

Some Key Current Info-Bits at Random (April 16- April 30)

- On April 16, 2014, the **61st, National Film Awards** were announced:
 - ‘Bhaag Milkha Bhaag’, the Farhan Akhtar-starrer Hindi film on former ace athlete Milkha Singh was adjudged the **best popular film**.
 - Anand Gandhi’s debut film ‘Ship of Theseus’ (English-Hindi) was named the **best feature film** while the Indira Gandhi award for the **best debut film** of a director went to Marathi film ‘Fandry’.
 - Rajkummar Rao and Suraj Venjaramoodu shared the **best actor award** for their respective performances in Hindi film ‘Shahid’ and Malayalam film ‘Perariyathavar’. Geetanjali Thapa won the **best actress award** for Hindi film ‘Liar’s Dice’.
 - For the 61st, National Film Awards, **11-member jury was headed by noted Director Saeed Akhtar Mirza**, Rajkummar’s portrayal of the intriguing journey of a Muslim young man who is persecuted, and who rebels and ultimately comes back to fight the injustice as a committed law abiding lawyer, brings to life the soul of Shahid Azmi.
 - Saurabh Shukla was declared the **best supporting actor** for courtroom drama ‘Jolly LLB’. ‘Jolly LLB’ was also named the **best Hindi film**.
 - The **best supporting actress award** is shared by Amruta Subhash for Marathi film ‘Astu’ and Egyptian actress Aida El-Kashef for ‘Ship of Theseus’.
- On April 17, 2014, the apex court rules that the **CAG can audit telecom firms**:
 - The Supreme Court ruled that CAG had right to scrutinise accounts of private sector telecom companies to ensure that Govt. got its due share under revenue-sharing agreement for letting them use spectrum, a scarce natural resource.
 - The revenues of private telecom companies are estimated at over Rs. 300,000 crore (Rs 3 trillion) a year.
- On April 17, 2014, the Supreme Court set **March 31, 2015 as the deadline for completion of the widening work** on the 291 kms. Panipat-Jalandhar highway, forming part of **NH-1**, to lay two additional lanes by Soma Isolux

- The apex court set aside the May 27, 2013 order of the Punjab and Haryana High Court cancelling the May 2008 contract awarded to the company on a PIL for the slow progress of work on the Rs 4,500-crore project.
- The HC had directed the NHAI to undertake the remaining work on the highway.
- Recently, at the **9th, National Quality Conclave** at New Delhi, *Neuroscience Research Laboratory at the Post Graduate Institute for Medical Education and Research* (PGIMER) won **DL Shah Quality National Award** of the Quality Council of India (QCI).
 - This award make it the *first-ever research lab* in the country to have been recognised for voluntarily implementing the international standards of research reserved for UN Food and Drug Administration approved drug testing facilities.
 - The award was conferred for “*redefining the basic research investigations by broadening the purview of good lab practices*”.
- On April 17, 2014, the **UN expressed hope** that the Indian Supreme Court verdict *recognising transgenders as a third gender* will pave the way for the apex court to **review its decision of upholding criminalisation of consensual same-sex relationships**.
 - UN human rights chief Navi Pillay had voiced her disappointment at the re-criminalisation of consensual same-sex relationships in India, calling it “*a significant step backwards*” for the country.
- Recently Chinese scientists reported having discovered a *new species of the aggressive brownish pit viper*, identified **Protobothrops himalayanus**.
 - A genetic analysis identified *Protobothrops himalayanus*, which was first spotted at *Jilong Valley* in southern Tibet Autonomous Region in 2012, as a *new snake species*.
- On April 17, 2014, a **giant 25-foot torch, a replica of the Olympic torch**, was unveiled at New York in honour of Indian spiritual leader *Chinmoy Kumar Ghose*.
- On April 17, 2014, Russia, Ukraine, the US and EU reached a **surprise deal on de-escalating the worsening Ukrainian crisis**, in a ray of hope for the former Soviet republic that has plunged into chaos.
 - The agreement reached in Geneva comes as a strong contrast to earlier hawkish comments made by Russian leader Vladimir Putin, who left the door open for intervention in Ukraine.

- On April 17, 2014 Admiral Rabinder Kumar Dhowan assumed charge as the **Chief of Naval Staff**, after officiating in the position for around two months.
 - Admiral Dhowan, was given the officiating charge after Admiral Devendra Kumar Joshi resigned on February 26 following a series of accidents, including the one involving submarine INS Sindhurakshak.
 - He was also the Naval Adviser at the Indian High Commission in London from 2002 to 2005.
- On April 18, 2014 **Wrestling Federation of India** secretary general Raj Singh was named as **Chef-de-Mission for the Indian contingent at the Commonwealth Games** to be held in Glasgow, Scotland from July 23 to August 3.
- On April 18, 2014 a massive avalanche struck Mount Everest killing at least 12 Nepalese Sherpa guides and injuring 10 others in the deadliest mountaineering accident on the highest peak.
 - Around 4,000 persons have scaled Mt. Everest since 1953 when Tenzing Sherpa and Edmund Hillary made it to the summit of the peak.
 - More than 250 people have died while attempting to climb the Everest.
 - This year over 300 climbers have taken permission to climb the Everest.
- According to the recent **CGS International Graduate Admissions Survey**, the number of applications from prospective Indian students to US graduate schools *jumped 32 per cent in 2014*.
 - For the second year in a row, applications to US graduate schools from India skyrocketed
- On April 20, 2014 **Lewis Hamilton raced to a hat-trick of wins Formula One Chinese Grand Prix**, cruising unchallenged to the flag ahead of team mate Nico Rosberg as a dominant Mercedes claimed a third straight one-two finish.
 - The win was the 25th of Hamilton's career.
- On April 20, 2014 at Monaco, Stanislas Wawrinka defeated Roger Federer 4-6 7-6 (5) 6-2 in an all-Swiss Monte Carlo Masters final.
- At Monte Carlo Masters, Mike Bryan became the first player to win 100 tour-level doubles titles after he and twin brother Bob Bryan triumphed.
- The Americans captured their 98th, team title as they defeated Ivan Dodig and Marcelo Melo.

- On April 22, 2014 Kerala's KT Neena proved her mettle once again as she improved her national record and defended her title in 5,000m race walk at the **11th National Youth Athletics** at Panaji.
- On April 22, 2014 India joined over 140 other countries in a *biennial conference* of the **Western Pacific Naval Symposium** (WPNS) in the eastern Chinese port of Qingdao.
 - This is the first time that China, one of the 12 founding members of the WPNS, is hosting the symposium.
 - India is an observer in the WPNS.
- Recently, "**WhatsApp**", the instant messaging app, revealed having *crossed the half-a-billion (50 crore) user mark* on the back of strong growth in emerging markets like India and Brazil.
 - The company was acquired by social networking giant Facebook in February this year for \$19 billion
 - WhatsApp was *founded in 2009* by Ukrainian *Jan Koum* and American *Brian Acton*.
- On April 24, 2014 Supreme Court ordered a *special audit of the assets* of **Kerala's Padmanabha Swamy temple** in the light of the amicus curiae's report on total mismanagement and sorry state of affairs of the shrine in Thiruvananthapuram.
 - The audit would be supervised by former Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) Vinod Roy.
- Recently, the Obama administration criticised reconciliation between rival Palestinian groups, describing it as "troubling" and a blow to the currently stalled peace process with Israel.
- On April 25, 2014 Australians and New Zealanders remembered their servicemen and Indian soldiers who served their nation in *World War-I*.
 - At the **historic Delhi War Cemetery**, Australian and New Zealand communities in India paid tribute to war veterans and those who have laid down their lives in the service of their nation.
 - April 25 each year is termed as **Anzac Day** - a national day of remembrance in Australia and New Zealand that broadly commemorates all Australians and New Zealanders "who served and died in all wars, conflicts, and peacekeeping operations" and "the contribution and suffering of all those who have served".

- Recently **Facebook launched FB Newswire**, with the aim to make it *easier for journalists and newsrooms to find, share and embed newsworthy content* from the popular social networking website in their work.
- Recently, Off-spinner Ashwin Ravichandran, who won the **Cricket Board's Polly Umrigar Trophy best player award** in 2012-13 season, was recommended by the *BCCI* for the **Arjuna Award**.
- Recently, the report “**Trek to MDG 4: State of Indian states**” showed that according to current trends, *the infant mortality rate* (number of child deaths per 1,000 live births) of India would be **37 in 2015**.
 - **Punjab got listed among 6 states that will meet target in 2015. Other states being** Karnataka, Maharashtra, Odisha, Tamil Nadu and Goa.
- On April 27, 2014 **Justice RM Lodha** was sworn in as *41st Chief Justice of India*.
- On April 27, 2014 **Pope Francis proclaimed his predecessors** John XXIII and John Paul II saints in front of more than half a million pilgrims, hailing both as courageous men who withstood the tragedies of the 20th, century.
- On April 27, 2014 Chung Hong-Won, **South Korean PM resigned** over the sinking of a passenger ferry that left more than 300 people dead or missing, amid huge public anger over what is seen as a bungled response to the tragedy.
- On April 27, 2014, in Germany, Maria Sharapova claimed a **hat-trick of Stuttgart titles** after coming from behind to win a three-set battle royal with Ana Ivanovic in the final.
 - Having won the 2012 and 2013 titles, Sharapova won her **13th consecutive win on Stuttgart's clay-courts** in the 51st final of her career.
- On April 26, 2014 World heavyweight champion Vladimir Klitschko easily retained his **WBO crown** when he knocked out Alex Leapai of Australia in the fifth round.
 - Klitschko, who holds the WBA, IBF, WBO and IBO crowns, has now been unbeaten for 10 years with his most recent defeat back in April 2004 against Lamon Brewster.
- On April 27, 2014 in a significant milestone in the direction of developing a *two-layered ballistic missile defence system*, India successfully carried out its maiden **Prithvi Defence Vehicle (PDV)** test-fire meeting the mission objectives.

- On April 27, 2014 Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra's 'Bhaag Milkha Bhaag', a biopic on legendary athlete Milkha Singh, has become the **top prize winner at the 15th International Indian Film Academy (IIFA)** awards, taking home five major honours including best actor, best director and best picture.
 - Farhan Akhtar, 40, bagged the **best actor trophy** for his powerful portrayal of Singh in the sports drama.
 - Deepika Padukone, 28, nominated in the **best actress category** for three of her films, won the award for 'Chennai Express'.
- On April 28, 2014 GoI told the Supreme Court that courts should not inquire into a decision of the President to grant pardon to a convicted person, saying the **power of the head of the executive is beyond the pale of question.**
- On April 28, 2014 European Union **temporarily banned the import of Alphonso mangoes and four vegetables from India** from May 1, sparking protests from the Indian community, lawmakers and traders.
 - The ban came after 207 consignments of fruits and vegetables from India were found *contaminated by pests* such as fruit flies in 2013
- Recently, *Ramesh Agrawal*, 60, was recognised in a ceremony in San Francisco as one of six recipients of this year's \$175,000 **Goldman Environmental Prize**, often called the "**Green Nobel**".
- Recently, sixteen influential Indian-Americans from across the country have asked US Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel to **allow Sikhs to serve in the armed forces with their religious faith intact.**
- Recently, Indian gymnasts won seven medals, including three golds, from the **International Commonwealth Championships** held at Perth.
 - While 2010 Commonwealth Games and Asian Games medallist Ashish Kumar won two gold medals, female gymnast Dipa Karmakar bagged the other yellow metal.
- On April 29, 2014 **Nokia appointed India-born Rajeev Suri as its new CEO.**
 - He replaced Stephen Elop, who returned to Microsoft with the sale of Nokia's handset unit for about \$7.2 billion.
- On April 29, 2014 GoI named Air Chief Marshal (Retired) **NAK Browne as India's next Ambassador to Norway.**
- The recent report, '**Antimicrobial Resistance: Global Report on Surveillance**' suggests that the resistance is occurring across many different infectious agents report focuses on antibiotic resistance in nine different bacteria responsible for common, serious diseases such as bloodstream

infections (sepsis), diarrhoea, pneumonia, urinary tract infections and gonorrhoea.

- Antibiotic resistance happens when bacteria change so that antibiotics no longer work on patients who need them to treat infections caused by the bacteria in question.
- On April 30, 2014 **International Comparison Programme (ICP)**, hosted by the Development Data Group at the World Bank Group, released data showing that **India has become third largest economy in 2011.**
 - *India was at No. 10 in 2005.*
 - *US and China retained top two spots.*
- On April 30, 2014 **Iraqis voted in the first general election** since US troops withdrew in December 2011, with Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki proclaiming 'certain' victory.

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