

Awards & Honours

Name	Award Name	Extra Information
Rajinikanth	Dadasaheb Phalke Award	Actor-politician Rajinikanth will receive the Dadasaheb Phalke Award for 2019, India's highest film honour, Union Minister Prakash Javadekar tweeted
Suman Chakraborty	30th GD Birla Award for Scientific Research	Professor Suman Chakraborty has been selected for the 30th GD Birla Award for Scientific Research for his outstanding contribution to engineering science and its applications in developing technologies for affordable healthcare.
Alfred Aho	2020 ACM Turing Award	Turing Award, known informally as the "Nobel Prize of computing." Aho shares the award with his long-time collaborator Jeffrey David Ullman.
Ashutosh Bhardwaj	Devishankar Awasthi Award 2020	The famous Devishankar Awasthi Award has been awarded to the prolific Hindi prose, journalist, and critic Ashutosh Bhardwaj. This honour has been given to him for his work 'Pitra-Vadh'.
Dutee Chand	Chhattisgarh Veerni Award	The Chhattisgarh Government had earlier announced that the first edition of the Chhattisgarh Veerni Awards will be held on the occasion of Ambedkar Jayanti, April 14th. The ceremony will take place virtually due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
Guneet Monga	Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters honour	It is the second-highest civilian French honour and has earlier been awarded to big Hollywood names like Meryl Streep, Leonardo DiCaprio, and Bruce Willis.
Yusuffali MA	Top Civilian Award In UAE	Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan has honoured Indian-origin businessman Yusuffali MA and 11 other individuals with Abu Dhabi's top civilian award for their noble and

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		charitable contributions to the community.
Roberto Benigni	Lifetime Achievement Award	Director Roberto Benigni will be receiving the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement at the 78th Venice International Film Festival, which runs from September 1 to 11.
Rumana Sinha Sehgal	Nelson Mandela World Humanitarian Award 2021	She was virtually awarded for her contribution to the field of developing innovative and functional green products by recycling varied materials and non-biodegradable materials.
Chloe Zhao	Best director at the Academy Awards – Oscar	Zhao was born in China and went to a boarding school in London. She then moved to Los Angeles where she completed her high school. Her debut film was Songs My Brothers Taught me.
Nomadland, Anthony Hopkins, Frances McDormand	Best movie, Best Actor and Best Actress respectively.	Chloé Zhao’s “Nomadland” has won best picture at the 93rd Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS) award.
Krithi Karanth	Wild Innovator Award	Dr. Krithi K Karanth, Chief Conservation Scientist at Bengaluru-based Centre for Wildlife Studies (CWS), has been chosen as the first Indian and Asian woman for the 2021 ‘WILD Innovator Award’.

Appointments

Name	Designation	Extra Information
Subhash Kumar	Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC)	He is serving as Director (Finance) at ONGC. Kumar succeeds incumbent CMD, Shashi Shanker, who superannuated on March 31, 2021.
Mukhmeet S. Bhatia	Director General of Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC)	He is a 1990 IAS Officer of the Jharkhand cadre. Earlier, he has worked as the Additional Secretary in the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance. ESIC is a Statutory and an Autonomous Body under the Ministry of Labour and Employment.
Adil Zainulbhai	Chairman of Capacity Building Commission	The government has approved a commission under National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB), also known as 'Mission Karmayogi', to train civil servants at all levels.
Mallika Srinivasan	Chairperson of the Public Enterprises Selection Board (PESB)	This is for the first time that a private sector specialist has been appointed as the head of the PESB, responsible for the appointment of top management posts in the Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs).
Urjit Patel	Director of Britannia Industries	Former Reserve Bank of India Governor Dr Urjit Patel has been appointed as Additional Director of Britannia Industries with effect from 31st March 2021 for the tenure of 5 years.
Virat Kohli	Digit Insurance - Brand ambassador	Digit Insurance has roped in cricketer Virat Kohli as its brand ambassador. Kohli has also invested in Digit Insurance in the past. Digit Insurance, a general insurance company that became the first unicorn of 2021 with a valuation of \$1.9B.
Shabir Khandwawala	BCCI Anti-Corruption Unit chief.	The 70-year-old, a 1973 batch IPS officer, takes over from Ajit Singh whose tenure ended on March 31. After retiring as Gujarat DGP in late 2010, Khandwawala worked with the

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		Essar Group as an advisor and was also part of the central government's Lokpal Search Committee.
N V Ramana	48th Chief Justice of India	President Ram Nath Kovind has appointed Justice N V Ramana as the 48th Chief Justice of India, accepting the recommendation made by the outgoing CJI SA Bobde. Justice Ramana will have a term till August 26th next year.
Tarun Bajaj	Revenue Secretary	Prior to this, Bajaj, a 1988 batch Haryana-cadre IAS officer, was serving as the Economic Affairs Secretary since April 30, 2020. The cabinet has also approved the appointment of Ajay Seth, a 1987 batch Karnataka-cadre IAS officer, as new Economic Affairs Secretary in place of Bajaj.
Carl Bildt	WHO special envoy for ACT-Accelerator	Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the director-general of the World Health Organization (WHO), appointed Carl Bildt as WHO Special Envoy for the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-Accelerator).
Chintan Vaishnav	Mission Director of Atal Innovation Mission	Noted socio-technologist, Dr Chintan Vaishnav has been appointed the mission director of Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), the government's flagship initiative under NITI Aayog.
S Ramann	Chairman and Managing Director of Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)	Ramann, a 1991-batch Indian Audit & Accounts Service officer, is currently the CEO of National E-Governance Services Ltd, India's first Information Utility.
Vjosa Osmani	Kosovo's parliament	Kosovo's parliament elected Vjosa Osmani as the country's new president. Osmani received 71 votes from the lawmakers at the third round of voting in the Assembly of Kosovo.
Sonu Sood	Ambassador for Punjab's anti-coronavirus vaccination programme.	During the coronavirus-induced lockdown last year, the actor had helped migrants reach their home states.

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Ouhoumoudou Mahamadou	Prime Minister of Niger	Niger's newly-elected President Mohamed Bazoum appointed Ouhoumoudou Mahamadou as the country's new Prime Minister on April 3, 2021.
Poonam Gupta	National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) – Director General	Gupta will succeed the current head of the think tank, Shekhar Shah, to become the first woman to hold the post. Currently, Gupta is the lead economist at the World Bank in Washington DC.
Sushil Chandra	Chief Election Commissioner	The incumbent Election Commissioner (EC) Sushil Chandra has been named to become the next Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) of India. He will assume charge with effect from April 13, 2021. He will replace incumbent CEC, Sunil Arora, who will retire on April 12, 2021.
Siddharth Longjam	National Anti-Doping Agency's Director-General	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).
Guillermo Lasso	Ecuador's next president	Conservative Former Banker, Guillermo Lasso was elected as the next President of Ecuador on April 11, 2021.
Murali Natarajan	DCB Bank MD and CEO	Private sector lender, DCB Bank has received approval from the Reserve Bank of India for the re-appointment of Murali M.
Miguel Díaz-Canel	President of Cuba	He is the first person without the surname Castro to run Cuba since the 1959 revolution. Díaz-Canel is seen as loyal to the Castros and their economic model.
Washington Sundar, Devdutt Padikkal	Puma - Brand ambassadors	Puma India, which recently announced its partnership with Royal Challengers Bangalore, has been consistently investing in India's sports ecosystem.
Vanita Gupta	First Indian-American Associate Attorney General of US	The US Senate confirmed Vanita Gupta to be the Associate Attorney General in a narrow 51-49 vote after Senator Lisa Murkowski decided to join

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		with the Democrats in support of US President Joe Biden's Justice Department nominee.
Rekha Menon	chairperson of Nasscom	Accenture India's chairperson, Rekha M Menon has been appointed as chairperson of the National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM), becoming the first woman to take the top role in the software lobby group's 30-year history.
GC Murmu	External auditor for Hague	India's Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG), GC Murmu has been chosen as the external auditor by the Hague-based Conference.
NV Ramana	48th Chief Justice of India	Justice NV Ramana took the oath as the 48th Chief Justice of India (CJI) on April 24, 2021. He was administered the oath of office by President Ram Nath Kovind in a brief ceremony at the Rashtrapati Bhavan.
Amit Banerjee	Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of Bharat Earth Movers Limited, (BEML)	The PESB announced on meeting held on April 26, 2021. Currently, he is serving as Director (Rail & Metro), BEML Limited.
Arun Raste	MD and CEO of National Commodity & Derivatives Exchange Limited (NCDEX)	Raste is currently associated with the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) as an Executive Director and prior to NDDB, he has worked with organisations like IDFC First Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, NABARD, ACC Cement, and a non-profit NGO IRFT.
Ravindra Jadeja	Sportswear brand ASICS – Brand Ambassador	Japanese Sportswear brand ASICS announced that it has appointed Ravindra Jadeja, the all-rounder of the Indian cricket team and Chennai Super Kings as its brand ambassador.
Amit Banerjee	Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of Bharat Earth Movers Limited, (BEML)	The PESB announced on meeting held on April 26, 2021. Currently, he is serving as Director (Rail & Metro), BEML Limited.
TV Somanathan	Finance secretary by Committee of the Cabinet	He will replace Ajay Bhushan Pandey who superannuated in February 2021. Somanathan, a 1987 batch IAS officer of Tamil

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		Nadu cadre, was currently serving as the Secretary, Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance.
Niraj Bajaj	Bajaj Auto Chairman	The automaker has also announced Rahul Bajaj as its Chairman Emeritus. This will be taken up at the ensuing annual general meeting for the approval of the shareholders.

Banking & Finance

Axis Bank to sell UK arm to tech platform

Private sector lender Axis Bank has entered into a Share Purchase Agreement for sale of 100 per cent stake in its subsidiary, Axis Bank UK Limited to OpenPayd Holdings Ltd. The agreement was entered on March 31, 2021, and the transaction is subject to approval by the UK Financial Regulator, the Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA).

SBI inks USD 1 billion loan agreement with Japan Bank

India's largest lender, State Bank of India, has raised \$1 billion from Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) to extend loans to the supply chain of the Japanese automobile industry in India. The loan is in the form of refinancing against the funding support provided to the manufacturers, suppliers and dealers of Japanese automobiles in India.

Paytm Money opens new R&D centre in Pune

Online investment platform Paytm Money has set up a new R&D facility in Pune, Maharashtra, which will drive product innovation, especially in the area of equity, mutual funds, and digital gold. The company added that it plans to hire over 250 engineers and data scientists to build new wealth products and services.

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to Cancel Licence of Sambandh Finserve

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued a show-cause notice prior to cancelling the licence of fraud-hit Sambandh Finserve Pvt Ltd. after its networth eroded below the regulatory minimum and financial situation worsened beyond redemption over the recent months. Sambandh is registered as an NBFC-MFI.

ICICI Bank, PhonePe Tie Up For Issuance Of FASTags

ICICI Bank and PhonePe announced their partnership for the issuance of FASTag using UPI on the PhonePe App. This integration allows over 280 million registered PhonePe users to order and track the ICICI Bank FASTag conveniently on the app.

PhonePe becomes 1st player to cross billion-transaction mark on UPI

Bengaluru-based digital payments and financial services company, PhonePe has become the first company to cross one billion transactions on Unified Payments Interface (UPI) infrastructure. The company achieved the feat in March 2021, when the total transactions clocked around 1.3 billion on its platform, across the payment instruments offering of wallet, cards as well as UPI.

Citigroup to exit consumer banking in India, 12 other markets

America's investment bank and financial services company Citigroup has announced that it plans to exit retail banking in 13 global markets, including India. The other 12 affected markets are Australia, Bahrain, China, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Poland, Russia,

Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam. Citigroup's Institutional Clients Group will continue to serve clients in these markets.

RBL Bank Mastercard partner to offer first-of-its-kind payment functionality

RBL Bank and Mastercard have announced their partnership to launch a mobile-based consumer-friendly payment solution 'Pay by Bank App', a first-of-its-kind payment functionality in India. RBL Bank account holders can now enjoy contactless transactions across the world through their mobile banking application both in-store and online.

LIC ties up with Paytm to handle digital payments

State-run Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) has appointed homegrown payments player Paytm to facilitate its digital payments. Following a tie-up with another payment gateway earlier, the country's largest life insurer has sought a new deal as the majority of its payments have moved to digital modes.

World Bank, AIIB approve loan for USD 300 million projects to Punjab

The World Bank and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) have approved the loan for USD 300 million (about Rs 2,190 crore) canal-based drinking water projects in Punjab. The project is aimed at ensuring quality drinking water and minimise water losses for Amritsar and Ludhiana.

World Bank approves USD 32 million project to Mizoram

The World Bank Board of Executive Directors has approved a USD 32 million projects to improve management capacity and quality of health services in Mizoram.

The project titled "Mizoram Health Systems Strengthening Project" will strengthen the governance and the management structure of the Mizoram Health department and its subsidiaries.

RXIL becomes first TReDS platform to cross Rs 1,000 monthly throughput, What is RXIL? Explained

The Receivables Exchange of India Ltd (RXIL) informed on April 6, 2021 that it had crossed the monthly transaction volumes of Rs 1,000 crore in March.

The RXIL in a statement said, "The growth of transaction volumes from Rs 69 crore in April 2020 to Rs 1,105 crore in March 2021 is an indication of the revival and resumption of the economic activity."

RBI sets up committee to review working of ARCs

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has constituted a six-member panel to carry out a comprehensive review of the working of Asset Reconstruction Companies (ARCs) in the financial sector ecosystem. The panel will be headed by former Executive Director of RBI, Sudarshan Sen.

RBI increases WMA limits for the State Governments/UTs

The Reserve Bank of India has increased the limit for Way and Means Advances (WMA) for the State Governments/UTs from Rs. 32,225 crore (fixed in February 2016) to Rs. 47,010 crore based on the recommendation of a committee headed by Shri Sudhir Shrivastava. This represents an increase of about 46%.

RBI enhances maximum balance limit per account in Payments Banks

The Reserve Bank of India has enhanced the limit of maximum balance at end of the day maintained in Payments Bank from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 2 lakh per individual customer. The step has been taken to encourage the efforts of Payments Bank for financial inclusion and to expand their ability to cater to the needs of their customers, including MSMEs, small traders and merchants.

Shivalik Small Finance Bank Limited Begins Operations

The UP-based Shivalik Small Finance Bank Limited commenced operations as a Small Finance Bank (SFB) with effect from April 26, 2021.

It must be remembered that the Shivalik Mercantile Co-operative Bank (SMCB) is the first urban co-operative bank (UCB) in India to receive licence from RBI to operate as a Small Finance Bank (SFB).

What is Currency Chest?

Currency Chests are places where RBI (Reserve Bank of India) stocks money meant for banks and ATMs. The Currency Chests are located in different banks and are administered by the Reserve Bank of India.

RBI decides to open up RTGS, NEFT facilities for payment system operators

In a major move in the online payments segments, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to allow payment system operators to take direct membership of Centralised Payment Systems (CPS), such as RTGS and NEFT.

Membership in Centralised Payment Systems (CPS) RTGS and NEFT for entities other than banks are so far limited to banks, with a few exceptions, such as specialised entities like clearing corporations and select development financial institutions.

ADB approves USD 484 mn loan to improve CKIC in Tamil Nadu

The Asian Development Bank on April 8, 2021, gave its approval to USD 484 mn loan to improve the road maintenance and transport connectivity in the Chennai-Kanyakumari Industrial Corridor- CKIC in Tamil Nadu.

Airtel Payments Bank announces 'Rewards123' savings account

Airtel Payments Bank launched its new 'Rewards123' savings account, which provides customers with perks and rewards. The Rewards123 Savings Account is built specifically that allows you to get access to a variety of perks when you save and transact digitally.

The company claims that its newly introduced saving account is designed to offer consistent value, with assured rewards on different types of digital transactions throughout the year.

Bharti AXA Life and Fincare SFB join hands for bancassurance partnership

Bharti Axa Life and Fincare Small Finance Bank have joined hands for a bancassurance partnership under which the bank will sell insurance policies to its customers. This alliance will make life insurance solutions reachable to over 26.5 lakhs customers of Fincare Small Finance Bank and provide financial security to them.

RBI to set up Regulations Review Authority for one year

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will be set up a new Regulations Review Authority (RRA 2.0) from May 1, 2021, to review the regulations, circulars, reporting systems and compliance procedures of the central bank for streamlining them and making them more effective.

The RRA will be set up for a period of one year unless the timeline is extended by the RBI.

RBI cancels licence of Bhagyodaya Friends Urban Co-operative Bank

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has cancelled the licence of Maharashtra-based Bhagyodaya Friends Urban Co-operative Bank Limited due to inadequate capital.

On liquidation, every depositor is entitled to receive deposit insurance claim amount of his/her deposits up to a monetary ceiling of Rs 5 lakhs from the DICGC subject to the provisions of the DICGC Act, 1961.

RBI Caps Tenure of Private Banks MD & CEO at 15 Years

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has capped the tenure of Managing Director and Chief Executive of commercial banks to 15 years. The same limit will also be applicable to whole-time directors (WTD). This means that the same incumbent cannot hold the post for more than 15 years.

The revised instructions will be applicable to all the Private Sector Banks including Small Finance Banks (SFBs) and wholly owned subsidiaries of Foreign Banks. However, it will not be applicable to foreign banks operating as branches in India.

RBI joins network for greening financial system

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has joined the Central Banks and Supervisors Network for Greening the Financial System (NGFS) as a member. The central bank joined the NGFS on April 23, 2021. Green finance assumed significance in the context of climate change.

ICICI Bank launches Digital banking Platform 'Merchant Stack'

The ICICI Bank has announced the launch of a digital and contactless banking platform, especially for retail merchants. The service, called 'Merchant Stack', is targeted at the over 2 crore retail merchants in the country, covering grocers, supermarkets, large retail store chains, online businesses and large e-commerce firms.

Indian Affairs

AYUSH Ministry in collab with Vinoba Seva Pratishthan organizes ‘Ayurveda Parav’

In a bid to promote Ayurveda as the mainstream treatment for the prevalent lifestyle-related diseases, Vinoba SevaPratishthan (VSP), in collaboration with the Ministry of AYUSH, has successfully organized a 3-day “Ayurveda Paravin Bhubaneswar. This unique initiative aims to not only ensure greater acceptance of Ayurveda among the masses but also to popularize Ayurveda as the main line of treatment for the current lifestyle diseases.

Tika Utsav: COVID-19 Vaccination Drive

Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently appealed to the Chief Ministers of the States to organise “Tika Utsav”. Tika Utsav is a vaccine festival. It is to be held between April 11, 2021, and April 14, 2021. The main objective of the festival is to vaccinate as many people as possible. It will also focus on zero wastage of the COVID-19 vaccine.

India’s Petroleum consumption contracts 9.1% in FY21

The Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell operating under Ministry of Petroleum recently released a report on petroleum consumption of India. According to the report, fuel consumption of the country reduced by 9.1% in the year 2020-21 as compared to that of the previous year. This is the first time the petroleum consumption contracted to the highest since 1998-99.

Persons above 18 years are free to choose religion: Supreme Court

The Supreme Court ruled on April 9, 2-21 that people above the age of 18 years are free to choose their religion. The ruling was delivered by an SC bench comprising Justices RF Nariman, BR Gavai and Hrishikesh Roy.

The bench gave the direction while refusing to entertain a plea seeking directions to the Centre and states to control black magic and religious conversion.

Ghaziabad issues India’s first municipal green bonds

Ghaziabad Nagar Nigam (GNN) has announced successfully raising and listing India’s first Green Municipal bond issue. GNN raised ₹150 crores at a cost of 8.1 per cent. Money will be used to clean up dirty water by setting up a tertiary water treatment plant and supply piped water through water meters to places like Sahibabad.

Lilavati Awards 2020 announced

The Union Education Minister, Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank recently presented the AICTE Lilavati Awards, 2020 in New Delhi. The awards were presented based on the theme “Women Empowerment”. The winners were selected by AICTE (All India Council for Technical Education) in six sub-themes.

Mental-Health Digital Platform MANAS Launched

The Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India virtually launched the “MANAS” App to promote wellbeing across age groups.

MANAS stands for Mental Health and Normalcy Augmentation System. MANAS is a comprehensive, scalable, and national digital wellbeing platform and an app developed to augment mental well-being of Indian citizens.

Agriculture Ministry sign MoU with Microsoft for farmer welfare

The Agricultural Ministry of India recently signed Memorandum of Understanding with Microsoft to implement a pilot project for farmer welfare.

The project will focus on technology boosted agriculture. It will provide smart agricultural techniques to the farmers especially during post-harvest season.

Railways to run ‘Oxygen Express’ trains via green corridors

Following a surge in the number of Covid-19 cases, the Indian Railways will run ‘Oxygen Express’ trains transporting liquid medical oxygen and oxygen cylinders across the country via green corridors to meet growing demand from states. Green corridors are being created to ensure fast movement of these trains.

India’s Mirabai Chanu creates a new Clean and Jerk world record in Tashkent

Mirabai Chanu set a new World Record in the women’s 49kg Clean and Jerk with a massive 119 kg lift at Asian Weightlifting Championships in Tashkent.

The 26-year-old Indian won the bronze medal at the event. The gold medal went to Hou Zhihui of China who created a new world record in snatch. Asian Games, held once every 4yrs, is the 2nd largest multi-sport event after Olympics.

Union Minister Prahlad Singh Patel inaugurates first-ever online exhibition on Ramayana

The Tourism and Culture Minister Prahlad Singh Patel on April 18, 2021, inaugurated the first-ever online exhibition on Ramayana, the epic by Maharishi Valmiki.

The exhibition will be showcasing 49 miniature paintings collections of the National Museum in New Delhi from different art schools of India. It will be dating from the 17th through the 19th century.

Indian government provides NRs 800 crores financial aid to Nepal for road construction project

The Indian Embassy in Kathmandu informed on March 31, 2021, that the Indian Government has provided Nepali Rs. 800 crores of grant assistance for strengthening road infrastructure in the Terai region in Nepal. The grant has been provided under a Memorandum of Understanding.

West Central Railway becomes first fully electrified Indian Railways zone

Indian Railways' West Central Railway zone gets fully electrified!, after CCRS Inspection and Commissioning of electrification of Kota – Chittaurgarh railway section (Srinagar – Jalindri) in the state of Rajasthan. West Central Railways has become the first fully electrified railway zone in the country. The zonal railway now boasts a 3012 Route Km electrified network.

Government to replace all normal bulbs with LED bulbs in next few years: Environment Minister

Union Minister of Environment Prakash Javadekar said recently that the central government plans to change all normal bulbs of 40 to 60 watts with LED bulbs in a few years from now.

He informed that the Narendra Modi government has replaced almost two billion normal bulbs with LED bulbs in the last six years.

SANKALP SE SIDDHI launched by TRIFED

The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) operating under Ministry of Tribal Affairs recently launched the “SANKALP SE SIDDHI”.

It is a hundred-day drive. The main aim of the drive is to activate the Van Dhan Vikas Kendras located in tribal villages.

Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal launches “NanoSniffer”

The Union Education Minister, Ramesh Pokhriyal ‘Nishank’ launched the world’s first Microsensor based Explosive Trace Detector (ETD) called “NanoSniffer”. The ETD has been developed by NanoSniff Technologies, an IIT Bombay incubated startup. It is being marketed by Vehant Technologies, a spin-off from a former IIT Delhi incubated startup Kritikal Solutions.

Priyanka Mohite becomes first Indian woman to scale Mt Annapurna

Priyanka Mohite from Satara in western Maharashtra has scaled Mt Annapurna, the 10th highest mountain peak in the world, becoming the first Indian woman climber to achieve the feat. Mount Annapurna is a massif in the Himalayas located in Nepal that includes one peak over 8,000 metres and is considered to be one of the toughest mountains to climb.

ITBP Water Sports & Adventure Institute inaugurated in Tehri

Water Sports and Adventure Institute (WSAI) has been established by the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) at Tehri Dam in Uttarakhand. The institute was inaugurated on Friday by Chief Minister Tirath Singh Rawat and Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju.

Union Health Ministry launches Tribal Health Collaborative Anamaya

Union Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan along with Union Minister of Tribal Affairs Arjun Munda launched the Tribal Health Collaborative ‘Anamaya’ through a video conference on April 07, 2021.

ULPIN: Unique Land Parcel Identification Number

The Government of India recently launched the Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN) scheme in ten states. The system is to be rolled out in the country by March 2022.

Land parcel is nothing but a portion of large area of land. The ULPIN is described as “Aadhaar for land”. The ULPIN is a fourteen-digit Alpha Numeric ID.

Cabinet Affairs

Drugs and Cosmetics Act: New Regulatory Regime for eight medical items

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare recently notified eight items to be regulated under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act. According to the ministry, this had come into effect on April 1, 2021 under the Medical Devices Rules, 2017 that was enacted in 2017.

Cabinet approves Subsidy for Urea produced via Coal Gasification

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs recently approved subsidy for Urea that are to be produced by TFL. TFL is a state-run fertilizer plant. It is Talcher Fertilizer Plant.

The TFL is to commission a new fertilizer plant in Odisha. This plant will produce urea through coal gasification. The Government of India is to provide subsidy to establish the plant. It will be the only plant in India to produce nitrogenous soil nutrient through coal gasification process.

Cabinet approves Agreement between India and UK on Customs Cooperation

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved the agreement signed between Government of India and the Government of UK. The agreement was signed on Customs Cooperation and Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs matters. India and UK have been signing several trade related agreements after the latter moved out of European Union.

State related Affairs

Rajasthan becomes 1st state to provide health insurance for all residents: CM

Rajasthan on Thursday started the registration for its Mukhya Mantri Chiranjeevi Swasthya Bima Yojana. “Rajasthan has become the first state in the country, where each family will get health insurance of ₹5 lakh each year,” Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot tweeted. “People can get registered and be assured of cashless treatment,” the CM further wrote.

Mahendragiri: Odisha’s Second Biosphere Reserve

The Odisha state government has proposed a second biosphere reserve in the southern part of the state at Mahendragiri. It is a mountain in the Gajapati district of the state. It is at an altitude of 1,501 metres. Mahendragiri is also the second-highest peak in the state.

Maharashtra: Amboli named as biodiversity heritage site

The Maharashtra government has declared an area at Amboli in Western ghats in Sindhudurg district, where a rare freshwater fish species was discovered, as a biodiversity heritage site.

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray’s son Tejas Thackeray, who is a wildlife researcher, and his team had discovered the new freshwater fish species – Schistura Hiranyakeshi” near Amboli in Sawantwadi tehsil of Sindhudurg district.

Biggest Floating Solar Power Plant of India

The biggest floating solar power plant of India is to be set up at Ramagundam in Telangana. The capacity of the solar power plant is 100 MW.

It is expected to be opened in May 2021. The solar power plant is being set up at the Ramagundam Thermal Power Plant reservoir. The solar power plant is to be set up in 450 acres of the reservoir.

AP launched Jagananna Vidya Deevena Scheme

The Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, YS Jagan Mohan Reddy recently released the first tranche of Rs 672 crores under the Jagananna Vidya Deevena Scheme for the year 2021-22. This reimbursed the fees for 10.88 lakh students. So far, a total of Rs 4, 879 crores have been disbursed under the Jagananna Vidya Deevena Scheme.

Uttar Pradesh won e-panchayat award

The Uttar Pradesh government won the “E-Panchayat Puraskar 2021”, ranking first in Category I. It was followed by Assam and Chhattisgarh at the second position, while Odisha and Tamil Nadu stood third.

Every year, the Union Ministry of Panchayati Raj awards those states, which ensure maximum use of information technology to keep a tab on the work done by gram panchayats.

Maharashtra's Sindhudurg area named Biodiversity Heritage Site

The Maharashtra government on March 31, 2021 declared an area at Amboli in Sindhudurg district in the Western Ghats, as a biodiversity heritage site. The area is where a rare freshwater fish species was discovered.

The new freshwater fish species, named Schistura Hiranyakeshi was discovered near Amboli in Sawantwadi tehsil of Sindhudurg district. It was found by a team led by wildlife researcher Tejas Thackeray, who is also the son of Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray.

Maharashtra gets India's first floating LNG storage and regasification unit

India's first Floating Storage and Regasification Unit (FSRU) has arrived at H-Energy's Jaigarh Terminal in the Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra, on the west coast of India. 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". The port is the first deepwater, 24x7 operational private port in Maharashtra.

Punjab All Set to become 'Har Ghar Jal' State by 2022

Punjab State reiterated the commitment of the State to achieve the 'Har Ghar Jal' target by 2022 as planned. Punjab has 34.73 lakh rural household, out of which 25.88 lakh (74.5%) have tap water supply. In 2021-22, the State plans to provide 8.87 lakh tap connections, thereby providing tap connection to every rural household.

International Affairs

China approves contentious proposal to overhaul Hong Kong's electoral system

China on March 30, 2021, gave its approval to the proposal for the most controversial and sweeping overhaul of Hong Kong's electoral system. The passed proposal will slash the number of directly elected seats in the city's legislature from half to about one-fifth and will tighten Beijing's control in the Special Administrative Region- SAR.

Russia registers world's 1st Covid vaccine Carnivac-Cov for animals

The world's first animal vaccine against the novel coronavirus has been registered in Russia, the country's agriculture safety watchdog Rosselkhoznadzor. The vaccine for animals, developed by a unit of Rosselkhoznadzor (Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance, was named Carnivac-Cov.

United Arab Emirates names its first female astronaut

The United Arab Emirates named the next two astronauts in its space programme on 10th April, including the country's first female astronaut. Noura al-Matroushi is the UAE's first female astronaut. The announcement gave no biographical information about her or her male counterpart, Mohammed al-Mulla.

Pakistan temporarily blocks all social media platforms

Pakistan's Ministry of Interior issued a notification on April 16, 2021 directing the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) to temporarily block complete access to all social media platforms including Twitter, Facebook, Whatsapp, Telegram and YouTube.

The social media websites were blocked across the country between 11 AM and 3 PM on April 16th. The Ministry did not mention the reason for the suspension.

UK to build World's most powerful climate-change forecasting supercomputer

Met Office and Microsoft are to build a weather forecasting supercomputer in the UK. The UK Government is to invest 1.2 billion Pound Sterling in the project.

The supercomputer is expected to be one of the top twenty-five supercomputers in the world. It will help in better understanding of Climate Change.

UK Government approves extradition of fugitive economic offender Nirav Modi

The United Kingdom Home Secretary Priti Patel approved the extradition of fugitive Indian economic offender Nirav Modi. This was informed by a Central Bureau of Investigation official on April 16, 2021.

This is great news for India, as Nirav Modi is wanted in India on the charges of money laundering and fraud.

Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference 2021 held

The opening ceremony of the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference 2021 was held in Boao, south China's Hainan Province. The theme of the conference – “A World in Change: Join Hands to Strengthen Global Governance and Advance Belt and Road Cooperation”.

Turkey bans Crypto Currency payments

The Bitcoin currency tumbled more than 4% after the Central Bank of Turkey banned the use of Crypto currencies and crypto assets for purchases. The bank cited possible irreparable damages and transaction risks as the reason for the ban.

The ban followed actions of Morocco in banning the currency and is expected to be implemented in India as well.

New Zealand Makes World's 1st Climate Change Law For Financial Firms

New Zealand is about to become the world's first country to bring a law into force that demands environmental accountability from financial firms by asking them to report on how their businesses affect climate change.

The aim is to bring the financial sector on board with the efforts being made towards achieving the country's target of becoming carbon neutral by 2050.

UAE's first nuclear power plant begins its commercial operations, more clean energy

The Barakah nuclear power plant in the United Arab Emirates' began its commercial operations on April 6, 2021, the Gulf Arab state's leaders announced on Twitter.

Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed al-Nahyan took it Twitter to celebrate their 'historic' milestone for the country, which is also celebrating 50 years since its formation.

New Zealand temporarily bans travellers from India including own citizens

New Zealand on April 8, 2021 temporarily suspended entry for all travellers from India, including its own citizens due to high number of COVID-19 cases in the country.

This suspension will be for about two weeks and it comes after New Zealand recorded 23 new COVID-19 cases at its border, 17 of which were from India.

Sanskrit learning app 'Little Guru' unveiled in Bangladesh

A Sanskrit learning app 'Little Guru' has launched in Bangladesh by the Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre (IGCC) of the High Commission of India. The Sanskrit learning app is part of the campaign being run by the Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) to promote the Sanskrit language among students, religious scholars, Indologists and historians across the world.

Prime Minister of Haiti Joseph Jouthe Resigns

Prime Minister of Haiti, Joseph Jouthe has resigned following a situation of unrest in the country due to an increase in killing and kidnapping cases over the past few days.

Joseph Jouthe served as the Prime Minister of Haiti from March 4, 2020, until April 14, 2021. President Jovenel Moise has nominated Claude Joseph as the new prime minister of Haiti.

Statehood Movement in Columbia

The House of Representatives in the US recently passed a bill to make Washington DC, the fifty first US state. The Washington DC Admission bill is being passed for the second time in a year. The bill will create the state of “Washington, Douglas Commonwealth”. It has been named after Frederick Douglass.

The Washington DC is formally known as Columbia. It is the capital of United States. It is located on the Potomac river. It borders Maryland and Virginia.

New Zealand’s action to save Maui dolphins

The Maui Dolphins are found only in the West Coast of New Zealand and no where else in the world. They are one of the smallest dolphin’s subspecies globally. There are only 63 Maui dolphins left in the world.

The New Zealand Government along with World Wide Fund and some few fishing companies is to develop a drone that is capable of finding and tracking Maui dolphins using Artificial Intelligence.

UK becomes first country to give green light to self-driving cars on motorways

The Government of the United Kingdom became the first country on April 28, 2021, to announce that it will be regulating the use of self-driving cars at slow speeds on motorways. The first such vehicles are expected to appear on public roads as soon as in 2021.

Foreign Relation

India-Japan signed MoU for Academic and Research Cooperation

The Union Cabinet recently apprised an MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) signed between India and Japan. The MoU was signed between the National Atmospheric Research Laboratory (NARL) that operates under the Department of Space, GoI and the Research Institute for Sustainable Humanosphere called the RISH that operates under the Kyoto University of Japan.

Nirmala Sitharaman attends 2nd Virtual G20 Finance Ministers

Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs, Nirmala Sitharaman has participated virtually in the Second G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors (FMCBG) meeting. This meeting held under the Italian Presidency to discuss policy responses to global challenges to restore strong, sustainable, balanced and inclusive growth.

India contributes USD 500,000 to UN Trust Fund for counter-terrorism

India has contributed an additional \$500,000 to the United Nations Trust Fund for Counter-Terrorism, taking the country's donation to the UN office set up to combat terrorism to over \$1 million. With this amount, India's total contribution to it so far is \$1.05 million.

PM Modi, Netherlands PM Mark Rutte to hold virtual summit

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to hold a virtual summit with Netherlands Prime Minister Mark Rutte today, April 9, 2021. The two leaders are expected to discuss in detail regarding bilateral cooperation and new ways to strengthen the relationship between the two nations.

The leaders will also discuss and exchange views regarding regional and global issues of mutual interest.

Civil Aviation Ministry finalizes air bubble agreement with Sri Lanka

India has finalized an air bubble agreement with Sri Lanka, making it the 6th such arrangement in SAARC region & the 28th in total. All the eligible passengers will be able to travel between the 2 countries in the near future.

Italy launches first ever mega food park in India

Italy has launched its first-ever mega food park project in India, at Fanidhar in the Mehsana district of Gujarat. The project aims to create synergy between agriculture and industry of the two countries and focuses on the research and development of new and more efficient technologies in the sector.

Australia-India Indo Pacific Oceans Initiative

Australia recently launched the Australia-India Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative Partnership. The programme will support free, open and prosperous Indo-Pacific. The Government of Australia has provided a grant of 1.4 million Australian dollars (Rs 8.12 crores) to support the initiative.

India elected to three bodies of the UN ECOSOC

India was recently elected to the three bodies of the United Nations. They were the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, Executive Board of the UN Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and the Executive Board of World Food Programme. All these three bodies operate under United Nations Economic and Social Council.

WHO to provide 4,000 oxygen concentrators to India

The World Health Organisation recently announced that it will provide 4,000 Oxygen Concentrators to India to help the country in its fight against COVID-19.

The UK recently sent 495 Oxygen Concentrators and 140 ventilators to India. Ireland announced that it is preparing to send 700 oxygen concentrators to India. Saudi Arabia recently shipped 80 tonnes of Oxygen to India.

India sign MoU with France for cooperation on Gaganyaan Mission

The Indian space agency, ISRO has signed an agreement with the space agency of France CNES for cooperation in its first human space mission, Gaganyaan. CNES will train Indian flight physicians and CAPCOM mission control teams at French facilities.

The Gaganyaan orbital spacecraft project was kicked off in August 2018. It originally intended to send astronauts from Indian soil to mark the 75th anniversary of India's independence in 2022.

Hong Kong announces suspension of all flights connecting with India for 14 days

Hong Kong has suspended all flights connecting with India for 14 days from April 20, 2021 till May 3, 2021 in the wake of a sharp rise in cases in the country. Besides India, Hong Kong authorities have also suspended flights from Pakistan and the Philippines.

The Hong Kong government made the announcement on April 18, 2021. The government statement read that 00:00 on April 20, all passenger flights from India, Pakistan and the Philippines will be prohibited from landing in Hong Kong for 14 days.

Indian expedition to Antarctica returns to Cape Town

The 40th Scientific Expedition to Antarctica (40-ISEA) hosted by the Ministry of Earth Sciences successfully returned to Cape Town after completing a journey of about 12,000 nautical miles in 94 days, including stopovers.

India-Germany enter into agreement to prevent plastic waste entering oceans

The Government of India and Germany have signed an agreement for Technical Cooperation in enhancing practices to prevent plastic from entering the marine environment at a virtual ceremony in New Delhi. The project titled 'Cities Combating Plastic Entering the Marine Environment' will be implemented for a period of three and a half years.

Ranks & Indices

2021 Global Gender Gap Index: Key findings and India's Rank

The World Economic Forum has released the Global Gender Gap Report 2021. India has seen a decrease in its ranking on the index by 28 places.

India has been ranked 140th among 156 countries on the index. With this, India became the third-worst performer in South Asia. As per the index, India has closed 62.5% of its gender gap to date. In 2020, India was ranked 112th among 153 countries.

Singapore becomes first country to ratify mega free trade agreement 'RCEP'

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. The RCEP must first be ratified by at least six ASEAN and three non-ASEAN member states to come into effect.

Henley Passport Index 2021 released

Amid the rising COVID-19 cases and subsequent restrictions on travel overseas, when many countries are banning individuals from worst-hit nations, the Henley Passport Index on April 17 released its list of the most powerful passports.

India stands at number 84 on the list, as the Indian citizens can visit Visa-Free or Visa-on-Arrival in over 58 places. Japan, Singapore and Germany, South Korea stand in Top 3 respectively.

India Ranks 49th in Chandler Good Government Index 2021

India has been placed at 49th position among 104 nations in the Chandler Good Government Index (CGGI) 2021. Finland has topped the CGGI Index 2021 and Venezuela is the last ranked country at 104.

Jio Platforms, BYJU's in Time Magazine's 2021 list of 100 most influential companies

Two Indian firms, Reliance's Jio Platforms and e-learning startup Byju's have been featured in Time Magazine's 2021 list of 100 most influential companies.

The Time magazine mentioned on its website that the companies shaping the future are at the heart of the first-ever TIME 100 Most Influential Companies.

HDFC Bank top arranger of corporate bond deals in FY21

HDFC Bank has emerged as the top arranger of corporate bond deals in 2020-21 (FY21). Axis Bank came in second, while ICICI Bank third.

However, for the last quarter of FY21, i.e January- March 2021, Axis Bank was the top arranger of corporate bond deals while HDFC was second in the last quarter. Axis Bank managed 16 deals worth Rs. 106.6 billion while HDFC Bank had 19 deals worth around Rs 70.4 billion.

World Press Freedom Index, 2021

The Reporters Without Borders, a not-for-profit body recently published the World Press Freedom Index, 2021. It ranked 180 countries. India ranked 142 in the index. India was at the same position in 2020 as well.

Norway topped the index followed by Finland and Denmark. The index was topped by Norway in 2020 as well. Eritrea received the last rank in the index. China ranked 177th out of 180 countries. North Korea was at rank 179 and Turkmenistan was at rank 178.

India Ranks 87th in WEF Global Energy Transition Index 2021

India is placed at the 87th position among 115 countries in the 2021 Energy Transition Index (ETI). The report is published by the World Economic Forum (WEF), prepared in collaboration with Accenture to track nations on the current performance of their energy systems across various aspects.

Digital India: India leads in Digital Payments

The UK based payments system company ACI recently released a report on digital payments. According to the report, India has the highest number of real-time online transactions in 2020.

India was ahead of China, US, South Korea, UK, Thailand in number of online transactions.

ARWU Ranking, 2020

The ARWU (Academic Ranking of World Universities) is also called Shanghai Ranking. Around fifteen Indian Universities have made it to the ARWU, 2020.

The Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore has secured the top position among the higher education institutes in India. Calcutta University secured second position among the higher education institutes in India.

Who are world's 10 richest people & what are their net worths as per Forbes' list?

Forbes today released its 35th Annual World's Billionaires List that was topped by Amazon Founder Jeff Bezos with \$177 billion wealth. Tesla CEO Elon Musk ranked as second-richest with \$151 billion wealth and LVMH CEO Bernard Arnault featured on the third spot with \$150 billion wealth. Bill Gates was ranked fourth, followed by Mark Zuckerberg, Warren Buffett and Larry Ellison.

SBI MF becomes first mutual fund company to cross Rs 5 lakh crore AAUM

SBI Funds Management Pvt. Ltd has informed that it has become the first mutual fund house in India to cross the Rs. 5 lakh crore average assets under management (AAUM) mark. SBI

MF has seen a growth of 35% during the financial year 2020-21, with its average AUM increasing from Rs 3.73 lakh crore to Rs 5.04 lakh crore.

India ranks 49th in Inclusive Internet Index 2021

The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), in partnership with Facebook, has released the Inclusive Internet Index 2021. India has been ranked at 49th spot globally.

It shares its rank with Thailand. This index measures the extent to which the internet is available and affordable by region, and highlights additional insight into how people around the world are using the web.

Business News

Facebook and Google to build new cables under the sea called ‘Echo’ and ‘Bifrost’

Facebook and Google are planning to build new subsea cables from the US to Singapore and Indonesia.

Facebook has partnered with leading regional and global partners to build two new subsea cables Echo and Bifrost that will provide vital new connections between the Asia-Pacific region and North America.

While Google is only investing in Echo. These cables will increase overall transpacific capacity by 70 per cent.

Axis Bank becomes co-promoter of Max Life Insurance

Axis Bank Ltd informed it has become co-promoters of Max Life Insurance Company Limited, after completion of the acquisition of 12.99% stake collectively by the Axis Entities in the company.

Axis Bank and its two subsidiaries Axis Capital Limited and Axis Securities Limited will collectively own a 12.99% stake in Max Life after the consummation of the deal.

Amazon launches \$250-million Venture Fund for Digitizing SMEs in India

The e-commerce giant Amazon has launched a \$250 million (Rs 1,873 crore) venture fund called “Amazon Smbhav Venture Fund”, to invest in Indian startups and entrepreneurs, with a focus on digitizing SMEs.

The launch of the Amazon Smbhav Venture Fund aims to attract the best ideas and empower entrepreneurs in the country to partner in this vision.

Flipkart acquires Cleartrip for \$40 million

Bengaluru-based e-commerce company and Walmart-backed Flipkart on April 15, 2021, announced its plan to acquire Cleartrip for \$40 million.

In a bid to diversify its e-commerce offerings, Flipkart will acquire a 100 per cent stake in one of the oldest travel booking company in India, Cleartrip.

Microsoft buys AI speech tech company Nuance for \$19.7 billion

Microsoft has made its second-biggest acquisition after LinkedIn. The tech giant has bought AI speech tech firm Nuance for \$19.7 billion.

The move will help Microsoft’s prowess in voice recognition and will give it a boost in the health care market.

Nuance is known for its Dragon software which helps to transcribe speech using deep learning. In 2016, Microsoft had purchased LinkedIn for \$26 billion.

Bharti Airtel sells 800 MHz spectrum in three circles to Reliance Jio

Bharti Airtel has entered into an agreement with Reliance Jio Infocomm to transfer 'Right to Use' for some of its 800 MHz spectrum in three circles to the Mukesh Ambani-led firm.

Following this agreement, Bharti Airtel will receive a consideration of ₹1,037.6 crores from Reliance Jio for the proposed transfer. In addition, Reliance Jio will assume future liabilities of ₹459 crores relating to the spectrum.

Indian Army signs MoU with HPCL & NIEDO for Ladakh Ignited Minds project

Ladakhi youth Army under the aegis of Fire and Fury Corps signed MoU for Ladakh Ignited Minds project with corporate partner Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) and executing agency National Integrity and Educational Development Organisation (NIEDO) HQ 14 Corps Leh.

Defence News

Indian Army to participate in Military Exercise SHANTIR OGROSHENA 2021

A multinational Military Exercise named ‘SHANTIR OGROSHENA’ 2021 (Front Runner of the Peace) is scheduled to be held in Bangladesh from April 04 to 12, 2021.

The theme of the exercise is “Robust Peace Keeping Operations”. The exercise is being held to commemorate the birth centenary of Bangladesh ‘Father of the Nation’ Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and mark glorious 50 years of liberation of the country.

Light weight Bullet Proof Jacket developed by DRDO lab

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has congratulated DRDO and DMSRDE Kanpur for developing a LightWeight Bullet Proof Jacket. India needs more such innovative product design and development to realize the dream of Atma Nirbhar Bharat.

DRDO develops Advanced Chaff Technology to safeguard naval ships

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has developed an Advanced Chaff Technology to safeguard naval ships against missile attack. The development of Advanced Chaff Technology by the DRDO lab is another step towards Atmanirbhar Bharat.

Varuna-2021: India, France begins naval bilateral exercise in Arabian Sea

The 19th edition of the Indian and French Navy bilateral exercise ‘Varuna-2021’ has started in the Arabian Sea on April 25, 2021.

According to the official release, the exercise will also showcase the increased level of coordination, synergy and interoperability between the friendly navies of India and France.

India third highest military spender in 2020

India has retained its position as the third biggest military spender in the world in 2020, according to new data titled ‘SIPRI Military Expenditure Database’ published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) on April 26, 2021.

Indian Army signs MoU with HPCL & NIEDO for Ladakh Ignited Minds project

Ladakhi youth Army under the aegis of Fire and Fury Corps signed MoU for Ladakh Ignited Minds project with corporate partner Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) and executing agency National Integrity and Educational Development Organisation (NIEDO) HQ 14 Corps Leh.

DRDO develops single crystal blades for helicopter engine application

The Defence Research and Development Organisation has developed a single crystal blade technology as part of their indigenous helicopter development program for the helicopter engine application.

DRDO has also supplied 60 number of crystal blades to HAL (Hindustan Aeronautics Limited). Single-crystal blades are used in helicopter engines.

NATO military exercises launched in Albania

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has launched joint military exercises “DEFENDER-Europe 21” in Albania with thousands of military forces from the United States and other countries in the first such large-scale drills since World War II in the Western Balkans.

Albania is playing a critical part in the DEFENDER-Europe 21 exercise with Joint Logistics Over-the-Shore operations taking place.

Science & Technology

IIT Kanpur develops touch sensitive watch for visually impaired

A professor and a research associate of Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur have developed a sensitive watch for the use of visually impaired people.

The watch has tactile hour indicators of different shapes. These indicators help the visually impaired persons to recognize the time easily.

Artemis Programme: NASA to land first person of colour on the moon

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration programme will land the first person of colour on the moon as a part of its Artemis Programme. In addition, NASA will also land first woman on the moon under the programme.

NASA had finalised around 18 astronauts under its Artemis Programme. It included the Indian American Raja Chari. However, NASA is yet to announce the first two crew members of the Artemis programme.

Little Guru: World's First Gamified Sanskrit Learning Application

The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) tied up with the Gamapp Sportswizz Tech Private Limited to launch “LITTLE GURU” application. It is a specialized mobile application for learning Sanskrit.

NASA to launch SpaceX Crew 2 on April 22

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration is set to launch four astronauts to the International Space Station on World Earth Day (April 22). NASA is to launch the mission along with SpaceX. It is the second crewed operational flight of Crew Dragon Spacecraft.

Study: Only 3% of land areas unspoiled by humans

The researchers from Key Biodiversity Areas Secretariat at Cambridge have figured out the amount of “Intact Habitat” on the earth. An Intact habitat is an unbroken natural landscape with no signs of human activity.

However, the study has included an additional factor to define “Intact Habitat”, which is, in these regions the plant and animal life has been intact as they were five hundred years ago.

NASA Awards \$2.9 billion contract to SpaceX

The United States space agency National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has picked Elon Musk's SpaceX for its Artemis programme, to develop the first commercial lander and take the next two US astronauts to the moon. The total value of this contract is \$2.89 billion.

NASA's Ingenuity Mars helicopter makes yet another successful flight on the red planet

The Ingenuity Mars helicopter of NASA has made yet another successful flight on the red planet.

NASA said it flew faster and farther on Sunday, April 25 than in any tests it went through on Earth. The third flight of the helicopter was recorded by the US Space Agency's Perseverance rover on Mars.

China successfully launches Tianhe space station core module into orbit

The ambitious space program of China got a major boost on April 29, 2021, when it successfully launched the core module of its space station into orbit.

The module was sent as part of the country's aim to complete the construction of the facility by the end of 2022.

China names its first-ever Mars rover "Zhurong"

China has named its first-ever Mars rover "Zhurong" after an ancient fire god ahead of a landing attempt on the Red Planet in May.

The China National Space Administration (CNSA) revealed the name at the sixth China Space Day held in Nanjing. The Chinese name for Mars, "Huoxing," literally means "fire star."

Books

A book titled ‘Manohar Parrikar: Brilliant Mind, Simple Life’ by Nitin Gokhale

A new book titled ‘Manohar Parrikar: Brilliant Mind, Simple Life’ authored by Nitin Gokhale was released. The book is published by Bloomsbury.

It is an attempt to capture Parrikar’s persona — the man, the politician and the patriot. Gokhale is a renowned author, media trainer and founder of a specialised defence related website BharatShakti.in. and StratNewsGlobal.com.

A book titled exam warriors updated version released by PM Modi

The updated version of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s book named ‘Exam Warriors’ was launched. The book gives out various suggestions to both students and parents to deal with the examination pressure and stress.

The book raise the awareness on topics like mental health, the role of technology and time management. The book has new Mantras and a range of interesting activities. The book reaffirms the need to remain stress-free before an exam.

PM Modi released 4 books related to Babasaheb Ambedkar

PM Narendra Modi has paid tribute to India’s first law minister and the architect of the Indian Constitution Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar on his birth anniversary and released four books based on his life.

PM Modi has addressed the 95th Annual Meet and National Seminar of Vice-Chancellors of the Association of Indian Universities via video conferencing and launched four books related to Dr BR Ambedkar, written by Kishor Makwana.

Suresh Raina’s memoir ‘Believe’ to release in 2021

A book titled ‘Believe – What Life and Cricket Taught Me’, the much-awaited Suresh Raina autobiography is set to hit the bookstands in May 2021.

The book is Co-authored by Raina and sports author Bharat Sundaresan, the biography will be published by the prestigious publishing house, Penguin India.

Aakash Ranison launches his E-Book “Climate Change Explained – For One And All”

The climate activist-author, Aakash Ranison has come out with a new e-book titled “Climate Change Explained – for one and all”, on the occasion of Earth Day.

Through the e-book, the author explains the impact of climate change and aims to motivate readers to reduce its outcome with the help of simple sustainable solutions.

A new book title “Living Mountain” by Amitav Ghosh

“The Living Mountain” is a new story by Jnanpith winner and internationally renowned author Amitav Ghosh, written during the course of the pandemic.

It is a fable for the current times: a cautionary tale of how humans have systematically exploited nature, leading to an environmental collapse.

Sports

Name	Tournament Name	Extra Information
Lewis Hamilton	Bahrain Grand Prix 2021	Hamilton after his 96th career win. Max Verstappen (Red bull) and V Bottas (Mercedes) stand 2nd and 3rd Position Respectively.
Virat Kohli	Top spot in ICC ODI rankings	Kohli has 870 points in his kitty. Rohit Sharma has been ranked third, behind Pakistan's Babar Azam. K L Rahul has moved up from 31st to 27th spot. Hardik Pandya has achieved a career best 42nd position while Rishabh Pant has entered the top 100.
Aniyan Midhun	Gold at south Asian Wushu tourney	The 28-year-old youth represented the country in the 70-kg category in the championship. He is the first Wushu player from southern India to reach the Indian team.
Hubert Hurkacz	Miami Open title	Hubert Hurkacz of Poland has won the Miami Open title. He won the title playing against Jannik Sinner. Hubert has become the Poland's first Masters 1000 Champion.
Tashkent	2023 AIBA Men's World Boxing Championships	President of the International Boxing Association (AIBA) Umar Kremlev during his visit to Uzbekistan officially announced that AIBA Men's World Boxing Championships will take place in Tashkent in 2023.
Bhuvneshwar Kumar	ICC Players of the Month award	India seamer Bhuvneshwar Kumar has won the ICC Player of the Month award for his superlative show in the recent limited over series against England in March. Bhuvneshwar became the third successive Indian recipient of the award since its inception early this year.
Kane Williamson	Sir Richard Hadlee medal	It was his 4th Sir Richard Hadlee award in 6 years. He had a great test season. He scored 251 against West Indies followed by a century on the boxing day.

CURRENT AFFAIRS DAILY DIGEST – APRIL 2021

Babar Azam	World No-1 batsman in ICC Men's ODI Rankings	In the International Cricket Council's (ICC) rankings for ODI batsmen, Pakistan Captain Babar Azam has climbed to the No.1 spot. Azam replaced his Indian counterpart Virat Kohli, who was occupying the top position for nearly three and a half years.
Virat Kohli	Wisden Almanack's ODI Cricketer of Decade	Indian skipper Virat Kohli was awarded the title of the Wisden Almanack's ODI Cricketer of the 2010s on April 15, 2021. This honour was conferred by the annual sports publication the Wisden Cricketers' Almanack.
Max Verstappen	Emilia Romagna F1 Grand Prix 2021	This win is his first victory of the season. The race was the second round of the 2021 Formula One World Championship.
India	14 medal - Senior Asian Wrestling Championship	The 2021 Senior Asian Wrestling Championships was held from April 13 to 18, 2021 in Almaty, Kazakhstan. The event was the 34th edition of the Asian Wrestling Championships.
Stefanos Tsitsipas	Monte Carlo 2021 Title	Stefanos Tsitsipas has won his first ATP Masters 1000 series after a flawless performance against Andrey Rublev in Monte Carlo.
Arjun Kalyan	68th Indian Grandmaster	Tamil Nadu's, Arjun Kalyan became India's 68th Chess Grandmaster when he crossed the 2500 ELO mark after beating Dragan Kosic in the fifth round of GM Round Robin "Rujna Zore-3" in Serbia.
Manchester City	League Cup football tournament	Manchester City won the League Cup for a record-equalling fourth time in succession with a deserved victory over a disappointing Tottenham Hotspur side at Wembley.
Rafael Nadal	12th Barcelona Open title	This is the second tournament where Nadal has captured 12 or more titles. The 13-time Roland Garros champion will return to No. 2 in the FedEx ATP Rankings.

Obituary

Name	Associated Field
Shashikala	Veteran film and TV actress
Radheshyam Khemka	The president of Gita Press
Chandra Naidu	India's first female cricket commentator
Philip	Britain's Prince
Balbir Singh Junior	Hockey Player
Yogesh Praveen	Eminent Historian and an expert on Awadh
G.V.G. Krishnamurthy	Former election commissioner
Ranjit Sinha	Former CBI Chief
Dr. Kakarla Subba Rao	Renowned Radiologist
Vivek	Veteran Tamil actor and comedian
Charles Geschke	Adobe co-founder and PDF developer
Sumitra Bhavé	National Award-winning filmmaker
Kishore Nandlaskar	Veteran actor
Shankha Ghosh	Noted Bengali poet
Maulana Wahiduddin	Padma awardee winning Indian Islamic Scholar
Amit Mistry	Veteran Gujarati and Hindi Film Actor
Dadudan Gadhvi	Renowned Gujarati poet and folk singer
Manoj Das	Noted Odia and English Author
Manoj Das	Eminent Odia and English author

Important Days

Day	Date	Themes
Utkal Divas or Odisha Day	April 01	
International Children’s Book Day	April 02	The Music of Words
World Autism Awareness Day	April 02	
International Day of International Mine Awareness Day	April 04	
International Day of Conscience	April 05	
International Day of Sport for Development and Peace	April 06	
World Health Day	April 07	
CRPF Valour Day	April 09	
World Homeopathy Day	April 10	
World Parkinson’s Day	April 11	
National Safe Motherhood Day	April 11	
International Day of Human Space Flight	April 12	
International Turban Day	April 13	
Ambedkar Jayanti	April 14	
World Chagas Disease Day	April 14	
Himachal Day	April 15	
World Voice Day	April 16	ONE WORLD MANY VOICES
World Hemophilia Day	April 17	
World Liver Day	April 19	
UN Chinese Language Day	April 20	
National Civil Services Day	April 21	
International Girls in ICT Day	April 22	
International Mother Earth Day	April 22	Restore Our Earth.
UN English Language Day & UN Spanish Language Day	April 23	
World Book and Copyright Day	April 23	
World Day for Laboratory Animals	April 24	
National Panchayati Raj Day	April 24	
International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace	April 24	
World Veterinary Day	April 24	Veterinarian response to the COVID-19 crisis
World Malaria Day	April 25	Reaching the Zero Malaria Target
World Immunisation Week	Last week of April	Vaccines bring us closer
International Delegate’s Day	April 25	
International Chernobyl Disaster Remembrance Day	April 26	

CURRENT AFFAIRS DAILY DIGEST – APRIL 2021

World Intellectual Property Day	April 26	Intellectual property and small businesses: Taking big ideas to market
Workers' Memorial Day	April 28	Health and Safety is a fundamental workers' right.
World Day for Safety and Health at Work	April 28	Anticipate, prepare and respond to crises – Invest Now in Resilient Occupational Safety and Health Systems
International Dance Day	April 29	Purpose of dance
International Jazz Day	April 30	
Ayushman Bharat Diwas	April 30	