

**August 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> news:**

**National:**

**Project 'SWAYAM' Launched By HRD Ministry**

The Ministry of HRD has embarked on a major and new initiative Project called '*Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds*' (SWAYAM), which will provide one integrated platform and portal for online courses. This covers all higher education subjects and skill sector courses. The objective is to ensure that every student in the country has access to the best quality higher education at the affordable cost.

**Economy:**

**MoU Signed Between TRIFED And National Medicinal Plant Board**

Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Ltd. (TRIFED) under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs & National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB), Ministry of AYUSH have signed an MoU together. The MoU aims to promote Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (MAPs) forest produced for livelihood development of tribal people by promoting primary level value addition to MAPs produce from forest area at the grassroots level.

**RBI to pay ₹ 50,000 crore dividend to govt for FY18**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will transfer Rs50,000 crore of its surplus money to the government, the highest since 2015-16, in a partial relief for the latter struggling to replenish public sector banks. The transfer gives the government more elbow room to infuse capital into the banks it owns. In October 2017, the government had said it would infuse Rs2.11 trillion into public sector banks through a mix of recapitalization bonds (Rs1.35 trillion), direct infusion from budgetary allocations (Rs18,000 crore) and market borrowing (Rs58,000 crore).

**Global Innovation Index, GII- 2018 Launched In India**

The Global Innovation Index 2018 was launched in New Delhi by Ratan P Watal, Principal Adviser, NITI Aayog & Member Secretary of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister. The event was organized by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) – one of the founding partners of GII along with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), in collaboration with the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP). India's rank on the Global Innovation Index (GII) has improved from 60 in 2017 to 57 in 2018. India has been consistently climbing the GII ranking for the past two years

**Environment:**

**Khangchendzonga Becomes 11th Biosphere Reserve To be Included in WNBR**

The Khangchendzonga Biosphere Reserve (in Sikkim) has become the 11th Biosphere Reserve from India that has been included in the UNESCO designated World Network of Biosphere Reserves

(WNBR). The decision to include Khangchendzonga Biosphere Reserve in WNBR was taken at the 30th Session of International Coordinating Council (ICC) of Man and Biosphere (MAB) Programme of UNESCO held at Palembang, Indonesia.

**The other ten are...**

- Nilgiri (1986)
- Gulf of Mannar (2001)
- Sunderbans (2001)
- Nanda Devi (2004)
- Nokrek (2009)
- Pachmarhi (2009)
- Simlipal (2009)
- Achanakmar-Amarkantak (2012)
- Great Nicobar (2013)
- Agasthyamala (2016)

**Persons in news:**

**Harivansh Narayan Singh:** NDA candidate Harivansh Narayan Singh was elected the Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman with 125 votes. The Opposition candidate BK Hariprasad managed to get 105 votes. Mr Singh is an MP from the Janata Dal (United) and a Parliamentarian from Bihar and a former journalist.

**Ivan Duque:** He was sworn in as the newly elected President of Colombia. He pledged to unite the country and improve economic growth. He pledged changes to tackle corruption and invigorate the economy and vowed to change the peace deal with the FARC rebel group

**Michelle Bachelet:** She is the new UN's new human rights chief. Bachelet would be succeeding Jordanian diplomat Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein. Bachelet's name will now go forward for consideration and approval by the 193-member UN General Assembly.

Michelle Bachelet has served as the President of Chile twice, from 2006 to 2010 and from 2014 to 2018. Her second four-year term as President ended earlier this year.

She was the first woman in her country to occupy the top position and is known to be a strong advocate for women's rights.