

Some Key Current Info-Bits at Random (April 1- April 15)

- On April 1, 2014 Sri Lanka banned the **LTTE and 15 other Tamil Diaspora** groups for their alleged terror links and involvement in reviving the Tamil rebel movement.
 - Sri Lanka has banned 16 organisations, including the LTTE, in accordance with the UN Security Council resolution 1373.
 - Among the organisations proscribed are the LTTE's Trans National Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE), Global Tamil Forum (GTF), which is active in Europe, and the UK-based British Tamil Forum (BTF).
- On April 2, 2014 a powerful 8.2-magnitude earthquake hit northern Chile's Pacific coast
- With more than 900,000 people along Chile's coast evacuated their homes, .. President **Michelle Bachelet** declared parts of northern Chile to be disaster zones.
- On April 2, 2014 **Serik Akhmetov**, 55, PM of Kazakhstan unexpectedly announced his resignation.
 - Kazakhstan is the oil-rich Central Asian nation.
- Recently a team of international crop scientists reported having successfully sequenced the **genome of the peanut**.
 - The **International Peanut Genome Initiative** (IPGI), a multi-national group of crop geneticists working in cooperation for several years, has achieved this feat.
 - Hyderabad-based International Crops Research Institute for Semi Arid Tropics (**ICRISAT**) played a key role in the research project.
- The recently released data by the **Internet and Mobile Association of India** (IAMAI) estimate the number of online retailers close to 1 million.
 - In India, the million online retailers comprise the market place with sales of almost Rs 63,000 crore in 2013.
 - The association has estimated that online retail accounted for \$12.6 billion (Rs 62,967 crore), showing a year-on-year compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 34% since 2009.
- On April 3, 2014 Microsoft announced the launch of **Cortana** to take on the challenge posed by Apple's Siri and Google Now
 - Cortana is its own voice assistant for Windows phones.
- Recently, Anil K Gupta, CMD, **Container Corporation of India**, has received the Dalal Street Investment Journal -e5ftfhi cPi SeUn tA wMyendi rfaotr n a""Moosft t h award.
 - The company has posted a record (over 41% higher) market capitalisation of Rs 18,921 crore as on March 31, 2014, as against Rs 13,394 crore on the same date last year.
- Recently, Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission of India, shared that while **China has been growing at an average rate of 10 per cent** for the past about 30 years, India has just managed to grow by 7 per cent in the past decade.
 - GDP of China is four times that of India.
 - India can be the third biggest economy in the world after the US and China, if it maintains a growth rate of 7 per cent till 2035.

- On April 6, 2014 at Busan, **Somdev Devvarman** pulled off a stunning win to enable India enter the Davis Cup World Group play-offs with a win over South Korea in their Group I Asia/Oceania second round tie.
- On April 6, 2014 at the Siri Fort Sports Complex, Malaysian world No. 1 **Lee Chong Wei** defeated world No. 2 Chen Long from China. . .defending champion Chong Wei won his third Yonex India Open crown, having won it in 2011 and 2013.
- On April 6, 2014 at Manama, **Formula One** agreed to accept two new teams, including a U.S. entry proposed by NASCAR team owner Gene Haas.
- On April 6, 2014 **Lewis Hamilton** won Bahrain Formula One Grand Prix after a duel with Mercedes team mate Nico Rosberg in a floodlit night race full of overtaking and wheel-to-wheel battles.
- On April 6, 2014 Sri Lanka defeated India (140) by six wkts to lift **WC T20** lifted title for first time in five attempts since the 1996 World Cup.
- On April 8, 2014 British Prime Minister David Cameron in the UK announce **will be exempted from wearing hard hats at construction sites. . .**
 - This year marks the 160 years since the first Sikh arrived in Britain.
 - Since then, the story of British Sikhs has been one of success - of many thousands of people making a positive contribution in so many ways".
- On April 8, 2014 Facebook revealed having **crossed 100 million active** users in India, its largest base outside the US.
- On April 9, 2014 India's maiden mission to Mars is on course, with its spacecraft Orbiter crossing the halfway mark on its voyage to the Red Planet, four months after it left earth on December 1.
 - "In terms of radio distance, the 1,337 kg Orbiter is cruising at 39 million km away from earth, travelling at 1.55 km per second in the sun's orbit..
 - The Rs 450-crore Mars Orbiter Mission was launched on November 5 from Sriharikota spaceport off the Bay of Bengal, about 80 km north east of Chennai.
- On April 9, 2014 Kim Jong-Un was "re-elected" as North Korea's leader.
- On April 9, 2014 Supreme Court rejected a plea to stay the Centre's poll-eve notification to include the Jat community in the OBC list for providing the benefits of reservation, saying there was, prima facie, material for taking the decision.
- On April 10, 2014 an Indian Police Service officer, **Devendra Kumar Pathak**, took over as the Director General of the Border Security Force.
 - Pathak is the 23rd DG of the BSF, the world's largest border force with 2.5 lakh personnel.
 - The BSF which was established on **December 1, 1965**, currently guards the India-Pakistan and India-Bangladesh borders.
- On April 10, 2014 ICC paved the way for **Associate Members to earn Test status** by introducing the 'ICC Test Challenge' which will take place every four years between lowest ranked Test team and winner of ICC Inter-Continental Cup.

- The decision effectively means that one among Bangladesh and Zimbabwe — the two lowest-ranked Test teams in ICC rankings — will have to fight it out with the likes of The Netherlands, Ireland or UAE for Test status.
 - ICC Chief Executive is **David Richardson**.
- On April 10, 2014 former 100 metres world record holder **Asafa Powell**, 31, was banned for 18 months by a Jamaican anti-doping disciplinary panel after he tested positive for a banned substance last year.
- On April 10, 2014 after years of deadlock on the liability issue, India and Russia signed an agreement for building units 3 and 4 of the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant Project (KKNPP) at a cost of Rs 33,000 crore.
- On April 11, 2014 Interim President of BCCI-IPL **Sunil Gavaskar** appointed Housing Development Finance Corporation (HDFC) chairman Deepak Parekh as his special adviser for the seventh edition of the Indian Premier League.
- On April 11, 2014 Gol announced the appointment of **Justice RM Lodha** as the Chief Justice of India (CJI) to succeed Justice P Sathasivam who will retire on April 26.
- On April 11, 2014 Britain listed Sri Lanka as a "**country of concern**" in its latest annual human rights report, released days after it co-sponsored a US-backed resolution against the country at the UNHRC.
- On April 11, 2014 Myanmar completed its **first census** in three decades.
 - 100,000 schoolteachers were fanned out across the nation on foot collecting data for the census, expected to count from 48 million to 65 million citizens.
- On April 12, 2014 eight-time world champion **Pankaj Advani** overcame a stiff challenge from Chinese Li Hang to clinch the second round World Snooker Championship qualifying match in the decider.
- On April 12, 2014 study by Professor **Santo Fortunato** of Aalto University in Finland, who conducted the study revealed that time lag between reporting of a major scientific discovery and awarding it with the Nobel prize has grown over the years, with 20 years now being the norm.
- On April 12, 2014 World Bank reported that **India lead global remittances** in the year 2013 with a whopping \$70 billion in its kitty, of which \$65 billion were earned from the country's flagship software services exports.
- Recently, Lancet **Oncology reported** that around one million new cancer cases are diagnosed and around 600,000 to 700,000 people die from cancer in India.
- On April 13, 2014 in Thailand, over 100 persons were killed and 893 injured in hundreds of accidents during the first two days of the **Songkran festival** that Thai people celebrate to welcome the arrival of spring.
- On April 13, 2014 UN **climate chief** called on governments to take bold steps to tame carbon emissions after a landmark report said the worldwide aim to limit global warming was still attainable.

- “The world can still combat climate change but only if nations raise their collective ambition to achieve a carbon neutral world in the second half of the century”
- Christiana Figueres is executive secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
- On April 12, 2014 **Manny Pacquiao** scored a unanimous decision win over Timothy Bradley to regain the WBO welterweight title and avenge a highly controversial loss to the American in June 2012.
- On April 13, 2014 unseeded Indonesian **Simon Santoso** pulled off a major shock when he defeated badminton world No. 1 Lee Chong Wei to win the Singapore Open for the first time.
- Recently, Stockholm **International Peace Research Institute** (SIPRI) shared that US, probably for the first time since World War II (1939-45), has cut its military spending in 2013.
 - Chinese spending has increased by 7.4 pc last year.
- On April 14, 2014 **European Union** formally approved a one-billion-euro assistance package to help Ukraine interim authorities overcome deep financial problems.
- On April 14, 2014 **Dipika Pallikal** finished runners-up in the Women's Champion Fiberglass Texas Open, losing the summit clash against Egyptian qualifier Nour El Sherbini in Houston, USA.
- On April 15, 2014 **Michael Phelps**, the most decorated swimmer of all time, will come out of retirement next week, the clearest signal yet that he is getting ready to make an Olympic comeback at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games.
- On April 15, 2014 Supreme Court recognised the **transgender community** as a third gender and directed the government to treat hijras and eunuchs as socially backward and offer them employment and educational quota.
- Recently, India-born poet **Vijay Seshadri** won the prestigious 2014 Pulitzer Prize in the poetry category for his witty and philosophical collection of poems.
 - The Washington Post and Guardian were awarded secret global surveillance programmes.

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For IASC*