

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF MILLETS (IYOM)-2023

Agriculture Ministry, NAFED signed MoU to boost the initiative to promote millets towards the celebration of the international year of millets 2023.



About:

- The U.N. General Assembly recently adopted a resolution, sponsored by India and supported by more than 70 countries, declaring 2023 as the International Year of Millets.
- The resolution is intended to increase public awareness on the health benefits of millets and their suitability for cultivation under tough conditions marked by climate change.

What are millets?

- Millet is a cereal that belongs to the grass family.
- Majorly cultivated in the semiarid tropical regions of Africa and Asia, around 97 percent of world's overall millet production happens in these regions.
- Types of millets: Jowar (Sorghum), Ragi, Bajra (Pearl millet).

WHO'S DESERVING, WHO'S NOT

Context

- As the Supreme Court verdict is awaited on the validity of 103rd constitutional amendment for granting 10% reservation to economically weaker sections (EWS), the article examines the EWS threshold criteria from the perspective of Principle of affirmative action for the poor.

About EWS

- **Amendment:** The 10% EWS quota was introduced under the 103rd Constitution (Amendment) Act, 2019 by inserting Article 15 (6) and Article 16 (6).

- Article 15 (6) is added to provide reservations to economically weaker sections for admission to **educational institutions** including private educational institutions, whether aided or unaided by the State, other than the minority educational institutions referred to in Article 30(1).
- Article 16 (6) is added to provide reservations to people from economically weaker sections in government posts.
- **Applicability:** The EWS provisions apply to economically weaker sections other than backward classes, schedules castes and scheduled tribes.
- **Conditions for identifying EWS:** The income criterion. Rs 8 lakh gross family income of beneficiary
 - Land criteria: Not more than five acres of agricultural land
 - Property area: A residential flat of not more than 1,000 square feet or residential plot of not more than 100/200 square yards in notified/non-notified municipalities.

The issues SC is examining

- A writ petition has been filed by Youth for Equality contending that 103rd amendment violates the basic structure doctrine as follows:
 - **Covering economic deprivation:** Whether the EWS Act is said to breach the basic structure of the Constitution by permitting the state to make special provisions, including reservation, based on economic criteria.
 - Earlier government notification providing 10% reservation to weaker economic sections of society was struck down in Indra Sawhney v. UOI in 1992.
 - **Breach State's limit:** Whether this 103rd amendment is valid constitutionally by permitting the state to make special provisions in relation to admission to private unaided institutions.
 - **Left-out bias:** Whether the EWS criteria violate the constitution provisions by “excluding the SEBCs (Socially and Educationally Backward Classes)/ OBCs (Other Backward Classes)/ SCs (Scheduled Castes)/ STs (Scheduled Tribes) from the scope of EWS reservation.

State's justification

- The government argues that the 103rd Constitution amendment does not breach the basic structure of the Constitution owing to following reasons:
 - EWS quota does not disturb the reservation given to other castes like SCs, STs and OBCs

- The State has the power to take affirmative action to elevate the poor among the general category

Arguments against the EWS reservation

- **Historical injustices:** The quotas in the Constitution were envisaged as a means to ensure adequate representation to those historically disadvantaged because of their caste identity, and not as a poverty alleviation scheme.
 - **Perpetuity:** As per critics, caste and its oppressions are permanent and passed down generations, while poverty can be temporary.
 - **Against constitutional provisions:** The 10 per cent EWS quota is in addition to the 50 per cent reservation for the SCs, STs, and OBCs which exceeds the reservation limit set by apex court in the Indra Sawhney Judgment 1992.
 - **Deceitful act:** The citizens who are educationally and socially backward as well as SCs and STs cannot take the benefit of reservation even if they fall within the economically weaker sections.
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EC WANTS PARTIES TO SPELL OUT POLL PROMISES

In News:

- The Election Commission has proposed amending the model code to ask political parties to provide authentic information to voters on the financial viability of their poll promises.
- In a letter to all recognised national and state parties, the Election Commission (EC) asked them to submit their views on the proposals by **October 19**.
- The EC will release new guidelines once the consultations with the parties are over.

Background:

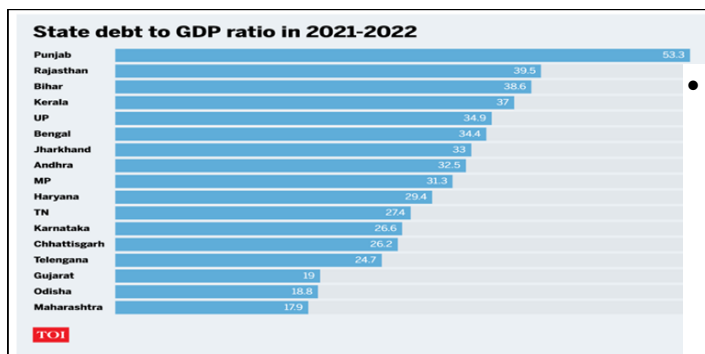
- Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had expressed concerns over giving free government schemes to the public on behalf of the states.
- The PM said that this culture of giving **freebies** is dangerous for the development of the country.

- The Supreme Court also recently observed that the issue concerning freebies is an important one and requires debate.

About Election Freebies:

- Provision of free electricity, free water, free public transport, waiver of pending utility bills and farm loan waivers are often regarded as freebies.
- Such waivers potentially undermine credit culture, distort prices through cross-subsidisation eroding incentives for private investment and disincentivise work at the current wage rate leading to a drop in labour force participation.
- As per estimates, expenditure on freebies range from 0.1 – 2.7 per cent of GSDP for different states.

RBI's report on state finances:



- A report by the RBI titled “State Finances: A Risk Analysis” highlighted that the fiscal health of states like West Bengal, Kerala, Punjab, Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh warrant a careful assessment because of their

larger focus on social welfare.

- Punjab is expected to be worst hit as its debt-GSDP ratio has already exceeded 50% in 2021-22.
- The state government has started giving 300 units of free electricity from September 1 to every household.
- Rajasthan, Kerala and Bihar have already exceeded debt-GSDP ratio of 35%.
- For the five most indebted states – Punjab, Rajasthan, Bihar, Kerala and West Bengal – the RBI said that the debt stock is no longer sustainable as the debt growth outpaced their GSDP growth in the last five years.

News Summary:

- The Election Commission has proposed changes to its manifesto guidelines under the **model code of conduct** regarding poll promises, requiring political parties to specify how they would find resources for implementation of the pledges.
- This is likely to escalate the ongoing debate on the accountability of political parties in announcing freebies.
- The EC wants political parties to specify the estimated impact on financial stability, and the number of beneficiaries expected to be targeted by schemes promised.
- The EC has said that the proposed disclosures about the promises and their implementation would help voters make informed choices.

Model Code of Conduct (MCC):

- The Model Code of Conduct (MCC) is a consensus document.
- In other words, political parties have themselves agreed to keep their conduct during elections in check, and to work within the Code.
- The Election Commission first effectively put to use the Model Code of Conduct in the year **1991** to ensure fair elections and a level playing field.
- The Code comes into force as soon as the election schedule is announced, and stays in force until the election process is completed.

Is MCC legally enforceable?

- It is not a legally enforceable document, and the Election Commission usually uses moral sanction to get political parties and candidates to fall in line.
- The EC is now of the opinion that making the Code legally enforceable would be self-defeating because any violation must be responded to quickly — and this will not be possible if the matter goes to court.

[herSTART' PLATFORM](#)

President Draupadi Murmu launches 'herSTART' - a start-up platform of Gujarat University for women entrepreneurs

About:

- herSTART' is the initiative of Gujarat University Startup and Entrepreneurship Council aims at supporting women-led startups.
- The platform has been launched with the aim that it will not only boost innovation and start-up efforts of women entrepreneurs but also help them connect with government as well as private enterprises.
- Through this platform, free resources and training modules free will be provided to aspiring women entrepreneurs. It will build a digital community and also a digital publication to spread their success stories.



THE TAMIL MOVIE PONNIYIN SELVAN-1 PUTS FOCUS ON THE CHOLAS



About:

- The Chola kingdom stretched across present-day **Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and parts of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.** During the period of the Cholas' rise and fall (around 9th to 12th century AD), other powerful dynasties of the region would also come and go, such as the Rashtrakutas of the Deccan who defeated the Cholas, and the Chalukyas of the Andhra Pradesh region whom the Cholas frequently battled.
 - The **dynasty was founded by the king Vijaylaya**, described as a “feudatory” of the Pallavas by historian Satish Chandra in the book ‘The History of Medieval Era’.
- ### Society under the Cholas
- One of the biggest achievements of the Chola dynasty was its **naval power**, allowing them to go as far as Malaysia and the Sumatra islands of Indonesia in their conquests.

- While the extent of this domination is disputed, the Cholas had strong ties with merchant groups and this allowed them to undertake impressive naval expeditions.
- **Succession wars were natural** which is set in the time after the Rashtrakutas defeated the Cholas.
- Another feature is how the **practice of building grand temples**. The grand **Brihadeeswara temple of Thanjavur**, built by the Cholas, was the largest building in India in that period.

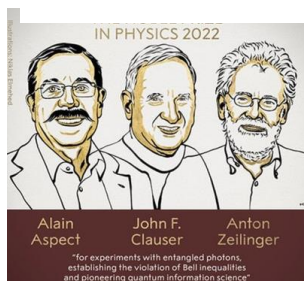
eCHHAWANI PORTAL

Government has approved the extension of Online Building Plan Approval System (OBPAS) under eChhawani portal to five more Cantonment Boards, namely Agra, Ranikhet, Babina, Jammu and Cannanore.



About:

- eChhawani is a citizen-centric project of the **Directorate General of Defence Estates, Ministry of Defence**.
- Under this initiative, Cantonment Boards provide **online citizen services** to more than 20 lakh residents across 62 Cantonments in the country.
- The unified portal provides access to civic services along with all relevant information in a simple, easy to understand and effective manner.
- As a step towards facilitating ease of living, over 2.18 lakh property taxpayers living in cantonment areas would be able to **apply online for mutation in the property tax register** under the eChhawani portal (echhawani.gov.in).



NOBEL PRIZE IN PHYSICS 2022

Alain Aspect, John F. Clauser and Anton Zeilinger have jointly won the Nobel Prize in Physics "for experiments with entangled photons,

establishing the violation of Bell inequalities and pioneering quantum information science".

About:

- Two of the laureates—John Clauser and Alain Aspect—worked on firming up the concept of **quantum entanglement** and developing more complex experiments that demonstrated this phenomenon, especially creating, processing and measuring what are called **Bell pairs**. The third laureate, Anton Zeilinger, has been chosen for his **innovative use of entanglement and Bell pairs both in research and application such as quantum cryptography**.

Significance:

- Quantum information science has a broad range of potential implications in areas such as secure information transfer, quantum computing and sensing technology.
- One of the most mature applications of quantum technology is **quantum cryptography**, which takes advantage of the fact that changes made to one particle in an entangled system affect the other.

Quantum entanglement

- It is a phenomenon by which a pair of particles, say photons, are allowed to exist in a shared state where they have complementary properties, such that by measuring the properties of one particle, you automatically know the properties of the other particle. This is true regardless of how far apart the two particles are transported.