

October 19th news:

International issues:

- Macron sets out counter-terror programme for next five years

French President Emmanuel Macron unveiled a plan to bolster France's domestic security on 18th October. His proposals include the creation of a "daily security force" within the police, a plan to combat radicalisation and reforms to asylum procedures

A key announcement was to employ 10,000 extra police and gendarmes. He also promised to give them more technology to use in operations.

Macron also said that the "daily security" police force (PSQ) that he intends to put in place is different from the similar force created by then prime minister Lionel Jospin in 1998 and abolished by then interior minister Nicolas Sarkozy five years later. Meanwhile, Macron said that the consultation on the PSQ will start on October 23, and that the force will begin work at the start of 2018.

The French president announced that he will convene a committee of numerous ministers across different government departments, which will "draw up a new national plan" against radicalisation, while drawing up a list of specific places to monitor.

Emmanuel Macron also called for "uncompromisingly sending back" people from abroad with "no legal right" to stay, while accepting "refugees and people in good standing".

Moreover, Macron complained that there are "several weeks of delays before asylum procedures for migrants actually start".

With France's Senate voting through the controversial anti-terrorism law that will put an end to the country's state of emergency on 1 November, Macron said that he would not refer the decision to the Constitutional Council, even though many in France fear that the legislation will trample on civil liberties.

National issues:

- US says India shouldn't insist on veto reforms if it wants UNSC seat

US ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley said on Tuesday that America was open to UN reforms to expand the permanent membership of the security council but the key for India to get there would be to "not touch" the issue of veto power that current members are neither willing to share nor give up.

The "key to getting India on the Security Council would have to be not touch the veto", Haley, an Indian American, added, in a rare public discussion of the American position on India's claim to a permanent UNSC seat, which was first endorsed by former president Barack Obama in a visit to India in 2010.

India has staked a claim to a permanent seat on a reformed UN security council, with all the same powers but along with other members of the G-4 pressure group — Germany, Japan and Brazil — has backed deferred and phased rollout of the veto power, after a transition period of 15 years

What is UNSC?

The **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)** is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations, charged with the maintenance of international peace and security as well as accepting new members to the United Nations and approving any changes to its United Nations Charter.

Its powers include the establishment of peacekeeping operations, the establishment of international sanctions, and the authorization of military action through Security Council resolutions.

UNSC is the only UN body with the authority to issue binding resolutions to member states. The Security Council held its first session on 17 January 1946

What is Veto Power?

The **United Nations Security Council "power of veto"** refers to the veto power wielded solely by the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, and United States), enabling them to prevent the adoption of any "substantive" resolution.

Abstention or absence from the vote by a permanent member does *not* prevent a draft resolution from being adopted. However, the veto power does not apply to "procedural" votes, as determined by the permanent members themselves.

The unconditional veto possessed by the five governments has been seen by critics as the most undemocratic character of the UN

Bilateral issues:

- **India, Japan to join hands for LNG import**

India and Japan on 18th October agreed to explore joint cooperation in the areas of sourcing, swapping and optimisation of liquefied natural gas sources in the global market and commercial exploitation of methane hydrates.

In a bilateral meeting held in Tokyo, Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and Hiroshige Seko, Minister of Economy, Trade, and Industry of Japan, signed a memorandum of cooperation on establishing a liquid, flexible and global LNG Market. India is the fourth largest importer of LNG in the world.

The two sides discussed ongoing cooperation in the hydrocarbon sector between companies in India and abroad and explored ways to further enhance the engagement.

Economy issues:

- **Funds for SHG @ 7%**

According to RBI, Banks will provide funds to women self help groups, SHGs, in rural areas at 7 per cent under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) in the current fiscal.

The central bank issued the revised guidelines on interest subvention scheme under DAY-NRLM, as received from the Ministry of Rural Development for implementation by 21 public sector banks and 19 private banks.

All women SHGs will be eligible for interest subvention on credit upto 3 lakh rupees at 7 per cent per annum. Banks will be subvented to the extent of difference between the Weighted Average Interest Charged and 7 per cent subject to the maximum limit of 5.5 per cent for the year 2017-18.

The Ministry of Rural Development in consultation with state governments will harmonise State specific interest subvention schemes, if any, in line with the central scheme. The interest subvention scheme on credit to women SHG during 2017-18 is applicable in 250 districts across the country.

What is SHG?

Self Help Groups (SHGs) are a homogenous group of 10-20 individuals who come together for saving and internally helping each other in times of need.

Group members are engaged in livelihood activities such as running a retail shop, cattle rearing, zari work, tailoring jobs, making candles, artificial jewelry etc. Each individual saves a fixed amount on a monthly basis.

Many self-help groups, especially in India, under NABARD's 'SHG Bank Linkage' program, borrow from banks once they have accumulated a base of their own capital and have established a track record of regular repayments.

What is Interest Subvention Scheme

The interest subvention scheme for farmers aims at providing short term credit to farmers at subsidised interest rate.

The interest subvention will be given to Public Sector Banks (PSBs), Private Sector Banks, Cooperative Banks and Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) on use of own funds and to NABARD for refinance to RRBs and Cooperative Banks.

The Interest Subvention Scheme will continue for one year and it will be implemented by NABARD and RBI.

Environmental issues:

- India's methane emissions stabilising: Independent Report

According to an independent study, India's average emissions of methane gas were about 22 trillion grams per year between 2010 and 2015. The group of Scientists was led by Anita Ganesan, who specialises in estimating greenhouse emissions at Bristol University in the UK

Significantly, their estimates showed India's methane emissions are about a third lower than what was calculated by a global research consortium called the Emissions Database for Global Atmospheric Research, in a comprehensive global inventory of greenhouse gas emissions.

Methane, the second most powerful greenhouse gas implicated in climate change, is mainly released from livestock and paddy fields.

It is a significantly more potent greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide: each tonne of methane emitted contributes roughly 25 times more to global warming than a tonne of CO₂.

The aim of the study was to quantify India's methane emissions using observations of methane concentration in the country's atmosphere, the first time that this has been done for India at this scale.

For the study, the scientists used a combination of observations — from the surface, from an aircraft and from a satellite that is measuring methane concentrations globally from space.

The study also found that methane emissions are enhanced each year between June and September over emissions that are being released continuously. This signal is due to rice, which is predominantly grown during this season, and can clearly be observed.

What are Green House gases?

A **greenhouse gas (GHG)** is a gas in an atmosphere that absorbs and emits radiation within the thermal infrared range. This process is the fundamental cause of the greenhouse effect.

The primary greenhouse gases in Earth's atmosphere are water vapor, carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and ozone.

Without greenhouse gases, the average temperature of Earth's surface would be about -18°C rather than the present average of 15°C

Paris Climate summit

The **Paris Agreement**, **Paris climate accord** or **Paris climate agreement**, is an agreement within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) dealing with greenhouse gas emissions mitigation, adaptation and finance starting in the year 2020.

In the Paris Agreement, each country determines, plans and regularly reports its own contribution(Intended Nationally Determined Contribution) it should make in order to mitigate global warming.

There is no mechanism to force a country to set a specific target by a specific date, but each target should go beyond previously set targets so that goal of limiting global temperature rise by 2 °C and if possible by 1.5 °C to that of pre-industrial level.

Awards:

- **Man Booker Prize for George Saunders**

US author George Saunders has won the 2017 Man Booker Prize. He became only the second American writer to win Britain's renowned Prize, which was awarded for his first full-length novel "Lincoln in the Bardo". The prize was announced at a ceremony in London.

All about Man Booker Prize

The **Man Booker Prize for Fiction** is a literary prize awarded each year for the best original novel, written in the English language and published in the UK , therefore, the prize is of great significance for the book trade.

From its inception, only Commonwealth, Irish, and South African (and later Zimbabwean) citizens were eligible to receive the prize.

This eligibility was widened to any English-language novel

The selection process for the winner of the prize commences with the formation of an advisory committee, which includes a writer, two publishers, a literary agent, a bookseller, a librarian, and a chairperson appointed by the Booker Prize Foundation. The advisory committee then selects the judging panel, the membership of which changes each year.

There is one variant of this prize called **Man Booker International Prize**, which is usually given every two years to author of any nationality who has written in English or has their work translated into English