



Weekly Current Affairs

20 to 26 Sep 2020

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NATIONAL NEWS

1. HOCL gets BIS certification for all its products

- Hindustan Organic Chemicals Limited (HOCL), a PSU under the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers has been granted Bureau of Indian Standards – BIS certification for all its products.
- HOCL has been a pioneer in the manufacturing of Chemicals since its inception and quality is its motto since then.
- The company is supporting and implementing the Make in India initiative of the Government of India in one or other way.
- HOCL, a leader in the chemical industry, has a manufacturing unit at Kochi in Kerala.
- It provides basic organic chemicals essential for vital industries like Drugs and pharmaceuticals, resins and laminates, dyes and dyes intermediates, rubber chemicals, paints, pesticides and Textile industry, virtually touching every face of life.
- It is also manufacturing sanitizers in this period of COVID pandemic.

2. Principal Secretary to PM chairs meeting of High-Level Task Force to improve air quality in NCR

- Principal Secretary to Prime Minister Dr P K Mishra chaired the meeting of the High-Level Task Force constituted to improve the air quality in the National Capital Region of Delhi.
- Dr Mishra emphasized that the meeting was called well in advance before the onset of harvesting and winter season to ensure proper precautionary and preventive measures to combat the causes of air pollution are taken well in time.
- A review of the main sources of air pollution, measures taken and the progress made by the State Governments and various Ministries was carried out.
- It was noted that the incidence of stubble burning has reduced by more than 50 per cent in the last two years and the number of Good AQI days have gone up.

3. Eight Indian beaches recommended for coveted Blue Flag international eco-label

- Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar has said that eight beaches of the country have been recommended for the coveted 'Blue Flag' international eco-label. Clean beaches are a testimony to good environment in coastal areas and India's many beaches are among the best in the world.
- For the first time, eight beaches of India have been recommended for the Blue Flag certification.

- Blue Flag certification is a globally recognised eco-label accorded by an international agency ‘Foundation for Environment Education, Denmark’ based on 33 stringent criteria in four major heads—environmental education and information, bathing water quality, environment management and conservation and safety and services in the beaches.
- The ‘Blue Flag’ beach is an eco-tourism model endeavouring to provide the tourists/beachgoers clean and hygienic bathing water, facilities/amenities, safe and healthy environment and sustainable development of the area. The eight beaches recommended under the BEAMS are Shivrajpur in Gujarat, Ghoghla in Daman and Diu, Kasarkod and Padubidri in Karnataka, Kappad in Kerala, Rushikonda in Andhra Pradesh, Golden in Odisha and Radhanagar in Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

4. Cricketer Suresh Raina to set up cricket schools in J&K

- International cricketer Suresh Raina called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha in Srinagar yesterday. The celebrity cricketer, on the request of Lt Governor, agreed to set up five schools in Kashmir division and an equal number in Jammu division to train the aspiring cricketers, particularly the youngsters from remote areas of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.
- The Lt Governor appreciated the gesture of the cricketer and also informed him of the government’s resolve of developing sports culture in the Union Territory and said with sports and education, we shall give a new direction to the talented youth of J&K’.

5. KVGB launches special gold loan scheme for pandemic

- Karnataka Vikas Grameena Bank (KVGB) has launched a special gold loan scheme “Vikas Laghu Suvarna” with a reduced interest rate of 7.25%.The rate has been reduced considering the pandemic and also to provide easy and affordable credit to customers at a cheaper cost.
- Gold loans are easy means to get money during emergencies with minimal procedure and are still a popular loan product among customers.
- Under this new gold loan scheme, the bank is giving 80 % of the market value subject to a maximum of Rs 3,200/gram. A customer can avail up to maximum loan of Rs 15 lakh which is repayable within a period of maximum 6 months.

6. Govt launches Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyaan in 272 most affected districts

- The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has formulated and is implementing a National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (NAPDDR) for 2018-2025.
- The Plan aims at reduction of adverse consequences of drug abuse through a multi-pronged strategy.

- The activities under the NAPDDR include awareness generation programmes in schools, colleges, Universities, workshop and provisioning of treatment facilities and capacity building of service providers.
- The Ministry has also launched NashaMukt Bharat Abhiyaan in 272 most affected districts with focus on institutional support, community outreach and awareness generation.

7. “Swachhta Pakhwara” is being observed all over Indian Railways

- Indian Railways is observing “Swachhta Pakhwara” from 16th to 30th September 2020. During the inaugural day of Pakhwara, the Swachhta pledge was administered to Railway employees at all Zonal Railway HQs, Divisional Offices, and other establishments.
- During the Pakhwara, intensive cleaning and sanitization of stations, trains, tracks, colonies and other railway establishments is being carried out with special focus on plastic waste management.
- Railway Board through Northern Railway, in partnership with United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), organised a webinar on “Swachhata and Environment”.
- The Webinar was held to flag off the “SwachhataPakhwada” beginning from September 16 and ending on September 30, 2020.

8. Tamil Nadu becomes first state to unveil ethical AI, blockchain, cybersecurity policies in country

- Tamil Nadu became the first state in the country to come out with policies on Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain and Cyber security policies. The policies go by the names Tamil Nadu Cyber Security Policy, 2020, Tamil Nadu Blockchain Policy, 2020, and Tamil Nadu Safe and Ethical Artificial Intelligence Policy, 2020.
- In order to promote IT/ITeS industry in the State and to attract more investments, eight Special Economic Zones were established in Chennai and tier-II cities by Electronics Corporation of Tamil Nadu Limited (ELCOT) and start-up warehouses were set up in Chennai and Coimbatore.
- State Family Database (SFDB) and Block-Chain Backbone infrastructure will be established in the state for the implementation of these policies.

9. RajyaSabha Chairman rejects no-confidence motion against RS Deputy Chairman

- RajyaSabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu on September 21, 2020, rejected the no-confidence motion moved by Opposition MPs against the Deputy Chairman Harivansh saying that it is "not admissible under the rules".
- The RS Chairman said that he has received a letter from 46 Opposition MPs against the Deputy Chairman alleging violation of "norms of parliament procedures". M Venkaiah Naidu further said that it was a bad day for

RajyaSabha yesterday, when some members came to the well of the House and the Deputy Chairman was physically threatened and obstructed from doing his duty.

10. India is home to largest number of Greater One-Horned Rhinoceros: Prakash Javadekar

- Union Minister Prakash Javadekar said India is home to the largest number of Greater One-Horned Rhinoceros in the world with population in the range of 3000 animals in Assam, West Bengal and UP.
- In his message on the occasion of World Rhino Day, Mr Javadekar said Environment Ministry has launched a National Conservation Strategy for Indian One-Horned Rhino. He added that the conservation initiatives for rhino has also enriched the grassland management which help in reducing the negative impacts of climate change through carbon sequestration.
- The National Rhino Conservation Strategy for India was launched last year to conserve the greater one-horned rhinoceros. This is a first of its kind for the species in India which aims to work for the conservation of the species under five objectives. The objectives include strengthening protection, expanding the distribution range, research and monitoring, and adequate and sustained funding.

11. No permit requirement for vehicles carrying oxygen till March, 2021

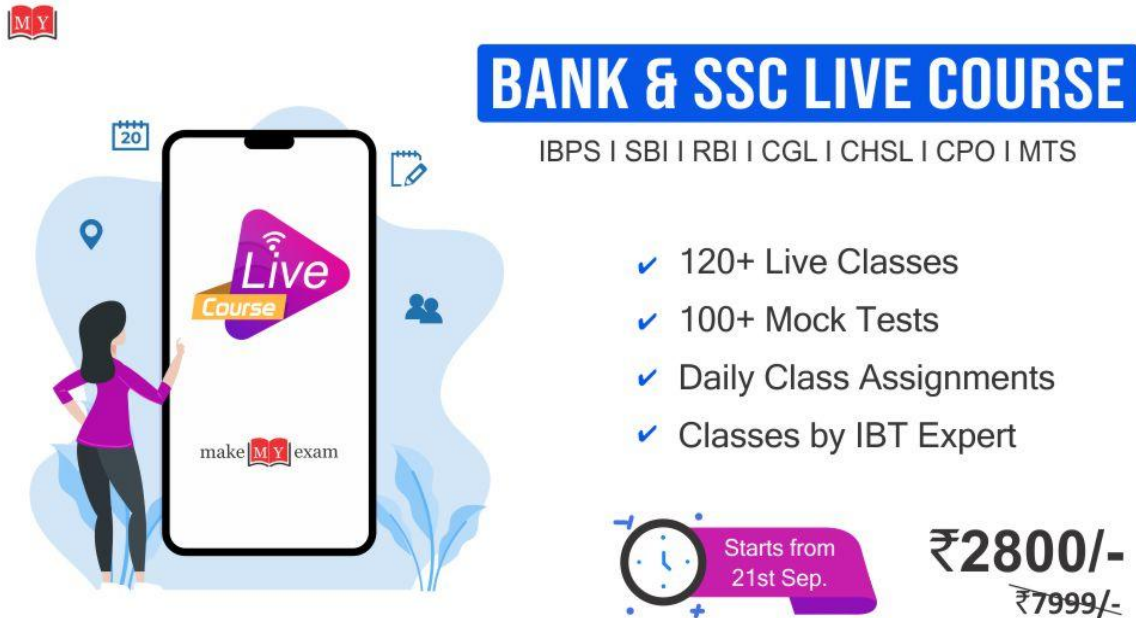
- The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways issued an order on September 21, 2020 waiving off permit requirements for vehicles carrying oxygen tanks or cylinders till March 31, 2021 in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The decision was taken in view of certain issues brought to notice of ministry about problems being faced by certain Transport Vehicles operators for the transportation and delivery of oxygen cylinders or oxygen tanks across states or within a state.
- The move will, hence, ensure the smooth movement of vehicles carrying oxygen and further ensuring the supply of oxygen across the country. Oxygen is an important item required for the treatment of COVID-19 patients.

12. RajyaSabha Passes National Forensic Sciences University Bill 2020

- The Parliament on September 22, 2020 passed the National Forensic Sciences University Bill 2020 with the RajyaSabha approving it. The LokSabha had approved the bill earlier.
- The bill proposes to establish the Gujarat Forensic Sciences University, Gandhinagar and the Lok Nayak Jayaprakash Narayan National Institute of Criminology and Forensic Sciences, New Delhi, as a National Forensic

Sciences University, Gujarat. The Bill declares the University to be an institution of national importance.

- Speaking on the bill's provisions, Minister of State for Home Affairs, G. Kishan Reddy said that forensic science plays an important role in the scientific investigation of crime incidents. He said that the university will work for the capacity building in the field of forensic science and promote research.



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13. Piyush Goyal participates in the G-20 meeting of the Trade and Investment Ministers

- Union Commerce and Industry & Railways Minister Shri Piyush Goyal took part in the virtual meeting of the G-20 Trade and Investment Ministers.
- Making interventions during the meeting, he called upon G-20 to play a leadership role in crafting a pathway to recover from COVID19, he said that one of the key lessons for all countries is the need to strike the right balance between their external and internal economic policies, with a view to ensuring balanced and sustainable development.
- He said that India stands ready to engage constructively with all G-20 Members to push an agenda that is inclusive and development oriented.
- Describing G20 as a significant grouping representing the majority of the world's population, its GDP and trade, Shri Goyal said that we must pursue an agenda that is universally beneficial and also takes into account the interests of Members outside the G-20. He stressed on the need to be sensitive to diverse economic realities.

14. India registers a Record of Highest Single day recoveries on 22 September

- In an unprecedented surge, India has recorded the highest number of single day recoveries.
- More than 1 lakh (1,01,468) new recoveries have been registered in the last 24 hours in the country.
- In another landmark achievement, the trend of very high number of single day recoveries has sustained for the past four consecutive days.
- With this, the total number of recoveries are nearly 45 lakh (44,97,867). This has resulted in the Recovery Rate touching 80.86%.

15. India, UK to hold Water Partnership Forum on 22 September

- A virtual India-UK Water Partnership Forum held to discuss ways to collaborate on issues pertaining to water conservation and infrastructure development.
- According to an official note, the inaugural address given by Indian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, Gaitri Issar Kumar. Besides, a memorandum of understanding inked between Ganga and British Water.
- The event highlighted the strategic partnership approaches between the two countries to develop 21st-Century water infrastructure in India.

16. Ministry of AYUSH partners with Ministry WCD to control Malnutrition

- A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the Ministry of AYUSH and Ministry of Women and Child Development to control Malnutrition as a part of POSHAN Abhiyaan. The MoU will see some time-tested and scientifically proven Ayush-based solutions being adopted for controlling malnutrition in the country.
- The MoU will help in tackling the problem of malnutrition in mothers and children in the country.
- The Ministry of AYUSH and Ministry of WCD will work together towards integrating Ayush in POSHAN Abhiyaan and management of malnutrition through the principles and practices of Ayurveda, Yoga and other Ayush systems.

17. Government to set up Neutrino Observatory in the country: Dr. Jitendra Singh

- The central government is planning to set up a Neutrino Observatory in the country. This was informed by the Union Minister of State (Independent Charge), Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh on September 21, 2020 in a written reply in the lower house of the Parliament, Lok Sabha.
- The India-based Neutrino Observatory (INO) will be a world-class underground laboratory with a rock cover that will study the neutrinos produced in the atmosphere of the Earth.
- Construction of an underground laboratory and associated surface facilities at Bodi West Hills in the Theni district, Tamil Nadu. The underground

laboratory will comprise a large cavern of size 132m X 26m X 20m and several smaller caverns. The approach to the caverns will be by a 2100 m long and 7.5 m wide tunnel.

18. PM Modi pushes for digital self reliance, launches ‘Ghar Tak Fibre’ scheme to connect 45,945 villages across Bihar

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched nine highway projects and Optical Fibre Internet Services in Bihar. The optical fibre services are being provided under the scheme “Ghar Tak Fibre”. These services are to be executed along with combined efforts of Common Service Centre.
- The project is to be implemented Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology under the scheme “Ghar Tak Fibre”. The project will connect 45,945 villages in the state and will thus enable the Digital revolution to reach the farthest corner of Bihar.
- The scheme aims to provide optical fibre enabled internet connections to every home in the country, concentrating on the village and rural areas. During his 74th independence-day address, PM Modi had said that over 1.5 lakh village panchayats have received optical fibre connections after 2014 under the scheme.
- The CSC Wi-Fi Choupal is an initiative to provide high-speed internet connectivity to rural India. It ensures digital connectivity using Bharat Net.

19. Lok Sabha passes Jammu and Kashmir Official Languages Bill, 2020

- Lok Sabha passed the Jammu and Kashmir Official Languages Bill, 2020. The bill aims to make Kashmiri, Dogri, Hindi, English and Urdu as the official languages of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.
- The earlier the official language for the Union territory was only Urdu.
- Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir had informed the Centre that people across the Union Territory had been demanding to include the languages they speak and understand as their official language.

20. India aims to end tuberculosis by 2025: Health Minister at UN

- Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan has said that India has accorded high priority for ending tuberculosis by 2025, five years ahead of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Dr. Harsh Vardhan said this while addressing Ministers of Member Nations of WHO, Heads and Representatives of UN Agencies through virtual interaction
- The Minister added that Tuberculosis has been in existence since time immemorial and continues to remain a major global public health problem. Despite the progress made over the last decade, TB remains the leading infectious killer disease worldwide.

21. Nagaland rolls back COVID-19 cess on petroleum products; Rs 10.32 cr collected so far

- Following a cabinet meeting held in Dimapur, the Nagaland government has announced its decision to revoke the COVID-19 cess on petroleum products. A total of Rs 10.32 crore has so far been collected from the cess which came to force on the midnight of April 28.
- The decision of the state government comes after several civil societies and political parties demanded a rollback on the COVID-19 cess.
- Nagaland government had levied the COVID cess on diesel by 5 rupees per litre and on petrol 6 rupees per litre from 28 April this year.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

1. Nepal plans to resume passenger railway services after 7-year suspension

- Nepal is planning to resume passenger railway services after a 7-year suspension after it received two sets of rails from India. The Diesel-Electric Multiple Unit rail sets that Kathmandu had purchased from India arrived in Janakpur city yesterday.
- Director General at the Department of Railway Balram Mishra said, it would take at least one and half months to restart the services, as it was currently working to recruit necessary human resources. The Department has planned to recruit over 200 staff gradually. It will be the country's first ever broad-gauge passenger railway service. The service will start from Kurtha, an area close to Janakpur town to Jayanagar, a town bordering India.
- There was an operation of Janakpur-Jaynagar railway service in the past but on a narrow gauge line. The service was completely halted seven years ago.

2. US banned TikTok and WeChat downloads from app stores

- TikTok and WeChat will be banned from US app stores, unless President Donald Trump agrees to a last-minute deal. The Department of Commerce said it would bar people in the US from downloading the messaging and video-sharing apps through any app store on any platform.
- The Trump administration says the companies threaten national security and could pass user data to China. But China and both companies deny this.
- WeChat will effectively shut down in the US, but people will still be able to use TikTok until 12 November, when it could also be fully banned.

3. US Imposes Sweeping New Sanctions on Iran

- The United States on September 21, 2020 imposed new sanctions on Iranian officials and entities after its effort to reimpose UN sanctions on Tehran was largely rejected. The new sanctions were imposed under a new executive order issued by US President Donald Trump, which is aimed at deterring conventional arms transfers to Iran.
- US Secretary of State Michael Pompeo said in a statement that the UN arms embargo on Iran is now reimposed indefinitely and we will ensure that it remains in place until Iran changes its behaviour.
- Pompeo said that the new executive order gives the US tools to hold accountable actors who seek to evade the embargo. Some of the sanctions have been issued against the Iranian Ministry of Defence and embattled Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro.

4. Saudi Arabia suspends travel to and from India, Brazil and Argentina due to Pandemic

- Saudi Arabia on September 23, 2020 suspended travel to and from India, Brazil and Argentina. The decision has been taken due to rising COVID-19 cases in the three nations.
- The Gulf nation has also barred people who have travelled to any of these three countries 14 days before their arrival in the Kingdom. The information was relayed through an official circular.
- The Saudi Travel ban comes as the Union Health Ministry announced that India accounts for 17.7 percent of global COVID-19 cases. The Ministry informed that India also has the highest share of global recoveries, almost 19.5 percent.

5. Bougainville elects former rebel chief Ishmael Toroama as its new president

- Former rebel military commander Ishmael Toroama has been elected president of Bougainville, an autonomous part of Papua New Guinea, electoral officials say, and is set to lead talks seeking independence.
- The general election was the first since Bougainville voted overwhelmingly for a separation from PNG at the end of last year, with Mr Toroama defeating an open field, the Bougainville Electoral Commissioner.
- Bougainville, a mineral-rich and lush group of islands in the South Pacific, has developed little since a decade-long civil war that claimed as many as 20,000 lives came to an end in 1998.

New Appointments and Person in News

1. Bihar DGP Gupteshwar Pandey takes voluntary retirement

- In Bihar, Director General of Police (DGP) Gupteshwar
- Pandey took voluntary retirement with immediate effect. The State Government granted his request five months before the completion of his service tenure on 28th of February next year.
- Additional charge of the top post has been given to DG (Homeguard) S. K. Singhal.
- Mr Pandey has been in limelight for taking a strong stand on the bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death case in which an FIR was lodged.


2. Colonel Dr Girija Mungali named in Asian Football Confederation task-force

- Retired Colonel Dr Girija Shanker Mungali has been appointed as one of the seven members of the Asian Football Confederation's task force for regulating football clubs in Asia and Australia. Mungali, who is also currently serving as the Chairman of the Club Licensing Committee of the All India Football Federation (AIFF), is the only Indian to be appointed on this committee.
- According to a statement issued here, the retired Army officer plans to use this platform to promote and create opportunities for young and upcoming footballers especially from the rural areas of the country.
- His appointment to AFC was made on September 15 by Dato' Windsor John, the General Secretary of the Asian Football Confederation and he will be on the panel till 2023.

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BANKING

1. Bandhan Bank sets up new vertical "Emerging Entrepreneurs Business" to help Entrepreneurs

- Bandhan Bank has set up a new vertical called “Emerging Entrepreneurs Business (EEB)”.
- The new vertical has been launched to support the emerging needs of the unbanked and underbanked segment of customers.
- The vertical will focus on supporting this segment of customers in their journey to becoming entrepreneurs.
- In addition to micro loans, the vertical will also manage micro home loan, micro bazaar loan and micro enterprise loan.

2. SBI starts women self-reliance programme in Assam

- To accelerate SHG finance in the Bank in a mission mode, State Bank of India (SBI) started a programme by the name “Mahila Atmanirbharshil Aachani” (Women Self-Reliance programme). SBI stated that women SHGs are very active and credit worthy in rural areas of Assam as it relies on social collateral rather than on financial collateral.
- It also empowers the women by encouraging them to create their micro enterprises for self-reliance and to maintain a sustainable economic condition.
- The basic objective of the programme is to create a strong bonding with the SHG members besides extending credit linkages to the women SHGs nurtured and sponsored by NRLM, Assam for self-reliance and economic upliftment.

3. HDFC Bank tops the BrandZ Top 75 Most Valuable Indian Brands 2020 report

- For the seventh straight year, HDFC Bank remained the top-ranked brand in India with a total brand value of more than \$20.2 billion, according to the 2020 BrandZ Top 75 Most Valuable Indian Brands ranking released by WPP and Kantar. According to the report, the total value of the BrandZ India Top 75 fell by 6 percent in 2020, shedding \$13 billion in value for a total brand value of \$215.608 billion.
- LIC is ranked second while Tata Consulting Services has been ranked at no.3.

4. IDFC Mutual Fund launches ‘SIP in Fixed Income’ campaign

- IDFC Mutual Fund has started a new campaign called SIFI or ‘SIP in Fixed Income’.
- The new campaign called SIFI has been launched to make investors more aware about the benefits of investing in fixed income products via Systematic Investment Plans.
- SIFI can help in generating better risk-adjusted returns, and the debt fund SIP can help cushion the impact of higher volatility in equity markets, thereby balancing the allocation.

- IDFC Mutual Fund's SIFI initiative aims to inform investors how a combination of equity and debt SIPs can help them navigate troubled times.

5. RBI appoints AK Das as the new administrator of PMC Bank

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has appointed AK Das (ex-general manager at Union Bank of India), as the new administrator of the Punjab and Maharashtra Co-operative (PMC) Bank.
- He has replaced JB Bhorla who has stepped down from his role as the administrator of the bank due to health reasons.
- In September 2019, the RBI had superseded the board of PMC bank due to fraud and financial irregularities in the PMC bank.

Books and Awards

1. Margaret Atwood awarded 2020 Dayton Literary Peace Prize

- Margaret Atwood has won the 2020 Dayton Literary Peace Prize's lifetime achievement award.
- The award celebrates literature's power to foster peace, social justice and global understanding.
- The Richard C. Holbrooke Distinguished Achievement Award is named for the late U.S. diplomat who brokered the 1995 Bosnian peace accords reached in the Ohio city.
- Margaret Atwood is a prolific writer of poetry, fiction, nonfiction, essays and comic books.
- In the recent years, she has drawn a new round of acclaim for "The Handmaid's Tale", her bestselling 1985 novel of a dystopian future in which women are subjugated after a theocratic group overthrow the US government.

2. Barack Obama Announces New Memoir titled "A Promised Land"

- Former US President, Barack Obama has announced his first presidential memoir titled "A Promised Land."
- The 768-page book will be published in November 2020 by Penguin Random House and is scheduled to be released on November 17, 2020, in 25 languages.
- A Promised Land is the first of two volumes of the book. This volume tells about his early political life, his presidential campaign in 2008, and ending with the death of Osama bin Laden in 2011.

3. Narendra Modi Becomes Second Indian PM To Win Ig Nobel Prize

- Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi has been awarded the Ig Nobel Prize 2020 for Medical Education.
- He has been awarded the satirical award for “using the COVID-19 pandemic to teach the world that politicians can have a more immediate effect on life and death than scientists and doctors can”.
- PM Modi is the second Indian Prime Minister to be honoured with the Ig Nobel Prize. Prior to this, Atal Bihari Vajpayee was awarded in 1998. He jointly won the Ig Nobel Peace Prize with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan for aggressively peaceful explosions of atomic bombs.
- PM Modi shares the award with Jair Bolsonaro of Brazil, Boris Johnson of the United Kingdom, Andrés Manuel López Obrador of Mexico, Alexander Lukashenko of Belarus, Donald Trump of the USA, Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey, Vladimir Putin of Russia, and Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow of Turkmenistan.

4. Chef Vikas Khanna’s book titled “Kitchens of Gratitude” to be out soon

- Michelin Star chef Vikas Khanna’s Feed India initiative was one of the brighter things during the bleak pandemic. It evolved into one of the largest food drives in the world carried forth by an individual.
- Spearheaded by him, it crossed 30 million meals in more than 135 cities.
- The chef fed underprivileged kids and ensured food reaches the many cities and towns ravaged by the virus. And now, he will be writing about all this and more in this new book, Kitchens of Gratitude, which will be out next year.
- Published by Penguin Random House, India, the book will detail the author’s experience and also touch upon his will to combat the ills of the time with the nourishing quality of food.

5. President Ram Nath Kovind confers NSS Awards for 2018-19

- President Ram Nath Kovind conferred the National Service Scheme Awards for the year 2018-19 through virtual mode.
- The NSS Award for the year 2018-19 was presented to 42 awardees in three different categories like University, NSS Units and their Programme Officers and NSS Volunteers. Youth Affairs and Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju attended the ceremony from Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi.
- Mr Kovind said that it is a matter of happiness that about 40 lakh young students of many technical institutes, colleges and universities are serving the society and the nation by joining the National Service Scheme. He said, so far nearly four crore volunteers have contributed through this scheme.

6. A book titled “Voices of Dissent” authored by Historian Romila Thapar

- Noted Indian Historian and author Romila Thapar has written a new book titled “Voices of Dissent”

- The book is a historical essay that explores dissent, including its articulation and public response to its forms, with a focus on the recent protest in India against the citizenship law and the National Register of Citizens.
- Thapar received the Kluge Prize in December 2008.
- She was honoured with Padma Bhushan in 2005 which she declined stating that she made a resolve not to accept any “State Award”.



SCIENCE TECH & DEFENCE

1. In a first, 2 women officers to operate helicopters from Indian Navy warships

- In a historic first, two women officers have been selected to join as “Observers” (Airborne Tacticians) in the helicopter stream of the Indian Navy.
- The women officers will be the first set of women airborne combatants who would be operating from warships. This is a landmark development in the history of Indian naval aviation.
- The entry of women in the Indian Navy was restricted to the fixed-wing aircraft that took off and landed ashore.

2. India-China Commander level Talks underway at Moldo in Chinese side of LAC

- India and China are scheduled to hold a Corps Commander-level talks at Moldo, on the Chinese side of the Line of Actual Control (LAC), on the border standoff. This will be the sixth such talks on the issue.
- An official from the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) is likely to be part of Indian delegation. This is the first time that an MEA official will be present in this meeting, people aware of the developments said.

- In the previous five meetings, the Corps commander-ranked officers have failed to break the deadlock. This will be the first meeting since the foreign ministers of the two countries agreed on a five-point roadmap to take forward the disengagement and de-escalation process.

3. Indian Army organises annual 'Shikara Race' in Srinagar

- Fifteen Shikaras participated in the annual 'Shikara Race' organised by 20 Rashtriya Rifles (RR) of Indian Army for the people in Srinagar. The aim behind the race was to promote tourism in the newly formed Union Territory.
- This event is organised by Indian Army every year along with boat races and other races for children but could not do the same this year due to COVID-19 outbreak.
- The tourists who came to Srinagar to enjoy the race said that events like this should be organised more often as they help in developing good bonds with the locals.

4. DRDO conducts successful flight test of missile target vehicle ABHYAS

- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) conducted a successful flight test of ABHYAS on September 22, 2020. The test was conducted from the Interim Test Range in Balasore, Odisha.
- During the trials, ABHYAS - High-speed Expendable Aerial Target (HEAT) was successfully test flown. The air vehicle can be used as a target for the evaluation of various missile systems.

5. Flight Lieutenant Shivangi Singh to be first woman pilot to join Rafale fleet

- Flight Lieutenant Shivangi Singh will become the first woman pilot to fly the multi-role fighter aircraft Rafale after finishing her conversion training, according to reports.
- Commissioned into the Indian Air Force in 2017 as part of the second batch of women fighter pilots, Singh currently flies the force's oldest jet MiG-21 Bison. Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman, who shot down a Pakistan Air Force (PAF) fighter on 27 February last year near the Line of Control before being shot down himself and taken captive, was Singh's flying instructor.
- The Indian Air Force (IAF) currently has 10 women fighter pilots, who have undergone the arduous training to fly the supersonic jets. Reportedly, it takes around Rs. 15 crores to train a single fighter pilot.

6. Google Pay, Visa partner for card-based payments with tokenisation

- Google Pay announced the rollout of tokenisation across its platform that will enable users to safely transact with their debit or credit cards. Through

tokenisation, Google Pay Android users can use their debit or credit card to make payments through a secure digital token attached to their phone without having to physically share their credit or debit card details.

- The feature also works with online merchants, delivering more native and seamless OTP experiences without any redirects to 3D secure sites. This feature is now available to all users of Axis, SBI Card and Kotak.

OBITUARIES

1. Veteran Tamil Director Babu Sivan passes away

- Tamil director Babu Sivan passed away. He began his career by assisting director Dharani, who helmed films like Ghilli and Kurvi with Vijay.
- Later, he made his directorial debut with Vettaikaaran in 2009. It was one of the highest grossing Tamil films of that year.

2. MoS Railways Suresh Angadi 1st Union minister died of Covid-19

- Union minister of state for railways and Karnataka BJP MP Suresh Angadi, 65, passed away days after he tested positive for Covid-19. Angadi is the first Central minister to die of coronavirus.
- Suresh Angadi was the fourth-term MP from Belagavi.

IMPORTANT DAYS

1. International Coastal Cleanup Day observed on 19 September

- The 35th International Coastal Cleanup Day was celebrated consecutively for the ninth year by the Indian Navy at Visakhapatnam on 19 September. To commemorate the occasion, Eastern Naval Command(ENC) as a part of their sustained commitment and responsibility undertook Coastal Cleanup Drive at Ramakrishna Beach, Yarada beach and all seafronts within premises of naval units along the East coast.
- Naval personnel at Ramakrishna beach and at Yarada beach undertook the cleanup drive whilst strictly adhering to COVID-19 protocol.
- Drive was intended to inculcate amongst the general populace, the spirit of respecting the beaches and safeguarding our environment. The event was also aimed to create awareness among the general public to keep beaches clean and to support the noble efforts of GVMC in making 'The City of Destiny – Vizag' a clean city.

2. International Day of Peace: 21 September

- International Day of Peace is observed globally on 21st September every year. It is observed to spread awareness and preach peace and harmony all across the globe.
- On this day, the UN encourages countries to observe the day by creating an environment of “24 hours of non-violence”.
- Theme for world peace day 2020 is- “Shaping Peace Together”

3. International Day of Sign Languages: 23 September

- International Day of Sign Languages (IDSL) is celebrated annually across the world on 23 September. This day is celebrated to raise awareness on sign languages and strengthen the status of sign languages.
- The choice of 23 September is the same date that the World Federation of the Deaf was established in 1951.
- The last week of September is also observed as International Week of the Deaf. The theme for the 2020 International Day of Sign Languages is “Sign Languages are for Everyone!”



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