

UPSC 2017: Comprehensive News Analysis “October 09

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. [GS1 Related](#)

B. [GS2 Related](#)

Polity

1. [Ex-SC judges could soon be appointed NHRC chiefs](#)
2. [All parties need to be on board for simultaneous polls: Election Commission](#)

International Affairs/Bilateral Relations

1. [Rex Tillerson may club India, Pak for visit](#)
2. [Navigating a Changing World](#)

Health Issues

1. [Health ministry approves new tuberculosis drug](#)

C. [GS3 Related](#)

Environmental Science and Ecology

1. [16 balsam species found in 5 years in Arunachal](#)
2. [Odisha hikes compensation for deaths caused by wild animals](#)

Agriculture

1. [From Plate to Plough: What Gujarat did yesterday](#)

D. [GS4 Related](#)

E. [Prelims Fact](#)

F. [UPSC Prelims Practice Questions](#)

G. [UPSC Mains Practice Questions](#)

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Category: POLITY

1. [Ex-SC judges could soon be appointed NHRC chiefs](#)

Context:

- Appointment of National Human Rights Commission chiefs.

In news:

- The Home Ministry has moved the Cabinet to amend the recruitment process of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC).
- **Key Changes:**
- Retired Supreme Court judge could also be considered for the Chairperson's position, currently reserved for former Chief Justices of the Supreme Court.
- Similarly an amendment for appointment of members is also being considered. The members could be picked from a pool of retired Chief Justices of High Courts. Currently, a serving or retired SC judge is considered.
- The State Human Rights Commissions are also expected to see a change in the appointment procedure. Retired High Court judges could also be considered for the post of State Human Rights Commission chairperson, which is currently held by retired Chief Justices of High Courts.
- **Key Fact:**
- The NHRC was constituted under the **Protection of Human Rights Act in 1993**. The Act was last amended in 2006.
- The Commission consists of a chairperson, one member who is or has been a Judge of the Supreme Court, one member who is or has been the Chief Justice of a High Court and two members to be appointed from among persons having knowledge of, or practical experience in, matters relating to human rights.
- The chairperson and members are appointed by the President on recommendations from a six-member committee chaired by the Prime Minister.
- **What next?**
- Once the Cabinet approves them, an amendment to the Protection of Human Rights Act would have to be ratified by Parliament.

2. [All parties need to be on board for simultaneous polls: Election Commission](#)

Context:

- Simultaneous Lok Sabha and Assembly polls.

In news:

- **The Election Commission opinion:**
- All political parties need to be brought on board before such an exercise is carried out.
- Simultaneous elections will give enough time for incumbent government to formulate policies and implement programmes continuously for a longer time without interruptions caused by imposition of model code of conduct.
- Conducting the polls together would be possible only when necessary changes in the Constitution and Representation of the People Act are carried out.
- **Situation at present:**
- Existing legal and constitutional provisions mandates that elections are to be held within six months ahead of the end of the term of a State Assembly or the Lok Sabha.
- **Requirements to hold simultaneous polls:**
- Requirement of 24 lakh each Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) Machines.
- Two sets of EVMs – one for Lok Sabha and another for the Assembly polls.
- **The Niti Aayog’s “Three Year Action Agenda, 2017-18 to 2019-20” report:**
- The Niti Aayog has also favoured conducting synchronised two-phase Lok Sabha and Assembly elections from 2024 in “national interest”.
- All elections in India should happen in a free, fair and synchronised manner to ensure minimum “campaign mode” disruption to governance.

Category: INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS/BILATERAL RELATIONS

1. [Rex Tillerson may club India, Pak for visit](#)

Context:

- U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson is expected to visit India later in October.

Key Points:

- Tillerson will become the fourth senior U.S. official to visit New Delhi after the Trump Administration took over.
- Tillerson is expected to travel to both India and Pakistan on the same visit, indicating a sharp shift from precedent.
- **Previously:** During the Bush and Obama administrations, U.S. officials had avoided clubbing visits to New Delhi and Islamabad because of India’s sensitivities over a “hyphenation” of the U.S.’s relations with India and Pakistan.

New Afghan policy:

- The U.S. Secretary of State’s visit to India is likely to highlight growing ties between New Delhi and Washington, and growing cooperation between them on Afghanistan.

2. [Navigating a Changing World](#)

Context:

- Obstacles in the trade pact between India and the EU.

Change in global dynamics :

- Brexit
- Elections in Germany and France
- Visible rifts between eastern and western countries on what constitute core EU values
- Election in the US and consequent retreat of the US from its leadership of the west

Key Points:

- The reference to India and EU as “world’s largest democracies” – Such a statement is generally made with reference to sovereign countries. Interestingly, EU per se is not a sovereign country but a group of sovereign countries. Such a mention is more notable this time in light of the U.S.’s uncertain position on the international stage and EU’s need for a stronger union post Brexit.
- The countries have reiterated their commitment for a “Rules based” and “Multipolar” world
- **Rules based world:** This term assumes significance on the backdrop of the US going back on its promises on Paris climate agreement and the probability of the same on the Iran Nuclear deal
- **Multipolar world:** The reference to multipolarity is a recognition that there is more than just one chair at the top table, not just with the U.S.’s shifting position but also due to Russia and China’s ascent.
- The India-EU joint statement on terrorism this year called for “decisive and concerted actions” against Hafiz Saeed, Dawood Ibrahim, Lashkar-e-Taiba and other purveyors of terror; this will further bolster India’s efforts to call out Pakistan on the issue of sponsoring terror.

Roadblocks in talks on BTIA:

- Recent summits have been conspicuous by the absence of talks on the BTIA (Broad-based Trade and Investment Agreement). There is disagreement on whether the protection of foreign investments will be part of the BTIA or dealt with in a stand-alone treaty
- Indian demand for liberalising the access to natural persons- India wanting a greater ease of movement of temporary skilled workers to provide services in the EU and the EU wanting greater market access for its automobiles and its

wines and spirits. Wanting an open market for automobiles and liquor but unduly restricting the movement of natural persons (with barriers in terms of salary thresholds, recognition of qualifications, visa fees, social security and so forth) seems to be a case of double standards.

- EU not granting “data secure” certification to India “a condition that facilitates the cross-border transfer of personal data. India does not have a stand-alone law on data privacy and this could be acting as a barrier too as EU is very seriously taking steps to secure digital data privacy of its citizens.

Way forward:

Convergence of values and interests:

- EU is India’s largest trade partner (over 100 billion Euros in bilateral trade of goods and services last year). EU, like India, is also wary of China’s political and economic dominance.
- Uncertainty over EU’s future in the next decade: With Brexit and other important developments, there is no clarity about what presence will EU have in the next decade. Hence, cementing trade ties with India will help strengthen EU’s economic future.
- “Data secure” certification: India needs to enact a strong Data Privacy Law which protects the digital data privacy of its citizens. This is necessary to protect the economic interests of the Indian IT industry.
- India is right to strike a hard bargain as far as the temporary movement of skilled workers is concerned. The EU and other developed countries have been historically reluctant about moving forward on this and the issue has become more challenging with the rise of populism and protectionism in Europe.

Category: HEALTH ISSUES

1. [Health ministry approves new tuberculosis drug](#)

Context:

- New Drug against Tuberculosis

In news:

- The technical group on tuberculosis in the ministry of health has given approval to “Delamanid”
- The “Delamanid” is in its phase 3 clinical trials
- Health Ministry will initially conduct a trial with this drug on over 400 patients in a controlled manner
- New Drug will be included in the **Revised National TB Control Program** (RNTCP) from this month in parallel to **Bedaquiline**

Key Fact: increasing number of multi-drug resistant (MDR) and extensive drug resistant (XDR) tuberculosis cases in India

Government’s expectations from the “Delamanid”

- Delamanid has proved effective in many clinical trials in South Africa and Japan
- Taking a cue from this, government are expecting that over 70-80% patients will respond to tuberculosis treatment

Category: ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE AND ECOLOGY

1. [16 balsam species found in 5 years in Arunachal](#)

Key Points:

- Impatiens walongensis, a new species of balsam was discovered from Arunachal Pradesh’s Anjaw district, one of India’s easternmost.
- Since 2013, at least 16 new species of plants under the genus Impatiens, commonly referred to as balsam, have been discovered from Arunachal Pradesh.
- Balsam varieties are facing a threat to their habitat from fast-changing landscape of the region.
- Impatiens shows high endemism.

2. [Odisha hikes compensation for deaths caused by wild animals](#)

In news:

- The State government has decided to increase the ex-gratia compensation for human deaths caused by wild animals to Rs. 4 lakh from the existing Rs. 3 lakh
- “Ex gratia” means “done from a sense of moral obligation rather than because of any legal requirement”
- Reason: Because the man-animal conflict is on rise in Odisha

Key Points:

- According to the State Forest and Environment Department, increasing biotic and anthropogenic pressure on forests are affecting the biodiversity and the habitat as a whole
- As a result animals stray out of the forest towards human habitation in search of food, water or use these areas as routes to access other wilderness area to meet their ends

Category: AGRICULTURE

1. [From Plate to Plough: What Gujarat did yesterday](#)

Context:

- Gujarat agricultural model from 2003 to 2014

Agriculture Growth of Gujarat from 2003 to 2014

- Gujarat's agri-GDP registered an unprecedented growth of 8 per cent per annum during 2002-03 to 2013-14, way more than the all-India figure of 3.3 per cent per annum
- Gujarat's agri-growth was even higher than that achieved by Punjab during the Green Revolution's

Expectations from the Gujarat model

- When Modi became the prime minister in May 2014, one was expecting that the "Gujarat model" would be extended to many states, with the fine-tuning to suit each state's requirements
- But the growth of all-India agri-GDP in the first three years of NDA rule has come down to 1.8 per cent

Is deficient rain the reason behind this situation?

- Deficient rain in 2014-15 and 2015-16 is of course one factor behind this poor performance
- But there were bumper harvests in 2016-17, yet farmers suffered due to a collapse in agri-prices
- The advance estimates of 2017-18 do not indicate much recovery
- Reasons behind Gujarat's excellent agri-performance during 2003 to 2014

First

- The Atal Bihari Vajpayee government's bold decision to allow the commercial use of Bt cotton became a catalyst for change, from which Gujarat benefited the most
- From nowhere in 2002, Bt cotton spread to more than 90 per cent of the area under cotton in Gujarat by 2014

Second

- China is taking over Syngenta for \$43 billion to access the best technologies for its farmers
- While the Centre is creating conditions that may force companies like Monsanto to quit
- This government is literally reversing the benefits that the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government bestowed to farmers

Third

- Gujarat government at that time provided basic infrastructure to farmers – irrigation, power and roads enabled the easy adoption of Bt cotton, and benefited other crops and the livestock sector as well
- Currently, Gujarat has one of the best road-network in the country, of which 89 per cent are pucca/surfaced roads

Fourth

- Good marketing institutions propelled Gujarat agriculture, especially its dairy industry
- The AMUL model of directly buying milk from farmers' cooperatives and processing and distributing it through millions of outlets ensures that farmers receive 75-80 per cent of the consumers' price
- This model is worth extending to other commodities, especially fruits and vegetables, bypassing the mandi system

The way forward

- Enable farmers to access best technologies and best markets at home or abroad
- Invest in basic infrastructure that can give access to water for irrigation, power and rural roads
- Create AMUL type institutions for other commodities to enable farmers to access high share of consumers' price
- Export bans or high minimum export prices for agri-products are anti-farmer

Nothing here for Today!!!

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F. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

G. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

GS Paper I

1. Why are the tribals in India referred to as "the Scheduled Tribes"? Indicate the major provisions enshrined in the Constitution of India for their upliftment.
2. What is the basis of regionalism? Is it that unequal distribution of benefits of development on regional basis eventually promotes regionalism? Substantiate your answer.

GS Paper II

1. "Increasing cross-border terrorist attacks in India and growing interference in the internal affairs of member-states by Pakistan are not conducive for the future of SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation)." Explain with suitable examples.