

October 3rd news:

International issues

Medicine Nobel awarded for work on circadian clocks

Three scientists who studied the workings of organisms' inner circadian clocks have won the 2017 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine.

Jeffrey Hall and Michael Rosbash, both at Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts, will split the award of 9 million Swedish kronor (US\$1.1 million) with Michael Young at Rockefeller University in New York City.

Beginning in the 1980s, the three researchers isolated and characterized a gene in fruit flies, *period*, that encodes a protein that builds up each night, only to be broken down the following day. In subsequent work, the trio, as well as other scientists, unpicked the molecular regulation of the *period* gene (and the protein that it encodes, called PER) and identified additional components of the circadian clock.

All multicellular organisms possess circadian clocks, and human versions of the genes that comprise their clocks have been implicated in sleeping disorders and other medical conditions.

National Issues:

- Justice Rohini to head sub-categorisation panel

President Ram Nath Kovind on October 2nd appointed a commission to examine the sub-categorisation of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) to ensure that the more backward among the communities can access the benefits of reservation. The five-member panel will be headed by retired Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court G. Rohini.

Earlier, on August 23, finance minister Arun Jaitley had announced that the government will soon set up a commission to examine the sub-categorization of OBCs.

The composition of the Commission is...

- Chairperson -Justice (Retd.) G. Rohini,
- Member -Dr. J.K. Bajaj (iii) Member(Ex-officio)-Director, Anthropological Survey of India,
- Member (Ex-officio)-Registrar General and Census Commission of India
- (v)Secretary of the Commission-Joint Secretary, Department of SJ&E, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment

Terms and conditions of commission

- To examine the extent of inequitable distribution of benefits of reservation among the castes or communities included in the broad category of Other Backward Classes with reference to such classes included in the Central List
- To work out the mechanism, criteria, norms and parameters in a scientific approach for sub-categorisation within such Other Backward Classes; and...

- To take up the exercise of identifying the respective castes or communities or sub-castes or synonyms in the Central List of Other Backward Classes and classifying them into their respective sub-categories
- The Commission is required to present their Report to the President within a period of twelve weeks of assumption of charge by the Chairperson of the Commission
- On receipt of the Report of the Commission, the Central Government will consider ways and means for equitable distribution of the benefits of the reservation in Central Government jobs and admission in Central Government Institutions amongst all strata of the Other Backward Classes

Swachh Bharat status report

Swachh Bharat program has completed three years, since its inception. It was launched by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 2nd October, 2014. After three years, the current statistics stands.....

The program is divided into Swachh Bharat Urban (SBM-U) and Swachh Bharat Gramin (SBM-G).

The urban part of the program is handled by the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs as the nodal ministry.

The rural part is under the Union Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation.

The primary task of constructing toilets is done either by the individuals with funding help from the government or the government—this is done mostly in case of public toilets.

As and when individual units are completed, photographs and details are submitted to the government that updates latest available data on a daily basis on the websites of concerned nodal ministries.

The data for SBM-U is sourced from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. Similarly, the data for SBM-G is sourced from Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation.

Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban

Under SBM-U, the government had helped construction of 3,074,229 individual toilets and 226,274 public and community toilets.

As per the government data, 1,150 cities have been declared open defecation free since October 2, 2014. The 100 per cent door-to-door waste collection coverage has been reported from 44,650 wards. Currently 88.4 MW energy is being created from waste materials in urban areas.

In the year 2016, as much as 164,891.6 metric tons of compost was produced from waste materials.

SBM-U targets

The three-year cumulative target till end of 2017-18 under SBM-U is 95 lakh individual toilets with a overall program target of 1.04 crore units.

For public and community toilets, the cumulative figure is for 5.08 lakh units which is also the overall target. Also, scientific solid waste management set up has to reach 4,000 villages by end of this year.

Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin (rural)

Under SBM-G, 49,906,655 toilets have been constructed. In 2017-18, 10,280,236 toilets have been built. Since the initiative was launched, there has been an increase of 30.52 per cent in number of households with toilets in rural areas.

Under self declarations to SBM-G authorities, 214 districts have been declared as ODF. As many as 113,514 gram panchayats and 257,259 villages have declared being ODF. According to official figures, on October 2, 2014 coverage for rural areas was 38.7% but it has increased to 69.22% by 2017-18.

SBM-G targets

The overall target for SBM-G is constructing 111.1 million toilets by 2019—the year set by the government to make India ODF.

States like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh are lagging behind miserably. The coverage for individual household toilets is 32.43% in Bihar, 36.37% in Jammu and Kashmir, 43.15% in Odisha and 50.78% in Uttar Pradesh.

Swachh Survekshan

The idea of Swachh Survekshan is to promote competition between cities to be ranked as high as possible in the list of cleanest cities in India.

In the first survey carried out in 2016, QCI assessed and ranked 73 cities. In 2017, the survey, assessment and ranking will be done for 500 cities.

Till now, more than 7.5 lakh citizens have participated in the cleanliness survey and 12,200 locations have been assessed by at least 420 surveyors.

The head of the QCI who oversees the operation is appointed directly by the prime minister hence this is also one of the more closely handled programs of PM Modi.

The survey is done in phases—data collection from municipal bodies, via direct observations and independent assessment; direct citizen feedback and finally ranking on cumulative scores.

The parameters for evaluation are ODF/toilets, waste processing and disposal; waste collection, sweeping and transportation; information, education and behaviour change; and capacity building.

App-based initiatives

In more novel initiatives, the Ministry of Urban Development had released an app called the Swachh Bharat Toilet Locator which has a Google toilet locator service.

The app provides directions and distance to the nearest public toilet. Searches produce gender specific results and an option to rank the installations on the app.

The installations which receive poor ratings are the first to be addressed. Although the initiative didn't take off as expected but this was the first of its kind service in India.

According to coverage statistics with the Centre, Uttarakhand, Chandigarh, Sikkim, Kerala, Gujarat, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh have been declared as ODF states.

Economy issues:

- GDP to hit \$6 trillion by 2027 on digital leap: Morgan Stanley report

India is likely to be the world's fastest-growing large economy in the next 10 years, driven by digitisation, favourable demographics, globalisation and reforms, predicts a Morgan Stanley report.

According to the global financial services major, the trend line in India's annual GDP growth has been accelerating to 6.9 percent in 2000s, from 5.8 percent in the 1990s, and this momentum is likely to continue in the next decade as well.

Morgan Stanley expects digitisation will provide an enhancement of 50-75 bps to GDP growth and forecast that India will grow to a 6-trillion-dollar economy and achieve upper-middle income status by 2026-27.

Morgan Stanley said that India's real GDP growth to compound annually at 7.1 percent and nominal GDP growth to compound at 11.2 percent, over the coming decade

- First US crude oil shipment arrives in Paradip

The first US crude oil cargo of 1.6 million barrels bought by Indian Oil Corporation from the US reached Paradip Port on 2nd October. Indian Oil will process the crude at its East-Coast base refineries, located at Paradip, Haldia, Barauni and Bongaigaon.

According to an official release, Indian Oil, which became the first Indian public sector refiner to source US crude has placed a cumulative order 3.9 million barrel from the US. Bharat Petroleum has also placed orders from the US for about 2.95 million barrels and Hindustan Petroleum 1 million barrels for their Kochi and Vizag refineries.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during his visit to the US in June 2017 had mentioned that India was looking to strengthen its hydrocarbon engagement with US. The decision to source crude from the US came soon after the visit of PM to the US.