



News Analysis (25 Sep, 2018)

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Maldives Election Result

The joint candidate of Opposition parties led by Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP), Mr. Ibrahim Mohamed Solih won the presidential election in the Maldives.

Solih defeated the incumbent president Abdullah Yameen, who was president since November 2013.

Background

- Maldivian Supreme Court on February 1, 2018, ordered the government to release the nine convicted opposition leaders and also ruled for reinstating 12 parliamentarians who were removed from their seats.
- President Yameen ignored the court order and declared an emergency.
- The judges of the supreme court and former president of the Maldives Abdul Gayoom were arrested in February 2018.
- The Emergency was lifted 45 days later.
- India, EU, and the US criticized the Yameen government for its actions and urged Yameen government to abide by the constitution of Maldives and Supreme Court ruling.
- With a number of prominent opposition figures of the country put behind bars, former President Mohamed Nasheed living in exile, a defunct parliament and a crippled judiciary, there was a big question mark over a free and fair election in the Indian Ocean archipelago nation.
- The election was held on 23rd September 2018.

International Response

- The United States and Sri Lanka welcomed the developments in the Maldives.
- The US also said that it looked forward to “a peaceful transition of power,” and pledged cooperation to Mr. Solih’s government.

Significance for India

- The winning of opposition candidate is welcomed by India, as India is hoping to gain the ground it lost to China in the Maldives due to the estranged relation with Yameen Government.
- India has always supported the democratic way, thus the successful conduct of the election is seen as a positive development for India.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi also called president-elect to congratulate him on his victory. The two leaders agreed to work closely together to further strengthen the close, friendly and good neighborly relations between the two countries.

India-Maldives Relation

- India and the Maldives share deep historical, cultural, and economic ties.
- India was among the first to recognize the Maldives after its independence in 1965 and to establish diplomatic relations with the country. India established its mission at Malé in 1972.
- India’s bilateral and financial assistance to the Maldives has been reciprocated through an “India first” policy by the Maldives.
- Importance of the Maldives for India:
 - Strategically located in the Indian Ocean, Maldives archipelago comprising 1200 coral Islands lies next to key shipping lanes which ensure uninterrupted energy supplies to countries like China, Japan, and India. More than 97% of India’s international trade by volume and 75% by value passes through the region.
 - As the pre-eminent South Asian power and a ‘net security provider’ in the Indian Ocean region, India needs to cooperate with the Maldives in security and defense sectors.
 - India is also a preferred destination for Maldivians for education, medical treatment, recreation, and business.
 - Maldives is also a member of SAARC. It is important for India to have the Maldives on board to maintain its leadership in the region. Maldives was reluctant to follow India’s call for the boycott of SAARC summit in Pakistan after the Uri attack.
 - Since China’s naval expansion into the Indian Ocean - Maldives significance has steadily grown and now it’s at the heart of international geopolitics.

Ease of Living Index

Andhra Pradesh topped the 'Ease of Living Index' ranking under the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), followed by Odisha and Madhya Pradesh.

- The index is released by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA).
- 'Ease of Living' as a term has no standard definition. For some, it is fundamentally tied to physical amenities such as water supply, solid waste management, parks and green space etc; for others it relates to cultural offerings, career opportunities, economic dynamism or safety. For these reasons it is directly or indirectly also linked to number of schemes and initiatives of the Government which ultimately aims to meet the needs and aspirations of the people.
- It will help cities systematically assess themselves against global and national benchmarks and encourage them to shift towards an 'outcome-based' approach to urban planning and management.
- The MoHUA released the first ever 'Ease of Living Index' covering 111 Indian cities in August, 2018, which serves as a litmus test to help assess the progress made in cities through various initiatives.
- It captures quality of life based on data collected from urban local bodies on four parameters or pillars, which are further broken down into 15 categories. The cities are evaluated out of 100.
- The four parameters with their respective weightage are:
 - Institutional (governance)- 25.
 - Social (identity, education, health, security)- 25
 - Economic (economy, employment)- 5
 - Physical Factors (waste water and solid waste management, pollution, housing/ inclusiveness, mixed land use, power and water supply, transport, public open spaces)- 45
- Ease of Living assessment standards is also linked with majority of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specially to the SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities And Communities).
- This will promote evidence-based planning and action towards sustainable urbanization as it seeks to assist cities in undertaking a 360-degree assessment of their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

[Read more on Ease of Living Index...](#)

NTBN Approves Nutrition Norms

India's top nutrition panel, the **National Technical Board on Nutrition (NTBN)** has recommended that severely malnourished children must be fed freshly cooked food prepared from locally available cereals, pulses and vegetables, and distributed by

anganwadi centres.

- This is the country's first-ever guidelines for nutritional management of children suffering from **severe acute malnutrition (SAM)**.
- The measures are part of the community-based health management of children suffering from SAM.

Severe acute malnutrition is defined by a very low weight for height (below -3z scores of the median WHO growth standards), by visible severe wasting, or by the presence of nutritional oedema. Decreasing child mortality and improving maternal health depend heavily on reducing malnutrition, which is responsible, directly or indirectly, for 35% of deaths among children under five.

National Technical Board on Nutrition (NTBN)

- The NTBN was constituted in 2017 under Ministry of Women & Child Development to make technical recommendations on policy relevant issues on nutrition.
 - The board meets once in three months and its recommendations are advisory in nature.
- The government had, in 2011 put in place only the **guidelines for the hospitalisation** of severely wasted children who develop medical complications and **not anything related to nutrition**.
 - Under the new guidelines, the morning snacks and hot-cooked meals, which are served at anganwadis to children between the **age of three to six years**, should be "prepared freshly and served at the centralised kitchen/ anganwadi centres.
Locally available cereals, pulses, green leafy vegetables and tubers, vitamin C rich fruits, as well as fresh milk and 3-4 eggs every week have also been prescribed.
 - The anganwadi workers and auxillary nurse midwives (ANMs) will identify **severely wasted children**, segregate those with oedema or medical complications and send them to the nearest health facility or nutrition rehabilitation centres.
The remaining children (those not with medical complications) are enrolled into "community based management", which includes provision of nutrition, continuous monitoring of growth, administration of antibiotics and micro-nutrients as well as counselling sessions and imparting of nutrition and health education.

Oedema

- Oedema is a build-up of fluid in the body which causes the affected tissue to become swollen.
- It's normal to have some swelling in legs at the end of the day, particularly in state of sitting or standing for long periods.

- Oedema is often temporary and clears up by itself.
- It can occur as a result of malnutrition as well.

Recently, the government has also revised the method to be used to measure wasting. Now, weight is calculated based on the height of children instead of the mid-upper arm circumference.

Important Facts for Prelims (25th September 2018)

Tipeshwar Wildlife Sanctuary

- Tipeshwar Wildlife Sanctuary is located in Yavatmal district of Maharashtra
- It is fast emerging as a prime tiger conservation and tiger tourism haven despite the disadvantage of being much smaller in area.
- The comparatively higher incidence of tiger sightings in the sanctuary has made the place popular among wildlife enthusiasts.

International Day of Sign Languages

- Following the declaration by the United Nations (UN), International Day of Sign Languages is celebrated annually across the world on the 23rd September as part of the International Week of the Deaf. The theme of International Day of Sign Languages is "With Sign Language, Everyone is Included".
- In India International Day of Sign Languages was celebrated by Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC) under Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- Sign languages are fully fledged natural languages, structurally distinct from the spoken languages. There is also an international sign language, which is used by deaf people in international meetings and informally when travelling and socializing.
- The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recognizes and promotes the use of sign languages. It makes clear that sign languages are equal in status to spoken languages and obligates states parties to facilitate the learning of sign language and promote the linguistic identity of the deaf community.
- Sign languages are complex grammatical languages just like the spoken ones. They have their own grammar and vocabulary. No one form of sign language is universal. Different sign languages are used in different countries or regions. For example, British Sign Language (BSL) is a different language from ASL, and Americans who know ASL may not understand BSL.

World Federation of the Deaf

- The World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) is an international non-profit and non-governmental organisation of deaf associations from 133 countries.
- In addition to this, its membership includes Associate Members, International Members and Individual Members as well as Youth Members. It's legal seat is in Helsinki, Finland where the WFD Secretariat operates.
- The WFD has a consultative status in the United Nations and is a founding member of the International Disability Alliance (IDA).
- It promotes the human rights of deaf people in accordance with the principles and objectives of the United Nations Charter, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and other Human Rights Treaties.

NASA's MAVEN spacecraft

- NASA's Mars Atmosphere and Volatile Evolution mission (MAVEN) spacecraft has beamed back a selfie to mark its four years orbiting Mars and studying the upper atmosphere of the red planet.
- Launched in Nov. 2013, the mission will explore the Red Planet's upper atmosphere, ionosphere and interactions with the sun and solar wind.
- Scientists will use MAVEN data to determine the role that loss of volatiles from the Mars atmosphere to space has played through time, giving insight into the history of Mars' atmosphere and climate, liquid water, and planetary habitability.
- Mars was a potentially habitable planet billions of years ago, with a thick atmosphere and large amounts of liquid water flowing across its surface. But then something happened, and the Red Planet transitioned to the cold and dry world we know today, with an atmosphere just 1 percent as dense as that of Earth. Scientists want to know what happened to the water and where the planet's thick atmosphere went.
- MAVEN is designed to peer into the Martian past in an attempt to piece together how the ancient Red Planet changed from a wet world into the dry desert.
- The MAVEN mission will study the nature of the red planet's upper atmosphere, how solar activity contributes to atmospheric loss, and the role that escape of gas from the atmosphere to space has played through time.
- During its time at Mars, the spacecraft has acquired compelling evidence that the loss of atmosphere to space has been a major driver of climate change on Mars.
- MAVEN has demonstrated that the majority of the carbon dioxide (CO₂) on the planet has been lost to space and that there is not enough left to terraform (transform so that it can support human life) the planet by warming it, even if the CO₂ could be released and put back into the atmosphere.

e-Vidhan

- Recently a National Orientation workshop on National e-Vidhan Application (NeVA) was organized by Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs.
- The focus of the workshop was to encourage all State Legislatures to move towards e-Vidhan platform and bring in transparency, accountability and responsiveness in their conduct of business, through the use of technology.
- e-Vidhan is a Mission Mode Project to digitize and make the functioning of State Legislatures paperless.
- This is part of Digital India programme and Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, being the Nodal Ministry for this project, desires to roll out e-Vidhan covering all 40 Houses including two Houses of Parliament and thereby putting all them on a single platform and proving the theory of 'One Nation One Application'.
- This journey began with a pilot project executed in Himachal Pradesh with the central assistance which made the Shimla Legislative Assembly the first Assembly in India to go paperless in 2014.

Pakyong Airport

- It is the first airport in Sikkim.
- Pakyong is India's 100th operational airport.
- Pakyong airport is part of the UDAN scheme.
- It is located at an altitude of 4500 ft from sea level.
- It is Airport Authority of India's first greenfield airport.

Significance of Airport

- **Strategic Significance:** The airport is located 60 km from the Indo-China border. Hence, it is strategically important. The Indian Air Force (IAF) can also use the airport for landing and taking off of its aircraft.
 - **Economic Development of North East:** The airport will also give boost connectivity of Sikkim with rest of India. It will be a huge booster for the tourism sector in Sikkim. With the new airport, it will be easier for tourists to reach Sikkim.
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