

AROUND U

MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS – OCTOBER 2018

The most important current affairs in a PPT for easy revision.



PROJECT CHAMAN

- **Coordinated Horticulture Assessment and Management using geo-informatics (CHAMAN)**
- It uses Geographical Information System tools along with remote sensing data for generating action plans for horticultural development.
- It also aims to carry out research activities on horticultural crop condition studies, diseases assessment and precision farming.
- It was launched in 2014 by Ministry of Agriculture under the Mission of Integrated Horticulture Development.
- It is being implemented by New Delhi based Mahalanobis National Crop Forecast Centre (MNCFC).

<http://www.ncfc.gov.in/chaman.html>

Significance of CHAMAN

- The waste land/ jhum land areas identified for one crop in one district each of North Eastern States would be taken up for development on priority by state governments.
- To identify post harvest losses which can be reduced by creation of desired Post Harvest Infrastructures like cold storages.
- Better income for framers with help of Geo-Spatial Studies like crop intensification, orchard rejuvenation and aqua-horticulture
- **Boost to agricultural GDP**
- Ensuring food and nutritional security to all people.
- **Creation of Employment opportunities**

Other related projects

- **BHUVAN** - A Web based GIS application (Geoportal) enabling the monitoring and evaluation of IWMP watersheds, using satellite remote sensing and sample field data using mobile smart phone applications has been realised.
- The main objectives of the IWMP [Integrated Watershed Management Programme] are **to restore the ecological balance by harnessing, conserving and developing degraded natural resources such as soil, vegetative cover and water**. The outcomes are **prevention of soil run-off, regeneration of natural vegetation, rain water harvesting and recharging of the ground water table**.

- **Forecasting Agricultural output using Space, Agro meteorological and Land based observations (FASAL)**
 1. Generates crop forecasts at District/State/National level for 8 major crops such as Jute, Kharif Rice, Sugarcane, Cotton, Rapeseed & Mustard, Rabi Sorghum, Wheat and Rabi Rice.
 2. Both optical and microwave Remote sensing data is used for crop area enumeration, crop condition assessment and production forecasting
 3. The main aim is to collect Monsoon data through remote sensing, economic data and monitoring of crops when growing.
 4. The programme is sponsored by Ministry of Agriculture.

National Agricultural Drought Assessment and Monitoring System (NADAMS)

- Provides near real-time information on prevalence, severity level and persistence of agricultural drought at state/district/sub-district level.
- It covers 14 states of India, which are predominantly agriculture based and prone to drought situation
- Resourcesat is used for detailed assessment of agricultural drought at district and sub district level in five states.

NIIF National Investment and Infrastructure Fund

- NIIF was set up in 2015 and registered as a **category II alternative investment fund** with the SEBI.
- The **corpus of the fund is** Rs. 40, 000 crore, with the government investing 49% and the rest to be raised from third-party investors such as sovereign wealth funds, insurance and pension funds.
- A **governing council** under the chairmanship of the **Finance Minister** act as an advisory council to NIIF.
- It will invest in areas such as energy, transportation, housing, water, waste management and other commercially viable **greenfield, brownfield and stalled projects** in the infrastructure sector
- Recently, India's (NIIF) signed an investment agreement worth \$1 billion with Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA)

SAATHI SCHEME

- Sustainable and Accelerated Adoption of Efficient Textile Technology to Help Small Industries (SAATHI) scheme
- Bi-ministerial effort – Ministry of Textiles and Ministry of Power
- The initiative will be jointly implemented by **Energy Efficient Services Limited (EESL)** and the office of the Textile Commissioner on a pan-India basis.
- (EESL), would procure energy efficient Powerlooms, motors and Rapier kits in bulk and provide them to the small and medium Powerloom units at no upfront cost.

Energy Efficient Services Limited (EESL)

- It is a joint venture of four National Public Sector Undertakings – NTPC Limited, Power Finance Corporation Limited, Rural Electrification Corporation Limited and POWERGRID Corporation of India Limited.
- It has been set up under Ministry of Power, Government of India.
- It implements Street Lighting National Programme (SLNP) and Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All(UJALA)
- It also leads the market-related activities of the National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency

SAMPOORNA BIMA GRAM YOJANA

- To provide **affordable life insurance services** to people living in rural areas of the country through the postal network.
- To identify at least **one village** (having a minimum of 100 households) in each of the revenue districts of the country and cover all households with a minimum of one RPLI (Rural Postal Life Insurance) policy in that village .
- All villages under **the Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana** will be covered under it.

SANKALP & STRIVE SCHEMES

- Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion (**SANKALP**) a centrally sponsored scheme (funded directly by Central Ministries and implemented by States or their agencies), addresses this need by **setting up national bodies for accreditation and certification**.
- Skill Strengthening for Industrial Value Enhancement (**STRIVE**), a central sector scheme (funded and implemented by the Central Government machinery), aims to modernize 500+ ITIs through outcomes and reform linked funding

National Skill Development Mission

- Launched in 2015
- To create convergence across sectors and States in terms of skill training activities.
- It will be implemented through a streamlined institutional mechanism driven by Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)
- Seven Sub missions are
 - (i) Institutional Training, (ii) Infrastructure, (iii) Convergence, (iv) Trainers, (v) Overseas Employment, (vi) Sustainable Livelihoods, (vii) Leveraging Public Infrastructure.

Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)

- Flagship scheme of the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE).
- Skill Certification Scheme
- The objective of this is to enable a large number of Indian youth to take up industry-relevant skill training that will help them in securing a better livelihood.
- Individuals with prior learning experience or skills will also be assessed and certified under Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).
- Under this Scheme, Training and Assessment fees are completely paid by the Government.

UDAAN

- Udaan is a **Special Industry Initiative for Jammu & Kashmir** in the nature of partnership between the corporates of India and Ministry of Home Affairs and implemented by National Skill Development Corporation.
- The programme aims to provide skills training and enhance the employability of unemployed youth of J&K.
- The Scheme covers graduates, post graduates and three year engineering diploma holders. It has two objectives:
- (i) To provide an exposure to the unemployed graduates to the best of Corporate India;
(ii) To provide Corporate India, an exposure to the rich talent pool available in the State.

Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana

- The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD)
- DDU-GKY is uniquely focused on rural youth between the ages of 15 and 35 years from poor families.
- DDU-GKY is a part of the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), tasked with the dual objectives of adding diversity to the incomes of rural poor families and cater to the career aspirations of rural youth.

PM-YUVA Yojana(Pradhan Mantri Yuva Udyamita Vikas Abhiyan)

- Aims to create an enabling ecosystem for Entrepreneurship Development through entrepreneurship education and training across the country in select Institutes of Higher for over a period of five years.
- Additionally, students will get easy access to a robust network of peers, mentors incubators, funds and business services through an online platform.
- Focus will also be on entrepreneurship promotion and social entrepreneurship.
- Under MSME Ministry

What is Gujarat's Ro-Ro ferry service?

- The Ro-Ro ferry, the first of its kind in India, will be able to carry up to 100 vehicles (cars, buses and trucks) and 250 passengers between the two ports of Ghogha and Dahej in Gujarat.
- The ro-ro ferry will ply the Gulf of Khambhat between peninsular Saurashtra and South Gujarat
- The service shall reduce the travel time between Saurashtra, and South Gujarat, from about seven or eight hours, to just over an hour.
- The ferry service is aimed at boosting the connectivity and infrastructure in Gujarat.
- It has been launched by **Ministry of Shipping** as part of **Sagarmala Project**.

BHARATMALA PROJECT

- For construction of 24,800 Km of highway connecting **western and eastern part** of the country.
- It will undertake programs for improvement in Economic Corridors, Inter Corridors and Feeder Routes, National Corridor Efficiency Improvement, Border and International connectivity roads, Coastal and Port connectivity roads and Green-field expressways.
- It has been envisaged as an umbrella program that will subsume unfinished parts of NHDP
- The mains agencies that will implement the program are National Highways Authority of India, National Highway and Industrial Development Corporation and state public works departments.
- It will increase **last mile connectivity, boost movement of cargo, increase exports, boost the employment opportunities and fast track the development of roads**

E-SAMIKSHA

- E-Samiksha is an **online monitoring and compliance mechanism** developed by Cabinet secretariat with technical help from National Informatics Centre.
- It is used for **tracking the progress on projects** & policy initiatives and follow up actions of various ministries by cabinet secretary and Prime Minister on a **real-time basis**
- E-Samiksha portal is designed to **enhance efficiency, bring transparency, increase accountability, and improve the communication** between Government to Government, Business to Government and vice versa

E-Patrachar

- sends meeting notices and agendas, circulars, letters, etc. through e-mail and SMS, thus promoting the maxim of '**Minimum Government and Maximum governance**'.

T. K. Viswanathan committee

- The committee was formed after Supreme Court struck down Section 66 A of the Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000 in Shreya Singhal vs. Union of India.
- Section 66 A of IT Act was added to criminalize sending of offensive messages through a computer or other communication devices
- Recommendations
- appointing cybercrime coordinators in all states and establishing cybercrime cells in each district.
- The committee suggested that state cybercrime coordinator should be an officer not below the rank of Inspector General of Police (IGP). The district cell should be headed by an officer not below the rank of sub-inspector of police.

- **Section 78 of the IT Act** primarily ‘dealt with capacity building’ and needs to be relooked to sensitize the officers and give them support with electronic expertise, computer-forensics and digital-forensics.
- Expressed the desirability of having **guidelines in place to prevent the abuse of provisions by investigation agencies** and to safeguard innocent users of social media.
- The offensive speech should be “highly disparaging, abusive or inflammatory against any person or group of persons”, and should be uttered with the intention to cause “fear of injury or alarm”.
- it is more effective to insert the substantive provisions in the IPC instead of the IT Act, since the IT Act was primarily concerned with e-commerce regulation.

Govt sets up Jaitley-led panel on PSB mergers

- A ministerial panel headed by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley that will oversee merger proposals of state-owned banks.
- The move to create large banks aims at meeting the credit needs of the growing Indian economy and building capacity in the PSB space to raise resources without dependence on the state exchequer.
- The mechanism will oversee the proposals coming from boards of PSBs for consolidation.
- The decision to set up such a mechanism follows State Bank of India merging its five associate banks, as also the Bharatiya Mahila Bank, with itself.
- The idea of bank mergers was around since 1991, when former Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor M. Narasimham had recommended the government merge banks into three-tiered structure, with three large banks with an international presence at top. In 2014, PJ Nayak Committee also had suggested that that government either merge or privatize state-owned banks.

- The consolidation of struggling state-run banks, which have a market share of about 70% and account for over 80% of bad loans in the Indian banking system, is aimed at building scale and bolstering their risk-taking ability.
- The government hopes that state-owned banks will achieve economies of scale and operational efficiency, while managing risks in a better way after merging.
- Consolidation is also likely to help them deal better with their credit portfolio, including stressed assets.
- Consolidation prevents multiplicity of resources being spent in the same area and strengthens banks to deal with shocks

India's role in science

- London's Science Museum on Tuesday unveiled a new exhibition that traces India's contribution to science and technology over the past 5,000 years.
- **Bakhshali manuscript** - which contains *the oldest recorded origins of the symbol "zero"*.
- *1817 version of Jambudvipa, or Jain map of the world, and a spectrometer from 1928 designed by Nobel Prize winner C.V. Raman.*
- *an index chart of the great trigonometrical survey of India from 1860, which it says "no map in the world at that time could rival" for scale, detail and accuracy*

Delamanid drug.

- In order to combat the increasing burden of Multi-drug-resistant Tuberculosis (MDR-TB) Ministry of Health has recently approved **Delamanid** drug.
- Delamanid will be inducted parallel to **Bedaquiline under Revised National Tuberculosis Control Program (RNTCP)** and not replace it.

Revised National Tuberculosis Control Program (RNTCP)

- The National TB Control Programme was started in 1962
- In the district, the programme is implemented through the district Tuberculosis Centre (DTC) and the Primary Health Institutions
- The Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme (RNTCP), based on the DOTS strategy, began as a pilot project in 1993 and was launched as a national programme in 1997 but rapid RNTCP expansion began in late 1998.
- The Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme has initiated early and firm steps to its declared objective of Universal access to early quality diagnosis and quality TB care for all TB patients'.

- As per the National Strategic Plan 2012–17, the program has a vision of achieving a "TB free India", and aims to achieve Universal Access to TB control services.
- The program provides, various ***free of cost, quality tuberculosis diagnosis and treatment services*** across the country through the government health system. It seeks to employ the WHO recommended tuberculosis control strategy, DOTS (Directly Observed Treatment, Short Course), to the Indian scenario.
- NIKSHAY, the web based reporting for TB programme has been another notable achievement initiated in 2012 and has enabled capture and transfer of individual patient data from the remotest health institutions of the country.

DOTS Strategy

- **Directly observed treatment, short-course (DOTS, also known as TB-DOTS)** is the name given to the tuberculosis (TB) control strategy recommended by the World Health Organization.¹
- According to WHO, "The most cost-effective way to stop the spread of TB in communities with a high incidence is by curing it. The best curative method for TB is known as DOTS."
- DOTS has five main components:
 1. Government commitment (including political will at all levels, and establishment of a centralized and prioritized system of TB monitoring, recording and training)
 2. Case detection by sputum smear microscopy
 3. Standardized treatment regimen directly of six to nine months observed by a healthcare worker or community health worker for at least the first two months
 4. A drug supply
 5. A standardized recording and reporting system that allows assessment of treatment results

2. NOBEL PEACE PRIZE 2017 AWARDED TO ICAN

- International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons.
- It is an **international coalition of non-government organizations** running the campaign to advocate United Nations Weapon Ban treaty in about 100 countries.
- Due to their efforts the **United Nations' Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons** was officially adopted in July 2017 and will come into force after ratification by 50 countries.
- At present nine countries of the world – India, Pakistan, China, United Kingdom, United States of America, Russia, Israel and North Korea possess nuclear weapons.
- USA and Russia jointly hold **93% of the world's nuclear arsenal**
- Read on NSG, MTCR, Wassenaar Arrangement, Australia Group
- Read on NPT and CTBT

- NSG – Nuclear Suppliers Group
- MTCR- Missile Technology Control Regime
- Australia Group - The Australia Group is an informal group of countries established in 1985 to help member countries to identify those exports which need to be controlled so as not to contribute to the spread of chemical and biological weapons
- Wassenaar Arrangement - **The Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies**, commonly known as the **Wassenaar Arrangement**, is a multilateral export control regime (MECR) with 41 participating states. Participating states seek, through their national policies, to ensure that transfers of these items do not contribute to the development or enhancement of military capabilities.

PARYATAN PARV

- Ministry of Tourism in collaboration with other Central Ministries, State Governments and Stakeholders has organized “Paryatan Parv”, a nation-wide celebration of Tourism.
- Paryatan Parv has been organized with the objective of drawing focus on the benefits of tourism, showcasing the cultural diversity of the country and reinforcing the principle of “Tourism for All”.
- Gujarat presented the folk dance of Siddhi Dhamal, Haryana showcased Bhum Lehri, Phag, Madhya Pradesh presented Matki Nritya, Chhau Dance was presented by State of Jharkhand whereas Kerala showcased Fusion of Oppana, Margam.

SCHEMES BY MINISTRY OF TOURISM

- For creation of tourism infrastructure- 2 major initiatives
- 1. Swadesh Darshan
- 2. PRASAD - Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spirituality Augmentation Drive
- Twelve cities namely Amaravati (Andhra Pradesh), Gaya(Bihar), Dwaraka(Gujarat), Amritsar(Punjab), Ajmer(Rajasthan), Kanchipuram(Tamil Nadu), Vellankani(Tamil Nadu), Puri(Odisha), Varanasi(Uttar Pradesh), Mathura(Uttar Pradesh), Kedarnath (Uttarakhand) and Kamakhya (Assam) have been identified

Swadesh Darshan

- Under the Swadesh Darshan scheme, thirteen thematic circuits have been identified, for development namely:
- North-East India Circuit, Buddhist Circuit, Himalayan Circuit, Coastal Circuit, Krishna Circuit, Desert Circuit, Tribal Circuit, Eco Circuit, Wildlife Circuit, Rural Circuit, Spiritual Circuit, Ramayana Circuit and Heritage Circuit.
- ‘PRASAD’ scheme the focus is on **development and beautification of the identified pilgrimage** destinations.
- Whereas, in the ‘Spiritual Circuit’ identified under the Swadesh Darshan scheme, **the thrust is on development of particular thematic circuit consisting of various religious/spiritual destination** in a State and Union Territory.

'Adopt a Heritage Scheme'.

- Also known as **Apni Dharohar Apni Pehchan Project**
- **Ministry of Tourism** in collaboration with Ministry of Culture and Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).
- Under this Private Sector Companies, Public Sector Companies and Corporate individuals are invited to adopt the heritage sites.
Called "**Monument Mitras**" and activities taken up as a CSR initiative.
- It envisages **developing monuments, heritage and tourist** sites across India and making them tourist friendly
to enhance their tourism potential and cultural importance to make them more sustainable.

HRIDAY

- Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana
- Ministry of Urban Development
- scheme aimed at preserving and revitalizing the soul and unique character of the heritage cities in India
- Twelve cities under the scheme in the first phase, namely; Amaravati(Andhra Pradesh); Gaya (Bihar); Dwarka (Gujarat), Badami(Karnataka); Puri (Odisha), Amritsar (Punjab); Ajmer(Rajasthan); Kanchipuram (Tamil Nadu); Vellankani(Tamil Nadu); Warangal (Telangana); Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh); and Mathura (Uttar Pradesh).
- The criterion for selection of these cities is their rich heritage and cultural history.

'CLEANEST ICONIC PLACE' TAG

- Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple in Madurai has been adjudged the best 'Swachh Iconic Place' (clean place) in India. The temple is a masterpiece of Dravidian architecture built by Nayaka rulers
- The Swachh Iconic Places is an initiative under the Swachh Bharat Mission.
- The Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation will be the coordinating Ministry for this initiative, in association with the Ministry of Urban Development, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Tourism and the concerned State governments.
- Under **Swachh Iconic place** Initiative government will undertake a special clean-up initiative focused on 100 iconic heritages, spiritual and cultural places in the country. All Iconic Sites have designated PSUs for financial and technical support.

Paika Rebellion of Odisha

- The 'Paika Bidroha' (Paika rebellion) of 1817 will find a place in the history books as 'the First War of Independence'.
- Paikas were peasant militia under the Gajapati rulers of Odisha who rendered military service to the king during times of war. They rebelled against the British rule under the leadership of Bakshi Jagabandhu Bidyadhara as early as 1817.
- It ended with the surrender of Jagandbandhu in 1825.

ECHO CLINIC

- ECHO (Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes) ECHO clinics do not provide care directly to patients like in telemedicine.
- Instead, they **equip primary healthcare clinicians** in remote areas with the knowledge and support to manage complex cases.
- Project ECHO **began in 2003 in New Mexico**
- India's first ECHO clinic **began in 2008** as a collaboration between the National Aids Control Organization (NACO) and Maulana Azad Medical College (MAMC) on managing HIV AIDS patients. Since then, ECHO clinics and handling various diseases in the country

RASHTRIYA SWASTHYA BIMA YOJANA

- It is a health insurance that is managed through private insurance companies **for BPL** (below poverty line) families. It was launched for the workers in the **unorganized sector** in 2007-08.
- It provides for IT-enabled and smart-card-based cashless health insurance, including maternity benefit cover up to Rs. 30,000/- per annum on a family floater basis.
Funding Pattern: Contribution by Government of India to State Government is in ratio of 75:25.
- It is implemented by **the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.**
- Evaluation : No revision of scheme after 8 years, no much impact on out of pocket expense, tertiary treatments are too costly etc

SEX RATIO INCREASE: BETI BACHAO BETI PADHAO (BBBP)

- It is a **tri-ministerial effort** of Ministries of Women and Child Development, Health & Family Welfare and Human Resource Development.
- The efforts include;
Enforcement of **Pre-Conception & Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act, 1994** Nation-wide awareness and advocacy campaign and multi-sectoral action in select districts (low on CSR)
in the first phase.
Emphasis on mindset change through training, sensitization, awareness raising and community mobilization on ground.

Other Initiatives to augment the BBBP outcomes

‘Sukanya Samriddhi Account: is a small deposit scheme for the girl child with a higher interest rate of 9.1 per cent and income-tax benefit.

Selfie with daughter: An initiative the aim to motivate society to feel proud to be parents of a girl child.

Balika Manch- under BBBP to encourage girl students’ participation and improve awareness related to gender issues.

NOBEL PRIZE IN PHYSICS

- For contributions to the **LIGO detector** and the **observation of gravitational waves**
- Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory
Einstein's general theory of relativity predicts that massive accelerating objects would disrupt space time thereby generating waves of distorted space. These are known as gravitational waves.
- At present there are two LIGO detectors, both in US
- The Laser Interferometer Gravitational wave Observatory (LIGO) lab in India will be built in **Maharashtra's Hingoli District**

It offers a new way to observe the cosmos, helping scientists explore the nature of mysterious objects including black holes and neutron star

It helps in solving some big mysteries in astrophysics – including the cause of bright flashes of light known as “gamma ray bursts” and even the origins of heavy elements such as gold.

ICHTHYOSAUR FOSSIL DISCOVERED

- 152 million-year-old fossil of an **Ichthyosaur** - an extinct marine reptile – in the western state of Gujarat.
- Many ichthyosaur fossils have been found in North America and Europe, but this is the **first time** an ichthyosaur fossil has been **discovered in India**.
- The fossil belongs to Jurassic era and was found inside rocks belonging to **Mesozoic Era**.

TURTLE SANCTUARY IN ALLAHABAD

- Government has decided to establish Turtle Sanctuary at Allahabad under **Namami Gange programme**.
- It includes setting up of a **Turtle Rearing Centre, River Biodiversity Park** at **Sangam** (confluence of the rivers Ganga, Yamuna and mythical Sarasvati) and **awareness campaign** about the importance of river Ganga and imperativeness of its conservation.
- It would contribute to the sustenance of more than 2,000 aquatic species including some of the most endangered fauna like turtles, the National Aquatic Animal — Gangetic dolphin ,the Gharial.

Gangetic Dolphin

- The Ganges River dolphin or Susu, lives in one of the most densely populated regions of the world. One of the main threats to the species is loss of habitat due in large part to the creation of dams and irrigation projects.
- Ganga and Brahmaputra river system [Habitat]
- IUCN: Endangered
- Being a mammal, the Ganges River dolphin cannot breathe in the water and must surface every 30-120 seconds. Because of the sound it produces when breathing, the animal is popularly referred to as the 'Susu'.

Gharial

- Critically Endangered
- **fish-eating crocodile**
- The global wild gharial population is estimated at fewer than 235 individuals, which are threatened by loss of riverine habitat, depletion of fish resources, and entanglement in fishing nets
- Gharials once inhabited all the major river systems of the Indian Subcontinent, from the Irrawaddy River in the east to the Indus River in the west. Their distribution is now limited to only 2% of their former range.
- The gharial is one of three crocodilians native to India, the other two being the mugger crocodile and the saltwater crocodile

