SEPTEMBER 2020

MONTHLY UPDATES ON

CURRENT AFFAIRS

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National

- **Mission Karmayogi**, a National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB) has been approved by the Union Cabinet. A sum of ₹ 510.86 crores has been allocated for a period of 5 years which will cover 46 lakhs employees (approx.) who work under Central Government. Also, an Integrated Government Online Training **iGOTKarmayogiPlatform** would be set up to deliver the programme.
- Vodafone Idea has announced its new unified brand identity by renaming all its products under a new name and logo **Vi** through a virtual platform.

The integration into one brand is believed to be the company's efforts to reduce the cost of maintaining two brands.

- Indian Railways has developed a remote-controlled medical trolley named **MEDBOT** to help deliver food and medicines to COVID-19 patients.
- Union Cabinet has approved J&K official languages Bill 2020 which says that Kashmiri, Dogri and Hindi along with Urdu and English, will be the official languages in the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir.
- The New Development Bank (or, BRICS Bank) approved loan for infrastructure projects worth $741 million in India. A loan of $500 million has been approved for the Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) Project.

The lending would be utilised for construction of a rapid rail corridor connecting the National Capital Territory of Delhi with the cities of Ghaziabad and Meerut in Uttar Pradesh. The RRTS have a total length of 82.15 km with 25 stations. Another part of $241 million has been approved for Mumbai Metro Rail II (Line 6) Project. This loan for Mumbai Metro will be used by the Government of India for on-lending to the Government of the State of Maharashtra. The metro line has a length of about 14.47 km in Mumbai. Line 6 will provide rail-based connectivity between the western and eastern suburbs in an integrated manner.

- Government of India has constituted an Expert Committee for making an overall assessment of relief to bank borrowers related to waiver of interest on the COVID-19 related moratorium. State Bank of India will provide secretarial support to this committee and the Committee may consult banks or other stakeholders, as deemed necessary, for the purpose. This committee shall be as under Rajiv Mehrishi, former CAG of India – Chairperson; Ravindra H. Dholakia, former Professor, IIM Ahmedabad & ex- Member, Monetary Policy Committee of Reserve Bank of India and, B. Sriram, Former Managing Director, State Bank of India & IDBI Bank.
- The 13th edition of the **Global Innovation Index (GII) 2020** has jointly released by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), Cornell University and INSEAD Business School. It announced that India is now among the group of top 50 countries in the global innovation index for the first time, moving up four places to the 48th rank and keeping the top position among the nations in central and southern Asia. Also, India ranks in the top 15 in indicators such as ICT (Information and Communication Technology) services exports, government online services, graduates in science and engineering, and R&D-intensive global companies.
- India has been elected as a member of the United Nation's Commission on Status of Women, a body of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for four years, 2021 to 2025.
- India, Afghanistan and China had contested the elections to the Commission on Status of Women. Even as India and Afghanistan won the ballot among the 54 members, China could not cross the half-way mark.
- The Institute for Management Development, Singapore University for Technology and Design (SUTD), has released the **Smart City Index 2020**, in which 109 cities were surveyed. The index has been topped by Singapore, followed by Helsinki and Zurich as top three smart cities. **Hyderabad** was the

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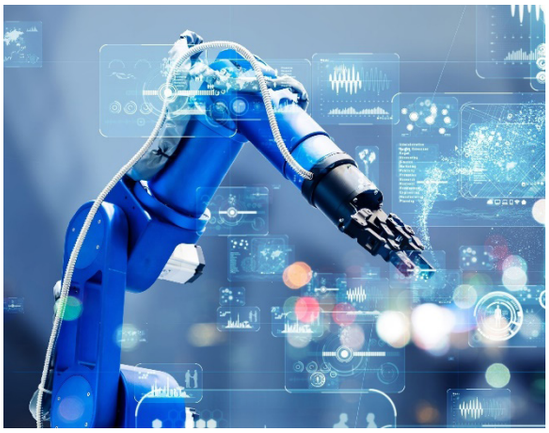
top Indian city, placed at the 85th position followed by New Delhi (86th), Mumbai (93rd) and Bengaluru (95th).

- World Bank released the report titled **The Human Capital Index 2020 Update: Human Capital in the Time of COVID-19**. The Human Capital Index (HCI) 2020 is a collaboration between the Human Development Practice Group and the Development Economics Group of the World Bank. It includes health and education data for 174 countries covering 98% of the world's population up to March 2020. It provided a pre-pandemic baseline on the health and education of children. India has been ranked at the 116th position among 174 countries. Singapore topped in this list with the score of 0.88 followed by Hong Kong & China (0.81) and Japan (0.80).
- The Advanced Manufacturing Hub (AMHUB) will be jointly set up by World Economic Forum and Guidance in Tamil Nadu.



It will be one among the nineteen platforms that has been designed by the World Economic Forum (WEF). Tamil Nadu's nodal investment promotion agency called as Guidance will also be joining hands with WEF. This manufacturing hub will focus on addressing Regional Opportunities, engaging regional production and challenges brought by Fourth Industrial Revolution.

- Minister of Textiles Smriti Irani launched the first ever Brand and Logo for Indian Cotton on Second World Cotton Day on October 7, 2020. India's premium cotton would now be known as **Kasturi Cotton** in world cotton trade. This brand will represent whiteness, softness, brightness, lustre, purity and uniqueness.
- Shri Durga Shanker Mishra and Secretary of Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs had launched the Application Programming Interface (API) integration between the PM SVANidhi Portal and the State Bank of India (SBI) portal under the Prime Minister Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) Scheme. It will facilitate seamless flow of data between the PM SVANidhi Portal and SBI's eMudra Portal and will secure the payment environment and expedite the loan sanctioning and disbursement process.
- NITI Aayog, The New and Renewable Energy Ministry and Invest India will organise a global symposium virtually **India PV EDGE 2020**. The summit is being organised in order to catalyse cutting-edge solar cell manufacturing in India and will be having sessions including the plenary session, sessions on 'Wafers and Cells, Session on 'Modules and Production Equipment' and a session on 'Supply Chain.

Economy

- The **42nd GST Council** met under the Chairmanship of Union Finance & Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and made the following recommendations.
  - Aadhaar authentication has mandatory to get the refunds.
  - GST Compensation Cess levy have been extended beyond the transition period of five years.
  - Compensation of ₹20,000 crores have been released towards States to compensate the loss of revenue during 2020-21.
  - Small Tax payers (having annual turnover of less than ₹5 crores) will have the flexibility over filing returns.
  - Taxpayers with turnover more than Rs 5 crores will now have to provide a Harmonised System Nomenclature (HSN) Code from April 2021.
  - 18% of GST levied on Indian firms for launching their satellite have been exempted to encourage the domestic launching.
- The Reserve Bank of India reviewed the Priority Sector Lending (PSL) Guidelines to align the PSL Guidelines with evolving national priorities. The new guidelines will make better credit penetration into credit deficient areas and increase the lending to small as well as marginal farmers and weaker sections and it will also enhance credit to renewable energy, and health infrastructure.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will implement the **Technology Vision for Cyber Security** for Urban Co-operative Banks (2020–2023) to enhance the IT security system of Urban Co-operative banking to prevent, detect, respond to and recover from cyber-attacks. The Technology Vision Document aims at enhancing the cybersecurity posture of the Urban Co-operative banking sector against evolving IT and cyber threat environment.

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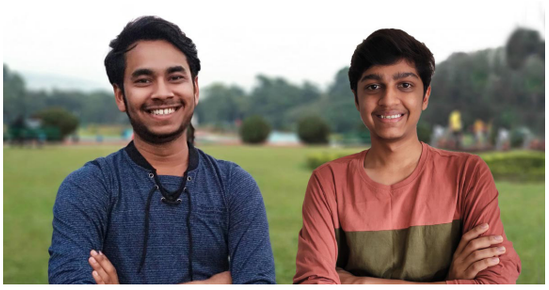
- Economists Jayant R. Varma, Shashank Bhide and Ashima Goyal have been appointed as the new members of Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) by the Government of India. MPC prepares the monetary policies for the country using the monetary policy tools that include bank rate, repo rate, reverse repo rate and cash reserve ratio. The Committee was constituted under Section 54ZB of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) act, 1934.

  Key highlights of this committee are
  - Repo rate kept unchanged at 4%.
  - Reverse Repo Rate kept at 3.5% as earlier.
  - Decision to conduct Open Market Operations (OMO) of worth ₹20,000 crores.
  - Ways and Means Advance Limits of the Centre has been kept at ₹1.25 lakh crores.
  - GDP for the fiscal year 2021 have been predicted at 9.5% with chances of strong rebound.

Science and Technology

- Gujarat State Fertilizers and Chemicals India Limited has launched an indigenous variety of calcium nitrate and boronated calcium nitrate which is being manufactured locally for the first time in India. This will help to provide a quality product at a cheaper rate to the farmer community. These products were launched in the retail market from Solan, Himachal Pradesh and Bhavnagar, Gujarat under **AatmaNirbhar Bharat** and **AatmaNirbhar Krishi**.
- World's largest Solar Tree has been developed by the CSIR-CMERI and has been installed at the Residential Colony of CSIR-CMERI in Durgapur, West Bengal.

- Students of Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay **Rohit Kumar Chaudhary** and **Kavin Agrawal** have launched a free-of-cost mobile scanner application **AIR Scanner**.



- The IIT Delhi incubated **startup Chakr Innovation** has launched a special decontamination device called **Chakr DeCoV**, to decontaminate N95 masks.

- Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully flight-tested a **Hypersonic Technology Demonstrator Vehicle (HSTDV)**.

It is an unmanned scramjet vehicle with the ability to travel at six times to the speed of sound. The test was conducted from Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam Launch Complex at Wheeler Island, off the coast of Odisha.

- **Khushi Chindaliya** has been appointed as Regional Ambassador for India by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)- Tunza Eco-Generation.

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She will raise awareness about climate change and the importance of environmental conservation and the need to safeguard environmental treasures.

Sports

- Indian Grandmaster **P Iniyan** has won the 48th Annual World Open online chess tournament.

- Mercedes driver **Lewis Hamilton** has won the Formula One Belgian Grand Prix 2020 at Spa-Francorchamps, Belgium.

- **Pierre Gasly** has won the Formula One Italian Grand Prix 2020 held at Autodromo Nazionale Monza, Italy. This is his first Grand Prix win.

Lewis Hamilton ended at 7th place after he earned a 10-second stop and go penalty.

- England cricketer **Ian Bell** announced his retirement from all forms of cricket at the end of the 2020 domestic season.
- **Valtteri Bottas** (Mercedes-Finland) has won the Formula One Russian Grand Prix 2020 held at Sochi Autodrom, Russia.

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- Indian Police Officer, **Poonam Khatri** has claimed for World Championship status after her silver medal at the Wushu World Championship last year has been upgraded to the Gold one.

- **Naomi Osaka**, Japanese Tennis star defeated **Victoria Azarenka** of Belarus and won the Women's Singles title in the 2020 US Open Tennis tournament.

- Austria's **Dominic Thiem** defeated **Alexander Zverev** to win the men's singles title at the 2020 US Open tournament.

- In Women's single, **Simona Halep** defeated champion **Karolina Pliskova**, 6-0, 2-1, to win her first Italian Open title.

- Retired Colonel **Dr. Girija Shanker Mungali** has been appointed as one of the seven members of the Asian Football Confederation's task force.

Asian Football Confederation
The Future is Asia

The taskforce will regulate the football clubs in Asia and Australia.

Persons in News

- The Government of India (GoI) has appointed **M. Rajeshwar Rao** as the new Deputy Governor of Reserve Bank of India (RBI). This post was vacant since March 2020 after the former Deputy Governor **N. R. Vishwanathan** resigned due to health issues.
- Nation paid homage to the revolutionary freedom fighter **Bhagat Singh** on his 113th birth anniversary on September 28, 2020. He was born on this day in 1907, in Banga village of Lyallpur district of undivided Punjab province.

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In April 1929, he and **Batukeshwar Dutt** exploded bombs inside the Central Legislative Assembly in Delhi. They shouted slogans there and later, they allowed the authorities to arrest them. Thus, he was convicted and hanged on March 23, 1931.

- **Kesavananda Bharti** who was the head seer of Edneer Mutt in Kerala since 1961 passed away. He was famous for initiating the historic judgement of Supreme Court that the 'Basic Structure of Constitution' cannot be amended by the Parliament.
- **Rajiv Kumar**, the former finance secretary has been appointed as the Election Commissioner. He has 30 years of experience in public policy and administration in several sectors and holds L.LB. and B.Sc. degrees along with Masters of Public policy and Sustainability. He worked in the key areas of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's plan of Financial Inclusion, Mudra loan schemes and Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana.
- Time Magazine released the **TIME 100 Most Influential People List 2020**. Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** is the only politician in this list. He has been named in this for the fourth time since coming in power in 2014. The List has named people in five categories: Pioneers, Artists, Leaders, Titans and Icons. Other Indians in this list were, Professor Ravindra Gupta (Pioneer), Ayushmann Khurrana (Artist), Bilkis (Icon), the 'Dadi from Shaheen Bagh'.
- **Aveek Sarkar** has been elected as the chairman of Press Trust of India (PTI). He will succeed Vijay Kumar Chopra.
- Appointment Committee of the Cabinet has approved extension in the re-appointment of **Pramod Chandra Mody** as Chairman of Central Board of Direct Taxes.
- **Hemant Khatri** assumed charge as the Chairman and Managing Director of state-owned defence shipbuilder, Hindustan Shipyard Ltd (HSL) at Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.
- National Democratic Alliance (NDA) candidate and Janata Dal (United) MP (Member of Parliament) **Harivansh Narayan Singh** has been once again elected as Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha (RS) by Voice vote.

- Recently, UNICEF (United Nations International Children Education Fund) appointed **Ayushmann Khurrana** as its celebrity advocate for promoting and supporting its work around ending violence against children.

The actor will work towards ending violence against children especially in the current scenario when COVID-19 risk has blanketed the whole world.

- Joint secretary in the Ministry of Civil Aviation, **Usha Padhee** has been given additional charge as Director-General of the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS).
- Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of the current chairman of the Railway Board **VK Yadav** as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

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- The appointment of **S. Krishnan** as the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Punjab & Sind Bank has been approved by Appointments Committee of the Cabinet. He will replace **S. Harishankar**.
- Reserve Bank of India has approved the appointment of **Murali Ramakrishnan** as Managing Director and CEO of the South Indian Bank.
- **Raj Kumar Srivastava** has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Croatia.
- Maruti Suzuki MD and CEO, **Kenichi Ayukawa** has been elected as the new President of the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) for a term of two years. He will replace **Rajan Wadhera**.
- **Vinkesh Gulati** has appointed as the 35th president of the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) for the year 2020-22. He succeeded **Ashish Harsharaj Kale** as the new FADA President.
- **Anil Jain** has been elected as the president of All India Tennis Association (AITA) and **Anil Dhupar** was chosen as its secretary-general. Also, India's Davis Cup captain Rohit Rajpal was elected as the treasurer for a four-year term till 2024.
- Former Lok Sabha MP and Bollywood actor, **Paresh Rawal** have been appointed as the new chief of National School of Drama by President Ram Nath Kovind.

Plans and Policies

- Prasar Bharati and Indian Farmers Fertilizer Cooperative Limited (IFFCO) signed a MoU to broadcast and promote new agriculture technology and innovations. As per this MoU, DD Kisan will broadcast innovative techniques that is being adopted in agriculture field in an easy language. It will run a 30 minutes program series to benefit the farmers.
- **Infosys** made an announced that it will acquire product design and development firm, Kaleidoscope Innovation for up to $42 million.

It is a US-based firm and would bring to Infosys a diverse talent pool with extensive knowledge of design and engineering.

- Facebook-owned **WhatsApp** has partnered with Cyber Peace Foundation (CPF) to create awareness on cyber safety among students.
- National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and LinkedIn have announced a partnership to provide access to free learning resources for digital skills. A total of 10 learning paths consisting of 140 courses will be made available for free on e-Skill India digital platform until March 31, 2021.
- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has signed an agreement for $15 million of debt financing through the subscription of nonconvertible debentures for Suguna Foods Private Limited (Suguna). The deal is made to help in sustaining poultry farming operations, as well as rural livelihoods and food security in India during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- A MoU has been signed between the Ministry of AYUSH and Ministry of Women and Child Development to control Malnutrition as a part of **POSHAN Abhiyaan**.
- Volvo Car India partnered with HDFC Bank to launch Volvo Car Financial Services which will enable buyers get easy finance for its vehicles.
- HCL Technologies and Google Cloud has announced the expansion of their strategic partnership to bring HCL's **Actian portfolio**, starting with Actian Avalanche, to Google Cloud.
- Google Pay announced partnership with VISA for the rollout of tokenization across its platform that will enable users to safely transact with their debit or credit cards. Through tokenization, Google Pay users can make payment by using the debit or credit card without physically sharing their card details through a secure digital token attached to their phone.
- The Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board (UTDB) and Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) signed a MoU to promote adventure sports activities at Tehri Lake in the state.

Awards and Honours

- Hyderabad International Airport has won the **National Energy Leader** and **Excellent Energy Efficient Unit** awards at the 21st National Awards for **Excellence in Energy Management**.
- The **72nd Emmy Awards 2020** has announced in the times of COVID-19. The ceremony was hosted by Jimmy Kimmel at an empty theatre in Los Angeles with cut-outs of the nominees placed in the audience.

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Some of the categories are as follows:

Drama Series: Succession

- Lead Actress in a Drama Series: Zendaya, Euphoria
- Lead Actor in a Drama Series: Jeremy Strong, Succession
- Supporting Actress in a Drama Series: Julia Garner, Ozark
- Supporting Actor in a Drama Series: Billy Crudup, The Morning Show
- Outstanding Directing for a Drama Series: Succession

- Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited-Vizag Steel Plant (RINL-VSP) has been awarded **Excellent Energy Efficient Unit** award by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Godrej Green Business Centre (GBC) in national award competition for excellence in energy management.

- The Fiumicino International Airport also known as the Leonardo Da Vinci International Airport of Rome, Italy, has become the first airport in the world to be certified with 'COVID-19 5-star airport rating' from Skytrax, a U.K.-based airport and airline review firm.

- The **Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize 2020** was announced by the Union science and technology minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan at the Foundation Day celebration of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).

- The list of 14 Fourteen scientist awardees is as follows:

Biological Sciences

Dr. Subhadeep Chatterjee & Dr. Vatsala Thirumalai

Chemical Sciences

Dr. Jyotirmayee Dash & Dr. Subi Jacob George

Earth, Atmosphere, Ocean and Planetary Sciences:

Dr. Abhijit Mukherjee & Dr. Suryendu Dutta

Engineering Sciences

Dr. Amol Arvindrao Kulkarni & Dr. Kinshuk Dasgupta

Mathematics Sciences

Dr. U.K. Anandavardhanan & Dr. Rajat Subhra Hazra

Medicine Sciences

Dr. Bushra Ateeq & Dr. Ritesh Agarwal

Physics Sciences

Dr. Rajesh Ganapathy & Dr. Surajit Dhara

- Team of NTPC Limited, Vallur, Tamil Nadu has won the All India Management Association (AIMA) Chanakya (Business Simulation Game) **National Management Games (NMG) 2020**.

- **Sir David Attenborough** won the prestigious **Indira Gandhi Peace Prize** for the year 2019. He is an English broadcaster and a historian. He is popular for writing and presenting the BBC Natural History Unit.

- Managing Director of HDFC Bank, **Aditya Puri** has been conferred with **the Lifetime Achievement Award** by Euromoney Awards of Excellence 2020. He has been awarded for his skills in building a world-class bank in India at a time where there were no similar institutions in existence.

- Chef **Vikas Khanna** has been chosen to be honoured with the prestigious **Asia Game Changer Award 2020**. This award is given to him for feeding millions of people across India in the COVID-19 pandemic through a massive food distribution drive **FeedIndia**.

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