

October 5th news:

National issues:

- Govt sets up committee for water management in north-east

With the aim of helping India's flood-ravaged north-east, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government has set up a high-level committee to evolve a strategy for management of the region's water resources.

The committee will be headed by NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar

The committee will facilitate optimising benefits of appropriate water management in the form of hydro-electric power, agriculture, bio-diversity conservation, reduced flood damage erosion, inland water transport, forestry, fishery and eco-tourism,

With one of the focus areas being hydropower, the strategy will also help establish first-user rights to the waters of the Brahmaputra. This comes in the backdrop of Japan joining hands with India to aggressively develop infrastructure projects in India's north-eastern states.

With the ministry of development of north-eastern region (DoNER) serving as the coordinating point, the committee will submit its report as well as a plan of action by June next year. This will involve dovetailing central and state government schemes across departments and autonomous bodies.

- The Brahmaputra, a trans-boundary river and among the mightiest in Asia, is unstable in its entire stretch in Assam except for a few places. India and China have joined issue over the diversion of the Brahmaputra river, which originates in Tibet.
- The Brahmaputra and Barak river systems, which account for one-third of India's run-off, are highly prone to floods. Brahmaputra is one of the largest river systems in the world and causes considerable distress and costs to the region through frequent flooding and erosion
- India has been pushing to establish prior user rights on rivers that originate in China in an effort to fast-track projects in the northeast.
- According to the United Nations, the cross-border annual aggregate flow of the Brahmaputra river system is 165.4bcm (billion cubic metres), which is greater than the combined trans-boundary flow of the three key rivers—Mekong, Salween and Irrawady—that run from the Tibetan plateau to South-East Asia.

Bilateral issues:

- India, Djibouti agree to establish regular political consultations

India and Djibouti have agreed to establish regular political consultations at the level of the Foreign Office.

It was decided during the delegation level talks between President Ram Nath Kovind and President of Djibouti Ismail Omar Guelleh. An agreement in this regard was signed in the presence of both Presidents.

During wide-ranging talks with his Djiboutian counterpart, President Kovind made specific reference to areas of common concern and interest such as terrorism, renewable energy and particularly Djibouti's support for membership of the International Solar Alliance, maritime cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region and technical and capacity building assistance by India to enhance employment opportunities for Djibouti's young people.

Mr Kovind has reached Ethiopia on the second leg of his two-country visit to Africa.

Djibouti: Djibouti is a country located in the Horn of Africa. It is bordered by Eritrea in the north, Ethiopia in the west and south, and Somalia in the southeast. The remainder of the border is formed by the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden at the east. Djibouti occupies a total area of just 23,200 km² (8,958 sq mi)

Operation Rahat and Djibouti

Operation Rahat, the name given to the evacuation process in Yemen, was orchestrated from the tiny African nation of Djibouti, which lies on the other side of the Gulf of Aden from Yemen, and houses foreign militaries taking part in anti-piracy operations off the African coast.

Operation Raahat was an operation of the Indian Armed Forces to evacuate Indian citizens and other foreign nationals from Yemen during the 2015 military intervention by Saudi Arabia and its allies in that country during the Yemeni Crisis. The evacuation by sea started on 1 April 2015 from Aden port. The air evacuation was started by the Indian Air Force and Air India on 3 April 2015 from Sana'a. More than 4640 Indian citizens in Yemen were evacuated along with 960 foreign nationals of 41 countries. The air evacuation ended on 9 April 2015 while the evacuation by sea ended on 11 April 2015

- Turtle Sanctuary to be set up in Allahabad

The Union Ministry of Water Resources approved a project to set up Turtle sanctuary in Allahabad along with River Biodiversity Park at Sangam in Allahabad. The purpose of the Turtle sanctuary is to protect the rich aquatic biodiversity of river Ganga from escalating anthropogenic pressures.

This project will provide a platform to make the visitors aware of their place in the ecosystem, their roles, and responsibilities, improve their understanding of the complexity of co-existence with the environment.

The sustenance of more than 2000 aquatic species including threatened gharials, dolphins and turtles in river Ganga exemplifies rich biodiversity of River Ganga.

Economy issues:

- RBI maintained status quo in its Monetary policy

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on 4th October kept the repo rate unchanged at 6 per cent, maintaining the status quo in its 4th bi-monthly monetary policy statement.

The central bank also revised real GVA growth projection for 2017-18 down to 6.7 per cent from the August 2017 projection of 7.3 per cent.

In a decision that was taken by a majority of 5 to 1, the **Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)** decided to keep the policy repo rate under the liquidity adjustment facility (LAF) unchanged at 6.0 per cent.

Consequently, the reverse repo rate under the LAF remains at 5.75 per cent, and the marginal standing facility (MSF) rate and the Bank Rate at 6.25 per cent, RBI said in a statement.

The six member monetary policy committee (MPC) left cash reserve ratio (CRR) unchanged at 4 per cent, but the statutory liquidity ratio (SLR) requirement was cut by 50 basis points to 19.5 per cent.

The MPC expects inflation to rise from current level to 4.2 to 4.6 in the second half of this fiscal year. The teething problems related to Goods and Service Tax (GST) may get resolved in second half, RBI Governor Urjit Patel said during the press briefing following the MPC meet.

About Monetary Policy

Monetary policy is how central banks manage liquidity to create economic growth. Liquidity is how much there is in the money supply. That includes credit, cash, checks and money market mutual funds the most important of these is credit. It includes loans, bonds and mortgages.

The primary objective of central banks is to manage inflation. The second is to reduce unemployment, but only after they have controlled inflation.

Awards:

- Three people declared winners of Nobel in Chemistry

Scientists Jacques Dubochet, Joachim Frank and Richard Henderson have won the Nobel Chemistry Prize on 4th October for the development of cryo-electron microscopy. It's a method of simplifying and improving the imaging of biomolecules.

Commenting on the discovery by the winners Nobel committee said in a statement that the researchers can now routinely produce three-dimensional structures of biomolecules.

- Rajnish kumar is new Chairman of SBI

Managing Director of State Bank of India (SBI), Rajnish Kumar has been appointed as the next chairman of the largest public sector bank. He will succeed Arundhati Bhattacharya, who is at present serving her one-year extension.

- Soumya Swaminathan is new DD of WHO

The World Health Organization (WHO) appointed Soumya Swaminathan one of two Deputy Directors General. This is the first time such a post has been ever created within the organization.

The position is also the highest post held by an Indian in the WHO. She is currently the Director General of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).