

The background of the page is a blurred photograph of a person's hands typing on a laptop keyboard. A large, red, arrow-shaped graphic points from the right side towards the center, containing the title and date.

Weekly Current Affairs

16-22 August 2020

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NATIONAL NEWS

1. Govt to reconsider minimum marriage age for women

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced that the Centre will decide on the recommendations of a committee set up to reconsider the minimum age of marriage for women. The minimum age of marriage, especially for women, has been a contentious issue.
- The law evolved in the face of much resistance from religious and social conservatives. Currently, the law prescribes that the minimum age of marriage is 21 years and 18 years for men and women respectively.
- On June 2, the Union Ministry for Women and Child Development set up a task force to examine matters pertaining to age of motherhood, imperatives of lowering Maternal Mortality Ratio and the improvement of nutritional levels among women.
- The task force will examine the correlation of age of marriage and motherhood with health, medical well-being, and nutritional status of the mother and neonate, infant or child, during pregnancy, birth and thereafter.

2. PM Modi announces optical fiber link connecting Lakshadweep to mainland India

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced an undersea optical fiber cable link to connect Lakshadweep with mainland India. Modi set a target of completing the Lakshadweep undersea project in 1,000 days to boost mobile and broadband communication between mainland India and the group of islands situated on the Laccadive Sea, off the southwestern coast of India.
- On 10 August, Modi inaugurated the Chennai-Port Blair project, whose foundation was laid in December 2018.
- The 2,312-kilometer-long cable project, implemented at a cost of ₹1,224 crore, will connect not only Port Blair but also other islands such as Swaraj Dweep, Long Island, Rangat, Little Andaman, Kamorta, Car Nicobar, and Greater Nicobar.

3. PM Narendra Modi to inaugurate 'Atal Tunnel' in Rohtang next month

- Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur said the 'Atal Tunnel' in Rohtang would be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi by the end of September this year. The tunnel will be the world's longest above an altitude of 3,000 metres and will reduce the distance between Manali and Leh by 46 km.
- The tunnel is being built under Rohtang Pass in the Pir Panjal range on the Leh-Manali highway. The length of the tunnel is 8.8 kilometers.
- Once thrown open, the tunnel will provide all-weather connectivity to remote border areas of Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh which otherwise

remain cut-off from the rest of the country for about six months during winters.

4. Indian Railways begins construction of world's tallest pier bridge across river Ijai in Manipur

- As a part of 111 kilometre-long Jiribam-Tupul-Imphal line project, Indian Railways' North East Frontier Railway zone is constructing the world's tallest pier bridge, having height of 141 metres, across river Ijai in Manipur with an outlay of Rs 280 crore. After completion, it will surpass the existing height record of 139 meters of the Mala – Rijeka Viaduct, Montenegro in Europe.
- The 703 meters long bridge is located at the hilly terrain of Marangching village in Noney district, about 65 km west of Imphal, Manipur. The project will be completed in March 2022.

5. Nagaland Government Rolls-Out Centralized e-commerce platform "Yellow Chain"

- On the occasion of Independence Day, the Chief Minister of Nagaland, Neiphiu Rio launched "Yellow Chain". Yellow Chain is a centralized e-commerce platform, to promote local business and entrepreneurship in the State.
- Yellow Chain will act as an integrated platform for the people of the state, where any Seller/Service Provider/Individual/Group can register themselves and upload their products, trades, skills, services etc to enable the citizens/buyers to have access to their Service or Product.
- It may include Home service(Barber, Electrician, Plumber, Painter, Carpenter, Water Service etc.), Delivery service, IT Products & Services, Cab & Taxi Service, Health Care & Education, Fast food & Catering, Bakeries & Confectioneries, Grocery Stores, Local Product/Produces, Trainings, Pre-owned Products, Real Estate, Rentals etc.

6. SC refuses to direct transfer of money from PM CARES Fund to NDRF

- The Supreme Court refused to direct the transfer of money collected under the PM CARES Fund set up for COVID-19 relief to the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF).
- The Bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan, R Subhash Reddy, and MR Shah also held that contributions to the PM CARES were Fund of a charitable trust. The Court said that there was no statutory prohibition on contributions made to the NDRF.
- The Bench further clarified that funds collected under the PM CARES Fund are entirely different from the NDRF. On the petitioner's prayer to set up a National Plan for COVID-19, the Apex Court held that plan prepared by the Centre is sufficient to cater to the pandemic.

7. National Recruitment Agency Gets Cabinet Nod to Conduct Common Eligibility Test for Govt Jobs

- The Union Cabinet gave its nod to setting up of a National Recruitment Agency (NRA), which is aimed at filling up posts in central government organisations and public sector undertakings. Recruitment will be done on the basis of computer-based common eligibility test conducted for non-gazetted vacancies.
- "The #National Recruitment Agency will prove to be a boon for crores of youngsters. Through the Common Eligibility Test, it will eliminate multiple tests and save precious time as well as resources. This will also be a big boost to transparency," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in a tweet.
- The NRA will hold a test for preliminary selection to various government vacancies. The score of the CET will be valid for three years and during these years a candidate can "apply for job in different sectors depending upon his aptitude and preference."
- The CET will take place for three levels – graduate, higher secondary (12th) and matriculate (10th).
- The test will replace the Tier 1 exams held by Staff Selection Commission (SSC), Railway Recruitment Board (RRB) and Institute of Banking Personnel Selection (IBPS) for non-technical posts.
- However, final selection will be made through separate specialized Tier 2 or Tier 3 exams. These exams will be conducted by the respective recruitment agencies.
- On the basis of the CET, candidates will be shortlisted for Group B and C posts in the central government. There will be no restriction on the number of attempts if a candidate is eligible as per the upper age limit. Candidates belonging to reserved categories will be given relaxation in upper age limit.

8. PM Modi to inaugurate First World Solar Technology Summit to be held on Sept 8

- The First World Solar Technology Summit will be organized by International Solar Alliance, ISA on a virtual platform on 8th of September. The summit aims to bring the world scientists and engineers together to address the challenges to make energy affordable.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will deliver the inaugural address of the First World Solar Technology Summit and it will be graced by Ministers from member countries from across all ISA regions.
- ISA would also be launching the ISA Journal on Solar Energy that would help authors from across the globe to publish their articles on solar energy, during the event.

9. Uttar Pradesh's Manduadih railway station to be renamed as Banaras

- Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) approved the renaming of Manduadih Railway Station in Uttar Pradesh (UP) as 'Banaras'.
- In 2019, Former Union Minister Manoj Sinha had written to UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath requesting the change in name of the Manduadih Railway Station.
- Manduadih is a place in Varanasi situated about four kilometres from Varanasi Cantonment Station.

10. President Gives Nod For Changing Name Of HRD Ministry To Ministry Of Education

- President Ram Nath Kovind notified Union Cabinet's decision to rename Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) as Ministry of Education.
- A gazette notification published said the President had given his nod to changing the name. On July 29, the Union Cabinet approved a new education policy and took some major decisions including the renaming of the Ministry of Human Resource and Development (MHRD) as the Ministry of Education.
- In exercise of the powers conferred by clause (3) of article 77 of the Constitution, President Ram Nath Kovind amended the Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961 by Government of India (Allocation of Business) Three Hundred and Fifty Sixth Amendment Rules, 2020, thereby, changing the name of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) as Ministry of Education.
- This renaming of ministry was among the key recommendations of the draft new National Education Policy (NEP), which was also cleared by the Union Cabinet in July 2020.

11. Two over bridges of Ahmedabad named after late Arun Jaitley, Sushma Swaraj

- In Gujarat, two over bridges of Ahmedabad city have been named after late Arun Jaitley and Sushma Swaraj. The Railway over the bridge in Ranip area of the city will be known as Atmanirbhar Gujarat Railway Flyover.
- The newly built flyover at Income Tax circle will be known as Arun Jaitley flyover, while another flyover at Anjali crossroad will be known as Sushma Swaraj Bridge.

12. UP becomes number one in conducting COVID tests in country

- Uttar Pradesh has become number one in conducting COVID tests in the country. Cumulative COVID testing figures reached 36 lakh samples. The state is conducting around one lakh COVID test daily.

- With at least 9 districts in the state recording more than 100 new cases of COVID infection in the past 24 hours, the number of active cases in the state crossed 50,000.
- The state now has 50426 active cases and the list is topped by Lucknow, which has 7,188 active cases. Kanpur is in second place with more than 4 thousand active cases.

13. Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot launches Indira Rasoi Yojana on 20 August

- To ensure that people belonging to the economically weaker sections get meals at a highly subsidised rate, the Rajasthan government will be providing fresh and nutritious meals for Rs 8 from August 20. Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot launched the "Indira Rasoi Yojana" to provide quality nutritious meals to the downtrodden section of society.
- The Indira Rasoi Yojana would be started in 213 urban local bodies of the state and the meals will be made available from 8.30 am till 1 pm and from 5 pm to 8 pm.

14. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla attends inaugural ceremony of 5th World Conference of Speakers of Parliament

- Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla attended the inaugural ceremony of the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament (5WCSP).
- The two day Conference is being organized jointly by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Geneva and the Parliament of Austria with the support of the United Nations (UN).
- This is the first time that an international Parliamentary Conference of such a magnitude is being organised in Virtual mode.
- The Conference is being held in the backdrop of the current crisis of COVID-19 pandemic is expected to strengthen multilateralism and international cooperation in order to rebuild a better world.

15. Indian Railways introduces drone-based surveillance system for security

- Indian Railways have introduced a Drone based surveillance system for Railway security. Railway Protection Force, RPF has planned extensive use of drones for the purpose of Railway security.
- Nine drones have been procured by RPF so far at a cost of around 32 lakh at South Eastern Railway, Central Railway, Modern Coaching Factory, Raebareli and South Western Railway.
- Mumbai Division of Central Railway has recently procured two Ninja UAVs for better security and surveillance in Railway areas like station premises, Railway track sections, yards and workshops.

- A team of four staff members of RPF Mumbai has been trained for drone flying, surveillance and maintenance. These drones are capable of Real Time Tracking, Video Streaming.

16. PM Modi greets people on Prakash Purab Utsav of ‘Guru Granth Sahib’

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi greeted people on the Prakash Purab Utsav of the holy book Guru Granth Sahib Ji. The Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji illuminates the entire world with its pure teachings.
- The first Prakash Purab Utsav marked the installation of Guru Granth Sahib in Harmandir Sahib, also known as the Golden temple, in 1604.
- Guru Granth Sahib is regarded by Sikhs as the final, sovereign and eternal living Guru following the lineage of the ten human gurus of the religion

17. India ranks first in the number of organic farmers

- The growth story of organic farming is unfolding with increasing demand not only in India but also globally. India ranks first in number of organic farmers and ninth in terms of area under organic farming.
- Sikkim became the first state in the world to become fully organic and other states including Tripura and Uttarakhand have set similar targets.
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- The Government initiated Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North East Region (MOVCD) and Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) in 2015 to encourage chemical free farming. It also aims at assisting farmers to adopt organic farming and improve earnings due to premium prices. Agri-export Policy 2018, has also given a major thrust in the field of Organic farming in the country. The major organic exports from India have been flax seeds, sesame, soybean, tea, medicinal plants, rice and pulses. Quick and easy certification process of the Organic produce under Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) and National Program for Organic Production (NPOP) have helped poise India to be a leader in terms of Organic produce in years to come.

18. India Ranked 57th in Digital Quality of Life Index 2020

- In accordance with the 2nd edition of global research “Digital Quality of Life (DQL) Index 2020” released by online privacy solutions provider SurfShark, India ranked 57th out of 85 countries in terms of overall category “Digital Quality of Life 2020” with 0.5 index points which has been topped by Denmark with 0.79 points.

- The DQL Index 2020 analyzes 85 countries around the world covering 6.3 billion people or 81% of the global population in terms of five core pillars: internet affordability, internet quality, e-infrastructure, e-security, and e-government, and results are premised on 12 different factors.



19. Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat tests positive for coronavirus

- Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat has tested positive for coronavirus. In a tweet he informed that he has tested positive for coronavirus infection and was hospitalized on the advice of doctors.
- He is a member of parliament from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) representing Jodhpur in the Lok Sabha. The Ministry of Jal Shakti was formed in May 2019 under the second Modi ministry.
- This was formed by merging of two ministries; Ministry of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation and Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation.

20. Dr Harsh Vardhan launches interactive first-of-its-kind video game 'Corona Fighters' to spread awareness

- Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan has launched an interactive first-of-its-kind game on COVID-19, the Corona Fighters.
- The Minister also launched two new videos urging adherence to key COVID Appropriate Behaviours.
- The game presents a new and extremely creative way to teach people the right tools and behaviours to fight the Covid-19 pandemic. The game was designed to influence the players' actions in the real world, reminding them to take the right precautions and escape infection.

21. Shri Arjun Munda Virtually Launches TRIFOOD Project of TRIFED in Raigad, Maharashtra and Jagdalpur

- Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda virtually launched the tertiary processing centres under the 'TRIFOOD' project at Raigad in Maharashtra and Jagdalpur in Chhattisgarh. The TRIFOOD Project aims at enhancing the income of tribals through better utilization and value addition to the Minor Forest Produces (MFPs) collected by the tribal forest gatherers.
- Under the project, two Minor Forest Produce (MFP) processing units will be set up.
- The unit at Raigad in Maharashtra will be used for value addition to traditional tribal drink mahua, amla, custard apple and jamun and will also produce mahua drink, amla juice, candy, jamun juice and custard apple pulp.
- The multi-commodity processing centre at Jagdalpur in Chhattisgarh, will be used for the processing of commodities like mahua, amla, honey, cashew, tamarind, ginger, garlic and other fruits and vegetables. The project will help promote tribal entrepreneurship.

22. Union Minister of State for Labour and Employment launches Logo of Labour Bureau

- Union Minister of State for Labour and Employment launched the official logo of the Labour Bureau. The newly launched logo displays the three goals of the Labour Bureau i.e. Accuracy, Validity, and Reliability.
- It also indicates the Labour Bureau as a data-based organization that deals in data pertaining to workers and work.
- The logo of the Labour Bureau also comprises “Blue wheel”, a cog wheel that represents work.
- The blue colour indicates that the Labour Bureau deals with the blue collar workers.

23. Chhattisgarh The Cleanest State, Indore Creates Record by Winning Title of Cleanest City Fourth Time in A Row

- Chhattisgarh has been declared as the cleanest state of the country as per the Cleanliness Survey 2020 organized by Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry. Chhattisgarh has bagged 14 national awards in various categories. The state had taken many initiatives to achieve this success
- In Chhattisgarh, 100% door to door garbage collection was ensured.
- All 166 municipal bodies are ensuring collection of waste from every household and 100% disposal of the same in SLRM center.
- 3R Principle- Residue, Reuse and Recycle was implemented in all the urban bodies through innovations such as Neki Ki Diwar, Bartan Bank, Home Composting. Waste pickers were given employment under the Mission Clean City Scheme.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

1. Luis Rodolfo Abinader sworn in as 54th President of Dominican Republic

- Luis Rodolfo Abinader Corona has been sworn in as the 54th President of Dominican Republic. Luis Rodolfo Abinader is a businessman who has never held any other elected office. He succeeds Danilo Medina of Liberation Party.
- The 53-year old Luis Rodolfo Abinader was elected to the four-year term on July 5, which ended the 16-year run in power by the Center-Left Dominican Liberation Party (PLD). He finished second in the 2016 President election. Abinader's Modern Revolutionary Party (PRM) won the elections with 53% vote, while Gonzalo Castillo who was the candidate of the ruling PLD got 37.7%.
- The swearing-in ceremony was attended by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

2. Keith Rowley Becomes Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago for a 2nd Consecutive Term

- Keith Rowley sworn in as Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago for a 2nd consecutive 5-year term at the President's House, following victory in general elections held on August 10, 2020. In addition to him, his new cabinet ministers were also sworn in. He is from the ruling People's National Movement (PNM).
- The new cabinet sworn in was delayed due to requests for recounts of ballots.
- As per the preliminary result PNM won 22 of the 41 electoral seats, while the opposition United National Congress (UNC) led by former Prime Minister Kamla Persad -Bissessar won 19 seats. Keith Rowley's cabinet consisted of young and experienced politicians like ColmImbert, Finance minister; Franklin Khan, Minister of Energy and Energy Industries; Camille Robinson-Regis, Minister of Planning and Development and Attorney General Faris Al-Rawi.

3. Vietnam health ministry to buy Russian COVID-19 vaccine

- Vietnam's health ministry has registered to buy a Russian COVID-19 vaccine. The Southeast Asian country fights a new outbreak of the coronavirus following months of no local cases.
- Vietnam has reported a total of 911 infections, with 21 deaths.
- Vietnam has signed up for 50-150 million doses of the vaccine
- Russia said the first batch of the world's first Covid-19 vaccine would be rolled out within two weeks, rejecting as "groundless" the safety concerns aired by some experts over Moscow's rapid approval of the drug.

New Appointments and Person in News

1. Spanish Mountaineer names Spanish peak after Uttarakhand IAS officer

- Juan Antonio, a Spanish mountaineer, who recently climbed a virgin peak in Spain has decided to name the peak and its route after Ashish Chauhan, a former District Magistrate of Uttarkashi, and present additional secretary (civil aviation) in the state government.
- Ashish Chauhan shared the news regarding Antonio's gesture on his social media account and mentioned that he was touched by the honour of the mountaineer. As per Juan Antonio, he was overwhelmed by Chauhan's help during his 2018 expedition in Gangotri Himalayas.
- Juan Antonio had visited Uttarkashi in 2018 to climb Mountain Satopanth, which is situated in the Gangotri region at an altitude of nearly 7,075 meters above the sea level. However, as Antonio fell sick during the expedition, Chauhan who was then the DM of Uttarkashi had helped him out.

2. Indian Idol Fame Shahzan Mujeeb Signed as First-Ever National Brand Ambassador Of Aligarh Municipal Corporation

- Indian Idol Season11 Finalist and Oscar Nominated Playback Singer Shahzan Mujeeb became First-Ever National Brand Ambassador of Aligarh Municipal Corporation for Swachh Bharat Abhiyan Campaign at National and International level.
- He is also a Music Composer and Music Director. His film Gera won the National Award for Best Gujarati Film.
- Aligarh Municipal Corporation (AMC) is the civic body that governs Aligarh city. established under the Uttar Pradesh Municipal Corporation Act-1959.

3. Ashok Gehlot led-govt wins trust vote in Rajasthan assembly

- A month after a rebellion from 19 dissident legislators of his party threatened the survival of his government, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot won the trust vote in the state assembly. The vote took place a day after Sachin Pilot attended the Congress Legislature Party meeting at CM Gehlot's house and declared that he is determined to act in the "interest of the people of Rajasthan and in accordance with the promises made".
- The confidence motion was brought in the assembly after the reunification of the Gehlot and Sachin Pilot factions of the Rajasthan Congress party.

4. Rakesh Asthana appointed as DG of Border Security Force

- The Centre appointed Gujarat cadre IPS officer – Rakesh Asthana as the new director general of the Border Security Force (BSF). The 1984 batch IPS officer, currently heading the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security

(BCAS) with additional charge of Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), will assume full time charge of the border guarding force deployed at the approximately 2,280 km long border with Pakistan.

- Currently, DG Indo-Tibet Border Police (ITBP) Chief S S Deswal, a batchmate of Asthana, was holding the additional charge of BSF since March this year. Asthana, known for his acumen in investigations and strong leadership skills, will hold the post of DG BSF till July 31, 2021, time of his retirement.

5. Ashok Lavasa resigns as Election Commissioner; set to join ADB as vice president

- Election Commissioner Ashok Lavasa resigned to take up the position of vice-president at Asian Development Bank next month.
- Lavasa, who would have retired as the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) in October 2022, would be the second election commissioner to step down from the poll panel before the completion of his term.
- Sushil Chandra, presently posted as Election Commissioner will be in the line of succession after Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora which otherwise would have been donned by Lavasa had he not resigned.

6. National Sports Awards Committee recommended Rohit Sharma, Vinesh Phogat, Manika Batra, Mariappan Thangavelu for Khel Ratna

- The National Sports Awards Committee has recommended the names of cricketer Rohit Sharma, Table tennis champion Manika Batra, Paralympian Mariappan Thangavelu and wrestler Vinesh Phogat for the prestigious Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award.
- Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award is India's highest and most prestigious sporting honour. In 2016, India's star shuttler PV Sindhu, wrestler Sakshi Malik, shooter Jitu Rai and gymnast Dipa Karmakar had been collectively awarded the top honour.
- Rohit Sharma will join the elite list of cricketers to ever receive the top sporting honour after Sachin Tendulkar, MS Dhoni and Virat Kohli.

7. Satya Pal Malik appointed as Meghalaya Governor

- Satya Pal Malik was transferred as Governor of the northeastern state of Meghalaya, replacing Tathagata Roy who completed his five-year tenure. Malik has been shifted to Meghalaya, and Governor of Maharashtra Bhagat Singh Koshiyari has been asked to discharge the functions of Goa governor in addition to his own duties.
- There is no fixed tenure for governors, but conventionally it is considered for a period of five years.
- Roy was appointed governor of Meghalaya in August 2018 and continued till date, barring absence between December 2019 to January 2020 when he

was on leave. Malik was the last governor of erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir before it was divided into two union territories 'Ladakh and JK' on October 31 last year.

- The announcement in this regard was made on August 5 last year when the Centre abrogated the special status of Jammu and Kashmir.

BANKING

1. SBI waives off SMS charges for all savings accounts

- State Bank of India, SBI has waived off SMS charges in addition to its penalty waiver on non-maintenance of minimum balance for all its Savings Accounts. SBI has over 44 crore savings accounts. The public sector bank informed that the waiver of such charges is applicable for all kinds of savings accounts including those with cheque or Internet Banking facilities.
- Earlier, SBI customers had to maintain an average monthly balance of 3000, 2000 and 1000 rupees in metro, semi Urban and rural areas respectively. The bank used to levy a penalty of 5 to 15 rupees plus taxes on non-maintenance of average monthly balance. The Bank had announced in the month of March this year that the minimum balance charges will be waived off for all its Savings Account customers.

2. Fino Payments Bank launches Aadhaar Authentication based Digital Savings account “Jan Bachat Khata”

- Fino Payments Bank has launched Jan Bachat Khata (JBK), which is an Aadhaar Authentication based digital savings account that brings neo-banking experience to consumers.
- Under the JBK, customers can transact at a Fino branch or merchant point with fingerprint and OTP combination, while at non-Fino points they need Aadhaar authentication.
- Earlier, Fino Payments Bank had introduced Shubh and Bhavishya, subscription-based savings accounts targeted at specific customer segments.

3. RBI Board approves transfer of Rs 57,128 cr as surplus to central govt

- The RBI Board has approved the transfer of 57,128 crore rupees as surplus to the central government for the accounting year 2019-20.
- RBI has informed that it has also decided to maintain a Contingency Risk Buffer at 5.5 percent.
- The Board, chaired by RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das, discussed the bank's operations in the past year and approved its annual report and statement of accounts.

4. ADB approves USD 1 billion package for rapid transit system in India

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a USD 1 billion (about ₹7,485 crore) loan to support the construction of the modern, high-speed Delhi-Meerut regional rapid transit system, a first of its kind in India.
- The transit system project aims to help decongest the city and improve regional connectivity by establishing transit options through densely populated sections of the NCR connecting Delhi to Meerut in Uttar Pradesh.
- Delhi accounts for 37 percent of the population of the national capital region (NCR).
- The 82-km Delhi-Meerut regional rapid transit system network is the first of three priority rail corridors in the country's integrated transport network under the NCR regional plan 2021.
- This project will finance the construction of railway tracks, station buildings, maintenance facilities and traction and power supply.

Books and Awards

1. Book “A Bend in Time: Writings by Children on the Covid-19 pandemic” by Bijal Vachharajani Released

- A book titled “A Bend in Time: Writings by Children on the COVID-19 Pandemic” was released in July 2020, the introduction of which is written by award-winning children’s author Bijal Vachharajani. The book is published by Talking Cub (children’s imprint of Speaking Tiger).
- The book showcased the emotions and thoughts of children and young adults, from across the country and social groups, about the greatest global crisis in recent times: the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Bijal Vachharajani is the winner of the Auther Children’s Book Award 2020 and also named in the Parag Honour List 2020 of TATA Groups.

2. Actor Sharon Stone’s Memoir “The Beauty of Living Twice” to Release in March 2021

- Hollywood Actor Sharon Stone announced the release of her Memoir “The Beauty of Living Twice” in March 2021. She unveiled the cover of the book on Twitter.
- The Book will reflect on her journey from painful childhood in Pennsylvania to her experience in acting in films like Martin Scorsese’s mobster epic ‘Casino’ which earned her an Academy Award nomination and a Golden Globe award.
- Additionally she will be writing about her two marriages, her near-fatal stroke and humanitarian work on behalf of AIDS research and other causes.
- The book is set to be published by Alfred A Knopf, and is set to release both in hardcover and ebook.

3. President Approves 84 Gallantry Awards for defence personnel

- President Ram Nath Kovind has approved 84 gallantry awards for defence personnel, including nine Shaurya Chakra.
- The Kirti Chakra has been posthumously awarded to Abdul Rashid Kalas, Head Constable, Jammu and Kashmir Police.
- The Shaurya Chakra is awarded for 'gallantry otherwise than in the face of the enemy'.
- It is the third highest gallantry award in peacetime.
- The President has also approved 19 Mention-in-Despatches to the Army personnel for their significant contributions in different military operations, which include eight posthumous for 'Operation Meghdoot' and 'Operation Rakshak'.
- Operation 'Meghdoot' was launched in 1984 to secure control of the heights predominating the Siachen Glacier.
- 'Operation Rakshak' is also an ongoing counter-insurgency operation in Jammu and Kashmir.

4. Rural School in Nagaland Wins Pallikkutam National Award for Innovation in Education

- St. Christopher School in Chessore Village, Nagaland won the Gold Award along with cash prize of Rs.1 Lakh from the first ever Pallikkutam National Award for Innovation in Education instituted by Rajagiri Media. The awards were announced over a virtual meeting.
- The St Christopher School won the award for ensuring a seamless class for the students with the limited infrastructure and resources in the rural area. The Prize money for Gold Award is Rs.1,00,000.
- The rural school provided a balanced online and offline activities for the students over the Whatsapp.

5. Michael Cohen's Book "Disloyal: The True Story of the Former Personal Attorney to President Donald J. Trump" is set to Publish on 8 sept

- Michael Cohen's book about President Donald Trump titled "Disloyal: The True Story of the Former Personal Attorney to President Donald J. Trump" published by Skyhorse Publishing is set to release on 8th September 2020.
- Skyhorse describes "Disloyal" as a devastating business and political horror story of the century.
- On 13th August 2020, Cohen released the foreword of the book with the writing of his former boss.

6. Abhijit Paul's 'Am I' wins first prize in Online Patriotic Short Film Contest


- A Short film titled 'Am I?' directed by Abhijit Paul won the first prize and a cash award of one lakh rupees in the Online Patriotic Short Film Contest organized by the Ministry Of Information and Broadcasting along with National Film Development Corporation, NFDC.

- 'Ab India Banega Bharat' directed by Debojo Sanjiv got the second prize and a cash award of 50 thousand rupees and '10 Rupees' directed by Yuvraj Gokul got the third prize and a cash award of 25 thousand rupees. Eight short films have got Special Mention Certificates.
- The contest went live on 14th July on MyGov portal and ended on the 7th of August. The contest was hosted on the www.MyGov.in website for receiving the entries. The theme for the entries revolved around patriotism, equating it to Atmanirbharta, self-reliance as the new Mantra of progress for the nation.

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SCIENCE TECH & DEFENCE

1. Chandrayaan-2 captures image of crater on Moon; ISRO names it after Vikram Sarabhai

- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) announced that Chandrayaan-2 has captured images of the Moon by Terrain Mapping Camera – 2 (TMC-2) and named one of the craters as 'Sarabhai Crater' after Indian astrophysicist Dr. Vikram Ambalal Sarabhai who is regarded as the Father of Indian Space program, to celebrate his birth centenary
- Vikram Ambalal Sarabhai's 100th birth century was observed on 12th of August, 2020.
- Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge), Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), to pay tribute to him, announced that Chandrayaan 2 Orbiter has captured the Moon images of "Sarabhai" Crater.

2. Custom-made Boeing 777 as 'Air India One' for PM Modi, President Kovind, top dignitaries soon

- Soon Prime Minister Narendra Modi, President Ram Nath Kovind and other VVIP dignitaries will fly in Boeing 777-300ERs that India is set to receive from Boeing in the United States. Two Boeing 777-300ERs will arrive in India from the US for which officials have already left to receive the aircraft.
- VVIP aircraft 'Air India One' or The Special Extra Section Flight (SESF) are customs made Boeing-777 that will arrive in India in September.
- To fly these planes, Indian Air Force pilots will be given the responsibility and not Air India.
- The planes will have state-of-art missile defence systems.
- The missile system will be called Large Aircraft Infrared Countermeasures (LAIRCM) and Self-Protection Suites (SPS).

3. IIT-Madras is country's top innovative educational institute for 2nd straight year

- Indian Institute of Technology, Madras has retained its number-one position in the list of top innovative educational institutes in India for the second consecutive year.
- The premier institute has been ranked number-one in the 'Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements' ,released by Vice President Venkaiah Naidu.
- The ranking was launched last year by the Innovation Cell of the Ministry of Education.
- 674 Institutions of National Importance, Central Universities and centrally funded technical institutions participated in the rankings this year, as compared to 496 last year.

4. Google announces new virtual education tools “Assignments” for teachers, students

- The search engine giant Google has announced new education tools for teachers and students to facilitate learning in the virtual education space. This feature will be available with all the products of Google such as Meet, G Suite and Classroom.
- This new tool will have some of the features rolled out in the coming months whereas the rest of the features will be available later this year. In this platform, a larger titled view with up to 49 participants and a collaborative whiteboard with Jam-board have been made available in Google Meet.
- Google announced \$10 billion towards education in India in the next five years and the company will also train more than 1 million teachers in the country within 2020 offering a range of free tools such as G Suite for Education, Google Classroom and YouTube to help digitize the education experience in the nation. As part of this, Google has tied up with CBSE and

Maharashtra government also for digitizing the education space in the country.

5. Astronomers find "Milky Way look-alike" baby galaxy 12 billion light years from Earth

- The astronomers have found a baby galaxy billions of light-years from the Earth that has been seen to be similar to our planet. This discovery is going to change the perception of the scientists regarding the formation of galaxies in the world.
- This galaxy is named as SPT0418-47 is located around 12 billion light-years away from Earth, as per the study published in the Nature Journal. The astronomers at the Max Planck Institute for Astrophysics could spot this galaxy using the Atacama Large Millimeter Array, one of the most powerful telescopes of the world. However, this galaxy is known to be surprisingly unchaotic, unlike all the turbulent and unstable young galaxies.

6. DIAT develops Ayurvedic face mask “Pavitrapati” and antimicrobial bodysuit “Aushadatarā”

- Pune based Defence Institute of Advanced Technology, DIAT (DU) developed a Nanofibres of Ayurvedic based Biodegradable Face Mask which acts a virus neutralizer to resist against the bacteria/virus and is named “Pavitrapati”. The Company now launched its first-ever Ayurvedic based biodegradable face mask named “Pavitrapati” for sale.
- M/s Siddheshwar Techtessile Pvt. Ltd., Maharashtra developed initially 10,000 Nos of this mask and has got responses from distributors, sales teams, pharmaceutical companies and the same will be made available on online platforms like Amazon, Flipkart etc. Another ToT has been transferred to M/s. Siddheshwar Techtessile Pvt. Ltd., Maharashtra by DIAT for development of antimicrobial bodysuit in the name of “Aushadatarā”. This suit has superhydrophobic, breathing, anti-microbial, comfort feeling properties.

7. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh launches SRIJAN portal for Indigenization in Defence Sector

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has launched a portal SRIJAN which is a one-stop shop online portal that provides access to the vendors to take up items for indigenization.
- This will help industry partners to play an active role in the goal of self-reliance in the defence sector.
- The Defence Minister called upon the Indian industry partners to show complete commitment and take proactive participation in the pursuit of Indigenization and self-reliance in the Defence Sector.

8. Chandrayaan-2 Completes a Year in Moon Orbit, has Adequate Fuel for 7 Years More: ISRO

- Chandrayaan-2 was launched on July 22, 2019 and inserted into lunar orbit on August 20, exactly one year ago on Thursday.
- "Though the soft-landing attempt (of the lander carrying the rover) was not successful, the orbiter, which was equipped with eight scientific instruments, was successfully placed in the lunar orbit. The orbiter completed more than 4,400 orbits around the Moon and all the instruments are currently performing well," ISRO said.

SPORTS

1. Hockey India To Provide Financial Assistance To 61 Unemployed Athletes

- The Hockey India executive board has announced immediate support to 61 athletes across the junior and senior men and women core probable who are not employed due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
- The purpose behind providing financial assistance is to help them in resuming their sports activities. Athletes who are not holding any form of employment may face constraints that can impact their ability to be able to return to sports activities.
- Mr. Gyanendro Ningombam, Hockey India Officiating President informed that sixty-one athletes will be receiving financial assistance from the Hockey India, which will include 26 Junior men, 30 Junior women, 1 senior men, and 1 senior women core probable.

2. Cricketer Rohit Sharma Appointed Oakley's Brand Ambassador in India

- Indian Limited-overs Team Vice-Captain Rohit Sharma has been appointed as Brand Ambassador of Sports eyewear brand, Oakley for a period of two years in India
- With this partnership, Rohit Sharma will sport Oakley Sports eyewear on and off the pitch.
- He has joined the likes of Vira Kohli, Yuvraj Singh and model Milind Soman who have endorsed the brand in the past
- Ben Goss, Oakley global brand director announced the appointment of Rohit Sharma as Brand Ambassador through a press statement.

3. MS Dhoni announces retirement from international cricket

- Former Indian skipper, MS Dhoni announced his retirement from international cricket on August 15, 2020. The 39-year-old World Cup-winning captain made the announcement through his social media account.

- Dhoni announced his retirement through a post on Instagram, which read "Thanks a lot for your love and support throughout. From 1929 hrs consider me as Retired."

OBITUARIES

1. PM Modi, Amit Shah pay respects to Atal Bihari Vajpayee on second death anniversary

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tribute to Atal Bihari Vajpayee on his second death anniversary as he remembered the former Prime Minister's "outstanding service" to the nation. Born on December 25, 1924 in Madhya Pradesh's Gwalior, Vajpayee was the first-ever person from the BJP to become the Prime Minister.
- He served as Prime Minister thrice, briefly in 1996, from 1998 to 1999 and then for a full five-year term between 1999 and 2004. Apart from politics, Vajpayee was a prominent writer and penned a number of poems. The veteran BJP leader passed away on August 16, 2018, at the All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS) in Delhi after a prolonged illness.

2. Music legend Pandit Jasraj passes away in US at the age of 90

- Music legend Pandit Jasraj passed away at the age of 90. Pandit Jasraj was an Indian classical vocalist, belonging to the Mewati gharana.
- He was a recipient of the Padma Shri (1975), Padma Bhushan (1990) and Padma Vibhushan (2000).
- Back in 2019, a minor planet, between Mars and Jupiter, was named after the famed musician.

3. Former India opener Chetan Chauhan passed away at the age of 73

- The 73-year-old Chetan Chauhan, who was also a Cabinet Minister in Uttar Pradesh government passed away today. He was admitted to the Sanjay Gandhi PGI Hospital in Lucknow after testing COVID-19 positive on July 12.
- The health condition of former India opener Chetan Chauhan, who tested positive for COVID-19 last month, was worsened after he developed multi-organ failure and he was now on ventilator support at a medical facility in Gurugram.

IMPORTANT DAYS

1. World Humanitarian Day: 19 August

- World Humanitarian Day (WHD) is held every year on August 19. The day pays tribute to aid workers who risk their lives in humanitarian service, and to rally support for people affected by crises around the world.
- Thousands of men and women all around the world put their lives in danger working in Humanitarian causes and do it selflessly, not for ulterior selfish motives.
- This year WHD comes as the world continues to fight the Covid-19 pandemic. On 19 August 2003, a bomb attack on the Canal Hotel in Baghdad, Iraq took place in which 22 people were killed brutally and among these ones was the chief humanitarian in Iraq.
- In 2009, the UN General Assembly announced this day as World Humanitarian Day in remembrance of the bomb attack.

2. "Sadbhavana Diwas" Observed on 20th August

- Sadbhavana Diwas is observed on August 20 every year in the memory of late erstwhile Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi who dreamed about a developed India. The day is celebrated to mark the birth of our sixth and youngest Prime Minister. Contributions to the betterment of our society are made on this day, paying respect to Gandhi and his vision for the country.
- Rajiv Gandhi became Prime Minister at an age of 40 years after the assassination of his mother Indra Gandhi and served from 1984-89. A year after Rajiv Gandhi's assassination, the Indian National Congress instituted Rajiv Gandhi National Sadbhavana Award in 1992.
- It was established to accredit outstanding contributions in promoting national integration, peace, and harmony.

3. World Senior Citizen Day: 21 August

- World Senior Citizens' Day is celebrated on 21 August every year. It is observed to raise awareness about the issues that older people face and to acknowledge the importance of senior citizens in society.
- It also recognises and acknowledges the contributions of older people to society.
- The day was first proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 14, 1990, while the first celebration was marked on October 1, 1991.
- The World Senior Citizen's Day was officially founded by the former President of the United States of America, Ronald Reagan.

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