Testwale Current Affairs PDF

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1. GEAC approves Genetically Modified mustards for field trials (Oct. 28, 2022)

GEAC approves Genetically

The **Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC)**, under the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has recommended “environmental release (larger field trials)” of a transgenic mustard hybrid.

The regulator has given approval for field trials of GM mustard for four years and is renewable for two years at a time based on compliance reports. However the final decision will be taken by the ministry of environment and forests and climate change.

Who has developed the GM mustard seed?

The GM mustard seed DMH 11 was developed by the Centre for Genetic Manipulation of Crop Plant (CGMCP) of Delhi University.

Patent on indigenously developed GM mustard is jointly held by **National Dairy Development Board** and the **University of Delhi under Deepak Pental**.

If the trial is successful then it will be the **first genetically modified food crop** to be cultivated in India.

Genetic Crops in India

The first transgenic crop to be approved in India was **Bt.Cotton in 2002**, which has led to a massive jump in the production of cotton in India. India is now the largest producer of cotton in the world.

The second crop which was approved for field trial was **Bt. Brinjal** in 2009. However, the decision was later stayed by the then environment minister Jairam Ramesh on grounds of “insufficient scientific evidence about safety”.

What is a transgenic crop?

A transgenic crop is a genetically modified organism (GMO).Here transgenic means that one or more genes of a different unrelated plant or from different species is inserted artificially in a crop using recombinant DNA technology. This is done to introduce desired quality in the crop and improve its productivity.

Benefits of GM Crops

Improve crop protection and production

- One of the objectives for developing plants based on GM organisms is to improve crop protection. It can be used to modify the genes of the crops so as to increase the resistance of plants to specific insects and diseases, thus increasing the production. For example Resistance against insects is achieved by incorporating into the food plant the gene for toxin production from the bacterium Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt).
- This helps in reducing the consumption of the insecticides and herbicides saving money for the farmers.

- It can help in creating plants which are more tolerant to cold, frost, or drought. It will make crops grow in harsh climatic conditions and will be extremely helpful in in a constantly changing environment.
- It also helps in increasing the production of crops as they grow faster than the traditional crops and also taste better. This will in turn lower the prices of the crop produced.
- Genetically engineered foods are reported to be high in nutrients and contain more minerals and vitamins than those found in traditionally grown foods.
- Genetically engineered foods have an increased shelf life and hence there is less fear of foods getting spoiled quickly.

Problems with Transgenic crops

Fear of adverse effect on Human health

The consumption of transgenic foods is believed to have a harmful effect on the human body as it can cause the development of diseases which are immune to antibiotics.

The long term effect of these foods on human beings is not known.

Fear of MNC controlling food production

The process to develop such transgenic crops needs resources, qualified personnel and technology which is mainly with large multinational corporations. The seeds of the transgenic crops can be used only once. Hence the farmers have to buy the seed again and again from the company which holds the patent of the crop. This makes the farmers and developing countries dependent on the company which can be a serious threat to the food system and economy of the developing countries.

Religious and cultural reasons

Many religious and cultural communities are against such foods because they see it as an unnatural way of producing foods. Many people are also not comfortable with the idea of transferring animal genes into plants and vice versa.

Unknown impact on Ecosystem

The introduction of a new crop in the ecosystem having foreign genes can have unpredictable consequences for the ecosystem. An ecosystem develops symbiotic relationships amongst its organism over a long period of time. Introduction of a new species with foreign genes can disrupt the ecosystem with unpredictable consequences.

Union Minister for Environment ,Forest and Climate Change : **Bhupendra Yadav**

2. Record horticulture production in 2021-22 (Oct. 28, 2022)

Record horticulture production in 2021-22

India's production of **horticultural crops** consisting of **fruits, vegetables, spices and medicinal plants** increased to a record **342.3 million tonnes (mt)** in the crop year 2021-22 (July-June) as against **334.6 million tonnes** recorded in 2020-21.

Important facts

- According to the **third advance estimate** released by the agriculture ministry on October 27, the increase in production over the previous year was due to growth in the cultivation area.
- The area under horticultural crops was **28 million hectare** in 2021-22 compared to **27.4 million hectare** in the previous year.
- The horticultural crops production continues to be higher than the foodgrain production.
- According to the fourth advance estimate of **foodgrain production** released in August, India's production of rice, wheat and pulses in the crop year 2021-22 was estimated at a record 315.7 million tonnes.
- **Vegetable productio**n is estimated to increase by 2.1% to 204.8 million tonnes in 2021-22 as compared to 200.4 million tonnes as per the final estimates for 2020-21.
- **Onion production** is estimated to increase by 17% to 31.2 million tonnes in 2021-22 from 26.6 million tonnes in the previous year.
- At the same time, **potato production** is estimated to decline by 5% to 53.3 million tonnes in the 2021-22 crop year, from 56.1 million tonnes in 2020-21.
- **Tomato production** is estimated to decline by 4% to 20.3 million tonnes as compared to 21.1 million tonnes as per the final estimates for 2020-21.
- The third advance estimate of **fruit production** is estimated to be 107.2 million tonnes in 2021-22 as compared to 102.5 million tonnes in the 2020-21 crop year.
- **Production of Banana** is estimated to increase by more than 32.45 million tonnes (2%) in 2021-22 over the previous year, while Mango production is estimated to be 20.3 million tonnes in 2021-22 which is the same level as compared to the previous year.

3. Saudi Aramco executive jailed for one week in Chamoli for carrying satellite phone (Oct. 28, 2022)

Saudi Aramco executive jailed

A senior British executive of oil giant **Saudi Aramco** had to spend nearly a week in a **Chamoli in Uttarakhand jail** after taking a banned satellite phone to a yoga retreat.

Important facts

- **Fergus MacLeod**, head of investor relations at Saudi Aramco, was released after paying a **fine of ₹1,000.**
- McLeod, who was arrested on July 12, said he was unaware of the ban on satellite phones, which were used by terrorists who attacked **Mumbai in 2008.**
- McLeod reportedly turned on the satellite phone in his hotel room but claimed he did not use it.

About Satellite Phone

- It is a type of mobile phone that connects to other phones or telephone networks by radio via orbiting satellites rather than at terrestrial cell sites, as cellphones do.
- Its advantage is that its use is not limited to areas covered by cell towers, it can be used in most or all geographic locations on the Earth's surface.
- These phones are capable of receiving and making calls anywhere in the world, even in remote parts, be it the Himalayas or an uninhabited island in the Pacific.
- The concept of satellite phones is not new. Actually, the first satellite phone was **launched by Motorola in 1989**.

4. Singapore-India Maritime Bilateral Exercise 'Simbex' - 2022 (Oct. 28, 2022)

Singapore-India Maritime Bilateral Exercise

The **Indian Navy** is hosting the 29th edition of the **Singapore-India Maritime Bilateral Exercise (SIMBEX)** in **Visakhapatnam** from October 26 to 30, 2022.

Phases of SIMBEX-2022

1. **Port Phase** at Visakhapatnam from 26th to 27th October 2022
2. **Sea phase** in the Bay of Bengal from 28 to 30 October 2022

Important facts

- Two ships from the Republic of Singapore Navy, RSS Stalwart (a Formidable Class Frigate) and RSS Vigilance (a Victory Class Corvette) arrived at Visakhapatnam on 25 October 2022 for participation in the exercise.
- The Harbor Phase saw extensive professional and sporting interactions between the two navies which included cross deck visits, Subject Matter Expert Exchange (SMEE) and planning meetings.

About SIMBEX series of exercises

- It began in **1994** and was initially known as **Exercise Lion King.**
- The scope and complexity of the exercise has risen substantially over the past two decades to include advanced naval drills covering a wide spectrum of maritime operations.
- The exercise exemplifies the high level of cooperation between India and Singapore in the maritime sector.
- It also highlights the commitment and contribution of the two countries towards enhancing maritime security in the Indian Ocean region.

5. Cyclone Sitrang (Oct. 27, 2022)

Cyclone Sitrang

Bangladesh has been devastated by **Cyclone Sitarang**, where densely populated, low-lying areas have been badly affected.

Important facts

- This cyclone named by **Thailand** is the first **tropical cyclone** of the post-monsoon season of 2022.
- The India Meteorological Department has predicted that a low pressure area is likely to form over southeast and adjoining east-central Bay of Bengal.
- Due to this, the low pressure area may turn into a cyclonic storm which may affect Odisha, West Bengal, northern part of Andhra Pradesh and adjoining areas.

About Cyclone Sitrang

- A tropical cyclone is an intense circular storm that originates from warm tropical oceans, characterised by low atmospheric pressure, high winds and heavy rainfall.
- The name of this cyclone is given by **Thailand.**
- Cyclone Sitarang comes after Cyclone **Asani**, which developed in the Bay of Bengal in early May this year.
- This will be the **second cyclonic storm** of 2022.
- Cyclones forming in the North Indian Ocean including the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal are named by the IMD.
- **Thirteen countries** – Bangladesh, India, Iran, Maldives, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, United Arab Emirates and Yemen – have been warned of tropical cyclones and storm surge by the IMD.

Common names of Cyclone

- **Hurricanes** – In the Atlantic and Eastern Pacific
- **Typhoons** – In Southeast Asia
- **Cyclone** – In the Indian Ocean and Western Pacific around Australia

6. Narendra Singh Tomar presides over the 7th ASEAN-India Ministerial Meeting on Agro-Forestry (Oct. 26, 2022)

th ASEAN-India Ministerial Meeting

The 7th ASEAN-India Ministerial Meeting (AIMMAF) on Agriculture and Forestry was held virtually on 26 October 2022. The meeting was co-chaired by the Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, **Narendra Singh Tomar**.

Agriculture Ministers of Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam also participated in the meeting.

In the meeting, the progress in implementation of various programs and activities under the Medium Term Action Plan of ASEAN-India Cooperation (Year 2021-2025) was reviewed. The meeting also welcomed the 30th anniversary of ASEAN-India relations.

Association of Southeast Asian Nation (ASEAN)

It is considered to be one of the most successful regional groups in the world.

It was set up in 1967 as a group of South-East Asian nations.

At present there are 10 members in the group. They are:

Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

The headquarters of ASEAN: **Jakarta, Indonesia.**

7. Union Home Ministry cancels FCRA licence of Rajiv Gandhi Foundation (Oct. 23, 2022)

cancels FCRA licence

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has cancelled the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) license of the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation (RGF) for violations of the law.

The Foundation is registered as a non-government organization and is associated with the former Congress party President Sonia Gandhi and her family .

The decision of the ministry was based on the investigations carried out by an inter-ministerial committee formed by the home ministry in 2020.

Why was the FCRA license cancelled?

In 2020, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) President Jagat Prakash Nadda had alleged that the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation had accepted $300,000 from the Chinese government during 2005-06.

The BJP alleged that the funds received by the RGF were a "bribe" for lobbying for a free-trade agreement between India and China.

The MHA set up the inter-ministerial committee headed by an Enforcement Directorate officer to probe possible violations of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, the Income Tax Act and the FCRA.

Rajiv Gandhi Foundation

The Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, set up in 1991 during the reign of Narasimha Rao, as a think tank to study on a number of issues including health, science, and technology, women and children, disability support, etc., from 1991 to 2009.

Former Congress President Sonia Gandhi is the chairperson of RGF while other trustees include former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, former Finance Minister P Chidambaram, Congress MP Rahul Gandhi, and Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra.

What is FCRA?

- The Foreign Contribution Regulation Act 1976 regulates the receipts of foreign contribution foreign contribution received by certain Individuals, companies, Political Parties, association or NGO resident in India.
- The government can ban receipt of foreign contributions if it feels that it harms the national interest.
- It can also cancel the license of the Associations, NGO if they do not follow the procedure mentioned in the law.
- The law is administered by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.

8. Rishi Sunak appointed as the 57th Prime Minister of the United Kingdom by King Charles (Oct. 25, 2022)

King Charles of the United Kingdom appointed Rishi Sunak as the **57th Prime Minister** of the United Kingdom on 25 October 2022 at **Buckingham Palace** in London.

He is the third Prime Minister of this year after Boris Johnson and **Elizabeth Truss** and will enter Downing Street as the **youngest** Prime Minister in two centuries. He is 42 years old.

is also the first **Asian** to become the Prime Minister.

Rishi Sunak who was the Chancellor of the Exchequer (finance minister) during Boris Johnson's regime lost to Elizabeth Truss in a contest to be the next Prime minister.

However he was elected as the leader of the Conservative party after Truss resigned after being in office for just 44 days.

Who is Rishi Sunak?

Rishi Sunak's father and mother are of Punjabi descent and were born in Kenya and Tanzania respectively, which were part of British Empire.

They migrated to the United Kingdom in 1970’s and Rishi Sunak was born in England.

He is married to Akshata Murthy, the daughter of Indian billionaire and one of the founders of Infosys Company, Narayana Murthy.

Important things to know

10 Downing Street

It is the official residence of the Prime Minister of United Kingdom

Buckingham Palace

Buckingham Palace has served as the official London residence of the United Kingdom's sovereigns since 1837 and today is the administrative headquarters of the Monarch.

Robert Walpole is considered to be the first Prime Minister of Britain (1721-1742) and also the first Prime Minister in the world.

9. Russia accuses Ukraine of building ‘Dirty Bomb’ (Oct. 25, 2022)

Ukraine of building ‘Dirty Bomb’

Russian defence minister **Sergei Shoigu** in a phone call to his counterpart from the United States, Britain, France and Turkey has accused Ukraine of nearly completing building a ‘dirty bomb’. However Ukraine, France, the United States and the United Kingdom has rejected the Russian accusations.

The Russian claims that “two organisations in Ukraine have specific instructions to create a so-called ‘dirty bomb’.

Russia invaded Ukraine on 24 February 2022 and it has been almost 9 months of the conflict.

What is a dirty bomb?

It is a bomb which contains radioactive material such as uranium along with a conventional explosives. The explosives when detonated scatters the radioactive material in the air contaminating a wide area. The radioactive material used to make dirty bomb is not a highly enriched uranium which is used to make of nuclear weapon but it could be radioactive materials from hospitals, nuclear power stations or research laboratories.

It is cheaper and easier to make than nuclear weapons.

Impact of Dirty Bomb

The Dirty bomb itself does not cause massive casualty but due to radioactive fallout, it can cause serious illness such as cancer in the area. It can cause massive panic in the targeted area. A wide area around the blast zone would also have to be evacuated for decontamination, or abandoned completely.

According to the BBC “the Federation of American Scientists has calculated that if a bomb containing 9g (0.3oz) of cobalt-60 and 5kg of TNT were to be exploded at the tip of Manhattan, in New York, it would make the whole area of the city uninhabitable for decades.”

For this reason, dirty bombs are known as weapons of **mass disruption**.

Instances of the use of Dirty Bomb

According to BBC there has been to three known instances of use of dirty bombs, but they were defused before it could explode

In 1996, rebels from Chechnya **planted a bomb** containing dynamite and caesium-137 in Moscow's Izmailovo Park. The caesium had been extracted from cancer-treatment equipment.

In 1998, Chechnya's intelligence service found and defused a dirty bomb that had been placed near a railway line in Chechnya.

In 2002, Jose Padilla, **a US citizen who had contacts with al-Qaeda**, was arrested in Chicago on suspicion of planning a dirty-bomb attack.

10. Xi Jinping re-elected as General Secretary of Communist Party of China for record third term (Oct. 23, 2022)

Xi Jinping re-elected

Chinese President Xi Jinping on 23 October 2022 was re-elected as the General Secretary of the ruling Communist Party of China for a record **third five-year term**. Only the founder of the People's Republic of China (PRC) **Mao Zedong** has been made the General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party three times. He is the **7th General Secretary** of the Chinese Communist Party.

The 20th Chinese Communist Party Congress was held in Beijing from 16 -22 October 2022. It is held **once every five years**. The first National Congress was held in 1921.

According to the constitution of the People's Republic of China there is only one political party, the Communist Party of China in the country which is also the ruling party of China. The Communist Party Congress meeting elects the 25-member Political Bureau which picks the 7 Standing Committee members to govern the country.

Whoever is the General Secretary of the Communist party is the President of China also.

Xi was also named chairman of the CPC Central Military Commission (CMC), the overall high command of the Chinese military at the session.

People's Republic of China

The People's Republic of China was founded by Mao Zedong on 1 November 1949 after the communist forces defeated Nationalist Party, or Kuomintang (KMT) led by Chiang Kai-shek in the Chinese Civil War.

Later Chiang Kai-Shek fled to Formosa, now **Taiwan** and formed the Republic of China.

PRC is also called as **Mainland China** is the largest **Asian** country area wise and **third largest** in the world after Russia and Canada.

It is the **second largest economy** in the world after the United States of America.

It is the largest **Exporting** and **Trading country** (export+Import) in the world.

Capital: **Beijing** (It was earlier known as Peking)

Currency: **Renminbi (yuan)**

President: **Xi Jinping**