

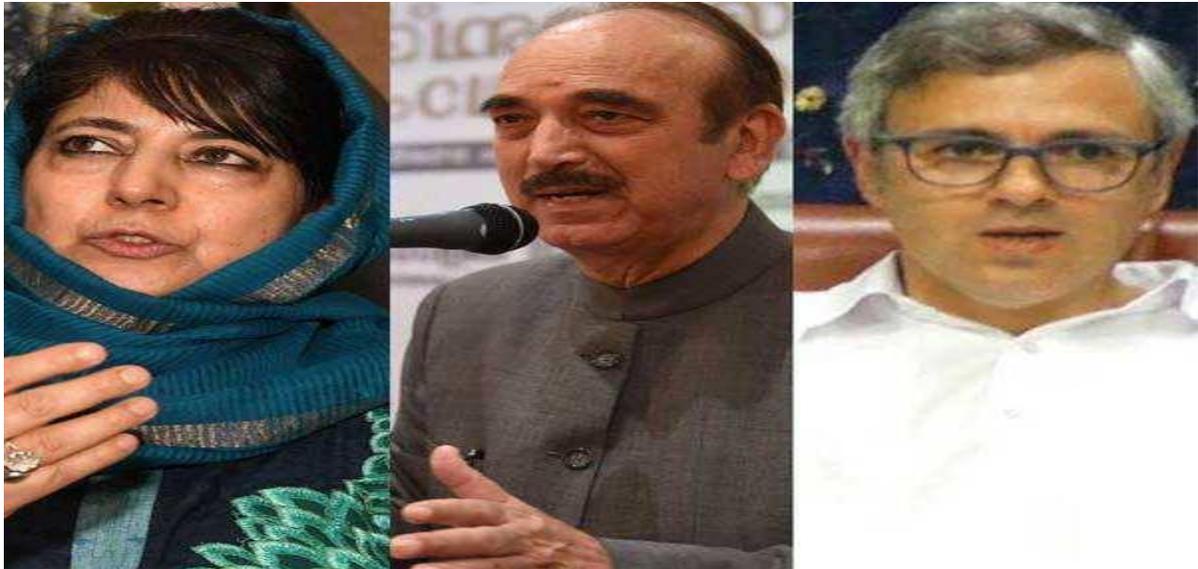


CIVIL SERVICE DIGEST (CSD-Daily)

November 23, 2018

Joined hands with PDP to protect special status accorded to J&K

- The National Conference (NC), the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and the Congress on Thursday launched a scathing attack on Jammu and Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik for dissolving the Assembly and BJP general secretary Ram Madhav for his remarks alleging Pakistani support to the alliance.
- NC vice-president Omar Abdullah justified his “temporary grand alliance with the PDP and the Congress to safeguard the special status of J&K in the Supreme Court.”
- At a press conference here, he questioned Mr. Malik’s rejection of the move on grounds of “different political ideologies” and asked why the same principle was not applied when the PDP joined hands the BJP in 2015.
- “That time, it was dubbed the coming-together of the North Pole and the South Pole... Today, you are telling the other parties that you cannot come together,” he said. “The differences among the PDP, the NC and the Congress over some important issues are smaller than those between the BJP and the PDP,” he said.



General analysis of Coalition Politics

- Coalition Politics is a time tested thing in Modern Democracy. The concept of Coalition Politics basically draws its roots from the times when warring states sometimes used to ally with each other in order to defeat of a common enemies, as in Vedic Civilization's Dasharajnya war, Nizams & British coalition verses Marathas .
- In recent times in India got a taste of Coalition Politics at the state level when the Left front comprising of Communist Party of India (CPI), CPI (Marxist) and others formed the first ever Coalition Government in India at West Bengal with Mr. Jyoti Basu as the Chief Minister.
- At the national level the first ever coalition government was formed under the Prime Ministership of Late Shri Morarji Desai which existed from 24th March 1977 to 15th July 1979 headed by Janata Party

Pros of Coalition Politics

- The coalition government addresses the regional disparity more than the single party rule.

- Coalitions provide good government because their decisions are made in the interests of a majority of the people. A coalition government better reflects the popular opinion of the electorate within a country.
- Coalition government provides more continuity in administration. A more consensual style of politics also allows for a more gradual and constructive shift of policy between administrations.
- Such government functions on principle of politics of consensus. Besides, states are given more powers, and the base of concept of federalism is strengthened.
- Government will be more consensus based: resulting policies will be broadly approved of for the benefit of the nation.
- Better representation of the electorate's wishes. Better quality of policy: enhanced scrutiny and increased attention paid to each policy
- Increased continuity: election does not lead to dramatic overhaul which can produce fragmented rule
- Coalition governments have been effective in enhancing democratic legitimacy, representativeness, and national unity.

Cons of Coalition Politics

- Coalition government is actually less democratic as the balance of power is inevitably held by the small parties who can barter their support for concessions from the main groups within the coalition.
- Coalition government is less transparent, because a party has no real chance of forming a government alone, the manifestos they present to the public become irrelevant and often wildly unrealistic.
- Coalitions provide bad government because they are unable to take a long term view.

- In coalition governments, MLAs and MPs from all the parties are given portfolios/ministries and appointed as Ministers. These ministers are appointed on the recommendations of the parent party, without taking the qualification, character and criminal /clean record of the MLAs and MPs.

An emerging disease

- Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) under Department of Health Research is in the forefront of advanced research in virology and the ICMR-National Institute of Virology (NIV) is at par with leading scientific establishments across the world.
- ICMR-NIV, Pune has sequenced 5 Zika virus strains collected at different time points of the Jaipur outbreak.
- The Health Ministry is reviewing the situation on a daily basis.
- Around 2000 samples were tested for Zika virus positivity, of which 159 positive cases have been confirmed. Adequate numbers of testing kits have been provided to the Viral Research and Diagnostic Laboratories.

About:

- Zika virus disease is an emerging disease currently being reported by 86 countries worldwide. Symptoms of Zika virus disease are similar to other viral infections such as dengue, and include fever, skin rashes, conjunctivitis, muscle and joint pain, malaise, and headache.
- In India, the first outbreak was reported in Ahmedabad in January/February 2017 and second outbreak in July,2017 from Krishnagiri District in Tamilnadu.

Zika virus

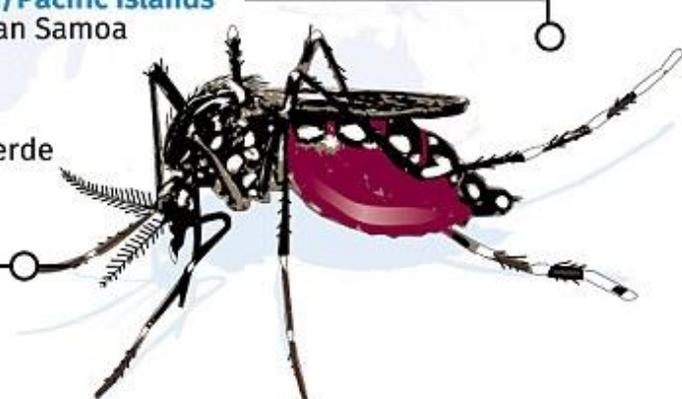
The World Health Organisation has declared an international emergency over the virus, which is linked to birth defects in Brazil and the Americas.

Countries affected:



Transmission

Zika virus disease is caused by a virus transmitted by **Aedes mosquitoes**



Signs and Symptoms

- headache
 - conjunctivitis
 - skin rashes
 - mild fever
 - muscle and joint pain
- Symptoms are usually mild and last for 2-7 days

The Aedes mosquito also transmits **dengue, chikungunya** and **yellow fever**

The best form of prevention is protection against mosquito bites

Safe sex **1 Month**

Public Health England warned men in the UK to wear condoms for a month after returning from any of the affected countries

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/The World Health Organisation **PA**

Australia and Poland join US rejection of UN migration pact

Australia and **Poland** refused to sign a UN pact on migration because the agreement would undermine their existing immigration policies. A draft of the agreement, which is not legally binding, was finalized in 2017 after more than a year of work. **The United Nations** decided to come up with a global compact on migration in 2016, in the wake of the crisis in the Mediterranean, which has seen thousands of migrants die while attempting to cross into Europe.



Key points:

- i.** The pact lays out **23 objectives** to open up legal migration and better management of migratory flows as the number of people on the move worldwide has increased to 250 million (3 % of the world's population).
- ii.** It is due to be adopted next month although the United States and a handful of conservative governments in Israel, Austria, Hungary and the Czech Republic have rejected the pact.

**India clears Kartarpur Corridor till Pakistan border to help Sikh pilgrims
visit Gurdwara Darbar Sahib**

- India and Pakistan exchanged letters on Thursday committing to build the required infrastructure for visa-free direct travel by Sikh pilgrims to Pakistan's Kartarpur Sahib Gurdwara allowing them to mark the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev in November 2019.
- The move was described by a Pakistani Minister as the “victory of peace lobbies” in both countries.
- Officials of both countries will meet soon to discuss the logistics of the corridor and the point of border-crossing where the roads, which pilgrims will take on the Indian side from Dera Guru Nanak Dev in Gurdaspur district, will lead directly to the border and from the Pakistani side of the border directly to the Kartarpur Darbar Sahib Gurdwara, a senior official confirmed to The Hindu.

Brief history of Kartarpur Gurdwara

- The gurdwara in Kartarpur stands on the bank of the Ravi, about 120 km northeast of Lahore.
- It was here that Guru Nanak assembled a Sikh community and lived for 18 years until his death in 1539.
- The shrine is visible from the Indian side, as Pakistani authorities generally trim the elephant grass that would otherwise obstruct the view.
- Indian Sikhs gather in large numbers for darshan from the Indian side, and binoculars are installed at Gurdwara Dera Baba Nanak.

The significance of the Gurdwara

- The gurdwara was opened to pilgrims after repairs and restoration in 1999, and Sikh jathas have been visiting the shrine regularly ever since.
- There are no restrictions on visiting Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib once a pilgrim has entered Pakistan on a valid visa.

- Sikh jathas from India travel to Pakistan on four occasions every year for Baisakhi, the martyrdom day of Guru Arjan Dev, the death anniversary of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, and the birthday of Guru Nanak Dev.
- These Indian pilgrims are given access to all gurdwaras in Pakistan.

Centre didn't consult CIC on proposed RTI Act amendments, says outgoing information commissioner

- The Centre did not take the Central Information Commission into confidence on its proposed amendments to the Right To Information Act (RTI), said outgoing Chief Information Commissioner (CIC) Radha Krishna Mathur, who retires on November 24, 2018.
- While the Commission as a whole has not taken any official stance, several of the Commissioners have made their views public, signalling a split within the body. M. Sridhar Acharyulu had written a letter to his fellows soon after the amendments were made public, warning that the proposal would weaken the Commission.

Background

- The government had planned to introduce the Right to Information (Amendment) Bill, 2018, in the Lok Sabha in July this year. But the Bill was not tabled following protests from civil society and the Opposition.
- The Bill proposes to give the Centre the power to decide the tenure and salaries of State and Central Information Commissioners. Critics have warned that the amendments undermine the independence and authority of the Commission.

Right to Information (RTI)

- In 1976, in the Raj Narain vs the State of UP, it was held by the Supreme Court that people cannot speak unless they know. Hence the Right to Information is embedded in Article 19.
- It was also said in the same case that the in the Indian democracy, people are the masters which give them the right to know about the functioning of the government. RTI Act provides machinery for exercising this fundamental right.
- As per the RTI Act 2005, every citizen has the right to receive a timely response from the government for any information that is sought by them with respect to the functioning of the government.

Under the RTI, every citizen is empowered to

- Seek information / ask questions to the government
- Request for copies of government documents
- Inspect government documents and works
- Request for samples of materials of any government work

The basic objectives of RTI

- Empowerment of the citizens
- Promotion of transparency and accountability in the functioning of the government
- Prevention and elimination of corruption
- Making the democracy work for the people in its real sense

An informed citizen is better equipped to have a better vigilance on the instruments of governance in order to make the government more accountable to the governed.

- RTI is a huge leap in keeping the citizens informed about the activities of the government.
- An RTI portal is created by the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions in order to facilitate the process of RTI. Besides access to information

related to RTI, published disclosures by various public authorities under the state and the central governments, it acts as a gateway for obtaining information on the details of first Appellate Authorities, Principle Information Officers etc.

- Every Public authority is obligated to maintain a computerised version of all the records in a manner that could be accessed over a network at any place within the country by issuing it to the person on his/her demand.
- Various channels need to be frequently updated by the public authority so that the use of RTI Act to seek information can be kept to a bare minimum.
- A written or electronic request must be placed by a person seeking information under the RTI Act. No reason shall be sought from the person placing the request except the contact details in case the authorities would have to contact him/her.
- However, the authorities are not obligated to provide any such information that is received under confidence by a foreign government, cabinet papers, information forbidden to be shared by the court of law, information that could potentially hurt the sovereignty and integrity of India.