

Weekly Current Affairs

11-17 April, 2021

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NATIONAL NEWS

1. Government launched Mass Vaccination Programme “Teeka Utsav” to control surging COVID-19 cases

- In a bid to fight against the surging COVID-19 cases, the Government of India has launched a mass vaccination programme “Teeka Utsav (vaccine festival)” from April 11 to 14, 2021.
- It must be noted that April 11 marks the birth anniversary of Jyotiba Phule and April 14 is the birth anniversary of Baba Saheb Ambedkar.
- As a result, the nationwide vaccination drive will be observed as a vaccination festival and will aim to inoculate a maximum number of eligible people against the coronavirus.
- All eligible persons for vaccination can register and book an appointment with the help of CoWIN portal and Aarogya Setu App. Apart from this, an on-site registration facility is also available.
- PM Narendra Modi has urged the youth to come forward and help senior citizens and others who need help to register for COVID vaccination.

2. Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik launched 'Mask Abhiyan' against COVID-19

- Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on 8th April launched 14-day 'Mask Abhiyan' as part of efforts to prevent the spread of coronavirus in view of rising cases and urged people to strictly follow the safety guidelines.
- Its aim is to turn the use of a mask into a habit.
- This will play a huge role in controlling the current resurgence of COVID-19.
- Also, the Odisha State Government has increased the fines for violators from Rs.1000 to Rs.2000.

3. Persons above 18 years are free to choose religion

- The Supreme Court said persons above 18 years of age are free to choose their religion as it refused to entertain a plea seeking directions to the Centre and states to control black magic and religious conversion.
- A bench of Justices R.F. Nariman, BR Gavai and Hrishikesh Roy told senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayana, appearing for petitioner advocate Ashwini Upadhyay, "What kind of writ petition is this under Article 32. We will impose a heavy cost on you. You argue on your own risk."
- The bench said there is no reason why a person above 18 can't be allowed to choose their religion.
- The plea filed by Ashwini Upadhyay has also sought directions to ascertain the feasibility of appointing a committee to enact a Conversion of Religion Act to check the abuse of religion.

- Religious conversion by "carrot and stick" and by "hook or crook" not only offends Articles 14, 21, 25, but is also against the principles of secularism, which is an integral part of the basic structure of the Constitution.

4.India overtook Brazil to become the second-worst hit country as Covid cases soar

- India reported more than 168,000 new cases over a 24-hour period on Monday, according to health ministry data.
- Around 83% of the new infections were reported in 10 states, including the western state of Maharashtra, home to India's financial capital Mumbai.
- Since the beginning of April, India has reported more than 1.37 million cases, bringing the country's total number of infections to over 13.5 million.
- India overtook Brazil as the second worst-infected country behind the United States after data showed that Covid-19 cases continued to surge.
- The South Asian nation reported more than 168,000 new cases over a 24-hour period on Monday, according to health ministry data. Around 83% of the new infections were reported in 10 states, including the western state of Maharashtra, which is home to India's financial capital Mumbai.

5.PM Modi inaugurated 6th Raisina Dialogue, organised in Fully Digital Format

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 2021 "Raisina Dialogue", through video-conferencing on April 13, 2021.
- Raisina Dialogue is India's flagship conference on geopolitics and geoeconomics, organised annually since 2016.
- The Raisina Dialogue 2021 is the sixth edition of the annual dialogue, organised from April 13 to 16, 2021, in fully digital form for the first time due to the coronavirus pandemic.
- The theme for the 2021 conference is "#ViralWorld: Outbreaks, Outliers, and Out of Control".
- The four-day dialogue is jointly organised by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and the think-tank Observer Research Foundation.

6.PM Modi addressed Association of Indian Universities' 95th annual meet on 14th April

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the Association of Indian Universities' 95th annual meet and National Seminar of Vice-Chancellors at 11 am through video conferencing.
- PM Modi will also release four books based on Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar's life, written by Kishor Makwana.
- The Meet will also commemorate and celebrate the 96th Foundation day of AIU, established in 1925 under the patronage of stalwarts like Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee.

- A National Seminar of Vice-Chancellors on the theme 'Implementing National Educational Policy-2020 to Transform Higher Education in India' is also being organised during the Meet. It aims to work out implementation strategies for the recently launched National Education Policy– 2020 with a clear-cut action plan on effectively implementing the policy in the interest of its primary stakeholders, the students.

7. Udhampur bagged top position at National level for successfully implementing PMGSY during 2020-21

- Udhampur district of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir has bagged top position at National level for successfully implementing Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) during 2020-21. The district has received top position for constructing roads of 560.49 km in 2020-21.
- However, four more districts from the Union Territory have also figured in the list of PMGSY top performing 30 districts in the country. It includes Rajouri, Doda, Kathua and Reasi districts of Jammu division of Jammu and Kashmir.

8. NITI Aayog launched 'Poshan Gyan', a digital repository on health, nutrition

- NITI Aayog, in partnership with Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Centre for Social and Behaviour Change, Ashoka University launched Poshan Gyan, a national digital repository on health and nutrition. The launch event was addressed by NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Dr. Rajiv Kumar, CEO Amitabh Kant, Women and Child Development Secretary Ram Mohan Mishra and Additional Secretary Dr. Rakesh Sarwal.
- While launching the website, Dr. Rajiv Kumar said, the creation of Poshan Gyan was a landmark moment. He said, real change can be brought about only through changing behaviours on the ground. The NITI Aayog Vice Chairman said, high malnutrition persists despite India being a food-surplus nation, which points towards a clear need for behavioural change.

9. India ranked 49th in Inclusive Internet Index 2021

- The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) has released a report, the Inclusive Internet Index 2021 in collaboration with Facebook.
- The Inclusive Internet Index 2021 highlights the extent to which the internet is available and affordable by region and also reviews additional insight into how people around the world are using the web.
- Inclusive Internet Index is commissioned by Facebook and developed by The Economist Intelligence Unit.
- As per the Inclusive Internet Index 2021, India is at 49th place in the world and Thailand also is at the same position as India.

- The top five countries for this index are: Sweden, United States, Spain, Australia, Hong Kong

INTERNATIONAL NEWS & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

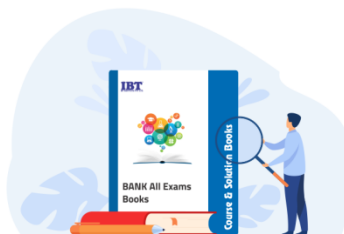
1. Singapore became first Country to ratify mega free trade agreement 'RCEP'

- On April 9, 2021, Singapore ratified the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement, the world's largest free trade agreement, led by China.
- In doing so, Singapore became the first among 15 participating countries to ratify RCEP.
- RCEP is a multi-nation trade pact, comprising 10 ASEAN economies as well as Australia, China, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea.
- The RCEP was signed by the 15 participating countries in November 2020. India had opted out of it in 2019.
- The RCEP must first be ratified by at least six ASEAN and three non-ASEAN member states to come into effect.
- Once implemented, RCEP would be the world's largest free trade agreement, covering around one-third of the world's population and about 30% of the world's economy.

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2. India-Netherlands Virtual Summit held on April 09, 2021

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and Prime Minister of the Netherlands Mr. Mark Rutte, held a Virtual Summit on April 09, 2021.
- During the India- Netherlands virtual Summit, the two leaders reviewed the existing bilateral engagements and also exchanged views on further expanding and diversifying the relationship in trade and economy, water management, agriculture sector, smart cities, science & technology, healthcare and space.

- Apart from this the two Prime Ministers also agreed on instituting a 'Strategic Partnership on Water' to further deepen the Indo-Dutch cooperation in the water-related sector and upgrading the Joint Working Group on the water to Ministerial-level.
- They also exchanged views on regional and global challenges such as climate change, counter-terrorism and Covid-19 pandemic and agreed to leverage the emerging convergences in new areas like Indo-Pacific, Resilient Supply Chains and Global Digital Governance.

3.United Arab Emirates named country's first female astronaut for space program

- The United Arab Emirates named the next two astronauts in its space program, including the country's first female astronaut.
- Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the ruler of Dubai who also serves as the autocratically ruled country's prime minister and vice president.
- He identified Noura al-Matroushi as the UAE's first female astronaut, with her male counterpart as Mohammed al-Mulla.
- Al-Mulla, born in 1988, serves as a pilot with Dubai police and heads their training division.
- Dutee, who holds the national record of 11.22 secs in 100m, is aiming to achieve Tokyo Olympics qualification time of 11.15 secs in the coming months.
- Earlier this week, she was selected to represent the country in 4x100m relay team at next month's World Relays in Poland.

4.India has finalised air bubble pact with Sri Lanka

- India has established a bilateral air bubble arrangement with Sri Lanka for operation of special international passenger flights between the two countries.
- With this, India now has such pacts with 28 countries, including Afghanistan, Bahrain, Canada, France, Germany, Iraq, Japan, the Maldives, Nigeria, Qatar, the UAE, the U.K. and the USA.
- Under an air bubble pact between two countries, special international passenger flights can be operated by their airlines into each other's territories under restrictive conditions.

5.NITI Aayog to launch Online Dispute Resolution handbook

- NITI Aayog will launch the first-of-its kind Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) handbook in India.
- ODR is the resolution of disputes outside courts, particularly of small and medium-value cases, using digital technology and techniques of alternate dispute resolution such as negotiation, mediation, and arbitration. Supreme

Court Judge, Justice D.Y. Chandrachud will deliver the opening address and launch the handbook.

6. Dr. Harsh Vardhan will launch a new mission called 'Aahaar Kranti'

- The mission is aimed to spread the message of the need for a nutritionally balanced diet and to understand the importance of accessible to all local fruits and vegetables.
- Vijnana Bharati (Vibha) and Global Indian Scientists' and Technocrats' Forum (GIST) have come together to launch the mission with the motto of 'उत्तम आहार-उत्तम विचार (Uttam Aahaar Uttam Vichaar)' or 'Good Diet-Good Cognition'.
- The 'Aahaar Kranti' movement is designed to address the peculiar problem being faced by India and the world called 'hunger and diseases in abundance'. Studies estimate that India produces as much as two times the amount of calories that it consumes. However, many in the country are still malnourished. The root cause of this strange phenomenon is a lack of nutritional awareness in all sections of our society.
- There is a need for a nutritionally balanced diet also in the context of the current COVID-19 pandemic. A healthy body would be able to handle the infection much better with greater immunity and higher resilience.

7. Russian Vaccine Sputnik V gets emergency use authorisation in India

- The Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) has approved the use of the Sputnik V vaccine for usage, according to the Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF).
- This paves the way for India to roll out its third vaccine against coronavirus infections. The country has been administering Covishield -- the Oxford-Astrazeneca vaccine manufactured by the Serum Institute of India -- and home-grown Covaxin.
- India has now become the 60th country to approve Sputnik V.

8. Genovva starts enrolment for Phase I/II human trials for its mRNA vaccine

- India's mRNA-based covid-19 vaccine candidate-HGCO19, developed by Pune-based biotechnology company Genovva Biopharmaceuticals Ltd has received additional government funding for its clinical studies.
- The department of biotechnology (DBT), ministry of science & technology on 13th April announced approval of additional funding awarded under Mission Covid Suraksha—The Indian covid-19 Vaccine Development Mission by DBT's dedicated Mission Implementation Unit at Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) after multiple rounds of evaluation of all the applications that were submitted in response to the

'Request for Expression of Interest (REOI)' under Mission COVID Suraksha for the development of covid-19 vaccine candidate(s).

9. US President Biden announces complete troops withdrawal from Afghanistan

- US President Joe Biden has announced that all American troops would be withdrawn from Afghanistan by September 11 this year, thus bringing to end the country's longest war, spanning across two decades.
- "US troops, as well as forces deployed by our NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) Allies and operational partners, will be out of Afghanistan before we mark the 20th anniversary of that heinous attack on September 11 (2001)", said Biden during a televised address to the nation from the White House.

NEW APPOINTMENT AND PERSON IN NEWS

1. Sonu Sood became Punjab's Covid vaccine campaign ambassador

- Sonu Sood, who has been on a mission to help the needy ever since the lockdown was announced to fight the novel coronavirus pandemic last year, has been appointed as the Covid vaccine campaign ambassador by the Punjab government. On Sunday, April 11, Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh declared him the Brand Ambassador of the Punjab Government for its Covid-19 vaccination programme.
- Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh made the announcement a day after meeting Sonu, who called on him at his residence on Saturday, April 10. "There is no one more ideally suited to inspire and influence people to take the vaccine. There is a lot of hesitancy among people here in Punjab. Sonu's popularity among them and his exemplary role in helping tens of thousands of migrants reach safely home since the pandemic broke out last year will help counter their reservations.

2. Sushil Chandra appointed as Chief Election Commissioner

- Sushil Chandra has been appointed as the new Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) by the President Ram Nath Kovind under clause (2) of article 324 of the Constitution.
- He will succeed Sunil Arora, who demitted office on 12 April 2021.
- He is the senior-most election commissioner, ahead of Rajiv Kumar, in the three-member poll panel.
- He will be the 24th CEC, having been appointed as an election commissioner on February 14, 2019.

3. Guillermo Alberto Santiago Lasso Mendoza elected as President of Ecuador

- Ecuadorian businessman and politician Guillermo Alberto Santiago Lasso Mendoza (65 years) has been elected as the President of Ecuador.
- He defeated Andrés Arauz in the 2021 general election.
- He previously ran for the presidential elections in 2013 and 2017 but was defeated.
- Apart from his political career, he was also a banker and previously served as CEO of Banco Guayaquil.
- The Electoral Council in Ecuador had not declared an official winner in the contest to replace President Lenín Moreno next month, but results released by the agency showed former banker Guillermo Lasso with about 53% of votes and leftist Andrés Arauz at 47%, with just over 90% of votes counted.



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4. IAS officer Siddharth Longjam appointed new NADA DG

- IAS officer Siddharth Singh Longjam will take over as the National Anti-Doping Agency's Director-General, succeeding Navin Agarwal who listed the creation of Athletes Biological Passport (ABP) for around 60 elite Indian sportspersons as one of the highlights of his tenure. Longjam is currently serving as joint secretary in the sports ministry and is also the CEO of the currently suspended National Dope Testing Laboratory (NDTL).
- Agarwal, an IPS officer who took charge of NADA in 2016, will be back in Jammu & Kashmir Police. Asked about his tenure in a role which isn't exactly conventional policing, Agarwal said ABP has been a significant step in curbing the menace of doping. The Athlete Biological Passport (ABP) helps monitor select biological variables over time that can reveal the effects of doping, rather than attempting to detect the doping substance or the method itself.

5. Haiti Prime Minister Joseph Jouthe resigned

- Haitian Prime Minister Joseph Jouthe on April 14 has submitted his resignation to President Jovenel Moise. Without explaining the reason, he announced his decision on Twitter. His resignation follows a situation of unrest in the Country, There has been an increase in killing and kidnapping cases over the past few days.
- Joseph Jouthe had served as prime minister since March 2020. He had previously also tried to resign but President Moise had refused to accept it. But, this time he accepted his resignation and even nominated Claude Joseph as the new Prime Minister.
- Haiti has been facing more than a year of protests as the opposition leaders have claimed that President Jovenel Moise's five-year term has ended. The opposition leaders have demanded the resignation of the president but he has refused to do it. He announced that authorities had arrested people who were planning an alleged coup to kill him.

BANKING

1.ADB approved USD 484 million loan to improve Transport Connectivity at CKIC in Tamil Nadu

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a USD 484 million loan to improve transport connectivity and road maintenance in the Chennai-Kanyakumari Industrial Corridor (CKIC) in Tamil Nadu.
- The CKIC is part of India's East Coast Economic Corridor, which stretches from West Bengal to Tamil Nadu and connects India to the production networks of Southeast and East Asia.
- The project will upgrade about 590 km of state highways in the CKIC influence areas. Climate change adaptation measures will be incorporated in the highway upgrades, including improved drainage, raised road embankments in critical sections, and resizing of bridges and culverts.

2.SEBI imposed penalty of Rs. 25 crore on Mukesh Ambani, Anil Ambani and others

- The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has imposed a penalty of Rs. 25 crore on the Ambani family and firms linked to the promoter group for violation of takeover code regulations in the year 2000.
- In January 2000, the promoter stake in Reliance Industries (RIL) had increased by 6.83 percent following conversion of warrants issued in 1994.
- However, the promoter group failed to make an open offer as mandate under the Substantial Acquisition of Shares and Takeovers (SAST) Regulations 1997.
- Under the regulations, a promoter group acquiring more than 5 percent of the voting rights, in any financial year ending March 31, needs to make an open offer to minority investors.

3.Provisional Direct Tax for Financial Year 2020-21 show growth of almost 5%

- Provisional figures of Direct Tax collections for the Financial Year 2020-21 depicts net collections of Rs. 9.45 lakh crore.
- Net Direct Tax (NDT): Corporation Tax at Rs.4.57 lakh crore and Personal Income Tax including Security Transaction Tax (STT) at Rs. 4.88 lakh crore.
- NDT represent 104.46% of Revised Estimates of Rs.9.05 lakh crore of Direct Taxes for F.Y. 2020-21.
- Gross collection of Direct Taxes (before adjusting for refunds) stands at Rs. 12.06 lakh crore.

4.Airtel Payments Bank launched 'Rewards123' savings account

- Airtel Payments Bank has rolled out a new digital savings account called 'Rewards123' to offer consistent value, with assured rewards on different types of digital transactions throughout the year.
- In addition to this, users will get a cashback of 2% on online shopping worth ₹1,000 or more using the platinum debit card that comes with the account. Users will get a maximum of ₹40 per month as a part of this scheme. Lastly, users will get a cashback of ₹30 cashback per month on payments for prepaid recharges, post-paid, broadband, landline, and DTH bill payments. Other benefits include zero minimum balance, free platinum online Mastercard Debit card and unlimited deposits with an auto-sweep facility.

5.Punjab National Bank launched digital initiative PNB@Ease

- Punjab National Bank (PNB) has launched digital initiative titled PNB@Ease under which every transaction by a bank branch will be initiated and authorized by customers themselves.
- Service will range from savings accounts opening to availing loans, without visiting a branch,
- It will be rolled out across 165 identified locations across India.
- It will be loaded with 5 Kiosks: ATM, Bunch Note Acceptor, Account Opening Kiosk, Card Issuance Kiosk, and internet-enabled Kiosk.
- Amazon has announced a \$250 million fund for India with the aim to focus on enabling SME digitisation, agriculture technology and medical technology. The announcement came at the tech giant's second Smbhav event.

The Amazon Smbhav Venture Fund will focus on three key priorities:

- Digitisation of small and medium businesses (SME) in India.

- Drive innovation in Agritech innovations to empower farmer productivity and reach.
- Drive innovation in Health tech to provide universal and quality health care.

6.RBI to set up Regulations Review Authority from May 1 for one year

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) set up a new Regulations Review Authority (RRA 2.0) for a period of one year. The RRA will undertake a review of the central bank's regulations and compliance procedures for streamlining them and making them more effective.
- The RRA will be set up from May 1, 2021, for a period of one year, unless the timeline is extended by the RBI. M Rajeshwar Rao, Deputy Governor, RBI will be head of the Regulations Review Authority, the banking regulator said.
- It is to be noted that RBI had established an RRA back in April 1, 1999, for a period of one year to review the regulations, circulars, reporting systems, based on the feedback from the public, banks, and financial institutions.

SCIENCE TECH & DEFENCE

1.Sanskrit learning app 'Little Guru' to be launched in Bangladesh

- Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre (IGCC) of High Commission of India has launched Sanskrit learning app titled as 'Little Guru' in Bangladesh.
- The app is part of the campaign being run by ICCR to promote Sanskrit language among students, religious scholars, Indologists and historians across the world.
- It is based on an interactive platform which will make Sanskrit learning easy, entertaining and fun, using games, competition, rewards, peer to peer interactions, etc.

2.Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated IAF Commanders' Conference on April 15

- The first bi-annual Indian Air Force (IAF) Commanders' Conference for the year 2021 will be inaugurated by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on April 15 at the Vayu Bhawan in New Delhi.
- A series of discussions would be conducted over a period of three days during the conference to address strategies and policies related to capabilities that would give IAF a significant edge over its adversaries.
- The conference of top-level leadership is also aimed at addressing the issues of IAF's operational capabilities in the times to come.

- Various welfare and human resource measures to improve HR and administrative efficiency will also be discussed, they added.

What is Air Force Commanders' Conference:

- The IAF Commanders' Conference is a bi-annual conference which is held at Subroto Hall, Air Headquarters, Vayu Bhawan in New Delhi.
- It provides a forum to the senior leadership of the IAF to discuss critical issues pertaining to operations, maintenance and administration.

3.Agriculture Ministry signed MoU with Microsoft for a pilot project in 100 villages of 6 states to raise farmers income

- Union Agriculture Ministry has signed an MoU with Microsoft for a pilot project in 100 villages of six states. This project will carry out various tasks for the betterment of farmers in the selected villages, which will enhance their income. This will also reduce the input costs for farmers and make farming easy.
- These states are Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh. Microsoft will develop a farmer interface for smart and well-organized agriculture, including post-harvest management and distribution.
- PM Modi has laid great emphasis on the use of modern technologies in the farming sector to enhance farmers' income. He said, the agricultural economy is the backbone of the country and any loss to agriculture is a loss for the country.
- Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said, the agriculture sector has contributed positively to the country's economy even in adverse conditions like Corona epidemic.

4.Maharashtra got India's first floating LNG storage and regasification unit

- India's first Floating Storage and Regasification Unit (FSRU) have arrived at H-Energy's Jaigarh Terminal in Maharashtra.
- This will also be the first year-round Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminal in Maharashtra.
- The LNG terminal is located at JSW Jaigarh Port in the Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra, on the west coast of India. The port is the first deep water, 24x7 operational private ports in Maharashtra.
- The LNG regasification terminal has storage capacity of 170,000 cubic metres and installed regasification capacity of 750 million cubic feet per day (equivalent to about six million tonnes a year).
- The FSRU based LNG Terminals aim at providing the ability to enhance the pace of natural gas import capability in an environment friendly and efficient manner.

5.UNFPA Launched the State of World Population Report, 2021

- Nearly half of all women are denied their bodily autonomy, says the new UNFPA State of World Population Report - 'My Body is My Own' -- released on April 14, 2021.
- For the first time, a United Nations report focuses on bodily autonomy - the power and agency to make choices about your body without fear of violence or having someone else decide for you. A serious lack of bodily autonomy has had far-reaching implications much beyond the profound harm to individual women and girls that include potentially depressing economic productivity, undercutting skills, and extra costs to health care and judicial systems.
- Nearly half the women from 57 developing countries do not have the right to decide regarding their bodies including using contraception, seeking health care, or even on their sexuality.

BOOKS AND AWARDS

1.Akhtari: The Life and Music of Begum Akhtar to be released soon

- A new book "Akhtari: The Life and Music of Begum Akhtar" to be released soon.
- Originally written in Hindi the book is now available in English.
- The book edited by Yatindra Mishra and published by HarperCollins India.
- Akhtaribai Faizabadi, or Begum Akhtar as she was better known, was a legend even during her own lifetime, and one of the last of the great singers from the tawaif community.
- This book is a tribute to Begum Akhtar, featuring essays on her life and music.

2.Dutee Chand to be honoured with Chhattisgarh Veerni Award

- Dutee Chand, the Jakarta Asian Games silver-medalist in 100 and 200 metres, will receive Chhattisgarh Veerni Award.
- Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, the inaugural edition of the awards ceremony will be held virtually on April 14.
- The award, instituted by the Chhattisgarh state government, recognises contribution of Indian women in different fields, including sports.
- According to a press release of the Chhattisgarh government, Dutee has been shortlisted for the award for her contribution in sports.
- In 2019, the Odisha sprinter became the first Indian woman to win gold medal at the World University Games held in Italy.

3.Union Minister of Education presents AICTE Lilavati Awards 2020 on women empowerment

- Union Minister of Education Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' presented the AICTE Lilavati Awards 2020 on women empowerment to the winners in New Delhi.
- Aim: To create awareness about issues like sanitation, hygiene, health, nutrition, literacy, employment, technology, credit, marketing, innovation, skill development, natural resources and rights among women
- Award covers multidisciplinary areas such as women's health, self-defence, sanitation, literacy, entrepreneurship and legal awareness.

4.Indian business tycoon Yusuffali honoured with top civilian award in Abu Dhabi

- Yusuffali, 65, the Chairman and Managing Director of Abu Dhabi-based LuLu Group which operates hypermarkets and retail companies in many countries, was honoured by the Crown Prince.
- Apart from Yusuffali MA, 11 other individuals received the honour for their noble and charitable contributions to the community.
- The 65-year-old Yusuffali, who was born in Kerala, is the Chairman and Managing Director of Abu Dhabi-based LuLu Group which operates hypermarkets and retail companies in many countries.

5.NITI Aayog launched India Energy Dashboards Version 2.0

- The India Energy Dashboards Version 2.0 was launched by Dr. Rajiv Kumar (Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog), Dr. V K Saraswat (Member, NITI Aayog), Shri Amitabh Kant (CEO, NITI Aayog) and Dr. Rakesh Sarwal (Additional Secretary, NITI Aayog). Secretaries from Ministry of Coal, Ministry of Power, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, and Ministry of New and Renewable Energy attended the launch event.
- India Energy Dashboards (IED) is an endeavour to provide single-window access to the energy data for the country. Energy data published/provided by Central Electricity Authority, Coal Controller's Organisation, and Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas are compiled in the Dashboards. NITI Aayog launched the Version 1.0 in May 2017.

6.Ace filmmaker Guneet Monga received the second-highest civilian French honour

- Ace filmmaker Guneet Monga who has made India proud time and again has now been conferred with the honour of the Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters (Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres), the second-highest civilian French honour which has previously been awarded to people like Meryl Streep, Leonardo DiCaprio, and Bruce Willis.
- Monga's Sikhya Entertainment has backed many great films like That Girl in Yellow Boots, The Lunchbox, Masaan, Monsoon Shootout, and Oscar award-winning documentary Period, End of Sentence. Monga's latest film,

Pagglait which stars Sanya Malhotra has been gaining rave reviews. Shah Rukh Khan, Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, Amitabh Bachchan, Nandita Das, Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia and Anurag Kashyap have also received the Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters earlier.

7. Government launched community mental-health digital platform "MANAS"

- The Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India Prof. K Vijay Raghavan has virtually launched the “MANAS” App to promote wellbeing across age groups.
- MANAS which stands for Mental Health and Normalcy Augmentation System was endorsed as a national program by the Prime Minister’s Science, Technology, and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC).
- MANAS is a comprehensive, scalable, and national digital wellbeing platform and an app developed to augment mental well-being of Indian citizens. MANAS App integrates the health and wellness efforts of various government ministries, scientifically validated indigenous tools with gamified interfaces developed/researched by various national bodies and research institutions.
- MANAS was initiated by the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India. It was jointly executed by NIMHANS Bengaluru, AFMC Pune and C-DAC Bengaluru.



8. Seville to be host city for Laureus World Sports Awards 2021

- The Spanish city of Seville will host the 22nd Laureus World Sports Awards on May 6 in a virtual ceremony owing to the raging COVID-19 pandemic.
- Among the many big names who have had a year to remember and who will be in contention for the awards are Rafael Nadal, Lewis Hamilton, LeBron James, Robert Lewandowski (Sportsman), Naomi Osaka, Federica Brignone (Sportswoman).

9. Marathi film ‘Puglya’ won big at Moscow International Film Fest

- Marathi film ‘Puglya’ has won the best foreign language feature at the Moscow International Film Festival 2021, continuing its immensely successful international stint. Director Vinod Sam Peter’s film about a pug and two boys has been winning accolades at foreign festivals.
- Puglya revolves around two 10-year-old boys– one from the city, other hailing from a village– and how the entry of a pug turns their life turns upside down.
- Puglya has travelled to various International Film competitions, including in London, Italy, Sweden, Australia, Philippines, Turkey, Iran, Argentina, Lebanon, Belarus, Russia, Kazakhstan, Spain, Philippines, Israel, USA and Canada. It has also been produced by Vinod Sam Peter under the banner Abraham Films.

10.India inks MoU with France for cooperation on Gaganyaan Mission

- ISRO has signed an agreement with space agency of France CNES for cooperation in its first human space mission, Gaganyaan.
- Under this, CNES will provide equipment developed by it, tested, and still operating aboard the International Space Station (ISS) to Indian crews.
- It will also supply fireproof carry bags made in France to shield equipment from shocks and radiation.
- CNES will train Indian flight physicians and CAPCOM mission control teams at French facilities.

SPORTS

1.Indian Army Officer “Bharat Pannu” breaks two Guinness World Records for Fastest Solo Cycling

- Indian Army's Lieutenant Colonel Bharat Pannu has earned two Guinness World Records for his fastest solo cycling feats from October last year.
- The first record was created when Pannu cycled from Leh to Manali (472 km distance) on October 10, 2020, in just 35 hours and 25 minutes.
- Pannu created a second record when he cycled the 5,942-km-long 'Golden Quadrilateral' route, which connects Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata, in 14 days, 23 hours and 52 minutes.
- This cycling event had started from India Gate in New Delhi on October 16, and it ended back at the same spot on October 30.

2.Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju inaugurated Khelo India State Centre of Excellence for Rowing discipline at Water Sports Academy in Srinagar

- Union Minister for Sports & Youth Affairs Shri Kiren Rijiju inaugurated Khelo India State Centre of Excellence for Rowing discipline at the Jammu & Kashmir Sports Council Water Sports Academy in Srinagar on 10th April 2021. He was joined by Shri Manoj Sinha, Lt. Governor, J&K, Shri Farooq

Khan, Advisor to LG of J&K and Shri Alok Kumar, Secretary, Youth Services, J&K for the ceremony at the Nehru Park in Dal Lake, Srinagar.

- Rijju had announced earlier this year during the Khelo India Winter Games that the Union Sports Ministry would open a state-of-the-art water sports facility in Srinagar. All procedures are now in place and the money has been allocated.

3. Tropical cyclone Seroja rips across 1000 kilometers stretch of Western Australia

- Tropical cyclone Seroja has ripped across a 1,000km stretch of Western Australia, leaving a trail of damage. The category three storm made landfall near the town of Kalbarri yesterday with windspeed of up to 170km/h. Residents reported smashed houses, fallen trees and downed power lines.
- The Bureau of Meteorology said while the storm had weakened, damaging gusts were still expected today, with peak winds of 110km/hour.

4. BAFTA Awards 2021: The complete winners list announced

- The 74th edition of British Academy Film Awards, often shortened to BAFTA or Bafta, are being held virtually in London's Royal Albert Hall. The awards, the British equivalent of the Oscars, honour the best in national and international cinema.
- The award ceremony was held over two nights on April 10 and 11. Eight of the 25 winners were unveiled on April 10. Winners in rest of the categories were revealed on April 11.
- Nomadland, The Father, Promising Young Woman, Ma Rainey's Black Bottom and so on were some of the awards season favourites that took home Bafta trophies.

5. Lizelle Lee and Bhuvneshwar Kumar voted ICC Players of the Month for March 2021

- The International Cricket Council (ICC) 14th April announced the winners of the ICC Player of the Month Awards for March which recognise and celebrate the best performances from both male and female cricketers across all forms of international cricket throughout the year.
- India's Bhuvneshwar Kumar won the ICC Men's Player of the Month for March 2021, for his impressive performances in India's recently concluded series against England. He was the standout bowler on either side in the white-ball series and was chosen the winner for the month by fans and the ICC voting academy.

6. Kane Williamson awarded Sir Richard Hadlee medal for fourth time

- New Zealand captain Kane Williamson has been awarded the Sir Richard Hadlee medal for the fourth time in six years, while women's allrounder Amelia Kerr and rising star Devon Conway also claimed top honours at the New Zealand Cricket Awards for the 2020-21 season.
- Williamson was given the award on the back of his impressive run in Tests during the summer, where he scored a career-best 251 against the West Indies in Hamilton, followed by a century on his home ground in Tauranga during the Boxing Day Test. He also made a double-century against Pakistan in Christchurch, which helped New Zealand book their place in the ICC World Test Championship final. Overall, New Zealand won 17 out of 20 matches they played during the summer, and claimed all seven series.

OBITUARIES

1. Mahabharat actor Satish Kaul passed away due to Covid-19 complications

- Veteran actor Satish Kaul who essayed the role of Lord Indra in the popular TV show Mahabharata and who acted in around 300 Punjabi and Hindi films passed away on Saturday due to Covid-19 related complications.
- Satish Kaul breathed his last at the Bhagwan Ram Charitable Hospital in Ludhiana here. He was 74.
- Satish Kaul was admitted to the hospital on April 8, and was facing breathing issues. He developed a fever six days ago. He had tested positive for Covid-19 and his oxygen saturation level was dipping. His condition worsened and he passed away at 74.

2. Baroness Shirley Williams, former minister, died aged 90

- Shirley Williams, one of the original “gang of four” Labour politicians who split to form the Social Democratic party, died peacefully in her sleep in the early hour’s morning, the Liberal Democrats have announced.
- Hailed by many as a trailblazer for a political career that spanned more than 50 years, she entered parliament as MP for the Hertfordshire town of Hitchin in 1964 and left it as Lady Williams of Crosby in 2016.
- Williams, who was 90, served in multiple prominent roles, including as education and science secretary under the Labour Prime Minister James Callaghan, and later became the first SDP member elected in a 1981 by election in Crosby, Merseyside.

3. Hockey player Balbir Singh Junior passed away at 88

- Balbir Singh Junior, who was a member of the silver medal-winning 1958 Asian Games Indian hockey team, died here at the age of 88.
- Born on May 2, 1932, at Sansarpur in Jalandhar, also known as the nursery of Indian hockey, Balbir Singh Junior had played alongside legends like

Balbir Singh Senior, Leslie Claudius, Prithipal Singh, Balkishan and Charles Stephen among others.

- Singh took hockey when he was six years old. He studied at Lyallpur Khalsa College in Jalandhar and was first selected to play for the Indian hockey team in 1951 during the tour of Afghanistan.
- He was part of the Punjab state hockey team and also captained Punjab University team. Later, he also played for the Indian Railways team that toured European countries such as Spain, Switzerland and Italy. The team also played Test matches in Netherlands.

4. Former Chief Election Commissioner G.V.G. Krishnamurty passed away at 86

- Former election commissioner GVG Krishnamurty died here due to age-related ailments.
- An Indian Legal Service officer, Krishnamurty became the election commissioner in October, 1993.
- His last rites will take place this evening at the Lodhi Road crematorium.
- An academic, a Gold Medalist, a Professor of Law, joined the Central Law Ministry of Govt. of India, and served it with distinction from 1960 to 1992 for about 32yrs. During his tenure with the Govt of India, he was associated with eminent jurists, constitutional and international law Experts like V.V.Giri, President of India, Dr. Zakir Hussain (Vice-President), V.K.Krishna Menon (Defence Minister), Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, Dr. Nagendra Singh (President International Court of Justice), T.N.Kaul (Foreign Secretary), P.N.Haksar (Secretary to PM) Mohd. Hidayatullah (Chief Justice of India), and Prof. Upendra Baxi (eminent jurist) to name only a few. It's an endless list of long associations with numerous Chief Justices, Judges, Civil Servants, academics, Diplomats and Doyens in the Press & Media.

IMPORTANT DAYS

1. World Parkinson's Day 2021: April 11

- April 11 is World Parkinson's Day, and April is Parkinson's Awareness Month. World Parkinson's Day is observed on the birthday of James Parkinson! He was a neurologist, geologist, scientist, and activist. He was born April 11, 1755, and died December 21, 1824.
- When you see a pink ribbon, you likely think of a breast cancer survivor or breast cancer awareness. Likewise, for Alzheimer's disease awareness, a purple ribbon is the chosen color. Interestingly, for Parkinson's disease awareness, it is a red tulip. This red tulip was developed by J.W.S. Van der Wereld, a Dutch horticulturist who had

2. 102nd anniversary of Jallianwala Bagh Massacre: 13 April, 2021

- April 13 marks the day of the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre, and this Tuesday is the 102nd anniversary of the incident. Jallianwala Bagh Massacre refers to the incident that took place in 1919 at Amritsar's Jallianwala Bagh, in which British troops opened fire against thousands of people who had gathered to mark the occasion of Baisakhi. In the massacre, several hundreds were killed and numerous more were injured. The incident is seen as a major turning point in the national freedom movement of India.
- After the first World War ended in 1919, Indian leaders believed that the leaders of the country would now be allowed to self-govern. To the contrary, the colonial rulers imposed the Rowlatt Act on March 10, 1919, as per which the government could imprison or confine any person who was associated with any seditious activity without any trial. The passing of this Act led to widespread protests across the country, with Mahatma Gandhi initiating a Satyagraha to oppose the Act.

3.Ambedkar Jayanti 2021 : 14 April

- Ambedkar Jayanti (also known as Bhim Jayanti) is an annual festival observed on 14 April to commemorate the birth anniversary of Babasaheb Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar who was born on 14 April 1891.
- The Day has been observed as an official public holiday throughout India since 2015.
- In 2021, we are marking the 130th birth anniversary of Babasaheb.
- Dr. Ambedkar is known as the Father (chief architect) of the Indian Constitution.
- He was the first Law and Justice Minister of the country after the independence.
- Dr. Bhim has been bestowed with the country's highest civilian honor, Bharat Ratna in 1990 posthumously.

4.World Art Day 2021: 15 April

- World Art Day is observed every year on 15 April to celebrate fine arts and promote awareness of creative activity around the world.
- The day was declared by the International Association of Art (IAA), an NGO working in official partnership with UNESCO.
- The first celebration of World Art Day was held on April 15, 2012.
- The date has been selected in honor of the birthday of Leonardo da Vinci, the famous painter of Mona Lisa.
- He was chosen as a symbol of world peace, freedom of expression, tolerance, brotherhood and multiculturalism as well as art's importance to other fields.

5. World Voice Day 2021: 16 April

- World Voice Day is observed globally on April 16 and celebrates the phenomenon of voice. It encourages people irrespective of their sex to assess their vocal health and take action to improve or maintain their good voice habits.
- World Voice Day aims to bring to the notice of the world the need of preventing voice problems rehabilitating the deviant or sick voice, training the artistic voice, and researching the function and application of voice.
- Another objective of World Voice Day is to encourage all the people who use their voice for business or pleasure to learn to take care of their voice, and know-how to seek help and training, and to support research on the voice.
- The theme for this year is One “World Many Voices”.

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