



GS 1 compilation October 27th to November 1st

Posted at: 12/11/2018

Oct 27

Who will speak truth to unfreedom

- It is time to re-read the politically charged play, *The House of Bernarda Alba*, (1936) by Federico García Lorca.
- His message remains with us, repressed sexuality is a powerful metaphor for political frustration.

Costs of subjugation

- Open societies encourage us to accept and welcome different ideas and practices.
- They liberate and expand our imaginations and our commitments.
- When societies turn inwards, they construct barricades between themselves and the outside world.
- At some point members transfer the notion of the outsider to parts of the collective self.
- Political subjugation carries heavy costs.
- Ruled by a government that verges on authoritarianism, Indians have turned savagely on their own fellow citizens under various names.
- Disorder is the order of the day, and violence is the currency of social transactions.
- The objective is to fine-tune sensibilities and push back horizons, familiarise young people with the best in literature, philosophy, political science, history, sociology, aesthetics and psychology, and keep alive the spirit of critical inquiry.

Power of the humanities

- That is why imaginatively designed courses in the humanities and social sciences lie at the heart of any university worth its name.
- They encourage students to challenge and interrogate, even as they explore the past and the present.
- Teachers inspire students to understand the complexities of the human condition,

to know what should be done for human beings, and what should not be done to them.

- Above all students are introduced to categories that allow them to think, reflect, and critically engage with people, places and things.
- In the process, university teachers promote the notion of citizenship as solidarity with the less advantaged and warn students of the horrors of authoritarian rule that seeks to control and dominate.
- The idea is to produce aware and enlightened citizens conscious of their own power and the responsibilities of an elected government.
- This is precisely why the latest avatar of capitalism in the 1990s, neoliberalism, devalued social sciences and humanities.
- Capitalism demands docile bodies and submissive minds.
- The second attack on the university has come from the current government.
- Now the government has decided that teaching and research have to be controlled.
- University administrations have ruled that faculties of Central universities will be subject to Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules.
- This, it is said, is the diktat of the University Grants Commission, which is at best a funding and administrative organisation.
- In JNU, the decision has been adopted without regard for procedures of rule-making: the passage of a proposed policy through the Academic Council, the Executive Council and the University Court.
- Starkly put, these regulations stipulate that academics cannot protest, howsoever grave be the provocation.

Just court history

- The policy strikes at the very idea of a public university that embodies the spirit of critical inquiry.
- Academic research has been reduced to court history.
- It is clear that holders of power and their academic courtiers have extracted retribution and punished those who have dared to speak back to unfreedom.
- Today, knowledge has been replaced with trite information.
- Mediocrity rules, and eminent academics are crudely harassed.
- Instead of strengthening the public university, which was meant to be a training ground for citizenship, the government has deliberately weakened an academic structure that has great potential to chart a route to opportunity and social justice.

Migratory birds start arriving at Chilika, numbers are down

- Migratory birds have started arriving at the wetlands of Odisha's Chilika Lake — one of the largest wintering grounds in Asia, but not in their usual numbers this year.

- The arrival of migratory birds is awaited with the onset of winter every year. This year, however, fewer winged visitors have descended on the mudflats of the lake.
- Close to one million birds congregate on the mudflats of the lake during winter.
- The lake, spread over 1,000 sq km, is home to 230 bird species, out of which 97 are intercontinental migrants from the Arctic and Eurasian regions.
- The lake has been a designated Ramsar site (a wetland of international importance) since 1981.

Rain-induced flooding

- The Nalabana Bird Sanctuary and Mangalajodi, the two major places where the birds congregate, also have not received the usual numbers.
- One of the reasons behind the low turnout is the flooding after incessant rain triggered by cyclone Titli that hit the Odisha coast in the second week of October.

Oct 29

Patel healed Partition wounds: PM-Modi pays rich tributes to him ahead of his birth anniversary; his statue to be unveiled on Oct. 31

- Paying rich tributes to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel ahead of his birth anniversary on October 31, Prime Minister Narendra Modi credited him with ensuring the merger of all princely states with the Dominion of India and healing the wounds of Partition.
- The Prime Minister will inaugurate Sardar Patel's 182-metre-tall "Statue of Unity" on the banks of the Narmada in Gujarat on October 31.
- The height is twice that of the Statue of Liberty.

Role in Kashmir

- Describing the significance of "Infantry Day" celebrated, Mr. Modi said it was the very day when the Indian forces landed in Kashmir and saved the Valley from the clutches of "aggression".
- He said it was Sardar Patel who had insisted on immediately sending the troops to Kashmir.

'Extend Vishakha norms to religious institutions'-PIL plea says it will help check abuse against women

- The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear a PIL petition to extend the Vishakha guidelines against sexual harassment in workplace to ashrams, madrasas and Catholic institutions.
- The Vishakha guidelines introduced by the apex court in 1997 were evolved into a parliamentary law called the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act of 2013.
- It also sought directions to the Centre to provide adequate measures for women

safety at religious places by conducting periodic checks by State women panels.

- The petition mentioned recent instances such as cases of priests being accused of sexual abuse in Kerala and of self-styled gurus like Daati Maharaj, Baba Ram Rahim and Asaram Bapu.

The paradox of faith-When protesters let their ego overcome their faith, they are no longer true disciples of their god

- Every day we see people brazenly driving through red lights, breaking queues with impunity or getting their way through bribes.
- They say that they act in this manner because they have lost faith in the police, the government or just the people around them.
- They take the law into their own hands because they have lost faith in something or the other.

Promises, hope and the future

- There are many kinds of faith: faith in a person, a system, a government; faith in systems of thought like liberalism and secularism.
- Having faith in a person often means that we believe that the person will live up to our expectations.
- Faith is also related to promise.
- Faith in a government could mean that we believe that the government will deliver on its promises.
- Thus, faith is not just belief but a qualified belief related to expectations and fulfilling promises.
- There are many who will continue to have faith in a government although the government may not have lived up to its promises.
- Faith is sustained very often by hope.
- The future is indeed a problem, it is radically unpredictable.
- That is, you cannot even attempt to find models of prediction of one's life in the future.
- In the face of this unpredictability, our daily life is filled with moments of faith.
- Faith in the constancy of nature cannot be 'proved'.

Faith in god

- And then there is god.
- One could also have faith in god.
- At its core, there is not much difference between the meaning of faith mentioned above and the case of the divine.
- But there is a difference between faith in god and faith in humans or social systems.
- This has to do with the autonomy of the individual.

The meaning of true faith

- What distinguishes faith in god as against faith in everything else is the tension between human autonomy and complete faith.
- This is very well exemplified by life-changing religious experiences.
- Almost without exception, all religious mystics have had moments when they have undergone a major crisis about their belief.
- This crisis is often manifested as a strong doubt in their belief in god.
- They struggle through this crisis and only when they come out of it do they really achieve true faith.
- All faith has some notion of trust and surrender but true faith in god has often been equated with complete surrender.
- This really is the paradox of faith: true faith demands the autonomous choice of giving up our autonomy.
- The paradox arises from our inability to surrender completely, to completely trust our faith.
- When humans decide to act to protect their gods, they are only manifesting their lack of trust in god as well as their belief that they have to act to protect the divine.
- The recent happenings in Kerala are a classic instance of this fractured belief.
- And so, just as in the case of people breaking various rules of society, when faith breaks down we take law into our own hands.
- Those who took the law into their hands at Sabarimala by refusing to abide by the Supreme Court's directives may think that they are expressing their loss of faith in the police, the Supreme Court and the Kerala government.
- But they also lost their true faith in their god when they decided to act in the manner they did.
- When they let their ego and self-importance overcome their faith, they were no longer the true disciples of their god.

Oct 31

The unifier of modern India-Remembering Sardar Patel's stupendous role in integrating the princely States into independent India

- "By common endeavour we can raise the country to a new greatness, while a lack of unity will expose us to fresh calamities."
- These pragmatic but profound remarks defined the vision and the sterling character of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the principal unifier of modern India.

Force behind unification

- Sardar Patel's foresight and tactful navigation of the most turbulent period in post-Independence, and the resolve he demonstrated in integrating the more than 500 disparate princely States into the Dominion of India is an unparalleled

accomplishment in modern history.

- Patel was a statesman with a strong sense of realpolitik, a realist to the core and an earthy politician whose sole aim was to build a strong and united India.
- What makes the merger of the princely States truly incredible is the fact that the princely rulers had the option at that time to either accede to India or Pakistan or remain independent.
- Yet, Patel's sagacity, foresight, patriotism, tact, persuasive powers and abiding commitment to fair play enabled him to untangle a highly complex political and social problem of an unprecedented scale, without triggering any kind of revolt or civil unrest.
- However, he was also compelled to use coercion by launching 'Operation Polo' to liberate and integrate Hyderabad after the Nizam of Hyderabad entertained false hopes of either joining Pakistan or remaining independent.
- In a swift operation lasting five days, Hyderabad State was liberated in September 1948.

A builder of India

- He did not allow the differences or personal ego to come in the way of protecting the larger interests of the country — which were at the core of his heart.
- He worked shoulder-to-shoulder with Nehru in building a modern India.
- Patel was a multifaceted personality.
- He was a dynamic political leader, an organiser par excellence, a competent administrator and a skilful negotiator.

Architect of the steel frame

- The Iron Man of India was the chief architect of India's steel frame — the civil services.
- Thus, the All India Services were seen as an important cementing force in promoting the unity and integrity of the nation.
- It will be relevant to recall his famous address to the civil service probationers in 1947 when Patel told them that the service will have to adopt its true role of national service without being trammelled upon by traditions and habits of the past.
- Another aspect of the Sardar that needs to be highlighted is his graciousness and magnanimity in readily abiding by Mahatma Gandhi's advice to withdraw his candidacy for the post of Congress President in favour of Pandit Nehru in 1946, although a majority of State Congress committees supported his candidature.
- It was apparent that the Congress President would become the first Prime Minister of India.
- It once again proved his noble intention of placing the country's interests above self.

A tribute

- The 182-metre-tall 'Statue of Unity' is being unveiled at the Narmada dam site in

Gujarat, in a real tribute and recognition of Patel's stupendous role in integrating various princely States and ensuring India's unity.

- As we pay our tributes to the great statesman on his birth anniversary today, on October 31, let us try to emulate his qualities and work towards realising his dream of providing 'Suraaj' in a new and prosperous India.

Patel saved India from Balkanisation: PM-United, we can face the world and scale new heights of growth and glory, says Modi

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tributes to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, describing him as a great unifier and the maker of modern India.
- "The 'Statue of Unity' [of Patel] is a symbol of both the unity of hearts and the geographical integrity of our motherland. It is a reminder that, divided, we may not be even able to face ourselves.
- United, we can face the world and scale new heights of growth and glory," PM Modi said.
- Situated on the banks of Narmada, the statue is the world's tallest.

Building a new India

- PM Modi said: Sardar Patel worked with astonishing speed to dismantle the history of imperialism and create the geography of unity with the spirit of nationalism, saved India from Balkanisation.
- As Independent India's first Home Minister, Sardar Patel set the stage for an administrative framework that continues to serve the nation, particularly the poor and the marginalised.

Trust and integrity

- The Prime Minister said Sardar Patel had also popularised the idea of cooperative housing societies.
- Two traits synonymous with Sardar Patel are trust and integrity.

CPI mouthpiece Kalantar shuts down-Sold more than 50,000 copies in the 1990s

- The editorial team of Kalantar, the Bengali mouthpiece of Communist Party of India (CPI) was working on a message for its readers.
- Mr. Banerjee said the publication of Kalantar as a daily started on October 7, 1966 and during its hey days in the mid-1990s, the eight-page paper sold more than 50,000 copies.
- The CPI leadership in West Bengal said it was "extremely unfortunate" that a paper such a historical value had to close down due to lack of funds.
- People associated with the paper described it as more than just a mouthpiece of the CPI.
- Well-known poet Bishnu De had coined its name and filmmaker Satyajit Ray had designed its masthead.
- It has seen the well-known Somnath Lahiri and Bhabani Sen as its editors.

Nov 1

Towering statue of Patel dedicated to the nation-PM Modi unveils 182-metre-tall likeness of Sardar Patel on Narmada

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated a 182-metre statue of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel overlooking the Narmada river in Gujarat as a tribute to the country's 'Iron Man'.
- The Prime Minister recalled the Congress leader's contribution in unifying the country after independence as he brought more than 500 princely states on a common platform to join the Union of India.

'Needed a visa to Gir'

- "Without him, one would need to get a visa to visit Gir forest to see lions, or visit Hyderabad to see famous Charminar," Mr. Modi said, recalling the strategic efforts made by the first Home Minister of India in bringing Junagadh in Gujarat and Hyderabad in south India — both of which were then controlled by Muslim rulers — into the Union of India.
- The statue, described as the world's tallest given that it exceeds the height of China's Spring Temple Buddha by 29 metres, was built by Indian construction major Larsen & Toubro (L&T) in 33 months.
- The statue was designed by Padma Bhushan-winning sculptor Ram V. Sutar.

Flays critics

- Among those critical of the project and its cost were local tribals, whose attempts to hold a protest were foiled by the heavy deployment of police along the route to the statue.
- The local police even detained more than 50 activists and tribal leaders, fearing protests by them.
- Environmental activist Rohit Prajapati, who was also detained ahead of the inaugural event, said that the statue — built on a small island in the river — would cause damage to the Narmada's ecology.

Source: [The Hindu](#)
