

General Knowledge GK Notes - April-2015

1st April

AROUND THE WORLD

Pakistan 8th Most Dangerous Country

- Pakistan has emerged as the world's eighth most dangerous country in a latest analysis of the top 10 danger zones based on terrorist and rebel activity.
- The IntelCenter's 'Top 10 Most Dangerous Countries' list as of March 2015 is topped by the Middle East, with Iraq and Syria ranked No. 1 and 2 respectively.
- The other countries in the top 10 include Nigeria (3rd), Somalia (4th), Afghanistan (5th), Libya (6th), Yemen (7th), Ukraine (9th) and Egypt (10th).

Nigeria Opposition Claims Historic Win



- Nigeria's former military leader Muhammadu Buhari claimed a historic election victory in Africa's most populous country.
- As per Buhari's campaign spokesman incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan had called the retired general to concede defeat in the most closely fought election in Nigeria's history.

INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

Bhel Bags Rs. 5k crore Contract

- State-owned Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (Bhel) confirmed that Telangana State Power Generation Corporation Limited (TSGenco) has awarded the company an EPC (engineering, procurement and construction) order for setting up a 4 x 270 MW thermal power plant at Manuguru in Khammam district at an estimated cost of Rs. 5,000 crore.
- The company said the project is targeted to be commissioned in 24 months on a fast-track basis with

both TSGenco and Bhel setting up teams to expedite clearances and execution of the project.

ECBs, NRI Deposits Push External Debt to \$462 Billion

- India's total external debt rose by USD 15.5 billion, or 3.5 percent, to USD 461.9 billion during the sixmonth period ending December, mainly due to increase in external commercial borrowings and NRI deposits.
- However, as percentage of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the country's external debt works out to be 23.2 percent at the end of December 2014, down from 23.7 percent as on March 2014.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

NASA Enters Key Partnerships



- The US space agency has selected 12 Next Space Technologies for Exploration Partnerships (NextSTEP) to develop the exploration capabilities necessary to enable commercial endeavours in human exploration to deep-space destinations such as Mars.
- Through these public-private partnerships, selected companies will prepare concept studies and technology development projects in the areas of advanced propulsion, habitation and small satellites.
- Commercial partners were selected for their technical ability to mature key technologies and their commitment to the potential applications both for government and private sector uses.

INFOTAINMENT

Virat Kohli Steady at 4th



- Virat Kohli remained the highest-placed Indian batsman at fourth even as Shikhar Dhawan rose to sixth place in the latest ICC ODI rankings.
- Apart from Kohli and Dhawan, Indian skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni is the other Indian batsman to be in the top-10.
- Rohit Sharma made significant strides up the order as he jumped seven places to be joint 12th with Steve Smith and Misbah-ul-Haq.

INDIA – OTHERS

Union Cabinet Recommends Re-promulgation of Land Acquisition Ordinance

- The Union Cabinet has decided to recommend re-promulgation of the land acquisition ordinance incorporating nine amendments that were part of the Bill that was passed in the Lok Sabha earlier this month.
- The decision was taken at a meeting of the Cabinet presided over by Narendra Modi as the Bill passed by the Lower House and is pending before the Rajya Sabha has no chance of being cleared before April 5.

Navy Evacuates 348 Indians from Yemen

- The Indian Navy evacuated 348 Indians from strife-torn Yemen.
- INS Sumitra rescued the Indian nationals after New Delhi got permission to dock its ship at the Aden harbour for the evacuation of its citizens from the sea port city as the government launched a massive air and sea evacuation operation for its over 4000 nationals in war-torn Yemen.

2nd April

AROUND THE WORLD

Iran Talks Stretch into Another Day

- Major powers and Iran stretched marathon talks on Tehran's nuclear programme into a second day past their deadline, with diplomats saying prospects for a preliminary agreement were finely balanced between success and collapse.
- The negotiations, aimed at blocking Iran's capacity to build a nuclear bomb in exchange for lifting sanctions, have become bogged down over crucial details of the accord, even as the broad outlines of an agreement have been reached.
- The six world powers, the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China, aim to stop Iran from gaining the capacity to develop a nuclear bomb. Tehran wants to lift international sanctions that have crippled its economy, while preserving what it views as its right to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

EARTH MATTERS

March 2015 India's wettest Month in 48 Years



- As per Met officials, a series of rain spells, starting with an unusually strong storm that brought heavy showers across the country, have made the last month the wettest March in India in 48 years.
- The average rainfall across India last month was recorded to be 61.1 mm, nearly double the normal of 30.9 mm.
- Only once since 1901, when systematic weather records started being maintained, has the country received more rain in March. That was in 1967, which saw 63.3 mm rain during the month.

INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

Govt. Infuses Rs. 6,690 crore in Nine PSBs

- The government has pumped in Rs. 6,690 crore in nine public sector banks, including SBI, Punjab National Bank, Bank of Baroda, Canara Bank, Syndicate Bank for the fiscal ended March 31, 2015 to strengthen their capital base.
- The other banks are Allahabad Bank, Indian Bank, Dena Bank and Andhra Bank.
- The government has infused capital of Rs. 1,260 crore in Bank of Baroda, Rs. 870 crore in Punjab National Bank, Rs. 570 crore in Canara Bank, Rs. 460 crore in Syndicate Bank and Rs. 140 crore in Dena Bank.
- The country's largest public sector lender SBI has been provided with the maximum capital infusion of Rs. 2,970 crore, Allahabad Bank Rs. 320 crore, Indian Bank Rs. 280 crore and Andhra Bank Rs. 120 crore.

Kotak Mahindra and ING Vysya Merger Gets RBI Nod



- Shares of Kotak Mahindra Bank and ING Vysya Bank edged higher as the Reserve Bank of India approved the merger deal between the two companies.
- The merger would create the country's fourth largest private sector bank.
- Following the merger, all the tangible and intangible assets have been transferred to Kotak Mahindra Bank. The merged entity has now 1,214 branches, with a wide-spread pan-India network. ING Vysya had around 10,000 employees, while Kotak Bank has around 29,000.
- The Rs 15,000-crore merger deal between Kotak Mahindra and ING Vysya received the Competition Commission's approval in February.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

NASA's Asteroid Mission Passes Critical Milestone

- NASA's ground-breaking science mission to retrieve a sample from an ancient space rock has moved closer to fruition.
- The Origins Spectral Interpretation Resource Identification Security Regolith Explorer (OSIRIS-REx) mission has passed a critical milestone in its path towards launch and is officially authorised to

transition into its next phase.

- OSIRIS-REx is the first US mission to return samples from an asteroid to the Earth.
- The spacecraft will travel to a near-Earth asteroid called Bennu and bring at least a 60-gram sample back to Earth for study.

INFOTAINMENT

Brendon McCullum Named New Zealand's 'Cricketer of the Year'

- New Zealand skipper Brendon McCullum was named "Cricketer of the Year" at the New Zealand Cricket Awards.
- McCullum, who led New Zealand to their first World Cup final, was the supreme award winner at the ceremony, winning the "Sir Richard Hadlee" medal.
- Team-mate Kane Williamson won the "Batsman of the Year" award across all three formats of the game.

INDIA – OTHERS

Andhra Pradesh Govt. Approves Amaravathi as New Capital

- The Andhra Pradesh Government decided to name the new capital of the state which is coming up in Vijayawada-Guntur region as 'Amaravathi'.
- The resolution to this effect was passed by the state cabinet which met under Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu.
- Amaravathi is located in Guntur district and the same name is adopted for the capital in view of its historical, spiritual and mythological significance.

3rd April

AROUND THE WORLD

147 dead in Garissa University Assault



- At least 147 people, mostly students, were killed in an assault by al-Shabab militants on a university in north-eastern Kenya.
- It is the deadliest attack yet by al-Shabab.

INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

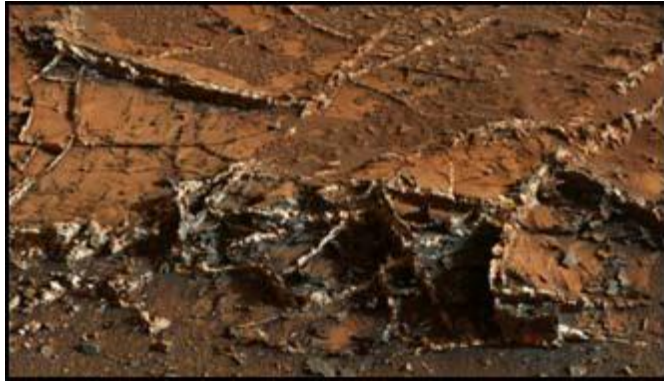
No Videshi Paper for Swadeshi Currency



- Prime Minister Narendra Modi asked the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to start manufacturing paper and ink used for currency notes.
- India prints 15 billion pieces of currency annually, of which up to 12 billion are printed on foreign-made paper. The paper used for the currency is cotton-based, and has the advantage that it cannot be easily replicated, yet has the touch and feel of paper.
- The ink, on the other hand, is imported from a Swiss company SICPA.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Curiosity Rover Finds Intriguing Mineral Veins on Mars



- NASA's Curiosity rover photographed a patchwork of crisscrossing rocky outcroppings on the Martian surface that appear to be two-tone mineral veins.
- The presence of the minerals adds further evidence that Mars had a watery past and could potentially harbor life.
- The specific area in which the rover found the mineral veins is known as "Garden City." Garden City marks the highest elevation yet reached during the rover's survey of the Martian surface.

Intact Ottoman 'War Camel' Found in Austrian Cellar



- A complete camel skeleton dug up from a 17th-century Austrian cellar shows tell-tale signs that it was a valuable riding animal in the Ottoman army.
- DNA analysis shows that the beast - the first intact camel skeleton found in central Europe - was a Bactrian-dromedary hybrid, popular in the army.

India's Largest Trapdoor Spider Found



- India's largest trapdoor spider has been found in Dang district of Gujarat.
- The three centimetres (cm) long spider was documented by researchers from MS University's (MSU) Department of Zoology.

INFOTAINMENT

Now, a Planet Named After Chess Grand Master



- A minor planet (4538), located roughly between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter, was named after him the former World Chess Champion Vishwanathan Anand.
- The newly-named minor planet, (4538 Vishyanand), was discovered by Kenzo Suzuki of Toyota, Japan, on October 10, 1988.

INDIA – OTHERS

Kashmir's First Tourist Bus Service Launched



- Jammu and Kashmir government launched Kashmir's first tourist bus service by Kehwah group at SKICC.
- The service named 'On Wheels' was launched to promote and explore the aspects of tourism and invite investments in tourism sector.

4th April

AROUND THE WORLD



- World leaders reached a framework for a historic deal meant to block Iran from developing a nuclear weapon.
- Iran, which insists that its nuclear ambitions are peaceful, agreed to limits on its program to enrich uranium, and it agreed not to make weapons-grade plutonium — two means of building a bomb.
- Iran also agreed to international inspections that President Barack Obama said would be the toughest on any country in the world. If Iran makes good on its pledges, world powers agreed that they would lift punishing economic sanctions.

INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

Government Gave Assent to Repromulgation of Land Ordinance



- The land acquisition ordinance, which the government could not get converted into a legislation in Rajya Sabha due to stiff opposition, was re-promulgated, a day before it was to lapse.
- The fresh ordinance, which is the 11th by the Narendra Modi government, includes 9 amendments that were part of Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (Amendment) Bill, 2015.

Union Government Unveiled New Foreign Trade Policy

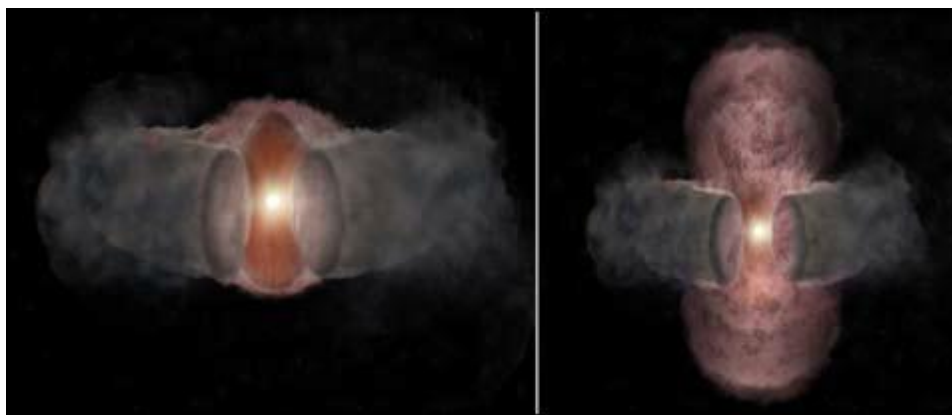


- Union Government has unveiled new Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) to make India an exporting powerhouse in the next five years.
- The new trade policy will incorporate government ambitious initiatives such as Make in India, Digital India mission, Skill India programme, ease of business in order to boost jobs and take India's exports to 900 billion dollars by 2020.
- Focus areas of the new FTP are
 - Labour intensive sectors to generate more employment
 - Boosting to environment-friendly products

- High tech value addition
- Involving skill India programme to promote entrepreneurship
- Moving towards branding of products
- Incentives for units located in SEZs. Making the life of traders easier

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Star's Birth Glimpsed 'in Real Time'



- Astronomers have witnessed a key stage in the birth of a very heavy star, using two radio telescope views of the process taken 18 years apart.
- The young star called W75N(B)-VLA 2 is 4,200 light-years from Earth and appears to be surrounded by a doughnut-shaped cloud of dust.
- The images appear dramatically different and that they provide a real-time glimpse of how massive stars develop in the earliest stages of their evolution.

INFOTAINMENT

Miami Open: Novak Djokovic and Serena Williams entered Semis

- Novak Djokovic entered the Miami Open semis after a 7-5 7-5 victory over Spain's David Ferrer.
- Serena Williams, who has held top spot in the women's rankings for 110 weeks, also entered the semis by defeating Indian Wells champion Simona Halep 6-2 4-6 7-5.

INDIA – OTHERS

Maharashtra Tops in Solid Waste Generation



- Maharashtra generates over 26,820 tonne solid waste per day, more than any other state in the country, a recent Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) report has said.
- The report was compiled after the National Green Tribunal (NGT) directed the board to submit an independent comment in relation to formulating a national policy concerning collection and disposal of municipal solid waste.
- The estimated solid waste generation in the country is around 1.43 lakh tonne per day.

AROUND THE WORL

Pedro Cateriano Bellido appointed as Prime Minister of Peru



- Pedro Cateriano Bellido was appointed as Prime Minister of Peru by the President Ollanta Humala.
- He will replace Ana Jara, who had lost a confidence vote and was sacked by Peruvian Congress amid allegations of corruption.

EARTH MATTERS

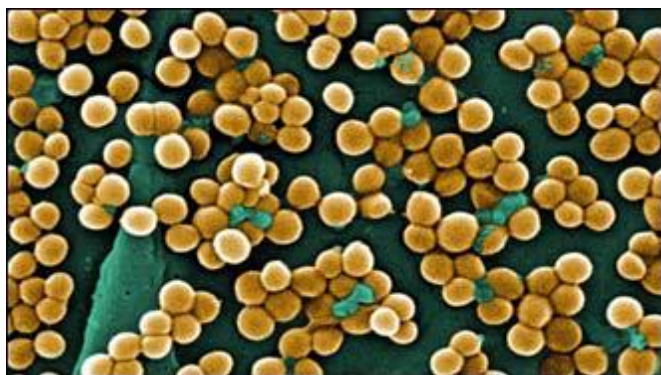
Reef Fish can adjust Sex Ratios as Oceans Warm



- Using a multigenerational experiment research has shown for the first time that when reef fish parents develop from early life at elevated temperatures they can adjust their offspring's sex through non-genetic and non-behavioral means.
- The ability to compensate for the sex bias caused by rising temperatures is an important trait that could help constrain the impacts of ocean warming on reef fish populations and other species.
- The research findings are significant because global warming poses a threat to species with temperature-dependent sex determination (TSD), such as reptiles and fish, potentially skewing the sex-ratio of offspring and, consequently, breeding individuals in a population.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

A Medieval Potion that kills MRSA Superbugs



- A recipe for the potion, originally an eye salve, was found in Bald's Leechbook, a 10th-century book of Anglo-Saxon medical advice and recipes for medicines, salves and treatments found in the British Library.
- The recipe contains Garlic, Onion or leek, Wine, Oxgall (bile from a cow's stomach) and proved efficient in treating *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA).

- The researchers found none of the individual ingredients alone had any measurable effect on MRSA, but the combination was highly effective.

INFOTAINMENT

Malli Mastan Babu, India's Ace Mountaineer, Passed Away



- Ace Indian mountaineer Malli Mastan Babu's lifeless body was found today in the Andes that he had hoped to conquer.
- Malli was on a solo attempt to summit Tres Cruces Mountain in the Andes to hoist the Indian flag one more time. He began for the summit on March 24 and was to return the same day.
- Babu was regarded as the fastest "7 summiteer" that is fastest mountaineer to climb summits in all seven continents from India. In 2006, he had famously scaled 7 summits of the world in record 172 days.

INDIA – OTHERS

K. N. Tripathi sworn in as Governor of Mizoram

- West Bengal and Bihar Governor Keshari Nath Tripathi took additional charge of Mizoram.
- He was sworn in as 16th Governor of Mizoram.

6th April

AROUND THE WORLD

Violence to be the only certainty for Yemen



- Yemen's Houthi rebels, supported by army units, have gained ground in the southern city of Aden, the last foothold of supporters of Hadi, despite an 11th night of coalition air strikes targeting the group's strongholds.
- Saudis overseas are on a war-footing. Besides rallying Sunni countries, they have quietly backed the brutal Islamic State to hold Iran at bay.
- Amidst America's absence, Russia has demanded a ceasefire in order to supply medical aid amongst streets bathed in bodies.
- The conflict is being compared the collapse of wide swathes of West Asia into sectarian warfare to the Thirty Years' War that nearly consumed Christian Europe six centuries ago.
- It is nominally Shia versus Sunni, but really about a half-dozen regional powers vying to be king of the heap.

INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

ICICI Bank to Roll Out Voice Authentication



- When a customer calls up ICICI BankBSE -0.36 % in coming weeks, in the 10 seconds that he introduces

himself the bank's servers will identify his account details and authenticate his identity by picking a voice sample and matching it with the database.

- Not just that, in future voice data would be analyzed to identify whether the caller is agitated, irate or in a hurry to avoid cross-sell pitches.
- ICICI Bank has become the first in the country and among the few in the world to deploy voice-recognition technology for biometric authentication.
- The cutting-edge technology comes from Nuance Communications, a Massachusetts-based firm that created the technology behind Siri - Apple's voice-recognition software.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

LHC Cranked Up Again



- CERN scientists restarted their “Big Bang” Large Hadron Collider (LHC) in a bid to probe into the “dark universe” they believe lies beyond the visible one.
- CERN, the European Organisation for Nuclear Research, reported that particle beams were successfully pushed around the LHC in both directions after a two-year shutdown for a major refit described as a Herculean task that doubled its power and its reach into the unknown.

INFOTAINMENT

Kejriwal Re-launched Anti-graft Helpline



- Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal re-launched the anti-corruption helpline, a tried and tested tool, to make Delhi 'Corruption Free'.
- Launching the helpline on 1031, Kejriwal promised to make the Capital one of the most transparent cities in the world.
- The helpline can be used to lodge a complaint if someone is harassed for a bribe by government officials.

Miami Open: The Winners



- Men's Singles: Novak Djokovic
- Men's Doubles: The Bryan Brothers
- Women's Singles: Serena Williams
- Women's Doubles: Martina Hingis and Sania Mirza

7th April

EARTH MATTERS

Rare Partridge Captured on Camera



1. A shutterbug from Bengaluru Gururaj Moorching has captured the first ever image of a rare bird, the chestnut-breasted partridge (*Arborophila mandelli*).
2. It's worth mentioning that earlier only a sketch or a painting of the bird was available for reference.
3. The bird was captured on camera at West Kamang district of Arunachal Pradesh.

INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

Dena Bank, LIC Signed MoU to Provide Life Cover Under PMJBY



- Dena Bank signed agreement with LIC (Life Insurance Corporation) to provide insurance cover to its savings account holders under the Prime Minister's Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJBY) scheme.
- Under the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), LIC will give a life cover of Rs. 2 lakh in case of death of the insured person at a nominal premium of Rs. 330 per annum.
- Account holders in the age group of 18 to 50 years can avail of the product.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

NASA Revealed its Most Powerful Rocket Launcher Ever



- Armed with an asteroid hunter, lunar flashlight and DNA kit, NASA will launch the unmanned Orion spacecraft using the Space Launch System (SLS) — its largest, most powerful rocket booster ever built — in 2018.
- The US space agency plans to use the SLS's massive lift capability to carry nearly a dozen nano-satellites to conduct science experiments beyond low-Earth orbit and eventually, Mars.
- The SLS will launch Orion on an uncrewed test flight to a distant retrograde orbit around the moon.

INFOTAINMENT

Maria Muzychuk, the New Chess Grandmaster



- Mariya Muzychuk from Lviv region defeated Russian-grandmaster Natalija Pogonina in Sochi to win the Women's World Chess Championship.
- New world champion Muzychuk went home with USD 60,000 in prize money and assumes the new title of Grandmaster, the highest title a person can hold in the chess world.

INDIA – OTHERS

First Indigenously-built Scorpene Sub Undocked



- Defence Minister Manohar Parikkar launched the first indigenously-built Scorpene submarine at the Mazagaon Dockyard Ltd, Mumbai.
- The Scorpene is part of the ambitious Project 75 of Indian Navy's submarine programme, undertaken with French collaboration, which will include six such vessels joining the fleet over the next few years.

First National Air Quality Index Launched



- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the first national air quality index at the start of a two-day Environment Ministry national conference.
- The index, to be available in 10 cities for now, will inform the public about the level of pollution in the air on a daily basis in real time.

8th April

AROUND THE WORLD

USD 952 Million Sale of Helicopters, Missiles to Pak Approved



- The US State Department has approved sale of USD 952 million worth of attack helicopters, missiles and other defence equipment to Pakistan to help Islamabad with its counter-terrorism operations in South Asia.
- The deal would also contribute to the foreign policy and national security of the United States by helping to improve the security of a country vital to US foreign policy and national security goals in South Asia.
- The proposed sale includes a "precision strike, enhanced survivability aircraft" that Pakistan can operate at high-altitudes.
- The deal is to be implemented over a period of five and a half years, involving technical support, training and maintenance by US personnel.
- The principal contractors will be Bell Helicopter, General Electric Boeing and Lockheed Martin.

EARTH MATTERS

Western Canada's Glaciers may all but Vanish by 2100



- The world has 200,000 glaciers, nearly a tenth of which are in British Columbia and Alberta in western Canada, where they cover an area of 27,000 square kilometres and have an average thickness of 112 metres.

- The glaciers in these two provinces are losing almost one per cent of their volume each year – among the fastest rates of mountain ice loss anywhere in the world.
- Researchers at University of British Columbia in Vancouver have made the first major assessment based on a detailed analysis of how glaciers are likely to move and change shape as they melt. They also concluded that this will substantially speed up melting.

INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

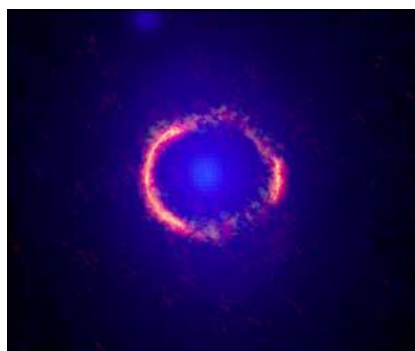
Top 3 Banks Cut Rates after RBI's Tough Talk



- Nudged and prodded by RBI, leading banks -- SBI, ICICI and HDFC Bank -- cut their lending rates by 0.15-0.25 percent despite the status quo in policy rate of the central bank.
- The action can also have a snowballing effect forcing other banks to follow suit.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Einstein Ring seen in Stunning Image of Lensed Galaxy



- Astronomers have discovered that a distant galaxy -- seen from Earth with the aid of a gravitational lens -- appears like a cosmic ring, thanks to the highest resolution images ever taken with the Atacama Large Millimeter/submillimeter Array (ALMA).
- Forged by the chance alignment of two distant galaxies, this striking ring-like structure is a rare and peculiar manifestation of gravitational lensing as predicted by Albert Einstein in his theory of general relativity.

INDIA – OTHERS

Vehicles Older than 10 years Banned in Delhi



- In an effort to curb air pollution in the national capital, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) in a landmark ruling banned diesel vehicles over ten years old from plying on Delhi roads.
- According to a report by the World Health Organisation (WHO), Delhi had the worst air quality in the world while 12 other Indian cities also figured among the world's worst 20.

9th April

EARTH MATTERS

Anaesthetic Gases raising Earth's Temperature Too



- Anaesthetic gases may help doctors to cause temporary loss of sensation in patients and carry out surgery smoothly, but by accumulating in the Earth's atmosphere, they also contribute to climate change, says a new study.
- Over the past decade, concentrations of the anaesthetics desflurane, isoflurane and sevoflurane have been rising globally and the study has detected the compounds as far a field as Antarctica.
- Like the well-known climate warmer carbon dioxide, anaesthesia gases allow the atmosphere to store more energy from the Sun.

- But unlike carbon dioxide, the medical gases are extra potent in their greenhouse-gas effects.

INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

Snapdeal acquired FreeCharge

- Online marketplace Snapdeal acquired India's fastest growing mobile transaction platform FreeCharge.
- This is the largest buyout so far in the Indian consumer Internet sector as it arms itself with fresh ammunition to battle rivals for leadership in the online retail sector.

MUDRA Bank Launched



- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched Micro Units Development Re-finance Agency (MUDRA) Bank in New Delhi.
- MUDRA Bank will act as a regulator for 'Micro-Finance Institutions' (MFIs) involved in manufacturing, trading and service activities to promote their growth.
- The Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana will be the main support system for the bank and will be the part of Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI).

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Gene Mutation that Causes Autism Identified



- Scientists in Argentina have discovered a gene mutation that causes autism.
- A three-member team of researchers sequenced and decoded for the first time the complete genome of three patients with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and epilepsy and discovered the genetic mutation that causes the disorders in Argentina.

INFOTAINMENT

Padma Awards 2015: Some Prominent Winners



- Padma Vibhushan:
 1. LK Advani- Public Affairs- Gujarat
 2. Amitabh Bachchan- Art- Maharashtra
 3. Prakash Singh Badal- Public Affairs- Punjab
 4. Dilip Kumar- Art- Maharashtra
- Padma Bhushan:
 1. Jahnu Barua- Art- Assam
 2. Bill Gates (Foreigner)- Social Work- USA
 3. Melinda Gates (Foreigner)- Social Work- USA
- Padma Shri:
 1. Dr Manjula Anagani- Medicine- Telangana
 2. Naresh Bedi- Art- Delhi

10th April

AROUND THE WORLD

Shell acquired BG Group for \$ 70 bn



- In the biggest oil and gas deal in a decade, Royal Dutch Shell acquired smaller British rival BG Group Plc for about \$ 70 billion to create the world's largest independent producer of LNG.
- The deal, the first major acquisition since oil prices began to slump last July, would be among the largest oil-and-gas deals of past two decades and the biggest in last 10 years.

LinkedIn acquired e-learning company Lynda.com



- In its largest acquisition so far, professional networking portal LinkedIn acquired online learning and professional development company Lynda.com for about \$1.5 billion in a cash-and-stock deal.
- LinkedIn's key focus is online professional networking. Lynda.com is a subscription service that allows members to access courses taught by experts, in multiple languages.

INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

Greenpeace India Society (GIS) Registration Suspended



- The Union Ministry of Home Affairs suspended the registration of Greenpeace India Society (GIS) for 180 days for acting against public and economic interests of the country.
- The ministry took the decision after an on-site inspection of the accounts and records of GIS in September 2014 which revealed it has utilised its funds received from foreign sources for unauthorised purposes as per the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), 2010, under which it is registered in India.
- GIS's all seven bank accounts in IDBI Bank, ICICI Bank and Yes Bank have been frozen as per the order.

RBI notified Hike in FDI Cap



- The Reserve Bank notified government's decision to raise foreign direct investment (FDI) limit in the insurance sector to 49 per cent.
- With this, RBI has included a new term 'Other Insurance Intermediaries appointed under the provisions of Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority Act, 1999' under the definition of 'Insurance'.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Glaciers of Frozen Water found on Mars



- Scientists have discovered belts of glaciers consisting of frozen water equivalent to over 150 billion cubic metres - enough to cover the entire surface of the Red Planet with more than one metre of ice.
- Using radar measurements from the NASA satellite and Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter, and combining those with ice flow modelling, researchers have been able to determine that it is water ice.

INFOTAINMENT

Voice of Cricket Richie Benaud Died



- Former Australian captain Richie Benaud, known as the "voice of cricket" to fans around the world, has died aged 84.
- He was the first player to score 2,000 Test runs and take 200 Test wickets. Australia never lost a series under the leg-spinning allrounder's captaincy.

INDIA – OTHERS

Dhanush successfully Test-fired



- India successfully test fired nuclear weapons-capable Dhanush missile from a ship, off the Odisha coast.
- Dhanush is one of the 5 missiles developed by the DRDO under the Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP).
- The surface-to-surface missile is a naval variant of Prithvi missile.

Nasim Zaidi appointed as Chief Election Commissioner



- President Pranab Mukherjee appointed the senior most Election Commissioner (EC), Dr. Nasim Zaidi as the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC).
- He will succeed incumbent CEC HS Brahma.

11th April

AROUND THE WORLD

26/11 Mastermind released by Pakistan



- Despite India's strong opposition, 2008 Mumbai attack mastermind and Lashkar-e-Toiba operations commander Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi walked out of jail on bail.
- Lakhvi was released from the Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi after he submitted two bail surety bonds worth Rs. 1 million each for his release.

Seoul named the Global Earth Hour Capital 2015



- Seoul has been named the Global Earth Hour Capital 2015 by the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

- The WWF that the city's approach to radically reducing emissions included allocating a realistic budget for increasing the use of solar power by residents, reducing transport emissions through greener fuels, and building more bus lanes and car sharing programs.

EARTH MATTERS

Ocean Acidification behind Earth's Biggest Die-off

- Ocean acidification was a key driver of the greatest mass extinction on Earth some 250 million years ago, scientists said.
- The changes to the Earth's waters were caused by a rash of volcanic activity, wiping out more than 90 per cent of life in the oceans and two-thirds of land animals.
- The oceans absorbed huge amounts of carbon dioxide from the volcanic eruptions, making the water more acidic and less friendly to fragile life forms.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

First Human Head Transplant Procedure Scheduled to Begin Soon



- Last year a certain Italian surgeon named Sergio Canavero promised that he will perform the world's first successful human head transplant medical procedure during the summer of 2015.
- The good surgeon has managed to find a volunteer willing to undergo the disturbing procedure. The volunteer is 30-year old Valery Spiridonov from Russia who suffers from Werdnig-Hoffman disorder, a rare genetic disease that results in severe muscle atrophy, the kind that leaves the sufferer confined to a wheelchair and leads to untimely death.

INDIA – OTHERS

India elected to Four United Nations Agencies



- India was elected to four important United Nations (UN) agencies.
- These agencies are United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), World Food Program (WFP), Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) and the Governing Council of UN-Habitat.

Thane named India’s Earth Hour Capital



- An 11-member international jury has declared Thane the National Earth Hour Capital with the city emerging the winner from India in the Earth Hour City Challenge this year.
- Thane, Rajkot and Pune were the finalists from India. Pune received a special mention from the jury for its city mobility plan and its solar and waste-to-energy initiatives.

12th April

AROUND THE WORLD

China Reaps Rewards for Standing by Iran

- China is reaping energy rewards for standing by Iran, with Tehran now promising Beijing with new deals once the sanctions related to the Iranian nuclear programme are lifted.
- China one of the biggest buyers of Iran's oil, has been greatly cooperating with the Islamic Republic under conditions of sanctions and we are willing for that cooperation to continue when sanctions are removed.
- Last year, China bought 550,000 barrels of Iranian oil per day, marking a 28 per cent spurt in consumption over that in the previous year.

EARTH MATTERS

The Oldest Neanderthal DNA Sample

- Researchers have stumbled upon the oldest Neanderthal DNA sample. The sample came from an ancient skeleton buried deep inside a cave in Italy.
- The DNA could be up to 1,70,000 years old and could one day help form a clearer picture of the Neanderthal life.
- The sample came from an extraordinarily intact skeleton of an ancient human, scientists had found amidst the stalactites and stalagmites of the limestone cave of Lamalunga, near Altamura in southern Italy in 1993.

INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

Don't Trust Bank Balance Enquiry App

- Cautioning the public against a fraudulent bank account mobile app in its name, the Reserve Bank said it had not developed any such application.
- In a statement, the Reserve Bank said it had been brought to its notice that an app is doing the rounds on WhatsApp purportedly to facilitate checking of balance in customers' bank accounts.
- The Reserve Bank wishes to clarify that it has not developed any such application. Members of public are, therefore, advised to use the application, if at all, at their own risk.

Freight Rates Decline

- Freight rates for nine-tonne payload section dropped by Rs. 1000 in the local truck transport following

easy availability of trucks amid restricted cargo movements.

- Transporters said easy availability of trucks in the market as compared to restricted cargo movements mainly pulled down freight rates.
- Delhi to Chandigarh, Kanpur and Ludhiana freight rates fell by Rs. 1000 each to Rs. 14,000, Rs. 16,000 and Rs. 15,000.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Asteroid Named After Malala

- The youngest Nobel Peace Prize winner and girls' education campaigner Malala Yousafzai now has an asteroid named after her, media reported.
- Amy Mainzer, astronomer at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in California, named Asteroid 316201 after Malala.
- Mr. Mainzer discovered the asteroid in the Main Belt between Mars and Jupiter which gives her the right to name it. It orbits the Sun every 5.5 years.

INFOTAINMENT

India Stuns Australia

- Young striker Nikkin Thimmaiah scored a hat-trick as India produced its best performance of the tournament to stun world champion and title-holder Australia 4-2 on Saturday and secure a place in the third and fourth place play-off at the Azlan Shah Cup hockey tournament.
- Already out of title race, India played without pressure and at last came up with a complete performance.
- The China backed Iran-Pakistan project is being revived because the existing sanctions on Iran's energy exports are likely to be lifted first, according to the nuclear framework agreement that was signed in Switzerland earlier this month.

INDIA – OTHERS

Moderate Turnout in Maharashtra By-polls

- As per election officials, the Tasgaon-Kavathemahankal Assembly constituency in Sangli district recorded 58 per cent and Bandra East in suburban Mumbai 42 per cent in the by-elections.
- Shiv Sena president Uddhav Thackeray, voted at a polling booth near his Kala Nagar residence in Bandra East, where the Sena and the Congress were locked in a tough battle. Congress leader Narayan Rane, formerly with the Shiv Sena, is contesting for his political survival, and the Shiv Sena has pulled out all the stops to ensure that Trupti Sawant, the widow of its sitting MLA, Prakash Sawant, wins the battle. The All India Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul Muslimeen candidate Rehbar Khan's ability to split the nearly 20 per cent Muslim votes in the constituency holds the key.
- Polling began on a slow note but gradually picked up towards afternoon

13th April

AROUND THE WORLD

Hillary Clinton Seeks to be First Female US President



- Hillary Clinton promised to be a champion for the Americans as she kicked off a long-awaited second run for the White House as the commanding Democratic front runner.
- Clinton, who lost a bruising Democratic nominating battle to Barack Obama in 2008, is expected to travel soon to Iowa, the state that holds the kickoff nominating contest in early 2016.

EARTH MATTERS

Acidic Oceans Triggered Greatest Extinction of All Times

- A new study has revealed that acidic oceans triggered greatest extinction of all time 252 million-years ago, which wiped out more than 90 per cent of marine species and more than two-thirds of the animals living on land.
- It happened when Earth's oceans absorbed huge amounts of carbon dioxide from volcanic eruptions. This changed the chemical composition of the oceans, making them more acidic.
- The findings are helping scientists understand the threat posed to marine life by modern-day ocean acidification. The amount of carbon added to the atmosphere that triggered the mass extinction was probably greater than today's fossil fuel reserves.

INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

Govt Gets Rs. 32,300 cr Upfront Payment

- The government has received a total upfront payment of over Rs. 32,300 crore from telecom players

against the spectrum sold during the March auction, well above the minimum outstanding due of Rs. 28,835.34 crore.

- Bharti Airtel, the country's largest telecom operator, has paid Rs. 11,374.7 crore, while the upfront amount due from it was Rs. 7,832.20 crore.
- All other telecom operators have paid the minimum amount due from them.

SBI Cuts Home Loan Interest Rate



State Bank of India

- Matching its competitor HDFC Ltd, State Bank of India announced a cut in home loan rate by up to 0.25 percent, providing relief to new borrowers.
- The cut in interest rate on home loans is higher than the reduction of 0.15 percent in base rate that came into force on April 10.
- According to reports, the home loan rate stood at 10.1 percent for women borrowers prior to the reduction in base rate. It will now be 9.85 percent. For other borrowers, the new rate is 9.9 percent, down from 10.15 percent before base rate cut.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Solar-powered Internet Drone Completes First Test Flight

- A Portuguese startup that aims to use solar-powered drones to provide wireless internet access to offline areas of the world claims to have successfully completed its maiden test flight.
- The company plans to use the SkyOrbiter drones that will stay airborne for weeks, months or even years at a time and will fly at altitudes of up to 22,000 metres.
- The drone was equipped with Wi-Fi-transmitting equipment that can provide internet access to local users on the ground via a patch antenna that receives the signal.

INFOTAINMENT

Sania Mirza Creates History



- India tennis ace Sania Mirza became the World No. 1 in women's doubles rankings. Sania and her Swiss partner Martina Hingis became the supreme force in women's tennis after bagging the Family Circle Cup.
- The duo beat Casey Dellacqua and Darija Jurak to win their second successive title.
- The duo who have formed a new partnership, had achieved success at the Indian Wells this year. Last week they bagged the Miami Open. The two sensations who look to rule the tennis world in 2015.

INDIA – OTHERS

Deal to Fast-track Jaitapur N-plant

- With India and France agreeing to expedite the setting up of the Jaitapur nuclear power plant, the move is expected to help settle several long-pending issues, including those regarding the technicalities and pricing of the project.
- During the visit to France of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India signed two agreements related to the Jaitapur Nuclear Power Plant.
- A pre-engineering agreement signed with AREVA, Alstom and Nuclear Power Corporation of India (NPCIL), aims to bring greater clarity on all technical aspects of the project.

14th April

AROUND THE WORLD

Russia, Ukraine Agree on Withdrawal of Smaller Caliber Arms

- Russia and Ukraine have agreed to call for the pullback of smaller caliber weapons from the front lines in eastern Ukraine as part of a fresh push to end the region's yearlong conflict.
- The foreign ministers from the two countries met with their French and German counterparts in Berlin and agreed to support international monitors and establish four working groups to address the most

pressing issues faced by people in the embattled region, where Russian-backed separatists are fighting Ukrainian government forces.

- The new deal calls for the withdrawal of mortars and heavy weapons below 100 mm caliber, as well as all types of tanks.

Russia Lifts Ban on Supplying S-300 Missiles to Iran

- Vladimir Putin lifted a ban on supplying Iran with sophisticated S-300 air defence missile systems, after Tehran struck a deal with the West over its nuclear programme.
- The decision to lift the delivery freeze comes after Tehran and international powers including Russia made a major breakthrough this month by agreeing an outline deal aimed at curbing Iran's nuclear programme.

EARTH MATTERS

Desert Fairy Circles



- Dotting the arid grasslands of Namibia, fairy circles have long baffled scientists as to how these round grassy patches form and why they disappear for seemingly no reason. Their mysterious nature has perhaps deepened with a new finding that the circles share a mathematical pattern with the skin cells of zebrafish.
- It's unclear how these fairy rings, which are different from mushroom rings, form in the desert. But they're impossible to miss; each barren patch of earth is surrounded by short grass, and they speckle the desert like craters on the moon.
- Scientists are racing to figure out this strange phenomenon, and have offered several still-unproven theories of what creates the circles.
- The researchers of the new study took a different approach to understanding this phenomenon. They realized that like skin cells, fairy circles have a life cycle and they could be affected by competition for space-related resources. So they looked at the macroscopic pattern of fairy circles that dot the landscape and compared it with the microscopic distribution of skin cells, and found that the two share a remarkably similar pattern.

INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

India to Grow at 7.9% this Fiscal

- As per global rating agency, India's economic growth is expected to improve to 7.9 per cent in the current fiscal year, even as it would take some more time for corporates to start investing.
- The projections are based on falling inflation, declining interest rates, and our expectation of a healthy monsoon this year.
- As per Crisil, the Indian economy has been on a gradual uptrend since May last year but the country's corporate sector remains in a wait-and-see mode before committing to significant new investments.
- However, the agency's projection is lower than 8-8.5 per cent GDP growth forecast by the government for 2015-16.

Government Lines up 12 PSUs for Stake Sale

- The Government has shortlisted about a dozen PSUs including IOC, National Fertilizers, MMTC, Hindustan Copper and ITDC for stake sale to achieve the current fiscal's disinvestment target of Rs. 41,000 crore.
- The Department of Disinvestment plans to divest 5-15 per cent government stake in these state-owned companies, and has already floated a draft Cabinet note to seek nod for stake sales in certain PSUs.
- The government has budgeted to raise Rs. 41,000 crore through PSU stake sale in the current fiscal and another Rs. 28,500 crore through strategic stake sales.

Retail Inflation Drops to 3-month Low

- Easing of food prices, mainly milk and vegetables, pulled down the March retail inflation to 3-month low of 5.17 per cent.
- The retail inflation as measured by Consumer Price Index was 5.37 per cent in February, and 5.19 per cent in January.
- The easing prices of milk, vegetables and fruits brought down the overall food inflation to 6.14 per cent in March, from 6.79 per cent recorded in February.
- The rate of price rise in the food and beverages segment as a whole was 6.2 per cent in March, lower than 6.76 per cent in the previous month.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Mars Rover Data Boosts Hope for Liquid Water

- Research from NASA's Mars rover Curiosity has strengthened hopes that liquid water may exist near the surface of Mars.
- The clue comes from the presence of calcium perchlorate in the soil.
- This is a type of salt that is highly absorbent and lowers the freezing point of water so that it remains

liquid.

- As per researchers, even if water does exist near the Martian surface, the conditions are so hostile that life there would be impossible.

INFOTAINMENT

Dhruv Sitwala Stuns Pankaj Advani

- Rising Mumbai cueist Dhruv Sitwala stunned multiple world champion Pankaj Advani to win the ACBS Asian Billiards Championship and pocket his first international title.
- Indian cuists dominated the event, which had three world champions -- Advani, C. Praput and Peter Gilchrist.

INDIA – OTHERS

Ban on Diesel Vehicles in Delhi

- Heeding to the plea of the Delhi government, the National Green Tribunal stayed for two weeks its order to impound diesel vehicles, heavy or light, plying in the capital for more than 10 years.
- It also asked the city government to submit suggestions on providing incentives to those transferring/scrapping old, polluting diesel vehicles and on fixing a cap on the number of vehicles to be registered in the capital.
- Noting that diesel is a prime source of air pollution in Delhi, the Tribunal had held that all diesel vehicles which are more than 10 years old will not be permitted to ply in Delhi- NCR.

15th April

AROUND THE WORLD

UN Imposes Arms Embargo on Yemen`s Houthi Rebels

- The UN Security Council imposed an arms embargo on Yemen`s Houthi rebels and demanded they immediately pull back from territory seized and seek a political settlement.
- Russia abstained from voting but did not veto the resolution, the first formal action taken by the council since a Saudi-led coalition launched an air campaign to halt the Houthi` advance.
- Drafted by the Gulf countries and Jordan, the resolution demanded that the Shiite Houthi withdraw from Sanaa and all other areas captured during their months-long offensive.

UN Asks Kenya to Rethink Closure of Refugee Camp

- The United Nations refugee agency urged Kenya to reconsider an order to close the teeming Dadaab refugee camp, warning that sending Somali refugees back to their homeland would have "extreme humanitarian and practical consequences".
- According to Kenyan authorities, it had given the United Nations three months to remove the camp housing hundreds of thousands of Somali refugees, as part of a get-tough response to the killing of 148 people by Somali gunmen at a Kenyan university.
- The UNHCR is ready to work with Kenyan authorities to "strengthen law enforcement" at Dadaab to help protect refugees and Kenyans against possible intrusion by armed groups.

INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

India Will Overtake China as the Fastest Growing Economy

- According to International Monetary Fund, India will overtake China as the fastest growing emerging economy in 2015-16 by clocking a growth rate of 7.5 percent on the back of recent policy initiatives, pickup in investments and lower oil prices.
- China will witness a deceleration with growth rate sliding from 7.4 percent in 2014 to 6.8 percent in 2015 and 6.3 percent a year after.
- IMF's growth projection of India is lower than the estimates of the Finance Ministry and the RBI. The Finance Ministry expects GDP growth to be 8-8.5 percent in 2015-16, while the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has estimated it at 7.8 percent.

ICICI and Axis Cut Home Loan Rate by up to 0.25%

- Joining the rate-cut war, ICICI Bank, Axis Bank and two mortgage lenders slashed home loan rate by up to 0.25 percent.
- DHFL lowered its home loan rate by 0.25 percent, while Indiabulls Housing Finance reduced home loan rate by 0.20 percent to 9.90 percent.
- The move follows rate cuts initiated by leading players State Bank of India and HDFC Ltd.
- Country's largest private sector lender, ICICI Bank lowered interest rate for women borrowers and financially weaker sections to 9.85 percent, while for others it was cut to 9.90 percent.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

YouTube Adds 15 More Languages

- Video-sharing website YouTube has added 15 more languages for navigation of its website.
- According to Engadget.com, Google's video-sharing website has added support for 15 more languages, bringing the total to 76.
- According to YouTube, that covers the native tongues of 95 percent of internet users.
- YouTube's developers are doing this to connect with as many people as possible using their own language.

INFOTAINMENT

Michael Phelps Enters Five Events

- Michael Phelps entered in five events at this week's Arena Pro Swim Series, which will be his first meet since serving a six-month ban following a drunk-driving conviction.
- Phelps, who was suspended last year by USA Swimming after his arrest on drunk-driving charges, entered in the 100 m butterfly, 100 m backstroke and 400 m freestyle, 200 m individual medley and 100 m freestyle.
- It will be familiar surroundings for Phelps, an 18-time Olympic gold medallist.

INDIA – OTHERS

India, Australia Explore Ways to Facilitate Flow of Uranium

- India and Australia explored ways for early conclusion of the Administrative Arrangements on civil nuclear cooperation to facilitate the flow of uranium amid Australian assurances that they may conclude by this year end.
- Australia holds about a third of the world's recoverable uranium resources, and exports nearly 7,000 tonnes a year. The nuclear pact under which Canberra will supply uranium was signed after a meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Australian counterpart Tony Abbott last September.

India Evacuates Embassy Staff from Yemen Capital

- India evacuated its entire staff from its embassy in the Yemeni capital of Sanaa, days after wrapping up a massive rescue operation under which over 4700 Indians were brought home.
- India had closed down the embassy in Sanaa on April 9 after winding up the air evacuation.
- India had also evacuated nearly 1000 foreign citizens from 41 countries.

16th April

UN Peace Envoy to Yemen Resigns

- UN peace envoy to Yemen, Jamal Benomar, has resigned, after losing support from Gulf countries for his mission in the conflict-riven nation.
- The Moroccan diplomat had been UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon's special envoy for Yemen since 2012.
- Mauritanian diplomat Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, who currently heads the UN Ebola mission in Accra may take Jamal Benomar place.

Iran Nuclear Deal Possible Only if Sanctions Lifted

- As per the Iranian President Hassan Rouhani Tehran will not accept a comprehensive nuclear deal with major powers if all sanctions imposed on Tehran were not lifted.
- Rouhani said, 'If there is no end to sanctions, there will not be an agreement.'
- Rouhani also said the U.S. Congress' power to review a nuclear deal with Iran was a domestic matter. Iran is in talks with the major powers and not with the Congress. Iran wanted to end its isolation by having "constructive interaction with the world and not confrontation", said Rouhani.

China's Economy Continues to Slow

- China's economy continued to slow further as it dipped to 7 per cent in the first quarter, the worst slump since the 2009 global financial crisis, raising concerns over the deceleration of the world's second largest economy.
- While China met an annual growth target of about 7 per cent set by its central government for 2015, it declined from the previous quarter's 7.3 per cent.
- The continued slowdown has become a major concern for policymakers as forecasts say the world's second largest economy will continue to decelerate till next year.
- As per a forecast by IMF forecast China's growth would further decline to 6.8 per cent this year and 6.3 per cent next year, falling behind India's 6.5 per cent.

INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

IT Dept Publishes List of Tax Defaulters

- The Income Tax department came out with a list of 31 defaulters who owe over Rs. 1,500 crore to the government.
- Some of the big defaulters of income tax/corporate tax in the list are: Hyderabad-based Totem Infrastructure (Rs. 401.64 crore), Pune-based Patheja Bros Forging & Auto Parts Mfg Co (Rs. 224.05 crore), Hyderabad-based Royal Fabrics (Rs. 158.94 crore); and Mumbai-based Home Trade (Rs. 72.18 crore).
- This is the second such list released by the department within one month. The earlier list had names of 18 entities who owe over Rs. 500 crore in tax to the exchequer.
- As per a statement given by government in Parliament, the total Corporate Tax demand pending for collection up to the month of December, 2014 was Rs. 3,11,080 crore.

Petrol and Diesel Prices Cut

- Petrol price was cut by 80 paise per litre and diesel by Rs. 1.30 a litre on global cues, the second reduction in rates this month.
- Rates were cut by 49 paise a litre in case of petrol and Rs. 1.21 in diesel from April 2.
- Since the last price change, the trend of international prices of petrol and diesel and Rupee—US dollar

exchange rate warrant a further downward revision in prices, the impact of which is being passed on to consumers with this price decrease.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

One of the Most Distant Planets Discovered

- Scientists using NASA's Spitzer Space Telescope have discovered a remote gas planet about 13,000 light-years away, making it one of the most distant planets known.
- The discovery demonstrates that Spitzer can be used to help solve the puzzle of how planets are distributed throughout our flat, spiral-shaped Milky Way galaxy.

INFOTAINMENT

Novak Djokovic and Genzebe Dibaba Bag Laureus Awards

- Serbian tennis star Novak Djokovic and Ethiopian sprinter Genzebe Dibaba were named the Laureus Sportsman and Sportswoman of the Year, respectively.
- The ceremony also saw the induction of Indian batting legend Sachin Tendulkar into the Laureus Academy. Djokovic pipped Lewis Hamilton (UK), Renaud Lavillenie (France), Rory McIlroy (UK), Marc Marquez (Spain) and Cristiano Ronaldo (Portugal) for the top honour. He was also awarded in 2012.
- Tendulkar become one of the five new members of the Laureus Sports Academy. Kapil Dev and Rahul Dravid are the other Indian cricketers to receive the recognition.

INDIA – OTHERS

Mulayam Singh Named Chief of New Party



- Leaders of six political parties announced the formation of a new party to defeat the BJP and combat communal forces in the country.
- As per reports, SP Chief Mulayam Singh Yadav will lead the new political party and its parliamentary board committee.
- The decision of the new political group was unanimously taken by the leaders of JDU, SP, RJD, SJP, JDS and INLD.

- The name of party, symbol and flag will be decided after taking into consideration views of presidents of all six parties.

17th April

AROUND THE WORLD

Former Nepal PM Surya Bahadur Thapa Dies



- Former Nepal Prime Minister Surya Bahadur Thapa passed away.
- He was suffering from cancer and was admitted to Medanta Hospital in Gurgaon in March.
- Mr. Thapa served as Prime Minister of Nepal for five terms, under three different Kings, in a political career spanning more than 50 years.
- His terms were 1963-64, 1965-69, 1979-83, 1997-98 and 2003-04. Surya Bahadur Thapa was the first Prime Minister of the Panchayat System of Nepal.

EARTH MATTERS

Delhi's Air Worst in the World



- As per the latest report by the World Health Organisation, New Delhi has surpassed Chinese capital Beijing as the city with the worst air in the world.
- According to WHO, the air quality levels measured in 2014 in as many as 1600 cities across the globe showed New Delhi as the most polluted city in the world.
- The report shows the air pollution is 10 times higher than acceptable standards. The city was also found to have the highest levels of particulate matter, also known as PM 2.5, known to be most harmful to human health.

INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

Hitachi Automotive Sets up Auto Parts Facility in TN

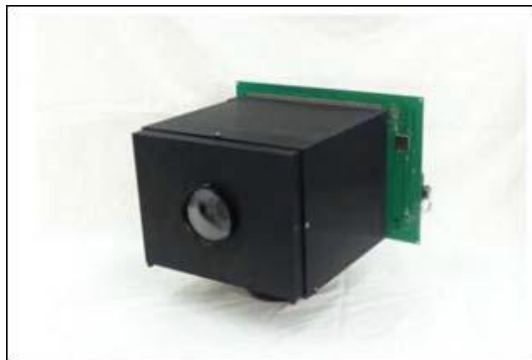
- Hitachi Group has expanded manufacturing footprint of its auto parts business in India with the launch of a new production unit near Chennai.
- The expansion is in response to growing importance of India in global automotive business. The group sees India as a strong base for its global strategy.
- The Japanese industrial giant has commissioned a new plant, its second factory in India, under a subsidiary Hitachi Automotive Systems India (HASI), for manufacturing valve timing control (VTC) systems and ignition coils for passenger vehicle engines.

GE Cap Set to Exit Card JV with SBI

- With its long-time joint venture partner GE Capital deciding to exit the financing business globally, SBI Card has started a valuation exercise for a possible new investor or a public offer.
- SBI, the nation's largest lender, entered the credit card business in 1998 by roping in GE Capital India, consumer finance arm of GE Capital. GE Capital owns 40% stake, and the remaining stake is with SBI.
- SBI Card has around three million active credit cards in circulation, making it the third largest player in the sector after HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank with a market share of 15% in FY15.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

World's First Self-powered Video Camera



- The world's first self-powered video camera that runs without a battery and can produce an image each second has been developed by researchers led by an Indian-origin scientist.
- To develop the prototype camera, researchers designed a pixel that can not only measure incident light but also convert the incident light into electric power.

INFOTAINMENT

Saina Nehwal Regains World No.1 Ranking



- Saina Nehwal regained the number one position in international rankings after China's Li Xuerui dropped a couple of rungs to third in the latest list issued
- Saina, the first Indian woman shuttler to be world number one after her India Open Grand Prix Gold triumph earlier this month, had dropped to the second place following her semifinal finish in the Malaysia Open Super Series.
- She skipped last week's Singapore Open Super Series but gained in the rankings after Xuerui also pulled out from the tournament.

INDIA – OTHERS

E-tourist Visas for 31 More Countries

- The government is set to give a major push to the e-tourist visa scheme by extending it to 31 more countries and allowing foreign tourists to avail of the facility at seven more airports by June 15.
- Among the countries that will benefit from the latest extension are the United Kingdom, Spain, the Netherlands, Portugal, Malaysia, Tanzania and Argentina.
- The airports to be added to the existing list of nine where foreign citizens from eligible countries can land with an e-tourist visa are Jaipur, Amritsar, Gaya, Lucknow, Trichy, Varanasi and Ahmedabad.

18th April

AROUND THE WORLD

Russia Pakistan to hold First-ever Joint Military Exercises



Russia and Pakistan have agreed to hold first-ever joint military exercises as part of their enhanced defence cooperation.

As per the agreement, both nations will strive for:

1. Enhancing cooperation in defence industry and military training
2. Promoting joint participation in military exercises
3. Increasing military cooperation in training and import of arms and equipment
4. Resolving conflicts through diplomatic means rather than using of force

INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

RIL Back as India's Most Profitable Co.



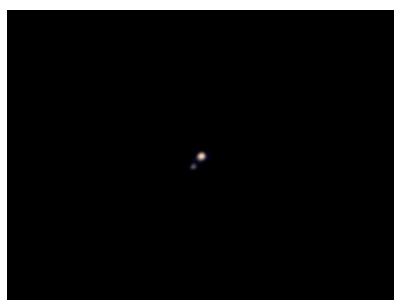
- Riding on superior refinery margins, Reliance Industries (RIL) regained its position as India's most profitable firm.
- TCS had displaced RIL from the numero uno position in Q3 as RIL profits fell for the first time in two years to Rs 5,256 crore.
- This effectively means that RIL profits have grown over 21% over the last quarter.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Technology Developed for Purifying Sea and Wastewater in 2.5 Minutes

- A group of Mexican engineers from the Jhostoblak Corporate created technology to recover and purify, either seawater or wastewater from households, hotels, hospitals, commercial and industrial facilities, regardless of the content of pollutants and microorganisms in, incredibly, just 2.5 minutes.
- The System PQUA, works with a mixture of dissociating elements, capable of separating and removing all contaminants, as well as organic and inorganic pollutants.
- Notably, the engineers developed eight dissociating elements, and after extensive testing on different types of contaminated water, implemented a unique methodology that indicates what and how much of each element should be combined.

First Ever Colour Image of Pluto and Charon Revealed



- NASA's New Horizons spacecraft, set to fly by the Pluto system on July 14, has sent its first colour image of the dwarf planet and its largest moon Charon.
- Charon is seen dimmer than Pluto in the image taken from a distance of 115 million km.
- The uncertainty between the composition of the two bodies should clear up this summer when New Horizons gets history's first good look at the two frigid, faraway objects.

INFOTAINMENT

Anderson England's Leading Test Wicket-taker



- England bowler James Anderson has taken his 384th test wicket to break the national record held by Ian Botham.
- The 32-year-old Anderson surpassed Botham's haul of 383 wickets by removing West Indies batsman Denesh Ramdin, on the final day of the first test in Antigua.

19th April

AROUND THE WORLD

Opposition Parties Unite Against Putin

- The marginalised Russian opposition parties of slain Kremlin critic Boris Nemtsov and arch Putin foe Alexei Navalny have announced they will form an alliance for legislative polls in 2016.
- As per reports, Nemtsov's RPR-Parnas and Navalny's Party of Progress are joining forces to put forward joint candidates at local elections this year and parliamentary polls next year. The two parties accused the authorities under President Vladimir Putin of establishing an authoritarian system that had wiped out opposition, wrecked the economy and plunged the country into a conflict in Ukraine.

EARTH MATTERS

First-ever Picture Taken of a Rare African Monkey



- The Bouvier's red colobus monkey had never been photographed until now.
- Long feared extinct, the rare primate hadn't been observed by scientists since the 1970s. But late this February two independent researchers, managed to track it down in the Republic of Congo's Ntokou-Pikounda National Park.
- Devreese's photograph, which shows a female with her offspring, is the first ever taken and confirms the existence of the elusive species to the scientific community.

INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

Modi's Visit to Canada Generated Business Worth 1.6 Billion Canadian Dollars

- According to official figures released by the Harper government, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Canada has generated business worth more than 1.6 billion Canadian dollars.
- Sixteen commercial agreements and announcements were made by Canadian and Indian companies and organisations during Prime Minister Modi's visit.
- The announcements cover a wide range of sectors, including aerospace and defence, education, energy, mining, infrastructure, sustainable technologies, information and communications technology.

Reliance Industries to Reopen All Petrol Pumps

- Buoyed by diesel price decontrol, Reliance Industries will reopen all its 1,400 petrol pumps this fiscal.
- RIL and Essar Oil Ltd, the only other private refiner in India, had together captured about 17 percent of domestic retail market for diesel and 10 percent of petrol by 2006 before heavily subsidised sales by state-run firms took a heavy toll on private firms' fuel sales.
- RIL had shut down all of its 1,432 petrol pumps in March 2008 because of huge losses it incurred in trying to match public sector firms, which sold fuel at rates much lower than their cost as they got government subsidies.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

New Google App to Help You Write Freely

- Google has designed a new app to test your on-screen penmanship. Called Google Handwriting Input, the app allows users to 'write' on a smartphone or tablet screen. It automatically interprets letters from 82 languages and transforms them into standard digital text.
- Developed by the company's research team, Handwriting Input can identify both cursive and print handwriting, and accepts emojis.
- Using handwriting as an input method can allow for natural and intuitive input method for text entry which complements typing and speech input methods.
- Google Handwriting Input is available now as a free download in the Google Play marketplace. The app requires Android 4.0.3 and up in order to work.

INFOTAINMENT

Six More Athletes Test Positive

- At least six more athletes from five disciplines have tested positive for banned substances in the Kerala National Games which concluded in February. It is reliably learnt that Bimola Devi (rowing, Manipur), Yudhvir Singh (hockey, Haryana), Gargi Yadav (wrestling, Uttar Pradesh), Vinisha Joshi (wushu, Rajasthan), Amrit Singh (cycling, Punjab) and Amit Kumar (cycling, Services) have tested positive for different banned substances.
- Earlier, four weightlifters — Geeta Rani, Komal Wakale, Mangte P. Kom and Harjeet Kaur — and a hammer thrower K. M. Rachna had returned positive results.
- So far, the number of athletes testing positive from the National Games has reached 11.

INDIA – OTHERS

Nasim Zaidi India's 20th Chief Election Commissioner

- Dr. Nasim Zaidi assumes charge as India's 20th Chief Election Commissioner.
- He will succeed Hari Shankar Brahma.
- Dr Zaidi will be the sole member of the three-member Election Commission till the government fills up the two vacant posts of election commissioners.
- He will be the CEC till July 2017.
- Dr. Zaidi is an IAS officer from Uttar Pradesh cadre of the 1976 batch.

20th April

AROUND THE WORLD

Israeli Leader Struggling to Form Coalition

- With a resounding election victory last month, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu seemed to have an easy path toward quickly establishing a coalition government with his traditional nationalist, religious and ultra-Orthodox Jewish allies.
- But after weeks of negotiations with potential partners, Netanyahu is finding the task harder than expected and is flirting with the idea of reaching out to his main dovish rivals to form a unity government. As he decides which path to take, he will seek an additional two-week extension to put his coalition together.

Titanic Deckchair Sold for 100,000 Pounds



- One of a handful of deckchairs salvaged from the wreck of the doomed liner Titanic has fetched a whopping 100,000 pounds at an auction in the UK.
- The chair was sold to an unnamed UK-based collector who has a passion for buying pieces of historic importance.
- The Nantucket wooden chair was found floating on the surface by the crew of the Mackay-Bennett, which was sent to recover victims' bodies after Titanic sank in the Atlantic waters.

INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

India's Investment Climate Better than Other BRICS Nations

- Though India has a better investment climate among BRICS nations, its regulatory and tax system-related challenges are impacting immediate investment plans, over 90 corporate leaders of German high-tech companies have said in a survey.
- 94 percent of the surveyed CEOs and CFOs from leading German high-tech companies stated that India currently offers a better investment climate than other BRICS countries.
- According to the study, several perceived challenges have been identified across all high-tech

manufacturing sectors and investor groups, including companies starting a business, already operating in India and potential investors which operate in other BRICS countries.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Windows Phone Gets Touch-friendly Office Apps

- Microsoft has unveiled a long-awaited suite of touch-friendly Office apps that allow Windows phone users to work on Word, PowerPoint and Excel documents on their phones with touch commands and to transfer them easily between devices.
- Test versions of what Microsoft is calling its Office Universal apps are available to download immediately and full versions will be available by the end of the month.

INFOTAINMENT

Novak Djokovic Wins Monte Carlo Masters

- Novak Djokovic won his fourth tournament of the year as he outlasted Czech sixth seed Tomas Berdych to lift the Monte Carlo Masters.
- Djokovic opened his 2015 account by winning his fifth Australian Open before following up with Masters` victories at Indian Wells and Miami.

Three Indian Race Walkers Qualify for Rio Olympics

- Three Indian race walkers -- Khushbir Kaur, Manish Rawat and Sandeep Kumar -- qualified for next year's Rio Olympics after creditable performances in the IAAF Race Walking Challenge at Rio Maior in Portugal.
- National women's 20 km walk record holder Khushbir Kaur clocked 1:33:58, better than the Rio 2016 qualification time of 1:35.
- In the men's 20 km race walk, Manish Rawat logged a personal best performance to finish in top 10 with a timing of 1:22:50, well above the Rio Games qualification time of 1:24.
- National 50 km race walk record holder Sandeep Kumar also qualified for Rio Games.

INDIA – OTHERS

Sitaram Yechury Elected as New CPI(M) General Secretary

- CPI(M) politburo member Sitaram Yechury was elected as the new General Secretary of the party, succeeding Prakash Karat.
- Karat had suggested Yechury's name for the post after the other frontrunner S. Ramachandran Pillai withdrew from the race.
- Yechury's name was approved unanimously by the party's new central committee, which has 91 members besides five special invitees and five permanent invitees.

- Yechury becomes the fifth general secretary of the party.

21st April

AROUND THE WORLD

China Launches \$46 bn Investment Plan in Pakistan

- Chinese President Xi Jinping inaugurated a \$46 billion investment plan in Pakistan that aims to create direct links between China and the Arabian Sea and boost the sluggish Pakistani economy.
- Islamabad and Beijing hope that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) will transform Pakistan into a regional economic hub and bring growth to the restive western Chinese region of Xinjiang.
- The corridor scheme is part of Beijing's "Belt and Road" plan to expand its trade and transport footprint across Central and South Asia.

South Korean PM Tenders Resignation

- South Korean Prime Minister Lee Wan-Koo was left in political limbo after offering to resign over a scandal involving bribery allegations against senior members of President Park Geun-Hye's administration.
- Lee, who has only been in the job for two months, tendered his resignation after the main opposition party said it would seek his impeachment.
- Two successive Park nominees to replace Chung withdrew their candidacies again because of allegations of past wrongdoing, and the job finally went to Lee, who now looks almost certain to step down.

INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

Daiichi Sankyo to Offload Stake in Sun Pharma

- Japanese drug maker Daiichi Sankyo's board has approved selling a part or entire 9 percent holding worth over Rs. 22,000 crore in Indian drug major Sun Pharmaceutical.
- Daiichi got around 9 percent stake in Sun Pharma following the merger of Ranbaxy with the Indian pharma major.
- In the event of Daiichi Sankyo selling only part of its stake, it won't remain a major shareholder in Sun Pharma although its existing business partnership with the Indian firm will continue.

Foreign Fund Inflows Cross Rs. 83,000 crore

- With overseas investors pumping in over Rs 4,000 crore in the Indian capital markets so far this month, total foreign fund inflows have reached Rs. 83,000 crore since the beginning of the year.
- Analysts expect the inflows to accelerate further in view of clearance of reform bills for insurance, coal and mining, as also on assurances on controversial issues like General Anti-Avoidance Rules.
- As per the data compiled by Central Depository Services Ltd. foreign portfolio investors have bought shares worth Rs. 2,984 crore till April 17 this month, while they infused Rs. 1,043 crore in the debt markets, taking their net investment to Rs. 4,027 crore.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Yahoo's Contact Cards Get Twitter, LinkedIn Integration

- Yahoo Mail's smart 'contact cards' now include support for Twitter and LinkedIn information and will allow users to see a contact's most recent tweets in addition to company, title, phone number and more, when they hover over a person's name in a message.
- Yahoo Mail had first rolled out contact cards as an enhancement in March in response to Google's revamp of its own Google Contacts service.
- The cards were designed to pull out extra information about the person you're e-mailing with from outside sources as well as from your own inbox.
- With the new social media integrations, Yahoo will now be able to pull in names for email addresses, profile photos and links to their social media profiles.

INFOTAINMENT

New York Times Wins Pulitzer Prizes

- The New York Times won two prestigious Pulitzer Prizes for coverage of the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, described by the Pulitzer board as courageous and vivid journalism that engaged the public and held authorities accountable.
- The Pulitzer for Public Service went to Charleston, South Carolina's Post and Courier for its series on domestic violence.
- The Pulitzers honour extraordinary work in US journalism, literature, drama and other areas and bring attention and recognition to newspapers and websites.

Mohammad Nabi Steps Down as Captain

- Mohammad Nabi has stepped down as captain of the Afghanistan national cricket team after more than two years in the job, citing his own poor form and the team's performance.
- Afghanistan made their World Cup debut under Nabi's captaincy this year, making their mark with a historic one-wicket win over Scotland.
- The tournament debutants were also impressive when losing to Sri Lanka before falling apart against Australia and New Zealand.

INDIA – OTHERS

Prashant Bhushan, Yogendra Yadav Expelled from Party

- The Aam Aadmi Party has expelled rebel leaders Prashant Bhushan, Yogendra Yadav, Anand Kumar and Ajit Jha from party for 'anti-party activities'.
- The development came following separate replies of Bhushan and Yadav, to the show-cause notice for organising an anti-party meet in Gurgaon last week.

Indian Navy's New Destroyer INS Visakhapatnam Launched

- Indian Navy's new destroyer, INS Visakhapatnam, with enhanced capability to operate in nuclear, biological and chemical atmosphere, was launched in Mumbai.
- The ship is the first of the four follow-up order of the Kolkata class warships and will give a major flip to India's maritime capabilities when it is inducted in 2018.

22nd April

AROUND THE WORLD

Japan Court Approves Restart of Reactors

- A Japanese court has approved the restart of Kyushu Electric Power's Sendai nuclear power station, rejecting a legal bid to halt the process by residents worried about the safety of the plant.
- The decision by the Kagoshima District Court clears another hurdle for the plant to start up as early as June as the government pushes to restart Japan's idled nuclear industry four years after the Fukushima disaster.

Coalition Ends Yemen Air War

- A Saudi-led coalition declared an end to four weeks of air strikes in Yemen, saying the threat of Iran-backed rebels there had been removed and that operations are entering a political phase.
- However, it left open the option of resuming strikes if the movements of the Huthi rebels warrant it, while a naval blockade on the strategic country at the tip of the Arabian Peninsula will continue.
- The coalition has ended Operation Decisive Storm based on a request by the Yemeni government and President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi.

INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

Government to Auction 69 Small Oil Fields

- The government will soon auction 69 small and marginal oil fields of state-owned ONGC and Oil India to private firms as a precursor to a fully fledged licensing round.
- The fields will be bid out on the basis of revenue share or the share of oil and gas a bidder offers to the government upfront, and work programme.
- Companies offering the maximum revenue share or percentage of oil and gas to the government, and committing to do more work will win the field.

Adani Completes Lanco's Udupi Plant Deal

- Adani Group has finally acquired Lanco Infratech's 1200 MW Udupi power plant for an enterprise value of Rs. 6,300 crore — Rs. 300 crore or 5% more than the deal value of Rs. 6,000 crore announced in August last year.
- Lanco will use Rs. 4,275 crore to retire its long-term debt and Rs. 2,147 crore to retire its short-term debt.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Pulsing Light Reveals Supermassive Black Hole Merger

- As two galaxies enter the final stages of merging, their supermassive black holes form a “binary” or two black holes that are gravitationally bound to one another. Now, astronomers have found direct evidence of a pulsing quasar which may substantiate the existence of black hole binaries.
- Scientists have observed two supermassive black holes in closer proximity than ever before.
- This pair of black holes may be so close together that they are emitting gravitational waves, which were predicted by Einstein's theory of general relativity.

INFOTAINMENT

Viswanathan Anand Crushes Wesley So

- Five times world champion Viswanathan Anand scored a crushing victory against Wesley So of the United States in the fifth round of Shamkir Chess 2015.
- Anand took his tally to three points in the process in the strongest tournament of the year and can now look forward to the remaining tournament with a lot of confidence.
- Meanwhile, world champion Magnus Carlsen of Norway came up with some remarkable positional chess to outclass Maxime Vachier-Lagrave of France. The Norwegian emerged as the new leader in the tournament on four points and Wesley So on 3.5 points slipped to the second spot after being upstaged.

INDIA – OTHERS

Indira's, Rajiv Gandhi's Names from 'Hindi Diwas' Awards

- The Central government has renamed two awards irking the opposition Congress.
- As per reports, the awards in question are - 'Indira Gandhi Rajbhasha Puraskar' and 'Rajiv Gandhi Rashtriya Gyan-Vigyan Maulik Pustak Lekhan Puraskar'. These will now be known as 'Rajbhasha Kirti Puraskar' and 'Rajbhasha Gaurav Puraskar', respectively.

BJP Wins 33 Out of 38 Seats in Gujarat By-elections

- The Gujarat unit of the BJP won 33 out of 38 seats in by-elections of various local bodies of the state.
- Apart from winning two RMC seats, BJP candidates won 31 seats out of a total 36 seats in elections to 11 municipal bodies.
- The statement of results stated that the Congress secured four seats.
- After these results, the BJP further strengthened its presence in these municipalities.

23rd April

AROUND THE WORLD

China Warns on Rising North Korea Nuclear Capability

- Chinese nuclear experts have warned that North Korea may already have 20 nuclear warheads and the capability to produce enough weapons-grade uranium to double its arsenal by next year.
- Experts at the U.S.-Korea Institute at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies earlier this year presented three scenarios for North Korea's nuclear capability, predicting its stockpile of weapons could grow to 20, 50 or 100 within five years.
- North Korea has conducted three nuclear detonations, the most recent in February 2013.

EARTH MATTERS

Rapid Decline of Trees in Amazon Rainforest Changing Climate

- A new study has revealed that one-tenth of trees have been removed by human activities from Amazon rainforest since the 1960s that has led to the climate change.
- Widespread removal of trees has contributed to a rise in the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, increasing the potential impact of climate change. Deforestation of the Amazon accounted for 1.5 per cent of the increase in carbon dioxide levels seen since the mid-nineteenth century.
- Destruction of large areas of the Amazon also impacts on the biodiversity of the rainforest and could lead to the loss of many animal and plant species.

INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

Government Meets FIIs on Tax Issues, Offers DTAA Relief to MAT-hit Investors

- In a relief to foreign investors slapped with Rs 40,000 crore tax demands. As per the government such levies would not be applicable to the entities based in countries having double taxation avoidance pacts with India, while others can approach the courts for reprieve.
- The government made it clear that it cannot withdraw the tax demands. According to officials the aggrieved foreign investors can claim benefits available under the DTAA's, which would over-ride such demands.

India among Top Five Markets for Japanese Auto Majors

- India now ranks among the top markets for Japanese automobile companies like Suzuki, Yamaha, Honda and Toyota among others.
- India has been topping Suzuki's global markets both in terms of volumes as well as revenues, now the situation is being replicated by other Japanese biggies like Yamaha, Honda and Toyota as India moves up the global pecking order.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Google to Favour Mobile Friendly Websites in Search Results

- Many businesses around the world discover their search ranking has been downgraded. After a month long warning period, Google will add 'mobile friendliness' to the 200 or so factors it uses to list websites on its search engine.
- As a result, websites that don't meet Google's criteria will tumble in its all-important rankings.
- Google has made several big changes. Companies will be docked for shortcomings like displaying links that are hard to click or forcing users to scroll horizontally on a lopsided site. In addition, the company had announced that in certain cases it would also use information contained within apps as a ranking factor for mobile searches performed on phones that run its Android software.

INFOTAINMENT

Hawks' Mike Budenholzer Named NBA Coach of the Year

- Mike Budenholzer, who led the Atlanta Hawks to a franchise-record 60 wins this season, has been named the NBA's coach of the year.
- Budenholzer received 67 first-place votes and a total of 513 points from a nationwide panel of sportswriters to beat out Golden State's Steve Kerr for the award.

Parupalli Kashyap Enters Pre-quarters of Asia Championship

- India's Parupalli Kashyap played one of the longest matches of his career as he roared into the prequarterfinals with a gruelling three-game win over Chinese Taipei's Jen Hao Hsu at the USD 200,000 Badminton Asia Championship.
- Commonwealth Games champion, Kashyap will next take on seventh seed Chinese Zhengming Wang, who beat Thailand's Boonsak Ponsana.
- Kashyap has lost to Wang thrice, while defeated him once at the 2014 India Super Series.

INDIA – OTHERS

Cabinet Okays Trial of Juveniles at 16 as Adults

- The Juvenile Justice Act will be changed to allow for trial of juveniles in the age group of 16-18 years accused of heinous crimes under the Indian Penal Code.
- As per the changes cleared by the Union Cabinet on Wednesday, Juvenile Justice Boards will determine whether a juvenile accused of a heinous crime ought to be treated as a "child" or adult". The proposed Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Bill also provides for the classification of different crimes as "petty", "serious" and "heinous", providing for differentiated processes for each category.
- Under the existing law, only those 18 years and above are tried under IPC.

India likely to Become Vice President of China Floated AIIB

- India is likely to get the Vice President's post in China-backed Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) in which India and 56 countries have been admitted as founding members.
- The MOU of the bank to be headquartered in Beijing specifies that the authorised capital of AIIB will be USD 100 billion with an initial subscribed capital of USD 50 billion.
- Chances of India getting the Vice President's post are high as the vote share is expected to be based on 50 per cent Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 50 per cent Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) with primacy to be given to the Asian countries as the bank primarily aims to fund infrastructure projects mainly in the Asian region.

24th April

AROUND THE WORLD

Lynch Becomes US Attorney General

- The US Senate confirmed Loretta Lynch as the nation's first black female Attorney General, installing an aggressive counter-terrorism prosecutor as the top law enforcement official for President Barack Obama's final 21 months in office.
- Lynch was confirmed in a 56-43 vote -- with 10 Republicans crossing the political aisle to lend their support.
- She takes over from outgoing Attorney General Eric Holder.

INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

HDFC Cuts Home Loan Rates for Women

- Mortgage major HDFC offered home loans to women borrowers at 9.85 percent, to make its loan pricing at par with that of rivals State Bank of India and ICICI Bank.
- The loan will be subject to conditions like the woman being sole or joint owner of the property.
- HDFC is the market leader in mortgage market with a loan book close to Rs 1.6 trillion as of December 2014.

RBI Widens PSL Coverage

- The Reserve Bank revised priority sector lending norms to ensure a phased increase in loans to small farmers, and also made it clear that smaller foreign banks will have to meet the 40 percent target over the next five years.
- Under the new guidelines, issued a day after the suicide of a farmer at a rally in Delhi, credit to small and marginal farmers will be 8 percent of a bank's total credit by March 2017.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Google Offering Wireless Service to Nexus 6 Owners

- Google has announced its decision to offer wireless service to Nexus 6 owners through a new program called, 'Project Fi.'
- As per Google, Project Fi enables us to work in close partnership with leading carriers, hardware makers.
- The service can only be availed on Google's Nexus 6 devices, both new and old ones, by using a special SIM card for Project Fi.
- Consumers will only have to pay for the data they use rather than a flat monthly fee that comes with a preset amount of data. If you fail to use the data you've paid for, Google will refund you the difference.

INFOTAINMENT

Kei Nishikori Enters Barcelona Quarters

- Defending champion Kei Nishikori thrashed Colombian 15th seeded Santiago Giraldo to move into the quarter-finals of the Barcelona Open.
- The Japanese top seeded is making his first appearance of the season on clay court.
- The world number five will face either Spain's Roberto Bautista Agut or Uruguayan Pablo Cuevas.

INDIA – OTHERS

BSNL Offers Free Pan-India Calling from Landline

- To boost landline business, the state-run BSNL announced unlimited free calling scheme during night hours from its fixed line phones to any operator including mobile phones anywhere in the country from May 1.
- The scheme would be operational between 9 PM to 7 AM.
- Under the scheme, all major landline general plans of rural and urban areas, landline special plans as well as all major Combo (landline with broadband) plans are covered.

Cabinet Okays Setting up of Commercial Courts

- The Cabinet approved the commercial courts bill that will allow setting up commercial courts, equivalent to district courts, in states and Union Territories where commercial divisions are not present.
- The bill also provides for mandatory setting up of separate commercial divisions in those High Courts which are already exercising ordinary original civil jurisdiction such as High Courts of Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and Himachal Pradesh.
- Commercial divisions will exercise jurisdiction over all cases and applications relating to commercial disputes. The commercial division shall have territorial jurisdiction over such area on which it has original jurisdiction.

25th April

AROUND THE WORLD

Togo Votes for a New President

- Togo voted for a new President, with the incumbent Faure Gnassingbe seeking a third term in office to extend his family's grip on power into a second half-century.

- Polling stations in the tiny West African nation open at 0700 GMT, with some 9,000 police and soldiers on patrol, and with borders shut for security reasons.
- Gnassingbe, 48, has been in power since the death of his father, Gnassingbe Eyadema, in 2005, winning contested elections that year and five years later.

Statue of Liberty Safe After Bomb Threat

- The Statue of Liberty and its surrounding island, one of the most visited monuments in the United States, was given the all-clear after being evacuated because of a bomb threat.
- New York police "deemed the area safe" following a thorough check but Liberty Island and the monument will remain closed for the rest of Friday due to scheduled closing hours.
- The threat was phoned into emergency services shortly after 11:00 am (1500 GMT), sparking the immediate evacuation of all personnel and visitors.
- Park police and canine units swept the statue and New York bomb disposal officers were scrambled after a possible suspicious package was located in a visitor locker.

EARTH MATTERS

Extremely Rare Pocket Shark Found

- According to a new study published in the journal Zootaxa, the second pocket shark ever to be seen has been discovered. It was found in a batch of fish collected as part of a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) study conducted in 2010.
- Unfortunately, the shark wasn't found swimming in the sea. The fish obtained during the NOAA mission had been frozen and slowly sorted through by scientists. In fact, it took three years to sort through lots of other frozen fish to finally get to the pocket shark.

INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

RBI Changes Priority Sector Lending Norms

- The Reserve Bank of India has revised the priority sector lending norms which direct banks to lend to certain segments by prescribing targets as a percentage of their total business. The new norms require banks to ensure that 8% of their loans go to small and marginal farmers.
- New sectors like renewable energy and social infrastructure will get a boost as these are now classified as priority sector. Any bank that lends up to Rs. 10 lakh to a household for solar power and biomass-based generators can classify the loan as priority sector.
- Foreign banks, which until recently enjoyed relaxed priority sector norms, will face new challenges. Under the new norms, the sub-targets for small and marginal farmers and micro enterprises would be made applicable post 2018 after a review in 2017 for foreign banks with more than 20 branches. Foreign

banks with less than 20 branches will move to the total priority sector target of 40% of loans or 'Credit Equivalent Amount of Off-Balance Sheet Exposure', whichever is higher, on a par with other banks by 2019-20.

INFOTAINMENT

Bangladesh Downs Pakistan

- Shakib Al Hasan's fine all-round performance powered Bangladesh to a seven-wicket victory over Pakistan, its first Twenty20 international win over Pakistan.
- Bangladesh lost three quick wickets but chased down a 142-run target with 22 balls to spare, fired by an unbeaten 105-run stand between Shakib (57) and Sabbir Rahman (51).

INDIA – OTHERS

India Delivers Cheetal Helicopters to Afghanistan

- India has delivered three multi-role Cheetal helicopters along with allied equipment and spares to Afghanistan.
- These helicopters have been test flown and accepted by Afghanistan pilots.
- The three Cheetal helicopters were based on an agreement with the Ministry of External Affairs.
- Cheetals are the upgraded version of Cheetah light utility, multi-role helicopters built by state-run Hindustan Aeronautics Limited.
- The Cheetal helicopter is equipped with a Turbomeca TM 333-2M2 free turbine turboshaft engine. Compared to the 560 km of the Cheetah helicopter, Cheetal has a range of about 640 km.
- The helicopters can be used for personnel transport, evacuation, reconnaissance and aerial survey. It is also capable of operating in the high-altitude areas.

26th April

AROUND THE WORLD

1,500 Killed in Nepal Quake

- A massive earthquake of 7.9 magnitude on the Richter scale and a series of aftershocks hit several parts of Nepal, leaving over 1,500 people dead and many others injured. Roads and buildings, many of them historic landmarks such as the Dhara-hara Tower in Kathmandu were destroyed.
- An equal number of people are said to be injured. The death toll is mounting and rescue operations have proved difficult given the mountainous terrain. A clearer estimate of casualties and damage could take days.
- The residents of the capital are out on the streets. The government has opened the gates of the Singha Durbar for people to take shelter.

INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

Tata Projects in Tie-up with Australian Firm

- Tata Projects has entered into a strategic partnership with Australian construction company, Brookfield Multiplex, to deliver a range of commercial and retail, healthcare and tourism and leisure projects in India.
- The memorandum of understanding promises 'on-time delivery' of projects and will offer state-of-the-art construction technology and world-class design capability.
- The MoU is project-specific with no equity participation by either partner. Both companies will enter partnerships in an integrated joint venture manner and the stake will vary project-wise.

Posco Asked To Pay Land Premium

- The Odisha government asked South Korean steel major Posco to make outstanding payment of about Rs. 50 crore towards land premium and Rs. 18 crore towards net present value for forest land diversion.
- Posco has not yet made full payment towards land premium. The company has been told to make payment soon. The Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (IDCO) threatened to take back the land from the steel major if it failed to pay the required amount.
- Though Posco had paid Rs. 30 crore as advance for land acquisition, it required to pay another Rs. 54.22 crore.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Astronomers Locate Runaway Galaxies

- Researchers have identified 11 runaway galaxies, for the first time that escaped their original homes and have been flung into space.

- An object is a runaway if it's moving faster than escape velocity, which means it will depart its home never to return. In the case of a runaway star, that speed is more than a million miles per hour. A runaway galaxy has to race even faster, travelling at up to 6 million miles per hour.
- This discovery represented a prominent success of the Virtual Observatory, a project to make data from large astronomical surveys easily available to researchers.

INFOTAINMENT

Anand Beats Adams

- Viswanathan Anand crashed through the defence of Michael Adams to jump to the second spot in the Shamkir Chess 2015 Tournament.
- Now, the Indian ace can train his sight to catch world champion Magnus Carlsen of Norway in the remaining two rounds.
- Meanwhile, Carlsen defeated Vladimir Kramnik of Russia. Fabiano Caruana of Italy was the other big winner of the day, beating erstwhile leader Wesley So of USA.

INDIA – OTHERS

Quake in Delhi, NCR

- At around noon furniture rattled and ceiling fans swayed when tremors struck the National Capital Region twice.
- As per the Indian Meteorological Department, tremors and aftershocks were felt at 11.45 a.m. and then at 12.18 p.m. in NCR. Minor cracks were found in three buildings in East Delhi, two in the South and one in the North district. The sites were assessed and no significant damage was found.
- Tremors were also felt in Uttar Pradesh and three in West Bengal.

27th April

AROUND THE WORLD

China to Provide 110 Fighter Jets to Pakistan

- Pakistan will acquire 110 latest JF-17 Thunder fighter jets from China as the two countries forge closer economic and defence cooperation following President Xi Jinping's visit to Islamabad.
- China will deliver the first batch of 50 jets over a period of three years.
- The JF-17 Thunder is also built in Pakistan as China has already transferred its technology. But Pakistan needs more of these jets at faster pace due to its fight against Taliban militants.

Aid Agencies Race to Reach Nepal Quake Victims

- International agencies and governments rushed to send search and rescue teams, doctors and medicines to Nepal where an earthquake has killed more than 2,400 people and left tens of thousands without food, water or shelter.
- Teams from India, Pakistan, the United States, China and Israel were already on the spot to help.
- Other international search teams have or are scheduled to arrive in the capital Kathmandu, with units from Japan, the United States and Britain equipped with sniffer dogs and equipment for heavy lifting.

INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

Ratan Tata Picks Up Stake in Chinese Handset Maker

- Ratan Tata has acquired a stake in Chinese handset maker Xiaomi, the first investment by any Indian in the smartphone maker.
- Tata, who retired as head of over USD 100-billion conglomerate in December 2012 and currently serves as chairman emeritus of Tata Sons, has emerged as a major venture capital investor since his retirement.
- Last week, Xiaomi announced its first 'made for India' handset Mi 4i, priced at Rs. 12,999.

FII's Hike Stake in HDFC to Record High of Nearly 80%

- Emerging as one of the most-liked stocks by foreign funds, mortgage giant HDFC Ltd has seen overseas investors raise their stake in it to a record high of nearly 80 per cent during the quarter ended March 2015.
- The mortgage financier has also become the first listed Indian company among the 30 Sensex firms to have around 80 per cent shareholding by foreign institutional investors.
- Cumulative FII holdings in the company rose to 79.65 per cent in the January-March quarter this year from 78.49 per cent in the three months ended December last year.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

First Liquid Diagnostic Laser Tool Developed

- In an invention that can make the idea of "lab on a chip" for quick medical diagnostics possible, scientists have developed the first liquid nanoscale laser.
- This laser is tunable in real time, meaning you can quickly and simply produce different colours, a unique and useful feature.
- The laser technology could lead to practical applications, such as a new form of a "lab on a chip" for medical diagnostics.
- Nanoscopic lasers, first demonstrated in 2009, are only found in research labs today. They are, however, of great interest for advances in technology and for military applications.

INFOTAINMENT

Rohit Sharma Recommended for Arjuna Award

- In the BCCI board has recommended batsman Rohit Sharma for the prestigious Arjuna Award for the year 2015.
- Last year in November, Rohit created history by becoming the first man ever to smash two doublecenturies in One Day Internationals (ODI). Rohit got his second double-ton against Sri Lanka in one of his favourite grounds Eden Gardens. His 265-run innings forced cricketing world to acknowledge the gifted player's prominence in the game.
- Rohit's 265-run knock is still the highest score in a match by an individual in ODI history.

28th April

AROUND THE WORLD

Seychelles 161st Member of WTO

- The World Trade Organisation welcomed Seychelles as its 161st member, ending 20 years of negotiating its accession terms.
- In March, President of Seychelles James Michel signed the "instrument of acceptance" of Seychelles' accession protocol, confirming its membership terms.
- This is a major step forward in the trade integration of Seychelles into the rules-based multilateral trading system and the global economy.

The US and Japan Revise Defence Ties

- The United States and Japan unveiled new rules for defence cooperation that will give Japanese armed forces a more ambitious global role amid concerns over China's rising sway.
- As per the revised guidelines, Japan could come to the aid of US forces threatened by a third country or, for example, deploy minesweeper ships to a mission in the Middle East.
- According to reports, the new doctrine is not aimed at China, there has been increasing concern over moves by Beijing to try to scoop up disputed areas of the South China and East China Seas.

INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

Government Cancels Licences of 8,975 NGOs

- After suspending the FCRA registration of Greenpeace India and putting foreign donor Ford Foundation on the watch list, the government has now cancelled the licences of 8,975 NGOs for failing to file annual returns for the years 2009-10, 2010-11 and 2011-12.
- In a cancellation order issued, the Union home ministry recalled that it had issued notices to 10,343 NGOs in October last, stating that they should file their annual returns within a month, specifying amount of foreign funds received, sources of such funds, the purpose for which these were received and the manner in which such foreign contribution was utilized. However, only 229 NGOs reverted to the home ministry. Their replies are being examined on case to case basis.

FDI limit Hiked in Pension Sector to 49%

- The government has raised the limit of foreign direct investment in pension sector to 49 per cent in line with the FDI cap in the insurance sector.
- In pursuance of the enactment of Insurance Regulatory & Development Authority Act, 2013, government has decided to permit FDI in the pension sector.
- The FDI cap in the sector has been hiked to 49 per cent and that includes foreign investment in the forms of FPI, FII, QFI, FVCI, NRI and DR.
- As per reports, no government approval is required till 26 per cent. But FIPB nod would be needed for investment beyond 26 per cent and up to the cap of 49 per cent.
- All investments in the pension sector will have to abide by the pension sector regulator -- PFRDA.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Facebook, Google Tools to Locate People

- With many searching their loved ones after the Nepal earthquake, Google has launched its 'person finder' tool and Facebook has activated its 'safety check' feature to help locate and report missing persons.
- Google Person Finder is an application that helps people reconnect with friends and loved ones in the aftermath of natural and humanitarian disasters.
- A link to the application has been provided on Google's home page www.Google.Com.Np. You can click on the 'Resources related to Nepal Earthquake' link below the search bar.

INFOTAINMENT

India Not to Bid for 2024 Olympics

- In a meeting between International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach and India Prime Minister Narendra Modi, it was decided that India will not bid for 2024 Olympic Games.

- The International Olympic Committee thought that it would be too soon for the country to host a successful Games as the national Olympic body has come out of suspension only last year.
- Boston, Hamburg and Rome are already declared bidders for 2024 Olympics.

Lee Chong Wei Handed Backdated Ban

- Malaysian shuttler Lee Chong Wei was handed a backdated eight-month ban for doping by the Badminton World Federation, keeping alive the former world number one's dream of winning gold at the Rio Olympics next year.
- Lee Chong Wei had been under a provisional suspension since November after testing positive for anti-inflammatory drug dexamethasone during the world championships three months earlier.
- Lee, one of Malaysia's favourite sporting sons, remains his country's top ranked shuttler and was nominated last week for Malaysia's 2014 sportsman of the year award.

INDIA – OTHERS

Six cities Responsible for Half the Sewage Discharge into the Ganga

- More than half the total sewage discharged into the Ganga every day comes from six big cities with Kolkata, Kanpur and Varanasi leading the pack. They are three of the total 118 towns\cities that fall in the vast basin of the country's national river. The other three cities which figure at the top are Patna, Allahabad and Moradabad.
- Together they present a gigantic task before the government which aims to bring these cities to a stage where each drop of sewage water they generate can be used by different agencies\sectors including industries and municipal bodies after treatment.
- The task, under the proposed 'zero discharge policy' of the Centre, however, looks much more difficult at a time when more than two-thirds of the sewage generated in these 118 towns get discharged into the Ganga untreated.

India Undertake Exploration of Essential Nuclear Fuel Source

- India is undertaking exploration of rare earth element (REE) monazite, an essential source of nuclear fuel, and has already set up a plant in Odisha for processing the mineral.
- Monazite is an atomic mineral and contains thorium an essential nuclear fuel.
- Monazite is a mineral of Thorium and REE and the only commercial source of REE in the country.
- India has the highest monazite reserve in the world with 11.39 million tonnes but stopped production since 2004 after cheap monazite became available from China.

29th April

AROUND THE WORLD

President Faure Gnassingbe Re-elected for Third Term

- Togo's incumbent President Faure Essozimna Gnassingbe has been re-elected for another five years in office.
- Gnassingbe won 58.75 percent of the votes, while opposition candidate Jean-Pierre Fabre won 34.95 percent.
- According to the national electoral commission Gnassingbe has been elected based on provisional results which are subject to confirmation by the constitutional court.
- The constitutional court is responsible for examining appeals and electoral disputes before proclaiming the final results.

INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

FIU Begins Tracking Overseas Money Transfer

- India's elite Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) has begun tapping information on all suspicious cross-border fund transfers made from India to offshore destinations.
- The premier technical wing has rolled out a new system where all banking and financial institutions are mandated to file formatted Cross Border Wire Transfer Reports (CBTRs) exceeding Rs. 5 lakh to it under the provisions of anti-money laundering laws.
- According to a report, all financial intermediaries and agencies operating in India need to send these reports to the FIU on a monthly basis and also in those cases where the fund movement is below the stipulated benchmark of Rs. 5 lakh but look to be "suspicious or inter-related."
- The Indian FIU is one of the few agencies of its kind in the world to have implemented this new mechanism, aimed to check black money, from the domestic economic channels to locations abroad.

Bharti Airtel Q4 Net Profit Jumps over 30%

- Bharti Airtel reported a 30.5 percent jump in its March quarter's net profit at Rs 1,255 crore.
- The company had reported a net profit of Rs. 962 crore for the corresponding period last year.
- Total revenue of the firm rose 3.6 percent to Rs. 23,016 crore for the reported quarter as compared with Rs. 22,219 crore in the year-ago period.
- Total revenue for the entire 2014-15 fiscal rose 7.3 percent to Rs. 92,039 crore as against Rs. 85,746 crore in the preceding year.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Facebook Introduces Video Calling on Messenger

- Facebook has introduced video calling on its messaging platform, allowing users to chat face-to-face with their friends by tapping a single button inside Messenger app.

- The new feature pits Messenger against similar products from other companies like, Microsoft's Skype, Google Hangouts and Apple's FaceTime.
- Users just have to tap the camera icon in order to start a call and once it has started, they can easily switch between the front-facing and rear cameras, or turn the camera off completely.

INFOTAINMENT

Wimbledon Prize Money Increased

- The winners of this year's Wimbledon singles titles will share a prize fund of £1.88 million (\$2.87 million, 2.63 million euros) after the organisers announced a fourth consecutive prize money increase.
- There has been a rise of seven percent from the £1.76 million paid to the singles champions in 2014, with overall prize money leaping from £14.6 million to £26.75 million in the past four years.
- It preserves the tournament's status as the highest-paying competition in professional tennis.

INDIA – OTHERS

Trinamool Congress Secures Landslide Victory in West Bengal

- Ruling Trinamool Congress inflicted a crushing defeat on BJP and the Left scoring a landslide victory in the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC), clinching 114 of the 144 wards and also winning 69 of the 91 civic bodies in districts across West Bengal.
- The TMC, which in the last KMC polls had won 95 seats, increased its tally to 114 while the main opposition CPI(M)-led Left Front was reduced to just 15 from 33.

30th April

AROUND THE WORLD

Wal-Mart to Build 115 New Stores in China

- US retailer Wal-Mart Stores Inc will build 115 new stores in China by 2017 and upgrade 50 stores this year.
- China is a key strategic market for Wal-Mart. Over the next three years Wal-Mart will increase its investment across their diverse business operations in China.
- The giant U.S. retailer has been changing tack in China to stave off slower growth, closing some underperforming stores and giving more emphasis to the faster-growing online grocery market through its Yihaodian.com platform.

EARTH MATTERS

Bumblebees Found Using Nicotine to Self-medicate

- Many animals are known to seek out plants and other non-food substances for medicinal reasons. Parrots, for instance, have been documented eating clay to absorb toxins in their gut. Brown bears have been witnessed making a paste of osha roots and saliva, which repels insects when rubbed in their fur. Dogs often eat grass, which helps makes them vomit when they have an upset stomach.
- But all of these examples involve vertebrates. Evidence of medicinal plant used by invertebrates remains scant, which is why researchers were surprised to find evidence that bumblebees infected by parasites seem to seek out flowers with nicotine in the nectar.
- This behavior is particularly fascinating because while nicotine can slow the progression of disease in bumblebees infected with certain parasites, it can nevertheless be harmful to healthy bumblebees. So, clearly the bees would not seek it out except as an emergency medicine, similar to how human doctors use chemotherapy to treat cancer.

INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

RBI Slaps Penalty on Dena Bank, OBC and Bank of Maharashtra

- The Reserve Bank imposed Rs. 1.5 crore penalty each on three banks-- Dena Bank, Oriental Bank of Commerce and Bank of Maharashtra for violation of Know Your Customer/Anti Money Laundering norms.
- Besides, the RBI has cautioned eight other banks to put in place appropriate measures and review them from time to time to ensure strict compliance of KYC requirements in future.
- The penal action was based on the basis of a complaint received by the RBI from a private organisation.

Wendy's to Open 40-50 Stores

- Wendy's, the world's third largest burger chain after McDonald's and Burger King, is set to open 40-50 stores in the next four years at a cost of around Rs. 2 crore per restaurant. Its first store will open in Gurgaon next month and the company is looking to focus on North India before expanding to other parts of the country.
- Wendy's is among the first global burger chains to launch here before setting up shops in China, which boasts a much bigger fast-food market estimated at \$178 billion compared to the Indian branded QSR market pegged at around \$13 billion.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Unmanned Russian Spacecraft Plunging to Earth

- An unmanned Russian spacecraft loaded with cargo for the International Space Station has gone out of

control and is probably going to crash into the earth's atmosphere soon.

- The spacecraft is carrying 6,000 pounds or 2721.5 kg of food, fuel and materials for scientific experiments for the crew at the International Space Station.
- The spacecraft is currently spinning out of control in orbit and will probably burn up on re-entry into the Earth's atmosphere.

INFOTAINMENT

Sharath Kamal Moves into Third Round at World Table Tennis Championship

- Sharath Kamal of India moved into the third round of the World Table Tennis Championship.
- Sharath defeated Simon Gauzy of France in the second round to advance into the third round.
- In the third round, Sharath will meet the winner of the second round match between compatriot G Sathiyan and Fang Mo.
- By entering the third round, Sharath equalled his best performance in the World Championships.

INDIA – OTHERS

JNNURM to be Renamed after Atal Bihari Vajpayee

- After conferring "Bharat Ratna" – the country's highest civilian honour on former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the decided to rename the 10-year old Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) and name it after the veteran BJP leader.
- Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission is a massive city-modernisation scheme launched by the Government of India under Ministry of Urban Development. Named after Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, the scheme was officially inaugurated by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in December 2005 as a programme meant to improve the quality of life and infrastructure in the cities.