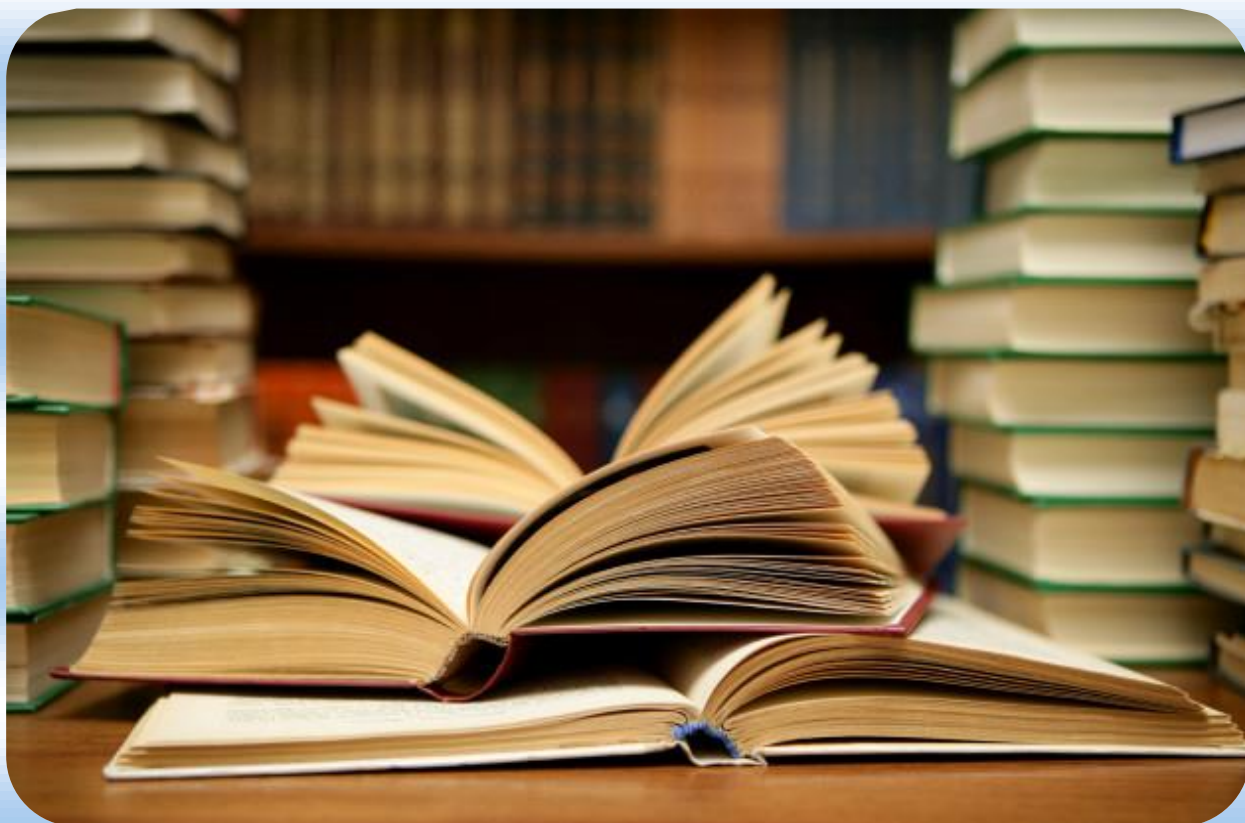


LIBRARY & RESOURCE CENTER, NOIDA

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE MONTHLY



APRIL-2019

NATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

Lok Sabha election 2019: Polling in West Bengal in 7 phases

The Election Commission on Sunday announced that the Lok Sabha election in West Bengal will be held over seven phases, beginning from April 11 and continue till May 19. The counting of votes for all the seats will take place on May 23. In Phase 1, polling will take place in West Bengal for two constituencies (Cooch Behar and Alipurduar), in Phase 2 polling will take place for three constituencies (Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, and Raiganj), in Phase 3 polling will be done in five constituencies (Balurghat, Malda uttar, Malda dakshin, Jangipur, Murshidabad).

NK Singh appointed chairman of 15th Finance Commission

The government on Monday announced that former revenue secretary NK Singh will be the chairman of the 15th Finance Commission (FC) that will recommend distribution of taxes between the Centre and the states. Other members of the Commission are former economic affairs secretary Shaktikanta Das, former chief economic adviser Ashok Lahiri, Niti Aayog member Ramesh Chand and Georgetown University Adjunct Professor Anoop Singh. The Commission will work on "the principles which should govern the grants-in-aid of the revenues of the States out of the Consolidated Fund of India and the sums to be paid to the States by way of grants-in-aid of their revenues under Article 275 of the Constitution.

Jet Airways' Chairman Naresh Goyal resigns

Jet Airways promoter and founder Naresh Goyal on Monday resigned from the company's board. The resignation followed the airline board's meeting in Mumbai on the day to decide on ways to procure interim funding as well as the future role of Goyal. Sources said Goyal tendered his resignation at the emergency board meeting. "The main agenda, however, is to get interim funding," said a source. It was expected that after the meeting the State Bank of India.

General election 2019 live | BJP first list, dissent in BJD, JD(U)'s entry in Arunachal — Politics

The BJP has fielded Prime Minister Narendra Modi from Varanasi constituency and its president Amit Shah from Gandhinagar in place of L.K. Advani in its first list of 184 candidates. Senior party leader J.P. Nadda has told a press conference that the party also decided to field Home Minister Rajnath Singh from Lucknow and another Union Minister Nitin Gadkari from Nagpur. Union Minister Smriti Irani has been renominated from Amethi and will take on Congress president Rahul Gandhi.

Tata Starbucks appoints new CEO

MUMBAI: Tata Starbucks has announced Navin Gurnaney as its chief executive officer effective January 1, 2019. He will replace Sumitro Ghosh who will return to the US parent company after a three-year stint. The company said Gurnaney will be responsible for driving Tata Starbucks overall strategic direction and vision in India and further strengthening Starbucks business growth. With this role, he is returning to Starbucks after first joining in 2004 where he was a leader on US business.

L&T makes Rs 10,800 crore takeover bid for Mindtree

In the country's first hostile takeover bid in the IT sector, infrastructure giant Larsen & Toubro Monday made an offer to buy up to 66 per cent stake in the Mindtree for around Rs 10,800 crore. L&T has entered into a deal to buy Cafe Coffee Day owner V G Siddhartha's 20.32 per cent stake in Mindtree and has also placed an order with brokers to pick up another 15 per cent of the company shares from the open market.

Lok Sabha Election 2019: Dates, Schedule, Facts

NEW DELHI: India is heading for Lok Sabha election 2019 next month - the world's largest democratic election exercise. Indian General Election dates 2019 schedule is out and the national election will be held in seven rounds from April 11 and the results will be announced on May 23. This general election will choose the 17th Lok Sabha. The members of the largest party or coalition will then choose the Prime Minister.

IPL 12: Ashwin, Rohit in exciting clash of captaincy

Ravichandran Ashwin and Rohit Sharma are considered two of the sharpest minds in Indian cricket. Just two games each into the season, they have already made news for more than their performances. A face-off between Kings XI Punjab and Mumbai Indians at the PCA Stadium here on Saturday would be an exciting clash of captaincy. Kings XI's Chris Gayle has been imperious but needs time to take off. There have been handy cameos from Sarfaraz Khan, David Miller and Mandeep Singh even as K.L. Rahul continues his search for runs.

Maruti Suzuki India re-appoints Kenichi Ayukawa as MD and CEO for 3 years

NEW DELHI: The country's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) Wednesday re-appointed Kenichi Ayukawa as Managing Director and CEO for a period of three years with effect from April 1, 2019. The company's board, which met Wednesday, re-appointed Ayukawa on the existing terms and conditions including remuneration, MSI said in a regulatory filing. This would be Ayukawa's third three term as MD and CEO of MSI. He had taken over for the first time in March 2013.

Now India can take down its enemies in Space

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced Wednesday the successful test of India anti-satellite (ASAT) missile system test. The classified test successfully destroyed a low earth orbit (LEO) satellite. With this test, India has become the 4th nation after US, China, and Russia to have this particular anti-satellite capability. In 2010, the then DRDO chief and Scientific Advisor to the defence minister, V.K. Saraswat, had asserted that India did have anti-satellite capability.

What does east-west classification of Uttar Pradesh by Congress mean?

The Congress has appointed two separate general secretaries for Uttar Pradesh: Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Jyotiraditya Scindia will be in charge of East and West Uttar Pradesh respectively. According to senior Congress leaders, East Uttar Pradesh accounts for 42 Lok Sabha seats from the sub-regions of Avadh and Purvanchal. West Uttar Pradesh includes Bundelkhand, Ruhelkhand and western parts of the state and accounts for the remaining 38 Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh.

Lok Sabha Elections dates announced: Polls to be held from April 11 in 7 phases, result on May 23

The Election Commission of India (ECI) announced the dates for Lok Sabha and some state Assembly elections. Chief Elections Commissioner (CEC) Sunil Arora said that the elections for the 17th Lok Sabha will be held in seven phases. The elections will start on April 11 and continue till May 19. The counting will be held on May 23. Nearly 90 crore voters will be eligible to vote for 543 Lok Sabha constituencies across the country.

India bans Boeing 737 Max aircraft: All you need to know

Late last evening India finally joined the growing number of countries grounding Boeing 737 MAX 8 planes following two deadly plane crashes killing 346 people in the space of five months, both involving this aircraft model. Announcing the development on Twitter, India's aviation watchdog Directorate General of Civil Aviation had added that these planes "will be grounded till appropriate modifications and safety measures are undertaken to ensure their safe operations".

BJP denies Lok Sabha poll tickets to veterans in major makeover bid

NEW DELHI: The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has denied tickets to veterans leaders, who were instrumental in building the party, as part of a major makeover in the run-up to the Lok Sabha elections. Soon after coming to power in 2014, the BJP leadership under Prime Minister Narendra Modi and party president Amit Shah decided that senior leaders aged 75 years, or more, will not hold any public office.

IPL 2019, RR vs KXIP: Ravichandran Ashwin sparks furore with 'Mankad' dismissal of Jos Buttler

Ravichandran Ashwin says his 'Mankad' dismissal of Jos Buttler in the Indian Premier League (IPL) on Monday was not against the spirit of the game despite the run out sparking a chorus of disapproval from fellow players and pundits. Rajasthan Royals batsman Buttler was run out on 69 while backing up at the non-striker's end, with Kings XI Punjab skipper Ashwin choosing to whip off the bails as the runner stepped out of the crease instead of completing his delivery to the batsman on strike.

Maruti Suzuki re-appoints Kenichi Ayukawa as MD, CEO for three years

The country's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) on Wednesday re-appointed Kenichi Ayukawa as Managing Director and CEO for a period of three years with effect from April 1, 2019. The company's board, which met Wednesday, re-appointed Ayukawa on the existing terms and conditions including remuneration, MSI said in a regulatory filing. This would be Ayukawa's third three-term as MD and CEO of MSI.

Olympic qualification system is unfair, putting strain on players: Pullela Gopichand

Chief Indian national coach Pullela Gopichand believes that the Olympic qualification system in badminton is "unfair" and putting a "lot of strain" on the players. The Olympic qualification period for the Tokyo Games starts April 29 this year with the Badminton World Federation (BWF) considering the ranking list, to be published on April 30, 2020 to allocate spots and Gopichand feels BWF needs to have a relook at the qualification system.

Coffee Day Enterprises falls 4% on agreement to sell stake in Mindtree

Shares of Coffee Day Enterprises, the parent company of the Coffee Day Group, which owns Cafe Coffee Day, tumbled over 4 per cent on Tuesday after the promoter of the company sold his entire stake of Mindtree to Larsen & Toubro. "Coffee Day Trading and V.G. Siddhartha, promoter of the company, along with certain other parties have signed a definitive agreement to sell their entire stake in Mindtree Ltd to Larsen & Toubro Limited for a consideration not exceeding Rs 3,269 crore.

Kesari box office collection Day 2: Akshay Kumar film is a winner

The latest song from actor Akshay Kumar's period drama Kesari launched online Friday afternoon and it is highly patriotic in tone and flavour. Titled Teri Mitti, the new song features Akshay and is crooned by B Praak while Manoj Muntashir has penned the lyrics. The video opens with slow motion shots of the battle in the movie. It plays to an emotional mood with the video, focussing on a soldiers' life, his feelings for the country, his love and more.

DRDO chairman wins missile systems award

The American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) has selected G. Satheesh Reddy, the Secretary of India's Department of Defence R&D and Chairman of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) as the co-winner of the 2019 Missile Systems Award. "Dr. G. Satheesh Reddy, Chairman of the DRDO, Ministry of Defence, India, was selected for his over three decades of significant national contributions toward indigenous design, development, and deployment of diversified strategic.

Abhinandan: Captured Indian pilot handed back by Pakistan

Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman was handed over to Indian officials on Friday at the only legal border crossing with Pakistan. Minutes earlier, the pilot said on Pakistani TV that he was "very impressed" by the Pakistan army. On Thursday Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan said the pilot's release was a "peace gesture" to India. India and Pakistan - both nuclear powers - claim all of Kashmir, but each controls only parts of it.

Mehul Choksi, accused in PNB fraud, surrenders Indian citizenship in favour of Antigua and Barbuda

Wanted diamond trader Mehul Choksi has surrendered his Indian passport, sources confirmed on Monday. The confirmation came a year after Mr. Choksi and his nephew, Nirav Modi, left India, just before the major financial scam involving them and the Punjab National Bank (PNB) came to light. Mr. Choksi was subsequently located in the Caribbean island of Antigua. "Mehul Choksi has surrendered his Indian passport to the High Commission in Guyana.

'Mission Shakti': India's first anti-satellite missile system that destroyed a LEO satellite

NEW DELHI: Giving an "important message", Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday announced that India has successfully tested its first anti-satellite missile system, code-named 'Mission Shakti'. "India has entered its name as an elite space power. An anti-satellite weapon ASAT, successfully targeted a live satellite on a low earth orbit (LEO)," PM Modi said. The Prime Minister also stated that shooting down a LEO satellite is a rare achievement and was completed successfully within three minutes of launch.

Vijay Mallya becomes first person to be declared a 'fugitive economic offender' under new law

A special court in Mumbai declared absconding liquor baron Vijay Mallya a fugitive economic offender (FEO) on a plea of the Enforcement Directorate. Mallya has become the first businessman to be declared FEO under the provisions of the new Fugitive Economic Offenders Act which came into existence in August last year. The ED had requested the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court that Mallya, who is currently in the UK, be declared a fugitive and his properties.

How India's first air strike in Pakistani territory since 1971 unfolded

India took down the largest Jaish-e-Mohammad terror training camp in Pakistan in a meticulously planned early morning air raid on Tuesday, terming it a “non-military, preemptive” strike based on credible intelligence that terrorists based in the camp were being trained for another suicide bombing in India. The strikes — India’s first such air raid into Pakistan since the 1971 war — targeted the Balakot training camp located in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, beyond Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

Omar for assembly polls in JK immediately after LS election, does not favour coalition govt

National Conference leader Omar Abdullah favours early Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir and has expressed the hope that the people of the state will give mandate for a single party rule, instead of a coalition government in the state as has been witnessed since 2002. In an interview to PTI, the former chief minister said assembly election in the state can be held in a three-to-five week period.

L&T prepares for hostile takeover of Mindtree

Mumbai: Larsen and Toubro Ltd (L&T), which has been in talks to buy Cafe Coffee Day founder V.G. Siddhartha’s stake in Mindtree Ltd, is set to sign a binding agreement to close the deal, two people directly aware of the development said. The deal, which is likely to be announced in the weeks ahead, could trigger a hostile takeover bid, leading to an open offer by L&T, India’s largest engineering company, to increase its stake to 51%.

Busting 5 concerns about Congress' NYAY scheme

On 25 March, Congress president Rahul Gandhi announced the Nyuntam Aay Yojana, or NYAY scheme. The plan is to give ₹6,000 every month to the bottom 20% of the population of around 5 crore families or 25 crore individuals. Gandhi’s proposal is not that of universal basic income (UBI), of which there has been a lot of talk in the recent past. UBI is basically a small amount of money paid every month to every citizen of a country, without any terms and conditions.

Rahul Gandhi likely to contest from south too

Congress president Rahul Gandhi is likely to enter the fray from a Lok Sabha constituency in the south, party sources told The Hindu on Saturday. The Congress units of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka have strongly urged Mr. Gandhi to contest from their States, but he has not taken a decision yet, multiple sources said. Party leaders in Kerala were vocal on Saturday about their request to Mr. Gandhi that he contest from Wayanad in north Kerala.

Rajan Anandan quits Google, to join Sequoia Capital

Rajan Anandan, responsible for scaling up Google's India operations to over \$1 billion in revenues, and instrumental in building the country's internet growth story at multiple levels, is quitting the company. Anandan had joined Google in 2011, when the company was not doing too well on revenues and India's internet journey was still nascent. Eight years hence, both the company and the initiatives championed by Anandan are well on the growth trajectory. "Rajan had moonshot ideas on how to drive India's internet growth.

Shaktikanta Das takes charge as 25th Governor of the RBI

Newly appointed Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor Shaktikanta Das took charge today after government selected him to replace Urjit Patel as the head of India's monetary authority. Urjit Patel abruptly resigned as the head of India's central bank Monday citing personal reasons amid tensions between the government and the RBI over issues related to governance and autonomy of the central bank. Having worked equally at ease under three different finance ministers -- P Chidambaram.

RBI repo rate cut: How much will your home loan EMIs reduce?

The six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), headed by RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das, voted to reduce the repo rate by 25 basis points (bps) to 6 per cent from 6.25 per cent earlier. This is the second consequent rate cut and with this development, those shopping around for home loans, car loans are likely to get a cheaper deal soon while the EMIs on some of your existing loans may come down. Of course, that's assuming banks decide to pass on the benefits of the lowered rates to the end consumers.

General election 2019 live | Phase 1 polling concludes, Tripura registers highest voter turnout at 81.8%

The first phase of the general election began on April 11 with voters exercising their franchise in 91 of the 543 constituencies spread across 20 States and Union Territories - Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep. Assembly elections are also being held today in Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Sikkim. State-wise first phase voter turnout.

Which city is the largest office market in whole Asia-Pacific region

New Delhi: India's Silicon Valley, Bengaluru is the largest office market in India and the biggest in the Asia-Pacific (APAC) region. According to property consultancy CBRE, last year, it has absorbed 11.6 million sqft of office space on a net basis, taking account of vacated space, as compared to Tokyo's seven million, Shanghai's six million, Hong Kong's three million, Beijing's 2.5 million, Singapore's 1.6 million, Sydney's 1.4 million and Seoul's 1.3 million.

What's inside the Svalbard Global Seed Vault?

Today the Svalbard Global Seed Vault in Norway celebrates the 10th anniversary of its official opening. The Norwegian government has planned to spend about \$13 million to upgrade the vault. What is the Svalbard Global Seed Vault and how many seeds are there? It is a facility located on a remote island in the Arctic Ocean and it houses the world's largest collection of seeds. The seeds can be of use in the event of a global catastrophe or when some species is lost due to natural disasters. It is therefore also referred to as the doomsday vault.

Yogi Adityanath: The “Forgetful Monk Chief Minister” of Uttar Pradesh

Lucknow: Ajay Singh Bisht, the monk Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, famously known as Yogi Adityanath, on Tuesday, March 19, claimed that law and order in the state has become a “model condition” for the rest of the country. The CM was addressing the press on the completion of two years of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in UP. He repeatedly claimed that the condition of law and order has improved a lot in his tenure of two years.

Bank of Baroda to become larger than ICICI Bank from 1 April

New Delhi: Powered by the business of Dena Bank and Vijaya Bank, Bank of Baroda will become larger than ICICI Bank from 1 April following completion of the amalgamation process of three state-run banks. After State Bank of India (SBI) and HDFC Bank, with businesses of ₹ 45.85 trillion and ₹ 15.8 trillion respectively, ICICI Bank (₹ 11.02 trillion) is the third largest commercial bank now,. Based on share swap ratio, the total business of the merged entity will be ₹ 15.4 trillion, only a notch below HDFC Bank but above ICICI Bank.

For more connectivity, need right-of-way, govt support: COAI

The Indian telecom industry has erected five lakh additional mobile towers in the last two years between November 2016 and October this year, taking the total number of base transceiver stations (BTSs) to over 20 lakh. The telecom industry has also been closely working with the government in building a well-entrenched communication infrastructure and till date has invested ₹10.44 lakh crore, said the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) in a release on Thursday.

India to retain top position in remittances with \$80 billion: World Bank

India will retain its position as the world's top recipient of remittances this year with its diaspora sending a whopping USD 80 billion back home, the World Bank said in a report Saturday. India is followed by China (USD 67 billion), Mexico and the Philippines (USD 34 billion each) and Egypt (USD 26 billion), according to the global lender. With this, India has retained its top spot on remittances, according to the latest edition of the World Bank.

Why Ola founder Bhavish Aggarwal turned down \$1.1 billion SoftBank deal

Startups, when they raise venture money to build their businesses, begin with a Series A round and then proceed through Series E, F or maybe G before going public. The Indian ride-hailing service Ola is a bit unusual: It just completed its Series J fundraising and is marching toward Series K, a letter almost unheard of by researchers that track such things. What's going on here is about more than money. Ola co-founder Bhavish Aggarwal is fighting to maintain his independence against SoftBank Group Corp.

Jamia Millia gets its first woman V-C

Professor Najma Akhtar of the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi was appointed as the Vice-Chancellor of Jamia Millia Islamia University on Thursday. "In exercise of powers conferred under statutes of JMI Act, 1988, the President of India, in his capacity as the Visitor JMI, has been ...pleased to appoint Professor Najma Akhtar as the V-C of JMI, New Delhi, for a period of five years from the date on which she enters upon her office or until she attains the age of 70 years, whichever is earlier,".

SoftBank's top executive Alok Sama to leave firm

BENGALURU: Alok Sama, a St Stephen's College graduate, who has helped SoftBank founder Masayoshi Son steer his biggest deals like the \$32-billion purchase of UK's ARM Holdings and the \$59-billion merger of US telcos Sprint and T-Mobile, is leaving the firm after a five-year stint, according to two sources. The 56-year-old executive, who was also closely involved in SoftBank's early India investments into online marketplace Snapdeal and ride-hailing major Ola, will continue to be a senior adviser even as he leaves his post of president.

How to link PAN with Aadhaar

The Supreme Court (SC) has allowed linking of PAN with Aadhaar while reading out its verdict on the constitutional validity of Aadhaar. The apex court also said that Aadhaar is a must to file income tax returns (ITR) and to apply for a new PAN. As per Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) press release dated March 31, 2019, the deadline to link PAN with Aadhaar has been extended to September 30, 2019.

India successfully launches EMISAT satellite

India scripted history by successfully launching EMISAT, a military satellite, and 28 foreign nano satellites on-board its polar rocket from here Monday, in a complex mission which marked many a first for ISRO. The rocket, PSLV-C45, in its 47th mission, injected the 436 kg EMISAT, aimed at electromagnetic measurement, and 28 co-passenger satellites belonging to Lithuania, Spain, Switzerland and the US, into their designated orbits, ISRO said.

OYO Rooms founder & millionaire Ritesh Agarwal tries to grin and beard it in life!

Nothing about 24-year-old Ritesh Agarwal's entrepreneurial journey is typical. He founded the hotel aggregator OYO Rooms when he wasn't even 20. A millionaire by 22, his company is on its way to attaining the coveted unicorn status, according to reports. And when success comes calling, one needs to look the part, or in Agarwal's case, the right age. Agarwal, who has never been spotted with a clean-shaven look, told ETPanache at a recent event in Bengaluru that his facial fuzz was "by design".

I-T raids on properties of Madhya Pradesh CM Kamal Nath's aides

Income Tax officials on Sunday launched nationwide raids on Sunday, targeting at least four dozen locations in Madhya Pradesh and Delhi, all residences and offices of people linked to chief minister Kamal Nath. Those raided include Nath's former Officer on Special Duty Pravin Kakkar, former advisor Rajendra Miglani and executives linked to his brother-in-law's firm Moser Baer and his nephew Ratul Puri's company, Hindustan Powerprojects Pvt Ltd.

Shatrughan Sinha joins Congress, fielded from Patna Sahib against BJP's Ravi Shankar Prasad

Actor-turned-politician Shatrughan Sinha joined the Congress on Saturday at the party headquarters in New Delhi. He was with the BJP till recently. Hours later, the Congress announced his candidature for the Patna Sahib Lok Sabha constituency in Bihar to take on Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad. Congress general secretary K.C. Venugopal, party spokesperson Randeep Surjewala and in charge of party's Bihar unit Shaktisinh Gohil welcomed Mr. Sinha into the party fold.

Rajnish Kumar to replace Arundhati Bhattacharya as SBI chief

MUMBAI: State Bank of India managing director Rajnish Kumar will succeed Arundhati Bhattacharya as chairman of the country's largest bank. "I look forward to serving the bank to the best of my abilities along with the support of all my colleagues spread across the globe," Kumar said in a statement on Wednesday. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet approved the appointment of Kumar for three years from October 7.

Jet Airways lenders considering interim funding of ₹500 crore: PNB MD

New Delhi: A consortium of banks is considering an interim funding of ₹500 crore for debt-laden Jet Airways (India) Ltd, but a final decision is yet to be taken, Punjab National Bank managing director Sunil Mehta said on Friday. PNB is part of the lenders' consortium, led by State Bank of India (SBI), that has extended loans to the airline. The consortium is looking at the entire process and something is being worked out. "Of course, (the) consortium is in favour (of interim funding).

Supreme Court quashes RBI circular on debt resolution

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court struck down a Reserve Bank of India (RBI) circular that gave defaulting companies 180 days to agree on a resolution plan with lenders or be taken to bankruptcy court to recover debt of Rs 2,000 crore and above. The bench said the February 12, 2018, circular was beyond the scope of the RBI's powers. "The impugned circular will have to be declared as ultra vires as a whole, and be declared to be of no effect in law,".

ICC World Cup 2019: India announces squad, Rishabh Pant misses out

New Delhi: Dinesh Karthik has beaten Rishabh Pant in the race to become the second wicket-keeper in the Indian team for the upcoming World Cup in England and Wales. The five-man national selection committee led by M.S.K. Prasad, met in Mumbai on Monday and picked the 15-member squad. Vijay Shankar goes to the showpiece event as the number four batsman and Ravindra Jadeja has been picked as the third spinner ahead of a fourth pacer. KL Rahul joins in as the back-up opener.

Lok Sabha elections 2019: Details of 95 seats that go to polls in Phase 2

The second phase of the seven-phase Lok Sabha elections 2019 was held in 95 constituencies across 13 states and Union Territories (UTs) on Tuesday. As many as 1,644 candidates from across various parties and independent ones were in the fray for these 95 seats. The 2019 Lok Sabha polls began on April 11 with the first phase of voting across 91 seats dispersed across 20 states and Union Territories.

Vodafone Idea, a new leader in the Indian telecom space

Idea Cellular and Vodafone India have completed their merger process and officially started operations as Vodafone Idea with a subscriber base of more than 408 million. The merged entity has pipped Bharti Airtel (344.88 million users in July) to claim the top spot. The company will also have the largest voice network with over 2 lakh GSM sites to cover 1.2 billion subscribers, or 92 per cent of the population. Its spectrum portfolio will comprise 1850 MHz and a number of broadband carriers, providing 2G, 3G and 4G services.

Reliance in talks to acquire iconic British toy brand Hamleys for up to ₹350 crore

Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) is in talks to acquire British toy retailer Hamleys in a bid to expand its global footprint in the retail category. According to sources, the company is in advanced talks with the iconic British brand, founded in 1760, and might make an announcement soon. The acquisition could be in the range of ₹250-₹350 crore, said another source. At the time of going to press, BusinessLine had not received a response from Hong Kong-based C Banner International, which owns Hamleys.

Govt targets IRCTC, IRFC IPOs by Sept, to raise Rs 1,500 crore

New Delhi: The government is targeting to raise about Rs 1,500 crore from initial public offerings (IPOs) of two railway companies -- IRCTC and IRFC -- by September, an official said. The finance ministry earlier this year initiated the process of launching an IPO of Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC) but the company has told the railway ministry that their borrowing cost will go up if it gets listed, the official said. A final call on this would be taken by the Union Cabinet.

Reliance eyes higher valuation for refining arm in likely Aramco deal

Mumbai: Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) has sought a higher valuation for its refining and petrochemicals business as it considers selling a minority stake to Saudi Arabia's state energy group, Saudi Aramco, said two officials directly aware of the development, requesting anonymity. On Wednesday, The Times of India reported that Saudi Aramco is in talks with RIL to buy up to a 25% stake in its refining and petrochemicals business.

Maruti Suzuki plans to stop producing BS-IV models by Dec 2019

NEW DELHI: Automobile major Maruti Suzukis Chairman R.C. Bhargava on Wednesday said it plans to stop manufacturing Bharat Stage (BS)-IV compliant cars by the end of 2019. The company's decision is in line with the Supreme Court's order stating that no BS-IV vehicle should be sold in the country from April 1, 2020 as the BS-VI emission norms would come into force. "Broadly, the production of BS-VI will largely come to a stop by December 2019," Bhargava said here during a media interaction.

Jet Airways may ground operations as banks refuse emergency funds

With the lenders rejecting an lifeline of ₹400 crore on April 17 Jet Airways, which has been on a wing and prayer since January, is left with no other option but to ground operations at least temporarily. Since the March 25 resolution to infuse ₹1,500 crore into the airline is yet to fructify, the once leading airline has been defaulting on payments, forcing its lessors to retake almost all its planes and was operating just about six planes as of April 16.

Apple and Qualcomm settle a feud over patents

The courtroom battle in San Diego was supposed to last for weeks, if not months. It was over on the first day, April 16th. Evan Chesler, a lawyer for Qualcomm, a big chip designer, had only a few minutes left in his riposte to Ruffin Cordell, who represented Apple, a hardware giant, when it emerged that the two firms had agreed to a settlement. This included a one-off payment from Apple to Qualcomm and the decision to "dismiss all litigation between the two companies worldwide".

Gitanjali Gems headed for liquidation

The committee of creditors to Gitanjali Gems, promoted by fugitive Mehul Choksi, has decided to liquidate the company to recover ₹ 12,558 crore it owes to 31 banks and financial institutions. Choksi along with diamantaire Nirav Modi, are on the run since early last year after they misused credit facilities of banks and defaulted on loan repayment. Almost all the investigative agencies of the country are probing the multi-million scam perpetrated by Modi and Choksi together.

PE fund AION fully exits Varun Beverages, walks away with handsome return

AION, a joint venture between Apollo Global Management and ICICI Venture, had invested \$90 million in Varun Beverages. Private equity fund AION has decided to completely exit the Ravi Jaipuria-promoted Varun Beverages, bottlers for beverage giant Pepsi. This comes nearly three and a half year after it invested \$90 million (Rs 625 crore according to Wednesday's exchange rate) in the company.

ICC World Cup 2019 Indian Squad Announcement Live Streaming: When and Where to Watch team announcement

While most of the players pick themselves, thanks to their consistent show in recent times, there are three main areas of concern that the selectors need to take a call on when they sit down to pick the 15-member squad. The much-debated number four slot, whether Rishabh Pant or Dinesh Karthik go as the second wicket-keeper behind MS Dhoni and finally, if the team will pick a fourth pacer or an additional third spinner considering that the wickets will be on the slower side at this time of the year in England.

Tiger Woods wins amazing fifth Masters 14 years after his last Green Jacket

Tiger Woods wins the Masters. If ever five words did not do justice to an outcome. Let debate now rage as to where this sits in the pantheon of sporting comebacks. Fourteen years after he last put on the Green Jacket, 11 years after last winning a major and 24 months after conceding to friends "I'm done" Woods completed a triumph which rates as extraordinary even by his standards.

IMD expects monsoons to be near-normal this year

In its first long-range forecast for the south-west monsoon, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) today predicted that the monsoons will be near-normal this year. M Rajeevan Nair, secretary Ministry of Earth Sciences, said India is going to have a near normal monsoon in 2019 as the south-west monsoon is likely to be near-normal. He said that over a long period average (LPA), they expect 96% rainfall of 89 cm.

Lok Sabha elections in Tamil Nadu's Vellore cancelled after cash haul

The Lok Sabha election to the Vellore constituency in Tamil Nadu was cancelled Tuesday by the Election Commission (EC) two days ahead of the polling following recovery of huge amount of cash allegedly from an associate of a DMK leader recently. A government notification rescinding the polls said the EC was "fully satisfied that the current electoral process in Vellore has been seriously vitiated on account of unlawful activities of certain candidates and some workers of the political party."

FATF grey listing to take its toll on Pakistan economy

NEW DELHI: Pakistan's economy will be adversely impacted following Friday's decision by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) to put the country in the 'grey list' for failing to fulfil obligations to prevent terror financing. The country may suffer a risk downgrade by multilateral lenders such as IMF, World Bank, ADB and also a reduction in risk-rating by Moody's, S&P and Fitch, according to an expert on Pakistan economy.

Greater efforts will be needed to reduce fiscal deficit: IMF

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Tuesday said that greater efforts will be needed to reduce the fiscal deficit as the interim budget envisages a slower pace of fiscal consolidation than previously planned. "The interim budget envisages a slower pace of fiscal consolidation than previously planned, delaying the time to reach the medium-term central-government debt target of 40 percent of GDP," Ranil Salgado, IMF mission chief for India told PTI.

Goodricke parent Camellia becomes the world's largest private tea producer

Over the past year, McLeod sold 21 gardens in India, reducing almost 32 million kg in production. In a bid to pare debt, Brij Mohan Khaitan's McLeod Russel India has lost its crown as the world's largest private tea producer, to Camellia Plc, the holding company of the Goodricke Group. Over the past year, McLeod sold 21 gardens in India, reducing almost 32 million kg in production. Its exit from Rwanda further trimmed around 5 million kg, taking its global output to around 80 million kg. In 2017-18, it had produced 118 million kg of tea.

After Yogi, Mayawati, EC bans Azam, Maneka from campaigning

LUCKNOW/NEW DELHI: Senior Samajwadi Party leader Azam Khan was slapped Monday with a poll campaign ban, an FIR and a women commission notice for his alleged "khaki underwear" jibe at BJP leader Jaya Prada, while the saffron party mounted a sharp political attack comparing his "disgusting" comments to disrobing of Draupadi in Mahabharata. The actor-turned-politician, who was earlier with the SP and has now been pitted by the BJP against Khan from Rampur Lok Sabha seat.

Mindtree's special dividend may cost firm Rs 530 cr ahead of L&T takeover

The company has declared an interim dividend of Rs 3 per share that will be paid before May 10 and also pay Rs 4 a share in final dividend, besides Rs 20 in special dividend. Ahead of a potential takeover of the company by L&T, Mindtree's board Wednesday proposed to pay a special dividend to its shareholders, including promoters, that along with regular dividend and tax components would strip the mid-sized IT firm of about Rs 530 crore.

Time travelling with Alia Bhatt and Varun Dhawan

Alia Bhatt comes back to the big screen on a high with director Abhishek Varman's period piece Kalank, just a couple of months after the success of Zoya Akhtar's contemporary Gully Boy. Set in the pre-partition era, the romance between Bhatt's Roop and Varun Dhawan's Zafar is foregrounded in communal tensions. Does this tension also speak to us, in the context of the times we live in, the times of Gully Boy, I ask.

SC stay on ban, government asks Apple & Google to take down TikTok app

BENGALURU: Google and Apple have been asked by the government to take down popular Chinese short-video mobile application TikTok from their app stores, two people familiar with the matter said. The move, by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), comes after the Supreme Court on Monday refused to stay an earlier order by the Madras High Court to ban the app. A bench, headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi, posted the matter for hearing to April 22, as the Madras High Court is expected to hear the case on April 16.

Uber Asia Pacific Head Amit Jain resigns

Uber Asia Pacific Head Amit Jain has resigned from the company after a four-year stint at the US-based ride hailing company. Jain, who was elevated to the APAC position in May last year after serving as the India head, will remain with the company till the end of May. "After four great years, Amit Jain will be leaving Uber at the end of May to spend time with his family before taking the next step in his career.

Reliance prepares the ground for e-commerce launch

Mumbai: Reliance Industries Ltd's retail arm—Reliance Retail Ltd—is testing its food and grocery app among its employees before the commercial launch of its e-commerce venture, mirroring the strategy India's most valuable company adopted ahead of launching its 4G telecom service in Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd. The grocery app would be made available to the public by this year-end and orders made on the app fulfilled by local merchants, two people aware of the matter said, requesting anonymity.

General election 2019: Nearly 66% voter turnout in Phase 3

APRIL 23, 2019, Besides all seats in Gujarat (26) and Kerala (20), voting is being held in four seats in Assam, five in Bihar, seven in Chhattisgarh, 14 each in Karnataka and Maharashtra, six in Odisha, 10 in Uttar Pradesh, five in West Bengal, two in Goa, and one each in Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu and Tripura. Nearly 66% voter turnout was recorded in the third phase of the Lok Sabha polls, the Election Commission said. In the third phase, voting was held in 116 Lok Sabha seats.

All you wanted to know about ARPU

Consolidation seems to be in the air for the Indian telecom industry as smaller players are busy making distress calls to their larger rivals. Price war worries have recently depressed telecom shares and everyone is watching the Average Revenue Per User or ARPU like a hawk. What is it? The business for telecom carriers depends on two main factors. One is the number of subscribers. The more they are able to add, the higher is the expected revenue.

Government names next navy chief, superseding one admiral

Setting aside the principle of seniority, the government on Saturday named Vice Admiral Karambir Singh as the next chief of naval staff (CNS). The current CNS, Admiral Sunil Lanba, who is due to retire on May 31, will hand over charge to Singh on that day. Singh, from the 1980 batch, will supersede Vice Admiral Bimal Verma, the current Commander in Chief Andaman & Nicobar (CINCAN), who was commissioned in 1979.

IBC outcome encouraging and disposal quite quick: IBBI chief

MS Sahoo seeks inputs from the industry to hasten case disposals The speed of resolution process has to improve so as to make the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) more responsive to the large number of corporate debtor cases pending,” said MS Sahoo, Chairman, Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI). Delivering the keynote address at the Bangalore Chamber of Industry and Commerce (BCIC) meet on Insolvency Resolution Process Under IBC 2016 via video conferencing, Sahoo said.

UDAY scheme's progress shows few hits, many misses

In November 2015, the government launched an ambitious scheme, Ujwal Discom Assurance Yojana (UDAY), to improve the financial health and operational efficiency of India's debt-ridden power distribution companies (discoms). Three years on, the scheme may be failing to meet the desired objectives, research by Amandeep Kaur and Lekha Chakraborty of the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy shows. Under UDAY, discoms can convert their debt into state government bonds, but are required to fulfil certain conditions.

Gautam Gambhir richest among Lok Sabha candidates in Delhi

Former Indian opener Gautam Gambhir is the richest among all the candidates in fray for the Lok Sabha election in Delhi with total assets worth Rs 147 crore. The former cricketer, who will be making his electoral debut from East Delhi, has shown an income of nearly Rs 12.40 crore in the income tax returns filed for 2017-18. His wife Natasha Gambhir declared an income of Rs 6.15 lakh in the IT returns filed during the same period.

Sexual harassment allegations against CJI Ranjan Gogoi: SC seeks response from lawyer who claimed conspiracy

In an apparent rethink, the Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi seems to have recused himself from the panel hearing sexual harassment charges against him. A fresh bench comprising Justices Arun Mishra, R. F. Nariman and Deepak Gupta has been constituted. The new bench on Tuesday issued notice to Advocate Utsav Bains who has alleged that he was asked to 'frame' the CJI. The matter will be taken up for hearing on Wednesday.

Earth Day: Saving the planet may cost USD 100 billion per year

Saving the diversity and abundance of life on Earth may cost USD 100 billion a year, say scientists who have proposed a policy to prevent another mass extinction event on the planet. There have been five mass extinctions in the history of the Earth. Scientists now estimate that society must urgently come to grips this coming decade to stop the very first human-made biodiversity catastrophe.

RBI reserves: Shaktikanta Das says Jalan panel to submit report shortly

The Bimal Jalan committee, set up to decide the appropriate capital reserves for the Reserve Bank, is in advanced stages of deliberations and will shortly submit its report, governor Shaktikanta Das said Thursday. The six-member Jalan panel was appointed on December 26, 2018 to review the economic capital framework for the RBI. The other key members of the committee include Rakesh Mohan, the former deputy governor of RBI as the vice-chairman, finance secretary Subhash Chandra Garg.

Hindi cinema actor Sunny Deol joins BJP, gets ticket for Gurdaspur seat

Film star Sunny Deol joined the BJP on Tuesday, and was fielded from the Gurdaspur parliamentary constituency that had previously been held by another cine star, the late Vinod Khanna. Mr. Deol, however, is not the only celebrity or late recruit awarded with party ticket by the BJP. The party is fighting the largest number of seats it has ever fought since it was founded in 1980, and has spread the net far and wide to snag likely candidates.

IL&FS to sell wind portfolio to GAIL in first asset sale since crisis

Mumbai: In its first asset sale since going bust last year, Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services Ltd (IL&FS) on Monday said it has agreed to sell its 874 megawatts (MW) operational wind energy portfolio to state-run gas utility GAIL (India) Ltd for ₹4,800 crore. The sale will close in three weeks, IL&FS said in a statement on Monday. Significantly, GAIL's offer of ₹4,800 crore at 100% enterprise valuation implies that the accumulated debt of ₹3,700 crore on the wind power special purpose vehicles (SPVs) will be fully repaid.

Lok Sabha elections 2019: Boxer Vijender Singh is Congress' candidate from South Delhi

The Congress, on Monday, fielded champion boxer Vijender Singh, who won the bronze medal at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, from the South Delhi constituency. He will take on BJP's sitting MP Ramesh Bidhuri and AAP's Raghav Chadha. "In more than 20 yrs of my career in boxing I have always made my country proud in the ring. Now it's time to do something for my countrymen & serve them," Vijender Singh tweeted.

State Bank of India to join SWIFT's global payment interface

MUMBAI: State Bank of IndiaNSE 0.56 % will soon sign up with the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Transactions' (SWIFTNSE 4.95 %) Global Payment Interface (gpi), adding to the list of Indian banks that have subscribed to the interbank communication channel's new payment interface which is set to make cross-border transactions much more secure and transparent, a top official said.

Arundhati Bhattacharya to be SWIFT India Chairman

MUMBAI: SWIFT India Domestic Services, the local unit of SWIFTNSE 4.95 % (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication) global that facilitates international payments functions for banks, has appointed Arundhati Bhattacharya, former chairman of State Bank of IndiaNSE 0.72 %, as its chairman. Bhattacharya, who had served nearly four decades at the State Bank of India, would succeed MV Nair who retires after about five years of heading SWIFT India.

NIA arrests Yasin Malik inside Delhi court, questions Mirwaiz

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Wednesday arrested separatist leader and JKLF chief Yasin Malik after a special court granted his 13-day custody to the probe agency. It also questioned Hurriyat chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq for the third consecutive day at its headquarters in New Delhi. According to an NIA spokesman, Mr. Malik, chief of the banned group, the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, and a constituent of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC), was arrested on Wednesday in the alleged J&K "terror funding" case.

INTERNATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey called Rep. Ilhan Omar after Trump's tweet sparked a flood of death threats

Twitter chief executive Jack Dorsey phoned Democratic Rep. Ilhan Omar on Tuesday and stood by the company's decision to permit a tweet from President Trump that later resulted in a flood of death threats targeting the congresswoman. The previously unreported call focused on an incendiary video that Trump shared on April 12, which depicts Omar discussing the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks interspersed with footage of the Twin Towers burning. The clip did not include the full context of Omar's remarks.

China ready for Wuhan-style summit meet with India despite differences over BRI: Chinese foreign minister

BEIJING: China said Friday it was ready to hold a Wuhan-style summit meeting with India this year to improve ties, notwithstanding the differences over the trillion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative in which the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a flagship project. Addressing a media conference here ahead of the Belt and Road Forum (BRF) being held from April 25-27 to showcase China's trillion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Not gold but Indian wrestlers bag 5 medals on 2nd day of Asian Wrestling Championships

Indian wrestlers reaped a rich-harvest of five medals in men's freestyle events but a gold medal eluded them on the second day of the Asian Championships here on Wednesday. All the five wrestlers who competed on Wednesday won a medal each but none could add a gold on the second day after Bajrang Punia clinched a yellow metal in 65kg men's freestyle on Tuesday.

YouTube CEO does damage control after advertisers flee over pedophilia scandal

YouTube CEO Susan Wojcicki on Friday said "We takes kids' safety incredibly seriously" in her first public remarks since the company was embroiled in a scandal involving a network of pedophiles on the video service. "I'm a mom," Wojcicki said at the Lesbians Who Tech + Allies Summit in San Francisco. "I understand kids. As a parent, I understand it and really want to do the right thing."

Ranveer Singh Sandhu: The 15-year-old who is Britain's youngest accountant and started his first business at 12

LONDON: A 15-year-old Indian-origin boy has been lauded as Britain's youngest accountant after setting up a successful accountancy firm while still at school. Ranveer Singh Sandhu, based in south London, has set himself a goal of becoming a millionaire by the time he turns 25 after he set up his first business when he was aged just 12 years. "Young Entrepreneur aged 15 living my best life and trying to make money," he proclaims on social media.

US likely to end sanction waiver for India and four other countries on Iran oil

The Trump administration is poised to tell five nations, including allies Japan, South Korea and Turkey, that they will no longer be exempt from US sanctions if they continue to import oil from Iran, officials said Sunday. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo plans to announce on Monday that the administration will not renew sanctions waivers for the five countries when they expire on May 2, three US officials said. The others are China and India. It was not immediately clear if any of the five would be given additional time to wind down.

Sri Lanka Easter blasts: 6 JD(S) workers among 8 Indians confirmed dead

At least eight Indians are confirmed to have been killed in the serial suicide blasts across churches and luxury hotels in Sri Lanka, that left 290 dead and several injured on Easter Sunday, officials said on Monday. The victims include six Janata Dal (S) workers from Karnataka, who were in Colombo on a vacation and staying at the Shangri-La Hotel, and a woman from Kerala, P.S. Raseena, who was identified by Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan. Of four persons of another group from Karnataka.

Eiffel Tower Dims Lights to Pay Tribute to Victims of Easter Sunday Attacks in Sri Lanka

The glorious Eiffel Tower usually lights up the Paris skyline as the night falls. But on April 21, the world's renowned monument switched off its nightly sparkles at the stroke of midnight to honor the victims of the terror attacks in Sri Lanka. "Tonight, from 12:00 am, I will turn my lights off to pay tribute to the victims of the Sri Lanka attacks," a post on the Eiffel Tower's official Twitter page read.

Yemen war: Trump vetoes bill to end US support for Saudi-led coalition

Mr Trump described the resolution as an "unnecessary" and "dangerous" attempt to weaken his constitutional powers. It is only the second time Mr Trump has used his presidential veto since he took office in 2017. Opposition in Congress to his policy on Yemen grew last year after Saudi agents killed the journalist Jamal Khashoggi at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul. The resolution passed the House of Representatives in April and the Senate in March, the first time both chambers had supported a War Powers resolution.

Alan García: former Peru president dies after shooting himself before arrest

Peru's former president Alan García has died after deliberately shooting himself in the head when police tried to arrest him in connection with a multibillion-dollar Latin American corruption scandal. "I am saddened by the death of former president Alan García," tweeted the country's current president, Martín Vizcarra, confirming the news. "I send my condolences to his family and loved ones."

Indonesia's Widodo set for 2nd term as president

JAKARTA, Indonesia — Indonesian President Joko Widodo has won a second five-year term, preliminary election results showed Wednesday, in a victory for moderation over the nationalistic rhetoric of his rival, Prabowo Subianto. Vote counts from five independent survey groups showed Widodo with a clear lead over Subianto, a general during the era of the Suharto military dictatorship who warned Indonesia would fall apart without his strongman leadership.

U.S. Treasury official David Malpass named World Bank President

David Malpass, a top U.S. Treasury official in Trump administration, was on April 5 unanimously selected as the new President of the World Bank. The World Bank's 25-member executive board unanimously approved 63-year-old Malpass, who is currently Under Secretary of Treasury for International Affairs, as the development lender's 13th President for a five-year term beginning April 9, according to a statement.

Stratolaunch: 'World's largest plane' lifts off for the first time

The world's largest aeroplane by wingspan has taken flight for the first time. Built by Stratolaunch, the company set up by the late Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen in 2011, the aircraft is designed to act as a flying launch pad for satellites. The idea is to fly the plane to 10 km (6.2 miles) high before releasing satellites into orbit. Its 385 ft (117 m) wingspan is longer than an American football field.

Notre-Dame: Massive fire ravages Paris cathedral

A major fire has engulfed the medieval cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris, one of France's most famous landmarks. The 850-year-old Gothic building's spire and roof have collapsed but the main structure, including the two bell towers, has been saved, officials say. Firefighters are still working to contain the blaze as teams try to salvage the artwork stored inside. President Emmanuel Macron called it a "terrible tragedy". The cause of the fire is not yet clear.

PM Narendra Modi awarded UAE's highest civilian honour Zayed Medal

UAE President Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan today announced that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be honoured with the Zayed Medal, the UAE's highest civil honour. The medal, awarded to kings presidents and heads of states, was conferred upon Modi for boosting relations between the Emirates and India. Previously, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping have also been conferred with the honour. Referring to Modi as his "dear friend", Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi said the award is in appreciation of Modi's.

The fabulous life of Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos, the new richest person in the world

Jeff Bezos, founder and CEO of Amazon, surpassed Bill Gates on Thursday to become the richest person in the world, with a net worth of roughly \$90 billion. Today, his "Everything Store" sells more than \$136 billion worth of goods a year. Here's how the former hedge funder got his start and became one of the world's richest people.

Julian Assange: Wikileaks co-founder arrested in London

Assange took refuge in the embassy in 2012 to avoid extradition to Sweden over a sexual assault case that has since been dropped. At Westminster Magistrates' Court on Thursday he was found guilty of failing to surrender to the court. He now faces US federal conspiracy charges related to one of the largest ever leaks of government secrets. The UK will decide whether to extradite Assange, in response to allegations by the Department for Justice that he conspired with former US intelligence.

Omar al-Bashir: Sudan's ousted president

When he seized power, Sudan was in the midst of a 21-year civil war between north and south. Although his government signed a deal to end that conflict in 2005, another one was breaking out at the same time - in the western region of Darfur, where Mr Bashir is accused of organising war crimes and crimes against humanity by the International Criminal Court (ICC). Despite an international arrest warrant issued by the ICC, he won consecutive elections in 2010 and 2015.

Ghosn's Fate May Hang on Complex Financial Web in Middle East

Soon after Carlos Ghosn was taken into custody last fall, kicking off a bizarre legal odyssey that's transfixed the automotive world, some wondered whether the financial crimes he'd been accused of were serious enough to warrant the shocking arrest of Nissan Motor Co.'s fabled chairman. Turns out that was just the opening act. The initial arrest last November -- over what some viewed as a relatively minor charge of understating compensation.

Trump's 'delight' and the discomfort of Democrats: How global media is reacting to the Mueller report

Global media are reacting to the results of one of the most gripping investigations into a U.S. president in modern times — and the somewhat unexpected result of special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into whether President Donald Trump colluded with Russia to influence the 2016 election. Attorney General William Barr summarized the results of Mueller's investigation on Sunday by saying it had not found that the Trump campaign.

China blocks Masood Azhar's listing as global terrorist for the fourth time

China has for the fourth time blocked (put a technical hold) a proposal at the United Nations to designate Jaish-e-Mohammad chief Masood Azhar as a global terrorist. Standing solidly behind its 'Iron Brother' Pakistan, China ignored international efforts to clamp down on cross-border terrorism. This is a major setback to Indian efforts to proscribe the Pulwama mastermind under the 1267 Al Qaeda Sanctions Committee of the UN Security Council (UNSC).

Mohammed Ishtaye sworn in as new Palestinian PM

New Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammed Ishtaye and his cabinet members were sworn in before President Mahmoud Abbas at his headquarters in the West Bank city of Ramallah on Saturday, the official television reported. The 18th Palestinian government since the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in 1995 was sworn in according to a presidential decree issued by Abbas, Xinhua news agency reported.

Lebanon sets new Guinness World Record

Lebanon's capital Beirut has set a new Guinness World Record for the number of national flags raised in a city for 24 hours. The Beirut Alive Association in the national capital on Sunday raised a total of 26,852 Lebanese flags breaking New York's Waterloo record of 25,599 flags, Xinhua reported. "I came here to adjudicate the record title for the most national flags displayed in one city in 24 hours. I am here to make sure that all guidelines of Guinness World Record have been achieved.

Sri Lanka attacks: Face coverings banned after Easter bloodshed

President Maithripala Sirisena said he was using an emergency law to impose the restriction from Monday. Any face garment which "hinders identification" will be banned to ensure security, his office said. Muslim leaders criticised the move. The niqab and burka - worn by Muslim women - were not specifically named. The move is perceived as targeting those garments, however. Sri Lanka remains on high alert eight days after Islamist attacks that hit churches and hotels.

Indonesia releases Ramayana stamp

Indonesia on Tuesday released a special commemorative stamp on the theme of Ramayana to mark the 70th anniversary of diplomatic ties with India. The stamp, designed by renowned Indonesian sculptor Padmashri Bapak Nyoman Nuart, features a scene from Hindu epic Ramayana in which Jatayu valiantly fought to save Sita. "As agreed during Prime Minister's visit in May 2018, the Department of Posts of the Government of Indonesia released a special commemorative stamp on the theme of Ramayana to mark the event," a statement of Indian Embassy in Jakarta said.

LSE announces "Amartya Sen Chair in Inequality Studies"

The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) has announced the establishment of the Amartya Sen Chair in Inequality Studies to honour the Nobel laureate, who was Professor of Economics at LSE from 1971-82. According to the release by the institute, Sen will also serve as the director of the LSE International Inequalities Institute, focused on studying and challenging some of the most pressing issues. "The International Inequalities Institute is a living embodiment of the School's enduring commitment to working for the betterment of society through research, education and public engagement.

WHO releases guidelines on how countries can use digital health technology

The World Health Organization (WHO) on April 17, 2019, released new recommendations on 10 ways that countries can use digital health technology, accessible via mobile phones, tablets and computers, to improve people's health and essential services. The recommendations are a result of a two-year-long research by the WHO on digital technologies, including consultations with global experts, so that such tools may be used for maximum impact on health systems and people's health.

