social media platforms to express that the emblem looked different from the original.
- Many came down heavily on the government alleging that, unlike the original, the Ashoka Lions in the new emblem are baring their fangs.

Does the law permit the government to amend the national emblem?

- The ongoing outrage has, however, raised an important question, if the central government, in fact, has the powers to make such modifications or change the state emblem.
- The relevant law to be considered with regard to the state emblem would be the **State Emblem of India (Prohibition of Improper Use) Act, 2005**, and the **State Emblem of India (Regulation of Use) Rules, 2007**, which specifically deal with state emblem.

State Emblem of India (Prohibition of Improper Use) Act, 2005:

- The statement of objects and reasons of the 2005 Act states that earlier the use of the State Emblem of India was governed by a set of executive instructions, which did not have any legal sanction, and the Act had to be enacted to prevent the State Emblem’s misuse by unauthorised persons.
- According to the 2005 Act, the State Emblem of India is as described and specified in the schedule to be used as an official seal of the government.
- The schedule of the Act states that the State Emblem of India is an **adaptation from the Sarnath Lion Capital of Asoka** which is preserved and shall conform to the designs as set out in Appendix I or Appendix II.

Power of Centre Govt.

- The question is, when there’s a statute that specifically states that the State Emblem should conform to the designs set out in the Act, does the Centre have any powers to make changes to the emblem.
- Section 6(2)(f) of the same Act further provides the **Centre with the power ‘to do all such things including the specification of design of the emblem.**
- The provision specifically states, “Subject to the provisions of this Act, the central government shall have powers to do all such things (including the specification of design of the emblem and its use in the manner whatsoever) as the Central Government considers necessary or expedient for the exercise of the foregoing powers.”
- Therefore, according to this provision, the government has the power to make changes in the design of the emblem.
- But one needs to note, that it only refers to change in the design and not change of the state emblem itself.

Conclusion:

- There is **no emblem set out in the Constitution of India**. The emblem design is set out in Appendix I and II of the 2005 Act. Amending the Act, the government can have a new emblem if it so desires.
- If an elected government wants to make certain amendments it can go ahead and do the same, but the constitution as such doesn't have a particular provision of punishment if one does that.

I2U2 summit
(GS Paper 2, International Relation)

Why in news?

- Indian Prime Minister is set to participate in the **first I2U2 Leaders’ Summit** on 14 July.
- The summit is set to be held virtually.



What does I2U2 stand for?

- The new grouping will be called “I2U2” — “I” for India and Israel and “U” for the US and UAE.

What is its origin?

- The I2U2 Grouping was conceptualised during the meeting of the foreign ministers of the four countries held on 18 October.
- Each country also has Sherpa-level interactions regularly to discuss the possible areas of cooperation.

What is it aimed at?

- I2U2 is aimed to encourage **joint investments in six mutually identified areas** such as water, energy, transportation, space, health, and food security.
- It intends to **mobilise private sector capital** and expertise to help modernise infrastructure, low carbon development pathways for our industries, improve public health, and promote the development of critical emerging and green technologies.
- The leaders will discuss the possible joint projects within the framework of I2U2 as well as the other common areas of mutual interest to strengthen the economic partnership in trade and investment in our respective regions and beyond.

What's the agenda?

- The I2U2 summit is expected to give greater shape to the grouping's agenda that is focused on economic cooperation and infrastructure projects.
- The countries have said there is no military angle to this grouping and that the focus is a constructive agenda regarding the economy and infrastructure, some experts have dubbed I2U2 the '**West Asian Quad**'.

What it holds for India?

- India is a massive consumer market. It is a massive producer of high-tech and highly sought-after goods as well.
- So, there are a number of areas where these countries can work together, whether its technology, trade, climate, COVID-19, and potentially even security as well.

DCGI approves India's first qHPV vaccine to treat cervical cancer

(GS Paper 3, Science and Tech)

Why in news?

- India's first **Quadrivalent Human Papillomavirus vaccine (qHPV)** against cervical cancer gets Drugs Controller General of India's (DCGI) approval for market authorisation.
- This vaccine will be manufactured by the Serum Institute of India (SII).

**Key Highlights:**

- Quadrivalent human papillomavirus (qHPV) vaccine is for cervical cancer patients above 9 years to 26 years of age.
- It is expected that vaccine will be launched in the market before the year-end.

Background:

- The National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (NTAGI) had recently also approved the qHPV after reviewing the clinical trial data of the vaccine.
- The Subject Expert Committee on June 15 recommended Serum Institute of India (SII)'s indigenously developed Quadrivalent human papillomavirus (qHPV) vaccine against cervical cancer for regular market authorisation.
- The phase 3 data of the vaccine was found satisfactory after which recommendations were made.

What's next?

- For the first time, there will be an Indian HPV vaccine to treat cervical cancer in women that is both affordable and accessible.