

Daily Current Affairs 20-21 September 2018

Banking and Finance

RBI announces norms for joint priority sector lending by banks, NBFCs

- The Reserve Bank Friday announced guidelines for co-origination of priority sector loans by banks and NBFCs with a view to enhancing flow of funds to the sector at competitive rates.
- As per the norms issued by the RBI for all scheduled commercial banks (excluding Regional Rural Banks and Small Finance Banks) and Non-Banking Financial Companies - Non-Deposit taking- Systemically Important (NBFC-ND-SIs), the sharing of risks and rewards between these entities should be in a manner that enables appropriate alignment of respective business objectives, as per their mutual agreement.
- The co-origination arrangement should entail joint contribution of credit by both lenders at the facility level.
- "Based on the respective interest rates and proportion of risk sharing, a single blended interest rate should be offered to the ultimate borrower in case of fixed rate loans. In the scenario of floating interest rates, a weighted average of the benchmark interest rates in proportion to the respective loan contribution, should be offered," it said.
- It is envisaged that the benefit of low-cost funds from banks and lower cost of operations of NBFC would be passed on to the ultimate beneficiary through the blended rate/weighted average rate, it said.

World Bank approves framework to support India's transition to high-middle income country

- The World Bank board has approved an ambitious five-year Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for India that is in line with India's objectives of high, sustainable and inclusive growth.
- The framework sets the strategic focus for the World Bank's engagement with India for the period FY18-22, to support its transition to a high-middle income economy.
- Through the CPF, the World Bank aims to support India's transition to a higher middle-income country by addressing some of its key development priorities such as resource efficient and inclusive growth, job creation and building its human capital.
- The framework is expected to bring financial support worth Rs 25-30 billion US Dollars from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA).

The three elements CPF will be based on include:

- Government of India's development priorities
- World Bank's Systematic Country Diagnostic (SCD) for India, which presents the Group's analysis of the key challenges facing India
- World Bank's comparative advantage and value proposition to support India

The CPF also incorporates lessons learned from the last five years of implementation of the Country Partnership Strategy FY13-17.

Yamaha signs MoU with J'hkhand govt on skill development

- India Yamaha Motor (IYM) on Friday signed an MoU with the Department of Higher, Technical Education & Skill Development and Jharkhand Skill Development Mission Society, for providing two years on-the-job shop floor training to the youth at its factories in Surajpur, Uttar Pradesh and Chennai.
- Jharkhand is the third state with which IYM has signed an MoU on Skill Development and Training, the company said in a statement.
- The company had also signed MoUs with Uttar Pradesh and Bihar governments in 2017.

Atal Bimit Vyakti Kalyan Yojna launched for unemployed insured persons

- The Employee's State Insurance (ESI) has approved a scheme named 'Atal Bimit Vyakti Kalyan Yojna' for Insured Persons (IP) covered under the Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948.
- The decision was taken by the ESI Corporation during its 175th meeting, which was held in New Delhi on September 18, 2018, under the Chairmanship of Santosh Kumar Gangwar, Union Minister of State for Labour & Employment (I/C).
- During the meeting, the ESI Corporation took some significant decisions towards the improvement of its services and benefits being provided to Insured Persons and their dependents. The decisions were taken considering the change in employment pattern and the current scenario of employment in India which has transformed from a long-term employment to fixed short-term engagement in the form of contract and temping.
- This scheme is a relief payable in cash directly to the bank account of insured persons in case of unemployment and while they search for a new engagement.
- The detailed instructions of the scheme including the eligibility conditions and application format will be issued separately.

Maharashtra to launch scheme to protect deposits in credit societies

- The Maharashtra government is going to come out with a scheme to protect deposits of upto Rs 1 lakh in cooperative credit societies, on the lines of similar protection offered to depositors of commercial banks.
- The name of the scheme would be Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Credit Society Deposit Protection Scheme. It will provide protection to deposits up to Rs one lakh.
- The scheme will be launched by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on September 25.
- There are 8,421 credit societies in the state, with total deposits of Rs 40,000 crore. Under the scheme, if a society faces financial crisis, depositors will still get their money back (upto Rs 1 lakh).
- The credit societies have been demanding this protection for a long time. A similar protection is already provided to deposits of upto Rs 1 lakh in banks.

India and Morocco sign revised Air Services Agreement enabling greater connectivity

- India and Morocco on September 19, 2018 signed the revised Air Services Agreement enabling greater connectivity between the two countries through a modernised agreement.
- The delegation of the two countries has earlier met thrice wherein they have worked towards liberalisation of markets between the two countries and towards updating the existing Air Services Agreement.
- Following the high level discussions, the two sides cleared the legal and technical difficulties and agreed to a modern new text for the Air Services Agreement. Thereafter, the respective governments approved the updated Air Services Agreement.
- The updated Air Services Agreement was formally signed during the visit of Mohammed Sajid, Moroccan Minister of Tourism, Air Transport, Handicraft and Social Economy. Union Minister of Commerce and Industry and Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu signed the agreement for the Indian side.

Civil Aviation Minister Suresh Prabhu orders safety audit of all airlines, airports

- Civil Aviation Minister Suresh Prabhu ordered a safety audit of all scheduled airlines and airports, amid recent incidents related to the safety of passengers.
- The Minister has directed officials concerned to immediately prepare a comprehensive safety audit plan, which involves assessment of safety parameters of all scheduled airlines, aerodromes, flying training schools and Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul Organisations.
- The development assumes significance as it comes on a day when at least 30 passengers on a Jet Airways flight from Mumbai to Jaipur suffered nose and ear bleeding after the crew forgot to turn on a switch that controls cabin air pressure.

India and states

Utraq: India's own GPS module launched

- An India-based semiconductor distribution company has launched country's first ever 'desi' GPS module. Today at an event in New Delhi, Ramakrishna Electro Component Pvt Ltd announced a new kind of Vehicle Tracking System that will run on Indian Satellites, and not on US Satellites.
- The company has launched Vehicle Tracking System under 'Utraq' brand. This system will replace the currently in-use GPS application that is working on US satellites.
- This module is IRNSS compliant for VTS application. IRNSS is Govt of India initiative under ISRO. IRNSS User Receiver module is integrated with front-end chipset and embedded high performance ARM9 processor from leading chipset manufacturer. It has internal S RAM, UART, USB, CAN and 10 Bit ADCs.

Gujarat to set up India's first biotechnology university

- India's first Biotechnology University will take shape in Gujarat with the State legislative assembly set to pass a Bill for establishment of the country's first such university. It will aim to boost research, innovation and entrepreneurship in the sector.

- The Gujarat Biotechnology University, to be made a world class research-focused academic institution, will train and prepare biotech scientists in product-focused research to create and deliver a strong pipeline of innovative products for the country.
- The University will have world-class infrastructure, an intellectual property base and skill sets for education, training, research, product development and technology commercialisation in biotechnology and allied sciences.

Health Ministry ties-up with Dell, Tata Trusts to provide technology solution for NSD programme

- The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on September 20, 2018 signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with the Tata Trusts and Dell to provide technological platform for nationwide prevention, control, screening and management program of Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs).
- To bring healthcare technology transformation in Comprehensive Primary Health Care NCD programme under the Ayushman Bharat, the Health Ministry is working with Dell as technology partner and the Tata Trusts as deployment partner.
- Dell developed the technology platform, while the Tata Trusts provided the implementation support of the NCD programme.
- This Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) screening program addresses Hypertension, Diabetes, Oral, Breast and Cervical cancers and covers all men and women over the age of 30 years.
- The programme, which is one of the modules in Ayushman Bharat's Comprehensive Primary Healthcare (CPHC) Initiative, is currently being deployed in about 200 districts across the country.
- Through implementation of the software, it will also be possible to track health trends across the country.

India successfully test fires short-range Prahaar missile

- India on September 20, 2018 successfully test-fired the indigenously developed surface-to-surface, short-range tactical ballistic missile 'Prahaar' from the Odisha coast.
- The missile has been developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). It was test-launched from launch pad-3 of the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Chandipur, near Balasore. It is capable of filling the gap between the multi-barrel rocket system 'Pinaka' and medium-range ballistic missile 'Prithvi'.
- The test launch was successful, as the missile travelled a range of 200 km before zeroing in on the target, achieving all mission objectives.
- The missile is equipped with state-of-the-art navigation, guidance and electromechanical actuation systems with an advanced onboard computer.
- It is fitted with an inertial navigation system and is capable of engaging multiple targets in different directions.

Ministry of Home Affairs, ISRO sign MoU to modernise Emergency Response

- The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) on September 20, 2018 signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for setting up the

state-of-the-art Integrated Control Room for Emergency Response (ICR-ER) in Ministry of Home Affairs.

- The MoU was signed by Joint Secretary (Disaster Management), Sanjeev Kumar Jindal on behalf of MHA and PVN Rao, Deputy Director, NRSC, ISRO.
- Under the MoU, the ISRO will render its technical expertise for setting up of proposed ICR-ER.
- The project will be executed under overall supervision of the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- The proposed Control Room is expected to be established in next one-and-a-half year.
- The ICR-ER will cater to the requirement of Disaster Management as well as Internal Security.

PM Modi lays foundation stone of world-class convention centre in Delhi

- The foundation stone of India International Convention and Expo Centre (IICC) was laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on September 20, 2018. The IICC is being developed as a state-of-the-art centre to promote meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions (MICE) to boost industrial development in the country.
- The project is planned over an area of 221.37 acres in Sector 25 Dwarka, New Delhi, at an estimated cost of Rs 25, 703 crores.
- The IICC will be an integrated complex with a host of mutually beneficial facilities such as exhibition halls, convention centre comprising plenary hall, ballroom and meeting rooms, a multi-purpose arena, open exhibition spaces, mixed-use commercial spaces like star hotels, retail services and high-end offices.
- The facilities will be at par with the world's best in terms of size and quality. They will enable the centre to host international and national events, meetings, conferences, exhibitions and trade shows.

Union Government launches India's first National Registry of Sexual Offenders

- In a first, the Union Government released a National Database of Sexual Offenders (NDSO) on September 20, 2018. The database was launched by Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh in New Delhi. With the launch, India became the ninth nation to maintain such a thorough database.
- The database would mainly include key details of the convicted sexual offenders such as their names, photographs, residential address, DNA samples, fingerprints, Aadhaar numbers and Personal Account Numbers (PANs). It is an initiative under the National Mission for Safety of Women. Our correspondent reports, the database will be maintained by the National Crime Records Bureau under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- On the occasion, the Home Minister also launched the Cyber Crime Prevention against Women and Children (CCPWC) portal to check objectionable online content. The portal "cybercrime.gov.in" will receive complaints from citizens on objectionable online content related to child pornography, child sexual abuse material and sexually explicit material such as rape and gang rape.

President Ram Nath Kovind signs Ordinance banning Instant Triple Talaq practice

- President Ram Nath Kovind on September 19, 2018 signed the Ordinance banning the practice of Instant Triple Talaq. The ordinance was cleared by the Union Cabinet earlier on the same day itself. The ordinance makes instant triple talaq a punishable offence.
- The ordinance has similar provisions as mentioned in original the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill 2017, which was cleared by the Lok Sabha in December 2017. However, the bill was stuck in the Rajya Sabha.
- It faced a stiff resistance in the Rajya Sabha where several opposition lawmakers argued over the criminal provisions in the draft law.
- In view of the growing opposition, the Government on August 9, 2018 approved three amendments in the instant triple talaq bill, making it permissible for a magistrate to give bail for the offence.

Romania will open consulate in Chennai

- Romania will open a consulate in Chennai. This was decided in a meeting between Vice President Venkaiah Naidu and Romania Prime Minister Viorica Dancila in Bucharest.
- In a joint press statement, Vice President also addressed the India-Romania Business forum.
- Naidu said that the demonetisation and the GST have been successfully implemented to help India to emerge as a modern and unified market.

Haryana government gives nod for construction of Kishau dam

- The Haryana government has given its go ahead for the construction of Kishau dam on Tons river, a tributary of the Yamuna.
- With the construction of this dam, Haryana would get additional 709 cusecs of water for drinking and irrigation purposes.
- According to a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by six states in the year 1994, Haryana's share in the Kishau Dam is 709 cusecs water out of the live storage capacity of 1,324 million cubic metre (MCM).

NDMC to set up separate Ayush department

- The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) has decided to set up a separate department of Ayush department to provide holistic treatment through ayurveda, yoga and naturopathy, unani, siddha and homoeopathy. These services were being offered by the health department of the civic body till now.
- The decision to set up a separate department Ayush was taken at a council meeting on September 20, 2018.
- The NDMC is also planning to establish a 50-bedded AYUSH Integrated Hospital and Research Centre at Sarojini Nagar within two years.

Mizoram tops states in adult HIV prevalence

- Mizoram had the highest adult HIV prevalence among states in India last year with the infection being detected in 2.04 per cent of the people whose blood samples were tested.

- Around 18,081 people were found HIV positive in Mizoram between October 1990 and August 2018. The state has a total population of around 11 lakh.
- On November 16 last year, the Mizoram assembly was informed that 14,632 HIV positive people were identified in the state.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to visit India on October 1

- United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres will be on a four-day visit to India from October 1, 2018.
- He will be accompanied by a six member delegation and will be participating in the Mahatma Gandhi International Sanitation Convention scheduled to be held at Rashtrapati Bhawan Cultural Centre, New Delhi on October 2, 2018.
- The event will mark the launch of Mahatma Gandhi's 150th Birth Anniversary celebrations as well as the 4th anniversary of the Swachh Bharat Mission.

Appointments

Anil Kumar Chaudhary appointed as new SAIL chairman

- Anil Kumar Chaudhary has been appointed as the new chairman of the Steel Authority of India (SAIL), a government order said Friday.
- Chaudhary, at present, has been serving as the Director (Finance) in the country's largest steel making company.
- The post of SAIL chairman fell vacant on June 30 with the retirement of P K Singh.
- The order issued by Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) said Chaudhary will be in the post till his superannuation in December, 2020.

Sports

New Premier Skills phase kicks off in Kolkata

- The hugely successful Premier Skills initiative, run by the Premier League and the British Council, is being organised in Kolkata 10 years after its first session in the city.
- The course has been jointly organised by the Sports Authority of India (SAI), the All India Football Federation (AIFF), British Council, and Premier League at Netaji Subhash Eastern Centre in Salt Lake, Kolkata.
- Forty-eight grassroots football coaches from the Sports Authority of India (SAI) and affiliated institutions across India will participate in the Premier Skills Phase 2 training course.
- The course is being conducted from the 18th to 23rd of this month.
- The selected coaches have completed the Premier Skills Phase 1 trainings in Delhi, Bengaluru and Guwahati and will now undertake the intensive training in Kolkata.

Days

International Day of Peace 2018 observed globally

- The International Day of Peace was observed across the world on September 21, 2018 to recognise the efforts of those who have worked hard to end conflict and promote peace. The International Day of Peace is also a day of ceasefire.
- 2018 Theme: "The Right to Peace - The Universal Declaration of Human Rights at 70"

Obituaries

India's First Woman IAS Officer After Independence passes away

- India's first woman IAS officer post-Independence, Anna Rajam Malhotra, died at her residence in suburban Andheri in Mumbai yesterday, her family sources said.
- She was 91. The last rites were performed in the city, they said.
- She was born as Anna Rajam George in Kerala's Ernakulam district in July 1927. She shifted to Chennai after her schooling in Kozhikode to pursue higher education at the University of Madras.
- Ms Malhotra joined the civil services in 1951 and opted for the Madras cadre. She then served in the Madras state under Chief Minister C Rajagopalachari.
- She married RN Malhotra, who served as the Governor of the Reserve Bank of India from 1985 to 1990.

Revolutionary leader Koteswaramma passes away

- Revolutionary leader, writer and feminist Kondapalli Koteswaramma passed away on the early hours of September 19, 2018.
- Koteswaramma, who suffered a brain hemorrhage last week, had celebrated her 100th birth anniversary recently.
- She was a widow of Kondapalli Seetharamaiah, the founder-member of People's War Group (PWG) and an active party worker of the United Communist Party in the 1940s and 50s.

Vietnam President Tran Dai Quang passes away at 61

- Vietnam's President Tran Dai Quang passed away on September 21, 2018 in a military hospital in Hanoi after a prolonged serious illness. He was 61.
- Quang passed away despite utmost efforts to treat him by Vietnamese and foreign professors and doctors. The President lapsed into a deep coma hours after being admitted to the National Military Hospital on the afternoon of September 20.
- According to reports, the Vietnamese leader had been suffering from a serious illness since the past few months and had travelled abroad several times for treatment. He was sworn in as the President of the communist country in 2016, following a stint as public security minister.