

UPSC 2017: Comprehensive News Analysis – Aug 04

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B. GS2 Related

Category: POLITY

1. [NOTA option to stay in Rajya Sabha polls](#)

Context

- Election Commission circular issued in January 2014 introduced NOTA in the Rajya Sabha elections.
- Gujarat Congress's plead Supreme Court to freeze the NOTA option for elections to the three Rajya Sabha seats in the State on August 8.

In News

- **Supreme Court observation:** The "None Of The Above" (NOTA) option will remain on the ballot paper in the upcoming Rajya Sabha elections.
- **Apprehensions of Congress political party:** NOTA would be a "recipe for corruption".

2. [NOTA's impact will be like abstention](#)

In news

- The impact of the decision of MLAs to exercise the NOTA (none-of-the-above) option in elections to the Rajya Sabha will be the same as that of an abstention.
- Nor does it attract the anti-defection law, though it can be a sign that an MLA is disgruntled with his party leadership or official candidate.

Elections in Rajya Sabha and NOTA

- In the Rajya Sabha polls, a winning candidate should get a required number of votes calculated through a formula.
- The total number of votes are divided by the number of seats going to the polls from the State, adding one vote to the number. To this whole, a value of one vote is again added.
- The polls are held by means of a single, transferable vote, and the candidates reaching the requisite number are declared elected.
- If a candidate from a party exercises the NOTA option, the total votes will go down. This will bring down the number required to win.

Category: ECONOMICS

1. [Post GST Launch: Manufacturing PMI slumps to the lowest since 2009](#)

In news

- India's manufacturing activity in July slumped to its lowest level since February 2009, dragged down by disruptions to business activity following the introduction of Goods and Services Tax (GST)
- The Nikkei India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) stood at 47.9 in July, down from 50.9 in June, and highlighted the first deterioration in business conditions in 2017 so far
- July also marked the biggest month-on-month decline since November 2008, just after the collapse of Lehman Brothers triggered the global financial crisis
- This contraction is likely to put pressure on the Reserve Bank of India to lower interest rate at its policy meet.

GST Effect

- The GST launch, the survey said, affected demand.
- The reductions in output, new orders and purchasing activity were all the steepest since early 2009.
- However, foreign demand for India-manufactured goods improved in July as new export orders continued to rise.
- While some business segments have protested against the GST, many are struggling with the new compliance requirements that require them to file at least three returns every month.

Basic Information

What is the "Purchasing Managers' Index" PMI?

- The Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) is an indicator of the economic health of the manufacturing sector.
- The PMI is based on five major indicators: new orders, inventory levels, production, supplier deliveries and the employment environment.
- The purpose of the PMI is to provide information about current business conditions to company decision makers, analysts and purchasing managers.

2. [Centre mulls changing minimum wages formula](#)

In news

- The Central government is mulling a revision in the formula to calculate minimum wages that may increase income levels of workers across the country.
- The **Central Advisory Committee on Minimum Wages**, headed by Labour and Employment Minister Bandaru Dattatreya, met here and decided to constitute a committee to deliberate the proposed changes in the calculation of minimum wages for workers.

Committees Task

- The committee would deliberate upon the following factors while recommending a new formula for minimum wages: a number of units per family, inclusion of dependant parents and treatment of women and children at par with the male family member.

Indian Labour Conference in 1957

- The norms for fixing minimum wages today are based on recommendations of the **Indian Labour Conference in 1957**.
- Under it, the minimum wage level for industries is fixed based on spending estimates for a working class family on **2,700 calories of food per person**, 72 yards clothes, minimum housing rent and education and light and fuel.
- A standard working class family consists of three consumption units for one earner with earnings of women, children and adolescents being disregarded.

3. [What is the impact of floods on India's GDP?](#)

Context

- From Assam in the north-east to Rajasthan and Gujarat in the west, floods are taking a heavy toll on lives and property this year.
- As per latest reports, 82 and over 100 flood-related deaths have been recorded in the states of Assam and Gujarat, respectively.

Flood-related damages

- Flood-related loss of both human and cattle lives and economic damages have come down over time.
- However, there has been a significant change in the nature of flood-related losses in India.

Changes

- **Central Water Commission (CWC)** gives detailed estimates of economic loss and loss of human and cattle lives due to floods from 1953-2016
- The 1970s was the worst decade in terms of loss human and cattle lives due to floods in India. These losses have come down since then.

- Although absolute economic losses have been increasing, the relative economic damage has come down

Flood related losses

- Floods resulted in loss of 0.86% of the total GDP in the 1970s and 1980s.
- In the present decade, this share has come down to 0.1% of the GDP.
- Until the 1970s, damage to crops was the biggest component of economic loss due to floods. Over time, damage to public utilities has acquired the biggest share in flood-related losses.
- A 2015 World Resources Institute study had shown that expanding cities and worsening climate challenges can significantly increase flood-related risks in India.

4. [Studying the climate of farm suicides](#)

Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)

- According to a study by the PNAS of the US, over 1,900 farm suicides were triggered every year over the last 30 years in India by warming related to climate change
- Name of the Study: ‘‘Crop-damaging temperatures increase suicide rates in India’’

Other points from study

- The study calculates that ‘‘warming a single day by 1 degree Celsius during India’s agricultural growing season leads to roughly 65 suicides across the country, whenever that day’s temperature is above 20 degrees Celsius’’
- Warming a day by 5 degrees Celsius has five times that effect

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. [Heat in South Asia could exceed survivable levels by 2100, says study](#)

In news

- According to a study, **South Asia** could see humid heat rise beyond survivable levels by century’s end if nothing is done to halt global warming
- The densely populated farming regions of South Asia could fare the worst
- Why: because workers are exposed to heat with little opportunity for escape into air-conditioned environments
- The Study is published in the journal: Science Advances
- The study is to look not just at temperatures, but at the forecast of ‘‘wet-bulb temperature’’, which combines temperature, humidity and the human body’s ability to cool down in response
- The survivability threshold is considered to be 35°C, or 95°F

2. [Water conservation scheme a big success](#)

Jal Swavalamban Abhiyan (JSA)

- It is a programme of Rajasthan Government
- It has turned out to be a success in Pratapgarh district
- In the district
 1. The groundwater table has increased
 2. Green agricultural fields have expanded and
 3. No tankers with drinking water had to be sent to as many as 94 villages this year

NGT hails efforts

- The National Green Tribunal lauded the efforts made under the programme
- The NGT’s Bhopal declaration has described the JSA as a massive climate change adaptation programme
- The JSA is praised as an initiative which would make every village of the State self-reliant in water by using scientific tools for rejuvenating traditional water bodies

D. GS4 Related

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E. Concepts-in-News: Related Concepts to Revise/Learn

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G. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

G. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. To what extent is Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, bearing marginal note "Temporary provision with respect to the State of Jammu and Kashmir", temporary? Discuss the future prospects of this provision in the context of Indian polity.
2. Discuss each adjective attached to the word "Republic" in the preamble. Are they defensible in the present circumstances?

GS Paper III

1. In what way could replacement of price subsidy with Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) change the scenario of subsidies in India? Discuss.
2. Discuss the advantage and security implications of cloud hosting of servers vis-a-vis in-house machine-based hosting for government businesses.

GS Paper IV

1. One of the scientists working in the R & D laboratory of a major pharmaceutical company discovers that one of the company's bestselling veterinary drugs, B has the potential to cure a currently incurable liver disease that is prevalent in tribal areas. However, developing a variant of the drug suitable for human beings entailed a lot of research and development having a huge expenditure to the extent of 50 crores rupees. It was unlikely that the company would recover the costs as the disease was rampant only in poverty-stricken area having very little market otherwise.

If you were the CEO, then

1. Identify the various actions that you could take;
2. Evaluate the pros and cons of each of your actions.