

CURRENT AFFAIRS SEPTEMBER 2018 PDF

AWARDS & HONOURS

| Name of the award | Award Winner | Additional Information |
|---|---|---|
| UEFA Player of the Year (2017-2018) | Luka Modric | He led Croatia to the World Cup final |
| Praful Bidwai Memorial Award for 2018 | Ulka Mahajan | Ulka Mahajan - one of the three founders of Sarvahara Jan Andolan. |
| Asiad's Most Valuable Player | Japanese swimmer Rikako Ikee | He bagged six gold and two silver medals at the Asian Games 2018 |
| Ramon Magsaysay Award | Bharat Vatwani and Sonam Wangchuk (Two Indians) | Other Recipients of the Award: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youk Chhang, • Filipino Howard Dee, • Vietnam's Vo Thi Hoang Yen • East Timore's Maria de Lourdes Martins Cruz. |
| Dr. Roy Award | Eminent neurosurgeon Dr B.K. Misra | Dr. Roy Award is the highest medical honour of India, instituted by the Medical Council of India in 1962. |
| Meryl Streep Award for Excellence | Actress Aishwarya Rai | Presented at Women in Film and Television (WIFT) India Award Ceremony |
| National Clean School Award | Seven schools from Puducherry | Tamil Nadu bagged second position in National Clean School Award. |
| Sarala Puraskar award | Poet Satrugna Pandav | For his poetry collection 'Misra Dhrupad' |
| "Outstanding Investigator Award" | Arul Chinnaiyan | Indian-American scientist and professor at the University of Michigan |
| Ig Nobel award | Research into human cannibalism | |
| Nine awards at this year's Emmy Awards. | HBO series 'Game of Thrones' | Outstanding Drama Series award Actor Peter Dinklage, who portrays Tyrion Lannister, was named Outstanding Supporting Actor |
| Tenzing Norgay Adventure Award | INSV Tarini's all-women crew | Indian Navy's first all-women crew |

CURRENT AFFAIRS SEPTEMBER 2018 PDF

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| Hindi implementation award Rajbhasha Kirti | Punjab National Bank | For implementing the Official Language Policy during 2017-18. |
| Airport Service Quality (ASQ) Awards 2017 | Lucknow, Indore, Ahmedabad, Chennai, Kolkata and Pune airports. | Presented by the Airports Council International (ACI) |
| Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna | Virat Kohli & Mirabai Chanu | World champion weightlifter Mirabai Chanu |
| Grosch People's Choice Midnight Madness Award | Director Vasan Bala's action thriller 'Mard Ko Dard Nahi Hota' (The Man Who Feels No Pain) | At the 43rd Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) |
| Civilian Honour of Mexico | Dr. Raghupati Singhania | Awarded for the efforts to strengthen bilateral ties between India and Mexico. |
| India's official entry for 2019 Oscars' Best Foreign Language Film category | Assamese film 'Village Rockstars' | Directed by Rima Das, the film is about a 10-year-old girl from a village in Assam who wants to be a guitarist. |
| FIFA Fair Play Award | German forward Lennart Thy | |
| Best FIFA Men's Coach award | France's World Cup-winning manager Didier Deschamps | He led France to victory in the 2018 FIFA World Cup |
| The Best FIFA Men's Player award | Croatia midfielder Luka Modrić | |
| 2018 FIFA Puskás award | Liverpool forward Mo Salah | Given for the best goal of the year. |
| Right Livelihood Award | Abdullah al-Hamid, Mohammad Fahad al-Qahtani and Waleed Abu al-Khair - three jailed Saudi human rights activists | Referred as Alternative Nobel Prize' |
| UN's highest environmental honour, the 'Champions of the Earth' award | PM Narendra Modi | Recognised for his leadership of the International Solar Alliance and pledge to eliminate single-use plastic in India by 2022. |
| Innovation Award at Automechanika | Manatec, the Pondicherry-based garage equipment manufacturer | Automechanika, a leading trade fair, held in Germany. |
| 'Icons of Indian Cinema' Award | Actor-director Pankaj Kapur | |

CURRENT AFFAIRS SEPTEMBER 2018 PDF

APPOINTMENTS

| Name of the Person | Name of the Position | Additional Information |
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| Binoy Kumar | Secretary in Steel Ministry | He also held the post of Director General (Supplies & Disposals) |
| Sunil Mehta | Chairman of Indian Bank's Association | He serves as the Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Punjab National Bank. |
| Mark Read | WPP's CEO | WPP Plc, the world's largest communication services group |
| Dr Poonam Singh | Regional Director for WHO South-East Asia Region | Nominated for 2nd Term |
| MC Mary Kom | Brand Ambassador of BSNL | For two years |
| Amitabh Chaudhry | MD and CEO at Axis Bank | |
| Anshula Kant | MD of State Bank of India (SBI) | |
| Ashwani Bhatia | Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of SBI Mutual Fund | Bhatia takes over from Anuradha Rao |
| Actor Akshay Kumar | Honorary Ambassador of Lal Bahadur Shastri Memorial Foundation | Lal Bahadur Shastri Memorial Foundation is the social organisation founded by the family of India's second Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri. |
| Dr Arif ur Rehman Alvi | 13th President of Pakistan | |
| Vibha Padalkar | Managing Director and CEO of HDFC Life | |
| Hima Das | Sports Ambassador of Assam | She won gold in track 400 m event at IAAF World U-20 Athletics Championships in France |
| Justice Mukul Mudgal | Head of Selection Committee to pick up Dronacharya and Dhyanchand Awardees | The Dhyanchand honour is bestowed on sports persons for their life-time achievements and contribution to sport during both their active career and after retirement. |
| Justice Ranjan Gogoi | Chief Justice of India | Will assume office on October 3, 2018 |
| Vibha Padalkar | Managing Director and CEO of HDFC Life | For a period of three years |
| Senior BJP leader L K Advani | Chairman of the Ethics Committee of the Lok Sabha | - |
| Former Uttarakhand CM Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' | Chairman of the Lok Sabha Committee on Government Assurances. | - |
| Prashant Kumar | State Bank of India's CFO | - |

CURRENT AFFAIRS SEPTEMBER 2018 PDF

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| Varun Dhawan and Anushka Sharma | Ambassadors of Skill India Campaign | Skill India Mission aims to standardise vocational training. |
| Kamlesh Nilakanth Vyas | Chairman of Atomic Energy Commission and the Secretary of Department of Atomic Energy | Currently he is the Director of Bhabha Atomic Research Centre |
| Ms. Tajinder Mukherjee | Chairman-cum-Managing Director of National Insurance Company Limited (NICL) | Currently he is working as General Manager of New India Assurance Company Limited |
| Anindo Majumdar | Secretary of Central Vigilance Commission | - |
| Ajit Mohan | Facebook India's Managing Director and Vice President. | - |
| Rajni Kant Mishra | Director-General of Border Security Force (BSF) | - |
| Eastern Air Command chief Anil Khosla | New vice chief of the Indian Air Force (IAF) | - |

BANKING & FINANCE

1. PM Narendra Modi launches India Post Payments Bank

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the India Post Payments Bank which will go live with 650 branches and 3,250 access points. The government aims to link all 1.55 lakh post offices to the India Post Payments Bank system by December 31. The bank can accept deposits of up to Rs 1 lakh but can't issue loans or credit cards.

Union Bank of India quits global diamond hub Antwerp

Union Bank of India has announced that it will close its branch in the global diamond hub of Antwerp within a year. Antwerp didn't generate "the expected amount of business, particularly from the diamond sector," CEO Rajkiran Rai Gundyadka said, adding, "The viability of the branch isn't established." The bank opened its branch in the Belgian city four years ago.

Mauritius remains India's largest source of FDI in 2017-18

Island nation Mauritius remained the top source of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into India in 2017-18 followed by Singapore, according to RBI data. While FDI from Mauritius totalled \$13.41 billion, inflows from Singapore rose to \$9.27 billion. The total FDI in the financial year stood at \$37.36 billion, a marginal increase from \$36.31 billion recorded in the previous fiscal.

Amazon hits \$1 trillion market capitalisation after Apple

World's richest man Jeff Bezos-led e-commerce major Amazon became the second publicly traded US company to hit \$1 trillion in market capitalisation after Apple. Amazon stock needed to hit a price of \$2,050.27 to reach the \$1 trillion mark. Amazon stock has more than doubled in the last 12 months and has gained more than 70% in 2018.

CURRENT AFFAIRS SEPTEMBER 2018 PDF

TCS becomes 2nd Indian firm to cross Rs 8 trillion market cap

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) became only the second Indian company to cross Rs 8 trillion in market capitalisation after Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries. TCS share price rose 1.7% to a record high of Rs 2,091 on the BSE, pushing the company's market capitalisation to Rs 8.01 trillion. The TCS stock has surged 54.6% so far this year.

Government spent Rs 132 crore on GST advertisements

The expenditure on advertisements through print media stood at nearly ₹127 crore while more than ₹5 crore was spent on advertisements with outdoor media. The Goods and Services Tax (GST) was implemented on July 1, 2017.

The government had also roped in Bollywood megastar Amitabh Bachchan as brand ambassador to promote GST and inform people about its benefits.

RBI directs banks with over 10 branches to have an internal Ombudsman

The Reserve Bank of India asked all scheduled commercial banks with more than 10 branches to appoint an internal ombudsman. It has excluded regional rural banks (RRB) from its directive.

RBI has reviewed the arrangement and issued revised directions under Section 35 A of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 in the form of Internal Ombudsman Scheme, 2018. An ombudsman is a person officially charged with investigating and addressing public complaints or violation of rights.

Dena, Vijaya and BoB may merge to form India's 3rd largest bank

Financial Services Secretary Rajiv Kumar said the boards of state-run Dena Bank, Vijaya Bank and Bank of Baroda have been advised to merge the three banks. The amalgamated entity would be the third largest bank in India. "The amalgamation will increase the banking operations...No employee will face any service conditions which are adverse," Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said.

PayU gets RBI nod to open non-banking financial company

South African conglomerate Naspers-owned online payments service provider PayU India has received a licence from the RBI to open its own Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC). The licence will be used to start a new credit business, PayU Credit. Through the service, PayU will issue personal loans and equated monthly instalments for consumers, PayU India MD Jitendra Gupta said.

India ranked third in family-owned businesses

India has a total of 111 companies and \$839 billion total market capitalization. India follows China (159 companies) and the US (121 companies). Korea came in fourth place, with 43 companies followed by Indonesia in the 5th place.

Samara Capital acquires Aditya Birla Retail Limited

CURRENT AFFAIRS SEPTEMBER 2018 PDF

The Aditya Birla Retail Limited (ABRL) sold its supermarket chain More to Witzig Advisory Services, owned by Samara Alternative Investment Fund. Amazon, in a deal with Samara, will be eventually picking up a 49% stake.

The deal was done at about Rs.4,200 crore. This will give Amazon to access more than 500 physical outposts across the country. The transaction was made between Witzig-Samara in an exchange filing. RKN Retail said that the board had approved the sale of its entire shareholding in ABRL to Witzig.

India Post Payments Bank, Bajaj Allianz tie up for insurance products sale

India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) and Bajaj Allianz announced a five-year partnership to sell life insurance products on a revenue share basis.

Under the partnership, IPPB will facilitate customers to pay for Bajaj Allianz life insurance products through their accounts. Launched on September 1, the IPPB has gained around 9 lakh customers.

India's per capita alcohol consumption doubled in 11 yrs: WHO

India's per capita alcohol consumption more than doubled between 2005 (2.4 litres) and 2016 (5.7 litres), according to a report by the World Health Organisation. Of the total consumption, 4.2 litres are consumed by men and 1.5 litres by women. The report further stated that global per capita consumption also rose from 5.5 litres to 6.4 litres during the period.

Dena Bank board approves merger with Vijaya, Bank of Baroda

State-run Dena Bank's board cleared a proposal suggesting a merger with two other state-run banks, Vijaya Bank and Bank of Baroda. The government had last week suggested a merger of the three banks to create the country's second largest state-run bank, after SBI. If the merger takes place, the number of government-run banks will be reduced to 19.

BRICS bank approves \$525-mn loan for infra projects in India

The BRICS' New Development Bank has approved a \$525-million loan for infrastructure projects in India. The loan will be used by the Indian government for on-lending to the Madhya Pradesh government for rehabilitating major district roads with a total length of about 2,000 km. The loan aims to improve connectivity of the rural interior with the national and state highways.

India to overtake Japan as 3rd largest economy by 2030: HSBC

India is forecast to overtake Japan as the world's third-largest economy by 2030, according to a report by UK's HSBC Holdings. The country's GDP has been projected to stand at \$5.9 trillion in 2030, compared to \$2.59 trillion at the end of 2017. Notably, India recently surpassed France to become the sixth-largest economy.

CURRENT AFFAIRS SEPTEMBER 2018 PDF

Aadhaar linking must for PAN, filing income tax returns: SC

The Supreme Court ruled that linking the Aadhaar card to PAN card is mandatory and is needed for filing income tax returns. The apex court, however, said Aadhaar is not mandatory for opening bank accounts and linking with existing accounts. Aadhaar-issuing body UIDAI had earlier told the court that Aadhaar linking would help prevent duplication of PAN cards.

The Supreme Court struck down Section 57 of the Aadhaar Act that allowed private companies to avail Aadhaar data. Calling the section unconstitutional, the court asserted that private companies cannot insist on having Aadhaar number of customers.

ICICI Prudential Life and Saraswat Bank partnered up for bancassurance

ICICI Prudential Life inked a pact with Saraswat Bank to offer insurance products. This includes 280 branches of Saraswat Bank in Maharashtra, Goa, Gujarat, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka.

Vijaya Bank approves merger with Bank of Baroda, Dena Bank

The board of state-run Vijaya Bank gave in-principle approval for merger with Bank of Baroda and Dena Bank. Earlier this month, the government proposed merging the banks to create the country's third-largest lender. After the merger of Bank of Baroda, Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank, the number of public sector banks will come down to 19.

ADB approved \$500 mn for Tamil Nadu water supply, sewerage, drainage infrastructure project

Asian Development Bank (ADB) approved financing of up to \$500 million for a multitranche financing facility (MFF) infrastructure project in at least 10 cities of Tamil Nadu.

The main objective is to develop climate-resilient water supply, sewerage, and drainage infrastructure. The first tranche of the program amounts to \$169 million will target the cities of Chennai, Coimbatore, Rajapalayam, Tiruchirappalli, Tirunelveli, and Vellore.

Walmart to invest Rs.180 crore in India to improve farmers livelihood

Walmart Foundation announced that it is to invest Rs.180 crore in India over the next five years to improve farmers' livelihood. The funds would be used to support farmer organisations to develop knowledge of sustainable farming practices, share business best practices and add value to primary agricultural commodities.

The money will also be used to improve access to finance and markets. Walmart India would grow its direct sourcing from farmers to 25% of the products sold in its Cash & Carry stores over the same period.

INDIAN AFFAIRS

Govt releases draft rules on sale of drugs by e-pharmacies

The Union Health Ministry has released draft rules on sale of drugs by e-pharmacies in order to regulate online sale of medicines. The draft rules state that all the e-pharmacies will have to be registered compulsorily with the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization. The e-pharmacies will not be allowed to sell tranquiliser, psychotropic drugs, narcotics and habit-forming drugs.

Govt to collect data on OBCs for first time in 2021 Census

The 2021 Census will be the first general census to collect data on 'Other Backward Classes' (OBC) since 1931. Although a socio-economic caste census (SECC) was conducted between 2011 and 2013 in deference to the demand of the powerful OBC lobby, it was part of the rural development ministry's survey of socio-economic status of households.

The government has been collecting data on Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes since the first census of Independent India in 1951. Notably, Mandal Commission's recommendation for reservation for OBCs was broadly based on caste data collected in the 1931 Census.

Seventh Meeting of National Medicinal Plants Board

The Seventh meeting of National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB) of Ministry of AYUSH was held under the chairpersonship of Minister of State for AYUSH, Shri Shripad Yesso Naik at New Delhi.

Smriti Irani inaugurated 'digital village' in Amethi

Union textiles minister Smriti Irani inaugurated a 'digital village' in Amethi, Uttar Pradesh, the parliamentary constituency of Congress president Rahul Gandhi.

Under the digital village project, there would be 206 programmes available for the people including a Wi-Fi Chaupal, LED bulb manufacturing, a unit to make sanitary pads and PM digital literacy initiative.

TRANSTAN made Aadhaar mandatory for organ transplant

Transplant Authority of Tamil Nadu (TRANSTAN) has made Aadhaar mandatory for Indian patients to register in the Tamil Nadu Network for Organ Sharing. While foreigners are asked to submit a No Objection Certificate (NoC) from the respective Embassies. Earlier, for Indian patients any identity proof, including voter's ID, was acceptable.

The move is a measure to streamline the deceased donor transplant programme and to confirm that they have come to the State for organ transplantation. TRANSTAN has brought in a single unique ID for a patient, irrespective of the number of organs he or she registers for. It is expected that this will avoid confusion so that the hospitals cannot modify patient's details except the activation and inactivation of patients.

CURRENT AFFAIRS SEPTEMBER 2018 PDF

Conference on E-Mobility in Indian Railways held in New Delhi

The main aim is to discuss strategies for future of mobility in India and to make Indian Railways more efficient, greener and a preferred mode of transport. It acted as a common platform for project developers and other stakeholders. Minister of State for Railways, Manoj Sinha was the chief guest of the conference.

Cabinet doubles Jan Dhan overdraft cap to Rs 10,000

The government has doubled the overdraft cap from Rs 5,000 to Rs 10,000 under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana. The scheme, which earlier aimed to provide a bank account to every Indian household, will now provide a bank account to every individual, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said. The age limit for availing overdraft has been increased to 65 years.

Homosexuality not a crime in India anymore: SC on Section 377

The Supreme Court scrapped parts of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), the 1862 law which criminalised homosexuality. The Delhi High Court had decriminalised homosexuality in 2009, but the decision was overturned by Supreme Court in 2013. "Section 377 is irrational, indefensible and manifestly arbitrary," said Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra.

Justice Indu Malhotra, who was a part of Supreme Court's Constitution Bench that decriminalised homosexuality, said history owes an apology to LGBT community and their families for the years of stigma imposed on them.

India ranks 19th in 'Theft Rankings' regarding Nuclear Materials Security

Nuclear Security Index (NSI) published a report on theft rankings of 'weapon-usable' nuclear materials, in which India holds a score of 46 out of 100. It is followed by Pakistan on the 20th position with 44 points. Australia and Switzerland are on the first position with a score of 94 each, followed by Canada with 89, Germany and Japan with 88 out of a total of 100.

Nehal Chudasama to represent India in Miss Universe 2018

Mumbai-based Nehal Chudasama had won the Yamaha Fascino Miss Diva Universe India 2018 title to become the representative of India at Miss Universe 2018 that will be held at Bangkok in December. While Indore's Aditi Hundia was crowned Yamaha Fascino Miss Diva Supranational 2018, Lucknow's Roshni Sheoran was crowned Yamaha Fascino Miss Diva 2018 Runner-Up.

SpiceJet 1st Indian airline to start dedicated cargo service

SpiceJet will start a dedicated air cargo service under the SpiceXpress brand from September 18. SpiceJet, which would be the first scheduled airline to start dedicated air cargo services in India, has inducted a Boeing 737-700 plane as the first freighter aircraft. The company said air cargo traffic in India is expected to grow 60% over the next five years.

CURRENT AFFAIRS SEPTEMBER 2018 PDF

Health Ministry implements HIV AIDS Act 2017

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare announced implementation of the HIV and AIDS (Prevention and Control) Act, 2017. The act criminalises any kind of discrimination against people suffering from AIDS in terms of treatment, employment and workplace. Those violating the act could be jailed for up to two years or fined up to ₹1 lakh or both.

PM Modi announces 100% hike in compensation for ASHA workers

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a landmark increase in remuneration for ASHA and Anganwadi workers. The announcement which will be effective from next month was made during a video bridge interaction with lakhs of ASHA, Anganwadi and ANM workers. The Prime Minister announced the doubling of routine incentives given by the Union Government to ASHA workers. In addition, all ASHA workers and their helpers would be provided free insurance cover under Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana and Prime Minister Suraksha Bima Yojana.

Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana to Cover Child Cancer Treatment

The child cancer will be treated under the Ayushman Bharat scheme and the rate in this regard is fixed. According to the announcement made, 1.5 lakh health and wellness centres will be opened across India by 2022 under the scheme.

The centres will provide comprehensive health care for diseases like diabetes, cancer, hypertension and cardiovascular diseases.

Cabinet approves PM-AASHA scheme to protect farmers' income

The Cabinet chaired by PM Narendra Modi approved Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan (PM-AASHA) to protect income of farmers growing pulses, oilseeds and copra. It will be a mix of sub-schemes involving direct procurement from farmers, involvement of private players for procurement on a pilot basis, and paying farmers the difference between the MSP and the selling price.

Rail Sahyog web portal launched for corporates to fund creation of amenities at Railway stations

The Minister of Railways and Coal, Piyush Goyal launched a web portal www.railsahyog.in today. The web portal will provide a platform for the Corporates and PSUs to contribute to creation of amenities at/near Railway Stations through Corporate Social Responsibility funds.

Based on the principle of first come first serve, the requests will be shortlisted and selected applicants will be intimated to deposit the funds with Railways/nominated agencies like RITES/RAILTEL etc. The nominated agency will get the work executed thereafter.

Hindi Diwas observed on September 14

On September 14, 1949, the Constituent Assembly of India adopted Hindi as the official language of a newly independent nation. The Indo-Aryan language had been in use across large

CURRENT AFFAIRS SEPTEMBER 2018 PDF

sections of India in multiple forms by then and had in fact been carried outside the shores of the country by those who settled in other parts of the world through centuries.

India ranks 3rd globally in family-owned businesses: Report

India ranks third globally in terms of number of family-owned businesses with 111 companies having a total market capitalisation of \$839 billion, according to a Credit Suisse report. India followed China (159 companies) and the US (121 companies). Indian family-owned companies generated 13.9% annual average share price return since 2006, compared to 6% by non-family owned peers.

India in UN's 'shameful' list over attacks on rights activists

India has been included in the UN's list of 38 "shameful" nations for intimidating people cooperating with the global body on human rights. The annual report accused these countries of torturing, killing victims and their human rights defenders, and also carrying out surveillance against them. China, Russia, Saudi Arabia and Israel have also been included in the list.

India moves up one spot to 130 in UN Human Development Index

India has climbed up one spot to rank 130 out of 189 countries in the latest Human Development Index (HDI) released by the United Nations Development Programme. India's HDI value for 2017 is 0.640, putting the country in the medium human development category. Between 1990 and 2017, India's HDI value rose from 0.427 to 0.640, an increase of nearly 50%.

Cabinet approves 4 New National Institutes of Design

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved the amendment of National Institutes of Design (NID) Act, 2014, thereby granting approval for introduction of a Bill in Parliament for the declaration of four new NID as Institutions of National Importance (INIs).

The four new NID will be come up in –

- ◆ Amaravati/Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh;
- ◆ Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh;
- ◆ Jorhat, Assam;
- ◆ Kurukshetra, Haryana.

Cabinet passes ordinance to make triple talaq punishable offence

The Union Cabinet approved the ordinance making triple talaq a punishable offence, after the bill to criminalise triple talaq got stuck in the Rajya Sabha. The bill was passed by the Lok Sabha in December 2017, but an agreement could not be reached in the upper house. The Supreme Court had also struck down the "unconstitutional" practice.

CURRENT AFFAIRS SEPTEMBER 2018 PDF

Universities to celebrate September 29 as ‘Surgical Strike Day’

UGC has directed varsities and higher educational institutions across the country to observe September 29 as ‘Surgical Strike Day’. NCC units of universities have been asked to organise a special parade, besides holding talk sessions with ex-servicemen to inform students about sacrifices of defence personnel. Students should also be encouraged to write letters to personnel, a circular added.

India becomes first country in the world to develop Cooling Action Plan

During World Ozone Day celebrations on September 17, Union Environment Minister Harsh Vardhan released a draft India Cooling Action Plan (ICAP) which lists out actions which can help reduce the cooling demand, thus helping in reducing emissions.

The minister also release a booklet on ‘Montreal Protocol – India’s Success Story’. ‘Keep Cool and Carry on’ : The Montreal Protocol is the theme of 24th World Ozone Day celebrations.

India signed \$74 mn loan pact with World Bank for Uttarakhand Workforce Development Project

The Uttarakhand Workforce Development Project (UKWDP) has a 5-year grace period, and a maturity of 17 years. The closing date for the project is June, 2023.

The project has three components —

- ◆ improving the quality and relevance of Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) training;
- ◆ increasing the number of skilled workers certified under National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQE);
- ◆ policy and institutional development and project management.

PM Modi launches world’s largest govt healthcare scheme

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojna (AB-PMJAY) in Jharkhand’s Ranchi. The cashless scheme, which offers an annual cover of ₹5 lakh to economically weaker sections of society is the world’s largest public health insurance scheme. It will benefit over 50 crore people across the country.

IISc Bangalore named India’s best university, IIT Indore 2nd

Indian Institute of Science Bangalore has been named the top Indian institute for the fifth straight year in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings and was placed in the 251-300 bracket. IIT Indore (351-400) was placed second, ahead of IIT Bombay and IIT Roorkee. Globally, Oxford University continues to hold the first place, followed by Cambridge, Stanford, and MIT.

CURRENT AFFAIRS SEPTEMBER 2018 PDF

Adultery not a crime: Supreme Court scraps 150-year-old law

The Supreme Court struck down the 150-year-old law which penalises adultery, ruling the law is unconstitutional. “There cannot be a shadow of doubt that it’s a ground for divorce but it can’t be a crime,” Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra said while reading out the verdict. “Adultery’s arbitrary and it offends the dignity of a woman,” he added.

Cabinet clears proposal to convert GSTN into govt company

The Cabinet has cleared a proposal to convert GST Network (GSTN) into a 100% government-owned company, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said. He added that 50% stake will be owned by the Centre and the remaining by the states. Currently, the Centre and states together hold 49% stake in GSTN, which provides IT infrastructure to the new indirect tax regime.

Cabinet approves ₹5,500 crore package for sugar industry

The Union Cabinet cleared a ₹5,500-crore incentive package for the sugar industry. Under the package, the government will give transport subsidies of ₹1,000-3,000 per tonne to sugar mills, depending on their distance from ports. The Cabinet approved raising the price the government directly pays to cane growers to ₹13.88 a quintal in the new season beginning October 2018.

Cabinet approves telecom policy to attract \$100bn investment

The Cabinet has approved the new telecom policy which aims to attract \$100 billion in investments and create 4 million jobs in the sector by 2022. Under the National Digital Communications Policy-2018, the government aims to provide universal broadband connectivity at 50 Mbps to every citizen. The policy also aims to expand IoT ecosystem to 5 billion connected devices.

India ranked 158th among 195 countries for investment in health care and education : The Lancet

The Survey was done in 195 countries. According to the survey, Finland tops the list in the two key sectors. India ranked 158th in the world, below countries like Sudan (157th), Azerbaijan, China and Bosnia Herzegovina. It is followed by Namibia at 159th. The United States ranked 27th, while China placed at 44th and Pakistan 164th.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan inaugurated Air Pollution Control Device WAYU in New Delhi

WAYU (Wind Augmentation PurifYing Unit) is developed by Council of Scientific and Industrial Research – National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (CSIR-NEERI) as a part of Technology Development Project being funded by Department of Science and Technology. 54 more such devices will be installed by 15th October in Delhi.

Govt sets up 9-member panel to review competition law

The government has set up a panel to review the Competition Act to ensure that the legislation is in line with the changing business environment. The nine-member panel, chaired by Corporate Affairs Secretary Injeti Srinivas, will pay special attention to merger guidelines and cross-border competition issues. The committee will submit its report within three months.

CURRENT AFFAIRS SEPTEMBER 2018 PDF

India ranks 96th on Economic Freedom Index; Hong Kong, Singapore retain top spot

As per the 2018 report on Economic Freedom in the World, released by the Centre for Civil Society (CCS) in conjunction with Canada's Fraser Institute, India stands at 96th rank out of 162 countries in economic freedom. Last year, India's rank was 98.

Hong Kong and Singapore again topped the index ranking first and second respectively. The other countries in the top 10 were: New Zealand, Switzerland, Ireland, the US, Georgia, Mauritius, the United Kingdom, Australia and Canada (tied for 10th) respectively.

Centre appointed search committee for Lokpal and Lokayuktas

The Centre suggested an eight-member search committee for Lokpal and Lokayuktas. The step came after the Supreme Court's order to appoint Lokpal at the earliest. The search committee was appointed by the selection committee. The Search committee will be headed by former Supreme Court judge, Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai.

The Selection committee constituted Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra, Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan, Leader of the largest Opposition party, i.e, Congress Mallikarjun Kharge, Jurist Mukul Rohatgi.

Ravi Shankar Prasad Launched Centre of Excellence for Data Analytics And DigiVaarta

National Informatics Centre (NIC) and National Informatics Centre Services Incorporated (NICS) have jointly set up a Centre of Excellence for data analytics to support Government departments to unlock the hidden potential of the data that they are generating as part of the governance processes and use it to improve the overall governance.

Government sets up Ayush Information Cell in Romania

To encourage practice of ayurveda, India has set up an 'Ayush Information Cell' at its embassy premises in Romania to create awareness about the traditional Indian system of medicine. The cell was digitally inaugurated by Vice President Venkaiah Naidu during his visit to Romania earlier this month.

Indian Navy signs contract with Hindustan Shipyard Ltd for construction of 2 Diving Support Vessels

The first vessel will be built in 36 months. It will be followed by the second vessel, 6 months later. The vessels will be based at Visakhapatnam and Mumbai respectively. It will have 118 m length and 7,650 T displacement. The DSV has a Deep Submergence Rescue Vessel (DSRV) that will improve its Submarine Rescue Capabilities.

India and UN Signed A Five-Year Sustainable Development Framework

Amitabh Kant and United Nations Resident Coordinator in India, Yuri Afanasiev, signed the Government of India-United Nations Sustainable Development Framework (UNSDF) for 2018-2022, at a special signing ceremony. The NITI Aayog is the national counterpart for the UN in India for the operationalization of the UNSDF.

STATE RELATED CURRENT AFFAIRS

SC bans construction in Maharashtra, MP, Uttarakhand

The Supreme Court has banned all construction activities in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Chandigarh till October 9. The interim order came after the states and the union territory failed to comply with the court's order to come up with a policy on solid waste management. "The attitude of the states/union territories...is pathetic, to say the least," the court said.

West Bengal government launched mobile blood donation camp

The West Bengal government has launched a mobile blood donation camp in a red luxury bus. The bus moves from location to location, collecting blood in West Bengal. The health activists said that this move by the government is a major success as the bus is often seen in the city collecting blood samples. The service is free of cost.

Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi inaugurates the first luxury cruise 'Alaknanda' in Varanasi

The five-star luxury cruise, a 30-metre double-decked modern line, is a startup venture of Varanasi based Nordic Cruiseline. It will run between Assi Ghat and Panchganga Ghat for a two-hour ride of around 12 km in the morning and evening.

Telangana dissolves 1st state assembly 9 months before tenure ends

The first state assembly of Telangana has been dissolved nine months before the term of the House expires, based on the recommendation of CM K Chandrasekhar Rao and his Cabinet. Governor ESL Narasimhan has asked Rao and his Cabinet to continue as a caretaker government till the new government is formed. CM reportedly wanted early state assembly polls in December.

Delhi Metro is second-most unaffordable in world

A study by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) has found that after the fare hike last year, Delhi metro has become the second-most unaffordable transport network in the world after Hanoi in Vietnam. The affordability is defined as the percentage of commuters' total income spent on travel. Last year, the Metro fares almost doubled after two hikes in May and October. The maximum fares escalated from Rs 30 to Rs 50 and then to Rs 60.

First 2-day India Idea Summit held in Mumbai by USIBC

The theme of the conference is 'US and India connecting our future'. This is the first time that US India Business Council (USIBC) is holding its annual general body meeting in India. The U.S.-India Business Council (USIBC) was formed in 1975.

CURRENT AFFAIRS SEPTEMBER 2018 PDF

China will be Jharkhand's partner country at the Food processing summit

Jharkhand Chief Minister Raghubar Das was on a four-day visit to China at the invitation of the International Department of the Communist Party of China (CPC). He invited China to participate in food processing summit, which will be organised by Jharkhand Government in November. Das visit Zhengzhou, the capital of China's agriculture province Henan.

Nagaland Government declared Singphan Wildlife Sanctuary as an elephant reserve

The Singphan Elephant Reserve which is the 30th elephant reserve in India, is located in Mon district of Nagaland and spreads over an area of 5825 acres (2357 hac). As per recent census report (2017) Nagaland has around 446 elephants. The creation of new Elephant Reserve will result in protection and conservation of the elephants.

Haryana govt signs MoU with Indian Oil to set up Ethanol plant

An ethanol plant will be set up in Bohali village, Panipat with an outlay of over Rs 900 crore. The MoU will be valid for one year. The proposed capacity of this ethanol plant will be of producing 100 kilolitres of ethanol per day. Paddy and Sugarcane crop residues will be supplied as raw material for this plant in cyclic manner.

Andhra govt launches app to digitise marketplace for farmers

The Andhra Pradesh government on Wednesday launched an app, e-Rythu, to digitise agricultural marketplaces and payments. It will help farmers buy, sell and receive payments for their products through phones in an easy and secure way. The app, developed by Mastercard Labs for Financial Inclusion in Nairobi, Kenya, has been customised for India through its team in Pune.

India, US annual combat exercise Yudh Abhyas 2018 to be held at Uttarakhand

The 2-Week long Yudh Abhyas 2018 exercise will be conducted at Chaubatia in Uttarakhand from 16 to 29 September, 2018. It will be fourteenth edition of exercise in Yudh Abhyas series which was started in 2004 under US Army Pacific Partnership Program. Last year, Yudh Abhyas was held at Joint Base Lewis-McChord in the US.

Kolkata tops in 4G Coverage in India, Jammu and Kashmir ranked last

Kolkata has topped OpenSignal's list of 4G availability with over 90.7% coverage, across all of India's 22 telecom circles for the May-July period this year. It is followed by Punjab (89.8%), Bihar (89.2%), Madhya Pradesh (89.1%) and Odisha (89%). The Jammu and Kashmir circle comes at the last spot with 80.23 percent 4G availability.

New Majerhat bridge to be constructed in West Bengal

The West Bengal government is to demolish the Majerhat bridge in South Kolkata. A portion of the bridge collapsed on September 4 and killed three people. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said an expert panel headed by Chief Secretary has suggested opinion to raze the bridge completely and to construct a new bridge in a year. She also mentioned that talks were on to construct a level crossing at the site.

CURRENT AFFAIRS SEPTEMBER 2018 PDF

Jaipur Literature Festival begins in Houston

The festival is the world's largest free literary gathering, started with a soulful music performance by Indian Sufi singer Zila Khan. The inaugural session also saw Congress leader and writer Shashi Tharoor discuss his book "Why i am a Hindu" with writer Namita Gokhale.

Kent RO to set up its second manufacturing plant at Noida

Kent RO Systems, a healthcare products firm, is to set up its second manufacturing plant at Noida. For this project, it has invested more than Rs.150 crore. The facility will be ready in 4-5 years. Earlier, Kent RO signed a MoU with the U.P. government to invest Rs.200 crore. Kent is aiming to cross Rs.950 crore revenue during the current fiscal.

Despite its other products like air purifiers, vegetable and fruit purifiers and water softeners besides a few home appliances, the water purifiers contribute more than 85% of the total revenue of the company.

Uttar Pradesh Police to launch first-ever 'dial-FIR' scheme

In this scheme, a common man can register regular crimes without going to a police station, by dialing the emergency number UP 100 and file an FIR, a call-based FIR.

An e-FIR or dial-FIR scheme is the FIR (first information report) that sets the law into motion and to start investigation. To combat crime, an online dossier of over 1-lakh small and big criminals in the state has also been prepared. UP is the only second state to prepare such a localised online criminal database after Punjab.

India gets first ever gender-neutral hostel in Mumbai's TISS

After the Supreme Court scrapped Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) that criminalised homosexuality, India has become the first-ever country to have a gender-neutral hostel. The Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) in Mumbai's Deonar has become the first campus in India to have a gender-neutral hostel. The hostel has 10 twin-seater rooms that will host transgender, or gender non-conforming students.

Uttarakhand passes resolution to declare cow 'Rashtra Mata'

Uttarakhand Assembly passed a resolution to declare cow the 'Rashtra Mata' or the mother of the nation. While presenting the resolution, the State Animal Husbandry Minister Rekha Arya claimed that cow is the "only animal that not only inhales oxygen, but also exhales it". The resolution will now be forwarded to the Centre for approval.

Indian Air Force plans to set up a 'strategic base' in Andhra Pradesh

The Indian Air Force (IAF) has proposed to the Andhra government its plans to establish a drone manufacturing facility in Anantapur district, a cyber security centre in Amaravati, and turn Rajahmundry and Vijayawada airports into asset positioning bases.

CURRENT AFFAIRS SEPTEMBER 2018 PDF

IAF also plans to set up a major helicopter training facility at Donakonda in Prakasam district. IAF currently has a base at Arakkonam near Chennai, while the Navy has INS Dega in Visakhapatnam.

Delhi and Seoul Sign MoU To Tackle Air Pollution

The MoU on the 'Friendship and Cooperation Agreement' was signed by Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Seoul mayor Park Won-Soon in Seoul. The Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal particularly sought the city's expertise in dealing with transport and air pollution.

Bengaluru to get Boeing's 2nd-largest aircraft electronics factory

US-based aircraft maker Boeing is setting up an electronics manufacturing and avionics assembly facility in Bengaluru at an investment of ₹1,152 crore. The 36-acre facility will be Boeing's second-largest after its Seattle, Washington unit and is said to create about 2,600 direct jobs on completion. Boeing India President Pratyush Kumar met Chief Minister HD Kumaraswamy to discuss the project.

Andhra Pradesh tops government's 'Ease of Living Index' rankings

Andhra Pradesh has topped the 'Ease of Living Index' rankings released by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs under the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT). Andhra Pradesh was followed by Odisha and Madhya Pradesh. AMRUT, launched in 2015, aims at providing basic civic amenities to improve the quality of life especially for the disadvantaged.

PM inaugurates India's 100th airport, Sikkim's 1st at 4,500 feet

PM Narendra Modi inaugurated Pakyong Airport near Gangtok in Sikkim, which is India's 100th airport and the state's first airport situated at an altitude of 4,500 feet above sea level. Sikkim CM Pawan Chamling and Union Aviation Minister Suresh Prabhu were also present at the inauguration. The first commercial flights would begin from October 4.

President gives nod to India's 1st good samaritan bill of Karnataka

President Ram Nath Kovind has given assent to the good samaritan bill of Karnataka, the first such legislation in India. The Karnataka Good Samaritan and Medical Professional (Protection and Regulation during Emergency Situations) Bill, 2016, provides legal protection to the good samaritans who help accident victims with emergency medical care within the 'golden hour'.

Four Northern states and 2 UTs to fix uniform tax rates on petroleum products

The states are Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh and UTs of Delhi and Chandigarh. Further, a subcommittee would be instituted which would recommend with regard to uniformity in tax rates in the next fifteen days. Punjab is one of the highest rates of VAT on petrol in the country and it is second to Maharashtra.

CURRENT AFFAIRS SEPTEMBER 2018 PDF

Telecom giant Bharti Enterprises to join hands with Andhra Pradesh

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu called on Sunil Bharti Mittal, Founder, and Chairman of Bharti Enterprises. The various IT-based initiative of Andhra government, Mittal expressed his willingness in joining hands with the state government.

Odisha Chief minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurated the Odisha Bhawan in Chennai

Odisha Bhawan, the official guest house of Odisha Government in Chennai, was inaugurated by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami and Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik. This will be the fifth official guest house of the State Government outside Odisha. The Chennai guest house has 16 double-bed rooms and five suits. It has also an auditorium with a capacity for 300 people. It has been constructed with an investment of nearly Rs 22 crore.

Vice-president Venkaiah Naidu will inaugurate World's largest dome in Pune on Oct 2

The 160 ft dome will be inaugurated at the Maharashtra Institute of Technology's (MIT) Loni-Kalbhor campus, on October 2, the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

With 160 feet diameter and 263 feet height, this would be one of the largest domes in the world. Earlier the largest dome was at Vatican city with 136 feet diameter and 448 feet height.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Germany to give Rs 990 crore loan for Clean Ganga Mission

In an effort to clean the river Ganga, Germany is providing a soft loan of euro 120 million (approx. Rs 990 crore) to India to strengthen sewage water treatment infrastructure in Uttarakhand.

The purpose of the project 'Clean Ganga Mission' is to reduce the inflow of untreated wastewater in River Ganga and, thus, to improve the water quality of the river. The initiative also includes construction of 13 sewage pumping stations.

India to help Nepal build rail link to Kathmandu

India will help Nepal build a railway line connecting Bihar's Raxaul to Nepal's capital Kathmandu. Both the countries have signed an MoU under which India will conduct a preliminary engineering and traffic survey of the new rail line. "The rail line is expected to expand connectivity by enhancing people-to-people linkages and promoting economic growth and development," the Indian Embassy said.

India and Nepal Sign MoU on Preliminary Survey of Railway Line between Raxaul and Kathmandu

Indian Ambassador to Nepal Manjeev Singh Puri and Nepal's Secretary of Ministry of Physical Planning and Works, Madhusudan Adhikari signed the MoU in Kathmandu.

CURRENT AFFAIRS SEPTEMBER 2018 PDF

India and Nepal agreed in April 2018 to construct a new electrified rail line with India's financial support connecting the border city of Raxaul in India to Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal.

India along with 23 other nations Participates in tsunami mock drill

The exercise, known as 'IOWave18', is being organized by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO, which coordinated the setting up of the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (IOTWMS) in the aftermath of December 2004 tsunami.

India and Cyprus signed MoUs on curbing money laundering

India and Cyprus signed two Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on combating money laundering and cooperation in the field of environment. The MoU was signed between Financial Intelligence Unit, India, and Unit for Combating Money Laundering of Cyprus.

Mr.Kovind and Mr.Anastasiades held discussions on issues of mutual interest, including promotion of business collaboration in the fields of IT and IT-enabled services, tourism, shipping and renewable energy.

India, France set up working group for ISRO's Gaganyaan

India and France announced a working group for Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) first manned space mission Gaganyaan. The mission would make India one of the four countries in the world after Russia, China, and the US to launch a manned space flight. The two countries also have plans to work on Mars, Venus, and asteroids.

India, US agree to work together on India's NSG membership

Following the inaugural 2+2 talks with the US, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj said that both the countries have agreed to work together towards India's entry in the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). China has been opposing India's bid for NSG membership on the grounds that the country is not a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

India, US sign deal on advanced technology exchange

India signed the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) with the US during the 2+2 talks in Delhi. The deal will enable India to access advanced technologies from US. Both the countries also committed to work together on regional and global issues, including in bilateral, trilateral, and quadrilateral formats.

India supports Mauritius' claim on Chagos Islands under UK

India at the International Court of Justice has supported Mauritius over its claim on Chagos Islands, which are under the United Kingdom's control in the Indian Ocean. "The process of decolonisation of Mauritius remains incomplete...as long as the Chagos archipelago continues to be under UK's colonial control," India said. Chagos is home to UK and US' military base Diego Garcia.

CURRENT AFFAIRS SEPTEMBER 2018 PDF

India to buy 18 bullet trains from Japan for Rs 7,000 crore

Each train will have 10 coaches and would be able to cruise at the speed of 350 km per hour. The purpose is to launch India's first bullet train by 2022. The 508-km high speed train corridor between Mumbai and Ahmedabad at an estimated cost of Rs 1,10,000 crore is expected to be operational by 2022. National High-Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL) will be responsible for executing the project of the high-speed train corridor.

Indo-Kazakhstan joint military exercise KAZIND 2018

KAZIND 2018 will be held in Otar region, Kazakhstan from 10 to 23 September 2018. This is the third joint military exercise between the two countries. The second edition of the KAZIND exercise was held in India in 2017. Aim is to build and promote bilateral Army to Army relations and exchange skills and experiences between Kazakhstan Army and the Indian Army.

France to collaborate on India's first human space mission 'Gaganyaan'

India and France inked an agreement to collaborate on Gaganyaan, ISRO's first human space mission. ISRO and CNES, the French space agency, will be combining their expertise in fields of space medicine, astronaut health monitoring, life support, radiation protection, space debris protection and personal hygiene systems. The two space agencies also plan to work on Mars, Venus and asteroids. India plans to send three humans to space before 2022. It would make India one of the four countries in the world after Russia, US and China to launch a manned space flight.

India and Bulgaria signed pact MoUs in the field of Investment, Tourism and Civil Nuclear Cooperation

They signed five MoUs in the field of Investment, Tourism, Civil Nuclear Cooperation, Establishment of Hindi Chair at Sofia University and enhancing scientific cooperation. The five important MoUs were signed following the detailed talks between Indian delegations led by President Kovind and Bulgarian delegations.

India-Sri Lanka Joint Exercise SLINEX-2018 begins in Sri Lanka

The exercise which was previously held biannually has been converted to an annual event from this year to enhance cooperation in the maritime domain and to further strengthen mutual trust and interoperability between the two navies.

The scope of the week-long exercise has been significantly increased this year with three ships, two maritime patrol aircraft and one helicopter participating from the Indian side.

India, Afghanistan, Iran hold first-ever trilateral meeting

India, Afghanistan and Iran held the first-ever trilateral meeting at the Deputy Foreign Minister level in Kabul. The meeting focused on consolidating economic cooperation, including the Chabahar Port, as well as enhancing cooperation on counter-terrorism, counter-narcotics and continuing support for the Afghan-led peace and reconciliation process, a joint statement read.

CURRENT AFFAIRS SEPTEMBER 2018 PDF

Iraq replaces Saudi as India's largest oil supplier: Report

Ahead of US sanctions on Iranian oil, Iraq has replaced Saudi Arabia as India's largest oil supplier in August, according to Reuters. Despite the lower purchases, Iran remained the third biggest oil supplier to India during the month. The US is reimposing sanctions on Iran following its decision in May to withdraw from the 2015 nuclear deal.

India to cut Iran oil imports ahead of US sanctions: Reports

Ahead of the US sanctions, India will cut its oil imports from Iran by nearly half from earlier this year, according to reports. India had increased the purchase of Iranian oil from April to August in anticipation of the reductions, reports added. India is the second-largest importer of Iranian oil.

US reviewing India's Chabahar port development in Iran

US President Donald Trump's administration has said that it is reviewing India's development of the Chabahar port in Iran after imposing several sanctions on the country. The port opens a trade route between India and central Asia by bypassing Pakistan. The US has asked India to cut oil imports from Iran to zero by November or face sanctions.

India, Afghanistan, Iran hold first-ever trilateral meeting

The main focus on consolidating economic cooperation, including Chabahar, as well as enhancing cooperation on counter-terrorism, counter-narcotics, and continuing support to the peace and reconciliation process that is led and owned by Afghanistan. The meeting was chaired by Afghanistan's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hekmat Khalil Karzai.

India and Malta to come together for strengthening cooperation in Tourism MoU to boost economy for both countries

The MoU will help in increasing tourist arrivals in both countries that will lead to a boost in the economy. The Main objectives of the MoU are to encourage the quality destination of tourism industry in both countries. The increase tourist arrivals in both countries from the entire world through the territories of India and Malta. Promoting human resource development in tourism and travel-related industries in both countries.

India-Mongolia Joint Exercise 'Nomadic Elephant 2018' held in Ulaanbaatar

The 12 days long Nomadic Elephant-2018 has begun at Mongolian Armed Forces (MAF) Five Hills Training Area, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. Nomadic Elephant is an annual bilateral military exercise, started in the year 2006, and this was the 13th edition of the exercise.

India approves MOU on joint Blockchain Research with BRICS Members

The research is jointly conducted by Export- Import Bank of India (Exim Bank) and one bank from each BRICS member states. The MoU was initially proposed at the 10th International BRICS Summit held in Johannesburg in July. The main focus of which was cooperation in economic development in the face of the fourth industrial revolution.

CURRENT AFFAIRS SEPTEMBER 2018 PDF

PM Modi, Bangladesh PM inaugurate Indo-Bangla oil pipeline

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bangladeshi counterpart Sheikh Hasina jointly inaugurated the construction of the India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline Project through video conferencing. The 130-kilometre-long pipeline will connect Siliguri in West Bengal and Parbatipur in Bangladesh's Dinajpur district. The two leaders also inaugurated the construction of two new rail projects.

India, Sri Lanka inks MoU for construction of 5000-MT Temperature Controlled Warehouse

The warehouse will be constructed with an Indian grant assistance of 30 crore Sri Lankan rupees. The construction of a 5000-metric ton temperature controlled warehouse will be used for fruits and vegetables to minimize its post-harvest losses.

India to organise 'Gandhi March' in Netherlands

India will organise 'Gandhi March' from the iconic Peace Palace at the Hague to Grote Kerk on September 30, to launch the two-year long celebrations of the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. On the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti on October 2, marked as International Day of Non-Violence, five other events will be held in The Hague, Amsterdam, Utrecht and Zoetermeer.

Indo-Bangla border conference held in Mizoram

A joint border conference was held between India and Bangladesh at Aizawl and delegates from both sides deliberated on the border issues between the two countries. Brigadier General Zakir Ahmed, the Surveyor General of Bangladesh told media persons that a discussion was held regarding the demarcation of border between the two countries along Mizoram.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Argentina hikes interest rate to 60%, highest in the world

Due to economic crisis, Argentina's central bank raised its benchmark interest by 15 percentage points to 60%, the highest in the world.

The Argentine peso is down 50% this year against the dollar and the country's inflation is running at over 30%. Argentina President Mauricio Macri has asked for an early release of a \$50-billion loan from the IMF (International Monetary Fund).

Sixth East Asia Summit and 15th India-ASEAN Economic Ministers Meeting held in Singapore

Commerce & Industry Minister Suresh Prabhu attended the 6th East Asia Summit- Economic Ministers Meeting (EAS-EMM) and 15th India-ASEAN Economic Ministers' Meeting (AEM) in Singapore.

CURRENT AFFAIRS SEPTEMBER 2018 PDF

Dr Arif Alvi elected 13th President of Pakistan

Dr Arif ur Rehman Alvi was elected the 13th President of Pakistan after a vote in the Parliament and provincial assemblies. Alvi, a dentist by profession, was a founding member of Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan's political party Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf. The 69-year-old is expected to assume office on September 9 after incumbent President Mamnoon Hussain's term ends.

South Africa enters recession for 1st time since 2009

South Africa entered recession for the first time since 2009 in the second quarter. Its economy contracted by 0.7% in the second quarter, led by declines in the agricultural, transport and retail sectors. The country's currency rand stretched losses against the dollar to more than 2% and government bonds fell after the data was released.

Ukraine launched joint military exercises with the U.S. and other NATO countries

Ukraine has launched joint military exercises with the U.S. and a string of other NATO countries. The annual Rapid Trident military exercises are to happen in the western Ukrainian village of Starychi until September 15, involve some 2,200 soldiers from 14 countries. This is because of the rise in tension with Russia remains high over the Kremlin-backed insurgency in the country's east.

The event will start a week before Russia holds its biggest military exercises, Vostok 2018, since the Cold War, with the participation of China and Mongolia.

International Women Entrepreneurs Summit 2018 held In Nepal

The theme of the 3-day event is "Equality begins with Economic Empowerment". The main objective of the summit is to bring together achievers, women business leaders, professionals, international service providers, resource organizations, experts, government representatives and other stakeholders with a focus on innovative economic transformation through discussions and collaborations.

International Aviation Summit Held In New Delhi

The seminar has been jointly organized by the Airports Authority of India, Ministry of Civil Aviation and International Air Transport Association (IATA). Vision 2035 plans to build 100 new airports across India in the next 10-15 years with an investment of USD 60 billion and address the major issues concerning aviation industry such as airport infrastructure, Currrtaxation and use of technology.

Qatar first Gulf nation to grant permanent residency to expats

Qatar has become the first Gulf nation to offer permanent residency to expatriates. The country's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani has issued a decree allowing a maximum of 100 expatriates to gain permanent residency each year. Children of Qatari mothers, and skilled expatriates who have lived in the country for more than 20 years will be given priority.

CURRENT AFFAIRS SEPTEMBER 2018 PDF

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Nepal to take part in military exercise with China

Nepal will take part in a 12-day-long military exercise with China later this month, Nepalese Army spokesperson Brigadier General Gokul Bhandaree said. The 'Sagarmatha Friendship-2' exercise will take place in China's Chengdu city. This comes after Nepal withdrew from the first-ever Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) military drill in India.

UN Security Council holds first-ever meeting on corruption

The UN Security Council (UNSC) held its first-ever meeting on corruption and its linkages to global conflicts. UN Secretary-General António Guterres said that corruption is linked to illicit trafficking of arms, drugs and people as well as terrorism. Citing the World Economic Forum's estimates, he added that corruption costs at least \$2.6 trillion or 5% of global GDP.

Russia holds biggest military exercise since Cold War

Russia began its biggest military exercise since the Cold War, involving around 3 lakh troops, 36,000 vehicles and over 1,000 aircraft. The 'Vostok-2018' exercise, being held in eastern Siberia, will last for five days. China will send 3,200 troops and 30 aircraft to take part in the exercise as part of an effort to deepen military cooperation.

Alibaba Co-founder Jack Ma to step down as chairman on 55th birthday

Chinese billionaire and Alibaba Co-founder Jack Ma today announced he will step down as the company's Executive Chairman on his 55th birthday on September 10, 2019. Ma will be succeeded by current CEO Daniel Zhang. However, Ma will remain on Alibaba's board of directors until the company's annual general meeting in 2020.

Pakistan could become World's 5th largest nuclear weapons state

According to the recent report, Pakistan could become world's 5th largest nuclear weapons state after Russia, United States, France and China in terms of possession of total nuclear warheads. Pakistan currently has 140 to 150 nuclear warheads and the stockpile is expected to increase to 220 to 250 by 2025.

Philippines hit by world's strongest storm this year

Super Typhoon Mangkhut, the world's strongest storm this year, hit the northern coast of the Philippines, bringing winds of up to 200 kmph and heavy rains. At least 12 people have died in the storm. Typhoon Mangkhut is heading west into the South China Sea, towards Hong Kong and southern China.

CURRENT AFFAIRS SEPTEMBER 2018 PDF

European Union to stop changing of clocks in 2019

The European Union (EU) will stop the twice-yearly changing of clocks from October 2019. The clock changes were implemented during the two World Wars and the 1970s oil crisis to save energy. EU countries are required to move forward by an hour on the last Sunday of March and back by an hour on the last Sunday of October.

North and South Korea open first liaison office since WWII

North and South Korea opened a liaison office in the North Korean city of Kaesong for the first time since the Koreas were divided at the end of World War II in 1945. The office is aimed at facilitating better communication between the two countries. The two Koreas previously communicated by fax and special telephone lines.

Syria holds 1st local elections since the start of civil war

Municipal elections were held in Syria for the first time since the civil war broke out in the country in 2011. Over 40,000 candidates are competing for more than 18,400 council seats, the Syrian state media reported. Areas outside the government control, including the Kurdish-held regions, were excluded from the polls.

Russia, Turkey to create demilitarised zone in Syria's Idlib

Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdoğan have agreed to create a demilitarised zone in Syria's Idlib province to separate the government and rebel forces. All heavy weaponry and rebel groups will be withdrawn from the zone by October 10. This is aimed at averting a major offensive in Idlib, one of Syria's last rebel strongholds.

Germany launches world's first hydrogen-powered train

Germany launched the world's first zero-emission hydrogen trains which will run on a 100-kilometre stretch. Built by French rail transport company Alstom, the trains are equipped with fuel cells that produce electricity by combining hydrogen and oxygen, leaving water and steam as the only emissions. The trains can travel up to 1,000 kilometres on a single hydrogen tank.

One-fifth of Japan's population is now aged 70 yrs or above

Over one-fifth of Japan's population is now aged 70 years or above and they account for 20.7% of the country's population, new government data has revealed. The elderly people (those aged 65 or above) make up 28.1% of the population. The rise in Japan's ageing society has been attributed to low birth rates, which have led to a shrinking population.

Japanese submarine holds drill in S China Sea for 1st time

A Japanese submarine has participated in a naval drill in the disputed South China Sea for the first time. Japanese warships, including the Kaga helicopter carrier, also took part in the exercise. China, which claims over 90% of the sea, warned Japan to act with caution and avoid taking actions that could damage peace and stability in the region.

CURRENT AFFAIRS SEPTEMBER 2018 PDF

World Ozone Day observed on September 16

On December 19, 1994, the UN General Assembly proclaimed September 16 to be the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer, commemorating the date when the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer was signed in 1987. Ozone layer is found particularly in the stratosphere layer of atmosphere ranging between 20 to 40 km.

The theme for World Ozone Day 2018 – Keep Cool and Carry On.

Bangladesh govt approved India to use the Chittagong and Mongla seaports

Bangladesh's Cabinet approved a proposed agreement with India to allow it to use the Bangladesh seaports. The approved agreement will be effective for five years. The agreement would allow India to Chittagong and Mongla seaports for transporting goods to and from the northeastern States.

Only Bangladeshi vehicles may be used as freight transport to move the goods while they are in Bangladeshi territory. India must also follow GATT and Bangladeshi regulations and also pay the customs duties and buy tax equivalent bonds. Any cargos that move through Bangladesh will be monitored by a tracking system. The decision by Bangladesh is a step toward improving the friendly relations between Bangladesh and India.

Time Magazine acquired By Salesforce Founders for \$190 Million

The purchase brought Bezos a Pulitzer Prize-winning, 140-year-old newspaper but also put him in the crosshairs of President Donald Trump called the Washington Post an “expensive lobbyist” for Amazon.com. Benioff has a net worth of \$6.5 billion, serves as the co-chief executive officer of Salesforce.

Ola enters New Zealand

Ola, the Indian ride-hailing company, unveiled its plan to extend its territory to New Zealand. The service will first begin in Auckland, Christchurch, and Wellington. Ola offers the service with a commission rate of 9%. The company is to pay drivers daily rather than weekly in order to benefit the drivers.

The company earlier launched its service in Australia in February and the U.K. in August. It said that it enables smart transportation to over 125 million users in India, Australia and the U.K.

US sanctions China for buying Russian jets, missiles

The US State Department imposed sanctions against the Chinese military for buying Russian Sukhoi Su-35 fighter jets and S-400 air defence missile systems. The US also blacklisted 33 people and entities associated with the Russian intelligence. China has called on the US to withdraw the sanctions or “bear the consequences”.

Pakistan issues stamps commemorating Burhan Wani as ‘freedom icon’

In an attempt to highlight the Kashmir issue, Pakistan released 20 “commemorative” postage stamps, one of which portrays slain terrorist Burhan Wani as a ‘freedom icon’. The stamps were reportedly issued on July 24 to locally and internationally highlight the “plight of people living in Kashmir”. The stamps have captions like “use of pellet guns” and “mass graves”, among others.

China, Vatican reach landmark deal on appointment of bishops

The Vatican reached a landmark deal with China on Saturday on the appointment of bishops in the country. Pope Francis recognised seven state-appointed Chinese bishops as part of the deal. Catholics in China are split between the Catholic Patriotic Association, where bishops are appointed by the government, and an underground Church that swears loyalty to the Vatican.

1 in 20 deaths worldwide caused due to alcohol: WHO

Alcohol is responsible for over three million deaths annually, which is more than 5% of all deaths worldwide, a report by the World Health Organisation has revealed. The report goes on to state that 13.5% of deaths among people in their 20s are linked to booze, with alcohol responsible for 7.2% of premature deaths overall.

Löfven becomes 1st Swedish PM to be ousted in no-confidence vote

Swedish PM Stefan Löfven became the country’s first leader to be ousted in a no-confidence vote. The 61-year-old received 142 votes in his favour while 204 MPs voted against him. Löfven, who could stay on as caretaker PM while his replacement is decided, said, “It is my wish to continue serving our country as PM”.

129 countries at UN pledge to combat drug problem

Around 129 countries at the United Nations pledged to combat drug problem, signing a US-drafted one-page “call to action on the world drug problem”. The countries pledged to develop national action plans to reduce demand for illicit drugs through education, strengthen international cooperation on justice, law enforcement and health, and cut off the drug supply by stopping production.

Germany tests world’s first self-driving tram

The world’s first self-driving tram, fitted with multiple radar, LiDAR, and camera sensors, has successfully been tested in Potsdam, Germany. The tram, which relies on AI algorithms, can react to trackside signals and respond to hazards like crossing pedestrians and vehicles. However, the tram operated on a 6-km test route in real traffic with a safety driver for emergency purposes.

Tiger population doubles in Nepal since 2009

Nepal’s wild tiger population has reached 235, nearly doubling the baseline of around 121 tigers in 2009. The last survey in 2013 had estimated the tiger population at 198. If these trends

CURRENT AFFAIRS SEPTEMBER 2018 PDF

continue, Nepal could become the first country to double its tiger population, since the launch of the TX2 goal to double the world's wild tiger population by 2022.

Argentina gets biggest loan in IMF's history at \$57 billion

Argentina has received \$57.1 billion from the International Monetary Fund, the biggest loan package ever from the global body aimed at boosting the country's struggling economy. The loan, \$15 billion of which has already been received by Argentina, will be disbursed over the next three years. Argentina had originally secured a \$50-billion loan in June this year.

Saudi opens high-speed rail line connecting Mecca and Medina

Saudi Arabia inaugurated a high-speed rail line connecting the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. The distance between the two cities would be covered in less than two hours, reportedly less than half the time it takes to cover the same distance by road. The 450-kilometre Haramain Railway line is a part of the 'Saudi Vision 2030' programme.

U.N. declared 2019-2028 as the Nelson Mandela Decade of Peace

This incident took place at the Nelson Mandela peace summit honouring the South African leader at the UN. He also unveiled a statue of Nelson Mandela at the UN marking the 100th anniversary of Mandela's birth.

Japan becomes world's first to land rovers MINERVA-III on asteroid Ryugu

Japan became the world's first country to successfully land two robotic rovers on an asteroid. This is the first time that the world will observe the surface of an asteroid via moving robots.

MINERVA-III separated from the Hayabusa2 spacecraft, is a 3.3 kg compact rover consisting of two cookie-tin shaped rovers, Rover-1A and Rover-1B, which are now operating on the asteroid surface.

Macedonia holds referendum on changing its name

Macedonia held a referendum on whether to change its name to the 'Republic of North Macedonia'. Greece and Macedonia had signed a deal in this regard in June. Greece argued that the name 'Macedonia' implied a territorial claim on its own province of the same name and had thus vetoed Macedonia's entry into the NATO and European Union.

Putin to visit India next month for annual bilateral summit

Russian President Vladimir Putin will visit India from October 4-5 to attend the 19th India-Russia Annual Summit, the Ministry of External Affairs said. Putin and PM Narendra Modi "will discuss key aspects of the further development of Russian-Indian privileged strategic partnership and exchange opinions on current international and regional issues", an official statement from Russia read.

CURRENT AFFAIRS SEPTEMBER 2018 PDF

World Tourism Day 2018 celebrated on September 27

Started in 1980 by The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), World Tourism Day (WTD) is celebrated worldwide annually on September 27. The theme of this year – ‘Tourism and the Digital Transformation’

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Scientist warns that the trapped heat below Arctic surface could melt ice in the entire region

Scientists warned that the Archived heat trapped below the surface of the Arctic has the potential to melt the entire region’s sea ice. They found that the warmer water that originated hundreds of miles away has penetrated deep into the interior of the Arctic. This heat is trapped below the surface layer presently. If it gets mixed up to the surface then the heat produced can melt the sea-ice pack that covers this region.

NASA set to launch Ice, Cloud Land Elevation satellite to track earth’s melting ice

The Ice, Cloud and land Elevation Satellite-2 (ICESat-2) will measure the average annual elevation change of land ice covering Greenland and Antarctica to within the width of a pencil, capturing 60,000 measurements every second. ICESat-2 which is scheduled to be launched on September 12 represents a major technological leap in our ability to measure changes in ice height.

ISRO to launch 19 missions in next 7 months

ISRO will conduct 19 missions, including 10 satellites and nine launch vehicles, in the next seven months between September and March, said ISRO Chairman K Sivan. Calling it the “highest density period for launches”, Sivan said ISRO has never before launched two satellites within 30 days consecutively for months. It will include the launch of India’s second moon mission Chandrayaan-2.

NASA scientists found signs of water in Jupiters Great Red Spot

NASA scientists detected signs of water above the planet’s deepest clouds deep inside Jupiter’s Great Red Spot, a storm raging on the planet for over 350 years. The pressure of the water combined with their measurements of another oxygen-bearing gas, carbon monoxide, imply that Jupiter has more oxygen than the Sun.

World’s first lion cubs born via artificial insemination

In a first, a lioness has given birth to a male and a female cub via artificial insemination in South Africa. Scientists harvested a male lion’s sperm, which was placed inside the lioness and she gave birth to two healthy cubs 3.5 months later. Scientists said the research is a breakthrough for saving endangered species like tiger and snow leopard.

CURRENT AFFAIRS SEPTEMBER 2018 PDF

ISRO planning its first satellite control base at North Pole

ISRO is reportedly planning to set up a satellite ground control station at the North Pole for a “14-orbit coverage” to efficiently download data from India’s Earth-observing satellites. ISRO already has two ground stations, IMGEOs at Telangana’s Shadnagar built in 2011, and AGEOS in Antarctica. The space agency would also install a second antenna in AGEOS to aid the project.

NASA seeks ideas to convert Carbon dioxide to an useful compound

NASA has announced a public competition seeking novel solutions to turn Carbon dioxide into useful compounds. The challenge is open to all. This is to find a solution that might help future astronauts exploring Mars as the Mars atmosphere has abundant CO₂.

The competition will be conducted in two phases. During Phase 1, teams must submit a design and description of a conversion system that includes details of the physical-chemical approaches to convert carbon dioxide into glucose. And NASA will award up to five teams USD 50,000 each. Phase 2 will carry a prize purse of up to USD 750,000, for a total challenge prize of USD 1 million.

India to make its own F-16 fighter jets

Maryland-based Lockheed Martin, an American security and aerospace giant, announced that the wings of its F-16 fighter jets will be produced in India. For this project, the Lockheed Martin Corporation has entered into an agreement with Tata Advanced Systems Limited (TASL).

This move is to boost the Centre’s ‘Make in India’ initiative. To make this project successful Lockheed has offered to move its entire F-16 manufacturing base to India. India is yet to make a decision on it.

Google launches new search engine for scientists

Google launched a new search engine called ‘Dataset Search’ to help scientists, data journalists and others find data required for their work. It will let people find “datasets wherever they’re hosted, whether it’s a publisher’s site, a digital library,” Google said. The search engine’s initial release will cover environmental, social sciences and government data, among others.

Facebook to open its 1st ever Asian data centre in Singapore

Facebook said it will invest over \$1 billion to build its first Asian data centre in Singapore, which is expected to open in 2022. The 11-storey data centre will span 170,000 square metres and “support hundreds of jobs”, according to the social media giant. Like its global counterparts, the data centre will be fully powered by renewable energy.

ISRO plans to set up its First Overseas Ground Station at North Pole

The ground station will augment the Indian Remote Sensing (Indian Remote Sensing (IRS) operations crucial not just for civilian needs like disaster management but also for the armed forces. However, ISRO has already two ground stations-IMGEOs at Shadnagar and AGEOS in Antarctica.

CURRENT AFFAIRS SEPTEMBER 2018 PDF

Google rolls out 'Blog Compass' app for Indian bloggers

Technology giant Google launched a new app 'Blog Compass' to help Indian bloggers manage their site and find topics to write about. The app, which is 'only available in India', works as an analytics and recommendation platform. It provides users with suggestions about topics based on their interests and posting history.

India successfully carried out first ever mid-air refuelling of Tejas combat jet

A Russian-built IL-78 MKI tanker transferred fuel to a Tejas MK I aircraft. The Indian Air Force (IAF) currently operates nine Tejas fighters built to an Initial Operating Clearance (IOC) standard. These jets are being flown by No. 45 Squadron, the Flying Daggers, based at Sullur Air Force Station in Tamil Nadu.

Air-to-air refuelling of Tejas aircraft done at 20,000 feet

The mid-air refuelling of 'wet contact' trial for Tejas aircraft was conducted successfully by Indian Air Force at an altitude of 20,000 feet. During the process, 1,900 kg fuel was transferred. "The Air-to-Air refuelling capability is a 'force multiplier' for IAF, giving the aircraft the potential to stay airborne for much longer periods of time," tweeted Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

Facebook's 'Rosetta' AI can detect text from memes, videos

Facebook has developed an artificial intelligence (AI) system 'Rosetta' which can detect text from over a billion images like memes and videos in real time. The AI detects rectangular regions in images that potentially contain text and then uses a neural network to recognise and transcribe what's written. To train the system, Facebook used a human-annotated dataset of public images.

Apsara: BARC recommissions upgraded version of India's oldest research reactor

The Bhabha Atomic Research Centre has recommissioned an upgraded version of 'Apsara', the country's oldest research reactor that was decommissioned almost a decade ago. Apsara was first made operational on August 4, 1956, becoming Asia's first research reactor at the time. The design of the pool-type reactor using enriched uranium fuel was conceptualised in 1955 by Dr Homi Bhabha himself.

The name Apsara was coined by then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Later, BARC set up two other research reactors Cirus and Dhruva. However, after having been in service for over five decades, the reactor was shut down in 2009 and decommissioned.

The country began production of radioisotopes with the commissioning of Apsara in 1956. Today, radioisotopes are used in the field of medicine for diagnosis and therapy, food preservation, agriculture, and other industries.

CURRENT AFFAIRS SEPTEMBER 2018 PDF

Scientists have developed drug to treat TB in future

Scientists from the University of Manchester, England, have developed a non-antibiotic drug that can one day treat tuberculosis (TB) in humans effectively. The drug targets Mycobacterium tuberculosis' defences rather than the bacteria itself.

In the study, published in the Journal of Medicinal Chemistry, animals with acute and chronic TB infection were treated with the compound. The results revealed that the compound does not kill the bacteria directly, but results in a significant reduction in the bacterial burden. It can also take out its increasingly commonly antibiotic-resistant strains. The scientists hope for clinical trials in humans up in four years.

IWC defeated the proposal to create Whale Sanctuary

The International Whaling Commission (IWC) defeated a proposal to create a whale sanctuary in the South Atlantic at a meeting in Brazil. The proposal received support from 39 countries but was opposed by 25. Brazil first introduced the proposal in 2001.

Japan and few other nations argued that there is no need for sanctuary because countries are not currently doing commercial whaling in the South Atlantic. Other environmental groups and conservationists argued that the sanctuary would protect whales from being hunted, trapped in fishing gear or struck by ships.

BSNL, Unlimit Ink partnership for IoT/M2M Services in India

The partnership between Unlimit end-to-end Internet of Things (IoT) and Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) will leverage seamless wireless network footprint pan India to provide its solutions and services across industries.

NASA launches \$1-bn laser-shooting mission to track ice melt

NASA launched its most advanced space laser, ICESat-2, a \$1-billion mission that will shoot lasers towards Earth to track the planet's melting ice. The preceding mission, ICESat, which lasted from 2003-2009 revealed that ice cover was disappearing from Greenland and Antarctica. The new laser will fire 10,000 times per second, whereas ICESat fired 40 times a second.

IBM partners IIT Bombay for AI research in India

American technology firm IBM has teamed up with IIT Bombay to 'accelerate' AI research in India through its AI Horizons Network. Students and teachers from the institute will partner IBM scientists to work on application of artificial intelligence, machine learning and related technologies to business and industry. It will be the first institute outside North America to join the network.

ISRO successfully launches two Earth observation satellites for UK

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully launched its PSLV-C42 rocket carrying two British Earth observation satellites from Andhra Pradesh's Sriharikota. The two

CURRENT AFFAIRS SEPTEMBER 2018 PDF

satellites, NovaSAR and S1-4, are intended to improve UK's disaster management capabilities. This marks the 44th flight of the PSLV and the third launch by ISRO this year.

Minister For Minority Affairs launched 'National Scholarship Portal Mobile App

The "National Scholarship Portal Mobile App" will ensure a smooth, accessible and hassle-free scholarship system for students from poor and weaker sections. All the scholarships are being given directly into bank accounts of the needy students under Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) mode through the National Scholarship Portal which has ensured that there is no scope for duplication and leakage.

ISRO launched its technology incubation centre in Agartala, Tripura

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) launched a space technology incubation centre in Agartala, Tripura. It was inaugurated from Bengaluru. The centre at Agartala is the first of six such centres which are planned to build capacity in new locations. It is aimed to have a good presence in academia and industry.

These space research activities are to tap the talents of the locations and include them in the space footprint. ISRO's Capacity Building Programme directorate is to invest Rs.2 crore for such centres in Jalandhar, Bhubaneswar, Tiruchi, Nagpur and Indore. These centres will not have activities related to space.

Chennai airport to get facial recognition system

Airports Authority of India (AAI) said that Chennai Airport will be soon getting facial recognition technology under the 'DigiYatra' scheme which will soon be implemented by the Ministry of Civil Aviation. This technology will capture the image of a passenger and scan the ticket so that there is no need for the passengers to wait in queues at the entrance.

Also if someone who travels with a fake ticket or with the boarding card of another the system will find out immediately and won't allow the passenger. It also ensures better security for the airport.

NASA telescope discovers 2 new planets 5 months after launch

NASA's Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite, known as TESS, has spotted "hot Earth" and "super-Earth" planets in solar systems 49 and 60 light-years away, marking its first discovery since April launch. TESS is designed to build on the work of its predecessor, Kepler space telescope, which discovered over 2,500 confirmed exoplanets in 20 years and is now running out of fuel.

BSNL signs deal with SoftBank, NTT to roll out 5G in India

State-run telecom firm BSNL has signed a deal with Japan's SoftBank and NTT Communications to launch 5G internet service and Internet of Things technology in India, BSNL Chairman Anupam Shrivastava said. "Under the agreement, we will look at solution specially for the smart cities," he added. He also said that the service may launch by 2020 in the country.

CURRENT AFFAIRS SEPTEMBER 2018 PDF

NASA mission to ‘touch’ the Sun sends back first images

NASA’s Parker Solar Probe has beamed back its first-light data showing the Milky Way and the galactic centre. Launched on August 12, the seven-year mission will probe why temperatures in Sun’s corona (outer atmosphere) reach a million degrees while the underlying surface only reaches about 5,500°C. The spacecraft will make its first close approach to the Sun in November.

Mozilla launches service to alert users on data breach

Mozilla launched Firefox Monitor, a security tool that will allow users to check if their online accounts were hacked in a recent data breach. It will provide them with details on sources of breaches and the types of personal data exposed in each breach. Users can also register with the service to get notified about future breaches.

Mangalyaan completes 4 years around Mars

The cheapest Mars mission in history, India’s Mangalyaan, has successfully completed four years around Mars, despite being designed to last only six months. ISRO inserted Mangalyaan into Mars’ orbit in its first attempt on September 24, 2014, using the least amount of fuel possible. The spacecraft was launched utilising a unique Earth-Mars arrangement that occurs once in 780 days.

IAF successfully test fired BVRAAM Astra

The Indian Air Force (IAF) successfully test fired the indigenously developed Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air Missile (BVRAAM) Astra from a Su-30 aircraft. It was tested at the Kalaikunda Air Force Station. The test missions included engagement of target at very long range, engagement of high manoeuvring target at medium range and multiple launches of missiles in a salvo to engage multiple targets.

CERN discovers two new particles with hints of a third

CERN, the world’s largest physics laboratory, has discovered two new particles, as well as hints of another new particle, in high-energy proton collisions at the 27-km-long Large Hadron Collider. The particles belong to the same family of protons called baryons. “Future studies of these particles will shed light on the strong force that binds subatomic particles called quarks,” CERN said.

India’s first space observatory ASTROSAT completes 3 years

Launched on September 28, 2015, ASTROSAT, India’s first multi-wavelength space observatory has completed three years in Earth’s orbit. ASTROSAT has helped scientists confirm the presence of younger stars in globular clusters, earlier believed to contain only old stars. The 1,513 kg satellite has observed over 750 sources so far and gathered data, which has resulted in nearly 100 publications.

CURRENT AFFAIRS SEPTEMBER 2018 PDF

USAID-India End TB Alliance formed between India, United States to combat tuberculosis

The main aim is to achieve a TB-free India by 2025. The Alliance members include industry and civil society leaders, academics, scientists, innovators, investors, and members of the diaspora.

Abbott is to introduce high-sensitive troponin-I blood test in India

Abbott announced it is to introduce a high-sensitive troponin-I blood test in India. This test can predict chances of a heart attack or other cardiac event months to years in advance.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) cardiovascular diseases kill an estimated 17.7 million people globally. In that, nearly 7.4 million are due to coronary heart disease. The troponin-I test provides better predictive information for determining a person's chances of developing future heart disease when added to the current standard of care.

SPORTS

Boxer Amit defeats Olympic champ to bag gold at Asiad 2018

India's 22-year-old boxer Amit Panghal defeated 2016 Olympic champion Hasanboy Dusmatov in the men's 49kg final to bag gold at the Asian Games 2018. Amit was the only Indian boxer who made it to a final at the quadrennial event. He had won silver medal at the Commonwealth Games earlier this year and a bronze at Asian Championships last year.

Pranab, Shibnath bag India's 1st ever bridge gold at Asiad

India's 60-year-old Pranab Bardhan and 56-year-old Shibnath Sarkar won the men's pair bridge event to bag the country's first-ever gold in bridge at the Asian Games. The card game has been featured as a sport at the Asian Games for the first time, in the 2018 edition. India have won 15 gold medals at the Asiad 2018 so far.

Amit won gold in 49 Kg wrestling in Asian games 2018

India's Amit Phangal, a 22-year-old army wrestler, created history beating the Olympic champion Hasanboy Dusmatov of Uzbekistan in the men's 49kg at the Asian games. Amit beat Hasanboy by securing 3-2.

This is the second time India wins the medal. Earlier in 1962, Padam Bahadur Mall had won the first gold medal for India in men's boxing in Jakarta Asian Games. Now, after 56 years Amit had made the country proud at the same venue.

England's top Test run-scorer Cook to retire from international cricket

England's highest run-scorer in Test cricket, Alastair Cook, has revealed he would retire from international cricket at the end of the ongoing Test series against India. "There's nothing left in the tank. I have achieved more than I could have ever imagined," Cook said. The left-handed batsman had stepped down from a four-year spell as Test captain in February 2017.

CURRENT AFFAIRS SEPTEMBER 2018 PDF

India record their best medal haul in Asian Games history

The Indian contingent bagged a total of 69 medals at Asian Games 2018, their best-ever medal tally in the history of the quadrennial event. India's previous best medal haul at the Games came in 2010, when the contingent clinched 65 medals. India won 15 gold medals in the 2018 edition, matching their record gold medal haul from the 1951 edition.

Indian Navy beats 22 other teams to win KAKADU Cup 2018 in Australia

Kakadu Cup 2018 was organised by the Australian Navy as part of its multi-nation maritime exercise. INS Sahyadri had participated in the Kakadu Cup 2018 which involved swimming, running, crossing water and land obstacles. The name KAKADU is derived from Kakadu National Park, a protected area in the northern territory of Australia, 171 km south-east of Darwin.

Novak Djokovic wins US Open to clinch his 14th Grand Slam title

Former world number one Novak Djokovic defeated world number three Juan Martín del Potro 6-3, 7-6(7-4), 6-3 to clinch his third US Open title and overall 14th Grand Slam title. With this, Djokovic equalled Pete Sampras' haul of 14 Grand Slams. Further, he became the seventh man to win US Open singles title at least thrice in the Open Era.

Naomi Osaka claims US Open title after Serena Williams meltdown

Naomi Osaka became Japan's first Grand Slam singles champion after she thumped Serena Williams 6-2 6-4 in a controversial U.S. Open final, with the American suffering a mesmerizing meltdown after being handed a code violation. It was drama-filled conclusion to a final that was rich with storylines but will now go down as one of the most controversial Grand Slam finals of all time.

Jhulan first player to pick 300 int'l wickets in women's cricket

Indian pacer Jhulan Goswami became the first bowler in women's cricket to pick 300 international wickets after reaching the landmark figure in India's nine-wicket win over Sri Lanka. In addition to Jhulan's record, Mithali Raj went past England's Charlotte Edwards (117) as the most-capped captain in women's ODIs with her 118th appearance.

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Triple jumper Arpinder becomes first Indian to win medal in IAAF Continental Cup

Triple jumper Arpinder Singh created history by becoming the first Indian to win a medal in the IAAF Continental Cup as he clinched a bronze but star javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra finished sixth with a below-par show here.

CURRENT AFFAIRS SEPTEMBER 2018 PDF

Arpinder, who had won a gold in the Asian Games in Jakarta, cleared a modest 16.59m in the first of his three jumps to be in the four-man semifinals. He could only clear a 16.33m jump in his next attempt to miss out on the two-man final jump. Nonetheless, he collected a bronze.

India Blue defeated India Red and won 57th Duleep Trophy

India Blue thrashed defending champion India Red by an innings and 187 runs in the final to win the Duleep Trophy at NPR College ground. Spinners Deepak Jagbir Hooda (5 for 56) and Saurabh Kumar (5 for 51) needed just 10.5 overs on the fourth day to bundle out India Red for 172 in the second innings.

Jamie Murray and Bethanie Mattek won mixed doubles US Open 2018 title

Britain's Jamie Murray and American Bethanie Mattek-Sands captured the U.S. Open mixed doubles title with a 2-6 6-3 11-9 victory over Croatia's Nikola Pietrangeli and Poland's Alicja Rosolska. Mattek-Sands has also won mixed doubles Grand Slam titles at the Australian Open and French Open. Murray had three other Grand Slam mixed doubles titles.

Garcha won bronze in the 52nd ISSF World Championships in Korea

Gurnihal Singh Garcha won bronze in junior men's shooting and qualified in the sixth place at the 52nd ISSF World Championships in Changwon, South Korea. Gurnihal, the 19-year old, was defeated by Elia Sdrucchioli of Italy.

In total India won 22 medals, including seven gold and eight silver, and secured the fourth spot in the medals table behind China, Russia and Korea.

Eliud Kipchoge set a new marathon world record

Kenyan Eliud Kipchoge set a new marathon world record in Berlin with a time of 2hr 1min 39sec. He covered 42.2km in the Marathon. The 33-year-old Olympic champion smashed the previous record by Kenyan runner Dennis Kimetto who clocked 2:02:57. Kipchoge's run was the largest single improvement on the marathon world record since Australian Derek Clayton took almost 2:23 minutes off the record in 1967.

Mary Kom won gold in Silesian Open boxing tournament

M.C.Mary Kom, Five-time World champion, won her third gold medal of the year in the 48kg youth category of the Silesian Open boxing tournament for women in Gliwice, Poland. Mary Kom won against Kazakhstan's Aigerim Kassanayeva and secured 5-0 in a fine tactical performance. India's junior boxers claimed 13 medals, six gold, six silver and a bronze, and the Senior boxer, Former World champion Sarita, ended with a bronze.

Maldives defeated India to lift SAFF Cup

Maldives defeated India with a goal 2-1. The win for Maldives comes 10 years after their first SAFF Cup title in 2008.

CURRENT AFFAIRS SEPTEMBER 2018 PDF

Hangzhou confirmed as host of 2022 Asian Para Games

Asian Paralympic Committee (APC) confirmed that Hangzhou in China will host the fourth edition of Asian Para Games in 2022. Hangzhou will now be represented at the Closing Ceremony of 2018 Asian Para Games, which will begin in Indonesian capital Jakarta on October 6.

Sajan Bhanwal wins back-to-back Jr Wrestling WC medals

India's 20-year-old wrestler Sajan Bhanwal became the first Indian to win back-to-back medals at the Junior World Wrestling Championship, after securing a silver medal in the 77kg Greco Roman category in Slovakia. The Haryana wrestler, who had won the gold at Junior Asia Championship in July, had defeated Dmytro Gardubei from Ukraine in the semifinals.

Two teams share top spot for the first time in FIFA rankings

For the first time in the history of FIFA international football team rankings, two teams are sharing the top spot after World Cup 2018 semi-finalists Belgium joined World Cup winners France at the top of the rankings. Belgium is coming on the back of two victories in the UEFA Nations League, while France was held to a draw by Germany.

Russian tennis player nicknamed 'Colonel' retires with 499 wins

Russia's Mikhail Youzhny, who is nicknamed 'Colonel', retired from professional tennis one win short of 500 career wins. Youzhny, who reached the US Open semifinals twice in his career, was playing his career's final tournament in the St. Petersburg Open in Russia. The 36-year-old Youzhny won 10 tour titles and reached a career-high ranking of eighth in 2008.

Dhoni overtakes Dravid to become India's 2nd most capped cricketer

MS Dhoni has become India's second-most capped cricketer, achieving the feat against Pakistan in the Asia Cup. Dhoni, who is currently playing in his 505th international match for India, overtook Rahul Dravid, who represented India in 504 matches. Dhoni is now only behind Sachin Tendulkar, who played a record 664 matches for India.

Sindhu, Srikanth both knocked out in China Open quarterfinals

Kidambi Srikanth and PV Sindhu, India's top-ranked male and female shuttlers respectively, were knocked out of the BWF China Open tournament in the quarterfinal stage on Friday. Srikanth was beaten by Japan's Kento Momota in straight games, while Sindhu lost to China's Chen Yufei with a scoreline that read 11-21, 21-11, 15-21.

Dhoni becomes oldest player to captain India in an ODI

India's 37-year-old wicketkeeper MS Dhoni became the oldest player to captain India in an ODI after he led the Indian team against Afghanistan in Rohit Sharma's absence in the Asia Cup. Dhoni, who led the side 696 days after leaving the position, surpassed Mohammad Azharuddin who captained India at the age of 36.

CURRENT AFFAIRS SEPTEMBER 2018 PDF

Germany to host a major football championship after 18 years

UEFA has announced that Germany will host the 2024 European Championship, the nation's first major football championship since the World Cup 2006. Germany beat Turkey for the right to host the 2024 edition of the tournament. A total of 24 national teams will play in 10 German cities. The last edition of the tournament was hosted in France.

Brendon McCullum hit Test cricket's fastest ton in his last match

Ex-New Zealand captain Brendon McCullum scored Test cricket's fastest century off 54 balls in his career's last match against Australia in February 2016. McCullum, who turned 37 on Thursday, broke the record jointly held by Viv Richards and Misbah-ul-Haq, who scored a century each off 56 balls. McCullum also holds the record for hitting most sixes in Tests, at 107.

India defeat Bangladesh to win Asia Cup for the seventh time

Rohit Sharma-led India defeated Bangladesh on the last ball in Asia Cup final to win the tournament for the second straight time and overall seventh time. India have now won 13 out of 14 matches against Bangladesh in Asia Cup history. Further, this is the third time in four Asia Cup editions that Bangladesh have finished as runners-up.

PV Sindhu only sportsperson in Forbes India's Maiden List of 22 'Tycoons of Tomorrow'

Badminton player and Olympian PV Sindhu is the only sportsperson featuring in the Forbes India's maiden 'tycoons of tomorrow' list of 22 young achievers in the fields of business, acting and sports.

OBITUARY

| Name of the Person Died | Associated Field |
|-------------------------|--|
| Burt Reynolds | Actor - known for films like 'Boogie Nights', 'Smokey and the Bandit' and 'Striptease', |
| Bhagwati Kumar Sharma | Gujarati Author and Journalist |
| VS Vyas | Padma Bhushan awardee and economist |
| Brij Katyal | Bollywood writer |
| Dolagobinda Pradhan | Former Odisha minister |
| Captain Raju | Veteran actor-director and a former army officer |
| Satya Prakash Malaviya | Former Union Petroleum Minister |
| Tran Dai Quang | Vietnam's President |
| Filmmaker Kalpana Lajmi | Known for films like 'Rudaali', 'Chingaari', 'Ek Pal' and 'Daman: A Victim of Marital Violence', |
| Jasdev Singh | Hindi commentator |