

Week 2 Current Affairs Update

8th- 14th September 2020

EVENTS

NATIONAL

SOCIAL

UNION CABINET APPROVES AMENDMENT TO THREE LABOUR CODES



Date: 8 September, 2020

Key Highlights:

- On September 8, 2020, the Union Cabinet approved amendments to Labour Codes.
- These three labour codes were proposed in Industrial Relations Code, 2019. The three codes include Occupational safety and health, social security and industrial relations.
- The Industrial Codes will define areas and conditions under which fixed-term employment shall be allowed.
- It recognizes trade unions. The Industrial Relations Code, 2019 also seeks to provide pension and medical benefit to gig workers.
- The Code will mainly replace three existing laws. They are as follows
- Trade Unions Act, 1926
- Industrial Disputes Act, 1947
- Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946
- This is the third bill in a series of four bills that aim to amalgamate and rationalize more than 40 laws related to labourers. The other two bills are Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions code, 2019 and Code on Wages, 2019.

GOLDEN TEMPLE GETS FCRA REGISTRATION



Date: 13 September, 2020

Key Highlights:

- Foreign-based followers of Sikhism will now be able to credit donations or 'daswandh' (one tenth of income) directly in a dedicated account of the Golden Temple after the Union government registered Sri Harmandir Sahib under Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, (FCRA) 2010.
- After 1984, foreign based sangat was restricted from directly sending donations to the Golden Temple account. Now, after the FCRA registration they will be able to fulfil their religious aspirations.
- The Golden Temple management had applied for FCRA registration on May 27. The Union ministry approved the registration on September 9. Longowal said after 1984, foreign based sangat had to find alternative ways of sending donations or daswandh to the Golden Temple.
- Many devotees used to send donations for langar, propagation of Sikhism or welfare work through their relatives or friends visiting Amritsar.

ENVIRONMENT

PUNJAB TO CONVERT STUBBLE INTO BIOMASS FUEL



Date: 12 September, 2020

Key Highlights:

- The Punjab Energy Development Agency (PEDA) in association with the Government of Punjab, is soon coming up with an alternative for paddy stubble utilisation.

- Stubble burning is one of the biggest problems in north India to curb this, the Punjab government's own agency; PEDDA is playing a stellar role in weeding out the problem indigenously.
- Stubble which is a residue left out of the paddy and wheat field is normally burnt in the field itself. This stubble burning brings a lot of environmental problems as well as health problems. In Punjab itself, around twenty million tonnes of paddy stubble is generated out of these only five per cent are used in a cleaner way for generating biofuel or environmentally friendly usage rest are burnt in the field.
- Two more biomass power projects with 14 MW capacity are in pipeline and will start working completely from June 2021. These 14 MW plant will also require 1.26 lakh metric tonnes paddy stubble per annum for operation.
- These biomass power projects are environmentally friendly due to relatively lower CO2 and particulate emissions and also displace fossil fuels such as coal which is very beneficial for the environment.

INTERNATIONAL

FOREIGN RELATION

FIRST INDIA-FRANCE-AUSTRALIA TRILATERAL DIALOGUE



Date: 9 September, 2020

Key Highlights:

- On September 9, 2020, the first India-France-Australia Trilateral Dialogue was held virtually with a focus on enhancing the cooperation in the Indo-Pacific Region.
- The dialogue held discussions on economic and geo-strategic challenges and cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region in context with Covid-19 particularly.
- The participants from India, France and Australia were as follows: Harsh Vardhan Shringla, Foreign Secretary of India, François Delattre, Secretary-General, French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Frances Adamson, Secretary, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

- This was the first trilateral dialogue between these three countries. It was decided in the meeting that such dialogues will be held annually now onward. The key discussions held were on below topics:
- Various Economic and Geo-strategic Challenges in the Indo-Pacific, particularly in context of Covid-19
- Cooperation between the three countries on trilateral and regional level on Marine Global Commons and potential areas
- Increasing cooperation between the three countries at through multilateral organizations also such as ASEAN, IORA and Indian Ocean Commission. Various reforms in the regional institutions.

DEFENCE

INDIA-JAPAN SIGN DEFENCE AGREEMENTS



Date: 11 September, 2020

Key Highlights:

- India and Japan signed Logistics agreement on “Reciprocal Provision Supplies and Services” to allow the armed forces of India and Japan to coordinate closely in supplies and services.
- The following are the key highlights of the agreement
- The agreement will increase the interoperability between armed forces of India and Japan.
- It will establish closer ties between India and Japan in reciprocal provision of supplies and services.
- The agreement will help India and Japan to coordinate medical supplies, airlifting and communication
- It will provide greater maritime cooperation and upgrade India-Japan Naval exercises for mutual benefit.
- Japan is the third largest source of Foreign Direct Investment into India after Mauritius and Singapore. Also, it is the most important partner in the Indo-Pacific region.

- India and Japan conduct SHINYUU Maitri-18 and Dharma Guardian exercises.
- SHINYUU Maitri-18 is an Indian Air Force exercise and Dharma Guardian is a joint army exercise. Japan, just like India has several rivalries with China.
- The countries are thus countering Chinese actions in the Indo-Pacific and have formed QUAD grouping.

ECONOMY

ECONOMIC FREEDOM OF THE WORLD REPORT 2020



Date: 12 September, 2020

Key Highlights:

- India witnessed a sharp fall of 26 spots and landed to the 105th position in the Global Economic Freedom Index 2020 report. As per the last year ranking the country was at the 79th spot.
- It is an annual index created in 1995 first by the Heritage Foundation and the Wall Street Journal to gauge the degree of economic freedom in the world's nations.
- The ranking scores countries on an economic freedom scale between 0 to 100 where zero meaning no economic freedom and 100 meaning total economic freedom.
- There are twelve aspects divided into a total of four categories. This year Singapore with a score of 89.4 ranked as first in the world's freest economy among 42 other countries in the Asia-Pacific region.
- Hong Kong stood second at the report. China ranked lower than India.
- The main objective of publishing this report is to gauge economic freedom which exists in the nation across the world.
- The main purpose of the report is to measure economic freedom, the economic security of privately owned property, levels of personal choice, the ability for business players to enter markets.

SPACE

U.S. SPACECRAFT NAMED AFTER ASTRONAUT KALPANA CHAWLA



Date: 14 September, 2020

Key Highlights:

- An American commercial cargo spacecraft bound for the International Space Station has been named after NASA astronaut Kalpana Chawla, the first India-born woman to enter space, for her key contributions to human spaceflight.
- Northrop Grumman, an American global aerospace and defence technology company, announced that its next Cygnus capsule will be named the “S.S. Kalpana Chawla”, in memory of the mission specialist who died with her six crewmates aboard the space shuttle Columbia in 2003.
- Chawla was selected in honour of her prominent place in history as the first woman of Indian descent to go to space.
- The S S Kalpana Chawla capsule is scheduled to launch on the NG-14 mission atop a Northrop Grumman Antares rocket from the Mid-Atlantic Regional Spaceport (MARS) at NASA’s Wallops Flight Facility in Virginia on September 29.
- For the NG-14 mission, the Cygnus spacecraft will deliver approximately 3,629 kg of cargo to the space station.

INTERNATIONAL RELATION

UK SIGNS FIRST MAJOR POST-BREXIT TRADE DEAL WITH JAPAN



Date: 13 September, 2020

Key Highlights:

- The UK has struck its first major post-Brexit trade pact after signing a deal with Japan that aims to boost trade between the countries by about £15bn.

- The deal would bring “new wins” for British businesses in manufacturing, food and drink, and tech industries.
- The deal may be of symbolic importance it would boost UK GDP by only 0.07%, a fraction of the trade that could be lost with the EU.
- UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement means 99% of exports to Japan will be tariff-free.
- Major Japanese investors in the UK such as Nissan and Hitachi would benefit from reduced tariffs on parts coming from Japan and streamlined regulatory procedures.



disha

Nurturing Ambitions

PEOPLE

NATIONAL

CINEMA

CHAITANYA TAMHANE



Date: 9 September, 2020

Why in News: Wins Best Screenplay award at Venice Film Festival.

Key Highlights:

- Filmmaker Chaitanya Tamhane's *The Disciple* won the Best Screenplay award at Venice International Film Festival during the closing ceremony.
- This is the second award the film got at the festival. Earlier, it was honoured with the International Critics' Prize awarded by FIPRESCI.
- In 2014, Chaitanya's marathi film *Court* had won the Best Film (Orizzonti) award and Chaitanya bagged the Lion of the Future Award.
- *The Disciple* was selected for the Best Screenplay award by the Jury for the Official Competition, presided by 2-time Oscar-winning actress Cate Blanchett, and comprising British director Joanna Hogg (*The Souvenir*), French actress Ludivine Sagnier (*8 Women*, *Swimming Pool*), Austrian filmmaker Veronika Franz (*Goodnight Mommy*), German director Christian Petzold (*Undine*, *Barbara*), American actor Matt Dillon (*The House that Jack Built*) and Italian writer Nicola Lagioia.
- Chloe Zhao's *Nomadland* won the prestigious Golden Lion award at the festival. The film stars Oscar-winner Frances McDormand as the lead.
- *The Disciple* was also selected as the only Indian film this year among the official selection of the 2020 Toronto International Film Festival.

RAGHUVANSH PRASAD PASSES AWAY



Date: 10 September, 2020

Key Highlights:

- Former Union minister Raghuwansh Prasad Singh passed away on 13 September while undergoing treatment in New Delhi. Singh, who had recently resigned from RJD, had fallen critically ill after developing post-COVID complications.
- Raghuwansh was an Indian politician. In the Lok Sabha, represented the Vaishali constituency of Bihar and was the national vice president of the Rashtriya Janata Dal .
- He resigned from RJD party in September, 2020 and wrote a letter to Lalu Prasad Yadav saying he was being sidelined. He was one of the senior most politicians in India as a people's representative in the legislature for four decades from 1977.
- He started his political career when he was elected as an MLA and was subsequently made the Energy minister of Bihar in the Karpoori Thakur ministry. He had represented Belsand constituency five times in the Bihar vidhan sabha. He was made the member of Bihar legislative council in a 1991 post.
- He became the chairman of Bihar legislative council. He has represented Vaishali constituency from Bihar in Lok Sabha consecutively for five terms and has been in the Union cabinet for three terms.
- He was the Union Cabinet Minister for Rural Development in UPA-I of Manmohan Singh's government and is credited with conceptualization and implementation of NREGA (National rural employment guarantee act).

APPOINTMENTS

SUBHASH KAMATH



Date: 13 September, 2020

Why in News: Subhash Kamath, chief executive at advertising agency BBH & Publicis Worldwide, India, has been unanimously elected chairman of the board of governors of the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI).

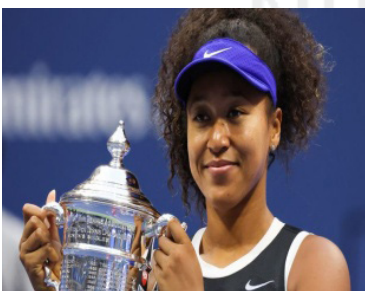
Key Highlights:

- Kamath, who was serving as ASCI vice-chairman, will replace Rohit Gupta, president, Sony Pictures Networks.
- NS Rajan, managing director at public relations firm Ketchum Sampark P. Ltd. was elected vice-chairman and Shashidhar Sinha, chief executive, Mediabrand India Pvt. Ltd was reappointed as honorary treasurer.
- Kamath has worked with global creative agencies including Ogilvy, Trikaya Grey and Publicis Ambience. He became the group CEO of Bates 141, a WPP company.
- He joined BBH as a founding managing partner and chief executive in January 2009 and has building the company for over a decade.

INTERNATIONAL

SPORTS

NAOMI OSAKA



Date: 8 September, 2020

Why in News: Naomi Osaka has won her second United States Open singles title by defeating Victoria Azarenka.

Key Highlights:

- Osaka has been ranked No. 1 by the Women's Tennis Association (WTA), and is the first Asian player to hold the top ranking in singles. She is a

three-time Grand Slam singles champion, and is the reigning champion at the US Open.

- Her six WTA titles on the WTA Tour also include two at the Premier Mandatory level. Osaka won her first two Grand Slam singles titles in back-to-back Grand Slam tournaments at the 2018 US Open and the 2019 Australian Open, and is the first player to achieve this feat since Jennifer Capriati in 2001.
- She came to prominence at the age of sixteen when she defeated former US Open champion Samantha Stosur in her WTA Tour debut at the 2014 Stanford Classic.
- Osaka made her breakthrough into the upper echelon of women's tennis in 2018 when she won her first WTA title at the Indian Wells Open.
- She defeated 23-time Grand Slam singles champion Serena Williams in the final of the US Open to become the first Japanese player to win a Grand Slam singles title. From 2018 through 2020, she has won a Grand Slam singles title in three consecutive years.

BANKING

JANE FRASER



Date: 14 September, 2020

Why in News: Citigroup Inc C.N has promoted Jane Fraser to head of its global consumer bank and president, putting her in a position eventually to become the first female chief executive of the U.S. bank.

Key Highlights:

- Fraser is replacing Stephen Bird as head of the consumer business, the bank said in a statement on Thursday, adding Bird is leaving Citi after more than 20 years to pursue an external opportunity.
- Fraser was recently reported to be among the candidates Wells Fargo & Co's WFC.N board was considering for its next CEO.
- A 15-years veteran at Citi, who first joined to run client strategy in the investment bank, Fraser had been running the bank's Latin America business, including its Citibanamex division in Mexico, for the past few years.
- She ran Citi's private bank and its troubled mortgage business, and is credited internally with helping the bank recover after the financial crisis, when it had to take \$45 billion in taxpayer funds to survive.

ISSUES

NATIONAL

POLITY

SPECIAL SECURITY FORCE THAT CAN ARREST OR SEARCH WITHOUT WARRANT IN UP



Date: 13th September

UP govt constitutes a special force to protect courts, airports, administrative buildings, metros, banks and other government offices. The Uttar Pradesh Special Security Force (UPSSF) will reportedly be allowed to conduct searches and arrests without warrants if it is sure about the crime.

Highlights of UPSSF

- The special force will have powers similar to the CISF (Central Industrial Security Force), that can search and arrest without a warrant.
- The UPSSF will be set up on the basis of orders of the Allahabad High Court, which had expressed its displeasure over the security at civil courts in December 2019.
- The state will constitute five battalions in the first phase, which will be headed by an ADG-ranked officer.
- The state aims to set up the new special force within the next three months with 9,900 personnel recruited in the first month.
- The special force will be responsible for the security of important government, private and industrial establishments.
- The force will be responsible for providing security to the high court, district courts, banks, financial institutions, airports, metro rail, administrative offices and buildings, educational institutions, industrial establishments, religious places and places of pilgrimage.
- The UPSSF will have powers to search without any warrant and arrest any person without the orders of a magistrate or a warrant.

- The force will be given special training and will be equipped with modern security equipment and informed about modern security techniques and gadgets.

INTERNATIONAL

HEALTHCARE

CORONAVIRUS CAPABLE OF DIRECTLY INVADING BRAIN: NEW STUDY



Date: 10th September 2020

According to the new study published recently Coronavirus may be capable of directly invading the brain. The study noted that headaches, confusion and delirium experienced by some of the COVID-19 patients may be a result of the same.

The Study: Key Highlights

- According to research done by Neurology Department at the University of California, SARS-CoV-2 virus can be capable of breaching the blood-brain-barrier, a structure that surrounds the brain's blood vessels and protects it from foreign substances.
- The study found that the SARS-CoV-2 virus can infect neurons and hijack the neuron cell's machinery to make replicate itself. The infected cells in turn caused the death of surrounding cells by choking their oxygen supply.
- The brain lacks high levels of a protein called ACE2 that the coronavirus latches on to and which is found in abundance in other organs like the lungs.
- The research team found that the brain organoids had enough ACE2 to enable the entry of the virus and the proteins were also present in the brain tissue of deceased COVID-19 patients.
- The researchers also performed a spinal tap on hospitalized COVID-19 patients suffering from delirium. The research also found that the patients had

neutralizing antibodies against the virus in their spinal fluid, which gave further evidence in favour of their theory.

- Another virus, Zika virus, also has the capability of breaking the barrier and cause significant damage to the brains of fetuses.

POLITY

INDIA-CHINA JOINT STATEMENT ON LAC: AFTER JAISHANKAR-WANG MEET



Date: 11th September 2020

On 10th September 2020, India and China have reached a five-point consensus regarding the ongoing border standoff at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) after detailed talks between Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Moscow on the side-lines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) meeting.

Talks between EAM Jaishankar and Wang Yi

- i. They agreed that both sides should seek guidance from a series of consensus of leaders on developing India-China relations, including not allowing differences to become disputes.
- ii. The two Foreign Ministers also agreed that the current situation in the border areas is not in the interest of either nation and therefore, agreed that the border troops of both nations should continue their dialogue, quickly disengage, maintain proper distance and ease tensions.
- iii. The two sides also agreed to abide by all the existing agreements and protocol on China-India boundary affairs to ensure peace and tranquillity in the border areas and avoid any action that could escalate matters.
- iv. The two sides also agreed to continue having dialogues and communication through the Special Representative mechanism on the India-China boundary question. They also agreed that the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China border affairs (WMCC), should continue its meetings.
- v. The Ministers further agreed that the two sides should fasten the work to conclude

new Confidence Building Measures to maintain and enhance peace and tranquillity in the border areas.

Background

The Indian Army and the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) have been locked in a tense border standoff in multiple areas along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh since early May 2020. Recently on September 7, few shots were fired across the LAC for the first time in 45 years with the two sides accusing each other of firing in the air.

AFTER UAE, PEACE DEAL BETWEEN ISRAEL AND BAHRAIN



Date: 12th September 2020

In another historic breakthrough, Israel and Bahrain agreed to establish full diplomatic relations in a joint statement issued among the US, Israel and Bahrain leaders. The announcement was made by US President Donald Trump. The joint statement released by the White House revealed that Bahrain's King Hamad bin Salman al-Khalifa had spoken with Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu and agreed to establish full diplomatic relations between Israel and the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Israel-Bahrain Peace Deal: Key Highlights

- According to a Joint Statement, the meeting held on September 11 was a historic breakthrough to further peace in the Middle East. The statement read that opening direct dialogue and ties between these two dynamic societies and advanced economies will continue the positive transformation of the Middle East and increase stability, security, and prosperity in the region.
- During the meeting, the United States expressed gratitude to Bahrain for hosting the historic Peace to Prosperity workshop in Manama on June 25, 2019 to advance the cause of peace, dignity, and economic opportunity for the Palestinian people.
- The joint statement highlighted that the three parties will continue their efforts to achieve a just, comprehensive and enduring resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to enable the Palestinian people to realize their full potential.

- Israel affirmed that as stated in the Vision for Peace, all Muslims who come in peace may visit and pray at the Al Aqsa Mosque and that Jerusalem's other holy sites will remain open for peaceful worshippers belonging to all faiths.

Impact on Palestine

The Israeli-Bahrain peace deal serves another major blow to Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, who had earlier condemned the UAE-Israel deal, calling it as despicable and betrayal and had sought to have the Arab League condemn it.



SECURITY

GOVERNMENT PLANS TO CURB COLLECTION OF DATA BY APPS



Date: 10th September 2020

The central government has been planning at prohibiting mobile applications from collecting user information beyond their area of functioning. The move can be seen in the backdrop of concerns around data handling and users' privacy, including at the hands of Internet giants Whatsapp and Facebook and scores of top international and Chinese apps.

Key Points:

- The policy aims to stop the mobile and internet apps to collect information that is not necessary for their functioning.
- The importance of user consent and the illegal harvesting of data is something that has been getting increasingly intense within the various levels of the government.
- Like push email, the government has also been working on the areas to stop push apps.
- The government feels that after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, and work and study from home situations the enormous amount of data has been moving online, right from the education of students, to businesses and offices, to social media and the internet conversations.
- As a result, the increasing number of instances of cyber attacks, data thefts, and fishing has been observed at the hands of some of the well-known and larger internet apps.
- The unauthorized data collection has been flagged off even previously by the government, as many apps tend to take data that is not even remotely connected to their utility.