Tamil Nadu Agriculture University’s (TNAU) newly-released ‘Star Jasmine’ – is expected to enter local markets in the next six to seven months.

✅ TNAU first released the ‘star jasmine’ or ‘jasmine nitidum’ in January this year as an alternative to the traditional jathimalli, which becomes unavailable during winter.
✅ The star jasmine will be available throughout the year and if refrigerated, it promises longer shelf-life.
✅ The colour of its buds ranges from baby pink to magenta, compared to snowy white buds of jathimalli.
✅ It is milder in fragrance when compared to jathimalli.
✅ It can be grown in all types of red and black soil.
STATES

- **In a first, Meghalaya – to get braille-enabled ballot papers at all polling booths**
  - The ballot paper pasted on the EVMs will have the names and symbol of candidates in braille alphabets.
  - The move will facilitate more than 800 visually impaired electorates to vote by a secret ballot.

NATIONAL

- **Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Limited – has become the first Indian shipyard to deliver 100 warships to the Indian Navy, Indian Coast Guard and Mauritius Coast Guard.**
  - The 100th Warship, IN LCU L-56, a landing craft utility, was handed over by Rear Admiral V. K. Saxena, Chairman & Managing Director, GRSE to Lt. Cdr. Gopinath Narayanan, Commanding Officer of the Ship.

- **Assam filmmaker Rima Das - has been appointed as the official ambassador of Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF)’s ‘Share Her Journey’ campaign**
  - She has won several national and international awards for her film ‘Village Rockstars’, which is India’s official entry to Oscars 2019
  - Recently Rima Das was honoured with ICC NE Excellence Award by Indian Chamber of Commerce at North East Business Summit in New Delhi
The other Indian ambassadors of the campaign include Filmmakers Mira Nair, Deepa Mehta, and Actress Priyanka Chopra.

TIFF launched the five years ‘Share Her Journey’ campaign in 2017 with an aim to increase participation, skills, and opportunities for women in film industry.

- Assam’s Bongaigaon district administration – has developed a mobile App ‘Sankalp’ to encourage first time voters
  - It has been developed with the help of National Informatics Centre
  - The first time voters will able to sign digital ‘sankalp patra’ to cast their votes on day of polling.

- India – to post tri-services women officers as ‘defence attaches’ in its overseas missions
  - The first missions have been identified in Europe and America
  - So far, only male officers have been posted as ‘defence attaches’

- The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) - extended the last date for intimating the Aadhaar number and linking it with Permanent Account Number (PAN) by six months to September 30
  - The earlier last date for linking PAN with Aadhaar was March 31
  - This is the sixth time the government has extended the deadline for individuals to link their Permanent Account Number (PAN) to Aadhaar
  - However, it'll be mandatory to quote and link Aadhaar while filing income tax return from April 1, 2019 unless specifically exempted.

INTERNATIONAL

- Russia - has opened a training Centre for ‘military helicopter pilots’ in Venezuela
  - Rosoboronexport, Russia’s arms export company will collaborate with Venezuelan Military Industrial Company, Cavim for the training centre
  - It will train pilots to fly Russian-built Mil helicopters

INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

- UAE – to issue equivalency for all Indian degrees that match the set criteria
  - The UAE government had earlier rejected the equivalency of some Indian degrees as some of the Indian universities issue both internal and external mark sheets as part of their degrees
  - This had created considerable difficulty for those seeking jobs in the nation and even for some teachers who were already working there
  - The Indian Ambassador to UAE, Navdeep Singh Suri had called on the UAE Minister of Education, Hussain Al Hammadi, to explain and resolve the issue
The UAE equivalency on Indian degrees is mandatory for Indians to work in the UAE.

**SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT**

- Isro – launches EMISAT along with 29 satellites of global customers on April 1.

- These 28 satellites, together weighing about 220 kg, belong to Spain (1), Lithuania (2), Switzerland (1) and the United States (24).
- These include 20 Flock-4A satellites and 4 Lemur satellites.
- The 436 kg electronic intelligence satellite, EMISAT has been launched at an altitude of 749 km orbit, while the remaining 28 satellites were launched at an altitude of 504 km orbit.
- EMISAT will be utilized for monitoring radar network by locating the positions of enemy radars.
- It is intended for electromagnetic spectrum measurement.
They were launched aboard the PSLV-C45 from Satish Dhawan Space Center in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.

This was the 47th mission for ISRO’s Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) Programme and was the 71st launch vehicle mission from Sriharikota.

For the first time, ISRO invited common people to view the launch

It had opened a visitors' gallery with 5,000 capacity at Andhra Pradesh's Sriharikota launching centre.

The gallery has a clear line of sight to two launch pads and large screens to explain launcher and satellite features

- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) – lists Hump-backed Mahseer as Critically Endangered in the Red List of Threatened Species

- It is found only in the Cauvery river basin including Pambar, Kabini and Bhavani rivers
- It is a species of freshwater fish and referred as 'tiger of water'
- There are about 16 species of mahseer in India
- For the conservation of mahseer, 'Project Mahseer' has been initiated by Shoal, an international organization in collaboration with other stakeholders in three states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka

- ECONOMY

- The merger of Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank with Bank of Baroda – becomes effective on April 1, 2019
- This is the first-ever three-way merger in the country’s banking sector
- Post merger, Bank of Baroda becomes India’s second largest Public Sector Bank after the SBI and India’s third largest lender overall after the SBI and ICICI Banks
- It has a total business of more than Rs 14.82 lakh crore, 9,500 branches and 13,400 ATMs now.
Dena Bank CEO, Karnam Sekar is likely to join Chennai-based Indian Overseas Bank while R A Sankara Naryanan, CEO of Vijaya Bank is likely to take charge of Canara Bank in Bengaluru.

Dena and Vijaya banks were both founded by Indian entrepreneurs in the 1930s and nationalized in 1969 and 1980 respectively.

Both Dena and Vijaya banks will continue to display their former signage, but it will now include a strip ‘Now Bank of Baroda’.

The merger of these banks was first announced in September 2018 and approved by Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister, on January 2, 2019.

The amalgamation would be carried out under Alternative Mechanism, which is headed by Arun Jaitley, Finance Minister.

Other members of Alternative Mechanism included Railway Minister Piyush Goyal and Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

Post this merger, the number of PSU banks will come down to 19.

Kotak Mahindra Bank – becomes the first lender to charge for UPI transactions.
☑️ The bank has decided to charge beyond a monthly limit of 30 peer-to-peer transactions in the Unified Payments Interface from May onwards
☑️ It will charge Rs 2.50 for every transaction worth Rs 1,000 or less while the same would be Rs 5 for transactions of more than Rs 1,000
☑️ This will be applicable for all platforms, including Paytm, PhonePe and Google Pay, the three main players controlling 90% of the transactions
☑️ National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) is the umbrella payments body that manages UPI

**SPORTS**

- Elavenil Valarivan, 19 years old – wins her first individual gold medal in the senior category in women’s 10m air rifle final of the 12th Asian Airgun Championships in Taoyuan, Taipei

- The Cuddalore-born Gujarat-settled girl, who trains at Gagan Narang’s ‘Gun For Glory’ shooting academy is part of their ambitious programme ‘Project Leap’
- Elavenil has won two junior World Cup gold along with a silver at Juniors’ World championships last year

- India’s Kidambi Srikanth – loses the final in the Yonex-Sunrise India Open at New Delhi
✓ He lost the final match against the World No. 6, Viktor Axelsen of Denmark in straight sets
✓ Srikanth was the winner of the event in 2015

➤ Formula One world champion Lewis Hamilton (Great Britain-Mercedes) – won the Bahrain Formula 1 Grand Prix in Manama

✓ After becoming the second-youngest driver in F1 history to take pole position on March 30, the 21-year-old Charles Leclerc (Ferrari) finished third
✓ Valtteri Bottas (Mercedes) finished at second place in the action-packed race
✓ Red Bull's Max Verstappen placed fourth with Sebastian Vettel (Ferrari) in fifth place
Retired Judge P Devadass - was appointed as the Anti-corruption Ombudsman in the Tamilnadu Lokayukta on April 1

- While retired judges K Jayabalan and R Krishnamoorthy will be judicial members, retired IAS officer M Rajaram and senior advocate K Arumugam will be non-judicial members.
- The selection committee headed by Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami considered the names recommended by the search committee, headed by former Madras high court judge Justice K Venkataraman and later finalised the officials.
- The Tamil Nadu Lokayukta bill was passed by the Assembly on July 9, 2018 and the Act came into being from November 13, 2018.
'Kandhamal Haldi', a variety of turmeric indigenous to southern Odisha - gets the Geographical indication (GI) tag

Kandhamal in southern Odisha is famed for its turmeric, a spice that stands out for its healing properties and arresting aroma.

The recognition coincided with Odisha’s Foundation Day (Utkal Divas).

Odisha, on April 1, 1936, was declared as a separate state in the then British India.

National Capital Region (NCR) districts – switch over to Euro-VI grade fuel (also known as Bharat Stage VI grade fuel) on April 1, 2019

Several cities in the 12 neighboring districts of Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh including Agra switched over to the ultra-clean fuel.

The Euro-VI grade fuel will be rolled out across India from April 1, 2020.

Delhi in April 2018 became the first city in the country to roll-out ultra-clean Bharat Stage VI (BS-VI) grade fuel, both petrol and diesel.

India had in 2015 decided to switch over to Euro-VI emission norm compliant petrol and diesel from the Euro-IV grade at present.

The BS-VI fuel is expected to reduce the amount of sulphur released from 50 parts per million (ppm) to 10 ppm.

Moreover, the emission of nitrogen oxides (NOx) from diesel and petrol engines is also expected to reduce by nearly 70% and 25% respectively.

The BS-IV norms were in force across the country since April 2017.

Bharat Stage emission standards were introduced in year 2000 in line with recommendations made by RA Mashelkar Committee.
SUPREME COURT VERDICT

The Supreme Court - declares higher pension to all private sector employees on April 1

- The HC had asked Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) to give pension to all retiring employees on the basis of their full salary

How the Calculation Works

- Assuming a person retires in 2029 after 33 years service on a package (basic + DA + retention bonus) of ₹50,000/mth
- Under present system, contribution for EPS is ₹542/mth (8.33% of max of ₹6,500 from 1996, when scheme was launched, till Sept 2014) and ₹1,250/mth thereafter (8.33% of ₹15,000)
- Under proposed system, contribution will be 8.33% of actual salary
- Pension calculated on formula: (No. of yrs + 2)/70 X last drawn salary
- Before court order, (18 yrs [1996-2014] + 11*)/70 X 6500 + 15 yrs (from 2014 on)+0.9/70 X 15,000
  *After dividing the bonus 2 on a pro rata basis, this figure will be ₹5,180/mth
- After court order, pension will be 33 + 2/70 X 50,000 (last drawn salary) = ₹25,000/mth

Golden Retirement?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Work</th>
<th>Last Drawn Salary/Mth</th>
<th>Pension After Order</th>
<th>Pension Before Order</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>5,180</td>
<td>383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>22,857</td>
<td>4,525</td>
<td>405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>19,225</td>
<td>3,425</td>
<td>461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>14,285</td>
<td>2,100</td>
<td>580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>5,180</td>
<td>865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>45,714</td>
<td>4,525</td>
<td>910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>38,571</td>
<td>3,425</td>
<td>1,026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>28,571</td>
<td>2,100</td>
<td>1,261</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- While pension will increase, the provident fund corpus will be reduced as the extra contribution will now go to the Employees Pension Scheme (EPS) rather than PF
- The Centre had introduced the EPS in 1995, under which an employer was supposed to contribute 8.33% of the employee’s salary in a pension scheme
- However, the contribution was capped at 8.33% of ₹6,500 (or ₹541 per month).
- On September 1, 2014, the EPFO amended the act to increase the contribution to 8.33% of a maximum of ₹15,000 (or ₹1,250)
- The amendment also stipulated that in case of those who availed the benefit of pension on full salary, their pensionable salary would be calculated as the average of the last five years’ monthly salary
- Subsequently, the Kerala high court set aside the September 1, 2014 amendment and also reinstated the old system of calculating the pensionable salary as the average of the last one year’s monthly salary
- Employees who have begun working after September 1, 2014, will also be able to avail the benefit of pension on full salary.
INTERNATIONAL

The era of Japan’s next emperor, which begins May 1 - will be named “Reiwa”, symbolising ‘pursuit of harmony’

- The current three decades long “Heisei”, or “achieving peace,” era will end with Emperor Akihito’s abdication on April 30
- The era began on January 8, 1989, a day after the death of the Emperor Hirohito, when his son Emperor Akihito acceded to the throne as the 125th Emperor of Japan.
- His son, Naruhito, is to ascend the Chrysanthemum throne the following day
- Heisei will be the first era without a war in Japan’s modern history. The new ‘Reiwa’ era will be the 248th in the history of Japan
- Japan's emperor has no political power, but remains a highly symbolic figure
- It is likely to be the first time that the Japanese era name (gengo) has been drawn from a Japanese document, breaking over 1,300 years old custom of choosing the name from Chinese classics.
- The first era was named as ‘Taika’ to celebrate the great Taika reform of 645
- There have been four era names in Japan’s modern period, with the practice of "one emperor, one era name" - Meiji (1868-1912), Taisho (1912-1926), Showa (1926-1989) and Heisei (1989-till now)

United Arab Emirates (UAE) - has approved a new rule for expats under which foreign workers will now be able to sponsor their family members if they fulfill a minimum income criteria

- Earlier, ‘professions’ was listed as the criteria for expats to sponsor families
- Under the prevalent guidelines, male expats can sponsor their immediate family members such as wife and children if he earns a monthly salary of Dh 4,000 (approximately Rs 75,000) or Dh 3,000 (Rs 56,000) plus accommodation provided by his company
He also had to be employed in certain categories for him to be eligible to sponsor his family.

Similarly, a female resident could sponsor her family only if she was a teacher, engineer or a health professional and earned Dh 4,000 per month.

If she worked in any other sector, she needed to have a minimum monthly salary of Dh 10,000 (Rs 1.88 lakhs) and a special approval from the General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners Affairs.

The move will benefit approximately 3.3 million non-resident Indians, constituting about 30% of the total population of the UAE.

Indians in the UAE constitute the largest part of population of the country.

**INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES**

**Bolivia - signed the framework agreement to join the International Solar Alliance (ISA)**

The agreement was signed during the state visit of the President Ram Nath Kovind to Bolivia.

The ISA is a major initiative of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in contributing to the implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement through the rapid and massive deployment of solar energy.

The International Solar Alliance was launched jointly by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Francois Hollande on the first day of the COP-21 summit at Paris in 2015.

It aims to mobilise more than $1000 billion of investments needed by 2030 for massive deployment of solar energy.
COMMITTEES

The Union Government - constituted a tribunal to decide on banning the Jamaat-e-Islami Jammu and Kashmir (JeL) and the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front-Yasin Malik (JKLF-Y) faction

The tribunal will be headed by Justice Chander Shekhar of the Delhi High Court.
Both the organisations were declared as unlawful associations by the centre.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

Isro - has postponed its Chandrayaan-2 mission for the fourth time.
The launch has now been slated for May.
Isro is planning to launch PSLVC-46 followed by PSLVC-47 and Chandrayaan 2 in May.
The lunar mission was pushed from its first deadline of April 2018 to October and again to January and April 2019.
An early launch would have made India the fourth nation to land a craft on the moon.
Israel’s Beresheet lunar spacecraft, launched by Space X’s Falcon 9, is scheduled to land on the lunar surface on April 11.

ECONOMY

GST collection in March - crossed the ₹1-lakh crore mark, the highest since the tax reform measure was rolled out in July 2017.
The GST revenue in March 2019 showed a growth rate of 15.6% over the receipts in the same month last year.
The revenue for the last quarter of 2018-19 was 14.3% higher than that collected during the same period of the previous financial year.
The monthly average of GST revenue during 2018-19 was Rs 98,114 crore, 9.2% higher than 2017-18

The Integral Coach Factory - has said it produced 3,262 coaches for the year ended March 2019

- It was 30% more than what it did in the previous fiscal
- The Railway Board had set a target of 3,230 coaches for this fiscal to the ICF
- The number of Linke Hoffman Busche (LHB) coaches, a German design which has better safety features, produced by ICF in the period doubled from 1,111 in the 2018-19 financial year
- This is a significant achievement given that Railway Ministry has taken a decision to replace all ICF model coaches into the LHB design coaches
- ICF made more LHB coaches than the other two manufacturing units Rail Coach Factory, Kapurthala and Modern Coach Factory, Raebareli
- While the Kapurthala unit makes around 1,300-1,400 coaches the Raebareli unit builds around 1400 LHB coaches
- The crowning glory was Vande Bharat Express, also known as Train 18, a high speed intercity train designed and built by ICF over a span of 18 months and delivered last fiscal.
APPOINTMENTS

♦ Vinod Dasari - has taken over as the new CEO of cult bike maker, Royal Enfield

☑ Dasari takes over from Siddhartha Lal who will continue as the MD of Eicher Motors
☑ He will also join Eicher Motors board as its executive director.
☑ Dasari shocked the industry with his premature exit announcement from Ashok Leyland last November when his term was until March 2022
☑ He was with Ashok Leyland for 14 years.
☑ Eicher Motors also announced the appointment of Vinod Aggarwal as non-executive director on the company board also for a period of five years
☑ Last August, Royal Enfield had appointed former Triumph India MD Vimal Sumbly as the head of Asia Pacific region
☑ In May 2018, Sudhanshu Singh of Star Sports joined as head of global brand.
☑ Triumph UK’s design head Simon Warburton joined Royal Enfield as head of product development.

SPORTS

♦ Shreya Agarwal, 17 years old shooter – wins gold in junior women’s 10m air rifle event at the Asian Airgun meet in Taoyuan, Taipei

☑ Shreya’s gold came with a world record (junior) in the final with a score of 252.5
☑ She broke Chinese shooter Ruozhu Zhao’s previous record by 0.1 point
☑ Shreya trains at Gagan Narang’s Gun For Glory academy in Jabalpur
☑ It was a clean sweep by the Indians in the junior men’s 10m air rifle category, as Yash Vardhan (249.5) clinched gold, while Keval Prajapati (247.3) won silver and Aishwarya Pratap Singh Tomar (226.1) took bronze
☑ Overall, India finished with 16 gold and 25 total medals.
Former India captain and batting legend Rahul Dravid – will soon be taking over the BCCI’s National Cricket Academy (NCA)

- BCCI has decided to hand over Dravid the responsibility of reconstructing and monitoring Indian cricket’s feeder line.
- The Supreme Court-appointed Committee of Administrators (COA) will be coming up with an advertisement very soon on the role and Dravid will make himself available
- In this new role, Dravid will be responsible for setting up the academy’s entire coaching staff across the country
- From specialised zonal coaches to those heading individual responsibilities at the NCA and its’ region-specific centres, all appointments will be overseen by Dravid
- The NCA head will report to the Board’s General Manager (Operations), the position currently held by Saba Karim

Indian squash player Saurav Ghosal - broke into the top 10 in the world rankings as per the latest PSA release

- The April rankings which were released on April 1 put the Indian on his career best high of 10 and he is the only Asian to be in the top 10
- Ghosal also became the first Indian male to reach this high in world rankings.
- Ghosal's earlier best ranking was 11 which he had touched in the October of 2018
- He reached the quarterfinals of the PSA world championship for the first time in his career and also made it to the last eight in the PSA gold event, Grasshopper Cup in Switzerland
- Indian squash’s two women stars Joshana Chinappa and Dipika Pallikal have earlier made it to this level in their career
India - retained the ICC Test Championship and won the purse of $one million for a consecutive third year

- India finished at the top of the ICC Test team rankings on the cut-off date of April 1 while New Zealand have climbed to second place from third position

- **TEAM RANKINGS**
  1. India (116 points)
  2. New Zealand (108)
  3. South Africa (105)
  4. Australia (104)
  5. England (104)
  6. SL (93)
  7. Pakistan (88)
  8. Windies (77)
  9. Bangladesh (69)
  10. Zimbabwe (13)

All India Football Federation (AIFF) President Praful Patel – was elected as the first Indian to be the member of FIFA Executive Council for a four-year period

- The elections are held in the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) headquarters in Kuala Lumpur on March 30
- Patel is currently the Vice President of AFC and his place in AFC could be taken by the Pakistan representative
- The executive council is FIFA’s highest decision making body and it has never had an Indian member in the past
- Former AIFF president Priyaranjan Dasmunsi was once elected to the technical committee of FIFA
INTERNATIONAL DAY

❖ World Autism Awareness Day - April 2

- The observance of the day intends to spread information about Autism Spectrum Disorder and help the global ASD population lead a healthy social life.
- The UN Department of Global Communication and Department of Economic and Social Affairs is the main organization responsible for this day.
- According to the World Health Organisation one out of every 160 children is living with autism.
- Theme 2019 - ‘Assistive Technologies. Active Participation’
- Autism or Autism Spectrum Disorder is a lifelong developmental disability that affects the functioning of the brain, mostly affecting children and adults in many countries irrespective of gender, race or socio-economic status.
- It is characterized by impairments in social interaction, problems with verbal and non-verbal communication and restricted, repetitive behaviour, interests and activities.

EMISAT – A REPORT

❖ Electro-Magnetic Intelligence Satellite (Emisat) - is a satellite intended to protect the country’s assets including fighter jets and spacecraft by detecting radars in enemy territory.
- It will intercept radar signals and detect the kind of radar and its location.
- A radar emits radio waves in specific frequencies that hit the targets and bounce back—telling the radar the nature of the target, its movement and distance.
Emisat is a result of a five year development jointly by Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) and Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

Isro’s PSLV-C45 on April 1 made unique manoeuvres to three different circular orbits to also inject 28 foreign satellites along with Emisat.
TAMIL NADU

Bharathidasan University - has been accorded A+ grade by the national accreditation and assessment council (NAAC) in the third assessment cycle valid for the next five years.

- Thus, the Trichy-based university becomes the first among the state-run universities in the state to secure A+ grade.
- With A+ grade in its kitty, the university is now eligible to offer open and distance learning programmes.
- Further, it can start a new course or programme department/school/centre in disciplines that form a part of its existing academic framework without UGC’s approval.
- It can also start skill courses consistent with the national skills qualification framework, also without the approval of the UGC.
More importantly, it can hire foreign faculty which have taught at any institution among the top 500 of the world’s renowned ranking frameworks up to 20% over and above its total sanctioned faculty strength.

Besides this, there will be an increase in funding from the ministry of human resources development.

The revised framework of NAAC was introduced in July 2017 and further revised in January 2018.

**In a first-of-its kind initiative, the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments (HR&CE) department - has prepared a manual for conservation of heritage temples across the state**

- The draft, to be notified soon, covers scientific conservation of the structure, sculptures and idols of temples.
- It was compiled by a special committee, comprising representatives from the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), IIT Madras and Shivacharyas.
- The HR&CE department oversees nearly 36,700 temples across Tamil Nadu.

**NATIONAL**

**WhatsApp - unveiled its new feature ‘Checkpoint Tipline’ to tackle fake news ahead of the LS elections on April 2**

- Using the feature, people can check the authenticity of information received.
- It’s launched by PROTO, an India-based media skilling startup along with two other organisations, Dig Deeper Media and Meedan.
- The service will enable users to send messages, including images, video and text in English, Hindi, Telugu, Bengali and Malayalam.
- Public can submit misinformation or rumours they receive to the Checkpoint Tipline on WhatsApp (+91-9643-000-888).
In a first-of-its kind apprenticeship programme for non-technical graduates, up to 5 lakh students - from across universities/colleges will join various industries and service sectors from July 2019

The programme titled ‘Scheme for Higher Education Youth for Apprenticeship and Skills (Shreyas)’ received huge response by the end of the registration deadline of March 25

The Shreyas programme has been conceived with the objective of introducing employable skills into the learning, promote apprenticeship as integral to education, and amalgamate employment facilitating efforts of the government into the education system

Shreyas, an initiative of three central ministries — namely the HRD ministry, ministry of skill development and entrepreneurship and the ministry of labour and employment It was launched in February 2019

SUPREME COURT VERDICT

The Supreme Court on April 2 - quashed the RBI’s February 12, 2018 circular, which directed banks to move against defaulters under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) on their failure to pay up within 180 days from March 1, 2018

A bench comprising Justices R F Nariman and Vineet Saran also quashed all IBC proceedings initiated by banks under the RBI circular against defaulters

The verdict is a big setback to efforts for recovery of bad debts of companies owing ₹2,000 crore or more to banks, giving a huge relief to defaulters
However, this ruling will not affect initiation of IBC proceedings by banks against big defaulters taken before, or independent of, the RBI circular.
The Supreme Court upheld the constitutional validity of Section 35AA of the Banking Regulation Act, which empowers the Centre to exercise the power itself or authorise the RBI to direct banks to proceed against specific defaulters.

It noted that the February 12 circular was illegal since there was no such authorisation from the Centre to RBI to direct banks to proceed against defaulters by specifying a default limit and a 180-day period.

INTERNATIONAL

**Estonia - becomes first in the world with highest numbers of online voting with 44% of votes - in the recently concluded parliamentary elections in the country**

- With total 1.3 million of population, 5,61,131 were the total voters while 2,47,232 people preferred for online voting.
- A large number (25%) of e-votes were cast by people over the age of 55, while 20% were cast by people aged between 45 to 54 years.
- Votes can cast their vote online any time in the seven days before election day, through a computer or mobile with internet connection.
- Voters need to verify their voter IDs so the voter's eligibility and registration can be verified.
- Voters must then fill out a digital ballot, sign and submit.
- Before sending it to election servers each vote gets encrypted.
- Electronic voting pioneer Estonia was the first country in the world to use online voting for a national election in 2005.
- In 2007, it introduced a special ID card system that allows people to use their phones to vote.
- In year 2015, online voting system was updated to allow voters to check if their vote was received by server or not.
- Estonia reached at a new high in 2017 with 32% of online voting during municipal elections.

**USA - decided to cut aid to the three Central American countries of “Northern Triangle” - El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras**

- US government blamed these Central American countries for sending migrants to the United States.
- The move affects nearly $500 million in 2018 funds and millions more left over from the previous fiscal year.
- These countries share a border tri-point at Trifinio biosphere reserve.
- They have signed trade agreements with Colombia, the United States, and Mexico.
South Korea – to launch the world's first fully-fledged 5G mobile networks on April 5, 2019
✓ 5G’s hyper speed would be able to connect one million devices within a one square kilometre zone simultaneously.
✓ It will provide a connectivity speed at 20 times faster than the existing 4G.
✓ Until now, no mobile networks have offered nationwide 5G access
✓ Japan is expected to roll out a limited deployment in 2019 before full services start in time for next year’s Tokyo Olympics.

**INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES**

India – to set up the India-Africa Institute of Agriculture and Rural Development (IAIARD) in Malawi – in association with the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development Consultancy Service (NABCONS)
✓ IAIARD will be a Pan-African Institute wherein trainees from Malawi and other African countries will be trained to develop their human resources
✓ This will be the first of its kind institute developed in an African country by India.
✓ The entire expenditure on Indian faculty will be borne by the Indian Government for an initial period of three years.
✓ IAIARD will develop training programmes in the areas of micro-financing and agro-financing, among others

United States - has approved the sale of 24 multi-role MH-60 ‘Romeo’ Seahawk helicopters to India at an estimated cost of $2.4 billion

✓ The MH-60 Romeo Seahawk helicopter is considered to be the world's most advanced maritime helicopter.
Built by Lockheed Martin, the helicopters are designed to hunt down submarines, as well as knock out ships and conduct search-and-rescue operations at sea. They are expected to replace the country’s aging fleet of British-made Sea King helicopters.

**SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT**

**Earth Hour – was observed on March 30, 2019**

Cities around the world marked the hour by turning off the lights in a call for global action on climate change. Beginning in Sydney in 2007, Earth Hour has spread to more than 180 countries, with tens of millions of people joining in.

- China - has successfully launched the Tianlian II-01 satellite onboard long March-3B carrier rocket from the Xichang Satellite Launch Centre in southwest China’s Sichuan Province on March 31, 2019
- It is the first of China’s new-generation data relay satellites network
- It will provide data relay, measurement and control, transmission services for manned spacecraft, satellites, carrier rockets and other non-spacecraft users.
- China launched its first data relay satellite, the Tianlian I-01, in April 2008.

**DEFENCE**

**The third edition of ‘AUSINDEX-19’ (Australia India Exercise), bilateral maritime exercise between Indian Navy and Royal Australian Navy - began on April 2, 2019 at Visakhapatnam**

The third edition would involve exercises in all three dimensions with focus on Anti-Submarine Warfare Systems (ASW).
The exercise focuses on India’s vision of SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) and shared objectives of the two countries in the maritime sector.

The inaugural edition of the AUSINDEX exercise was held in September 2015 at Visakhapatnam, India.

The second edition of the exercise was hosted by Australia in Freemantle in June 2017, wherein ships of the Eastern Fleet of the Indian Navy (IN) participated.

The Indian Army - has successfully built the longest suspension bridge ‘Matiri Bridge’ over the Indus River in the Leh-Ladakh region within a record 40 days.

- It is the shortest time ever built for any suspension bridge of this length in the country
- It was built by the combat engineers belonging to the ‘Sahas aur Yogyata’ regiment of Indian Army’s Fire & Fury Corps

APPOINTMENTS

India’s Manu Sawhney - took charge as the new Chief Executive of the International Cricket Council on April 1

- The incumbent ICC Chief Executive Dave Richardson will step down after the World Cup in July 2019 after seven years at the helm
- Sawhney was with ESPN Star Sports for 17 years and served as its Managing Director
- ESPN Star Sports signed the global broadcast partnership deal with the ICC that ran from 2007-2015 during his tenure
- Sawhney then moved to Singapore Sports Hub (SSH), where he worked as CEO.
- He is also a non-executive director and member of the Audit Committee of Manchester United Ltd
- The ICC board had approved Sawhney’s appointment in January 2019
UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres - announced the appointment of International criminal justice lawyer, Nicholas Koumjian (United States) as the head of the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar

- The Independent Investigative Mechanism (IIM) for Myanmar was established by the Human Rights Council on September 27, 2018 and welcomed by the UN General Assembly in December 2018.
- He will collect and analyse evidence that Myanmar perpetrated crimes against humanity against Rohingyas- the ethnic minority community, over the last eight years.

REPORT

✓ India and China together accounted for over 50% of the total 5 million deaths globally from air pollution in 2017
✓ As per the report, the life of a south Asian child born today will be shortened by 2 years and 6 months (over two years) growing up in current high levels of air pollution.
✓ In India, air pollution is the third highest cause of death among all health risks, ranking just above smoking
✓ In 2017, India recorded 673,000 deaths and China 852,000 deaths
✓ In 2017, exposure to PM 2.5 pollution was found to be the third leading risk factor globally for Type 2 diabetes
✓ In 2017, annual PM2.5 exposures were highest in South Asia, where Nepal, India, Bangladesh and Pakistan had the highest exposures.
✓ The 10 countries with the lowest national PM2.5 exposure levels were the Maldives, United States, Norway, Estonia, Iceland, Canada, Sweden, New Zealand, Brunei, and Finland.
✓ The report showed that India has taken several steps to address the pollution, which includes the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana Household LPG program, accelerated Bharat Stage 6/VI clean vehicle standards and the new National Clean Air Programme
TAMIL NADU

The Directorate of Technical Education (DOTE) - will conduct the annual ‘online’ engineering counseling this year

- Anna University has been conducting counselling for the last 22 years
- M K Surappa, vice-chancellor of Anna University resigned as chairman of Tamil Nadu Engineering Admissions (TNEA) committee following the differences over reconstitution of ‘TNEA committee’ in which DOTE commissioner R Vivekanandam was made co-chairman of the committee
- The TNEA committee was constituted in November 2017 for a period of three years.
- However, it was reconstituted after completing just one year with additional members leading to the confusion and subsequent withdrawal of the University from the counseling process
- The university was asked to provide technical help for conducting the ‘online’ counseling by the state higher education department

NATIONAL

United Arab Emirates (UAE) - honoured PM Narendra Modi with its highest decoration, Zayed Medal on April 4, 2019

- The honour was in recognition of his "pivotal role" in strengthening ties between the two nations.
- The Zayed Medal is the highest decoration of the UAE awarded to kings, presidents and heads of states.
- The previous recipients of the honour include Russian President Vladimir Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping, and Queen of the United Kingdom Elizabeth II
- Prime Minister Modi paid a visit to the nation in 2015 and in February 2018
Crown Prince of UAE visited India in 2017 as the Chief Guest for Republic Day celebrations in New Delhi. During the visits, both sides set an ambitious target of $100 billion in bilateral trade by the year 2020 against $50 billion in 2017. The UAE accounts for 8% of India’s oil imports and is the fifth largest supplier of crude oil to India. It is also a part of the International Solar Alliance (ISA), which is headquartered in Gurugram.

Whatsapp - launches a new feature which allows users to choose the groups they want to be part of by customising their privacy settings:
The new feature enables a user to decide who can add them to a group by choosing one of three options available in his/her account’s privacy settings — “nobody”, “my contacts” or “everyone”.
Earlier, WhatsApp allowed users to be added to groups without their consent and the only way to stop being a part of the said group was to “exit” it.
If users choose “nobody” in the privacy setting option, anyone inviting them to a group will have to send them an invitation link through private chat asking for their approval.
The link will expire in 72 hours, and a fresh approval request can be made after that.

Court Verdict:
The Madras high court - ordered a ban on mobile music app, TikTok on April 3.
A division bench of Justice N Kirubakaran and Justice S S Sundar issued an interim direction to the Union government to prohibit downloading of the app. It also prohibited the media from telecasting videos made with the mobile app, used to create and share short videos. Observing that pornography and inappropriate content were made available through TikTok, the judges said addiction to such apps was spoiling the future of the youth and the mindset of children. TikTok, originally known as Musical.ly, is an app created by a Chinese company in 2016. It has 500 million users worldwide, of which over 100 million are in India.

INTERNATIONAL

Chicago - created history by electing its first black female mayor, Lori Lightfoot

- African-American woman, Lori Lightfoot will also be Chicago's first openly gay mayor
- Lori Lightfoot is a former federal prosecutor and practicing lawyer

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) - announced to soon remove the practice of using cats in research work
- The use of cats involved forced “cannibalism” and resulted in killing of over 3000 cats since 1982, as per a report

The House of Commons of the British Parliament - approved a legislation to seek a delay in BREXIT before the April 12 deadline
- It was approved at the final stage by 313 votes to 312.
- It now has to pass the upper chamber, the House of Lords.
Isro - has formed a 12-member special task force headed by Srinivasan R K from UR Rao Satellite Centre - to address the anomaly during the lander drop test and submit a report to the centre’s director, Kunhikrishnan P

- The launch of Chandrayaan-2 is delayed at least until May as Vikram, the lander for India’s mission which installs a probe on the Moon, suffered minor damage to two of its four legs during a test late in February.
- The mission could take off only in the second half of the year after finding a suitable launch window.
- This mission, unlike Chandrayaan-1, involves a lander unloading a rover to study and take measurements on the Moon.

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

The NuGen Mobility Summit 2019 - will be held during November 27 – 29, 2019 at Manesar, National Capital Region

- It will be organised by the International Centre for Automotive Technology (ICAT) in association with SAE NIS, SAE INDIA, SAE International, NATRiP, DIMTS, Department of Heavy Industry under the Union Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises, Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) and Automotive Component Manufacturers Association of India (ACMA).
- The objective behind the Summit is to bring together all stakeholders in the automotive industry to understand global advancements in technologies.
- More than 2500 participants and over 250 exhibitors are expected to take part in the Summit.
Isro - to launch five military satellites this year that will enhance surveillance capabilities of the country

- Overall, it is scheduled to launch four new series Risat satellites and an advanced Cartosat-3 satellite
- In May, PSLV-C46 rocket will launch Risat-2B and then Risat-2BR1 will be launched in July, Risat-2BR2 in October and Risat-1A in November.
- In June-end, PSLVC47 will launch Cartosat-3
- Cartosat-3 is the advanced version with the capability to zoom up to a resolution of 0.2 metre, which is considered the best in the world.

Scientists at the Centre for Cellular & Molecular Biology - discovered a new enzyme called ‘scissors enzyme’

- The new enzyme helps in breaking cell walls of bacteria and hence, offers a potential for a new drug delivery route to arrest the anti-bacterial resistance
- Dr Manjula Reddy led the team at the Centre for Cellular & Molecular Biology
- Established on April 1, 1977, the Centre for Cellular & Molecular Biology (CCMB) is a premier research organization which conducts high quality basic research and trainings in areas of modern biology
- It is located in Hyderabad and operates under the aegis of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).
- It is designated as "Center of Excellence" by the Global Molecular and Cell Biology Network, UNESCO

ECONOMY

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) - released its First Bi-monthly Monetary Policy Statement 2019-20 on April 4, 2019

- The short-term lending rate, Repo rate under the liquidity adjustment facility (LAF) reduced by 25 basis points to 6% from 6.25% with immediate effect.
- Consequently, the reverse repo rate under the LAF stands adjusted to 5.75%
- The marginal standing facility (MSF) rate and the Bank Rate stand at 6.25%
- The government has mandated the Reserve Bank to keep inflation at 4% (+/-2%)
- It stands at 2.57% in February against a 19-month low of 1.97% in January
In the six member- Monetary Policy Committee, Dr. Chetan Ghate, Dr. Pami Dua, Dr. Michael Debabrata Patra, Dr. Viral V. Acharya and Shri Shaktikanta Das voted in favour of the decision to maintain the neutral stance of monetary policy.

Dr. Ravindra H. Dholakia voted to change the stance from neutral to accommodative.

The committee projected a GDP growth of 7.2% in the financial year 2019-20.

**AWARDS**

*The shallow water ROV or polar ROV (PROV), developed by National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT) – wins the National Meritorious Invention Award by National Research Development Corporation (NRDC), an enterprise of department of scientific and industrial research under the ministry*

- The 10-member team that was involved in the design and development of the ROV was awarded ₹3 lakh cash.
- It has helped Indian scientists conduct climate change studies in the Indian and polar regions.
- In Antarctica, the vehicle was deployed in Priyadarshini Lake on the Schirmacher Oasis, which is a source of water for ‘Maitri’, India’s second base in the icy continent.
It can also be deployed to conduct underwater inspections of desalination plants’ water intake structure for fouling, pipelines of oil and gas companies, videograph ship wrecks and for military applications.

NIOT have signed a non-exclusive MoU with L&T and BHEL to transfer the technology and commercially manufacture the ROV.

The ROV was operationalized in 2015 after it underwent successful trials in North Antarctica.

**SPORTS**

- **Divya Deshmukh, 13-year-old chess prodigy - is now world no. 1 in the under-14 girls’ category**

  **DIVYA’S METEORIC RISE**

  | Jan 2016 | 1,785 | YOUNG BLOOD |
  | Jan 2017 | 1,920 |
  | Jan 2018 | 2,118 |
  | Jan 2019 | 2,168 |
  | Feb 2019 | 2,127 |
  | Mar 2019 | 2,266 |
  | Apr 2019 | 2,432 |

  **INDIA’S TOP 3 WOMEN CHESS PLAYERS**

  1. Koneru Humpy, 2549 ELO (World No 5)
  2. Harika Dronavalli, 2492 ELO (World No 14)
  3. Divya Deshmukh, 2432 ELO (World No 43)

  - At 13 years and three months, Divya is youngest in India to cross the 2,400 ELO mark
  - 31-year-old Humpy, in Oct 2001, at the age of 14 years and three months touched 2400-mark, while Harika crossed the same when she was 16

- Within a year Humpty also became World’s youngest GM beating Judit Polgar’s previous mark by three months, which was broken by Chinese Hou Yifan in 2008.

- **India- bagged a total of seven gold, five silver and one bronze medal at the Asian Rowing Indoor Championship in Thailand**

  - India’s Parminder Singh bagged gold in the 2000m men’s single scull event, with an Asian indoor record as well.
  - Parminder was also part of another indoor record, when he and teammate Balwinder Singh clocked 6.14m to win the gold in the double scull event.
  - Last year, India won one gold, seven silver and four bronze at the Indoor championships.
  - The other gold medallists were Shagandeep Singh, Avinash Kaur, Pratik Gupta, and Mrunmayee Nilesh Salgaonkar.
The Global Burden of Disease Study 2017 - published by Lancet

- The study estimates that one in five deaths globally, equivalent to 11 million deaths, are associated with poor diet.
- High intake of sodium (3 million deaths), low intake of whole grains (3 million deaths) and low intake of fruits (2 million deaths) were the main dietary risk factors leading to half of all diet-related deaths in many countries in 2017.
- The causes of these deaths included 10 million deaths from cardiovascular disease, 913,000 cancer deaths, and almost 339,000 deaths from type-2 diabetes.
- Low intake of whole grains was the leading dietary risk factor for deaths in the USA, India, Brazil, Pakistan, Nigeria, Russia, Egypt, Germany, Iran, and Turkey.
- High intake of sodium was the leading dietary risk for deaths in China, Japan, and Thailand.
- Low intake of whole grains was the leading risk for deaths among young adults (aged 25–50 years) and sodium ranked first among older adults.
- Sodium ranked first for mortality among men followed by whole grains and fruit.
- Global Burden of Disease study was prepared with 15 dietary factors collected from 195 countries.
TAMIL NADU

Power demand in the state - has crossed 16,000MW for the first time

- It touched 16,151MW on the evening of April 3, surpassing the previous high of 15,847MW registered on March 13.
- As per Tangedco, the increased demand was mainly from domestic users, due to the increasing temperature.
- In cities like Chennai, Coimbatore and Trichy, many multi-storey buildings have come up and the power load in these areas was rather high.
- The other states which normally witness such high demand include Maharashtra, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh.
The Archaeological Survey of India – informed the Madurai bench of Madras high court that the sample artifacts from Adichanallur in Tuticorin district were about 2,900 years old

A division bench of Justices N Kirubakaran and S S Sundar noted the results to prove Adichanallur was the earliest ancient site in the state.

As per the Carbon dating results, samples from one of the urns was aged between 696BC and 540 BC (2,645-2,489 years), 791BC and 701 BC (2,740-2,650 years) and a sample from another urn was aged between 905BC and 806 BC (2,854-2,755 years).

After recording the submissions, the court directed ASI to have a police outpost at the site to prevent any damage.

The court had directed the ASI to send two sets of samples taken in 2003 at Adichanallur for to Beta Analytic Testing laboratory in Miami in the US and to Kalina Campus, University of Mumbai to ascertain their exact period.

Kodaikanal Hill garlic – gets the Geographical Indication (GI) tag

- It is known for its medicinal and storage properties.
- It has an extended storage life period of 8 to 11 months unlike other garlic varieties, because the cloves of the garlic do not get separated for months.
- The uniqueness of the product also lies in the specialty of the soil.
- The Application has been filed in June, 2018 by Department of Biotechnology, Mother Teresa Women’s University and Tamil Nadu State Council for Science and Technology.

State Election Commissioner, Malik Feroze Khan – retired recently after completing two years in office

- He assumed charge as the State Election commissioner on April 8, 2017, when he was 63 years old.
- Khan superannuated from IAS service on March 31, 2004 after attaining 60 years of age.
- The new Election commissioner for the state is expected to be announced after the completion of Lok Sabha elections in April 2019.
The Union Government - issues latest FAME2 notifications with clarifications on March 28

- As per the new guidelines, the Government subsidy will be available for electric/hybrid cars only if they are less than ₹15 lakh in price and used as taxis.
- The specifications also stipulates a battery power (15 kilowatt hour/100 km), a range cut off (140 km) and a top speed specification of 70km/hour to avail the subsidies.
- This effectively keeps out not only mass market electric cars but even luxury/premium vehicles being planned for the Indian market.

India’s first earth museum, TIME (The Indian Museum of Earth) – will be set up in the National Capital Region (NCR) soon

- The project is being envisaged as a public-private partnership venture with significant philanthropic and CSR (Corporate social responsibility) contributions.
- The project is expected to be launched before the 36th International Geological Congress which will be hosted by India in March next year.
- Regarding the modalities, Indian scientists are holding discussions with international experts from the USA, United Kingdom and South Korea at the Indian National Science Academy (INSA) in New Delhi.
- The proposal to build TIMES was first discussed and endorsed by the Prime Minister’s Science, Technology & Innovation Advisory Council in its meeting in January.
The Union government - sold over ₹1,100 crore worth of Wipro’s ‘enemy shares’ on April 4

- This is the first sale, which became possible following an amendment to the ‘Enemy Property Act in 2017’ to ensure that successors of those who migrated to Pakistan and China during partition would have no claim over the properties left behind in India.
- A majority of shares valued at Rs 3.9 crore was bought by the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC).
- The shares, belonging to two Pakistani nationals, were seized by India under the Enemy Property Act passed in 1968, following the conflicts with Pakistan and China in the 1960s.
- They were lying with the home ministry's Custodian of Enemy Property of India (CEPI).
- Totally, around 6.5 crore shares in 996 companies of 20,323 shareholders are under the custody of CEPI.
- Of these 996 companies, 588 are functional/active companies, and 139 of these are listed.

Indian expat, Ravindra Boloor - is announced as the winner in the latest draw of Big Ticket Abu Dhabi, for a mammoth Dh10 million prize in cash (Rs 18.64 crores)

- The Big Ticket draw was held at the Abu Dhabi Airport arrivals hall.
- Ravindra is currently travelling in his home country and he will be back at Abu Dhabi later this month to claim the prize.
- Last month’s winner is also an Indian national, Rogy George, who hit the Dh12 million jackpot.

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

The 7th Foreign Office consultations between India and Italy - were held in New Delhi on April 4, 2019

- The Indian side was led by A. Gitesh Sarma, Secretary (West), Ministry of External Affairs.
- The consultations provided an opportunity to review the follow-up actions taken after the visit of Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte in October 2018.
PERSONALITIES

✦ Bollywood Actor, Shah Rukh Khan - received honorary doctorate in Philanthropy from The University of Law, London on April 4

✓ He has earlier been honoured with honorary doctorates from The University of Bedfordshire and The University of Edinburgh
✓ Shah Rukh Khan owns Red Chillies Entertainment, and Redchillies VFX and Colour
✓ He is also the co-owner of a global sports franchise titled ‘Knight Riders’ with cricket teams across India, South Africa, and the Caribbean.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

✦ The world’s first largely private lunar mission, spacecraft Beresheet – enters into lunar orbit on April 4, ahead of scheduled landing on April 11

✓ It was launched by Israel’s Space IL agency
✓ Beresheet fired its engine for six minutes which reduced its velocity from 8,500 kmph to 7,500 kmph, slowing down enough to be captured by the moon’s gravity.
✓ The spacecraft is now positioned on an elliptical orbit around the moon with the closest point being 400 kms from the lunar surface, and the farthest being 10,000 kms.
✓ The manoeuvre has been accomplished successfully by only five nations so far— the US, the former Soviet Union, China, Japan and India.
✓ A joint venture of nonprofit Space IL and Israeli Aerospace Industries, Beresheet —Genesis in Hebrew — is also the smallest spacecraft in history to have entered the moon’s orbit.
**ECONOMY**

- The RBI - has shelved indefinitely its ‘External benchmark plan’- to get banks to link their lending rates to an external benchmark like the repo rate or the government treasury bill rate.
  - Banks are understood to have opposed an external benchmark proposal as often the repo rate or the treasury bill rate were not indicative of their cost of funds
  - SBI is the only lender to have made a move towards linking its deposits to an external benchmark.
  - From May 1, SBI’s savings bank deposits above Rs1 lakh and short-term loans are linked to the repo rate.
  - This means that every time the RBI cuts the repo rate, the deposit rate will come down.
  - The decision to move pricing to an external benchmark was taken by former RBI governor Urjit Patel based on the recommendations of the central bank’s internal committee headed by Janak Raj, principal adviser in the monetary policy department
TAMIL NADU

Two more metro rail stations at Nanganallur Road and Meenambakkam - to run on solar power after the commissioning of two 428KWp capacity plants

- The solar plants, with a capacity to generate around 57,780 units per month, are expected to save Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) around Rs 26.34 lakh per year.
- So far, CMRL has a total installed capacity of 4.1MWp solar power including those installed at its head office in Koyambedu and a few other metro stations
- Solar photovoltaic panels with a capacity of 103KWp have been commissioned at four metro underground stations — Thirumangalam, Anna Nagar East, Anna Nagar Tower and Shenoy Nagar

Indian Institute of Technology, Madras - has established a 'Cold Spray' SMART (Surface Modification and Additive Research Technologies) Laboratory in collaboration with General Electric (GE)

- This is the first of its kind High-Pressure Cold Spray (HPCS) facility being installed in any academic institute in India.
- The laboratory consists of state-of-the-art High-Pressure Cold Spray (HPCS) equipment imported from Plasma Giken, Japan
The project is funded under ‘Uchchatar Avishkar Yojana’ (UAY) of the Government of India, which is intended to boost collaboration between academia and private sector.

The Ministry of Human Resources Development, Government of India, was the key investor along with the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India, IIT Madras, and GE.

Cold spray technology is different from other widely used thermal spray processes in that there is no melting and oxidation of powders leading to high-quality coatings with less powder wastage.

This technology avoids the distortion and stresses leading to longer asset life.

**NATIONAL**

**Bharti Airtel - has got the licence to provide inflight connectivity for on-board Internet in Indian airspace**

- The Department of Telecom (DoT) has issued Indo Teleports Limited (ITL), a subsidiary of Airtel, the inflight and maritime connectivity service provider licence.
- State-run BSNL has also been granted the licence for the service along with its partner Inmarsat, a leading global mobile satellite communications player.
- Airlines that have on board WiFi let passengers surf, tweet, send text or WhatsApp message on their personal electronic devices at reasonably fast speeds in good connectivity zones.
- Inflight WiFi connectivity is subject to factors like the number of concurrent users, satellite coverage, and weather conditions.

**The government - released new income tax return forms on April 5**

- It seek more disclosures from those who claim exemption on a large agricultural income, directors on the boards of companies, individuals with foreign assets or bank accounts as well as those holding shares in unlisted companies.
- In a major change, the facility of filing paper returns will now be available only to those over 80 years.
- The ITR-1 or the Sahaj form will have to be filed by resident individuals with a total income of up to Rs 50 lakh from salary or pension, one house property, other sources such as interest income, and agricultural income up to Rs 5,000.
- For the salaried, details of some of the allowances, such as house rent, leave travel, children’s education and relocation too, will need to be shared.
- Earlier the tax authorities had sought details of taxable allowances but now there is a switch to exempt allowances.
- In the new format, additional details need to be provided in case agricultural income exceeds Rs 5 lakh, which will include the district with pin code where the land is owned, the measurement of land and irrigation details.
Those with overseas assets will need to provide details of foreign depository account, foreign custodian accounts, equity and debt interest and particulars of overseas cash value insurance contract or annuity contract.

Individuals are required to file their returns for FY2018-19 by July 31.

**PERSONALITIES**

**Kanishak Kataria - a dalit and graduate from IIT Bombay, has topped the Civil Services Examination 2018 in his very first attempt**

This is the second instance in four years of a dalit topping in one of the most intense competitive exams, with Tina Dabi achieving the feat in 2015

Kataria was employed with Samsung in South Korea and also Bengaluru.

Akshat Jain, a graduate from IIT Guwahati, got the second rank, while Junaid Ahmad of Jamia Millia Islamia’s Residential Coaching Academy placed third.

Srushti Deshmukh, an engineer from Rajiv Gandhi Proudhyogiki Vishwavidyalaya, is the topper among women with an overall fifth rank.

The top 25 candidates comprise 15 men and 10 women.

In all, 759 candidates — 577 men and 182 women — have been recommended for appointment to various all-India services like IAS and IPS.

The recommended candidates also include 36 people with benchmark disability (11 orthopedically handicapped; 12 visually challenged, 11 hearing impaired and two multiple disability)

From Tamil Nadu, only 39 candidates have been selected in one of the lowest performances by aspirants in the state in the last 10 years

Rishab C A of Madurantakam in Kancheepuram district, who was ranked 23rd, had topped the state, followed by Renjina Mary Varghese with 49th rank and V Abhishek, an engineer from Chennai, with the 79th rank.

Rishab, a 26-year-old former software engineer with Infosys had cracked the prestigious exam in his third attempt.

Fourty-two candidates from Tamil Nadu had cleared the exam last year among the overall 990 selected.

Sreedhanya Suresh from Wayanad became the first woman from a tribal community in Kerala to clear the civil services examination after she was ranked 410 in the overall list.
Japanese space probe, Hayabusa2 - successfully blasted the surface of asteroid Ryugu by dropping ‘bombs’ for the first time to form a crater

- The explosion paves the way for the collection of underground samples for possible clues to the origin of the solar system
- The mission was the riskiest for Hayabusa2 because it had to immediately move away so it wouldn’t get hit by flying shards from the blast.
- As per the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency or JAXA, Hayabusa2 dropped a small explosive box which sent a copper ball the size of a baseball slamming into the asteroid

ECONOMY

In a first-of-its-kind, markets regulator SEBI (Securities and Exchange Board of India) - has approved an ‘Airport’ specific fund called ‘Taking Off To The Future Airport Fund’

- Aiming to raise a capital of up to Rs 10,000 crore ($1.5 billion), it has been approved by SEBI as a ‘Category II Alternative Investment Fund’ (AIF)
- Chennai-based ‘Taking Off To The Future Investment Management LLP’ is the sponsor and the investment manager of the fund.
- The management and operation of ‘Sponsor/Investment Manager’ is led by its designated partner Gigi George.
- George currently serves as the managing director of ‘Taking Off To The Future Private Limited’, an infrastructure company that has a presence in the airport sector.
George is planning to develop Chennai’s second airport on 3,500 acres of land at Mamandur, about 80 kms south of the city.

The fund is targeting a minimum capital contribution of Rs 3,500 crore and a maximum capital contribution of Rs 7,000 crore.

The fund would typically target individual investments between Rs 50 crore and Rs 2,000 crore.

**Indiabulls Housing Finance (IBHFL) - to merge south-based Lakshmi Vilas Bank (LVB) with itself through a share-swap deal**

This will form a new bank with assets of nearly Rs 1.25 lakh crore and a market capitalisation of over Rs 41,000 crore.

As per the new deal, for every 100 LVB shares, shareholders will get 14 shares of the merged entity.

The next step for the merger to complete is the approval of the shareholders of the two entities by 2/3rds majority.

After that, both will need to obtain approvals from RBI, Competition Commission of India, Sebi and the bourses.

The proposal will then need an approval from NCLT and then a final nod from the central bank.

The proposed new entity will be named ‘Indiabulls Lakshmi Vilas Bank’ with Sameer Gehlaut, the current chairman of IBHFL, taking over as its vice-chairman.

Gagan Banga, currently VC & MD of the housing finance company, and Parthasarathi Mukherjee, current MD of the bank, will become the joint MDs.

It will have its headquarters at Mumbai.

Once complete, the IBHFL-LVB merger will be the fourth such deal between a bank and an NBFC in the last 18 months.

In October 2017, IndusInd Bank had announced it would be merge Bharat Financial Inclusion with itself.
In January 2018, IDFC Bank and Capital First announced a merger, while in January this year Bandhan Bank announced merger of Gruh Finance with itself.

IBHFL, one of the fastest growing mortgage loan companies in India, was established 20 years ago and has a strong presence in the northern and western parts of India.

LVB was started by a group of seven progressive businessmen of Karur under the leadership of V S N Ramalinga Chettiar in 1926 to cater to the financial needs of the people in and around the Karur, who were occupied in trading businesses, industry and agriculture.

In 2014, the headquarters was shifted to Chennai from Karur.

After five straight quarters of losses, unable to raise capital to fund its activities, LVB was struggling to stand on its own.

In the merged entity, current shareholders of IBHFL will own 90.5% while the shareholders of LVB will hold the balance 9.5%.

**APPOINTMENTS**

David Malpass - was selected as the 13th President of the World Bank for a five year term beginning April 9

63-year-old Malpass is currently Under Secretary of Treasury for International Affairs.

All 13 presidents of the of the development lender have been American men.

The World Bank President is Chair of Boards of Directors of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and International Development Association (IDA).

The President is also ex officio Chair of Boards of Directors of the International Finance Corporation (IFC), Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), and the Administrative Council of the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID).
United Kingdom – had announced the appointment of a new media freedom champion in human rights lawyer, Amal Clooney

- The new profile intends to counter draconian laws that hinder journalists from going about their work
- Amal takes over as the UK foreign secretary’s special envoy on media freedom and co-chair of a high-level panel of legal experts.
Tamil Nadu government - renamed Chennai railway station as Puratchi Thalaivar Dr M G Ramachandran Central Railway Station on April 5

- After obtaining the clearances from the Centre, the order was issued by the State chief secretary Girija Vaidyanathan on the conditional approval of the Election Commission with riders — no propaganda shall be undertaken by any political party to derive political mileage from it and no function shall be organised for the event.
- The Union Home ministry cleared the name change on March 6.
- The Railway Board received the election commission’s clearance on March 20 and it had conveyed its clearance to the TN government on March 26.
- The state cabinet had passed a resolution in September last year, recommending the Centre to rename the station on the sidelines of the former chief minister’s centenary celebrations.
- Prime Minister, Modi, while participating in the election rally at Kilambakkam on March 6, announced the decision to rename the station.
Sri Ramachandra Medical Centre in Chennai - has got the approval of Atomic Energy Regulatory Board - to use high-dose isotope therapy to test treatments for thyroid and neuro-endocrine cancers

- The centre has been providing nuclear scans and low-dose isotope therapies since 1995
- Isotopes are radioactive material that can kill the cancer cells, but AERB regulates the safe usage of these

The Directorate of Medical Education - has formed a committee to inspect blood banks in Dharmapuri and Krishnagiri districts, following reports of deaths due to “haemolytic reactions”, that is, related to blood transfusion

- The panel will inspect at the Government Dharmapuri Medical College Hospital and government hospitals in Krishnagiri and Hosur
- It would comprise an Additional Director of Medical and Rural Health Services and two transfusion specialists
- The committee will submit its report this month itself.

NATIONAL

The screening of the World’s longest ever biographical documentary film - began in Thiruvalla, Kerala

- Titled ‘100 years of Chrysostom’, made by the award-winning filmmaker Blessy, is soon to find a place in the Guinness World Records
- For the first time in its history, the Censor Board has given certification to a 48.08-hour biographical documentary and it took seven days for the board to watch the movie in its full length
INTERNATIONAL

◆ U.S. - to designate Iran’s elite ‘Revolutionary Guards Corps’ a foreign terrorist organization
  ✓ This is the first time US has formally labelled another country’s military a terrorist group.
  ✓ The U.S. has already blacklisted dozens of entities and people for affiliations with the IRGC, but the organisation as a whole has not been blacklisted
  ✓ In 2007, the U.S. Treasury designated the IRGC’s Quds Force, its unit in charge of operations abroad, “for its support of terrorism”

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

◆ The Nepal-India Franchise Investment Expo and Conclave - to be held during May 15-16, 2019 in Kathmandu
  ✓ It will be organised by the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FNCCI) in association with Embassy of India and Franchise India.
  ✓ It is expected to introduce new investment opportunities for Nepalese investors in Indian market along with technology transfers and business knowledge

PERSONALITIES

◆ 73-year-old Israeli Isaak Hayik - set a new world record as the oldest person to play in a professional soccer match
  ✓ Mr. Hayik, who celebrates his 74th birthday next week, broke the record after playing as a goalkeeper in an afternoon game with Israel’s Ironi Or Yehuda soccer club.
  ✓ The previous record was held by Robert Carmona of Uruguay, who in 2015 played a professional match with Uruguay’s Pan de Azucar at the age of 53
Amazon - is planning to set up a network of 3,236 satellites - to provide a high-speed broadband internet service from space

- The project is titled ‘Project Kuiper’, announced in September 2018
- It is a new initiative to launch a constellation of low Earth orbit satellites that will provide low latency, high-speed broadband connectivity to unserved and underserved communities around the world
- The constellation is planned as a network of 784 satellites at the lowest altitude (590 kilometres), 1,296 satellites at the next-highest altitude (610 kilometres) and the remaining 1,156 floating at the highest (630 kilometres) orbit above the Earth
- Project Kuiper gets its name from the Edgeworth–Kuiper belt, or simply Kuiper belt, which is a region of the solar system that exists beyond the eight major planets, containing many comets, asteroids, and other small bodies
- It was discovered by the late Dutch American astronomer, Gerard Kuiper

Scientists - are expected to unveil the first-ever photograph of a black hole on April 10

- As a breakthrough in astrophysics, it will provide insight into celestial monsters with gravitational fields so intense that no matter or light can escape
- The U.S. National Science Foundation has scheduled a news conference in Washington to announce a “groundbreaking result from the Event Horizon Telescope (EHT) project,” an international partnership formed in 2012, to try to directly observe the immediate environment of a black hole.
- A black hole’s event horizon, one of the most violent places in the universe, is the point of no return beyond which anything — stars, planets, gas, dust, all forms of electromagnetic radiation including light — gets sucked-in irretrievably
The research will put to the test a scientific pillar — physicist Albert Einstein’s theory of general relativity postulated in 1915, which intended to explain the laws of gravity and their relation to other natural forces.

The researchers targeted two super massive black holes.

The first — called Sagittarius A* — is situated at the centre of our own Milky Way galaxy, possessing 4 million times the mass of our sun and located 26,000 light years from the earth.

The second — called M87 - resides at the centre of the neighbouring Virgo A galaxy, boasting a mass 3.5 billion times that of the sun and located 54 million light-years away from the earth.

A light year is the distance light travels in a year, 9.5 trillion km.

Black holes are extraordinarily dense entities formed when very massive stars collapse at the end of their life cycle.

Supermassive black holes are the largest kind, destroying matter and radiation and perhaps merging with other black holes.

ECONOMY

The Indian Navy - signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) - to undertake joint research and development of advanced technologies for the Indian Navy

Under the agreement, joint research and development activities will be undertaken in the diverse fields of Mechanical, Electronics, Communication, Computer Science, Propulsion systems, Metallurgy and Nanotechnology.

Some of the immediate projects to be progressed under this MoU include development of alternative desalination technologies, installation of wireless MEMS based sensors for remote operation and residual life assessment studies of gas turbine generator blades to improve reliability
APPOINTMENTS

♦ Vikram Kirloskar - took charge as the new President of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)

Kirloskar is the Chairman and Managing Director of Kirloskar Systems Ltd and Vice Chairman of Toyota Kirloskar Motor.
He succeeds Rakesh Bharti Mittal, who is the Vice Chairman of Bharti Enterprises.
Uday Kotak, founder and MD and CEO of Kotak Mahindra Bank will be the President-Designate, while TV Narendran, the CEO and MD of Tata Steel will be the Vice President for the period 2019-20.

AWARDS

♦ 2nd edition of ESPN India Multi-Sport Awards – Winners

Sportsperson of the Year (Male) – Neeraj Chopra (Athletics)
Sportsperson of the Year (Female) – P V Sindhu (Badminton)
Comeback of the Year – Saina Nehwal (Badminton)
Coach of the Year – Jaspal Rana (Shooting)
Emerging Sportsperson of the Year – Saurabh Chaudhary (Shooting)
Team of the Year – Women’s team (Table tennis)
Match of the Year – Amit Panghal vs Hasanboy Dusmatov (Boxing)
Differently-abled athlete of the Year – Ekta Bhyan (Para-athletics)
Moment of the Year – Women’s 4x400m relay
Lifetime Achievement Award – Pradip Kumar Banerjee (Football)
The ESPN Multi-Sport Awards recognised achievements across 11 categories, of which winners across 10 categories were selected by an independent 14-member jury

OBITUARY

Silamboli S Chellappan, Tamil scholar and Orator (91 years)

He was born on September 24, 1928 at Siviyampalayam village near Namakkal
The late Tamil scholar Ra Pi Sethupillai hailed him as ‘Silamboli Chellappan’ after listening to his speech in 1953, as his discourses on Tamil epic Silappathikaram were well known
Souvenirs for World Tamil Conferences at Chennai and Madurai and the souvenir for ‘World Semmozhi Conference’ at Coimbatore were prepared under his supervision.
He also served as Director of Tamil Nadu government’s Tamil development department and Director of publications, department of Tamil University in Thanjavur.
He was also the founder-director of World Tamil Research Centre
Silapathikara Sinthanaigal, Sanga Ilakiya Thaen, Manimegalai Thelivurai, Silamboli, Perunkadhai Araichi and Semmozhi Thamizh Agapporul Kalanjiam were among the notable books authored by the Tamil scholar.

A recipient of the Pavendar Bharathidasan award of the Tamilnadu government, his book ‘Silamboliyarin Anindhuraigal’ won the best research book award for 2006 from the Tamil Development Department.

He was well-versed in several Tamil classics including Pathupattu, Ettuthogai, Manimekalai, Perunkadhai, Seerapuranam, Ravana Kavium and lectured regularly on these topics.

Mr. Chellappan helped former Chief Minister Mr. Karunanidhi pen the script for the film Ponnar Sankar.

SPORTS

Former civil aviation minister, Praful Patel – becomes the first Indian to win one of the five seats on Fifa’s ruling council on April 6 – for a four year term.

Patel is the current president of the All India Football Federation (AIFF) and senior vice-president of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC).

He polled joint highest votes of 38 out of 46, along with Japan Football Association president, Kozo Tashima, during the elections at the AFC Congress in Kuala Lumpur.

Besides Patel and Tashima, Saoud Al Mohannadi (Qatar), Du Zhaocai (China) and Mariano V Areneta (Philippines) secured the simple majority after one round of voting.

The Fifa Council is a 37-member- nonexecutive, supervisory and strategic decision making body that sets the vision for Fifa and global football.

Apart from the president, there are eight vice presidents and 28 members elected by the member associations in the Fifa council.

Patel took over as full-time AIFF president in October 2009 before being re-elected for the top job in December 2012 and 2016.

Former AIFF president Priyaranjan Dasmunsi was once elected to the technical committee of FIFA.
FIFA world football rankings – released on April, 04 2019

Top 20 countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>up 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>down 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Uruguay</td>
<td>up 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>down 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>up 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>down 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>down 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>up 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>down 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- India stands at 101st rank while Belgium tops the list.
- India rose two points to remain at 101th spot and stands at 18th in Asia
- Iran (21st) remained at the top of Asian ranking while Japan (26), South Korea (37), Australia (41) and Qatar (55) are other achievers
- San Marino remain the lowest ranked team in the world in 211th place
INTERNATIONAL DAY

♦ World Health Day 2019 – April 7

- The observance of the day is an initiative by the World Health Organisation (WHO) to make people more aware of health issues
- The World Health Assembly took place for the first time on April 7 in 1948 at Geneva
- World Health Day is commemorated every year on this date because this was when WHO was founded to address vital health care issues and provide equal health care facilities all over the world
- Theme 2019 – ‘Universal Health Coverage: Everyone, Everywhere’
- WHO is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland

♦ National maritime day – April 5

- Theme 2019 - “Indian Ocean – An Ocean of opportunity”
- The day was first observed on April 5, 1964 to create awareness about maritime commerce between the continents across the world
- The World Maritime Day is celebrated on September 26 every year to highlight the importance of shipping, maritime security and environment
ADB has cut India’s growth forecast to 7.2% for 2019-20 and 7.3% for 2020-21 because of a slower-than-expected pickup in investment demand.

On inflation, the report said that consumer price inflation is expected to rise to 4.3% in the financial year 2019, and 4.6% in the following one, as food costs increase slightly and domestic demand strengthens.

Growth in developing Asia is projected to drop down to 5.7% in 2019 and 5.6% in 2020.

Excluding Asia’s high-income newly industrialized economies, growth is expected to slip from 6.4% in 2018 to 6.2% in 2019 and 6.1% in 2020.
TAMIL NADU

- Radha, a transgender – is the only transsexual to contest the Lok Sabha elections in Tamil Nadu

- The 50-year old is contesting from south Chennai constituency as an independent candidate
- As per Election Commission, 5472 voters in the state have registered under the third gender category.
- In the entire country, as per 2011 census, there are 4.9 lakh transsexuals present

STATES

- Nagaland – observes the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Kohima

- The Battle of Kohima was fought in three stages from 3 April to 22 June, 1944 around the town of Kohima in Nagaland in northeast India
- It is considered as the turning point of the Japanese ‘U Go offensive’ or ‘Operation C mission’ launched in India in 1944 during the Second World War
- The battle is often referred to as the “Stalingrad of the East”
- It started when the Japanese attempted to capture Kohima ridge, a road which supplied British and Indian troops and ended after a stiff fight forced the Japanese to retreat, leading to the opening of the road
The Jammu and Kashmir Government – had enforced an order that allows only security forces convoys to move between Baramulla and Jammu on Sundays and Wednesdays till May 31

✓ The order on the restrictions to the civilian traffic was notified four days ago following the Pulwama terror strike and the abortive attack on a CRPF convoy at Banihal on March 30
✓ The ban on civilian traffic is effective along the 271-km Baramulla to Udhampur national highway, which goes through Srinagar, Qazigund, Jawahar tunnel, Banihal and Ramban
✓ The state Government had also announced several relaxations on the ban like allowing patients, students and tourists to ply their vehicles along with the convoys

The Government of Goa – extends the retirement age for doctors working in its institutions from 60 to 62
✓ Doctors working in ESI hospitals, Goa Medical College and Hospital besides various other government institutions would benefit from the order

NATIONAL

‘Café Scientifique’ – to be launched in Kerala by a group of science experts from the ‘Hume Centre for Ecology and Wildlife Biology’

✓ The new initiative intends to promote science among the public in an interesting way
✓ It is basically a grassroots public science initiative based on the French Café Philosophique model
✓ Under Café Scientifique model, meetings of science enthusiasts would be organised every month at a café or a convenient place, where one or more scientists are invited to talk to the public about new developmental areas in science
✓ Various topics such as the universe, climate change, evolution, genetics and human-animal relations will be discussed in every monthly gathering
India - has evacuated its entire contingent of peacekeeping forces from Libya - following the worsening of war-hit country’s political situation

- The battalion of 15 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel from Tripoli will be evacuated immediately
- The Libyan National Army headed by Khalifa Haftar advancing on the nation’s capital, Tripoli leading to the military conflict
- Libya has been torn by violence and political instability since long-time ruler Muammar Gaddafi was toppled and killed by rebels in 2011

SUPREME COURT VERDICT

- Supreme Court - directed the Election Commission of India (ECI) to increase the random checking of VVPAT slips from 1 EVM to 5 EVMs in each assembly of a parliamentary constituency in Lok Sabha Elections 2019
  - The bench headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and comprising Justices Deepak Gupta and Sanjiv Khanna said that the objective behind the move is to ensure a higher degree of accuracy and conduct free and fair elections
  - The Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trails (VVPAT) is a paper slip generated by the Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) every time a voter casts his vote, recording the party to whom the vote was made.

INTERNATIONAL

- Former Maldives president, Mohamed Nasheed – makes comeback with a landslide win
  - Preliminary results from April 6 elections showed the Maldivian Democratic Party of President Ibrahim Solih winning nearly 60 seats, and securing a two-thirds majority in the 87-member assembly.
  - Nasheed's arch-rival and autocratic former president Abdulla Yameen did not run, but his party -- the Progressive Party of Maldives -- ended with a poor showing and is projected to only secure four seats in the People's Majlis, or parliament.
  - An executive presidential system was adopted under political reforms in 2008, when the dictator Maumoon Abdul Gayoom stood down after 30 years in power.
Nasheed was sentenced to 13 years prison in 2015 but left Maldives a year later, after being granted prison leave for medical treatment in the UK.

Mr. Nasheed returned to the Maldives only after his party colleague Mr. Solih became President last year.

The charges against Nasheed were dropped by the Supreme Court after Solih toppled Yameen, with judges saying there was no basis for the charges.

**US House of Representatives - has voted to end US involvement in Yemen’s civil war**
- The resolution directs the US President to remove US Armed Forces from the Republic of Yemen within 30 days
- The resolution rejects the US President’s support for the Saudi-led campaign in Yemen

**INDIA AND NEIGHBOURS**

India – has turned down an official invite from China to attend the second Belt and Road Forum meet, scheduled to take place later this month

- India had also boycotted the first meet held in Beijing in 2017 as China’s BRI undermines India’s sovereignty in the form of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor which passes through the disputed Gilgit-Baltistan region

**COMMITTEES**

The Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) – constitutes a three-member sub-committee to study the issues behind the Kattupalli port expansion project in Tiruvallur district

- The EAC, constituted by the ministry of environment, forest and climate change, has deferred the proposal until the recommendations of the committee is received, following representations from various groups regarding the site selection, economic feasibility and ecological impact of the project
- The three-member committee comprises of H C Sharatchandra, V S Naidu and M V Ramana Murthy
- The EAC had also asked to get a fresh ‘environmental and coastal regulation zone’ clearance certificate for the establishment of a captive jetty for ultra mega power project in Panayur village in Kanchipuram district
- The Union ministry had issued the earlier environmental clearance for this project on November 30, 2012
CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

❖ The biannual Army Commanders’ Conference 2019 – commences in New Delhi between April 8 to April 14, 2019

❖ The opening address of the Conference was delivered by the Defence Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman.
❖ It will be chaired by General Bipin Rawat, Chief of the Army Staff.
❖ The conference is an important event in formulating planning and execution policy decisions of the Indian Army through collegiate deliberations.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

❖ Scientists from the Centre for Cellular & Molecular Biology - have discovered a new enzyme ‘Murein EndopeptidaseK’ that helps in breaking cell walls of bacteria

❖ This discovery offers the potential for a new drug delivery system to arrest the anti-bacterial resistance through existing antibiotic drugs
❖ CCMB, a designated “Center of Excellence” by the Global Molecular and Cell Biology Network, UNESCO, operates in Hyderabad under the purview of Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)

❖ The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) - signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi - to collaborate in the field of standardisation and conformity assessment for a period of five years

❖ BIS and IIT-Delhi will be setting up a Centre of Excellence in the field of Standardisation, Testing and Conformity Assessment with the BIS branding at IIT-Delhi campus
❖ IIT-Delhi will also introduce topics on standardisation in its academic courses for which BIS will provide inputs
❖ Around 50 faculty members of IIT-Delhi are also part of the technical committees of BIS
❖ IIT-Delhi will also explore the possibility of using its laboratory facilities for catering to the requirements of various conformity assessment schemes of BIS
**NASA’s Parker solar probe – successfully completes its second close approach called ‘perihelion’ to the Sun at about 24 million kms above the surface of the Sun**

- The probe was travelling at 2,13,200 miles per hour during this perihelion and is now entering the outbound phase of its second solar orbit
- The probe was launched on August 12, 2018
- It will journey steadily closer to the sun until it makes its closest approach at 3.8 million miles

**DEFENCE**

**The Indian Army - received its first batch of Dhanush artillery guns on April 8, 2019 at a formal function organised at GCF, Jabalpur**

- The 155x45mm gun is the first ever indigenous artillery gun of this caliber
- It has been designed and developed by the Ordnance Factory Board at the Gun Carriage Factory at Jabalpur based on the Bofor's drawings
- The OFB had received the bulk production clearance of manufacturing of 114 guns on February 18, among which six have been handed over for issuance to the Indian Army.

**Indian Army - is planning to use a modified version of the AK-203 assault rifle in carbine role - for its troops deployed during counter-insurgency operations in Jammu and Kashmir.**

- The AK-203 assault rifle would be manufactured at Uttar Pradesh's Amethi facility in a joint venture between the Ordnance Factory Board and Russia.
- The carbines are useful in close quarter combat and can be highly effective during operations like room interventions.
AWARDS

❖ Vice President Venkaiah Naidu - conferred President’s Certificate of Honour and Maharshi Badrayan Vyas Samman Awards at New Delhi

✓ The President’s Certificate of Honour was introduced in the year 1958 to honour the eminent scholars above 60 years of age in Sanskrit, Arabic, Pali/Prakrit, Persian, Classical Odiya, Classical Kannada, Classical Telugu, Classical Tamil and Classical Malayalam Languages
✓ Maharshi Badrayan Vyas Samman distinction is conferred on persons in the age group of 30 to 45 for their notable contribution in the languages of Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic, Pali, Prakrit, Classical Odiya, Classical Kannada, Classical Telugu and Classical Malayalam, since 2002
✓ Both the awards are conferred by the Ministry of Human Resources and Development, Government of India
Tamil Nadu

Chennai’s Presidency college – ranked third in the NIRF 2019 rankings

- It is ranked next only to two Delhi colleges, Miranda House and Hindu College
- It had got good rankings in research and professional practices parameter along with teaching and learning resources
- Chennai’s Loyola college was also ranked within top 10, as it bagged the 6th position
- Anna University had slipped from fourth place to seventh in the university category and from tenth to fourteenth in the overall category
- It is ranked sixth among institutes offering architecture and 43rd among those offering management courses.
- University of Madras also slipped from 18th to 20th in the university category and in the overall category from 29 to 33.
- Bharathiyar University slipped by one spot to finish at 21st and 14th in overall and university categories
- Alagappa University came down from 27th to 28th in the university category

- Indian Institute of Technology, Madras – topped the HRD ministry’s NIRF rankings 2019 in ‘Overall category’ for the first time with a score of 83.88

- IIT, Madras had also bagged the top position in the first edition of the Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA), a category introduced this year

- It had retained its first position in ‘engineering category’ for the fourth consecutive year

- The premier institute has the best research output in the country through an increase in research intensity, faculty strength, PhD student enrolment, infrastructure, engagement with industry and international collaborations

- It had undertaken several sponsored research works through the IIT Madras Research Park, the first of its kind in the entire country

- The institute is also filing around 140 patent applications every year

- The Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore, and IIT-Delhi ranked second and third in the list respectively.

- Of the top 10 institutes, seven are IITs.

- IISc had been top ranked in the first three editions of the NIRF Rankings

- Miranda House College of Delhi University ranked number one in ARIIA under University category

- National Law School of India University, Bengaluru, have been adjudged as the best law school
Jamia Hamdard has been announced as the top varsity for Pharmacy
All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) has been adjudged as the best medical college

The National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) has been approved by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India and launched by Honorable Minister Smriti Irani on 29th September, 2015
The HRD Ministry has been publishing the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) since 2016
The ranking parameters broadly cover the areas of -- Teaching, Learning and Resources, Research and Professional Practices, Graduation Outcomes, Outreach and Inclusivity and Perception
Overall, 3,127 institutions applied for different categories of the NIRF this year.
Election Commission – bars publishing of Political advertisements on polling day and a day prior to it in each of the seven phases of Lok Sabha polls

- Unless their contents are pre-certified by screening committees, these advertisements are prohibited by the Election Commissions to avoid misleading, inflammatory or hate advertisements
- At present, electronic media is barred from showing election publicity material during the last 48 hours before the conclusion of polling

The service voters of Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) unit located in the eastern tip of the state of Arunachal Pradesh – cast the first vote for 2019 Lok Sabha polls

- Votes through postal ballots have been cast from Lohitpur for many constituencies in India and the ballot papers have been dispatched
- Service voters are those who have service qualification and include members of Armed Forces of the Union of India
- They can cast the votes through postal ballots or through a proxy

COURT VERDICT

The Madras High Court – quashes the notification for land acquisition for Rs 10,000 crore, 277.30 km, eight-lane, Chennai-Salem greenfield corridor

- It said that the public hearing and environmental clearance was mandatory since the project would have an adverse impact on the environment, including reserved forests, fertile land and waterbodies, necessitating a mega realignment
- A Special bench of Justices TS Sivagnanam and V Bhavani Subbaroyan of the Madras High Court disagreed with the stand of the government to mutate revenue records and transfer government lands, even prior to the issuance of notification under the Land Acquisition Act.
- The judges gave eight weeks’ time for retransferring the land acquired from farmers
- The court also scrapped the project feasibility study report submitted by Feedback Infra, a private consultant appointed by National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)
- The Court also pointed out that the Centre had dropped the proposal for widening of Chennai-Madurai economic corridor from the Bharatmala Pariyojana Phase-I without mentioning any reason and instead included the Chennai-Salem expressway without the approval of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by the Prime Minister.
The ‘Chennai-Salem Greenfield Corridor’ was launched under the Centre’s ambitious road programme, Bharatmala Pariyojana.

It was proposed by the state government with the aim to cut down travel time between Chennai and Salem.

The two existing highways between Chennai and Salem are 334 km and 353 km long and the proposed expressway would reduce the distance to just 277 km.

The project would reduce average travelling time between the two destinations from 5.45 hours to 2.3 hours, save 10.4 crore litres of diesel per year and promote industrialisation in backward areas.

It was approved by the Centre in February 2018 and the state government has issued notification last May.

Bharatmala Pariyojana-I envisions the construction of about 35,000 km of national highways across the country at an estimated cost of Rs 5,35,000 crore before 2022 to decongest six national corridors.
**ECONOMY**

- **Reserve Bank of India (RBI) - issued the guidelines for banks to set up new currency chests**
  - The Currency Chests are part of banks wherein currency notes and coins are stored.
  - It can be a strong room or a vault, authorized and belonging to RBI.
  - **Guidelines**
    - As per the new guidelines, the area of the room or vault should be at least 1500 sq. ft. In case of hilly/ inaccessible places, the area of the strong room or vault should be at least 600 sq. ft.
    - The new chests should have a processing capacity of 6.6 lakh pieces of banknotes per day. For those situated in the hilly/ inaccessible places, capacity of 2.1 lakh pieces of banknotes per day.
    - Earlier, an RBI-appointed committee under DK Mohanty in 2016 had recommended that it should encourage banks to open large currency chests with modern facilities and Chest Balance Limit (CBL) of at least Rs 1,000 crore.
  - As per the RBI’s annual report of 2017-18, the currency management infrastructure consists of a network of 19 issue offices of the Reserve Bank, 3,975 currency chest and 3,654 small coin depots of commercial, co-operative and regional rural banks spread across the country.

- **India – is the world’s top recipient of remittances with the NRI’s sending $79 billion back home in 2018, as per World Bank data**
  - The remittances in 2018 grew by over 14% in India in 2018.
  - India is followed by China ($67 billion), Mexico ($36 billion), the Philippines ($34 billion), and Egypt ($29 billion).

**SPORTS**

- **Hockey India - confirmed the appointment of Graham Reid as chief coach of the India men’s hockey team**
  - Reid was part of the Australian side that won silver at the Barcelona Olympics.
  - He replaces Harendra Singh, who was sacked after the country’s quarter-final loss to Netherlands in the Hockey World Cup at Odisha.
The team had recently finished runner-up at the Sultan Azlan Shah Cup, under interim coach and Hockey India High Performance Director David John and analytical coach Chris Ciriello.

Reid’s contract is expected to be till 2022 World Cup.

Reid served as an assistant to the legendary Ric Charlesworth in the Australian team for five years.

**Dream11 - has become the first Indian gaming company to be valued at over $1 billion**

With this, it has entered India’s growing club of unicorns, or startups valued at over $1 billion.

Dream 11 is the firm founded by Jain and Bhavit Sheth, which runs a fantasy league for cricket, kabaddi, football, among other sports.

It allows users to create virtual teams and help them to organise matches based on statistical performance of players in the actual game.

It has around 60 million users on its platform currently.
The Election Commission – fixes May 19 for the by-elections in four constituencies, Sulur, Aravakurichi, Thiruparankundram and Ottapidaram in Tamil Nadu

- The notification now fills all the 22 vacancies in the Tamil Nadu State assembly
- These four constituencies were left out in the first round of polls, scheduled on April 18
- The results would be declared on May 23 along with the results of other 18 assembly constituencies

Tamil Nadu – bans all special classes during summer holidays following unprecedented heat in the state

- State board schools are scheduled to close for summer holidays from April 12, about 10 days in advance due to the general elections
- The CBSC schools will end on April 26 and the ban is applicable to all the schools in the state, including the CBSC and other board schools

Tamil Nadu Government – instructs schools not to detain any student till Class VIII

- The state education minister, KA Sengottaiyan had earlier announced that no board exams will be conducted this year for the classes V and VIII
- The Central Government had earlier amended the Right to Children for Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, allowing the states to decide on no-detention policy upto Class VIII
The Nilgiris Mountain Rail – introduces direct train service from Mettupalayam to Ooty after a gap of seven years

- It will run as a weekend special on every Saturday until June 29
- The train will be pulled by a steam engine from Mettupalayam to Coonoor and it will be replaced with a diesel engine at Coonoor till Ooty
- The railways stopped running the trains in 2012, because of constant breakdowns due to locomotive issues

Chennai district – has an elector-population ratio of 78, the highest in the State

- Chennai district with a population of 49.59 lakh as per 2019 projections, has included 38.66 lakh electors on the rolls so far
- T. Nagar has reported the highest number of electors for a given population, with an elector-population ratio of 87
- The Harbour Assembly segment has the lowest elector-population ratio of 66
- The elector-population ratio is 80 in Dr. Radhakrishnan Nagar, 77 in Perambur, 84 in Kolathur, 86 in Villivakkam, 76 in Thiru-Vi-Ka Nagar, 70 in Egmore, 68 in Royapuram, 66 in Harbour, 76 in Chepauk-Thiruvallikeni, 74 in Thousand Lights, 83 in Anna Nagar, 80 in Virugambakkam, 81 in Saidapet, 87 in Mylapore and 74 in Velachery
- The ratio of electors for a given population in the Assembly segments is calculated ahead of polls to assess the impact of deletion and inclusion in the rolls.

NATIONAL

The Election Commission - has decided to use the M3 EVMs in the Lok Sabha Polls in the Nizamabad parliamentary constituency of the Telangana state

- Earlier, it had planned to use Ballot papers as 185 candidates are in the fray in the constituency
- The Election Commission has ordered Electronics Corporation of India Limited (ECIL) to supply 26,820 EVMs, 2,240 control units and 2,600 Voter-Verified Paper Audit Trails (VVPAT) of M3 make
In each of the polling station, there will be 12 M3 version EVMs, arranged in L shape with each machine carrying a maximum of 16 names
M3 EVMs are the third generation EVMs, that can keep data of 384 candidates
They also has added features like Tamper Detection and Self Diagnostics for better security and safety aspect

**The Cabinet Committee of Security - has cleared the proposal for the procurement of the 464 T-90 tanks from Russia at a budget of over Rs 13,000 crores**

The deal also includes a Make-in-India element for integration at the Heavy Vehicles Factory in Avadi near Chennai
T-90 battle tanks are expected to be deployed on the borders with Pakistan, replacing the older variants of T-72 and T-55 tanks in the force
The new T-90 tanks would be equipped with thermal imaging night sights for waging battle during nights

**COURT VERDICTS**

**The Supreme Court - ruled on April 9, 2019 that a woman can file a case of dowry harassment from the place she has taken shelter under Section 498 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC)**

The bench led by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi relaxed Section 177 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), which mandates that criminal cases can be filed and tried only in courts within whose jurisdiction the crime occurred.
The verdict came as a big relief to women fighting dowry harassment cases outside the jurisdiction of their matrimonial home

**The Madras High Court – bars teachers from schools and colleges taking tuition after working hours**

It had directed the State Government to create a toll-free helpline within a period of 8 weeks and display it prominently in the schools, so that the parents and children file a complaint on issues of indiscipline, illegal activities, irregularities along with sexual harassment cases
The Government should take action within 24 hours after receiving such complaints, the HC said.
Justice S M Subramaniam cited the rule 9 of Tamil Nadu Government Servants Conduct Rules which prohibits a teacher engaging in any trade or business or undertake any employment
INTERNATIONAL

New York City – declares a public health emergency on April 9, following a measles outbreak in the ultra-orthodox Jewish community in Brooklyn
✓ Across the entire country, there have been 465 measles cases since the start of 2019, with 78 new cases in the last week alone

Sri Lanka – opens a new railway line, built with China’s assistance, connecting the coastal city of Matara and Beliatta in Hambantota
✓ The 26.75-km long railway extension is the first to be constructed in Sri Lanka since 1948
✓ The cost of the project was estimated to be $278 million
✓ According to China, it was a major Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) project in Sri Lanka

Google’s drone delivery – launched in Australia
✓ The first air delivery was made by the Google’s parent company Alphabet Inc., in North Canberra, Australia
✓ The company’s drone delivery arm, Wing, delivered the services to a limited set of eligible homes
✓ Wing has been testing drone delivery in Australia since 2014
Professors from Anna University, Chennai – has developed a device called ‘antibiogramoscope’ to detect antibiotic resistance.

- It identifies resistant strains of bacteria within six hours, thereby helping physicians choose the correct drug, at a charge of Rs 100 to Rs 300.
- The existent tests need at least 48 hours to detect at a cost ranging between Rs 500 to Rs 2000.
The project is supported by University Grants Commission and Department of Science and Technology and consists of professors from various streams including biotechnology, medical electronics, electronics and communication, manufacturing, medical physics and instrumentation.

The device had cleared the validation test at National Accreditation Board for Testing and a Calibration Laboratories (NABL) accredited microbiological lab in Coimbatore.

Commercial production will be started after further tests to be done at CMC, Vellore and AIIMS, Delhi.

Scientists - have found a new state of physical matter recently, which is solid and liquid at the same time.

Researchers have found that some elements when subjected to extreme conditions, assume unusual but stable properties of both solid and liquid states.

As per the information published in national geographic, the computer models confirmed that between about 20,000 and 40,000 times atmospheric pressure and 400 to 800 Kelvin (260 to 980 degrees Fahrenheit), the potassium entered what’s called a chain-melted state, in which the chains dissolved into liquid while the remaining potassium crystals stayed solid.

The work was carried out in collaboration with scientists from Xi’an Jiantong University in China.

DEFENCE


The three-day exercise is being conducted to develop military technology, boost maritime security and to fight against terrorism.

The Indian contingent was led by Colonel SP Singh.

India and Singapore had signed a cooperation agreement in November 2017 to strengthen the defence relations between Indian Military and Singapore Armed Forces.
President Ram Nath Kovind - launched ‘Veer Parivar App’, a mobile application for families of CRPF personnel killed in the line of duty on April 9, 2019

- The app was launched after the President paid his tributes to the martyrs at the National Police Memorial in Delhi on the occasion of the CRPF's 'Valour Day'
- The app will act as an interface between the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) authorities and the families of the martyred CRPF personnel
- It will render assistance on a real-time basis regarding issuance of ex gratia, pension benefits and all other information regarding the welfare schemes introduced for them by the government
- The Android-based app will be installed by the CRPF officials securely on the phone of the families and will not be available over the app stores
- The Central Reserve Police Force observed its 54th Valour Day on April 9, 2019
- The day marks gallant fight back by a small contingent of the 2nd Battalion of CRPF against an attack by a Pakistani Brigade at the Sardar post in Gujarat's Rann of Kutch on April 9, 1965.
- On the occasion this year, the President presented gallantry medals to six Jawans posthumously

ECONOMY

Ford – is on the process of finalizing a joint venture with Mahindra & Mahindra to partially exit from the Indian market
- This will be the second Detroit auto major to exit the country after General Motors
- Ford will hold 49% stake in the JV while Mahindra holds a majority 51%
- The deal is expected to conclude within 3 months
- After nearly 25 years and $2 billion investment, the Dearborn-Michigan headquartered Ford will transfer its automobile business in India to the new JV, including plant and staff
- Ford has two plants, at Sanand in Gujarat and at Maraimalainagar outside Chennai, with an installed capacity to produce 4.4 lakh cars and 6.1 lakh engines per annum respectively
- The two companies were partners when Ford entered India in the early 90s until they parted ways in 1998
- Last year, both the companies said that they will share BS6 engines and develop connected vehicle options in India
AWARDS

インドの教育テクノロジー企業「Dost education」は、2019年の次の大規模なエデュテック賞「Next Billion Edtech Prize」を獲得した。この賞は、インドのVarkey Foundationによって授与され、その目的は低所得と発展途上国における教育への影響をもたらす最優秀な技術を表彰することができる。徐々に変化をもたらすシームレスな技術を応用し、子供の早期教育を支援する能力を示すDost Educationが選ばれた。また、TanzaniaのUbongoとEgyptのPraxiLabsも同様の獲得した。

SPORTS

アジアのシュートプットチャンピオン、Manpreet Kaurは、2017年4月24日、5月1日、7月6日、7月16日に行われたアジア大会、パティアラのフェデレーションカップ、ブハラニワールドの州間選手権のすべての試合で金メダルを獲得した。彼女は2017年のアジアグランプリの金メダルを獲得した。彼女はメチノロンの禁薬に違反したが、その他の試合ではドナーのテストで陽性を示した。
INTERNATIONAL DAY

World Homoeopathy Day 2019 – April 10

- The day commemorates the birth anniversary of the founder of Homoeopathy, Dr. Christian Fredrich Samuel Hahnemann
- Samuel Hahnemann discovered Homeopathy in the year 1796

- The observance of the day aims to create better awareness about homoeopathy, improve its accessibility and to modernise the system of healing
- Samuel Hahnemann, a German physician, a great scholar, linguist and an acclaimed scientist, is known as the Father of Homeopathy, Father of Human Pharmacology, Father of Nano Medicine and the Father of Infinite Dilution concept in Chemistry
- The week following the birth date of Hahnemann, that is, 10 April- 16 April is observed as the World Homeopathic Awareness Week.

REPORT

World Economic Outlook 2019 April report – Released by IMF Chief Economist Gita Gopinath
The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has projected that global growth will be 3.3% in 2019, down from 3.6% in 2018 and 4% in 2017.

This lower projection is due to a slower global expansion in the second half of 2018 caused by U.S.-China trade tensions, macroeconomic stress in Turkey and Argentina, tighter credit policies in China and financial tightening, apart from a normalisation of monetary policy in advanced economies.

India’s growth is projected to pick up, from 7.1% in 2018, to 7.3% in 2019 and 7.5% in 2020.

Beyond 2020, global growth is expected to level out at 3.6% over the medium term.

Advanced economies are expected to slow down to 1.6% growth by 2022 and remain at that rate thereafter.

For emerging markets and developing countries, growth is expected to steady at 4.8% over the medium term.

1000 RACES IN FORMULA 1 HISTORY

Chinese Grand Prix – to be conducted on April 14 will be the 1000th race of the F1 world championships, since the first at Silverstone in 1950.
The following are some of the main numbers:

- **0.5** – Points scored by women drivers in Formula One history. Only two women have started a race, both Italian — Maria Teresa de Filippis and Lella Lombardi. Lombardi finished sixth in Spain in 1975, with half points awarded after the race was cut short due to a fatal accident.
1 – One posthumous champion, Austrian Jochen Rindt who died during practice for Lotus at Monza in 1970. His widow Nina collected the trophy.

7 – The most championships won by a driver, with Germany’s Michael Schumacher taking his seventh in 2004 with Ferrari.

10 – British champions, a record for any country. Brazil, Germany and Finland each have three. 19 Britons have won races.

16 – Ferrari have won 16 F1 constructors’ titles, another record, and six were consecutive between 1999 and 2004.

16 – Ferrari have won 15 F1 drivers’ championships, more than any other team.

17 – Dutch driver Max Verstappen was 17 when he became the youngest F1 driver with Toro Rosso.

18 – Max Verstappen was the youngest race winner at 18, with Red Bull, at the 2016 Spanish GP.

21 – Countries to have had a race winning driver.

29 – Titles decided in the last race of the season. Most recently in 2016, when Germany’s Nico Rosberg took the title for Mercedes in Abu Dhabi.

33 – The number of world champions, from Giuseppe Farina to Hamilton. There are 20 still living, with Jackie Stewart (1969, 1971 and 1973) the longest standing.

34 – Constructors to have won races. The top four (Ferrari, McLaren, Williams and Mercedes) have won 620 of 999 so far.

46 – Oldest world champion. Argentina’s Juan Manuel Fangio in 1957 was 46 years and 41 days when he won his fifth title.

53 – The oldest race winner, at 53, was Italian Luigi Fagioli who was born in 1898 and contested seven championship races in 1950 and 1951. He won in France in 1951 and died in 1952 during Monaco GP practice.

55 – Monaco’s Louis Chiron remains the oldest driver to start a race, in his home grand prix in 1955.

61 – The number of constructors’ championships so far. Since Vanwall won the first in 1958, 15 teams have been champions.

71 – The number of tracks to have hosted a race. A total of 32 nations, not including Luxembourg and San Marino whose names were on grands prix held in Germany and Italy respectively, have held F1 races.

83 – Ferrari have had a record 83 one-two finishes over the years, with McLaren next on 47. Mercedes have 46.

84 – No driver has had more pole positions than Lewis Hamilton, who took his 84th in Australia in March.

91 – Most races won by a driver, set by Schumacher whose last was in China in 2006 with Ferrari (his 72nd for the team).

99 – Since 1950, 99 drivers have started a race on pole position. Leclerc, in Bahrain last month, was the 99th in the 999th race.

107 – Formula One race winners, including Indianapolis 500 between 1950 and 1960.
✓ 155 – Most podium appearances by a driver, Schumacher again.
✓ 163 – British drivers, more than any other country.
✓ 220 – Poles for Ferrari, a record. McLaren are next on 155.
✓ 235 – Wins for Ferrari, the oldest team in the sport and only ones to have raced in every season. McLaren are on 182.
✓ 323 – Brazilian Rubens Barrichello, Schumacher’s team mate at Ferrari, started more races than any driver.
✓ 752 – Podium finishes for Ferrari, another record.
✓ 764 – Drivers to have started an F1 race.
✓ 974 – Races participated in by Ferrari (972 starts).

**Centurion Race years**

✓ 1 – British Grand Prix, Silverstone. May 13, 1950
✓ 100 – German Grand Prix, Nurburgring. August 6, 1961
✓ 200 – Monaco Grand Prix, May 23, 1971
✓ 400 – Austrian Grand Prix, Oesterreichring. August 19, 1984
✓ 600 – Argentine Grand Prix, Buenos Aires. April 13, 1997
✓ 700 – Brazilian Grand Prix, Interlagos. April 6, 2003
✓ 900 – Bahrain Grand Prix. April 6, 2014
✓ 1000 – Chinese Grand Prix, Shanghai. April 14, 2019
TAMIL NADU

The Election Commission – appoints Ashutosh Shukla as DGP (Elections), replacing the incumbent T K Rajendran

- Shukla will also handle law and order as additional charge
- As per the orders issued, all the officers involved in election process including IGs, DIGs and SPs should report to Shukla, a 1986-batch IPS officer, till the elections are over
- Rajendran was appointed the DGP of the state on the date of his retirement on June 30, 2017 and has tenure upto June 13, 2019 as per the SC guidelines in the Prakash Singh case, which guarantees two-year tenure protection for DGP
- This is the second time Shukla is replacing Rajendran in the post on account of elections, the first one in May 2016

SUPREME COURT VERDICT

- Supreme Court – rejects the Centre’s objections to ignore ‘leaked’ documents in the Rafale jet fighter deal and decided to hear petitions seeking review of its clean chit to the fighter deal
- The Centre had argued that the documents had been “unauthorisedly removed” from the defence ministry and therefore shouldn’t be considered as evidence as per the Official Secrets Act (OSA), 1923
- The documents include an eight-page note written by three members of the Indian negotiating team, Note 18 of the defence ministry and Note 10 written by SK Sharma, then defence deputy secretary
They appear to suggest that the earlier deal for 126 planes was scrapped after last-minute parallel negotiations by the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) and that the sovereign guarantee clause and the anti-corruption clauses were inexplicably dropped.

A bench of Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi and Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and K M Joseph unanimously rejected the government’s objections to the court looking at these documents, which came into the public domain largely through investigative reports in The Hindu newspaper.

The court had earlier refused to order an investigation into accusations of corruption in the $8.7-billion (Rs 59,000 crore) purchase of 36 Rafale jets from France on its December 14, 2018 judgement.
1600 Railway stations in the country – are now Wi-Fi enabled

- RailWire Wi-Fi by RailTel is now live at 1600 railway stations across the country.
- The Santacruz railway station in Mumbai became the 1600th station to be Wi-Fi enabled.
- RailWire is a retail Broadband initiative of the RailTel.
- RailTel is planning to provide fast and free Wi-Fi at all stations (except the halt stations) within a year.
- Funding for Wi-Fi:
  - RailTel funding – 985 stations
  - Google funding – 415 stations
  - Universal Service Obligatory Fund of the Government of India – 200 stations
- Universal Service Obligation Fund helps to fund projects to boost connectivity in rural areas.
- It is charged from the telecom operators as a percentage of various licence fees paid by them.

INTERNATIONAL

- United Kingdom and the European Union - agreed a six month extension to the Brexit deal until October 31, 2019
  - The extension is made flexible with the condition that Britain can leave once its withdrawal deal is ratified in the Parliament.
  - If UK stays as a member of European Union beyond 22 May, the country will likely be required to participate in EU elections.

INDIA AND NEIGHBOURS

- India - has built a 25-bed ‘Chandra Narayan Yadav Memorial Maternity Hospital’ in Nepal
  
  - Indian Ambassador to Nepal, Manjeev Singh Puri inaugurated the hospital in Siraha district.
  - The hospital, built under the Union Government’s Small Development Projects Scheme, will help in reducing maternal and child mortality rate among the people of 50 Village Development Committees in and around Siraha district.
  - The Hospital will be run by the Chandra Narayan Yadav Memorial Trust on no profit-no loss basis.
Astronomers – revealed the first ever image of a ‘supermassive’ black hole taken by Event Horizon Telescope with a network of eight linked telescopes - on April 10, 2019

- The image released shows the shadow of the hole at the center of glowing plasma.
- The research was conducted by the Event Horizon Telescope (EHT) project, an international collaboration begun in 2012, to directly observe the immediate environment of a black hole using a global network of Earth-based telescopes.
- The black hole is about 6 billion times the mass of our sun and is in a massive galaxy called Messier 87 in the nearby Virgo galaxy cluster, at 53 million light-years from Earth.
- The image shows the boundary between light and dark around a black hole, called the ‘event horizon’, that is as big as the solar system.
- It is the point of no return, where the gravity of the black hole becomes so extreme that nothing that enters can ever escape, gets sucked in and swallowed, including stars, planets, gas, dust and all forms of electromagnetic radiation.
At the centre of the black hole, time and space become so curved upon themselves that the 2 basic laws of physics, quantum physics and general relativity, break down completely.

The new image confirmed Albert Einstein’s theory of general relativity (1915) explaining the laws of gravity and their relation to other natural forces, thereby allowing scientists to predict the size and shape of a black hole.

The announcement of the image was made in simultaneous news conferences in Washington, Brussels, Santiago, Shanghai, Taipei, and Tokyo.

The project’s researchers obtained the first data in April 2017 using telescopes in the US states of Arizona and Hawaii as well as in Mexico, Chile, Spain, and Antarctica.

The EHT’s work focuses on two super-massive black holes - the first, dubbed Sagittarius A* - sits at the centre of the Milky Way with a mass of about 4.3 million times that of the sun and located 25,000 light years from Earth.

The second lies at the core of the M87 elliptical galaxy, about 50 million light years from Earth, and is 1500 times more massive than the Sagittarius A-star.

Black holes are formed when very massive stars collapse at the end of their life cycle.

There are basically three types of black holes - stellar, supermassive, and miniature black holes.

Stellar black holes are formed when a massive star collapses.

Supermassive black holes are equivalent to billions of suns, and expected to exist in the centres of most galaxies, including Milky Way galaxy.

Miniature black holes are assumed to have been formed shortly after the “Big Bang”, which is predicted to have started the universe 13.7 billion years ago.

**ECONOMY**

**Hong Kong’s stock market - has overtaken Japan to be the world’s third largest in value, behind only the U.S. and China**

- Hong Kong’s market cap was $5.78 trillion as of April 9 and Japan’s market cap was $5.76 trillion.
- The main driver behind the climb was Internet giant, Tencent Holdings Ltd. which has witnessed a 22% gain.

**AWARDS**

**‘Namami Gange’ programme – was awarded the honour of “Public Water Agency of the Year” by Global Water Intelligence at the Global Water Summit in London**
The National Mission for Clean Ganga or the Namami Gange programme, approved as 'Flagship Programme' by the Union Government in June 2014 with budget outlay of Rs.20,000 crore, aims to accomplish the twin objectives of effective reduction of pollution and the conservation and rejuvenation of National River Ganga.

The awards aim to recognize excellence across the international water industry and reward those initiatives in the water, wastewater, and desalination sectors, which have brought remarkable improvements in the lives of people.

Global Water Summit is the annual business conference for the water industry worldwide.

Telugu poet K Siva Reddy - was selected for the prestigious ‘Saraswati Samman 2018’ for his collection of poetry titled ‘Pakkaki Ottigilite’ (Turning Aside While Lying Down).

The award is given annually by the KK Birla Foundation, since 1991, for an outstanding literary work written in any Indian language and published during the last 10 years.

The award carries a cash prize of 15 lakh rupees, a citation and a plaque.

It is the highest recognition in the field of Indian literature.

Pakkaki Ottigilite, published in 2016, is an anthology of 104 poems in blank verse.

Past recipients of the Saraswati Samman include poet Harivansh Rai Bachchan, and writers Vijay Tendulkar, Shamsur Rahman Faruqi and Dr Indira Parthasarathy Ramanujar, among many others.

To felicitate writers, the KK Birla Foundation has instituted three awards in the field of literature - namely the Saraswati Samman, Vyas Samman (for Hindi) and Bihari Puraskar (for Hindi and Rajasthani writers of Rajasthan).
SPORTS

◆ Indian cricketer Virat Kohli - was named The Wisden Almanack’s ‘Leading Cricketer of the Year’ for 2018

✓ It had named India’s Smriti Mandhana for the Women’s Leading Cricketer award
✓ Kohli has won the title thrice, is third only to Sir Don Bradman and Jack Hobbs who have won it 10 and eight times respectively
✓ He has been named among England’s Rory Burns, Jos Buttler, Sam Curran and Tammy Beaumont in receiving the honour Wisden’s Five Cricketers of the Year
✓ Afghanistan’s Rashid Khan has been named as Wisden’s Leading Twenty20 Cricketer in the World for the second year in a row
✓ On October 24, 2018, Kohli became the fastest cricketer to score 10,000 runs in One-Day Internationals
✓ In January this year, Kohli became the first player in the history of the game to win the Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy for ICC Cricketer of the Year, his second consecutive, the ICC Test and the ODI Player of the Year awards for the year 2018
✓ Mandhana became only the second India woman player to win an ICC award after fast bowler Jhulan Goswami, who was named the ICC Player of the Year in 2007
✓ The Wisden Cricketers’ Almanack – often labelled the “Bible of cricket” – is an annual publication founded in 1864
✓ It publishes the list of five cricketers of the year since 1889 and announces the leading cricketer in the world since 2004

◆ India’s A Harshini – wins Silver in the Asian youth U-18 girls competition held in Sri Lanka

✓ She finished second with 6.5 points from 9 rounds while Vietnam’s Nguyen Hong Anh won gold with 8 points
Prime Minister Narendra Modi – honoured with Russia's highest state decoration, Order of St Andrew the Apostle on April 12, for promoting partnership and friendly relations between the two countries.

- The information was shared by the Russian Embassy in India.
- This is the second international award the PM received this month after Zayed Medal, the United Arab Emirates' highest civilian award.
- With the Russian award, PM Narendra Modi has now been conferred with around seven top global awards.
- The Order of 'St Andrew the Apostle' is the highest order and the oldest state order of Russia, first established in 1698.
- It was abolished under the Soviet Union but re-established in 1998.
- In 2017, Chinese president Xi Jinping was awarded the Order of St Andrew the Apostle.
- The other heads of state to receive the prestigious award include Nursultan Nazarbayev, former President of Kazakhstan and Heydar Aliyev, late President of Azerbaijan.
INTERNATIONAL

◆ US President Donald Trump’s ban on transgender Americans in the military - came into force on April 12, 2019
  ✓ Trump’s administration has insisted that there is a great risk to military effectiveness and lethality to allow transgender people to serve
  ✓ The move reverses a policy enacted under his predecessor Barack Obama
  ✓ The policy has undergone various changes since Trump first announced it on Twitter in July 2017
  ✓ The US Supreme Court ultimately ruled in January that the policy could take effect pending the outcome of ongoing litigation

◆ Sudan’s long-time president Omar al-Bashir - has been removed from office and arrested following months of civilian protests

✓ In a television address, Defense Minister Ahmed Awad Ibn Awf said the 75-year-old leader has been arrested and put in a safe place
✓ On 30 June 1989, Colonel Omar al-Bashir led a bloodless military coup, suspended political parties and introduced an Islamic legal code on the national level.
✓ On 16 October 1993, al-Bashir appointed himself President and disbanded the Revolutionary Command Council.
✓ Sudan became a one-party state under the National Congress Party (NCP) in 1996
✓ The United States subsequently listed Sudan as a state sponsor of terrorism
The Australia-born WikiLeaks founder, Julian Assange - arrested by British police at Ecuador’s embassy in London, his home since June 2012, after it withdrew his asylum status

At the time, he was famous as the face of WikiLeaks, as the whistleblowing website exposed government secrets worldwide, especially the release of 5,00,000 US documents on the Iraq and Afghan wars

He is likely to be extradited to US and face indictment for conspiracy to commit computer intrusion along with former Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning in 2010, revealing classified war crimes information

Assange created WikiLeaks in 2006 with a group of likeminded activists and information technology experts, to provide a secure way for whistleblowers to leak information
The Israeli spacecraft - called Beresheet, the first privately funded mission to the Moon - has crashed on the lunar surface after the apparent failure of its main engine.

During the soft touch-down descent on the Moon’s surface, it suffered technical problems and crashed.

The aim of the mission was to take pictures and conduct experiments to study Moon’s magnetism on the lunar surface.

The project has cost about $100m (£76m) and has paved the way for future low-cost lunar exploration.

Beresheet, which is Hebrew for "in the beginning", was a joint project between SpaceIL, a privately funded Israeli non-profit organisation, and Israel Aerospace Industries.

SpaceIL’s origins lie in the Google Lunar XPrize, an international challenge offering $20m for the first privately developed spacecraft to land on the Moon.

The Beresheet mission was launched on 22 February from Cape Canaveral in Florida off on a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket.

The average distance to the Moon is 380,000km (240,000 miles).

Only government space agencies from the former Soviet Union, the US and China have achieved soft lunar landings.

The former Soviet Union achieved the first soft landing with its spacecraft Luna 9 in 1966.

Nasa followed this by getting the first humans to the Moon in 1969.

Then, China’s Change-4 spacecraft touched down on the far-side of the Moon earlier this year.

Scientists - have discovered a new human species ‘Homo luzonensis’ in Philippines.

It is classified a separate species on the ground of 13 bones and teeth from two adults and one child found in a cave on the island of Luzon in the Philippines.

These remains were aged between 67,000 years to 50,000 years old.

Unlike Homo sapiens, whose premolar teeth generally have a single root, Homo luzonensis' premolars had two or three roots.

They are similar to more primitive species such as Homo erectus, which lived in Africa and Asia between about 1.89 million and 143,000 years ago.
Benjamin Netanyahu – to become the Prime Minister of Israel for a straight fifth term

Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party has finished ahead in the general election, with 36 seats for the 120-seat parliament, Knesset.

A coalition would likely make Netanyahu as the longest-serving prime minister in Israel's history.

Kahol Lavan, the political alliance led by former Israeli army chief of staff Benny Gantz conceded defeat with 35 seats.

Professor Najma Akhtar – appointed as the vice-chancellor of Jamia Millia Islamia – for a period of five years

Thus, she becomes the first woman VC of the central university in Delhi, 99 years after its inception.

Professor Najma Akhtar is an academician from the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration.

She has been a Commonwealth Fellow for University Administration Course at University of Warwick and Nottingham.

She is also trained at the International Institute of Educational Planning (IIEP), UNESCO, Paris.

The Vice Chancellor's post at Jamia had been lying vacant after Talat Ahmad resigned last year to join as head of Kashmir University.
JMI was founded on October 29, 1920, by the Ali brothers, Moulana Mohammad Ali Jouhar and Moulana Shoukat Ali during the British rule in Aligarh

Dr. Zakir Hussain was the first Vice-Chancellor of JMI

It became a central university by an act of the Indian Parliament in 1988

Manipur Governor Najma Heptulla is the chancellor of the varsity

**Justice Vikram Nath, the senior most judge of Allahabad High Court - was appointed as the first Chief Justice of the newly-constituted Andhra Pradesh High Court**

His name was recommended by the collegium of Supreme Court, comprising of Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi besides Judges S A Bobde and N V Ramana

The new Andhra Pradesh High court was established on January 1, 2019 following the division of a combined high court of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

**AWARDS**

**Two schemes of West Bengal Government - ‘Utkarsh Bangla’ (skill training of youth) and ‘Sabooj Sathi’ (cycles for students) won the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) awards of UN**

Utkarsh Bangla got the topmost award in the ‘Capacity Building category’ and the Sabooj Sathi was ranked in the first five as a champion project under ‘ICT application: E-Government category’

Utkarsh Bangla Scheme is aimed at providing vocational training to school dropouts

Sabooj Sathi is a scheme for distribution of bicycles to the students of class IX to XII studying in Govt. run and Govt. aided schools and Madrasas
Alice G. Vaidyan, Chairman and Managing Director of the General Insurance Corporation (GIC) of India - has been awarded the Freedom of the City of London in recognition of her work to promote insurance ties between India and the UK

Alice G. Vaidyan was the first lady officer to assume the post of Chairman-cum-Managing Director of General Insurance Corporation of India

- She was also the first lady chairman-cum-managing director in the public-sector insurance industry (non-life) under the Ministry of Finance in India
- She has been trained at Harvard Business School, Boston, USA and a Fellow of the Insurance Institute of India
- Freedom of the City is an honour bestowed by a City of London Corporation upon a valued member of the community

SPORTS

Silver medallist at the Rio Paralympics, Deepa Malik - was named recipient of the New Zealand Prime Minister’s Sir Edmund Hillary Fellowship for 2019 in recognition of her two big “inspiring achievements” - courage and a can-do attitude

- The 48-year-old Deepa will work to promote sporting, cultural and people-to-people relationship between India and New Zealand
- Deepa Malik had won the silver medal in shot put event in Rio in 2016
- Sir Edmund Percival Hillary was a New Zealand mountaineer, explorer and Philanthropist
- He served as New Zealand’s High Commissioner to India and Bangladesh and concurrently as Ambassador to Nepal from 1985 to 1988
- Hillary and Nepalese Sherpa mountaineer Tenzing Norgay became the first climbers confirmed to have reached the summit of Mount Everest on 29 May 1953
- They were part of the ninth British expedition to Everest, led by John Hunt
INTERNATIONAL DAY

◆ The International Day of Human Space Flight – April 12

✓ The day marks the anniversary of the first ever human space flight undertaken by Yuri Gagarin, a Soviet Union citizen then, in 1961
✓ In 2011, the United Nations declared April 12 the ‘International Day of Human Space Flight’
✓ The day is also observed as ‘Cosmonautics Day’ in Russia and some other countries
✓ Thirty-five years ago, on April 3, 1984, the first Indian astronaut, Wing Commander Rakesh Sharma, entered space aboard the Soviet rocket Soyuz T-11
✓ In October 1957, the Soviet Union sent the ever man-made object, Sputnik, into outer space
✓ Only three nations have been able to put a man in outer space so far: the USA, Russia, and China
✓ Now, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is all set to execute its first ever human space flight programme, Gaganyaan by 2022.
✓ Many private players are also attempting human space endeavours including Virgin Galactic led by Richard Branson, Blue Origins led by Jeff Bezos, and SpaceX led by Elon Musk.

Firsts In The Space

- **April 12, 1961**: Yuri Gagarin became the first human to orbit the Earth.
- **June 16, 1963**: Valentina Tereshkova became the first woman to orbit the Earth.
- **March 18, 1965**: Alexei Leonov became the first person to conduct a spacewalk
- **March 31, 1966**: Luna 10 was launched and was the first spacecraft to be placed in Moon orbit.
- **July 20, 1969**: Neil Armstrong became the first human to set foot on the
surface of the Moon.

- **March 2, 1972:** Pioneer 10 probe was launched. It was the first spacecraft to explore the Asteroid Belt, fly by Jupiter and leave the Solar System.
- **July 17, 1975:** Docking of Apollo and Soyuz spacecraft in space was the first international human mission to space.
- **July 20, 1976:** The unmanned space probe 'Viking 1' transmitted the first pictures from the surface of Mars.
- **1984:** Rakesh Sharma, the former Indian Air Force pilot, became the first person of Indian origin to travel in space. He flew in the space aboard Soyuz t-11, which was launched on April 2, 1984. He flew as part of the Intercosmos programme.
- **1997:** Kalpana Chawla, an Indian American astronaut, became the first woman of Indian origin to be in space

**US space flight company SpaceX - carried out its first commercial launch with its Falcon Heavy rocket by placing a Saudi satellite in orbit on April 11, 2019 in Cape Canaveral, Florida**

- The 13,000-pound Saudi Arabian telecommunication satellite is operated by Arabsat
- It is expected to provide television, internet and mobile phone service to the Middle East, Africa and Europe.
- Falcon Heavy rocket is capable of generating more than 5 million pounds (2.3 million kg) of thrust at liftoff
- Falcon Heavy was initially designed with an aim to restore the possibility of sending humans to the Moon or Mars, but now it is being considered mainly as a potential equipment carrier for deep space destinations
HOW WE GOT THE FIRST EVER IMAGE OF A BLACK HOLE ON APRIL 10 – A REPORT

On Wednesday, in a major scientific breakthrough, the first image of a black hole was released. Black holes are mysterious cosmic objects from which neither light nor matter can escape. A look at the international project that made the previously unseeable objects visible

How far light travelled to reach our telescopes
(Distance from Earth in light years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Earth (nearest star)</th>
<th>Alpha Centauri (nearest star)</th>
<th>Large Magellanic Cloud (one of the closest galaxies to Milky Way)</th>
<th>Messier 87 galaxy (home of the supermassive black hole)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>50 million</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A global network of telescopes made it possible

- SMT: Submillimeter Telescope, Arizona
- JCMT and SMA: James Clerk Maxwell Telescope and the Submillimeter Array, Hawaii
- LMT: Large Millimeter Telescope, Mexico
- APEX and ALMA: Atacama Pathfinder Experiment and Atacama Large Millimeter/Submillimeter Array, Chile
- SPT: South Pole Telescope, Antarctica
- IRAM 30M Telescope, Spain

The Event Horizon Telescope is a global array of eight radio telescopes. They simultaneously observed daily variations in the bright ring around the M87 black hole for 10 days. Together, they were sensitive enough to capture radiation from particles around the black hole.

The satellites collected so much data that it couldn’t be transmitted over the internet. Instead, hard drives had to be flown in to four teams of scientists, who analysed the data to build the image.

The result: A photograph that’s made history

**Resolution**

This image of the supermassive black hole at the heart of the galaxy Messier 87 was taken by the Event Horizon Telescope on April 6, 2017.

**Simulation**

An interpretation of the blurred image on the left shows a bright ring around the black hole’s event horizon, the line beyond which light cannot escape.

Source: NYT, AFP
LOK SABHA ELECTIONS 2019 KICKS OFF – A REPORT

The first phase of general elections - was held on April 11 - in 91 constituencies spread across 20 states and Union territories in India.
TAMIL NADU

- Senior IAS officer R Palanisamy – appointed as the new State Election Commissioner replacing Malik Feroz Khan on April 10
  - The 2000 batch IAS officer, a native of Coimbatore, was earlier the Registrar of Cooperative Societies
  - He will oversee the local body polls, which are likely to be held after the Lok Sabha elections.
  - Malik Feroz Khan has been heading the SEC since April 7, 2017
- The office of the Tamil Nadu Lokayukta - to start functioning from the premises of a Chennai Corporation school in Chintadripet
  - The Corporation school on Arunachalam Street, opposite Jain temple in Chintadripet, was closed following a dip in the number of students’ way back in 2009
  - A new building for the Lokayukta office will also be constructed after demolishing the existing school building
- Tamil Nadu’s first solar-powered boat - will soon operate at the Manimuthar Dam in Tirunelveli district within 10 days
  - Called Mahindra Odyssea, the 26-seater (including two crew members) boat is 11.8 m long and 4 m wide with a unique German motor (20 KW)
  - It has a solar roof on top which can generate 3.8 KW of power, which will help the boat get partially charged while moving
The Government - selected nine professionals, mostly from the Private sector, for the appointment as 'Joint Secretary' under 'lateral entry' process in various departments

THE APPOINTMENTS

- Amber Dubey, head of aerospace and defence at KPMG, to join civil aviation ministry
- Sujit Kumar Bajpayee, working with state-run NHPC, will join environment ministry
- Dinesh Dayanand Jagdale, CEO of Panama Renewable Energy Group, appointed to new and renewable energy ministry
- Others include Kakoli Ghosh (agriculture), Saurabh Mishra (financial services), Rajeev Saksena (economic affairs), Arun Goel (commerce), Suman Prasad Singh (road transport), and Bhushan Kumar (shipping)

- Till now, the position of 'Joint secretary' was filled up by the people who clear the civil services examinations, conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)
- To ensure the same standards, the entire selection process for these experts was conducted by the UPSC
- The selected experts will join on 'contract basis' in various departments such as agriculture, civil aviation, finance, transport and shipping
- NITI Aayog, in its report Strategy for India @75, had recommended encouraging lateral entry at the highest levels of the Government to provide 'expertise'

Indian Railways - lifted restrictions and unveils new quota for the Foreigners and NRIs to book tickets in all classes

- The foreign tourists who travel in Indian trains are allowed to book tickets in the first AC, second AC and executive classes through IRCTC website up to 365 days in advance.
- Under the FTQ category, the Railways has allocated four berths per coach in a sleeper and 3rd AC classes while seats have been parked per coach in chair car classes
A Pink polling booth for the Lok sabha elections - was inaugurated at Jamui parliamentary constituency in Bihar

- All polling party including security personnel are women, discharging their election duty, in this polling booth
- The decision was taken to make women feel special and come in large number in order to cast their vote
- The 40 Lok Sabha seats in Bihar, had already voted in the first of the seven-phase polls.

COURT VERDICT

The Madras High Court - has ruled that the employees of Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and any other similar institutions cannot claim themselves as 'Government servants'

- A division bench of Justice KK Sasidharan and Justice PD Audikesavalu made the observation despite the fact that RBI is a state within the meaning of Article 12 of the Constitution

INTERNATIONAL

Malaysia - rejoins China's ambitious OBOR project, after price cut for a China rail line

- It has reopened a closed chinese rail construction project after slashing 30% from the original cut
- Under the revised deal, the 648-km rail link will be costing $10.6 billion now
- China has agreed to it as it wants to present a strong global infrastructure project at the Belt and Road Forum, scheduled between April 25 and 27
- India has already indicated that it will not be attending the event
- Malaysian President, Mahathir Mohamad had shelved the project last July soon after returning power citing the project as a major financial burden for the country

Nepal - sends a four-member team of experts to remeasure the height of Mount Everest for the first time

- Chief Survey Officer Khim Lal Gautam and Survey Officer Rabin Karki will climb Mount Everest
- After reaching its top, they will use a Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) that will send readings about its height to their two colleagues who will remain at base camp
- The Survey Department will be conducting four sets of surveys - Precise levelling, Trigonometric levelling, Gravity survey and GNSS survey
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

◆ A Hawaiian name, Powehi – was given to the world’s first Black hole photographed on April 10

> Hawaiian language Professor Larry Kimura named the cosmic object in Hawaiian language
> The word ‘Powehi’ means "the adorned fathomless dark creation" or "embellished dark source of unending creation", coming from the Kumulipo, an 18th Century Hawaiian creation chant
> ‘Po’ is a profound dark source of unending creation, while ‘wehi’, honoured with embellishments, is one of the chant’s descriptions of ‘po’
> The world's first image of a black hole in a galaxy 53 million light-years from Earth was created using data from eight radio telescopes around the world
> Astronomers say giving it a Hawaiian name was justified because the project included two telescopes in Hawaii.

DEFENCE

◆ INS Shakti and INS Kolkata - to take part in Chinese Navy's 70th anniversary celebrations on April 23

> The ships are scheduled to visit Chinese port of Qingdao from 21 to 26 April to participate in an International Fleet Review to celebrate the 70th anniversary of People’s Liberation Army (PLA) Navy
> INS Kolkata is the lead ship of the Kolkata-class stealth guided-missile destroyers of the Indian Navy.
> INS Shakti is tanker and supply ship
ECONOMY

Russia's Moscow Exchange (MOEX) - has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) and India International Exchange (India INX)

- This will be the very first time that Indian exchanges will enter into the MoU with Moscow exchange
- The move aims to ease the access of Indian capital to the Russian market.

APPOINTMENTS

- Mayoori Kango, former bollywood actress - appointed as the Industry Head of Google India

- She will lead Google engagement with Publicis (Parent Company of Performics) and DAN.
- Before joining Google India, Mayoori has worked as a Managing Director in Performics, which is part of Publicis Groupe
- She has been instrumental in engaging and retaining accounts of firms like Uber, Airtel and Nestle
AWARDS

Vikram Patel, a psychiatrist and professor of global health at Harvard Medical School, has won the prestigious John Dirks Canada Gairdner Global Health Award

- Mr. Patel has led research on the burden and determinants of mental health problems in low and middle-income countries
- He will be formally presented with the award on October 24, 2019, at the annual Canada Gairdner Awards Gala in Toronto
- The John Dirks Canada Gairdner Global Health Award recognizes the world’s top scientists who have made outstanding achievements in Global Health Research.

SPORTS

The All India Tennis Association (AITA) - has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Serbian Tennis Federation (STF) to train Indian junior players under world-renowned Serbian coaches at New Delhi.

- Trainers and coaches from Serbia will come to India for a week/ two-week camp in the under-12, 14, 16 and 18 categories
- All India Tennis Association (AITA) is the premier governing body of tennis in India
- It was established in March 1920 with its headquarters at New Delhi

INTERNATIONAL DAY

100 years of Jallianwala Bagh Massacre (April 13, 1919 to April 13, 2019)

- On the fateful afternoon of Sikh festival Baisakhi, the troops of the British Indian Army under the command of Colonel Reginald Dyer fired ruthlessly into a crowd of Indian civilians gathered at Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar, Punjab on April 13, 2919
The civilians assembled for a peaceful protest to condemn the arrest and deportation of two national leaders, Satya Pal and Saifuddin Kitchlew.

The massacre, also known as the Amritsar massacre, is remembered as one of the deadliest attacks in Indian history.

As per the records of the British Government, the massacre killed 379 and caused 1200 injuries.

The bullet marks can be still seen on the walls of the Jallianwala Bagh which is now a national memorial.

It was the result of the Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act of 1919, famously known as the Rowlatt Act.

The Act, which came into force a month before the massacre, allowed political cases to be tried without jury, and imprisonment of suspects without trial.

Gandhi started a campaign against Rowlatt Act and there were violent protests throughout the country, leading to several disruptions.

Following the massacre, the Hunter Commission was appointed to investigate into the matter, which concluded Dyer 'guilty' and relieved of his command.

Udham Singh, a Punjabi revolutionary, killed Michael O’Dwyer, former Lieutenant Governor of Punjab, on March 13, 1940 in London in revenge for the Jallianwalla Bagh Massacre.

He was subsequently convicted and hanged in July 1940.

Bengali poet and Nobel laureate, Rabindranath Tagore renounced the knighthood he had received in 1915.
Turning Point in Indian Freedom Struggle

JALLIANWALA MASSACRE

April 13, 1919

1919: Resentment was high in Punjab after the ruthless British drive to recruit soldiers for World War I and forced contribution for the war fund.

MARCH 30 AND APRIL 6: Gandhi’s call for a country-wide ‘hartal’ to protest against the Rowlatt Act of 1919 received a tremendous response from Punjab.

APRIL 9: Ram Navami day, the Hindu-Muslim solidarity in the celebrations and the unity during the ‘hartal’ days made Punjab Lt Governor Michael O’Dwyer’s administration panicky.

- Gandhi’s entry into Punjab was banned.
- Two popular leaders of Amritsar, Saifuddin Kitchlew and Satya Pal arrested.

APRIL 11: Continuing provocations by Britishers led to mass demonstrations in Lahore, Kasur and Gujranwala. Police action in Amritsar led to violence and the city’s law & order was handed over to Brigadier-General Reginald Dyer.

APRIL 13: Baisakhi day, a meeting was called in Jallianwala Bagh. Suddenly Dyer appeared there with troops, blocked the exits and without any warning to the people, ordered firing on the completely peaceful and defenceless crowd. The fusillade continued till Dyer’s ammunition ran out. Over a thousand people were reported killed and many more injured.

MAY 31: Rabindranath Tagore renounced his Knighthood in protest. The country was now getting charged up to fight British rule.

OCT 14: British government forms a committee of inquiry into the events in Punjab.

NOV 19: Appearing before the Hunter Committee set up to investigate the ghastly act, Dyer admitted that he acted so to strike terror not only in the city of Amritsar, but throughout Punjab.

Source: Excerpts from Recollections and Reflections by Chimanlal H. Setalvad

KBK Infographics
Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu released a postage stamp and a coin commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre on April 13, 2019

**National Safe Motherhood Day - April 11**

- The day intends to raise awareness about the proper healthcare of women and maternity facilities to pregnant and lactating women apart from striving to prevent child marriages, an indirect cause of maternal deaths.

- Theme 2019 - "Midwives for Mothers"
- This day is an initiative of the White Ribbon Alliance India (WRAI) to provide women with various healthcare programs during pregnancy, childbirth and postnatal services.
- The day was first observed in 2003
- 11 April marks the birth anniversary of Kasturba Gandhi

**National Handloom week - April 7 to April 14**

- It is a celebration of the country’s 5,000-year old tradition of hand weaving cloths
- On this occasion, a book named ‘The Indian textile Sourcebook’ authored by Avalon Fotheringham and published by Thames and Hudson was launched on 9th April.
- In 2018, the National Handloom Week was observed during December month.
- The National Handloom Day is observed on 7th August every year across India.
- It was on this day that the Swadeshi Movement was launched in 1905.
- The First National handloom day was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on August 7, 2015 in Chennai.
Prevention of Blindness week - April 1 to April 7

- It is observed to alert and awaken the society towards various factors which causes blindness.
- It is organised by National Society for the Prevention of Blindness-India (NSPB-I) along with the support of state and local branches.
- Initiated in 1960, Prevention of Blindness Week was launched by Jawaharlal Nehru and Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur, under Societies Registration Act of 1860.
- Indian Government has also launched another campaign ‘Vision 2020: The Right to Sight’ in collaboration with WHO to prevent blindness.

PM’s INTERNATIONAL AWARDS – A REPORT

- The Prime Minister Narendra Modi - was decorated with the Order of St. Andrew the Apostle, the highest state decoration of Russia - for exceptional services in promoting special and privileged strategic partnership between the Russian Federation and the Republic of India and friendly relations between the Russian and Indian peoples.
GLOBAL RECOGNITION

MAJOR INTERNATIONAL AWARDS CONFERRED ON PM NARENDRA MODI

Zayed Medal of UAE
UAE announced its highest decoration for PM Modi on April 4, 2019, in recognition of his 'pivotal role' in strengthening ties between the two nations.

UN Champions of the Earth Award 2018
The highest environmental honour of the UN. Modi received the award on October 3, 2018 from UN secretary general Antonio Guterres. He was selected in the leadership category for his pioneering work in championing the International Solar Alliance and also as acknowledgement for his unprecedented pledge to eliminate single-use plastic in India by 2022.

Amir Abdulla Khan Award of Afghanistan
PM Modi, during his visit to Afghanistan, was on June 4, 2016 conferred with the Amir Amanullah Khan Award, the highest civilian honour of the country by its president, Ashraf Ghani.

Grand Collar of the State of Palestine
On February 10, 2018, Modi was conferred with the award by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, recognising his contributions in promoting relations between India and Palestine.

Seoul Peace Prize 2018
Conferred on PM Modi for his contributions to the growth of the Indian and global economies, crediting 'Modinomics' for reducing social and economic disparity between the rich and the poor.

King Abdullah Sash Award of Saudi Arabia
Prime Minister Narendra Modi was on April 3, 2016 conferred with Saudi Arabia's highest civilian honour ‘King Abdulaziz Sash’ by King Salman bin Abdulaziz at the Royal Court of Saudi Arabia. Among other notable recipients of this honour are former US President Barack Obama and British ex-PM David Cameron.
TAMIL NADU

Puratchi Thalaivar Dr. M.G. Ramachandran Central Railway Station in Tamil Nadu, with 57 letters – gets the honour of having the longest railway station name in India.

- Earlier, the honour for the longest station name in India belonged to Venkatanarasimharajuvaripeta in Andhra Pradesh.
- The Chennai Central railway station was renamed on April 5, 2019, after the legendary actor and politician of Tamil Nadu.
- About two decades earlier, it was known as Madras Central.
- The second longest station name in the country now is perhaps Krantivira Sangolli Rayanna Bengaluru City, which was renamed in 2015 to honour the soldier of a princely State who fought against the British.
- The third longest name of an Indian railway station is Chattrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus, which has 33 letters, being renamed in 2017 by adding the word Maharaj.
- Both Chennai and Mumbai railway stations have undergone three rounds of renaming so far.
STATES

The election fought in Nizamabad Parliamentary constituency with 185 candidates in the fray - is likely to make it to the Guinness World Records.

- For the first time in the country since electronic voting machines (EVMs) were introduced in 1998, as many as 12 ballot units at each polling station were used.
- So far, the record was for the conduct of polling with four ballot units, which were the M2 models with a maximum of 64 names.
- Besides, over 7,000 EVMs — which is also a record — were pressed into service in the constituency comprising seven Assembly segments.
- The election was successfully conducted using M3 machines that can accommodate 384 names.

NATIONAL

Tata Trusts and Microsoft India - have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to jointly rejuvenate the handloom clusters in the eastern and north-eastern parts of the country.

- Microsoft's Project ReWeave will help preserve traditional weaving forms by upskilling workers, designing and marketing merchandise, and creating sustainable livelihood options.
- Microsoft will also enable digital training through Project Sangam, a Microsoft Azure-based Learning Management System, to the weaving communities.
- Tata Trusts’ initiative, Antaran, aims at rejuvenating ailing handloom clusters through an end-to-end programme in Odisha, Assam and Nagaland.
The Guwahati Railway Station - has become the first ever railway station in the Indian Railways to get an ISO certification from the National Green Tribunal (NGT) for ‘providing passenger amenities in a clean and green environment'

- ISO certification received by Guwahati Railway Station is ISO-14001, which is for Environment Management System as per international norms which were upgraded in 2015
- Thus, the station’s certificate reads ISO 14001: 2015
- ISO, International Organisation for Standardization, is responsible for establishing the standard in the different area of activities
- It was founded on 23 February 1947 at London, UK
- It has its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland

Amazon India - launches a new seller-funding programme named 'Amazon Wings'

- It aims to help the small businesses and entrepreneurs to raise funds through the crowd funding platform
- Amazon India sellers can use the Ketto’s platform for a subsidized fee which is around 50% to initiate fundraisers

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) - has signed an MoU with The Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) - to protect and restore small wetlands in the coastal regions

- Smaller wetlands (which were smaller than 2.25 hectares) cover an area of more than 5 lakh hectares across the country, with Kerala alone having around 2,592 such wetlands
- As per the MoU, a mobile app and a centralised web portal with a complete database of wetlands in the country will be developed
- It will aid in developing a comprehensive wetland information system which could facilitate the village-level wetland advisories to the stakeholders
- The collaboration is part of the national framework for fisheries and wetlands recently developed under the National Innovations in Climate Resilient Agriculture (NICRA)
Essel World – launches India’s first interactive bird park in Gorai, Mumbai, Maharashtra

✓ The first-of-its-kind rainforest-themed park spread across 1.4 acres is home to over 500 exotic birds from more than 60 species
✓ The park is carefully designed to ensure appropriate living conditions for the birds
✓ The park is equipped with small ponds for aquatic birds, dense cover of trees for birds to incubate their eggs and a water stream that offers drinking water to birds.

INTERNATIONAL

London - becomes the first city in the world to launch 24x7 'pollution charge zone'

✓ It has started implementing a special Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) that would charge an entry fee for older vehicles if they do not meet the emission standards.
✓ This move aims to reduce toxic air pollution and protect public health.

Saudi Arabia - has reopened a consulate in Baghdad for the first time in nearly 30 years

✓ It has also announced a one billion dollars aid package for Iraq.
✓ Saudi Arabia cut ties with Iraq when the latter invaded Kuwait in 1990

United Nations Security Council (UNSC) - voted unanimously to completely end its peacekeeping operations in Haiti on October 15

✓ U.N. Peace Keeping Mission in Haiti was known as MINUSTAH, a French acronym which stood for “The United Nations is not leaving”
✓ MINUSTAH began operations in Haiti in 2004, when a violent rebellion swept the country and forced then-President Jean-Bertrand Aristide out of power into exile
India and Other Countries

- **India - signs pact with Sweden to address challenges around smart cities and clean technologies among others**
  - The programme titled, The India-Sweden Collaborative Industrial Research and Development Programme, was co-funded by Indian Department of Science and Technology (DST) and Swedish agency Vinnova
  - It is technically and administratively managed by the Global Innovation & Technology Alliance (GITA)

- **India – announced as the Guest of honour at the Abu Dhabi International Book Fair, ADIBF 2019, to be held at the end of April 2019**
  - The Book Fair aims to highlight the UAE’s rich heritage, showcasing its authenticity and modernity, as well as its cultural and literary output.

Personalities

- **Rahul Sharma, the co-founder of Micromax - unveils India’s first Artificial Intelligence-enabled e-motorcycle brand**
  - For the purpose, he has started a new enterprise called Revolt Intellicorp Pvt. Ltd, at an investment between Rs 400 crore to Rs 500 crore
  - The proposed AI-enabled motorcycle will have a range of 156.8 km and a top speed of 85km/hr.
  - The commercial launch of the motorcycle is scheduled in June this year.
NASA’s Curiosity rover in Mars – drills into a ‘clay-bearing’ unit and takes clay sample for the first time

- Curiosity collected a sample of bedrock called “Aberlady” on April 6, which the rover returned to its mineralogy lab on April 10
- Scientists are particularly keen to look for traces of clay minerals, as the presence of these minerals can indicate whether there used to be water present in the region
- The clay-bearing unit is near to a rocky landmark named “Knockfarril Hill” and the Vera Rubin Ridge, where the rover was previously situated

Google - has introduced a new open platform called 'Anthos' to run and manage apps from anywhere

- It is based on the Cloud services platform, launched by Google in 2018
- It lets users run applications on existing hardware investments or in the Public Cloud
- Anthos will also let users manage workloads running on third-party clouds like Amazon AWS and Microsoft Azure
Phayeng village of Manipur - becomes India's first Carbon-positive village

- As part of the carbon-positive village project, Phayeng will receive a grant of Rs10 crore in phases to facilitate afforestation in the catchment of river Maklang that flows along the village.
- Its conservation efforts are mainly linked to the belief that the forest is a sacred grove.
- It is surrounded by three densely forested hillocks with fruit trees at centre and a stream flowing through it.
- A village is given the Carbon-Positive Tag if it isolates more carbon than it emits, thereby slowing the accumulation of greenhouse gases and mitigating the effects of climate change.

DEFENCE

Navy chief Admiral Sunil Lanba - inaugurated state-of-the-art Virtual Reality Centre (VRC) in New Delhi - to develop indigenous warship designs for the Navy

- It is housed at the Directorate of Naval Design (Surface Ship Group), which is a premier organisation for the design of submarines and submersibles.
ECONOMY

Food Inflation in the country – falls to its lowest level in 27 years at 0.1% increase from last year

- It means that average food prices in 2018-19 were almost the same as they were in 2017-18—a phenomenon not seen for at least 27 years.
- As per an analysis by credit rating agency Crisil, food inflation measured by the consumer price index rose only 0.1% in 2018-19.
- The last time annual food inflation had fallen below 1% was in 1999-2000.
- Economists attribute low food prices to a string of factors including bumper crop, low demand, low global prices, and muted impact of increased minimum support prices (MSP).
- Food inflation has been falling consistently since 2013-14, which was the last year prices had risen by more than 10% annually.

Dubai-based Emirates Islamic - becomes the world's first Islamic bank to launch banking services via WhatsApp
- The bank had recently launched 'Chat Banking' services, that allows customers to use features such as checking account balances and temporarily blocking or unblocking of an existing card.
AWARDS

- Indian Astrologer Dr Sohini Sastri - has been honoured with 'D. Litt in Astrology' by National American University, USA

- She is also a receipt of 'Champions of Change Award' which was given to her by Honourable Vice-President of India, M. Venkaiah Naidu at Vigyan Bhawan, Delhi recently
- Other prominent personalities who were also awarded Doctorates at the same event include Bollywood singer Mohit Chauhan and choreographer Terence Lewis.

SPORTS


- Anand finished the event with 4.5 points, the same as Alexander Grischuk and Teimour Radjabov.
- However, he was placed fifth in the rankings behind Magnus Carlsen(7), Ding Liren (5), Sergey Karjakin (5), and Grischuk (4.5)

- Meena Kumari Maisnam - wins gold medal in the 54 kg at the Boxing World Cup in Cologne on April 13

- Sakshi (57kg) and Pwilao Basumetary (64kg) lost their final bouts and had to settle for the silver while Pinki Rani (51kg) and Parveen (60kg) won bronze as India finished with five medals.
Bibhu Kalyan Nayak - became the first Indian to be appointed Chair of International Hockey Federation (FIH) Health and Safety Committee by the world governing body

✓ A native of Bhubaneswar, Nayak has extensively trained in Sports Traumatology and Sports and Exercise Physiology from National Institute of Sports Medicine at Havana, Cuba & National Sports Centre at Madrid.
✓ Nayak also served as a medical officer for the 2018 Men's World Cup

Former Indian cricketer Murali Kartik – named as the brand ambassador of Fantasy 11, a fantasy sports platform

✓ Fantasy Gaming Space is rapidly growing and is expected to reach 100 million users by 2020.
✓ Karthik was the ‘Official Fan Management Partner’ for the recently conducted Premier Badminton league
✓ Other famous sports personalities who were appointed brand ambassadors include
  ✓ Dream 11 - MS Dhoni
  ✓ CricPlay - Gautam Gambhir
  ✓ HalaPlay - Hardik Pandya and his brother Krunal
  ✓ Fantain - Suresh Raina
  ✓ Fanmojo - Prithvi Shaw
TAMIL NADU

Project Kannamma - an initiative of the Rotary Club of Madras North to provide sanitary napkins to the students is carried out successfully in the state.

- It was started in August 2018 by providing free, biodegradable sanitary napkins to 82 students at the Government High School in Uthandi of Tamil Nadu.
- Now it covers over 300 students across Government schools in and around Chennai.
- The sanitary napkins are provided by the Irula Tribal Women’s Welfare Society, using Arunachalam Muruganantham machines.
- The sanitary napkin, under the brand Aavaram, is prepared with natural raw materials such as cotton and wood pulp, and a pack of six costs just Rs 22.
- If the group sells 15,000 pads per month, it can sustain the families of 12 tribal women, leading to their welfare also.

NATIONAL

India - sets up an exclusive Indo-Pacific wing in Ministry of External affairs.

- The brain child of foreign secretary, Vijay Gokhale, it aims to propagate the policy proclaimed by the Prime Minister at the Shangri-La Dialogue in 2018.
For the time being, it will be headed by joint secretary, Vikram Doraiswami, for whom it will be an additional charge apart from Myanmar and Bangladesh.

The division will integrate the Indian Ocean Rim (IOR) Association, Asean region and the Quad to the Indo-Pacific table.

It has to be recollected that United States has recently renamed its Pacific command as 'Indo-Pacific' command.

The birth centenary of Marshal of Indian Air Force, Arjan Singh - to be celebrated on April 15 across the country.

The 'iconic' air warrior served as the Chief of IAF from 1964 to 1969.

He was awarded a Distinguished Flying Cross during the Burma campaign of World War II.

He successfully marshalled his force during the 1965 Indo-Pak war, after initial setbacks.

He has also served as India's envoy to Switzerland and Kenya in 1970s apart from serving as the Lieutenant-Governor of Delhi during 1989-90.

Being a Philanthropist, he has donated Rs 2 crore for the welfare of retired IAF personnel and their families.

In 2002, he became only the third Service chief to be conferred with the Field Marshal rank, the highest honorary rank in the armed forces, after former Army chief's Sam Manekshaw and KM Cariappa.

Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw was the architect of the swift military operation to liberate Bangladesh in 1971.

The then President KR Narayanan had conferred the five-star rank on Marshal of the Air Force Arjan Singh in January 2002.

Marshal Arjan Singh passed away as the country's last surviving five-star general, in 2017.
Union Cabinet - approved the continuation of the GSLV Phase - 4 programmes, consisting of five GSLV flights during the period from 2021 to 2024

- Phase 4 will enable the launch of two ton class of satellites for Geo-imaging, Navigation, Data Relay Communication and Space Sciences.
- The PSLV programme will meet the launch requirement of satellites for providing critical Satellite Navigation Services, Data Relay Communication for supporting the Indian Human spaceflight programme and the next interplanetary mission to Mars.

Bharti Airtel - in collaboration with FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO) had launched a new App ‘My Circle App’

- My Circle app aims to help women in case they face any problem or a panic situation
- A woman in distress can send an SOS alert to any five of their family or friends in 13 languages by pressing the SOS prompt on the app
INTERNATIONAL

✎ World's biggest single day elections - to be held in Indonesia on April 17
✓ It will cover 192 million voters and 245,000 candidates in the national and regional legislative elections of the World's largest Muslim majority country
✓ President Joko Widodo is standing for re-election in the contest with ex-general Prabowo Subianto, whom he had narrowly defeated in 2014

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

✎ United Arab Emirates (UAE) - to host the world's leading Artificial Intelligence (AI) Summit - AIE from April 30 to May 1, 2019

Hosts

EVERYTHING
By GITEX

30 April – 01 May 2019
Dubai World Trade Centre

✓ The 2-day inaugural 'AI Everything', AIE will take place at the Dubai World Trade Centre.
✓ It will be hosted by the UAE National Programme for Artificial Intelligence, with the support of International Telecommunication Union, ITU, and the World Intellectual Property Organisation, WIPO, and in strategic partnership with Smart Dubai.
✓ The summit will witness the debut of Google's Kaggle days, which the largest online community of the world’s data scientists and machine learners
✓ Summit will feature the Supernova Challenge for the best AI-driven product, with cash prizes worth $100,000
✓ The Summit will showcase new AI software, which will enable the blind to safely navigate regular streets and avoid obstacles independent of physical assistance
✓ The show will host more than 100 global AI tech companies and start-ups from more than 30 countries in line with the 'UAE AI Strategy 2031'
DEFENCE

Indian Naval Ship Kozhikode - was decommissioned in a ceremony held at Naval Jetty, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh on 13th April – after three decades of service

- INS Kozhikode was commissioned on December 19, 1988, at Riga (erstwhile USSR)
- Named after the historic port of Calicut, the ship was an integral part of the 21 Mine Counter Measures Squadron, based in ENC at Visakhapatnam
- INS Kozhikode (M71) was a minesweeper of the Karwar class, of similar design to the Pondicherry-class ships that were in service with the Indian Navy till 2012
- It was built by the Sredne-Nevski Shipyard at Saint Petersburg, Russia
- The ship took part in the International Fleet Review 2016 that was held off the coast of Visakhapatnam
- Kozhikode was the sixth and the last of the modified ‘Natya’ class of minesweepers

ECONOMY

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) - has granted Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) with 12 years to cut its stake in the bank by 10%

- LIC is the major shareholder of IDBI Bank with 51% stake in the Bank
- The government is the other major investor in IDBI Bank owning 46.46% while the rest is with the public
- RBI has stipulated that after 12 years LIC has to reduce stake in IDBI Bank by 10% to 40%
- RBI has classified IDBI as a private sector bank last month
- As per the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDAI), LIC can hold up to 15% stake in any bank which can go up to 30% as per the board approval.
- But the insurance regulator has allowed LIC to invest up to 51% in IDBI Bank last year.
HDFC Bank - was ranked at the top of the ‘Forbes Best Indian Banks 2019’ list

- Another private lender ICICI Bank took the second spot, while DBS was at the third rank in Forbes list of Indian banks.
- Kotak Mahindra Bank and IDFC Bank had managed to gain the fourth and fifth spot respectively.
- Syndicate Bank, PNB, Allahabad Bank, Vijaya Bank and Axis Bank were ranked from sixth to tenth respectively.
- Forbes has compiled a first-ever list of the World’s Best Bank 2019 in terms of customer services and technological advancements.
- The banks were rated on the basis of 5 key attributes - trust, digital services, financial advice and fees.
- Forbes had partnered with Statista, a market research company, to measure the best banks in 23 countries.

APPOINTMENTS

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas - sworn in a new government in Palestine on April 13

- His ally in Fateh party, Mohammad Shtayyeh was administered the oath as the new Prime Minister in Ramallah, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank
- The new government was formed after former Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah resigned in January 2019

- It comprises solely of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) factions, primarily the Fatah party and excludes Hamas and the Islamic Jihad group
- Abbas, 83, has served as president of Palestine since 2005
- It is the 18th Palestinian government since the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in 1995
Dr. A K Singh, director at Life Sciences, DRDO - has been honoured with Lifetime Achievement Award 2019 during 4th APJ Abdul Kalam Innovation Conclave at Chandigarh University, Mohali.

- He has made notable contributions in Internal Deporporation of Fission Produced Radionuclides and Infection Imaging.
- He also discovered a Diagnobact Kit to detect the infectious lesion.
- He also introduced Pharmacosyntigraphy, i.e. application of nuclear medicine imaging in drug research.
- For Best Innovative Project Awards 2019, 965 innovative projects competed against each other.
- Pankaj Sharma bagged the first position and Best Innovation of the Year Award 2019, for Smart Trolley Bag project.
- Pratul and Abhishek shared second place.
- Pratul acquired award for Automatic Toilet Cleaner project.
- Abhishek won for prototype model for Accident Management System respectively. Third prize was jointly won by Vaibhav and Daniyal for treatment of textile affluent and plastic with bio-mass to help in controlling water and air pollution.

The 2019 UNESCO/Guillermo Cano Press Freedom Prize - has been awarded to Reuters reporters Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo

- Both Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo had worked hard in reporting on alleged human rights violations in the Myanmar’s state of Rakhine.
- Their documentary on the various crimes committed against Rohingyas landed them behind the bars.
- The UNESCO/Guillermo Cano Press Freedom Prize is funded by the Guillermo Cano Isaza Foundation (Colombia), the Helsingin Sanomatin Taidefund (Finland), and The Namibia Media Trust.
Digital Sukoon founder, Sudhanshu Kumar - was honoured with the Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Nobel Award by International Human Rights Council at Mumbai

- Among the awardee, Digital Sukoon was the Best Digital Agency of the Year 2019 to receive the award
- Yogesh Lakhani of Bright Outdoor Media, Actor Johnny Lever, Jasleen Matharu also received awards in various other categories.

SPORTS

Lewis Hamilton (Great Britain - Mercedes) - wins the Formula one's 1000th race, Chinese Grand Prix in Shanghai

- Five-time world champion, Hamilton already entered into record books as only one of the three drivers to have won five or more championship titles
- The victory brings his 75th career title, just 16 short of the all-time record held by Michael Schumacher

**Fast Facts**

- 1-2 hat-trick for Mercedes this season, the first time a team has achieved it since 1992 (Williams - Nigel Mansell and Riccardo Patrese)
- 75th career victory for the 34-year old Hamilton. Michael Schumacher was 35 when he won his 75th (overall wins: 91).
- The Brit becomes the second driver after the German to lead in 4000 laps in F1 history
- Sixth title for Hamilton in China, powers him to the top of the drivers' standings

- Valtteri Bottas of Mercedes finished second and Sebastian Vettel of Ferrari finished third in the race
- Incidentally, Hamilton also won the 900th race in Bahrain in 2014
- The first Formula 1 race was held in the year 1950
Pakistan’s Inzamam-ul-Haq and South African Mark Boucher - were inducted as the Honorary Life Members of the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC)

- Former Pakistan skipper and batsman Inzamam made his international debut in 1991, featuring in Pakistan’s successful 1992 World Cup campaign.
- In 2016, he became Pakistan’s chief selector.
- Inzamam is now the fifth Honorary Life Member of the MCC from Pakistan, after Imran Khan, Wasim Akram, Waqar Younis and Shahid Afridi
- Mark Boucher was the first wicketkeeper to claim 500 catches in Tests.
- He holds the record for the most wicket keeping dismissals across formats - 998 in total. Boucher is also the fifth Honorary Life Member of the MCC from South Africa, after Allan Donald, Jonty Rhodes, Shaun Pollock and Daryll Cullinan.

WORLD’S LARGEST PLANE TAKES FLIGHT – A REPORT

- World’s largest airplane called ‘Roc’ - was test-flighted for the very first time on April 13, 2019 at Mojave Desert, California
- It was built by Stratolaunch in 8 years time period, to launch rockets into orbit from the air
- Its first flight duration was 2.5 hours at up to 17,000 ft or 5,200 meter above the sea level
- The plane weighs about 227,000 kg and has the biggest wingspan ever built, measuring 118 meter from one end to the other.
- It is powered by six Pratt & Whitney engines, which were originally designed for Boeing 747s
- Stratolaunch was founded in 2011 by the late Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen
As per the report, India’s population grew at an average annual rate of 1.2% between 2010 and 2019 to 1.36 billion.

In comparison, China’s population grew at an average annual rate of 0.5% between 2010 and 2019.

In India, total fertility rate per woman was 5.6 in 1969, dropping to 3.7 in 1994 and 2.3 in 2019.

The life expectancy at birth in 1969 was 47 years, growing to 60 years in 1994 and 69 years in 2019.
As per the report, 27% of the country’s population was in the age bracket of 0-14 years and 10-24 years each, 67% of the country’s population in the 15-64 age bracket and 6% of the country’s population is of the age 65 and above.

The world’s population in 1969 was growing at about 2% a year, meaning it would almost double within the next 25 years at that rate.

As per the report, globally, in 1969, the average number of births per woman was 4.8, compared with 2.9 in 1994, and 2.5 today.
The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) – has allocated four new test spots for ‘drones’ in the State apart from Chennai

- Under the new policy titled ‘Requirements for operation of Civil Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS) 2018’, created to regulate and control operation of the Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) to ensure flight safety, the DGCA has assigned 4 test spots at Vellore, Salem, Coimbatore and Erode
- Drone operators are supposed to register with https://digital-sky.dgca.gov.in/ to use these test spots
- In Chennai, researchers and developers can fly their drones inside Anna University college campus
- Recently, ‘Digital Sky’, a single-window system for issue of Unique Identification Number (UIN), unmanned Aircraft Operator Permit (UAOP) and day-to-day operation of drones has been launched
- Drones will be embedded with encrypted firmware to receive permissions through the ‘Digital Sky’ application before take-off
 Taiwanese smartphone manufacturer, Foxconn – to commence mass production of iPhones in India this year at its factory in Sriperumbudur outside Chennai

- Apple had been concentrating on making its iPhone production in China so far
- Apple’s older model phones, including iPhone7, at its other supplier Wistron’s facility in Bengaluru for several years
- Taiwanese industrial major Wistron assembles iPhone 6S in the country.
- Wistron has also announced plans to invest Rs 3,000 crore in the Narasupra industrial sector in Karnataka’s Kolar district
- Foxconn already has two assembly sites in the southern Indian states of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, where it makes devices for Xiaomi and Nokia.

A 24 MW floating solar power plant – to come up at the Tuticorin factory complex of SPIC (Southern Petrochemicals Industries Corporation)

- It will be owned by Greenam Energy, a wholly-owned subsidiary of AM International Holdings, Singapore
- EDAC Engineering, a SPIC group company, is undertaking construction of the project that is owned by Greenam.
- Ashwin Muthiah, founder chairman of AM International Group, is also the chairman of SPIC
- The project intends to supply electricity to SPIC and the excess will be sold to the state power utilities

NATIONAL

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister – approves Rs 4,315.15 crore – for the implementation of 10% reservation for economically weaker section (EWS) from among the general category

- The reservation pays the way for the creation of 2,14,766 additional seats across 158 centrally funded higher education institutes over a period of two years
- The Rajya Sabha had approved the amendment of the Constitution to provide 10% reservation to general category poor in jobs and education on January 9
- The quota will be over and above the existing reservation for OBCs, SCs and STs
The Indian Meteorological Department – predicts a ‘near normal’ South West monsoon this year

- As per IMD, the country would witness 96% of long period average
- The Long Period Average (LPA) of the seasonal rainfall over the entire country for the period 1951-2000 is 89 cm
- The monsoon is categorized as ‘normal’ when the June-September period has rainfall in the range of 96-104% of the LPA
- If it falls in the range of 90-96% of the LPA, the seasonal rainfall is considered ‘below normal’
- The forecast also indicates a 17% probability of drought and 32% probability of ‘below normal’ rainfall
- The IMD had predicted normal rainfall (97% of the LPA with a model error of +/-5%) for the year 2018, but it turned out to be ‘below normal’ with nearly 91% of the LPA
- It differs from the forecast of private agency, Skymet, which had predicted on April 3 a ‘below normal’ monsoon this year during the June-September monsoon period at 93% of the LPA, due to the emergence of ‘El-nino’ condition, a cyclic warming of the central and eastern pacific region
- IMD will also release the region-wise and month-wise distribution of rainfall in first week of June
- A temperature rise greater than 1 degree Celsius for three months continuously is considered a “strong” El Nino (and which is threatening to the monsoon).
- A 0.5 degree Celsius to 1 degree Celsius rise is called “weak El Nino conditions.” Currently, the El Nino is 0.9 degree Celsius.
COURT VERDICTS

◆ The Supreme Court – stays the reservation in promotion for SC/STs in Government jobs – for want of quantifiable data to the Centre and the State on the adequacy of their representation

CASE HISTORY

▶ In Sept, a Constitution bench had said promotion quota could be implemented but ruled that “creamy layer exclusion” principle, which applied only to OBCs, could be extended to SCs and STs
▶ Following SC’s verdict in Jarnail Singh case, Delhi HC in November directed Centre to implement SC order
▶ Challenging HC decision, Centre moved SC and said it was not possible to implement order within 3 months

 ✓ A bench of Justice S A Bobde and Abdul Nazeer directed that status quo to be maintained till the issue is decided by the Government

◆ The Madras High Court – has ordered strict adhering of rules in schools, including immediate implementation of biometric attendance system, merit-cum-seniority based promotion and verification of their movable and immovable assets against the declarations of teachers

 ✓ Justice SM Subramaniam, while passing the orders, said that teachers and non-teaching staff of Government schools should not oppose the advanced Aadaar-based biometric attendance system, as it strives to create a fool-proof attendance system in state’s public services
INTERNATIONAL

◆ FBI – has barred Chinese academics from visiting US, if they are suspected of having links to Chinese intelligence agencies
  ✓ The move follows the cancellation of visas to around 30 Chinese professors in the social sciences, heads of academic institutes and experts helping government policies as part of FBI’s counterintelligence operation
  ✓ The Chinese scholars are barred as part of the US administration’s crack down on intellectual property theft by Chinese scientists working at American research institutions
  ✓ President Xi Jinping has set a goal for China to become a global scientific power by 2049

◆ European Union – approves the tougher copyright rules on April 15 to protect its own creative industries
  ✓ The move, aimed at ensuring fair compensation for the EU’s $1 trillion creative industries, is a big blow to online giants like Google, Facebook etc.,
  ✓ Under the new rules, these online platforms will have to sign licensing agreements with musicians, performers, authors and journalists to use their work
  ✓ The sharing platforms should install filters to prevent users from uploading copyrighted materials
  ✓ The change was endorsed by 19 countries including France and Germany and opposed by Finland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland and Sweden with Belgium, Estonia and Slovenia abstaining

◆ Notre Dame cathedral, the iconic symbol of the beauty and history of Paris - was ravaged by an extensive fire on April 15
The cause of the fire was not immediately known and there was no immediate indication that anyone had been hurt.

A jewel of medieval Gothic architecture built in the 12th and 13th centuries, Notre Dame, was a landmark not only for Paris but for the entire world.

The cathedral is visited by about 30,000 people a day and around 13 million people a year.

Notre Dame has stood tall above Paris since the 1200s and has given its name to one of the country’s literary masterpieces — Victor Hugo’s ‘The Hunchback of Notre Dame’. The last time the cathedral suffered major damage was during the French Revolution.

It survived two world wars largely unscathed.

Notre Dame Cathedral had been undergoing a massive renovation, with a hefty price tag of $180 million.

The cathedral is used by the Roman Catholic Church for Sunday mass each week and is the seat of the Archbishop of Paris, Michel Christian Alain Aupetit, who has held the position since January 2018.

In 1804, the cathedral was the site where the Coronation of Napoleon I as Emperor of France.

The Cathedral celebrated its 850th anniversary in the year 2013.

Notre Dame is French for “Our Lady” and refers to the Virgin Mary.

**SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT**

**Scientists in Israel – unveils World’s first 3-D printed heart with human tissues and vessels intact**

A biopsy of fatty tissue taken from patients was used in the development of ‘ink’ for the 3-D print.

The heart, produced by researchers at Tel Aviv University, will go a long way in producing hearts suitable for transplant into humans.
A Cubesat team led by an Indian-American student – will be flown into space on future missions of NASA

- The team of researchers from the Yale Undergraduate Aerospace Association led by 21-year old Keshav Raghavan is among the 16 teams selected across US, whose CubeSats will be flown into space on missions planned to launch in 2020, 2021 and 2022
- The team’s Cubesat is named ‘BLAST’ (Bouchet Low-Earth Alpha/Beta Space Telescope), after physicist Edward A Bouchet, the first African-American to receive a PhD in US
- It had designed the satellite over a period of four years through the launch grant of NASA’s CubeSat Launch Initiative competition
- According to NASA, BLAST is a scientific investigation mission to map the distribution of galactic cosmic radiation across the night sky.
- It will identify alpha and beta particle in the rays, and measure the radiation energy around Earth
- The investigation aims to search the origins of these rays to provide insight into the origins of the universe

DEFENCE

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) - successfully test-fired the underdevelopment, indigenous, long range subsonic cruise missile Nirbhay from the Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur in Odisha on April 15

- The organisation has conducted five trials since 2013 before the test, with the last trial conducted on November 7, 2017
- It is a nuclear-capable cruise missile and can carry warheads of up to 300 kg
- It is capable of targeting any object within 1,000 km range, covering the target range in 42 minutes and 23 seconds
- The state-of-the-art Nirbhay missile can eventually be deployed from multiple platforms – sea, land, aircraft and underwater.
The latest test was conducted from the land.
DRDO is also planning to develop ship, aircraft and submarine-launched version of this cruise missile.
Su-30 MKI fighter planes will be equipped with such missiles once they are ready. DRDO wants to increase Nirbhay’s range to 1,500 km.

AWARDS

Three Indian student teams - won awards in NASA’s annual Human Exploration Rover Challenge at the US Space and Rocket Centre in Huntsville, Alabama

The team from KIET Group of Institutions in Ghaziabad won the "AIAA Neil Armstrong Best Design Award" in the college/university division
The Mukesh Patel School of Technology Management and Engineering from Mumbai won the "Frank Joe Sexton Memorial Pit Crew Award" in the college/university division
The Mukesh Patel school also won the System Safety Challenge Award at the competition hosted by NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville and held at the US Space and Rocket Centre.

Lovely Professional University from Phagwara, Punjab, won the STEM Engagement Award.

NASA astronaut and two-time spaceflight veteran Sunita "Suni" Williams also interacted with teams and participating in the activities.

The International Space Education Institute of Leipzig, Germany, won first place in the high school division with 91 points and the University of Puerto Rico Mayaguez - Team 1 won the college/university division with 101 points.

Nearly 100 teams took part in the competition, hailing from 23 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, as well as a record number of countries, including Bangladesh, Germany, India, Mexico, Morocco, and Peru.

Human Exploration Rover Challenge invites high school and college students to build and test roving vehicles for future missions to the Moon, Mars and beyond.
Election Commission – cancels polling for Vellore Lok Sabha constituency in Tamil Nadu, following the cases of largescale cash distribution to influence voters

- This marks the first time polling in a Lok Sabha constituency has been called off on grounds of voter bribery and corrupt practices
- In 2016, assembly polls to Thanjavur and Aravakurichi were cancelled for the same reason, followed by the cancellation of a bypoll to the R K Nagar seat in 2017
- As per a report compiled by the EC on poll-related seizures till April 16, Tamil Nadu had the highest cash seizures among states at ₹204.77 crore, which constituted 30% of the total ₹683.29 crore all-India seizures

The Ma. Aranganathan Literary Awards for 2019 - were presented to writers Veli Rangarajan and Yuma Vasuki in Chennai

- The awards carry a citation and a cash prize of ₹1 lakh each from Munril Literary Society, run by Justice R. Mahadevan of Madras High Court.
- He had instituted the awards last year in memory of his father, a noted Tamil writer, who died on April 16, 2017 at the age of 83.

The Kochi Metro Rail Limited - has tied up with Google Maps to facilitate public access to metro routes, fares, stop timing at each station and duration of the trip

- Till now, Google Maps in Kochi showed only recommendations based on personal commute and trains
KMRL launched the train schedule and fare information in general transit feed specification (GTFS) format and became the first metro agency in India to adopt the open data approach.

Through this initiative, KMRL joins other metro agencies like Delhi Metro Rail Corporation and Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation to push the transit data to Google Maps.

Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Ltd – is planning to introduce first Driverless trains likely from 2021

The driverless trains will be introduced as part of the Communication Based Train Control (CBTC) signalling system for the Yellow Line.

This is the first time that CBTC, commonly called ‘driverless technology’, is being used in Namma Metro.

Currently, Namma Metro uses DTG (distance to go) signalling system, in which the time between two trains is two-and-half minutes.

However, CBTC can reduce train headway to less than 90 seconds.

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) - has notified amendments to Form16 — these revisions will come into force from May 12, 2019

Details of exempt allowances will be disclosed as separate line items — such as leave travel allowance (LTA), house rent allowance (HRA), death-cum-retirement gratuity, to name a few.

Salary from previous employers, if any, during that particular financial year, will also be separately disclosed.
Similarly, deductions claimed by the employer under chapter VI-A of the Income Tax (I-T) Act will be reflected in detail.

CBDT has also announced amendments to Form 24Q, a quarterly TDS statement on deductions against salary income that is filed by the employer.

Indian Institute of Technology, Madras - launched a 'DST Centre of Excellence (CoE) in Climate Change Impacts on Coastal Infrastructure and the Adaptation Strategies' on its campus.

- It will play a major role in helping communities in India’s 7,500 km-long coastal line to prepare for the impact of climate change such as rise in sea levels and increased frequency of tropical cyclones.
- The CoE is being established by Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India, at IIT Madras under Indo-German Centre for Sustainability (IGCS) centre.

INTERNATIONAL

Iran Parliament - approved a bill labelling US forces in West Asia as terrorist, a day after the US terrorism designation for Iran’s Revolutionary Guard formally took effect.
- Defence minister General Amir Hatami introduced the bill authorising the government to act firmly in response to “terrorist actions” by US forces.
- It demands authorities use “legal, political and diplomatic” measures to neutralise the American move, without elaborating.

PERSONALITIES

A nine-year-old Indian girl - won $1 million jackpot in Dubai Duty Free’s Millennium Millionaire
- Eliza M, a grade school student, won the jackpot with ticket No.0333.
- She is the 140th Indian national to win a million dollars in the Dubai Duty Free lottery since its inception in 1999.
In the same raffle, she had won a luxury McLaren Coupe in January 2013

**SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT**

 덧붙여, Nasa의 최신 행성 탐색 공격 유전자 (TESS)는 그녀의 첫 번째 지구중형 행성의 행성을 탐색하는 데 성공했습니다. 이 행성은 53광년 떨어져 있습니다.

- It has also discovered a warm sub-Neptune-sized world in the same system.
- The Planet Finder Spectrograph (PFS) on the Magellan II telescope in Chile helped confirm the planetary nature of the TESS signal, and to measure the mass of the newly discovered sub-Neptune.
- The PFS works using a technique called the radial velocity method, which is currently the only way for astronomers to measure the masses of individual planets.

**AWARDS**

- The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal were awarded Pulitzer Prizes for their separate investigations of President Donald Trump and his family.
- The Times won the journalism award for explanatory reporting for its probe of the Trump family’s finances.
- The South Florida Sun Sentinel won the Pulitzer for public service for its coverage of failings by school and law enforcement officials.
- In the breaking news category, the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette was honoured for its coverage of the October 2018 shooting at a synagogue in the city.
- The Associated Press won a Pulitzer for international reporting for its coverage of the war in Yemen.
- Reuters was honoured for international reporting for its coverage of atrocities committed against Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar.
NOTRE DAME FIRE – A REPORT

To understand why the fire at Notre Dame cathedral has plunged France into gloom and drawn messages of solidarity from across Europe and the world, one has to only look at its long history. But the French can take heart from the resilience that the church, whose name translates to “Our Lady of Paris”, has demonstrated down the centuries, suffering periods of damage and neglect but always succeeding in rising from the ashes.

### How the fire spread

1. **The fire began in the attic**
   - The attic’s structure is built from wooden beams, some of which date back to the 12th century. Once they began burning, it was almost impossible to douse the fire, whose exact cause remains unknown.

2. **It spread to the iconic spire in an hour**
   - In under an hour, the fire spread from the attic to the spire, a 300-foot-high wooden structure covered in lead. It was engulfed in flames in minutes, falling to one side before collapsing completely.

3. **The entire rooftop went up in flames**
   - After the spire toppled, the fire spread quickly across the rest of the cathedral’s roof and about two-thirds of the wooden rooftop was destroyed completely.

### WHAT SURVIVED: officials have recovered several relics and artefacts

- **Stone towers**: Though fires were reported to have broken out in the North and South Towers, they were contained.
- **The tunic of Saint Louis**: A 13th century garment of King Louis, the only French king to become a saint.
- **Stained glass window**: North Rose stained glass window survived but conflicting reports regarding the West and South Rose windows have emerged.
- **The Holy Crown of Thorns**: Believed to contain a part of the original crown of thorns placed on Jesus’ head during his crucifixion.
- **The Great Organ**: Contains 8,000 pipes and was built in 1403. There is concern some of its pipes may have been damaged.
- **Copper statues**: Sixteen sculptures representing Twelve Apostles and four evangelists were removed from the spire last week for renovation.

### WHAT WAS LOST: Several items were damaged by the fire and the status of some is unknown

- **The 300-foot spire that contained relics of two patron saints of Paris was destroyed**
- **The condition of the descent from the cross sculpture, one of the centrepieces that lies on the high altar, remains unknown though photos show it was not damaged**
- **While the Crown of Thorns was saved, the statue of the True Cross and Holy Nails, relics from Jesus’ crucifixion, is not known**
- **Madonna and Child, the statue known as Notre Dame de Paris that shares its name with the cathedral, is not yet confirmed as secured**
- **Also, the condition of several paintings, sculptures and cathedral structures, including 10 bells, remains unknown**

### The spire that inspired Hugo’s ‘Hunchback of Notre Dame’

- **Napoleon Bonaparte**, one of the most celebrated generals of all time, was crowned French emperor in the cathedral in 1804. But that is recent history for a church that began to take shape 850 years ago.
- **1163 | Construction begins**
- **1345 | Construction is completed. Time taken is a little more than 180 years**
- **1790 | Year of the French Revolution. That decade would see the church suffer damage, neglect**
- **1831 | French writer Victor Hugo’s novel, ‘The Hunchback of Notre Dame’, tells readers about the church’s decrepit state, leading to restoration efforts**
- **1991 | Cathedral included on Unesco’s list of World Heritage sites as part of “Paris, Banks of the Seine”**
- **2000-present | Notre-Dame draws 13 million visitors every year. It continues to be used for Sunday mass and is the seat of the Archbishop of Paris**

Source: NYT, media reports
OPEN SIGNAL’S MOBILE NETWORK EXPERIENCE – A REPORT

JIO HAS BEST 4G AVAILABILITY, AIRTEL TOPS DOWNLOAD SPEED
Reliance Jio is not just making rivals sweat but is also setting records globally. At 97.5%, the LTE network availability of Jio is the highest among all countries surveyed, finds global analytics firm OpenSignal’s Mobile Network Experience report. The study says Bharti Airtel is giving Jio a tough fight, gaining 10 percentage points in the last six months to achieve almost 86% 4G availability. Airtel also ranks first in download speeds, and offers users the best video experience. The Jio effect is hard to ignore, but India’s other operators have not been complacent and are investing in improving service, OpenSignal’s CEO Brendan Gill told TOI.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4G AVAILABILITY</th>
<th>AVERAGE UPLOAD SPEED (Mbps)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reliance Jio 97.5%</td>
<td>Idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airtel 85.6%</td>
<td>Vodafone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AVERAGE DOWNLOAD SPEED (Mbps)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Airtel 8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jio 6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airtel 70.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: OpenSignal India Mobile Network Experience Report, April 2019
Compiled by: Sindhu Hariharan
Tamil Nadu – ranked at 17th position in learning outcomes, 4th position in infrastructure and facilities and among the top 5 in the governance process – in the first-ever nationwide performance index for school education

✓ Tamil Nadu has secured the top position in the domain of equity, considering the marginal difference among scheduled caste (SC) students and those in the general category in rural and urban areas

✓ Kerala and Gujarat got Grade I (801-850 points), Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan managed Grade II (751-800), while Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Nagaland were in Grade VI, the lowest.

✓ In the 70-indicator performance grading index (PGI) prepared by the Union ministry of human resource development (MHRD) for the 29 states for 2017-18, the total weightage is 1,000 points with each of the 70 indicators assigned 10-20 points.
Greater Chennai Corporation - is likely to get Rs 100 crore funds from the Union government’s Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) soon - for restoring around 59 lakes under its jurisdiction

- Nesavalar and Kadapakkam lakes, for which the Chennai Rivers Restoration Trust has prepared a detailed project report (DPR), would benefit the most from this fund.
- Around ₹25 crore will be spent for these lakes and the rest of the fund will be spent for the rejuvenation of another 57, for which the Tamil Nadu Water Investment Corporation is preparing a DPR currently.
- These 57 water bodies include lakes in Perungudi, Sholinganallur and Madhavaram zones.
- Of the 210 water bodies identified in Chennai, five were restored at ₹5.95 crore from the corporation’s capital funds.
- Villivakkam lake was restored under the smart city project at ₹16 crore.
- About 50 lakes are being restored under the smart city project at a cost of ₹18 crore.
- The restoration process usually involves formation of bunds, de-silting, fencing and clearing the inlet, outlet and channels of the lakes.

**NATIONAL**

Jet Airways, India’s longest-serving private carrier - shut down operations after a 26-year journey, during which it flew 650 flights a day at its peak with over 120 planes

- Jet will take to the skies again only if it finds a new buyer who revives it.
- Jet Airways is compelled to cancel all international and domestic flights immediately with the last flight operating on April 17 at 10.30 pm.
- The airline had sent a final SOS to lenders for ₹983-crore emergency funding to remain afloat on April 16.
The journey of Jet Airways began on May 5, 1993, with its maiden Mumbai-Ahmedabad 9W321 flight
The plane was a Boeing 737 of Jetlite — the name Naresh Goyal gave to Air Sahara after buying it in 2007 for ₹1,450 crore
The carrier operated on 380 international routes including flights to London, Amsterdam and Paris.
Jet's last flight — Amritsar-Mumbai, finished in Mumbai, where it all started
Various factors including the increasing cost of aviation turbine fuel, low-cost model leading to rising operational cost and the decline in operations contributed to the downfall of the Jet empire

INTERNATIONAL

The Donald Trump administration - has decided to stop the US government practice of disclosing the current size of the nuclear weapons stockpile
The Obama administration, in May 2010, had declassified for the first time the full history of the US nuclear weapons stockpile from its beginning in 1945
Last year, the Trump administration had disclosed that the stockpile consisted of 3,822 nuclear warheads, down 196 warheads from the year before

Sony - has launched a taxi-hailing service in Tokyo, named S.Ride
Sony S.Ride uses artificial intelligence (AI) technology to predict where demand will be highest and dispatch drivers accordingly
The S in S.Ride stand for simple, smart, and speedy
Everybody's taxi is a joint venture of Sony and Sony payment service with five taxi companies in Tokyo
The taxi vehicles owned by these five taxi companies currently exceed 10,000, the largest in Tokyo.

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

The 4th Resilient Cities Asia-Pacific (RCAP) 2019 Congress – concluded in New Delhi between April 15 to 17, 2019

It was organised by ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability and hosted by South Delhi Municipal Corporation
It offered cities and regions from Asia-Pacific a variety of innovative solutions that build resilience to climate change at the sub-national level.

The United Nations session at the event brought together representatives from various UN agencies like UNDP-GEF, UNESCAP, UN-HABITAT and UNIDSR for technical sessions on the implementation and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), and the New Urban Agenda of 2016.

RCAP was launched in 2010.

**SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT**

*Śri Lanka - launched its first satellite ‘Raavana-1’ into space from the Mid-Atlantic Regional Spaceport at NASA’s Wallops Flight Facility on Virginia’s East Shore*

- The satellite was designed and built at the Kyushu Institute of Technology in Japan by two Sri Lankan research engineers.
- Weighing around 1.05 kg, it will have the lifespan of around one and a half years, orbiting at 400 kilometers away from the earth.
- Its ‘camera mission’ will undertake pictures of Sri Lanka and its neighbouring countries.
- Its ‘Lora Demonstration Mission’ aims to validate the module to be used to data download next satellites.
- The ‘Attitude Determination and Control Mission’ of ‘Ravaana 1’ will involve the team trying to reduce the angular velocity of the satellite using magnetic torquers.

*NASA’s Cassini - found lakes of liquid methane on Saturn’s moon ‘Titan’*

- Titan is the only planetary body in our solar system other than Earth known to have stable liquid on its surface.
As per the new findings published in Nature Astronomy, Saturn’s largest moon, Titan, hosts liquid hydrocarbon lakes and seas on its surface.

This composition differs significantly from that of Ontario Lacus, the only major lake in Titan’s southern hemisphere, which is more ethane rich.

Cassini, arrived in the Saturn system in 2004 and ended its mission in 2017 by deliberately plunging into Saturn's atmosphere.

The crucial data for the new research were gathered on Cassini’s final close flyby of Titan, on April 22, 2017.

Titan has a diameter of 5,150 km and is the solar system’s second largest moon, behind only Jupiter’s Ganymede.

It is bigger than the planet Mercury and is the most Earth-like body in the solar system.

**Astronomers from San Diego State University - has discovered a third planet in a two-star system named Kepler-47**

- It is seven times the size of the Earth and the largest in its system.
- In order to study this system, team used NASA’s Kepler space telescope to find the Neptune-to-Saturn-size planet orbiting between two previously known planets.
- The new planet, called Kepler-47d, was not detected earlier due to weak transit signals.
- Kepler-47b and Kepler-47c, both having two Suns in their skies were discovered in 2012.

**Scientists from Ocean University in Qingdao, China and the University of East Anglia in Norwich, England - have discovered a bacteria that eats oil**

- The oil eating bacteria was discovered in the western Pacific Ocean’s 10,994-meter-deep Mariana Trench.
- The expedition was organised by marine explorer and film director James Cameron.

**DEFENCE**

**“Varuna” naval exercise – to commence between India and France off Goa and Karwar from May 1**
✓ It is the largest-ever naval exercise with aircraft carriers, destroyers, submarines and fighters
✓ Both the countries will be deploying their aircraft carriers, INS Vikramaditya with its MiG-29K fighters and FNS Charles de Gaulle with its Rafale-M naval jets, and other warships
✓ India and France are also working to implement their action-oriented joint strategic vision for cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), which was finalized in March 2018
✓ French anti-aircraft destroyer FNS Cassard was docking at the Mumbai naval port in January, according to the reciprocal military logistics support agreement signed between both the countries
✓ Under the pact, the second such one after India signed the first with the US in 2016, Indian warships can similarly access French bases like the Reunion Islands near Madagascar and Djibouti on the Horn of Africa

**ECONOMY**

- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) - issued Rs 50 denomination banknotes signed by the Governor Shaktikanta Das on April 17, 2019

**THE FRENCH MILITARY KISS**

**SCORPENE**: 6 submarines being built at Mazagon Docks (Mumbai) under ₹23,562 crore 'Project-75' linked in 2005. First INS Kalvari commissioned in Dec 2017, now INS Khanderi is ready. All 6 by 2021-22, four years behind schedule

**MIRAGE-2000**: 49 fighters being upgraded under ₹17,847 crore project, which includes 490 MICA missile systems for ₹6,600 crore, inked in 2011-12. Running two years behind schedule, with only about a dozen jets upgraded till now

**RAFALE**: ₹50,000 crore deal for 36 fighters inked in Sept 2016. Delivery of the jets, with 13 India-specific enhancements, slated in the Nov 2019-April 2022 timeframe

France also in contention for over ₹50,000 cr 'Project-75 India' to build 6 stealth submarines in India as well as the multi-billion project to acquire 57 multi-role fighters to operate from aircraft carriers
The design of these notes is similar in all respects to Rs 50 banknotes in Mahatma Gandhi new series.

The fluorescent blue note bears the motif of ‘Hampi with Chariot’ on the reverse that depicts India’s cultural heritage.

It has the Ashoka pillar emblem on the right side of the obverse and bears the year of printing on the reverse side.

It also features a Swachh Bharat logo with slogan besides the language panel.

**APPOINTMENTS**

**Cricketer Mithali Raj** - has been named as the goodwill ambassador of the Indian team for the Street Child Cricket World Cup.

She will join former captain Saurav Ganguly and IPL franchise Rajasthan Royals in supporting the team India for the Street Child Cricket World Cup.

The first ever Cricket World Cup for street children will take place ahead of the 2019 ICC Cricket World Cup in England and Wales.

The Street Child Cricket World Cup aims to unite street children from around the world to play in their own international cricket tournament.
AWARDS

◆ 150 Indian peacekeepers serving with the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) - were bestowed with medals of honour by the United Nations for their dedicated service and sacrifice

✓ Currently, India is the second largest contributor of peacekeepers to UNMISS with more than 2,400 military and police personnel deployed in the mission

SPORTS

◆ Wrestler Bajrang Punia - regained the world No. 1 spot in men’s 65kg freestyle category in the latest rankings issued by United World Wrestling on April 17

✓ The 25-year-old Punia secured 58 ranking points ahead of Akhmed Chakaev of Russia, who has 21 points in his kitty.
✓ Punia won gold in the Asian Games and Commonwealth Games as well as a silver in the World Championships last year

✓ Punia had first reached the world number one spot in November 2018

◆ The International Hockey Federation (FIH) - has imposed a hefty fine of 170,000 Euros on Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) for not honouring the Pro League commitments

✓ The PHF was fined for not sending the national team for the Pro League matches in Argentina, Australia and New Zealand.
✓ PHF Secretary General Shahbaz Ahmed stated that the country is in no position to pay penalty and has requested the FIH to reduce the fine and allow it to be paid in instalments
M Senthilnathan - was named chairman of the TNCA senior state selection committee for the 2019-20 season

✓ He replaces S Sharath who was the chief selection of the state since 2016
✓ This is Senthilnathan’s third term as the state selector

INTERNATIONAL DAY

World Heritage Day - April 18

✓ UNESCO approved of this day in the year 1983 during its 22nd General Conference
✓ World heritage day also aims to seek recognition for the people involved in preserving these sites

✓ The day is also known as the ‘International Day for Monuments and Sites’
✓ Theme 2019 – ‘Rural landscapes’
✓ The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) has recognised 35 World Heritage Sites in India, of which 27 are cultural sites and the other 8 are natural sites.

✓ In a first, UNESCO had inscribed Nalanda Mahavihara or old Nalanda University of Bihar as World Heritage Site on July 15, 2016.

World Haemophilia Day – April 17

✓ The day commemorates the birthday of Frank Schnabel who established the World Federation of Haemophilia in 1963
Haemophilia is a medical condition in which the ability of blood to clot is severely reduced, leading to severe bleeding even for a minor injury.

Britain’s Queen Victoria is the world’s most widely known carrier of haemophilia, giving it a name of the ‘Royal disease’.

It is mostly inherited and is attributed to the defect in the X chromosome, due to which it is more common among men.

Haemophilia A, occurs in about 1 in 5,000 births, while Haemophilia B is even rarer at about 1 in about 20,000 births.

According to the World Federation of Haemophilia’s Annual Global Survey 2017, there were over 1.96 lakh persons living with haemophilia across the world and India tops the list with nearly 19,000 persons.

REPORT

TIME’s 100 Most Influential People-2019 list - released on April 17, 2019

- Reliance Industries Chairman Mukesh Ambani, public-interest litigators Arundhati Katju and Menaka Guruswamy, who spearheaded a historic legal battle for LGBTQ rights in India, are among the Indians who have been included in the list.
- Anand Mahindra, chairman of business conglomerate the Mahindra Group has written the profile of Mukesh Ambani and Priyanka Chopra wrote a profile for Arundhati Katju and Guruswamy.
- Indian origin but American comedian Hasan Minhaj is also a part of 100 most influential people list.
- The TIME 100 list also includes US President Donald Trump, Pope Francis, Chinese President Xi Jinping, Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan, iconic golfer Tiger Woods and Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, US Open winner Naomi Osaka, actor Mahershala Ali, Oscar-winning actor Rami Malek, former first lady Michelle Obama, South Africa’s President Cyril Ramaphosa, Oscar-winning singer and actor Lady Gaga and Abu Dhabi’s Crown Prince Mohamed bin Zayed.
Tamil Nadu and Puducherry - are going to polls on April 18 to elect 40 Lok Sabha MPs. Alongside, 18 assembly segments in TN will have by-elections.

- In Chennai, 38 booths were named as ‘all-women’ polling booths and 61 booths named as ‘Model’ polling booths with sophisticated facilities including air-conditioning etc.
PHASE 2 OF LOK SABHA POLLS – A REPORT

The voting for the Second Phase of Lok Sabha Elections 2019 was held on April 18, 2019 in 95 Lok Sabha Constituencies across 12 States and 1 Union Territory

- The polling for Vellore Parliamentary Constituency and Tripura East Parliamentary Constituency stands deferred
- The first phase of General Elections 2019 began on April 11, 2019 for 91 Parliamentary constituencies, out of the total 543 constituencies, spread over 18 States and 2 Union Territories.

---

Off to the hustings: Phase Two

Polling in the second phase of the 2019 general election will be held across 11 States and one Union Territory today

- TAMIL NADU*: 38 SEATS
- KARNATAKA: 14
- MAHARASHTRA: 10
- UTTAR PRADESH: 8
- ODISHA: 5
- BIHAR: 5
- ASSAM: 5
- WEST BENGAL: 3
- CHHATTISGARH: 3
- J&K: 2
- MANIPUR: 1
- PUDUCHERRY: 1

95 Lok Sabha seats go to the polls in phase 2

Over 15 crore, 79 lakhs and 34 thousand voters will decide the fate of 1,629 candidates

Polling will be held in more than 1.81 lakh booths

50.81% of the electorate are men and 49.18% women

---

Some Key Contests

**TAMIL NADU**

In Thoothukudi, DMK women’s wing leader Kanimozhi is pitted against BJP State president Tamilisai Soundararajan

In Sivaganga, the Congress’s Karti Chidambaram is facing off against the BJP’s national secretary H. Raja

**KARNATAKA**

The JD(S)’s Nikhil Kumaraswamy takes on independent Sumalatha Ambareesh (backed by the BJP)

**UTTAR PRADESH**

In Fatehpur Sikri, it is a three-cornered fight between the Congress’s Raj Babbar, the BJP’s Rajkumar Chahar and the BSP’s Guddu Pandit

**BIHAR**

The JD(U)’s Santosh Kushwaha takes on the Congress’s Uday Singh alias Pappu Singh in Purnia

**MAHARASHTRA**

The Congress’ Sushil Kumar Shinde takes on the BJP’s Siddheshwar Shivacharya Swami and Prakash Ambedkar of the Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi, which has allied with the AIMIM

*Polling in Vellore has been rescinded by the Election Commission*
Tamil Nadu

- 71.62% polling - was recorded in the 18 assembly segments and 70.9% was recorded in polling for the 38 Lok Sabha seats from Tamil Nadu

- Tamil Nadu had recorded 73.74% polling in 2014 and 73.05% polling in 2009 Lok Sabha elections
Harur assembly segment, with 86.96%, recorded the maximum turnout.
With 59.87% voting, Chennai registered the lowest turnout in the state.
In 2009, Chennai South recorded 62.66%; Chennai Central 61.03% and Chennai North 64.91.
In 2014, Chennai South polled 60.4%; Chennai Central is 61.4% and Chennai North is 64%.
Puducherry registered 80.5% polling for the lone Lok Sabha seat.
It had registered 82.10% polling in 2014 and 79.81% in 2009.

**Southern Railway - to introduce the first circular route linking north-western and south-western suburban sections of Chennai within the next 10 days**
The country’s first and longest circular train covering 190 km will be introduced from Chennai Central to Chennai Beach via Tiruvallur, Arakkonam, Thakkolam, Kancheepuram and Chengalpattu
The Chennai zone has recently become the first fully electrified zone in the Southern Railways

### NATIONAL

**The second phase of polling covering 95 Lok Sabha constituencies across 12 states - saw an overall 67.7% turnout, compared with 69.5% in the same seats in 2014.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voter Turnout (in %)</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assam (5 seats)</td>
<td>78.6</td>
<td>76.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bihar (5)</td>
<td>62.3</td>
<td>62.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J&amp;K (2)</td>
<td>50.6</td>
<td>45.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karnataka (14)</td>
<td>67.7</td>
<td>68.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maharashtra (10)</td>
<td>63.3</td>
<td>61.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipur (1)</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>78.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odisha (5)</td>
<td>72.4</td>
<td>62.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamil Nadu (38)</td>
<td>73.0</td>
<td>72.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UP (8)</td>
<td>61.7</td>
<td>62.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Bengal (3)</td>
<td>76.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chhattisgarh (3)</td>
<td>73.0</td>
<td>74.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puducherry (1)</td>
<td>92.1</td>
<td>90.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (95)</td>
<td>68.5</td>
<td>68.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On April 16, the LS poll in Vellore was cancelled in view of excessive abuse of money power and seizure of over ₹11 crore cash meant to bribe voters.

Similarly, the poll in Tripura (East) was deferred to April 23 in the wake of law and order concerns.

**Tashigang, in the cold desert of Spiti in Himachal Pradesh - has been declared as the highest polling station in the world at 15,256 ft**

The polling station will serve 48 voters from Tashigang and its neighbouring hamlet Gete, when Himachal goes to polls on May 19 in the last phase of the Lok Sabha elections.

Before Tashigang, Hikkim in Spiti had the distinction of being the highest polling station in the world at 14,567 ft.

**Air India - hired 150 cabin crew staff of Jet Airways for its international routes on Boeing 777 and Boeing 787 aircraft**

- It also plans to lease 5 Jet Boeing 777 aircraft that have been grounded by Jet Airways, as a goodwill gesture for debt-ridden Jet Airways.
- Even budget carrier SpiceJet announced that it will lease six Boeing 737 planes and roll out additional daily new flights connecting Mumbai and Delhi to encash void left by the temporary grounding of Jet Airways.
- The move came after cash-strapped Jet Airways on April 17, 2019 suspended all its domestic and international flights indefinitely with immediate effect.

**PERSONALITIES**

**US Astronaut Christina Koch - is due to set a record for the longest spaceflight by a woman**

- She reached International Space Station on March 14, 2019 and will remain in space until February 2020.
- Part of Nasa’s study of the effects of long spaceflights on the human body, Koch will spend 328 days in space.
The 40-year-old astronaut has been in orbit since last month after completing the space walk with a man instead of a female colleague.

She should have been in the first all-female spacewalk along with astronaut Anne McClain in late March, but it was scrapped over lack of a right-sized spacesuit for McClain.

The walk was would have occurred during the final week of Women’s History Month.

The typical stay for astronauts is six months, during which they work on a range of experiments in biology, biotechnology, health, earth, space and other sciences.

Astronaut Peggy Whitson holds the record for the longest single spaceflight by a woman, staying in orbit 288 days in 2016 and 2017.

The overall Nasa record of 340 days, set in 2016, is held by astronaut Scott Kelly in an experiment to compare his physical and mental health to his twin Mark Kelly, who remained on earth.

**SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT**

- **Scientists from The Max Planck Institute for Radio Astronomy (MPIfR) in Germany** - have detected the most ancient type of molecule in our universe in space for the first time ever.
  - Helium hydride ion (HeH+) was the first molecule that formed almost 14 billion years ago, due to falling temperatures in the young universe allowed recombination of the light elements produced in the Big Bang.
  - Operating the GREAT far-infrared spectrometer onboard the flying observatory SOFIA, an international team reported the detection of the molecule towards the planetary nebula NGC 7027.
  - Helium combined first with free electrons to form the first ever neutral atom, according to the study published in the journal ‘Nature’.

- **Nepal - successfully launched its first satellite, NepaliSat-1, into space from the US** - to gather detailed geographical information about the country.
  - Developed by two Nepalese scientists, it was launched from Virginia in US.
  - Weighing only 1.3 kilograms, it is a low orbit satellite at the 400-km distance from the Earth’s surface.
Two Nepali scientists, Aabhas Maskey and Hariram Shrestha who are currently studying at Japanese Kyushu Institute of Technology, developed the satellite under the BIRDS project.

The Nepal Academy of Science and Technology invested nearly Rs 20 million for the satellite.

**ECONOMY**

- **Amazon.com Inc** - said it will shut its China online store by July 18, 2019
- The move underscores how well-set home-grown e-commerce rivals have made it difficult for Amazon’s marketplace to gain space in China
- As per Consumer research firm iResearch Global, Alibaba Group Holding’s Tmall marketplace and JD.com controlled 82% of the Chinese e-commerce market last year.
- Amazon entered China in 2004, when it acquired a local online book seller for $75 million
- It launched its Prime membership programme in China in 2016 with aim to lure customers with high-quality Western goods

**AWARDS**

- **Gagandeep Kang**, executive director of the Translational Health Science and Technology Institute (THSTI), Faridabad - has been made a Fellow of the Royal Society, London

  She is the first Indian woman scientist to have been selected as FRS in the 359-year history of the prestigious scientific academy
  Known for her inter-disciplinary research and work in prevention of enteric infections and their sequelae in children in India, Kang has built national rotavirus and typhoid surveillance networks, established laboratories to support vaccine trials and conducted phase 1-3 clinical trials of vaccines.
  This year, 51 distinguished scientists were chosen as fellows of the oldest scientific academy of the world
  Among the 2019 announcements apart from Dr Gagandeep Kang, Mumbai-born Padma Bhushan awardee Dr Yusuf Hamied has also elected as Honorary Fellow.
BOOKS & AUTHORS

'Khooni Vaisakhi' – Released in UAE and India

- The book contains English translation of the 100-year-old Punjabi poem about Jallianwala Bagh massacre
- It was translated by India's Ambassador to the UAE Navdeep Singh Suri whose grandfather, revolutionary poet and novelist Nanak Singh wrote it after witnessing first-hand the events of massacre on April 13, 1919

SPORTS

- In a first such instance, leading Indian biker Vijay Singh - was tested positive for an anabolic steroid by the National Anti-Doping Agency (Nada)

- The Jaipur-born racer is provisionally suspended effective January 25, 2019
- Singh’s sample was collected by Nada during the JK Tyre FMSCI National Racing Championships – Round 4, which was held at the Buddh International Circuit (BIC) in Greater Noida from November 15-18
- It had traces of banned substance Stanozolol, which is a rarity in a sport like motorsport which isn’t necessarily a power sports like wrestling or weightlifting
- Singh won the 600cc category at the Grand Finale of JK Tyre Racing Championship in 2015.
RANKINGS

◆ World Press Freedom Index 2019 – Released by ‘Reporters Without Borders’
  ✓ The index is topped by Norway

✓ Top 10 countries in the 2018 World Press Freedom Index

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Global Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>7.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>7.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>8.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>8.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>9.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>10.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>10.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>11.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>12.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>12.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

✓ India has dropped two places on a global press freedom index to be ranked 140th out of 180 countries (India was ranked 138th in 2018)
✓ There have been violent attacks in India leading to at least six Indian journalists being killed in the line of their work in 2018
At the bottom of the Index, Vietnam (176th), China (177th), Eritrea at 178th, North Korea at 179th position and Turkmenistan down to 180th rank were present.
Tamil Nadu

- Tirupur district - has topped the state in the Class 12 board exams with 95.37% pass percentage
  - Erode and Perambalur districts took the next two spots, with 95.23% and 95.15% respectively.

The aggregate pass percentage has slightly increased by 0.2% to 91.30% this year, with 88.57% boys and 93.64% girls clearing the exams.

- Kanyakumari scored a pass percentage of 94.81% overall, and topped the state in terms of pass percentage secured by government schools (92.64%).
- Nearly 8.69 lakh students appeared for the examination this year in the new pattern, where students were awarded marks out of 100 in every subject.
✓ English and Language had a single combined paper instead of two.
✓ Students who took the examination in March comprised the first batch to have appeared for board examinations for three consecutive years, after the School Education Department brought in a public examination for Class XI as well.

**Election Commission – revises Lok Sabha election turnout in Tamil Nadu to 71.8% on April 18**

✓ The Dharmapuri Lok Sabha constituency stood first with a polling percentage of 80.49, while Chennai South registered 56.41%, the lowest in the State
✓ The polling percentage for the 18 Assembly constituencies that went for bypolls on the same day was 75.57%
✓ Among Assembly constituencies, Sholinghur recorded the highest with 82.26%, followed by Harur with 82.08% and Perambur with 64.14%, the lowest.
✓ The three parliamentary constituencies in Chennai witnessed the lowest polling percentage in the entire State - Chennai North, 63.47%, Chennai South, 56.34% and Chennai Central, 58.69%

**NATIONAL**

**Union Health Ministry – to replace the words ‘chemist’ and ‘druggist’ with ‘pharmacy’**

✓ The phrase ‘chemists and druggists’ was coined first in 1945
✓ The change was deliberated and recommended by the 55th Drug Consultative Committee meeting held in January and March this year
Twenty states and Union territories - have so far joined a pan-India network of single emergency helpline number '112'

- The '112' helpline is an integration of police (100), fire (101) and women (1090) helpline numbers on which immediate assistance can be sought by anyone in distress
- The project ‘112’ helpline is being implemented under the central government’s Nirbhaya Fund.
- The single number for emergency services is similar to '911' in the United States.
- The 20 states and UTs include Himachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Puducherry, Lakshadweep, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Dadar and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu, Jammu and Kashmir and Nagaland
- The Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) envisages a single pan-India emergency number '112', which is an internationally recognised number, to target all types of emergencies.
- The '112' India app, available in Google Playstore and Apple store, provides for 'shout facility' designed especially for women, for enlisting support of volunteers, who have registered themselves with the state police, for emergency response
- A total of Rs 321.69 crore has been earmarked for this Emergency Response Support System from the Nirbhaya fund
- The Nirbhaya Fund was set up by the central government for projects specifically designed to improve the safety and security of the women

CBSE - to allow visual aids for disabled kids from 2020
- It has decided to allow students to use magnifying glasses and portable video magnifiers, instead of large-font question papers, during the Class X final examination

INTERNATIONAL

Malaysian government – to revive a multibillion-dollar property and transportation project in Kuala Lumpur involving a Chinese state company, linked to China’s global “Belt and Road” initiative
- The 140-billion ringgit ($34 billion) Bandar Malaysia development in Kuala Lumpur is expected to attract financial institutions and companies, with the Malaysian Government owning 40% of the project
The announcement came just days after the countries agreed to resume work on a previously suspended railway project in Malaysia.

The project was originally launched in 2011 under the government of ex-leader Najib Razak, but was abandoned due to a dispute about payments.

**INDIA AND NEIGHBOURS**

**Two Indian warships - will be taking part in China’s international fleet review (IFR), scheduled to take place on April 21, 2019 in Qingdao, China**

- Indigenously-built guided missile destroyer INS Kolkata and fleet tanker INS Shakti will arrive at the Chinese port city of Qingdao on April 20, 2019.
- The IFR is organized as part of 70th Anniversary celebrations of People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLA Navy).
- The Naval Parade will be reviewed by the Chinese President Xi Jinping on April 23, 2019.
- The International Fleet Review is a parade of naval ships, aircraft and submarines.
- India conducted the IFR in February 2016 that saw overwhelming participation of 50 navies with nearly 100 warships.
- The move intends to step-up bilateral military ties after the temporary freeze due to the 73-day troop stand-off at Doklam in 2017.
- The two Indian warships held an exercise with Vietnamese warships off the Cam Ranh Bay while on their way to China.

**The Asian Tea Alliance (ATA), a union of five tea-growing and consuming countries - was launched in Guizhou in China on April 19**

- The members of the alliance are the Indian Tea Association, China Tea Marketing Association, Indonesian Tea Marketing Association, Sri Lanka Tea Board and Japan Tea Association.
- Indian Tea Association and China Tea Marketing Association have recently signed a MoU in December 2018 to promote green and black tea consumption in major tea markets of Europe, the U.S., Russia and West Asia.
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

♦ The 139-foot-tall (42.5-meter) Antares rocket – launches uncrewed ‘Cygnus Cargo spacecraft’ for International Space Station (ISS)

✓ Antares rocket, built by Northrop Grumman, was launched into the space from the Mid-Atlantic Regional Spaceport at NASA’s Wallops Flight Facility for a two-day voyage to ISS
✓ The mission, called NG-11, is the eleventh cargo flight for NASA by Northrop Grumman and will be the company’s longest one to date.
✓ The Spacecraft carried about 7,600 pounds of supplies and scientific experiments to the station
✓ The various experiments to be done includes the study of astronaut’s health in microgravity, analyse ageing-like changes in astronauts on the space station and examine effects of spaceflight on the function of antibody production and immune memory

ECONOMY

♦ Royal Enfield - announced its entry into South Korea by opening its store in Seoul

✓ It had appointed Vintage Motors (Kiheung International) as its official distributor-partner in the country
✓ To start with, Royal Enfield will offer Bullet 500cc, Classic 500cc and Classic 500 chrome and The Himalayan 410 cc
APPOINTMENTS

Cipla chairman Yusuf Hamied - has been elected an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Society, U.K. for his service to the cause of science.

 ✓ The Society is a Fellowship of the world’s most eminent scientists and is the oldest scientific academy in continuous existence.

SPORTS

India’s young paddlers Manush Shah and Raegan Albuquerque - clinched the bronze at the Belgium Junior and Cadet Open, a part of the ITTF Junior Circuit Premium, held in Chennai

 ✓ The duo paired up with Iran's Amin Ahmadian and Radin Khayyam to win the medal in the junior boys’ team event
TAMIL NADU

Union culture ministry - has released the categorization of Archaeological Survey of India-maintained monuments, based on their history and architectural importance.

- Pallava-era monuments at Unesco-notified world heritage site Mamallapuram, including the Shore Temple and the Five Rathas, are among 20 category ‘A’ monuments across the country including Taj Mahal at Agra, Sun Temple of Konark, besides Ajanta and Ellora Caves in Maharashtra.

- In Tamil Nadu, the Tigerheaded rock-cut temple at Mamallapuram, Rock-cut Jain Temple and natural caves monument in Sittanavasal of Pudukottai, Tirumalai Nayakar Palace in Virudhunagar, Fort St George, from where Madras (now Chennai) began and Fort Vattakottai in Kanyakumari district have been declared ‘B’ category monuments.

- Besides, entry to several monuments in the state, currently free, may soon be charged.
- Tamil Nadu is home to more than 410 ASI-maintained monuments.
- The ASI’s Chennai Circle is the largest in the country with the highest number of monuments.
- The purpose of categorising such structures was to ensure they were accorded priority in funding for better preservation and conservation.
A new underground aquarium – to be inaugurated on East Coast Road on April 21

- The 70-metre-long tunnel built at a depth of 6.5 foot housing several deep sea marine species is set to give visitors a near-underwater experience.
- The aquarium has been built at a cost of ₹115 crore and is called the VGP Marine Kingdom.
- The facility, built on a 75,000 sqft space, will have as many as 150 species that live in freshwater, brackish water and seawater in tropical regions.
- The species that would be on exhibit include groupers, butterfly fishes, stingrays, batfish, Trevally and lemon shark — sourced from Rameswaram to countries such as Indonesia, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Thailand.
- The highlight of the aquarium would be the ‘underwater tunnel’ where visitors can either stand and watch the marine species as divers feed them or can pass by on a walkalator set up on the centre of the facility.
- Visitors can opt to walk by the 35 exhibits, sit and enjoy a panoramic view of deep sea species, crawl under tanks filled with colourful ornamental fishes, feed a few of them or even dive into the largest tank — 30m tall and 40m wide — designed with artificial shipwrecks and ancient ruins to resemble the dark depths of the sea.

STATES

Rongali or Bohag Bihu festival – celebrated in Assam

- It is the Assamese new year and spring festival, which is celebrated from April 15 to April 21.
The Rongali Bihu coincides with Punjabi New Year Baisakhi.
The seven-day festival is celebrated in seven phases - Chot, Kutum, Mela, Raati, Goru, Manuh and Chera.
It begins with goru bihu or cow bihu on April 15, where the cows are washed and worshipped.
This is followed by manuh (human) bihu on 16 April, the New Year Day when people are seen in new dresses
It is celebrated three times a year, Rongali or Bohag Bihu is observed in April, Kongali or Kati Bihu observed in October and Bhogali or Magh Bihu observed in January.

INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

The foundation stone laying ceremony of the first Hindu temple in UAE’s capital Abu Dhabi – has been completed on April 20

Mahant Swami Maharaj, spiritual head of the Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS), which is constructing the temple, presided over the ceremony
Indian Ambassador to UAE Navdeep Suri read out Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s statement on the occasion

India - to build a cancer hospital in Kenya in collaboration with Japan.
Also, India will partner with the UAE to set up an ICT centre (Information and Communications Technology center) in Ethiopia
Through this partnership, India has undertaken many projects like the ambitious Pan African e-network project on tele-education and tele-medicine
The project provides “integrated” satellite, fiber optics and wireless network between educational and medical institutes in Africa and India.
CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

沙特阿拉伯 - 于2020年11月21-22日，在其首都利雅得举办年度G20领导人峰会

☑️ 这将是G20峰会首次在阿拉伯世界举行
☑️ 日本将举办今年的G20峰会，将在大阪举行，于2019年6月28-29日举行
☑️ 二十国集团（G20）是一个由19个国家和欧盟的政府和中央银行行长组成的国际论坛
☑️ G20经济占全球GWP的约90%，全球约三分之二的人口
☑️ G20世界领导人于2008年首次会面，旨在从70多年来最严重的金融危机中拯救全球经济
☑️ G20成员国 - 阿根廷、澳大利亚、巴西、加拿大、中国、法国、德国、印度、印度尼西亚、意大利、日本、墨西哥、韩国、南非、俄罗斯、沙特阿拉伯、土耳其、英国、美国

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

美国宇航局（NASA） - 宣布SpaceX将在2021年6月发射Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART)行星防御任务

☑️ 总发射成本估计约为6900万美元
☑️ 任务将在加州范登堡空军基地发射
☑️ 任务将撞击“Didymoon”，一个宽度为165米（540英尺）的丁梅迪斯小行星卫星，它位于地球的约400万英里外。
☑️ 科学家们将通过望远镜观察撞击，并测量撞击对Didymoon轨道的影响
☑️ 测试是一个计划中的太空探测器，用于验证撞向小行星月球的撞击器是否能成功地为地球防御小行星的目的
☑️ 本月早些时候，日本的Hayabusa2探测器将一枚铜爆炸物撞击进入太空岩石Ryugu，以收集其表面材料进行研究。

世界卫生组织（WHO） - 对全球2019年第一季度的麻疹病例增加了300%发出了警告

☑️ 大约170个国家向WHO报告了112163例麻疹病例
Africa has witnessed the most dramatic rise - up 700% which has weaker vaccination coverage than other regions

**DEFENCE**

**The Indian Navy - launched guided missile destroyer 'Imphal' at Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders in Mumbai.**

- Imphal is the third ship to be launched under Project 15B
- The first ship of Project 15B, a guided missile destroyer christened 'Visakhapatnam', was launched on April 20, 2015.
- The Project 15B class comprises four ships - Visakhapatnam, Mormugao, Imphal and Porbandar all of which are being built by the Mazagon Dock Limited (MDL) in India, and will be the largest destroyers to be operated by the Indian Navy
- The destroyers are an improved version of the Kolkata-class (Project 15A) and will feature enhanced stealth characteristics

**General Bipin Rawat, Chief of Army Staff – commissioned Indian Coast Guard vessel Veera, in a ceremony organised at Eastern Naval Command in Vishakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh**

- Veera, the third in the series of the new generation Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) is under the administrative and operational command of the coast guard regional headquarters
- The 98 meters long, 15-metre wide patrol vessel has a 3.6-metre draft and a range of 5,000 nautical miles
- The ship displaces approx 2200 tons (GRT) and is propelled by two 9100 KW diesel engines to attain a maximum speed of 26 knots.
• It is also equipped with an Integrated Bridge System (IBS), Integrated Platform Management System (IPMS), Automated Power Management System (APMS) and High Power External Fire Fighting System (HPEFS).
• This is indigenously designed and built by Larsen & Toubro Ltd. at its shipbuilding facility at Kattupali in Chennai, marking its 50th warship
• The first two vessels ICGS Vikram and ICGS Vijaya were delivered ahead of contractual schedule to ICG last April and August respectively
• The company has been building vessels under Warship License since receiving first Ministry of Defence (MoD) contract in March 2010

♦ Navies of India and Vietnam - held a four-day maritime exercise (IN – VPN BILAT EX) off Cam Ranh Bay in Vietnam from April 13

• The exercise was undertaken as a part of the ongoing Overseas Deployment of Eastern Fleet ships to South East Asian countries
• Indian Navy's war ships Kolkata and Shakti participated in the annual exercise, comprising a harbour and a sea phase
• Enhancing military ties was also a key element of talks during the visit of Vietnamese President Tran Dai Quang to India in March last year
• In 2016, during the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Vietnam, the relations between the two countries were elevated to the level of Comprehensive Strategic Partnership

♦ China - developed the world’s first armed amphibious drone attack boat named ‘Marine Lizard’

• It was built by Wuchang Shipbuilding Industry Group under China Shipbuilding Industry Corporation
• It can possibly form an unmanned sea-land-air integrated combat system with aerial armed reconnaissance drones and other drone ships.
• It has a maximum operation range of 1,200 kms and can be remotely controlled via satellites
ECONOMY

**Canara Bank** – becomes the first Public sector bank in the country to successfully roll out major new functionality to support EMV card acquiring across its ATM network and Aadhaar Authenticated PIN for transactions

- EMV stands for Europay, MasterCard, Visa, the three organisations that developed and established EMV as the global standard for chip-based credit and debit transactions
- The EMV standard helps to maximise security and global interoperability so that Visa cards can continue to be accepted around the world

**IDBI Bank** - has launched the first ever ‘paperless’ account opening facility for NRIs in Financial Action Task Force (FATF) member countries.

- The person will not be required to furnish physical documents and KYC proofs for opening an account with the IDBI bank.
- FATF is an inter-governmental body which devices policy and sets standards to promote effective implementation of legal, regulatory and operational measures to combat money laundering, terrorist financing and other related threats to the integrity of the international financial system
- The body has 38 member countries, including the US, UK, India, Japan, China and France, among others

APPOINTMENTS

**Former Cricketer Ravi Shastri** - appointed as Dubai-based Ras Al Khaimah Economic Zone (RAKEZ) exclusive ‘Corporate Ambassador’ to the Indian Business Community

- This first-of-its-kind approach is one of the many other initiatives that RAKEZ will be launching in the future to attract more investors from all over the world and boost the economic growth of Ras Al Khaimah.

- Brand Ambassador may attract more Indian business leaders to set up or expand their operations in UAE through RAKEZ
Bus ticketing platform redBus - has appointed cricketer Mahendra Singh Dhoni as its brand ambassador.

✔ The cricketer will appear in a hockey player avatar in his first cameo for the brand, slated to be launched soon
✔ At present, Dhoni is the brand ambassador of sports firm Dream11, Colgate, MasterCard, Orient Fans, BharatMatrimony, Indigo Paints, SRMB Steel, and health supplement brand Revital H.
✔ Dhoni’s brand endorsement deals can be in the range of ₹3-10 crore.
✔ redBus, which started in 2006, works with over 2500 bus operators’ and claims to have sold more than 180 million bus tickets till date
✔ It is a part of the MakeMyTrip group and the platform claims to have a customer base of around 20 million users.

SPORTS

Prajnesh Gunneswaran (Chennai) – is assured himself of a maiden main draw entry into the Wimbledon this year.

✔ Prajnesh, World No. 80, reached the final of the ATP Challenger 125 event in Anning, China in order to be assured of his entry into the Wimbledon
✔ Prajnesh, the defending champion in Anning, by reaching the final he will go up to at least No. 74 — the same as Anand Amritraj’s career-best — in world rankings
✔ Successfully retaining the crown will reach No. 64, just two spots below Somdev Devvarman’s career-high 62 and better than Leander Paes’ 74
✔ Only Vijay Amritraj (18) and Ramesh Krishnan (63) have had a better ranking in the all-time Indian chart.
The Election Commission – has ordered repolling in 10 polling booths in Tiruvallur, Dharmapuri and Cuddalore Lok Sabha constituencies, following complaints of irregularities during the April 18 polls

- The repolling date will be announced soon
- In the Tiruvallur constituency, the repolling will be held in a booth in the panchayat elementary school in Poonamallee for both the parliamentary election and the by-election.
- In the Dharmapuri Lok Sabha constituency, it will be held in Ayyampatti, Nathamedu and Jallipudur.
- In Cuddalore constituency, the booth situated in Panruti assembly constituency will witness repolling for both the elections.

The Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) – is planning to set up a pyrolysis plant to manage plastic waste and produce fuel from it

- It will be run under Public-Private partnership model.
- Already, a few private companies have set up similar plants in Sriperumpudur, Alandur and other locations.
- The GCC produces about 500 tonnes of plastic waste every day and has seized about 200 tonnes of banned plastic products, after the plastic ban was imposed on January 1, 2019.
✓ The fuel is sold for Rs 25-35 per litre and 2 kg of plastic waste is required to generate one litre of the fuel
✓ The fuel is used in cement, steel, glass, brick factories, trucks, generator sets, steam ships and also in boilers
✓ The technology became popular after the solid and plastic waste management rules were framed by the central government in 2016

◆ All two-wheeler dealers and manufacturers in Tamil Nadu – to sell helmets to the buyers from May 1, along with the vehicles
✓ Tamil Nadu leads the country in two-wheeler accident rate with every third accident reported in the state involves a two-wheeler and 73% of them are found to be those who did not wear helmets at the time of accident
✓ Every year, around 3,000 such fatalities are reported in the stat with nearly 700 among them being children
✓ State transport Commissioner, C Samayamoorthy has sent a circular regarding this to all the two-wheeler dealers, reinstating the fact that the helmets supplied should conform to the specifications prescribed by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)
✓ A rule banning the sale of non-ISI helmets was introduced by the Government in 2007

◆ Asia’s first balloon satellite - was launched by a girls’ team from Periyar Maniammai Institute of Technology at Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu, in collaboration with Chennai-based private organization, Space Kidz India (SKI)

✓ Designed and developed entirely by girls at the institute, the satellite — called SKI NSLV 9 (Near Space Launch Vehicle) Maniammaiyyar Sat — lifted off at 11.45am from the college campus and reached an altitude of 1,38,000 ft (approx 42 km)
✓ Space officially begins at an altitude of 100km above Earth’s surface

◆ New Delhi – allocates Rs 480 crore to set up a ‘Disaster secretariat’ for the proposed global ‘Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure’ (CDRI)
CDRI is a new Indian initiative on the lines of Solar alliance ISA with 122 countries.
The initiative has the support of the UN and the World Bank, apart from other multilateral development banks.
The new organization will be declared at the UN Climate Summit, scheduled at the UN headquarters in September.
It has the support of 33 countries including Italy, UK, Australia, South Africa and European Union which have agreed to fund the new organization.
The proposed initiative aims to develop standards and regulations to build resilient infrastructure to face various disasters due to climate change.
About 91% of all disasters in the past 20 years (1998-2017) were caused by floods, storms, droughts, heat waves and other extreme weather events, as per a study by the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), causing disaster losses to the tune of $3 trillion.
India suffered $80 billion losses during the corresponding 20 year period.

**Bamboo rice - has shown up in Odisha nearly after four decades.**

- The state of Odisha had last witnessed Bamboo rice in 1979.
- The Forest Authorities of Chandaka-Dampara Wildlife Sanctuary in Cuttack district have opened up the sanctuary for the forest dwellers to collect the Bamboo rice.
- Whenever the bamboo rice shows up, it would be accompanied by the increase in the rat population which starts running over the bamboo rice.
- Hence to avoid the menace the forest authorities have allowed forest dwellers to harvest Bamboo rice.
- Further, the authorities are also planning to purchase bamboo rice from the forest dwellers to germinate bamboo trees in other areas of the state.
- Bamboo rice is not commonly available as it takes many years for a bamboo tree to flower.
- Bamboo rice grows out of a dying bamboo shoot.
- Bamboo rice looks like paddy rice and tastes more like wheat.
- Bamboo rice is believed to contain a low glycaemic index compared to other varieties and it is good for diabetics.
- It is rich in proteins and does not contain any fat.
- Bamboo rice is also believed to be containing medicinal values.
The International Labour Organization (ILO) - has listed the Bhopal gas tragedy among the world’s major industrial accidents in the last century.

- The gas leak in the Union Carbide pesticide plant in the Madhya Pradesh capital, Bhopal on the night of December 2 and 3, 1984, killed over 3,500 people.
- Union Carbide, which is now owned by Dow Chemicals, and other firms have so far paid $470 million (Rs 3,261 crore) as compensation to the Indian government.
- At least 30 tons of toxic methyl isocyanate was released from the plant.
- ILO’s report titled “Safety and Health at the heart of the Future of Work: Building on 100 years of experience”, listed nine major industrial accidents since 1919.
- Apart from the Bhopal gas tragedy, its list included the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear power plant explosion in the erstwhile Soviet Union, the 2011 Fukushima disaster and the collapse of the Rana Plaza building in Dhaka, Bangladesh, in 2013, which killed 1,132 people.
- According to recent estimates released by the ILO, each year 2.78 million workers die from occupational accidents and work-related diseases (of which 2.4 million are disease-related).
- In the Chernobyl disaster in April 1986, one of four nuclear reactors at the Chernobyl power station in Ukraine exploded, releasing at least 100 times more radiation than the atom bombs dropped on Nagasaki and Hiroshima.
- The explosion killed 31 people immediately and thousands of people in the aftermath.

The Civil Services Day 2019 - was not observed on 21st April 2019 due to Lok Sabha elections

- The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances has stated that the Civil Services Day will be celebrated once the new government takes over or may even consider celebrating the day along with next year’s programme.
- The day marks the address of Sardar Vallabh bhai patel to the first batch of civil servants in Independent India at the Metcalf House where he referred to civil servants as the ‘steel frame of India.
- On the occasion of the Civil Services Day, ‘Prime Minister Award for Excellence in Public Administration’ is conferred to the civil servants recognizing the extraordinary and innovative service rendered by them to the welfare of the people.

The London School of Economics - has announced the establishment of the ‘Amartya Sen Chair in Inequality Studies’
The holder of the Amartya Sen Chair will also serve as the director of LSE International Inequalities Institute

Shaping up a legend
➢ Studied in St Gregory’s School in Dhaka in 1940 but finished school in Patha Bhavan in Santiniketan
➢ Went to Presidency College
➢ Went on to study at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he received a BA (1955), an MA (1959), and a PhD (1959)

Professional journey
➢ He taught economics at a number of universities in India and England, including Jadavpur University (1956–58) and Delhi University (1963–71), the London School of Economics, the University of London (1971–77), and the University of Oxford (1977–88) before moving to Harvard University (1988–98), where he was professor of economics and philosophy. In 1998, he was appointed master of Trinity College, Cambridge—a position he held until 2004, when he returned to Harvard as Lamont University Professor

Career highlight
➢ Won Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences in 1998 for his contributions to welfare economics and social choice theory and for his interest in the problems of society’s poorest members

Other awards
➢ Bharat Ratna in 1999
➢ IHEU International Humanist Award 2002
➢ Order of the Aztec Eagle
➢ Johan Skytte Prize in Political Science
➢ National Humanities Medal
➢ Bodley Medal, the highest honour bestowed by the University of Oxford’s world-famous Bodleian Libraries

Born on November 3, 1933, in Manikganj, Bangladesh

☑ The move intends to honour the Nobel laureate, who has also served as the Professor of Economics at the institution
☑ Amartya Sen was awarded Noble Prize in the year 1998 for his works in Welfare Economics
Election Commission of India (ECI) - launched a new mobile app for the voters across the country to see the real-time availability of voter turnout during the election season in the country.

- The beta version of the ECI's ‘Voter Turnout’ app is available for download on the Google Play Store.
- The app captures the real-time information gathered by the Returning Officers following which it calculates the estimated totals.

INTERNATIONAL

Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena - announced the appointment of a special committee led by retired Supreme Court judge to investigate the Sri Lankan suicide attacks and submit its report within two weeks.

- At least 207 people were killed and 500 people injured and hospitalized following the attacks targeting three five-star hotels in capital Colombo and three churches across the country on April 21, 2019.
An Improvised Explosive Device was detected and diffused near the departure area of Bandaranaike International Airport
Three Indians among 35 foreigners confirmed dead in the blasts
Sri Lankan Government will enforce a nationwide state of emergency from the midnight on April 22, 2019
The Sri Lankan government has declared April 23 as a national day of mourning, in the memory of all the victims of the horrific blast.

The government has also blocked access to social media and messaging sites, including Facebook and WhatsApp.

A two-day holiday has been decreed in the nation in a bid to reduce public traffic.

**Veteran Getty Images photographer John Moore’s photograph - won the World Press Photo of the Year and the first prize in the Spot News, Singles, category.**

It shows a young girl Yanela Sanchez crying as she and her mother are taken into custody by US border officials in McAllen, Texas, USA, after crossing into the US from Mexico.

He received €10,000 (£8,600) as prize amount.

Dutch-Swedish photographer Pieter Ten Hoopen won the “World Press Photo Story of the Year Award” for the image of 2018 mass-migrant caravan to the US border.

For 62 years, the World Press Photo Foundation has recognized the best contributions to visual journalism by professional photographers through its international World Press Photo Contest.

This year’s winners were selected from 78,801 images entered by 4,738 photographers world-wide.

**UAE Cabinet - has adopted the National Artificial Intelligence Strategy 2031**

The decision is aimed at positioning the UAE as a global leader in artificial intelligence by 2031 and to develop an integrated system that employs artificial intelligence in vital areas in the country.

The strategy will focus on the following fields of priorities during the first phase of implementation: resources and energy, logistics and transportation, tourism and hospitality, healthcare and cyber security.
**Indonesia’s Mount Agung Volcano – erupts again along with other volcanoes Mount Bromo in East Java and Mount Merapi in Yogyakarta**

- Mount Agung stratovolcano is the highest point on Bali
- The most important temple on Bali, Pura Besakih, is located high on the slopes of Mount Agung

**CONFERENCES & SUMMITS**

**The 29th edition of the Abu Dhabi International Book Fair, ADIBF 2019 – to take place from April 24-30, 2019 at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre**

- India will be featured as the official Guest of Honour, with the fair’s programming dedicated to reflecting and showcasing the diversity and richness of the country’s culture.
- It includes books on Freedom Struggle and 100 volume series of the Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi published by the Publications Division

**PERSONALITIES**

**Britain’s Prince Harry and wife Meghan Markle – to take up new international roles in Africa as ‘Commonwealth youth ambassadors’**

- The Duke and Duchess of Sussex will work together on behalf of the Commonwealth along with charity initiatives and promote Britain as part of the new ‘bespoke’ plans being finalized by Buckingham Palace officials
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

Tech giant, Google – has opened an Artificial Intelligence (AI) research lab in Ghana’s capital Accra

✓ It is the first of its kind research lab set up in Africa
✓ The lab would develop solutions in areas including agriculture, like helping in diagnosing certain types of crop disease.
✓ Using Google’s AI machine app ‘TensorFlow’, farmers analyze the issue with their plants and boost their production
✓ Google had opened such research centers across the globe in Tokyo, Zurich, New York, and Paris, to exhibit itself as AI-first company in the world

ECONOMY

The retail venture of Reliance Industries - reported an income of Rs 1,30,556 crore for 2018-19, 89% more than the previous year’s income of Rs 69,198 crore

✓ Reliance Retail is the only Indian retailer to be in the top 100 global retailers list and the 6th fastest growing retailer globally as per the Global powers of retailing 2019, Deloitte.
✓ Mukesh Ambani led Reliance Retail also became the first Indian retailer to cross more than 10,000 stores.
✓ It operates 10,415 retail stores in more than 6,600 cities and towns, covering an area of over 22 million sq ft, as on March 31.
✓ Compared to that, Future Group, the second biggest retail enterprise in the country, operates about 2,200 outlets nationwide with about Rs 35,000 crore of annual consolidated revenues.
Fincare Small Finance Bank (SFB) - honoured with the prestigious Celent Model Bank 2019 Award in Financial Inclusion category, for ‘Redesigning Lending to Reach Small Businesses’.

- The award recognizes LAP (Loans against Property) D.Lite, which is a tab-based solution designed and developed in-house by Fincare SFB for instant underwriting of loans against property targeted at micro and small enterprises.
- The Award was announced on its 12th anniversary in 2019 and was organized by Celent in New York.
- LAP D.Lite is one of the 22 initiatives from all over the world to receive this award, which featured 140 nominations from 80 institutions from 30 countries.
- The other banks to receive the award in other categories were Bank of America, CIBC, Fidor Bank, HSBC, Rabobank, and Santander.
- The award is for best practices of technology usage in different areas critical to success in banking.

APPOINTMENTS

Mukesh Kumar, chief of former Judo Federation of India - was re-elected as general secretary of Judo Union, the Asian governing body, at its ordinary congress at Fujairah, UAE.

- He is also the Chairman of the Technical Conduct Committee of the 36th National Games that is allotted to Goa.
- The present President of Judo Federation of India, Partap Singh Bajwa was elected as Vice President of Judo Union of Asia and as president of South Asia Judo Federation.

AWARDS

Malayalam film Bhayanakam (Fear) directed by Jayaraj - won the best cinematography award at the Beijing International Film Festival.
The cinematography was done by Nikhil S Praveen.
The film had also won the best cinematography award at the 65th National Film Awards.
The film portrays the visits of first World War veteran to a small village in the backwaters of Kerala's Kuttanand as a postman during the World War-II.
He shares with the families the good and bad news of the soldiers who took part in the war.
Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan-starrer Zero was screened at the end of the festival.
The festival also screened five Indian films, including Satyajit Ray's "Pather Panchali", "Apur Sansar", "Aparajito", the romantic comedy "Love Per Square Foot", the 2018 Indian romantic comedy and the thriller "Ittefaq"

SPORTS

India – set a national record on the opening day of the 23rd Asian Athletics Championships in Doha apart from bagging five medals

Sprinter Dutee Chand set a new national record in women’s 100m as she topped her heat to make the semifinals in 11.28 seconds beating her previous record set last year in Guwahati by 0.01 second

Javelin thrower Annu Rani and Avinash Mukund Sable (Men’s 3,000m steeplechase) won silver medals and Parul Choudhary (5000 m) and MR Povamma (400m) bagged bronze medals
Gavit Murali Kumar won India’s final medal of the day with a bronze in men’s 10000m race with a personal best time
With the five medals, India was ranked 5th in the medals tally
Bahrain leads the table with 7 medals, followed by China with 5 medals, Iran with 2 medals and Philippines with 1 medal.
The four-day event that commenced on April 21 will see participation from 63 nations across the world.
The Asian Athletics Championships is an event organised by the Asian Athletics Association.
The last edition of the event was held in July 2017 at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar, India.
Youth Olympics Gold medallist, Jeremy Lalrinnunga – smashed three world records at the Asian Weightlifting championship at Ningbo, China

✓ The 16-year old Mizoram weightlifter, Jeremy secured second place in group B of the 67kg men’s event smashing the Youth World and Asian records in snatch, clean and jerk and total lift with an effort of 297 kg
✓ The earlier youth world record was also in Jeremy’s name when he had lifted 131 kg in the EGAT cup in Thailand in February
✓ He had lifted more than double his body weight (157kg, 163kg) in two successful attempts in the clean and jerk, overtaking Kazakhstan weightlifter Saikhan Taisuyev’s youth world record of 161kg
✓ Jeremy, in fact, broke 15 records in total, combining national and international marks.
✓ He smashed six international records — three youth world and three youth Asian — and nine national records — three youth national, three junior national and three senior national.
✓ Earlier, Jhili Dalabehera claimed a silver medal in the women’s 45kg category, opening the country’s medal account

India’s Harsheel Dani, a former junior national champion - defeated Mads Christophersen of Denmark, world no 149, to clinch the 20th Victor Dutch International Badminton title in Wateringen

✓ The 22-year-old won the Ghana international crown in 2018 second Karvy All India junior-ranking badminton tournament in 2012.
✓ The Victor Dutch International is the Netherlands’ second biggest badminton event Prize money of $ 10.000.
✓ It is a part of the Badminton Europe Elite Circuit.
✓ This tournament has been an International Series level, another tournament for Grand Prix level named as Dutch Open
Chennai’s Prajnesh Gunneswaran – lost in the final of the ATP Challenger 125 event in Anning, China on April 21

- He is the defending champion and seeded second in the event
- He lost the final to the 20-year old Britain Jay Clarke, who is ranked 211 in the world

Services – won their sixth Santhosh trophy title after defeating Punjab by a solitary goal in Ludhiana

- Services had won their last trophy in 2015 after winning against the same opponents at the same venue

#One Day 4 Children, a tournament-wide campaign – announced by International Cricket Council (ICC) Cricket for Good in partnership with UNICEF

- It focuses on bringing the world of cricket together as one team to help build a better world for every child, at the 2019 World Cup.
- The campaign was launched by Former England batsman and #OneDay4Children ambassador, Nasser Hussain along with all-rounder Chris Woakes.
- There will be #OneDay4Children (#OD4C) activity throughout all 48 matches of the event.
- England and India will sport special one-off #OD4C branded kit on June 30 at Edgbaston.
- The money raised will support UNICEF's work in cricket playing nations to help children learn to play and be healthy.
- The 12th edition of ICC Men’s cricket World Cup 2019 will take place in England and Wales between 30, May 2019 to 14 July 2019
- Australia is the most victorious team in the history of the World Cup, having won events in 1987, 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2015
RANKINGS

Index of Cancer Preparedness (ICP) – released by The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)

- India was ranked at 19th with a score of 64.9
- In Cancer policy and planning, India ranks 17th with a score of 80.8
- India got first place for research and third for tobacco control in the country.
- India ranked 23rd for its national cancer control plan
- India’s healthcare system ranks 25th with a score of 40.3 in the index
- It is above only Saudi Arabia, Kenya and Egypt
- India’s healthcare infrastructure is the second worst among the index countries.
- In its delivery of cancer care, India ranks 20th with a score of 61.3
- India has a high standard of clinical guidelines, a category in which it is ranked first.
- Study based on facts collected from 28 countries revealed the wide range of data about cancer preparation of countries
- The index is based on the collection of four essential parameters - essential investment (appropriate spending and resources), roadmap (effective planning), foundation (functioning health systems) and Intelligence (availability and quality of cancer-related data)

INTERNATIONAL DAY

49th annual Earth Day – April 22

- The day aims to promote education of earth sciences, acknowledging its importance in sustainable use of natural resources as well as for sustainable development.
- The term ‘Mother Earth’ implies the interdependent relationship which exists between all the species of planet earth and to acknowledge earth’s role in
World Earth Day 2019 theme - ‘Protect Our Species’

- The first Earth Day was observed in 1970 on the day of Vernal equinox
- It will mainly focus on saving species which are on the verge of extinction due to climate change, deforestation, pollution and illegal poaching. The founder of the Earth Day was Gaylord Nelson, a US senator from Wisconsin.
- He had been a witness to the devastation caused by an enormous oil spill in Santa Barbara, California in 1969
- Earth Day Network (EDN), the organization that leads Earth Day worldwide, has chosen the theme for 2018 as ‘End Plastic Pollution’
- In 2005 the United Nations General Assembly declared 2008 as the “International Year of Planet Earth”

REPORT

The voting for the Third Phase of Lok Sabha Elections 2019 - to be held on April 23, 2019 for 116 Lok Sabha Constituencies across 14 States and 2 Union Territories

- It is the biggest phase of 2019 General Elections as it covers 116 Constituencies in single phase
- The first phase of General Elections 2019 began on April 11, 2019 for 91 Parliamentary constituencies, out of the total 543 constituencies, spread over 18 States and 2 Union Territories.
- The voting for Lok Sabha Elections 2019 Phase II was held across 95 constituencies (after polls to Vellore Parliamentary Constituency and Tripura East Parliamentary Constituency was deferred) across 12 states
Tamil Nadu

The first circular suburban train service in Chennai division – to commence from April 23
- One train will be a Mainline Electric Multiple Unit (MEMU) and other a regular Electric Multiple Unit (EMU)
- This has become possible after Southern Railway constructed a detour line between Takkolam and Arakkonam with the mainline
- The Defence ministry gave ₹60 crore for construction of the detour line
- This electrified 5km line was necessitated as the regular line between Takkolam and Arakkonam was not electrified due to objection from Defence ministry over the presence of INS Rajali nearby
- The MEMU rake will leave Chennai Beach, reach Arakkonam, then Tirumalpur followed by Kancheepuram, Chengalpet, Tamaram and back to Chennai Beach
- The second circular train will start from Chennai Beach, reach Tamaram, Chengalpet, then proceed to Kancheepuram, Tirumalpur and then Arakkonam to reach Chennai Beach finally

Chennai – could get another ‘Sister city’ soon, this time in South Africa
- It has signed six such agreements with foreign cities, in order to exchange knowledge in culture, education, trade and technology

FACT CHECK

Chennai has Sister City Agreement with 6 Foreign Cities

- Volgograd, Russia, 1966
- Denver, US, 1994
- Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 2010
- Chengdu, China, 2015
- Ulsan, S Korea, 2016

What is it?
As a Sister city (American) and twin city (European), as they may be called is an agreement between two cities that decide to share technical expertise in various fields, collaborate in education, improve cultural and trade ties
Partnering with a city usually means forming a committee to coordinate and communicate about programmes, projects and activities.

Information, experiences and knowledge exchange take place through training, seminars and visits.

Projects to improve the current infrastructure and facilities by getting expertise, consultancy and equipment are undertaken.

The city has signed the agreement with Kuala Lumpur in 2010 as there is a huge Tamil community there.

Similarly, it had signed the agreement with San Antonio in Texas, as they had cleaned the river that flows through the city, in order to improve river Cooum.

It also has a huge Tamil population there.

In 2015, Chennai signed agreements with Chongqing in China to understand its public transport system and tied up with Ulsan, a port city in South Korea, in 2016 to improve trade relations.

NATIONAL

The country’s first Lokpal, the anti-corruption ombudsman, will work from a five-star luxury hotel, ‘The Ashok’ in Chanakyapuri, Delhi

The Lokpal chairperson, all of its eight members and support staff are being allocated space in the hotel premises.

President Ram Nath Kovind had on March 23 administered the oath of office to Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose as the chairperson of Lokpal.

The Lokpal’s eight members were administered the oath by Justice Ghose on March 27.

Former chief justices of different high courts, Justices Dilip B Bhosale, Pradip Kumar Mohanty, Abhilasha Kumari and Ajay Kumar Tripathi, took oath as judicial members of the Lokpal.

Former first woman chief of Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) Archana Ramasundaram, ex-Maharashtra chief secretary Dinesh Kumar Jain, former IRS officer Mahender Singh and Gujarat cadre ex-IAS officer Indrajeeet Prasad Gautam were sworn-in as the Lokpal’s non-judicial members.
INTERNATIONAL

- Sri Lankan authorities - named a little-known local Islamist radical group, the National Thowheed Jamaath, as responsible for the ghastly Easter Sunday serial blasts
  - The blasts claimed nearly 300 lives and injured over 500 across the island nation
  - In a separate move, Islamic State claimed the responsibility for coordinated bombings, even though the group did not give evidence for its claim

INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

- US - to end waivers for all importers of Iranian oil
  - Now, these importers of Iranian oil will have to end their imports shortly or be subject to US sanctions
  - The waivers had been given to 8 countries including China, India, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Turkey, Italy and Greece
  - Since then, three of the eight nations-Italy, Greece and Taiwan- stopped importing oil from Iran
  - The exemptions were granted last November for a 180-day-period, which is going to expire on May 2 and the US is no longer going to renew them
  - The United States had re-imposed sanctions on exports of Iranian oil in November 2018, after Trump unilaterally pulled the US out of the landmark 2015 nuclear accord between Iran and six world powers

APPOINTMENTS

- Twitter - has appointed Manish Maheshwari as the Managing Director of its India operations
  - He replaces Balaaji Krish, who was given charge of leading the country's operations last year after Taranjeet Singh had stepped down as the India Country Director
  - Krish will return to Twitter global headquarters in San Francisco to resume his role as Global Head of Revenue Strategy and Operations
  - Maheshwari, who previously served as the CEO of Network18 Digital, takes over the new role from April 29
SPORTS

Trichy girl Gomathi Marimuthu - gave India their first gold by winning the women’s 800m event at the Asian athletics championships in Doha

- Gomathi won the race with her personal best timing of 2:02.70
- It was the 30-year-old Tamil Nadu athlete’s first major gold.
- Gomathi’s maiden international competition was back in 2013 where she ended up seventh in the 800m final of the Asian championships at Pune
- Tajinder Pal Singh Toor, the favourite, took the men’s shot put gold with an opening-round throw of 20.22m, his best this season.
- Javelin thrower Shivpal Singh produced a huge 86.23m effort that fetched him the men’s silver.
- And then, M.P. Jabir and Saritaben Gayakwad, in the men’s and women’s 400m hurdles, returned with bronze.

RANKINGS

India moved up to 17th position in 2018 from 37th spot last year - in the Startup Ecosystem Ranking for 2019, released by StartupBlink
- The top three spots remained unchanged with the United States, United Kingdom and Canada.
In StartupBlink’s cities ranking, six Indian entries made it to top 100.

Bengaluru was as the top startup city in India at 11th, while New Delhi followed in the 18th spot. Mumbai stood at 29th rank, while Chennai, Hyderabad and Pune also made it to top 100.

India ranked at 17 globally among 100 countries, based on the strength of its startup ecosystem, according to StartupBlink, which tracks startup ecosystems on a number of parameters.

It used data from startups, accelerators and co-working spaces registered on its platforms as well as data received from global partners such as Crunchbase and SimilarWeb.

The report has taken the startup ecosystems of 1,000 cities and 100 countries into consideration.

INTERNATIONAL DAY

‘World Book Day’ or ‘World Book and Copyright Day’ – April 23

- World Book Day is celebrated by UNESCO every year on April 23rd to celebrate the importance of literature and reading.
- The date, April 23rd, was finalized in the year 1995 in the UNESCO General Conference, held in Paris, to honor authors and book worldwide.
- April 23rd marks the death anniversary of many prominent literary figures like William Shakespeare and Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, while the date also marks the birth anniversary of many other prominent authors including Maurice Druon, Vladimir Nabokov, Josep Pla, Haldor K. Lazness and Manuel Mejia Vallejo.
This year, the city of Sharjah has been selected as the World Book Capital for a period of one year.
The theme for this year is centred around celebrating literature and reading with a particular focus on enhancing and protecting indigenous languages.

**Zero Shadow Day – April 24**

It is the day in which the shadow cast under a person around noon will be almost zero, when the Sun crosses the local meridian, an imaginary line connecting north, south and overhead.

On this day, the Sun’s declination will be at 13 degrees and cities such as Chennai, Bengaluru and Mangaluru are at 13 degree latitude. So, these cities can see zero shadow.

Every location on earth between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn will witness this phenomenon twice a year.

In India, this happens between April and September.

For one degree rotation, the earth takes four minutes. Hence, after Chennai sees shortest shadow, it will be followed by Bengaluru, which may take around 10 minutes and then Mangaluru.
JAN DHAN DEPOSITS TOP RS 1 LAKH CRORE – A REPORT

Four-and-a-half years after its launch, deposits in Jan Dhan accounts are about to touch ₹1 lakh crore, which are just 0.8% of all the bank deposits. But, data on zero balance accounts has gone missing.

State-run banks account for nearly 80% of the accounts and deposits under the scheme.

**Public sector**
- **78,014** Deposits
- **28.2** No. of accounts (in cr)

**Regional rural**
- **17,460**

**Private**
- **2,933**

**Total Deposits (₹ cr)**
- **98,407**

**35.5 cr accounts**

Bimaru states and West Bengal make up over 52% of the accounts and deposits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>No. of accounts (in cr)</th>
<th>Deposits (₹ cr)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UP</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>17,768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>9,743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>12,331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>4,916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>7,308</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Top three private sector banks have opened 80 lakh accounts for the unbanked, just 4 lakh more than UCO — among the smallest public sector players. SBI has opened 32% of accounts.

- **Axis Bank**
  - No. of accounts (in cr): 0.09
  - Deposits (₹ cr): 221

- **HDFC Bank**
  - No. of accounts (in cr): 0.24
  - Deposits (₹ cr): 1,074

- **ICICI Bank**
  - No. of accounts (in cr): 0.47
  - Deposits (₹ cr): 284

Districts which still have some unbanked households:
- **Malkangiri, Odisha**
  - Coverage (%): 87.7
- **Pulwama, J&K**
  - Coverage (%): 93.9
- **Reasi, J&K**
  - Coverage (%): 97.2
- **Churachandpur, Manipur**
  - Coverage (%): 97.4
- **Morigaon, Assam**
  - Coverage (%): 99.4

Data as on April 10, 2019; Source: PM Jan Dhan Yojana website

There is an increased flow into these accounts by way of direct benefit transfer and PM-Kisan. There is also growing awareness.

Pallav Mohapatra, MD & CEO, Central Bank of India

Through PMJDY, SBI along with its employees ensure access to financial services including savings bank accounts, remittance, credit, insurance, overdraft, pension and so on, to many unbanked adults in the remotest areas of the country.

P K Gupta, SBI MD
The third phase of Lok Sabha Elections 2019 - registered an overall approximate voter turnout of more than 66%

- The voting for the Lok Sabha Elections 2019 Phase 3 took place on April 23, 2019 for 117 Lok Sabha Constituencies across 13 States and 2 Union Territories.
- With this third phase, out of 543 Lok Sabha constituencies, polls concluded in 303 constituencies.

The third phase is biggest phase of the 2019 General Elections as it covers 117 Constituencies in single phase
- In the third phase, single phase polling was held for 26 parliamentary constituencies of Gujarat and 20 constituencies of Kerala
The Union Ministry of AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy) and the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) - signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for cooperation in research and education in areas of traditional systems of medicine and its integration with modern science.

- Both the organisations will jointly work on utilizing modern scientific concepts like Data mining and analytics and Artificial Intelligence (AI) in research and development of Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani (ASU), Database on Medicinal plants, Foods, etc.
- Earlier, CSIR jointly with AYUSH Ministry developed the Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL), a globally recognised proprietary database on Indian systems of medicine.

The government - notified the second phase of the FAME India scheme with a Rs 10,000-crore outlay - to encourage adoption of electric and hybrid vehicles.

- Under the second phase of the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles in India (FAME-II) scheme, 10 lakh registered electric two-wheelers with a maximum specified ex-factory price will be eligible to avail incentive of Rs 20,000 each.
- It will also support 5 lakh e-rickshaws having ex-factory price of up to Rs 5 lakh with an incentive of Rs 50,000 each.
- FAME-II will offer an incentive of Rs 1.5 lakh each to 35,000 electric four-wheelers with an ex-factory price of up to Rs 15 lakh, and incentive of Rs 13,000 each to 20,000 strong hybrid four-wheelers with ex-factory price of up to Rs 15 lakh.
- It will support 7,090 e-buses with an incentive of up to Rs 50 lakh each having an ex-factory price of up to Rs 2 crore.

India’s largest IT services company, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), has partnered with the Department of Posts (DoP)
The association will transform DoP into a multi-service digital hub, modernise the delivery of mail and packages, enhance customer experience, and launch innovative services that will drive new revenues.

In 2013, TCS had announced receiving an over Rs 1,100 crore multi-year contract from the Department of Posts (DoP) for an end-to-end IT modernisation programme.

Core System Integration (CSI) program designed and implemented by TCS, involved deploying an integrated ERP (enterprise resource planning) solution that caters to mail operations, finance and accounting, and HR functions, and connects its vast network of more than 150,000 post offices, making this the largest distributed ePostal network in the world.

Earlier, TCS had, along with the Ministry of External Affairs, revamped India’s passport services through the Passport Seva Kendra (PSK) initiative and ‘Student Connect’.

SUPREME COURT VERDICT

The Supreme Court - directed the Gujarat Government to give Rs 50 lakh compensation, a job and accommodation to Bilkis Bano (a) Bilkis Yakub Rasool

A bench of CJI Ranjan Gogoi and Justices Deepak Gupta and Sanjiv Khanna, while pronouncing the verdict, were visibly moved by the plight of Bilkis

On March 3, 2002, she was gang raped during the 2002 Godhra riots at Randhikpur village near Ahmedabad in Gujarat, in which 14 members of her family were killed, including her three-and-half-year old daughter.

The 2002 riots occured when mobs ran amok in the aftermath of the burning of the Sabarmati Express in Godhra which killed 59 kar sevaks returning from Ayodhya

Bilkis Bano had earlier refused to accept the interim compensation of Rs 5 lakh given by the Gujarat Government and had sought exemplary compensation from the state government in a plea before the Supreme Court

In 2017, Bombay High court convicted eleven of the accused, including five Gujarat policemen and two doctors for tampering with evidence
INTERNATIONAL

◆ Iran’s President Hassan Rouhani - announced that Iran and Pakistan to create a joint ‘reaction force’ on the border between the two countries

- The move follows the recent increase in deadly militant attacks by various groups on their frontier
- Border rapid reaction force would be helpful in combatting terrorism since increased tensions over attacks on both sides of the frontier is causing heavy casualties
- The announcement came during a two-day visit to Iran by Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan, the first of his tenure.
- Iran and Pakistan share a 959 km land border.
- Balochistan, which borders Afghanistan and Iran, is Pakistan's largest and poorest province with the highest prevalence of terrorist activities
- Iran has been complaining for years about recurring attacks by Pakistani militants on Iranian security forces.
- Pakistan and Iran are also members of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

◆ The Arab League - has pledged to pay $100 million a month to the Palestinian National Authority

- The move would be helpful for the Palestine as Israel had blocked tax transfers earlier in the year
- In February 2019, Israel decided to put into effect a law passed by the Israeli Parliament in July 2018 calling to freeze funds transferred to the Palestinian authority
- Israel had accused Palestine of transferring the money provided by Israel to terrorists who were detained in Israel as well as to their families
- But Palestine sees the transfer as a kind of welfare system for families
- At present, the Arab League has 22 members but Syria’s participation has been suspended since November 2011
African Nation, Malawi - will be undertaking large scale pilot tests for the world’s most advanced experimental malaria vaccine under the trade name, Mosquirix

- The tests will be helpful to prevent the disease that kills hundreds of thousands across Africa and Asia every year
- The vaccine has been developed by British pharmaceutical giant, GlaxoSmithKline in partnership with the PATH Malaria Vaccine Initiative
- The pilot tests aim to immunize around 120,000 children aged 2 and below to assess the effectiveness of the vaccine

INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

Indonesia - has released a special commemorative stamp on the theme of Ramayana on April 23, 2019

- The release of the stamp marks the 70th anniversary of establishment of its diplomatic ties with India
- It was designed by renowned Indonesian sculptor, Padmashri Bapak Nyoman Nuarta
- It features a scene from Ramayana in which Jatayu valiantly fought to save Sita

The Union Government - extended the ban on import of milk and its products, including chocolates, from China

- The ban will continue till laboratories at ports for testing the presence of toxic chemical melamine are upgraded.
- The ban was imposed after reports surfacing on the presence of melamine in some of the milk consignments from China
- Melamine is a toxic chemical used for making plastics and fertilisers.
The ban was first imposed in September 2008 and extended subsequently from time to time.
The latest ban imposed by the government ended on April 23.
India is the world’s largest producer and consumer of milk.
It produces around 150 million tonne milk annually.
Among the Indian states, Uttar Pradesh leads in milk production followed by Rajasthan and Gujarat.

COMMITTEES

The Supreme Court - constituted a three-judge panel to inquire into the sexual harassment complaint by a former junior court assistant against CJI Ranjan Gogoi.
The panel will be headed by Justice SA Bobde, the senior-most judge in apex court after the Chief Justice of India (CJI).

It comprises of Justice NV Ramana, the next senior most judge, and Justice Indira Banerjee, who was elevated to the Supreme Court on August 7, 2018.
The panel would be conducting an in-camera proceeding.
This is the first in-house inquiry on a sexual harassment complaint conducted in the 69-year old history of the Supreme Court and it is the first-ever time ever such an inquiry is being conducted against the CJI.
Justice Bobde is next in seniority to the CJI and is scheduled to succeed him on November 18, 2019.
Justice Ramana will become CJI on April 24, 2021, on Justice Bobde’s retirement.
PERSONALITIES

A 41-year-old Indian-origin Japanese, Puranik Yogendra (from Pune) - has been elected to Tokyo’s Edogawa Ward assembly, becoming the first Indian to win an election in Japan.

Edogawa Ward has the highest number of Indian residents among Tokyo's 23 wards, with 4,300 Indian nationals registered, accounting for more than 10% of Indians living in Japan.

Overall, around 34,000 Indians live in Japan.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

NASA – reveals that Mercury, the smallest planet in our solar system, has a massive solid inner core.
In its final trip around Mercury before crash-landing in 2015, NASA’s MESSENGER mission zoomed in close to the planet and made detailed measurements of its gravity, spin and internal structure.

Like Earth, Mercury’s outer core is composed of liquid metal, and now it is confirmed that its innermost core is solid, which is very nearly the same size as Earth’s inner core.

NASA's MESSENGER mission orbited Mercury for more from 2011 to 2015 on its second mission.

Currently, BepiColombo to explore the innermost planet from two unique vantage points was launched in 2018.

It was a joint mission by the European Space Agency (ESA) and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA).

The first close pass by Mercury of this mission will be in 2021.

When it arrives at Mercury in late 2025, it will endure temperatures in excess of 350°C and gather data during its 1 year nominal mission.

The mission comprises two spacecraft, namely the Mercury Planetary Orbiter (MPO) and the Mercury Magnetospheric Orbiter (MMO).

MESSENGER (March 18, 2011) became the second mission after Mariner 10’s 1975 flyby to reach Mercury.

Mercury is the closest planet to the Sun.

**ECONOMY**

**SBI General Insurance - launched its new product, cyber defence insurance - to protect businesses from financial and reputational losses due to cyber attacks**

- This offers protection against the growing threat of cyber breaches like hacking attacks, identity theft, disclosure of sensitive information and business interruption.
- It provides IT forensic investigations, legal advice, reputational and PR management.

**APPOINTMENTS**

**Indian Overseas Bank - appointed Karnam Sekar as its new MD and CEO**

- He is the former MD and CEO of Dena bank.
- He takes charge on July 1, 2019.
- Prior to Dena Bank, Sekar was deputy managing director and chief credit officer in State Bank of India.
AWARDS

Intellectual Property Rights Cell (IPR Cell) of Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) – has been selected for the National Intellectual Property Award 2019

- The award comprises of INR 1 lakh, citation and memento.
- KAU IPR cell had won special citation for GI related activities from Controller of general patents, trademarks and GIs in 2018
- It had also received recognition from PPV and FR authority for facilitating 21 national awards for Plant Genome saviour awards in 2016.
- The cell, headed by Dr.C.R.Elsy, has facilitated GI registration of nine crops from Kerala and procedure for four more crops have been initiated
- World IP Day is observed on April 26.
- The award is constituted by the Indian Intellectual Property Office under the Union Ministry of Industry and Commerce
- It is conferred on persons and organizations working in the field of patents, trademarks, and Geographical Indications.

SPORTS

World No.1 Bajrang Punia - won India’s first gold medal in the 65 kg category at the Asian Wrestling Championships 2019 in Xi’an, China.

- Bajrang defeated Sayatbek Okassov of Kazakhstan 12-7 in the final to bag the medal, after trailing 2-7 and just 70 seconds to finish the contest
- Bajrang had also won gold in the 2017 edition of the championship but had to settle for bronze in 2018.
- He had also won gold in 2018 Commonwealth Games and the 2018 Asian Games
- This was his eighth gold in last nine international tournaments he has participated in.
- Meanwhile, Praveen Rana settled for silver in 79 kg category and Satyavrat Kadian won bronze in 97 kg category.
Asian Games champion Swapna Barman – finished with silver medal in women’s heptathlon event in the 23rd Asian Athletics championships in Doha

Swapna, the first Indian to win a heptathlon gold in the Asiad and the Asian leader this season, had personal bests in the 200m and the shot put and topped the high jump but appeared to have lost some crucial points in the javelin throw.

Another silver came in the 4x400m mixed relay, with the team comprising Muhammed Anas, M.R. Poovamma, V.K. Vismaya and Arokia Rajiv.

INTERNATIONAL DAY

National Panchayat Raj Day - 24th April

When the PANCHAYAT RAJ is established, public opinion will do what violence can never do.
~ Mahatma Gandhi

The Constitution of India recognizes Panchayats as 'Institutions of self-government'.
This day marks the passing of Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, 1992 that came into force with effect from 24 April 1993.
The Amendment Act permits states to take steps to organize village panchayats and provide them with necessary powers and authority necessary to facilitate them to function as units of self-government.

In turn, it had led to the institutionalization of Panchayati Raj (PR) through the village, Intermediate and District level Panchayats.

The 73rd Amendment 1992 added a new Part IX to the constitution titled The Panchayats covering provisions from Article 243 to 243(O).

A new Eleventh Schedule covering 29 subjects within the functions of the Panchayats. It implemented article 40 of DPSP which says that State shall take steps to organize village panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government.

The first National Panchayati Raj Day was celebrated in 2010.
TAMIL NADU

 ◆ TANGEDCO - has begun measuring wind power generation in real time using the global positioning system (GPS)

- The system has been installed in all windmills across TN and the discom has been able to measure the power generated by a windmill without going to the spot,
- Tamil Nadu is the first state to use GPS in windmills
- Tamil Nadu has a total wind power capacity of 8,322MW
- In the coming months, the GPS system will be installed in solar, biomass and in thermal plants there by ruling out malpractices in billing apart from reducing discom’s expenditure

NATIONAL

◆ Government’s Think tank Niti Aayog - has agreed to the proposal of the Dental Council of India to allow dentists to practice as general physicians after doing a ‘bridge course’
- The proposal sought to introduce a bridge course of 3 years after BDS
- The admission would be either through a common entrance exam or through cumulative marks secured in the BDS course, or even a combination
- Indian Medical Association has vehemently opposed the proposal.
The Union Ministry of Home Affairs has distributed over 3,100 special kits SAECKs for collecting blood and semen samples, besides other evidence, to carry out immediate investigations into sexual assault cases among various states/UTs

- Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Kits (SAECKs) or ‘rape investigation kits’ are specially designed kits to carry out the immediate medico-legal investigation
- SAECKs also aid in furnishing evidence in sexual assault and rape cases
- The SAECKs are being procured with financial support under the Central government’s Nirbhaya Fund

**COURT VERDICT**

The Madras high court - directed the central government to come out with a time frame by which the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, 1971, could be amended to extend the legal abortion window period from 20 weeks to 24 weeks

- A proposal in this regard has been pending since 2014.
- A division bench of Justice N Kirubakaran and Justice SS Sundar observed that by extending the legal period for abortion, families could have been saved of the emotional and physical trauma

The Madras high court - has formed a five-member committee to bring in radical police reforms in Tamil Nadu

- Former DGP and sitting AIADMK MLA representing Mylapore constituency R Nataraj, former superintendent of police V Sithanan, senior advocate NR Elango, director of Banyan Dr K V Kishore Kumar, and deputy commissioner of police, Adyar range M Sudhakar were chosen as members of the heterogenous committee
Justice N Anand Venkatesh, while passing interim orders, gave the committee eight weeks to give its recommendations on reforms to usher in best practices for improving the quality of investigation, and to ensure reformation, rehabilitation and reintegration of convicts/accused into society.

The Madurai bench of the Madras high court - vacated its interim order prohibiting downloading of Chinese-origin video sharing app, TikTok

- The Chinese company submitted that it has moderating mechanisms in place to regulate obscene content and it is only an intermediary platform, which does not upload content.
- A division bench of justices N Kirubakaran and S S Sundar expressed concern that there was no statutory protection for children.
- It had asked whether the Union of India would enact a statute like the Children Online Privacy Protection Act, enacted by the United States, to prevent children from becoming cyber victims.
- The Bench directed ByteDance, the developer of TikTok, to monitor the content on the app.
- The Union government had blocked 14,220 websites between 2010 and 2018 and that this was the first case in the country on an intermediary website.
- On April 3, the court had issued an interim direction to the Centre to prohibit downloading of TikTok mobile app from Google and Apple app stores.
- TikTok, a platform for short-form mobile videos, allows users to create and share short videos with special effects.
- The app is already banned in Bangladesh and has been fined in the US for illegally collecting information on children.
- Over 30 million users in India installed the app in January 2019.

INTERNATIONAL

- Sri Lanka - banned the use of drones and unmanned aircraft following the massive Easter bombings
  - The measure was taken in view of the existing security situation in the country.
  - The ban will be in effect until further notice.

- African country Malawi - became the first to immunise children against Malaria through the vaccine ‘RTS,S’ (Mosquirix) under the WHO-coordinated Malaria vaccine pilot programme.
  - Malawi is also the first of three countries in Africa (apart from Ghana and Kenya) in which the vaccine RTS,S will be made available to children up to 2 years of age.
  - The Malaria vaccine pilot programme is a collaborative effort with ministries of health in Ghana, Kenya and Malawi and international partners like PATH and the vaccine developer Glaxo Smithkline.
Ghana - launched medical drone service in the country
- It had started a fleet of drones to carry medical supplies to remote areas
- The move is part of an ambitious plan to solve problems of medical access in a country with poor roads.
- The drones have been flying test runs with blood and vaccines, but the project was officially inaugurated on April 24 at the main drone base in Omenako
- Omenako is the first of four distribution centres which, when fully operational, will each have 30 drones serving 500 clinics within an 80-kilometre radius
- Operator Zipline, a U.S.-based company, said the three other sites should be ready by the end of 2019
- The drones are planned to ferry 150 different medicines, blood, and vaccines to more than 2,000 clinics serving over 12 million people — roughly 40% of the population
- Zipline first began delivering blood and medicine in East Africa in 2016, deploying drones in Rwanda

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

UAE’s Mars mission project ‘Hope Probe’ – is completed 85% and scheduled to be launched in July 2020
- The UAE Space Agency and Mohammed bin Rashid Space Centre (MBRSC) have announced in a joint statement that currently the project is on intensive testing phase for the launch
- With its successful launch, UAE may become the first Arabic and Islamic country to send a mission to Mars
- The project will take a global picture of the Martian atmosphere over a period of time, using various scientific devices like The Emirates exploration imager (EXI), Emirates Mars Ultraviolet Spectrometer (EMUS) and Emirates Mars Infrared Spectrometer (EMIRS)
- The probe is expected to reach Mars by 2021 to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the founding of the UAE

China – plans to send a manned mission to the moon and to build a research station on the moon’s South Pole within the next 10 years.
- Recently, it became the first nation to land a rover on the far side of the moon in January 2019.
- Tiangong programme, also known as ‘Heavenly Palace’ is the space station program of the People’s Republic of China
- China launched its first space laboratory, Tiangong-1, on September 29, 2011 followed by the launch of more advanced space laboratory with a cargo ship, Tiangong-2 on September 15, 2016
- It plans to create a modular space station similar to Soviet Union’s Mir
- The space station is scheduled to go into orbit by 2022.
✓ It is set to replace the International Space Station, a collaboration between the United States, Russia, Canada, Europe and Japan, which is due to be retired in 2024.
✓ China has also confirmed that its fourth lunar probe, the Chang'e-5, will be launched by the end of 2019.
✓ The nation also plans to launch a Mars probe by 2020.

**NASA’s Mars Lander InSight - has recorded its first ‘Marsquake’**

✓ It has recorded a quake of 2 or 2.5 magnitude which is hard to predict on Earth’s surface.
✓ The faint seismic signal, detected by the lander’s Seismic Experiment for Interior Structure (SEIS) instrument, was recorded on April 6, the lander's 128th Martian day.
✓ InSight's seismometer was placed by the lander on the planet's surface on December 19, 2018.
✓ InSight’s French-built seismometer is an instrument sensitive enough to measure a seismic wave just one-half the radius of a hydrogen atom.
✓ Earthquake is a result of shifting of tectonic plates, but Mars doesn’t have tectonic plates.
✓ Hence the quakes appear in Mars due to the impact of meteors and also due to the movement of magma deep underground.

**DEFENCE**

**The Indian Coast Guard Vessel C-441 - was commissioned on April 24, 2019 at Vizhinjam harbour, Thiruvananthapuram**

✓ The Indian Coast Guard Ship (ICGS) C-441 is capable to undertake diverse tasks such as close coast surveillance, interdiction, search and rescue and rendering assistance to boats and crafts in distress at sea.
✓ The ship is commanded by Assistant Commandant Amit K Choudhary.
In a first, the Indian Army - began online registration of women for recruitment as soldiers into the military police on April 25, 2019

✓ The recruitment for ‘Soldier General Duty (Women Military Police)’ was mooted by the Army Chief General Bipin Rawat
✓ The move comes three months after the Government announced that women would be inducted into the force in the "Personnel Below Officer Rank" (PBOR) category in a phased manner to eventually comprise 20% of total Corps of Military Police.
✓ Through this recruitment drive, 100 vacancies will be filled

Earlier in March 2019, the Defence Ministry announced that women officers recruited into the armed forces under the Short Service Commission will now have the option of taking up Permanent Commission in the Indian Armed Forces

ECONOMY

Reserve Bank of India - has sold its entire stake in the National Housing Bank (NHB) and the National Bank for Agriculture & Rural Development (Nabard) to the Union Government for Rs 1,450 crore and Rs 20 crore, respectively

✓ The move would now make these organisations fully government-owned with 100% stake
✓ It follows the recommendation of the second Narasimham committee report of October 2001, to end the cross-holding in regulatory institutions
✓ The National Bank for Agriculture & Rural Development was established on July 12, 1982 with an initial capital of Rs 100 crore
✓ The National Housing Bank was announced in the 1987-88 budget, following which, the NHB Bill, providing a legislative framework for the NHB, was passed by parliament in the Winter session of 1987 and it became an Act on December 23, 1987.

AWARDS

The Rabindranath Tagore Literary Prize 2019 - was awarded to author Rana Dasgupta for his 2010 novel “Solo”

✓ It is the second edition of the Rabindranath Tagore Literary Prize
✓ Rabindranath Tagore Literary Prize for social achievement was awarded to Yohei Sasakawa, the World Health Organization Goodwill Ambassador for Leprosy
✓ Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen was awarded as a beacon of democracy
Tagore Prize is founded and launched with a strong vision to be a platform and a vehicle for improving and inspiring World Peace, Literature, Art and Education.

**Popular scriptwriter Salim Khan, national award-winning filmmaker Madhur Bhandarkar and one of the finest dancer actress of yesteryears, Helen - were honoured with the prestigious Master Deenanath Mangeshkar Award at a ceremony in Mumbai**

The awards were instituted by the Master Deenanath Mangeshkar Smruti Pratishthan, a charitable trust in Pune, established and run by the Mangeshkar family for the last 30 years.

Deenanath Mangeshkar is the father of the legendary playback singer Lata Mangeshkar.

**SPORTS**

**P U Chitra - defended her 1500 m title to give India its third gold on the fourth and final day of the 23rd edition of Asian Athletics Championships in Doha**

- Ajay Kumar Saroj and Dutee Chand won a silver and a bronze in men's 1500 m and women's 200 m respectively.
- Earlier Gomathi Marimuthu (women's 800m) and Tejinder Pal Singh Toor (men's shot put) won the Gold medal each on the second day of the championships.
- The 23-year-old Chitra had clinched a bronze in the Jakarta Asian Games.
- Earlier, Chitra had won gold in the 2017 edition in Bhubaneswar.
- Dutee clocked 23.24 seconds to win the bronze in the women's 200 m.
- The 23-year-old Dutee had won a 200m silver in the Jakarta Asian Games.
- The women's 4x400 m relay quartet of Prachi, Poovamma, Saritaben Gayakwad and VK Vismaya finished second.
- In the 4x4000 m mixed relay event which was introduced for the first time in this championship, the Indian quartet of Mohammed Anas, M R Poovamma, V K Vismaya and Arokia Rajiv clocked 3:16.47 to finish with a silver.
India with 17 medals (3 Gold, 7 silver and 7 bronze) finished fourth in the tournament.
Bahrain topped the tally with 11 gold, 7 silver and 4 bronze, followed by China with 10 gold, 13 silver, 7 bronze and then Japan with 5 gold, 4 silver, 9 bronze.

Indian men - finished their freestyle campaign with a record-breaking haul of eight medals (1 gold, 3 silver and 4 bronze) at the Asian Wrestling Championships in Xi’an, China

Amit Dhankar (74kg) and Vicky Chahar (92kg) won silver medals while Commonwealth Games gold medallist Rahul Aware (61kg), Deepak Punia (86kg) and Sumit Malik (125kg) won their bronze medal.

On Day 1 of the championship, Bajrang Punia (65kg) had won gold, while Parveen Rana (79kg) got a silver and Satyawart Kadian (97kg) clinched bronze.

India finished third behind Iran (10 medals including 7 gold) and Kazakhstan (5 medals included 2 gold) in team championships in men’s freestyle.

Legendary Indian tennis player Vijay Amritraj, former India leg-spinner VV Kumar and Asian Games gold medallist R Gnanasekaran – to receive the India Cements-TNSJA Lifetime Achievement awards

The Tamil Nadu Sports Journalists Association (TNSJA) has joined hands with India Cements to present its annual awards, which recognise recent performances and bright potential across all sports.

Sportsperson of the Year, Young Achievers, Coach of the Year and Team of the Year are other categories of awards that will be presented on the occasion.

Ten promising sportspersons will also be honoured with scholarships of Rs 30,000 each.

The winners of the inaugural edition of the Pro Volleyball League — Chennai Spartans —become the first club from India to make the semifinals of the ongoing Asian club volleyball championships in Taiwan

With 17 points to his name, Naveen Raja Jacob was the standout performer for the Spartans.
RANKINGS

The Global Talent Competitiveness Index (GTCI) 2019 - released by INSEAD, Adecco Group and Tata Communications

- India ranks 80 while Singapore takes the lead in Asia region
- In this sixth edition, Switzerland continues to lead the 2019 Global Talent Competitiveness index, while Singapore and the United States come in second and third respectively.
- The top three is followed by Scandinavian countries, Norway (4th), Denmark (5th), Finland (6th), and Sweden (7th)
- Yemen has finished at the bottom of this year’s index at 125th, just below Congo (124th) and Burundi (123rd).
- The report measures levels of Global Talent Competitiveness by looking at 68 variables. The 2019 index covers 125 national economies and 114 cities (respectively 119 and 90 in 2018) across all groups of income and levels of development.

INTERNATIONAL DAY

World Malaria Day - April 25

- The observance of the day highlights the need for continued investment and sustained political commitment towards malaria prevention and control
- According to WHO’s latest World Malaria Report, no significant efforts were made in reducing malaria cases during 2015 – 2017 with the estimated number of malaria deaths in 2017 standing at 435000 with no change from previous year
✓ Theme 2019 – ‘Zero malaria starts with me’
✓ In the recent years, the WHO had certified 7 countries as Malaria-free countries after 3 consecutive years of zero locally-acquired cases of malaria. These are - United Arab Emirates (2007), Morocco (2010), Turkmenistan (2010), Armenia (2011), Maldives (2015), Sri Lanka (2016) and Kyrgyzstan (2016).
✓ The day was established in May 2007 by the 60th session of the World Health Assembly to provide education and understanding of malaria

'name: International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace – April 24

✓ The first ever official ‘International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace’ was observed by the United Nations (UN) on April 24, 2019
✓ The observance of the day every year on April 24 was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly on December 12, 2018

'name: World Immunization Week 2019 is being observed from 24-30 April, 2019

✓ Theme - Protected Together: Vaccines Work
✓ Every year last week of April is observed as World Immunisation Week to promote the use of vaccines to protect people of all ages against disease
✓ Immunization Week was observed uniformly for the first time in 2012, with the participation of more than 180 countries and territories worldwide
TAMIL NADU

The University of Madras - to set up a gender lab as part of creating workshop modules on gender sensitization, prevention of sexual harassment and other related topics

- The lab would be set up along with Sutherland Global Services Private Limited, with whom the University will sign the MoU on April 26
- Sutherland will fund and facilitate the lab through their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).
- They will create the lab in the women’s studies department and offer workshops and training to students, faculty members and administrative staff in the university and its affiliated colleges
- The gender lab is a beginning towards reducing the growing rates of sexual harassment and gender-based violence in society at large

NATIONAL

India’s first laboratory meat project to produce “ahimsa meat” - took off on April 25 with the Hyderabad-based Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) and National Research Centre on Meat (NRCM) coming together for the project

- With an initial funding of ₹4.5 crore for two years by the department of biotechnology, scientists will develop mutton and chicken from stem cells, without animal rearing
- The clean meat, CCMB scientists said, is nutritionally equivalent to conventional animal meat and it tastes, smells, looks and feels the same
- Experts said using the technology and producing meat in the lab would mean there would be no need to raise and slaughter animals for meat
During a summit on the future of protein and food technology revolution held in August 2018, Union minister Maneka Gandhi had advised CCMB to make cell-based ahimsa meat on commercial scale in the next five years.

The funding has come almost a year after the CCMB, in association with the Humane Society International (HSI) and Good Food Institute (GFI), held the first-ever meet to discuss clean meat last year.

The Atal Incubation Centre of the CCMB has been partnering with the HSI to promote clean meat sector

Governments in the Netherlands, Japan and Israel have been supporting clean meat companies

Maruti Suzuki, the country’s largest carmaker – to stop making Diesel cars from April 2020

The new, stricter BS6 emissions kick in April 2020

The reason, according to Maruti Suzuki, is higher manufacturing cost on account of stricter BS6 emission norms that would make diesel vehicles significantly expensive for customers

The company offers diesel on as many as eight models, with two of them — the Brezza and SCross SUVs — carrying it exclusively

Other models that come with both diesel and petrol options include Swift and Baleno hatchbacks, Dzire, Ertiga MPV, Ciaz, and Super Carry.

It had started the manufacturing of diesel cars in 1999 with the launch of Zen mini car

Delhi-NCR has already capped the life of diesel cars at 10 years against 15 years for petrol in view of the growing concern over vehicular pollution
INTERNATIONAL


Israel Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu - has announced that he would name a new community in the Golan Heights after US President Donald Trump.

- President Trump has officially recognised the disputed area as Israeli territory. Israel has also stated that in appreciation of the U.S. president, it intends to name a proposed train station near Jerusalem’s Western Wall after him.
- Israel captured the Golan from Syria in the 1967 Middle East war and annexed it, in a move not recognized internationally.
- Golan Heights is located about 60km (40 miles) south-west of the Syrian capital, Damascus, and covers about 1,200 sq km (400 sq miles).
- Syria has always insisted that it will not agree a peace deal with Israel unless it withdraws from the whole of the Golan.
- The last US-brokered direct peace talks broke down in 2000, while Turkey mediated in indirect talks in 2008.
- There are more than 30 Israeli settlements in the Golan, which are home to an estimated 20,000 people. The settlements are considered illegal under international law, although Israel disputes this.
- The settlers live alongside some 20,000 Syrians, most of them Druze Arabs, who did not flee when the Golan was captured.

Russia - has successfully tested the world’s first floating nuclear power plant (NPP), Akademik Lomonosov

- Reactors of the floating atomic block were launched in November 2018.
- The tests confirmed the operational stability of the main and auxiliary equipment for the plant, which will be the world’s first fully commercial operational floating nuclear power plant.
- All automatic process and control systems were tested successfully.
- Akademik Lomonosov was built at a shipyard in St.Petersburg since 2008
- It was towed around Scandinavia to Murmansk last year, where the uranium fuel elements were loaded into the two reactors and testing now has been going on for nearly a year.
- The plant will be towed out of Murmansk towards Pevek along the Northern Sea Route during the sailing season 2019.
- Providing 70 MW electricity and 300 MW head, the Akademik Lomonosov will replace the existing Bilbino nuclear heat- and electricity plant in Pevek.
The UAE's flag carrier, Etihad Airways - has become the first airline in the Gulf region to operate a flight EY484 without any single-use plastics on board, in a bid to raise awareness about pollution on Earth Day (April 22)

- Etihad identified that over 95 single-use plastic products are used across its aircraft cabins.
- As a result of planning the Earth Day flight EY484, Etihad additionally committed to remove up to 20% of the single-use plastic items on board by June 1.
- The airline also announced that by the end of this year, Etihad will have removed 100 tonnes of single-use plastics from its inflight service.

COMMITTEES

Justice Indu Malhotra - appointed as the third member of the in-house inquiry panel set up to examine allegations of sexual harassment against Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi.

- Malhotra was appointed to the panel following the recusal of Justice N V Ramana.
- Senior-most judge S A Bobde, who is heading the panel, appointed Justice Malhotra to the committee. Another woman judge, Justice Indira Banerjee is also a part of the panel
- The move comes a day after the former junior court assistant, who raised the sexual harassment allegations against the CJI, wrote a letter to the panel expressing reservation over the inclusion of Justice Ramana
- The complainant had expressed objection to the presence of Justice Ramana in the panel on the ground that he is a close friend of the CJI and a regular visitor to his house.
- She had also raised a question over the presence of only one woman apex court judge, Indira Banerjee, in the panel, citing previous Vishaka judgment mandate of SC to have majority of women in the sexual harassment hearing panels
- The panel would be conducting an in-camera proceeding
- This is the first in-house inquiry on a sexual harassment complaint conducted in the Supreme Court and it is the first-ever time ever such an inquiry is being conducted against the CJI.
The Supreme Court - constituted a one-man panel comprising former SC judge, Justice A K Patnaik to hold an inquiry into the allegations of a larger conspiracy to frame Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi and fixing of benches in the top court

- The apex court asked the Directors of CBI and IB and Delhi Police Commissioner to cooperate with Retired Justice Patnaik during the inquiry
- The order to form the one-man panel was delivered by a special bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra, which also comprised Justices R F Nariman and Deepak Gupta
- It follows the revelation from a lawyer, Utsav Singh Bains, who claimed that there was a conspiracy to make CJI Gogoi resign by framing him

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- Turkey, Poland, Spain and Argentina - have decided not to send official delegations to the Belt and Road Forum, held in Beijing
  - The US, France, Germany, Australia and Japan are among the nations that have expressed reservations about the debt-causing aspects of projects under the Belt and Road Initiative
  - The US has announced that it will send a low-level delegation.
  - India has taken a principled stand against attending the forum.
  - Japan is sending the leader of one of its parties in the ruling coalition instead of sending a government representative.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- ISRO - postpones Chandrayaan-2 launch to July after Israel's Moon mission fails
  - The launch of India's Moon mission was scheduled in April 2019 but it was postponed after Israel's Beresheet spacecraft crashed during moon landing in early April
  - The next launch window is available in mid-July for 10 days
  - Chandrayaan-2 was scheduled to be launched in April last year, but it was postponed to October after ISRO lost contact with GSAT-6A in March 2018.
  - In April last year, K Sivan informed the government about the postponement of the launch to October-November 2018.
Japanese scientists - successfully created the first-ever artificial crater on an asteroid, to find out the origin of solar system

Yuichi Tsuda, the project manager of Hayabusa 2 confirmed the crater from images captured by the probe located 1,700 meters (5,500 feet) from the asteroid’s surface.

Hayabusa2 space probe shot a projectile at the Ryugu asteroid around 340 million kilometers from Earth, as part of the probe’s mission to explore the origin of life and the evolution of the solar system.

ECONOMY

In a first, India’s largest bank State Bank of India (SBI) - launched ‘Green Car Loan’ to encourage customers to buy electric vehicles (EVs) in the country.

- The interest rates on the loan will be 20 basis points (0.2 per cent) lower than SBI’s existing auto loans.
- The scheme comes with the longest repayment period of up to 8 years.
- The loan is offered with zero processing fee for the first 6 months of the launch.
- SBI along with Wipro joined the Climate Group’s EV100 initiative for enhancing the launch of electric vehicles worldwide.

US tech giant, Microsoft - topped $1 trillion in market capitalisation for the first time after beating its quarterly earnings estimates

Microsoft stock gained about 23% so far this year due to its flagship cloud product Azure, rivalling Amazon.

It's the third company to achieve this milestone, following Apple, which hit the mark in August 2018, and Amazon, which earned that valuation in September 2018.
AWARDS

- Benny Antony, Joint Managing Director of the Kochi-based Arjuna Natural Ltd - has been conferred with the National Intellectual Property Award for 2019 in the category of Top Individual for Patents and Commercialization.

- He is the inventor of BCM-95, the world’s leading patented turmeric extract formulation, with over 80 international patents to his credit.
- Antony was also conferred with the ‘WIPO Medal for Inventors’ jointly by Intellectual Property Office India and the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO).
- The Indian Intellectual Property Office bestows National Intellectual Property (IP) awards to outstanding innovators, organisations and companies in the field of patents, designs, trademarks and geographical indications on the occasion of World IP Day every year.
- Both the awards will be given away on April 26 at a function jointly organised by the Indian Intellectual Property Office and the Confederation of Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry (CII) in New Delhi.

- Dawn editor and Columnist, Cyril Almeida from Pakistan - won the IPI’s (International Press Institute) World Press Freedom Hero award in 2019 for his “critical” and “tenacious coverage” of the civil-military relations in Pakistan.

- MadaMasr, an Egyptian news site, has won Free Media Pioneer Award 2019 of the IPI and International Media Support (IMS).
- Both awards will be presented in IPI’s annual World Congress and General Assembly function to be held in Geneva, Switzerland on 5th June, World Intellectual Property Day 2019.
- In 2016, Cyril Almeida published an exclusive story regarding a top-level meeting of civil-military leaders in Dawn, following which Pakistan Government had imposed a travel ban on Almeida.
- International Press Institute World Press Freedom Heroes are the journalists have been recognized by the Vienna-based International Press Institute for the significant contributions to the promotion of press freedom against great personal risk.
- Rafael Marques from Angola is the 70th recipient.
SPORTS

インドの16歳のSaurabh Chaudharyと17歳のManu Bhakerが、ISSF世界選手権2019で10mエアピストル混合チームイベントで金メダルを獲得した。

- Bhaker and Chaudhary outshot Jiang Ranxin and Pang Wei of China 16-6 in the final.
- This is the second consecutive gold for Manu Bhaker and Saurabh Chaudhary at the ISSF World Cup as they had clinched gold in the same category in the New Delhi edition of the shooting World Cup in February this year.
- Anjum Moudgil and Divyansh Singh Panwar also bagged a gold medal in the 10m Air Rifle Mixed Team event in the same tournament.

ISSF World Cup 2019 is governed by International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF)
- It is the qualification tournaments for the 2020 Olympic Games.
- It was first introduced in 1986
- It is carried out with four competitions per year in each event.
- 2019 World Cup 1 Venue - New Delhi, India
- 2019 World Cup 2 Venue - Beijing, China
- 2019 World Cup 3 Venue - Munich, Germany
- 2019 World Cup 4 Venue - Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

インドのShiva Thapa (60kg), Ashish (69kg) and Satish Kumar (+91kg) along with women boxers’ former champion L Sarita Devi (60kg), last edition's silver-medallist Manisha (54kg), former junior world champion Nikhat Zareen (51kg) and world silver-medallist Sonia Chahal (57kg) – finished with Bronze medal in the Asian Boxing Championships at Bangkok

- Six Indians, Amit Panghal (52kg), Kavinder Singh Bisht (56kg), Deepak Singh (49kg), Ashish Kumar (75kg), Pooja Rani (81kg) and Simranjit Kaur (64kg), entered into the finals of their respective events
India’s Divya Kakran and Manju Kumari - bagged bronze medals for the country in the women’s competition of the Asian Wrestling Championships in Xi’an, China

- Kakran defeated Battsetseg Soronzonbold of Mongolia, while Manju had defeated Vietnam’s ThiHuong Dao

India’s ace cueist Pankaj Advani defeated Ehsan Heydari Nezhad of Iran - to claim the inaugural Asian Snooker Tour title in Bengaluru

- Advani, a 21-time world snooker and billiards champion, had earlier won the second leg of the Tour in China

- Advani won $12,000, while Heydari took home $6,000

Three State units - have submitted their compliance reports to the Committee of Administrators (CoA)

- Karnataka, Maharashtra and Baroda have fallen in line with the recommendations of the Lodha Committee.

The United States Cricket Team - sealed one-day international status for the first time with a third straight victory at the World Cricket League Division 2 event in Namibia.

- There will be 20 ODI nations after the end of the tournament, with the top four sides to join Scotland, the United Arab Emirates, Nepal and the Netherlands in having temporary status.

- United States Cricket Team beat Hong Kong by 84 runs in the WCL Division 2 to attain one-day International (ODI) status

- Apart from USA, Oman has secured ODI status.

23rd Asian Athletics championships, Doha

- Winners
India finished fourth with 17 medals — three gold and seven silvers — behind Bahrain (11 gold), China (9) and Japan (6)

India had earlier topped the medals table with 12 golds at the 2017 Asians

Incidentally, both Shivpal (No. 2 in 2019 World performance list) and Jabir (No. 5) have achieved the qualification standards for this September’s World Championships in Doha.

**Indian swimmer S.P. Likith - achieved the ‘B’ qualifying standard for the 2019 FINA World Championships in the men’s 100m breaststroke at the 62nd Malaysia Open swimming championships in Kuala Lumpur**

Likith, who trains at the Nettakallappa Aquatic Centre (NAC), looks set to represent India at the World Championships in South Korea in July

There was a second winner from Karnataka on the day, with Srihari Natraj claiming the gold in the men’s 50m backstroke.

Srihari has already met the ‘B’ standard in the 100 and 200m backstroke events.

**Chennai Spartans – has lost the semifinal against Shahrdari Varamin (Iran) in the Asian men’s club volleyball championship in Taipei City**

Spartans is the first Indian club to reach the semifinals in the history of the Asian men’s club championship.

**INTERNATIONAL DAY**

**World Intellectual Property Day - April 26**

The day intends to spread awareness about the role that intellectual property rights like patents, trademarks, industrial designs and copyright play in encouraging innovation and creativity

On this day, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) works together with various agencies to hold different events and activities to promote the day

Theme 2019 - “Reach for Gold: IP and Sports”

In 2000, the WIPO designated 26 April as an annual World Intellectual Property Day

It was on April 26 that the Convention establishing the World Intellectual Property Organization first entered into force in 1970
World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) is formed on 14 July 1967 with its headquarters at Geneva, Switzerland.

WIPO is one of the 15 specialized agencies of the United Nations (UN).

It has 191 member States.

WIPO was created to promote the protection of intellectual property throughout the world.
TAMIL NADU

Chennai city - to get ₹4,500 crore for development of storm water drains and large underground drains as funding from multilateral funding agencies

- Work on development of storm water drains in the Kovalam basin — in the southern part of Chennai — is set to begin with funding from German development bank KfW.
- KfW has given in-principle approval for funding — estimated at ₹2,500 crore — of the project covering 600-km in the Kovalam basin.
- In addition to the 200 million Euro funds likely to be released from the German development bank, the State government will also fund the project.
- World Bank is also expected to give funds for the ₹3,000-crore project for flood mitigation in the State with over 70% of the project to be in Chennai and its suburbs.
- Flood-prone areas such as Tambaram, Guduvancherry and Urapakkam will get underground macrodrains to reduce flooding.

STATES

Kerala - became the second state after Gujarat to invoke action against voters for falsely alleging mismatch in their vote.

- Since the amendment done to the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961 - Rule 49 MA - recommending action against a voter for false claim on EVM, it has been invoked only thrice, with two of those cases filed in Kerala.
- On April 23, FIRs were registered against a voter each in Thiruvananthapuram and Kollam constituencies under 49MA rule.
- In 2017 assembly elections in Gujarat, the rule was used against a voter in Dwarka constituency.
In case of mismatch, the voter has to sign a form of declaration under rule 49MA by which he expressed his willingness to cast a test vote again to show that the allegation made by him was true and bonafide.

As per the penal provisions of IPC section 177, the elector shall be liable to be punished with imprisonment for up to six months or a fine up to ₹1,000 or both if the declaration was found to be incorrect.

**NATIONAL**

**The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) - launched the 'Malaria Elimination Research Alliance (MERA) India', to eliminate Malaria from India by 2030.**

- It is a gathering of partners working together to plan and scale up research in order to eliminate the disease completely
- The alliance was launched on the occasion of the World Malaria Day 2019
- The prevalence of Malaria in India declined by over 80% from 2.03 million cases in 2000 to 0.39 million in 2018.
- Deaths by malaria also declined by over 90% from 932 deaths in 2000 to 85 in 2018
- The National Vector Borne Diseases Control Program (NVBDCP) developed a comprehensive framework to achieve "Malaria free India by 2030"

**The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) - to shortly issue Rs 20 denomination banknotes in the Mahatma Gandhi (New) Series**

- It will bear the signature of Shaktikanta Das, Governor of the Reserve Bank of India.

- The new Rs 20 banknote has motif of Ellora Caves on the reverse, depicting the country's cultural heritage, with the base colour of the note in Greenish Yellow
INTERNATIONAL

◆ Qatar - is set to abolish its controversial exit visa system for all foreign workers by the end of 2019
  ✔ In September 2018, Qatar approved legislation to scrap the “kafala”, or sponsorship, system which required that foreign workers obtain permission from their employers to leave the country

◆ US President Donald Trump - rejects the United Nations' 2013 Arms Trade Treaty, terming it as ‘misguided’ and an intrusion on US sovereignty
  ✔ The 2013 Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) came into effect in December 2014 after over 65 countries of the world signed it on June 3, 2013.
  ✔ The treaty seeks to regulate the flow of weapons into conflicted zones and prohibit cross-border shipments that can be used in human rights violations or attacks on civilians.
  ✔ The world’s largest arms traders including the United States, China and Russia have not joined the treaty.

◆ The United States - imposed sanctions on Pakistan after the nation refused to take back its citizen deportees and visa over-stayers from America
  ✔ As a result of such sanctions, the US may withhold visas of Pakistanis beginning with its senior officials
  ✔ With these sanctions, Pakistan is the latest to join the list of 10 nations imposed with sanctions under the US Immigration and Nationality Act
  ✔ Ghana and Pakistan have been included in the list this year.
  ✔ The other countries include Guyana in 2001, Gambia in 2016, Cambodia, Eritrea, Guinea, and Sierra Leone in 2017, Burma and Laos in 2018

INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

◆ The United States - yet again placed India on its ‘Priority Watch List’, alleging lack of sufficient measurable improvements to its Intellectual Property (IP) framework
  ✔ The office of the US Trade Representative identified 11 countries, including India, in its ‘Priority Watch List’.
  ✔ The list is topped by China and includes Indonesia, Russia, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela.
  ✔ Besides this, the US Trade body has placed 25 countries, including Pakistan, Turkey and the UAE, on the watchlist.
COMMITTEES

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) - has set up a committee to review the regulatory framework on micro-insurance and recommend measures to increase the demand for such products.

- With IRDAI Executive Director Suresh Mathur as the chairman, the 13-member panel has been tasked with suggesting product designs with customer-friendly initiatives, including easy premium payment methods and simple claims settlement procedures.
- Micro-insurance policies are a general or life insurance policy with a sum assured of Rs 50,000 or less to promote insurance coverage among economically vulnerable sections of society.
- Micro-Insurance Business is done by intermediaries such as Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) especially for the protection of low-income groups.

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

5th Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU) Media Summit on Climate Action and Disaster Preparedness - began in Kathmandu

- The theme of the two-day summit is “Media Solutions for Sustainable Future: Saving Lives, Building Resilient Communities”.
- The basic aim of the summit is to fully utilize media’s potential of accelerating climate action and disaster preparedness and connect stakeholders for collaboration and joint practical projects.
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

United States - initiated its first move towards extending protection for giraffes under the Endangered Species Act

- The group, which designates endangered species, added giraffes to its "Red List" in 2016.
- It determined that the species as a whole is "vulnerable" to extinction and classified two subspecies as "critically endangered."
- A coalition of environmental and conservation groups petitioned the US Fish and Wildlife Service in early 2017 to protect giraffes under the Endangered Species Act.
- There are now only about 68,000 mature giraffes left in the wild, with their number falling each year.

DEFENCE

Additional Director General of the Indian Coast Guard K.R. Nautiyal - formally commissioned Coast Guard vessel ‘Priyadarshini’ in Kakinada

- This is the 99th vessel made by the Kolkata-based Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Limited (GRSE) and the third one deputed to the ICG Station, Kakinada.
- Priyadarshini has an overall length of 50 metres, displacement of 308 tonnes and a maximum speed of 34 knots.
AWARDS

◆ India’s well-known golf administrator, Dilip Thomas - was bestowed the ‘Lifetime contribution to Golf’ honour at the Golf Industry Association (GIA) Awards night at the Delhi Golf Club
  ✓ Notably, he was also part of the International Golf Federation’s Board of Directors overseeing the return of golf to the 2016 Olympic Games
  ✓ Gaganjeet Bhullar, winner of 10 international titles including one on the European Tour and eight on the Asian Tour, was named for “Outstanding Achievement as a player” award
  ✓ Nonita Lall Qureshi and Vijay Divecha were the worthy awardees for their contribution as coaches.
  ✓ Kavita Singh was chosen for the ‘Inspiration to women’s golf’ award.

SPORTS

◆ Rio Olympics bronze medallist Sakshi Malik and Asian Games champion Vinesh Phogat - settled for a bronze in the Asian Wrestling Championships at X’ian, China
  ✓ With the two bronze won earlier through Manju Kumari (59kg) and Divya Kakran (68kg), the Indian women wrestlers ended their campaign with four bronze medals
  ✓ The Indian team has so far won 12 medals (one gold, three silver, eight bronze) in the championships.
Indian wrestling sensation, Bajrang Punia – to soon become the first Indian wrestler to fight at iconic famed venue of Madison Square Garden in New York, USA

Bajrang has been invited by USA Wrestling (the national governing body for the sport in United States) to participate in the ‘Grapple at the Garden – Beat the Streets’ fight night, scheduled to be held on May 6
He will take on two-time US national champion Yianni Diakomihalis in the 65kg category, who is on a 47-match unbeaten streak
The Indian, who won gold in the Asian championship recently, is No. 1 in his weight category in world rankings.
Bajrang has bagged eight gold medals in his last nine international tournaments, including gold medals in the 2018 Commonwealth Games and 2018 Asiad.
2016 Rio Olympics gold medallist Kyle Snyder and 2012 London Olympics gold medallist Jordan Burroughs – both from the United States – will also take part in the showcase event
Indian boxer Vikas Krishan recently competed at the Madison Square Garden and won his professional bout against American Noah Kidd
Vikas turned professional last year and has stopped representing India at international amateur boxing tournaments.

Indian boxing star, Amit Panghal – wins Gold in the 52kg category at the Asian Boxing Championships in Bangkok

Besides Amit, Pooja Rani won gold as she stunned reigning world champion Wang Lina of China in the 81kg weight division.
The 23-year-old Amit had won gold at the 2018 Asian Games and came into the Asian championship after bagging gold at the Strandja Memorial Tournament in February in Bulgaria
India bagged 2 gold, 4 silver and 7 bronze medals to finish the championships with 13 medals in total.
This was India’s best ever performance in the championship
It was the first time the championship was held for men and women, simultaneously

Indian Medal Winners

**Gold**
- Amit Panghal (Men's 52kg)
- Pooja Rani (Women's 81kg)

**Silver**
- Kavinder Singh Bisht (Men's 56kg)
- Deepak (Men's 49kg)
- Ashish Kumar (Men's 75kg)
- Simranjit Kaur (Women's 64kg)

**Bronze**
- Shiva Thapa (Men's 60kg)
- Ashish (Men's 69kg)
- Satish Kumar (Men's +91kg)
- Sarita Devi (Women's 60kg)
- Nikhat Zareen (Women's 51kg)
- Manisha Moun (Women's 54kg)
- Sonia Chahal (Women's 57kg)

**Chennai Spartans – finished at fourth position in the Asian club volleyball championships at Taiwan**

They went down tamely to Qatar club Al Rayyan in the bronze medal playoff clash
Spartans have earlier lost to Irani club, Shahrdari Varamin in the semifinals
It is the first Indian club to reach semis of Asian Club Championship

**Divyansh Singh Panwar - bagged the individual silver in the men’s 10m air rifle event at the ISSF World Cup in Beijing**

He had also won the mixed gold with Anjum Moudgil a day before
In the process, the Jaipur boy also bagged one of the two quota places available for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics in this edition of the World Cup for his section. At 16, Divyangsh became the youngest Indian shooter to win an Olympic quota after Saurabh Chaudhary, 17, secured the 10m air pistol spot in February. The shooter is now supported by not-for-profit organisation, Olympic Gold Quest.

Shooters who have secured Olympics berth
- Anjum Moudgil (Women’s 10m air rifle)
- Apurvi Chandela (Women’s 10m air rifle)
- Divyangsh Singh Panwar (Men’s 10m air rifle)
- Saurabh Choudhary (Men’s 10m air pistol)

India’s Abhishek Verma - won the 10m Air Pistol gold at ISSF World Cup in Beijing

While winning the gold medal in only his second World Cup appearance, Verma sealed a quota place for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. Abhishek who had won a bronze medal in the 10m Air Pistol event during his India debut at the Asian Games. He became the fifth Indian shooter to have clinched a quota place for Tokyo Olympics.

Doru Isac (Romania) – to take charge as India’s next football technical director on a three year contract

Isac, 56, served as assistant to Arsene Wenger at the start of his career. He was the former Romania U-19 coach and manager of MLS team Houston Dynamos. He had also worked with teams in Japan, Singapore, Saudi Arabia and Qatar during his career and worked with former Portugal coach Carlos Queiroz and Bora Milutinovic, the Serbian coach who managed five different teams at the World Cup. He replaces Australian Scott O’Donnell, who stepped aside in 2017. Former India midfielder and director of coach education, Savio Medeira, was the interim technical director.
India’s Pardeep Singh - won a bronze in clean and jerk in the 102kg category of the Asian weightlifting championships

✓ Former World champion Mirabai Chanu (49kg) had also picked up a bronze in clean and jerk with a personal best of 113kg though she finished fourth in total lift (199kg)

Indian para swimmer Niranjan Mukundan - achieved the Minimum Entry Time (MET) in the men’s 200m IM (SM7 class) for the 2019 World Para Swimming Championships

✓ Competing in the Loterias Caixa Open Championships — part of the Para Swimming World Series — Niranjan emerged on top in the SM7 class
✓ The Worlds will take place in London from Sept. 9 to 15.

INTERNATIONAL DAY

World Day for Safety and Health at Work - April 28

✓ The day is observed annually to promote safe, healthy and decent work by preventing occupational accidents and diseases globally
✓ The day has been observed every year on April 28 by the International Labour Organization (ILO) since 2003
Wipro, TCS, HCL, Infosys, Reliance Industries (RIL), Welspun Steel, Mahindra Rise and Bharat Petroleum - top the list of India-domiciled companies creating intellectual property (IP) assets in the US.

The report finds that the proportion of tech patents is rising

In 2017-2018, tech patents accounted for 65% of total patents — up from 51% in 2015

Emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), cybersecurity, internet of things (IoT) and cloud computing accounted for over 50% of the tech patents filed in 2017-2018

AI is the frontrunner in the emerging technology space with over 300 patents filed for the 2015-2018 period

New applications areas include navigation, digital payments, logistics, text/data mining and cybersecurity.

The non-tech patents are most in the areas of chemistry & chemical composition, pharma and mechanical & structural inventions

Wipro has filed a patent related to generating a safe navigation path for a driverless vehicle.

TCS has filed a patent for pest management, where the method/system provides pest forecasting using historical pesticide usage information.

Indian companies and startups filed 60% of the tech patents, while international companies in India accounted for 25% of them.

Academics and researchers contributed the balance.
Chinese President Xi Jinping - defended his ambitious ‘Belt and Road Initiative’ (BRI), vowing to prevent debt risks at the second edition of the three-day Belt and Road Forum.

- India skipped the meet for the second time in protest against the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a key component of the Belt and Road Initiative.
- The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor passes through the strategic Gilgit-Baltistan region in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK), an integral part of India, held by Pakistan and claimed by it.
- Russian President Vladimir Putin, Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan and Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte were among the prominent dignitaries.

The Belt and Road Initiative is a development strategy proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping.
- It aims to create ‘One Belt, One Road’ (OBOR) by establishing new routes linking three continents - Asia, Europe and Africa by 2049.
- The initiative is geographically structured along 6 corridors along with the maritime Silk Road. They are –
  - New Eurasian Land Bridge, running from Western China to Western Russia
  - China - Mongolia - Russia Corridor, running from Northern China to Eastern Russia
  - China - Central Asia - West Asia Corridor, running from Western China to Turkey
  - China - Indochina Peninsula Corridor, running from Southern China to Singapore
  - China - Pakistan Economic Corridor, running from South-Western China to Pakistan
  - Bangladesh - China - India - Myanmar Corridor, running from Southern China to India
  - Maritime Silk Road, running from the Chinese Coast over Singapore and India to the Mediterranean
Tamil Nadu

- Chennai – to get soon its third full-fledged emergency department in the government sector at the Government Kilpauk Medical College (KMC) Hospital.
  - After Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital (RGGGH) and Government Royapettah Hospital, an emergency department as per the Tamil Nadu Accident and Emergency Care Initiative (TAEI) guidelines is being readied at KMC.
  - KMC is recognised as a level II trauma care centre
  - After KMC, the Government Stanley Medical College Hospital will also soon have the facility

- IIT, Madras team – has developed a unified script for nine Indian languages, named the Bharati script

  - It has also developed a method for reading documents in Bharati script using a multi-lingual optical character recognition (OCR) scheme
  - Dr Srinivasa Chakravathy’s team at IIT Madras has also created a finger-spelling method for nine Indian languages, that can be used to generate a sign language for hearing-impaired persons in collaboration with Sunil Kopparappu of Innovation Labs, TCS, Mumbai
The scripts that have been integrated include Devnagari, Bengali, Gurmukhi, Gujarati, Oriya, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam and Tamil, which have same (Roman letter–based) script.

English and Urdu have not been integrated so far.

**Tamil Nadu Government – takes over the administration of the Tamil Film Producers Council**

- The Government had appointed N Sekar, district registrar (admin) Central Chennai, as special officer to manage the affairs of the council.
- The move comes in the wake of allegations of misappropriation of funds by the existing council, headed by actor and producer Vishal Krishna, among others and a court-directed enquiry by IG Registration finding some of the allegations to be true.

**NATIONAL**

**The fourth phase of the 17th Lok Sabha election – begins on April 29 in 71 constituencies across nine States**

- In the fourth phase, five constituencies in Bihar, three in Jharkhand, six each in Madhya Pradesh and Odisha, eight in West Bengal, 17 in Maharashtra, and 13 each in Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh will vote.
- With this phase voting, the election will begin in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, and end in Maharashtra and Odisha.

**COMMITTEES**

**The Central Works Public Department (CPWD) - has constituted an expert committee - to formulate a design policy for building construction and infrastructure development**
The committee has been set up under the chairmanship of CPWD’s Additional Director General M K Sharma.  
The move is aimed at reviving building construction and infrastructure development at all levels in the CPWD  
The CPWD comes under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

Researchers at Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi - have developed an ultrasensitive quantum thermometer using graphene quantum dots

The thermometer can precisely measure a wide range of temperature - 27 degree C to –196 degree C in an extremely quick response time of just about 300 milliseconds.  
The thermometer has high sensitivity when measuring different temperatures and can measure very minute (micro Kelvin) changes in temperature.  
The thermometer was developed by a team led by Saikh S. Islam, Director of the Centre for Nanoscience and Nanotechnology  
The sensor can also be used for measuring high temperatures up to 100 degree C

DEFENCE

Indian Army - signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) Limited to build four underground tunnels  
The underground tunnels will be built along China and Pakistan borders for storage of ammunition and other war-related equipment.  
Three tunnels will be built along the Chinese border and one tunnel will be built along the Pakistan border.  
The tunnel can store 175-200 metric tonnes of ammunition and the cost of this pilot project is around Rs 15 crore.
BOOKS & AUTHORS

◆ The “Politics of Jugaad: The Coalition Handbook” - authored by journalist Saba Naqvi

- It examines coalition government history in India to project possibility at the end of 2019 Lok Sabha election
- It also analyses possibilities of coalition formation in different states and their chances of success and failure
- Saba Naqvi is one of India’s renowned journalists, best known author and political analyst.
- Other books written by her include In Good Faith (2012), Capital Conquest (2015), and Shades of Saffron (2018)

SPORTS

◆ India’s Greco-Roman wrestlers, Sunil Kumar (87kg) and Gurpreet Singh (77kg) - have clinched the silver medal in the ongoing Asian Wrestling Championship 2019 in Xi’an, China

- Kumar, who was just one step away from the gold medal, lost to Iran's mighty Hossein Ahmad Nouri
- Korea's Hyeonwoo Kim vanquished Singh 0-8 to win the gold medal.
- The Greco-Roman wrestling competition will continue on the final day of this prestigious tournament.
- On April 28, Gyanender (60kg), Ravinder (67kg), Yogesh (72kg), Harpreet Singh (82kg), and Hardeep Singh (97kg) will be in action.
Chess’ world governing body FIDE - has increased the number of classical games from 12 to 14 and reduced one rest day - in the next year's World Championship match

- The match is expected to be played in November 2020 with the venue yet to be announced
- The prize fund is likely to be in the region of $2m euros, almost double than last year’s
- The challenger for the reigning champion Magnus Carlsen is expected to be spotted next year at the Candidates tournament in March 2020

The BCCI - had recommended India pacers Mohammad Shami and Jasprit Bumrah, all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja and women’s team player Poonam Yadav for the Arjuna award

- The decision was taken during the CoA meeting in New Delhi

Australia’s Claire Polosak - will create history as the first woman umpire ever to stand in a men's ODI when she takes the field in the final of the ICC World Cricket League Division 2 at Windhoek, Namibia

- The 31-year-old, who is breaking new ground for women cricket officials has previously stood in 15 women's ODIs, the first one in November 2016 between Australia and South Africa.
Legendary Indian tennis player Vijay Amritraj, former India leg-spinner V.V. Kumar and 1978 Asian Games gold medallist (200m) R. Gnanasekaran - were felicitated with the lifetime achievement awards at the India Cements-sponsored Tamil Nadu Sports Journalists’ Association (TNSJA) annual awards and scholarships function in Chennai.

- Table tennis star, Sharath Kamal was named the sportsperson of the year for 2018-19 and R.B. Ramesh, who has trained many prodigious talents in the field of chess, won the coach of the year award.
- Among emerging talent, chess prodigy D. Gukesh and athlete P.M. Thabitha were presented the young achiever awards.
- Tamil Nadu women’s football team won the Team of the year award.
- Ten emerging sportspersons were also given scholarships of ₹30,000 each.

INTERNATIONAL DAY

World Veterinary Day - 28th April, 2019

- The day intends to celebrate the contributions of veterinarians to the health of animals and society.
- The World Veterinary Association (WVA) will co-host the 2019 World Veterinary Day Award with HealthforAnimals, the global animal medicines association.
- The theme for the day is the ‘Value of Vaccination’.
- World Veterinary Day is celebrated on the last Saturday of April.

COLD SPRAY TECHNOLOGY IN PLANES – IIT (M) PROJECT – A REPORT

IIT Madras (IITM) - in collaboration with the Central Government and General Electric (GE) has set up the Cold Spray equipment in its lab to research on its application to increase life expectancy of an aircraft and make flying safer.

- Cold spray technology is used in the aviation industry for fixing damages in aircraft engines and gas turbines without distorting or oxidizing the base material.
- The equipment, set up in a Cold Spray Smart (Surface Modification and Additive Research Technologies) Laboratory, is the first-of-its-kind in an academic institution in the country.
✓ The equipment can spray powdered metal particles in high pressure and low temperatures at supersonic speeds to fix damages in the aircraft
✓ It can spray hard metals like nickel-based alloys at a maximum speed of 1,200m per second and soft metals like aluminium as low as 300m per second.
✓ The higher the pressure, the higher the velocity of spray and better the powdered particles bond with the base material
✓ IIT-M plans to have thermal spray coating techniques like high velocity oxygen fuel coating, used in repairing hydro turbine components in dam
TAMIL NADU

Indian Institute of Technology, Madras - is collaborating with Madras Dyslexia Association (MDA) to launch ‘e-Shikshanam’, a free online teacher training programme to provide remedial support to ‘dyslexic’ children.

- The modules include coping strategies for children with difficulties in reading, spelling, writing and mathematics.
- The course is open to primary school teachers (up to Class V) across the country.
- National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL) is the facilitator for the course.
- The course is hosted on NPTEL website with all the recordings and editing.

INTERNATIONAL

Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena - announced a ban on covering of the face with burqa, veil or in any manner that obstructs identification of the person.

- The President’s office said that the move is intended to ensure national security.
- Sirisena took the decision under the Emergency Regulations.
- The country is a victim of coordinated blasts on Easter day, with the suicide bombers targeting three churches and three luxury hotels in the nation, killing over 250 people and injuring more than 500 others.
- The order comes into effect from April 29.
In a first, UAE - gives birth certificate to a girl born to a Hindu father and Muslim mother

- After nine-months of her birth, Anamta Aceline Kiran, got a legal birth certificate from the UAE government, keeping its marriage rules for expatriates aside
- Anamta was born to Sharjah-based expat Kiran Babu and Sanam Saboo Siddique
- UAE is observing 2019 as the Year of Tolerance to highlight itself as an exemplary example of a tolerant nation, bridging the communication gap between different cultures and religions
- As per the marriage rules for expatriates in UAE, a Muslim man can marry a non-Muslim woman but a Muslim woman cannot marry a non-Muslim man.

INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

The Japan-India Institute for Manufacturing (JIM), a residential skill training centre – was inaugurated at Andhra Pradesh

- JIM is part of a Manufacturing Skill Transfer Promotion Programme initiated by the Government of Japan in India
- It was envisaged as per the MoU signed by the two countries in 2016 to impart training to 30,000 Indian youth in manufacturing soft skills.
- Several Japanese companies are collaborating in this initiative to create a pool of skilled manpower for manufacturing units in India

DEFENCE

The Indian armed forces - will conduct a major cyber exercise or ‘Cyberex’ this week, in conjunction with other agencies

- The exercise will focus on cyber attacks on critical Indian infrastructure like strategic networks and power grids.
- The aim of the exercise is to assess the situation, seek responses, damage control and the requisite actions required for a coordinated response
- Cyberex is the first major joint exercise of the Army, IAF and Navy, under the aegis of the integrated defence staff, with participation from several other organizations
- The others involved in the two-day exercise range from the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS), National Technical Research Organization (NTRO) and Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) to the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In), National Informatics Centre (NIC) and Computer Security Resource Centre (CSRC).
- Cyber warfare is the fifth dimension of warfare after the first four “real” battlefields of land, air, sea and space
The malicious Stuxnet software worm, developed by the US and Israel, crippled Iran’s nuclear programme almost a decade ago.

**SPORTS**

**India - finished top of medal tally at ISSF World Cup Rifle/ Pistol 2019 edition held in Beijing, China**
- In last edition of Shooting World Cup held in New Delhi, India jointly topped standings with Hungary.
- India has secured 3 gold and 1 silver medal, ahead of China’s five medals (2 gold, 2 silver and 1 bronze) tally.
- This is the third time India has topped the medal tally in two years.
- India has also secured five 2020 Tokyo olympic quota places in the event.
- Saurabh Chaudhary and Manu Bhaker won gold in 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team Pistol event.
- Anjum Moudgil and young Divyansh Singh Panwar won gold in 10m Air Rifle Mixed Team competition.
- India’s third gold was won by Abhishek Verma in men’s 10m Air Pistol event.
- Divyansh Singh Panwar won India’s first individual medal by winning silver in men’s 10m Air Rifle.

**India – finishes with 16 medals (one gold, six silver and nine bronze) at the Asian Wrestling Championships in Xi’an, China**
- On the final day, India’s Harpreet Singh secured his first silver medal after three consecutive bronze in 82kg while Gyanender won a bronze in 60kg.
- India’s overall tally of 16 medals included eight — one gold, three silver and four bronze — won by men’s freestyle wrestlers, four bronze by women and three silver and a bronze by Greco-Roman wrestlers.
- India’s Greco-Roman wrestlers have improved on their tally of two bronze medals at the last edition and is the country’s best ever performance in this discipline at the Asian Championships.

**Kenyan Eliud Kipchoge - won his fourth London Marathon 2019 crown at London, UK**
- Kipchoge ran ahead of other runners to win the race with the second fastest-ever time of 2:02:37.
- He had set the world record time of 2:01.39s at Berlin in 2018.
- In the women’s section, Brigid Kosgei won the title.
- She finished the course in 2:18:20.
Valtteri Bottas (Finland - Mercedes) – wins the Azerbaijan Formula 1 Grand Prix and regained the lead in the 2019 drivers’ title race

- Great Britain’s current Formula 1 champion, Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) finished second
- With the one-two finish, Mercedes swept to a fourth successive season-opening one-two finish, the first team to do so since Ferrari in 1952.
- It was Bottas’ second win this year
- Sebastian Vettel of Ferrari finished third while Max Verstappen was fourth for Red Bull
- With the win, Bottas has 87 points, Hamilton 86 and Vettel 52 in the overall driver’s rankings

The Wrestling Federation of India - recommended the names of Bajrang Punia and Vinesh Phogat for the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award 2019

- World No. 1, Punia was the only gold medal winner for India in the just concluded Asian Wrestling Championships 2019 in Xi’an, China
- He had won the gold medal in the 65 kg freestyle wrestling event at the 2018 Asian Games held in Jakarta
- He also managed to win gold in the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games and Silver in the World Championships in 2018.
- On the other hand, Vinesh Phogat became the first Indian woman wrestler to win Gold in both Commonwealth and Asian Games 2018
- The Wrestling Federation had recommended Rahul Aware, Harpreet Singh, Divya Kakran and Pooja Dhanda for the Arjuna Award
- Virender Kumar, Sujeet Maan, Narendra Kumar and Vikram Kumar have been recommended for Dronacharya Award
- Bheem Singh and Jai Prakash have been recommended for the Dhyan Chand Award.
- The Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna is the highest sporting honour of India
All India Football Federation (AIFF) - recommended names of National team footballers Gurpreet Singh Sandhu and Jeje Lalpekhlua for the prestigious Arjuna award 2019

- AIFF has been naming both these players since 2017 but Arjuna Award committee didn’t approve their names in past two years
- Sandhu is only second footballer (after Sunil Chhetri) in India to play Asian Cup final rounds twice in 2011 and 2019
- Sunil Chhetri has already received both Arjuna award and Padma Shri
- He had set a unique record in 2016, by becoming first Indian footballer to play competitive match in European top division league, Stabaek of Norway
- Jeje, from Mizoram, currently plays for Chennaiyin FC in ISL (Indian Super League)
- Arjuna awards are the country’s second highest sporting award after Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award
- They are first instituted in 1961 to honour sportspersons for outstanding performances for four years in National sports

INTERNATIONAL DAY

International Dance Day – April 29

- The day is celebrated worldwide to encourage participation and education in dance through events and festivals
- The aim of the day is to celebrate dance, revel in the universality of this art form, cross all political, cultural and ethnic barriers, and bring people together with a common language - dance
- It was instituted by the dance committee of the International Theatre Institute (ITI)—the main partner for the performing arts of UNESCO.
- In 1982 the Dance Committee of ITI founded International Dance Day on April 29, the birthday of Jean-Georges Noverre (1727-1810), creator of modern ballet
The Human Resource Development Ministry - has released ₹58.92 crore as part of grant to improve higher education institutions in Tamil Nadu

- The allocation is under Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan scheme of the Centre, which contributes 60% of the total budget
- The funds are meant for the improvement of infrastructure, faculty development, research and innovation and upgrade of degree colleges to model institutions
- Institutions that have benefitted under the scheme include Tamil University of Thanjavur and the Physical Education and Sports University, which will receive ₹6 crore each for infrastructure improvement.
- Madurai Kamaraj University has been allocated ₹1.05 crore for faculty improvement
- Bharathiar University, Annamalai University, Anna University, MKU, Bharathidasan University and University of Madras each have been sanctioned ₹4.50 crore towards entrepreneurship and career hub development.
- The Government Arts College, Salem, Alagappa College, Karaikudi and Presidency College, Chennai, have each been given ₹60 lakh for infrastructure and colleges, including Quaid E Millath, Nandanam, Presidency, Dr. Ambedkar, Queen Mary’s and Bharathi Women’s College, Chennai, have been allocated funds to develop vocational education.
- Nineteen colleges, including Presidency College, have been allocated ₹10.50 lakh for vocationalisation of higher education

The Tamil Nadu Directorate of Government Examinations - released the TN SSLC result 2019 on April 29

- This year the TN Class 10th examination 2019 was conducted from 14 March - 29 March, 2019.
- Key stats of the results
No. of Students appeared - 9.76 lakh
- Overall Pass Percentage: 95.2%
- Pass percentage among girls: 97%
- Pass percentage among boys: 93.3%

Top 3 districts:
- Tirupur - 98.53%
- Ramanathapuram - 98.48%
- Namakal - 98.45%

NATIONAL

The Centre - asked the state transport departments to ensure that all battery operated vehicles have the green number plate immediately

- The road transport ministry had introduced the new number plate for all battery operated or electric vehicles (EVs) in August, 2018
- The government has already cancelled the permits for vehicles running on battery and other alternative source of fuel such as methanol and bio-fuel
- As per ministry’s notification, the registration mark - alphabets and numerical numbers - shall be exhibited in yellow colour on green colour background for commercial vehicles and for private vehicles the registration mark will be in white on green background.

Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman - attended the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Defence Ministers' conclave at Bishkek in Kyrgyzstan on April 29
- During the conclave, key bilateral defence issues, including defence cooperation, were discussed with Chinese and Russian Defence ministers and Chief of General Staff of Kyrgyz Armed Forces

- India became a full member of the SCO in 2017
INTERNATIONAL

Lebanon’s capital, Beirut - has set a Guinness World Record for the number of national flags raised in a city for 24 hours

The Alive Association raised a total of 26,852 Lebanese flags on April 28, breaking New York’s Waterloo record of 25,599 flags

COMMITTEES

The Union Environment Ministry - has constituted a committee to implement the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)

- NCAP aims to reduce particulate matter (PM) pollution by 20%-30% in at least 102 cities by 2024
- The committee will be chaired by the Secretary, Union Environment Ministry
- Other members of the committee includes the Joint Secretary (Thermal), Ministry of Power; Director-General, The Energy Resources Institute (TERI), the Delhi-based think-tank; and Professor Sachidananda Tripathi, Indian Institute of Technology-Kanpur (IIT-K)
- The NCAP was launched in January as a scheme to provide the States and the Centre with a framework to combat air pollution
- For achieving the NCAP targets, the cities would be expected to calculate the reduction in pollution, keeping 2017’s average annual PM levels as the base year.
- The NCAP is envisioned as a five-year action plan with 2019 as the first year.
- There would be a review every five years
- In 2018, 14 of the world’s 15 most polluted cities were in India.
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

The Government of India has decided to set up a second rocket testing station and a satellite launching base at Sriharikota Island, near Pulicat Lake, in Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh.

- The second station is required for flight testing and evaluating the performance of the rockets which are being designed and developed at the Space, Science and Technology Centre at Thumba.
- The first rocket launching station established in Thumba in Kerala State has been in operation since 1963.

DEFENCE

The defence ministry has signed a ₹6,311 crore contract with defence shipyard Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Limited (GRSE) to build eight anti-submarine warfare (ASW) shallow water craft for the Navy.

- The entire project will be completed in 84 months, with the first ship to be delivered within 42 months and other two to be delivered every year thereafter.
- They will have the capability to destroy sub-surface targets in coastal waters.
- They can be deployed for search and rescue operations round-the-clock in coastal areas. They will also be capable of capturing intruding aircraft, and lay mines in the sea bed.
- Weighing 750-tonne, the craft can reach a maximum speed of 25 knots with a crew of 57 personnel.

Indian Army – to purchase Spike-LR Anti-Tank Missiles from Israel and Igla-S Very Short Range Air Defence Systems (VSHORAD) from Russia invoking the latest emergency financial powers sanctioned by the Defence Ministry earlier this month.

- According to the new provisions, armed forces have been given a free hand to procure equipment worth up to ₹300 crore on a priority basis.
- Under the emergency route, the Army is also looking to procure about 12 launchers and around 250 missiles for each system.
- The deliveries for these missiles will be completed within three months, which is extendable to another six months.
**SPORTS**

- **India’s G Sathiyan (Chennai)** - becomes the first Indian Table Tennis player to break into the top-25 of world rankings

  ✓ Sathiyan rose four spots to be 24th in the latest ITTF rankings, following his impressive sixth place finish in the Asia Cup in Yokohama earlier this month

**RANKINGS**

- **World military expenditure report - data released by global think-tank Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (Sipri)**

  ✓ The US is the world’s largest spender on defence, with a military expenditure almost equal to the next eight countries combined.
  ✓ The total world military expenditure rose by 2.6% to $1,822 billion in 2018.
  ✓ The $66.5 billion (₹4.6 lakh crore) military expenditure figure for India includes defence pensions, which amount to one-fourth of the total.
  ✓ Of the remaining, two-thirds go in for the day-to-day running costs and salaries.
  ✓ Overall, this leaves just about one-fourth of the $66.5 billion figure for military modernization and new weapon systems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Military Expenditure in 2018</th>
<th>Billion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>$649 billion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>$250 billion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S Arabia</td>
<td>67.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>66.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>63.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>61.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The capital allocation for defence stands at 32-33% of the total central government capital expenditure.
Passenger Airports Growth in India – data released by the Airports Authority of India (AAI)

- Airports in the country witnessed a total 34.4 crore passengers during financial year 2018-2019, registering a growth of 11.6% as compared to the previous fiscal.
- Domestic passengers stood at 27.5 crore, recording a growth of 13.1% (counted once at departure and once at arrival) and the international passengers at 6.9 crore, with an increase of 6.1% (counted only once at departure) from the previous FY 2018.
- The overall growth rate of 11.6%, however, is the slowest in the last three years.
- Indian airports saw a growth of 16.5% in financial year 2017-18 and 18.3% in financial year 2016-2017.
- Among the six joint-venture airports that together account for 40% of the total traffic, Nagpur airport saw the fastest growth (28.2%).
- This was followed by Bengaluru (23.8%), Hyderabad (17.9%), Delhi (5.4%) and Mumbai (0.7%).
- Cochin airport saw a negative growth of -0.5%.
- Among the AAI-owned top 20 international airports, the fastest growth was seen at smaller airports such as Vijaywada (58.7%), Tirupati (42.7%), Varanasi (33.4%), Imphal (29.3%) and Bhubaneswar (27.9%).
REPORT

Around 64% polling - reported across nine states casting their ballots in the fourth phase of the Lok Sabha polls on April 29

With this phase, polling for 373 (69%) of the 543 Lok Sabha constituencies across 24 states and Union territories has been concluded.

- West Bengal secured the highest turnout at 77%
- The voter turnout was the lowest at 9.8% in J&K’s Anantnag constituency, where polling was held only in Kulgam.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATES THAT VOTED IN PHASE 4 (SEATS)</th>
<th>TURNOUT (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bihar (5)</td>
<td>57.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jharkhand (3)</td>
<td>57.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J&amp;K (Kulgam dist)</td>
<td>36.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madhya Pradesh (6)</td>
<td>64.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maharashtra (17)</td>
<td>55.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odisha (6)</td>
<td>75.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajasthan (13)</td>
<td>64.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uttar Pradesh (13)</td>
<td>58.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Bengal (8)</td>
<td>83.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (72 seats)</td>
<td>62.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>