

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – APRIL 11, 2019

TAMIL NADU

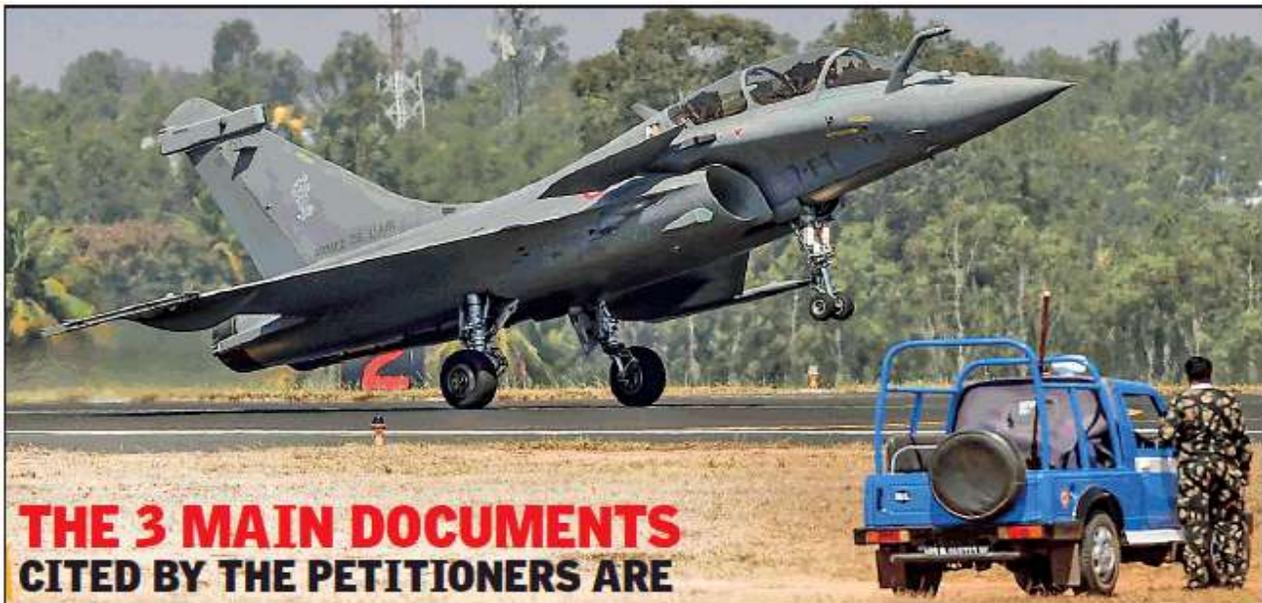
- ◆ **The Election Commission – appoints Ashutosh Shukla as DGP (Elections), replacing the incumbent T K Rajendran**



- ✓ Shukla will also handle law and order as additional charge
- ✓ As per the orders issued, all the officers involved in election process including IGs, DIGs and SPs should report to Shukla, a 1986-batch IPS officer, till the elections are over
- ✓ Rajendran was appointed the DGP of the state on the date of his retirement on June 30, 2017 and has tenure upto June 13, 2019 as per the SC guidelines in the Prakash Singh case, which guarantees two-year tenure protection for DGP
- ✓ This is the second time Shukla is replacing Rajendran in the post on account of elections, the first one in May 2016

SUPREME COURT VERDICT

- ◆ **Supreme Court – rejects the Centre’s objections to ignore ‘leaked’ documents in the Rafale jet fighter deal and decided to hear petitions seeking review of its clean chit to the fighter deal**
- ✓ The Centre had argued that the documents had been “unauthorisedly removed” from the defence ministry and therefore shouldn’t be considered as evidence as per the Official Secrets Act (OSA), 1923
- ✓ The documents include an eight-page note written by three members of the Indian negotiating team, Note 18 of the defence ministry and Note 10 written by SK Sharma, then defence deputy secretary



THE 3 MAIN DOCUMENTS CITED BY THE PETITIONERS ARE

❶ PARALLEL NEGOTIATIONS

- MoD note dated Nov 24, 2015, shows officials strongly objected to parallel negotiations being conducted by PMO.
- They raised concerns about the **'weakening of the negotiating position'** of the Indian Negotiating Team/MoD.
- They also said France's commercial offer should be preferably backed by sovereign/government guarantee or otherwise by bank guarantee.
- Then defence minister Manohar Parrikar disagreed, overruling the view as an **'overreaction'**. He asked the defence secretary to resolve matter in consultation with principal secy to PMO.
- But India finally agreed to just a **'letter of comfort'** signed by French PM instead of direct sovereign guarantee or bank guarantees for execution of the Rafale contract

❷ MOD'S 'NOTE 18'

Petitioners say that despite MoD reservations, national security advisor **Ajit Doval conducted negotiations with the French side in Paris on Jan 12-13, 2016**, on issues of sovereign/bank guarantee, and arbitration etc.

❸ DISSENT NOTE

- Dissent note on June 6, 2016, by three of the seven-member Indian negotiating team **raised serious concerns on several issues.**
- These included inflated benchmarking, high cost of the 13 India-specific enhancements on the fighters & waiving off certain standard contractual safeguards like sovereign/bank guarantees.
- But the govt says it was part of the internal collegiate decision-making process. And it secured a **'better deal'** in terms of price, capability, equipment, delivery and maintenance than the one **'notionally being negotiated'** by the previous UPA regime for 126 Rafales.

- ✓ They appear to suggest that the earlier deal for 126 planes was scrapped after last-minute parallel negotiations by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and that the sovereign guarantee clause and the anti-corruption clauses were inexplicably dropped.
- ✓ A bench of Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi and Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and K M Joseph unanimously rejected the government's objections to the court looking at these documents, which came into the public domain largely through investigative reports in The Hindu newspaper.
- ✓ The court had earlier refused to order an investigation into accusations of corruption in the \$8.7-billion (Rs 59,000 crore) purchase of 36 Rafale jets from France on its December 14, 2018 judgement

◆ **1600 Railway stations in the country – are now Wi-Fi enabled**

- ✓ RailWire Wi-Fi by RailTel is now live at 1600 railway stations across the country.
- ✓ The Santacruz railway station in Mumbai became the 1600th station to be Wi-Fi enabled
- ✓ RailWire is a retail Broadband initiative of the RailTel
- ✓ RailTel is planning to provide fast and free Wi-Fi at all stations (except the halt stations) within a year
- ✓ Funding for Wi-Fi
 - ✓ RailTel funding – 985 stations
 - ✓ Google funding – 415 stations
 - ✓ Universal Service Obligatory Fund of the Government of India – 200 stations
- ✓ Universal Service Obligation Fund helps to fund projects to boost connectivity in rural areas
- ✓ It is charged from the telecom operators as a percentage of various licence fees paid by them

INTERNATIONAL

◆ **United Kingdom and the European Union - agreed a six month extension to the Brexit deal until October 31, 2019**

- ✓ The extension is made flexible with the condition that Britain can leave once its withdrawal deal is ratified in the Parliament.
- ✓ If UK stays as a member of European Union beyond 22 May, the country will likely be required to participate in EU elections.

INDIA AND NEIGHBOURS

◆ **India - has built a 25-bed 'Chandra Narayan Yadav Memorial Maternity Hospital' in Nepal**



- ✓ Indian Ambassador to Nepal, Manjeev Singh Puri inaugurated the hospital in Siraha district.
- ✓ The hospital, built under the Union Government's Small Development Projects Scheme, will help in reducing maternal and child mortality rate among the people of 50 Village Development Committees in and around Siraha district.
- ✓ The Hospital will be run by the Chandra Narayan Yadav Memorial Trust on no profit-no loss basis

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

◆ Astronomers – revealed the first ever image of a ‘supermassive’ black hole taken by Event Horizon Telescope with a network of eight linked telescopes - on April 10, 2019

- ✓ The image released shows the shadow of the hole at the center of glowing plasma.
- ✓ The research was conducted by the Event Horizon Telescope (EHT) project, an international collaboration begun in 2012, to directly observe the immediate environment of a black hole using a global network of Earth-based telescopes.
- ✓ The black hole is about 6 billion times the mass of our sun and is in a massive galaxy called Messier 87 in the nearby Virgo galaxy cluster, at 53 million light-years from Earth
- ✓ The image shows the boundary between light and dark around a black hole, called the ‘event horizon’, that is as big as the solar system
- ✓ It is the point of no return, where the gravity of the black hole becomes so extreme that nothing that enters can ever escape, gets sucked in and swallowed, including stars, planets, gas, dust and all forms of electromagnetic radiation

From theory to fact

Scientists on Wednesday revealed the first image ever made of a black hole after assembling data gathered by a network of radio telescopes around the world. The image was released by astronomers of the Event Horizon Telescope



■ The term “black hole” was coined in the mid-1960s by American physicist **John Archibald Wheeler**, and refers to a point in space where matter is so compressed as to create a gravity field from which even light cannot escape. The more the mass,

the bigger the hole. They were theorised by physicist **Albert Einstein** in 1915 to explain the laws of gravity and their relation to other natural forces

■ The first image is of a black hole in a galaxy called **Messier 87**, in the

constellation Virgo, that is about 53 million light years from Earth. One light year is 5.9 trillion miles, or 9.5 trillion km. This black hole is about 6 billion times the mass of our sun

■ Astronomers created the picture by assembling data gathered by **eight radio telescopes** around the world. The data was gathered by the Event Horizon Telescope **two years ago**, but it took so long to complete the image because it was a massive undertaking, involving about 200 scientists, supercomputers and hundreds of terabytes of data delivered worldwide by plane

■ The team looked at two supermassive

black holes, the M87 and the one at the centre of our **own Milky Way galaxy**. The one in our galaxy is closer but much smaller, so they both look the same size in the sky. But the more distant one was easier to take pictures of because it rotates more slowly

 This is a huge day in astrophysics. We're seeing the unseeable

—FRANCE CURDOVA, director of U.S. National Science Foundation

 Black holes are like the walls of a prison. Once you cross it, you will never be able to get out and you will never be able to communicate.

—AVI LOEB, director of the Black Hole Initiative at Harvard University

- ✓ At the centre of the black hole, time and space become so curved upon themselves that the 2 basic laws of physics, quantum physics and general relativity, break down completely.
- ✓ The new image confirmed Albert Einstein's theory of general relativity (1915) explaining the laws of gravity and their relation to other natural forces, thereby allowing scientists to predict the size and shape of a black hole.
- ✓ The announcement of the image was made in simultaneous news conferences in Washington, Brussels, Santiago, Shanghai, Taipei and Tokyo
- ✓ The project's researchers obtained the first data in April 2017 using telescopes in the US states of Arizona and Hawaii as well as in Mexico, Chile, Spain and Antarctica.
- ✓ The EHT's work focuses on two super-massive black holes - the first, dubbed Sagittarius A* - sits at the centre of the Milky Way with a mass of about 4.3 million times that of the sun and located 25,000 light years from Earth.
- ✓ The second lies at the core of the M87 elliptical galaxy, about 50 million light years from Earth, and is 1500 times more massive than the Sagittarius A-star
- ✓ Black holes are formed when very massive stars collapse at the end of their life cycle
- ✓ There are basically three types of black holes - stellar, supermassive, and miniature black holes
- ✓ Stellar black holes are formed when a massive star collapses
- ✓ Supermassive black holes are equivalent to billions of suns, and expected to exist in the centres of most galaxies, including Milky Way galaxy.
- ✓ Miniature black holes are assumed to have been formed shortly after the "Big Bang", which is predicted to have started the universe 13.7 billion years ago.

ECONOMY

- ◆ **Hong Kong's stock market - has overtaken Japan to be the world's third largest in value, behind only the U.S. and China**
- ✓ Hong Kong's market cap was \$5.78 trillion as of April 9 and Japan's market cap was \$5.76 trillion
- ✓ The main driver behind the climb was Internet giant, Tencent Holdings Ltd. which has witnessed a 22% gain

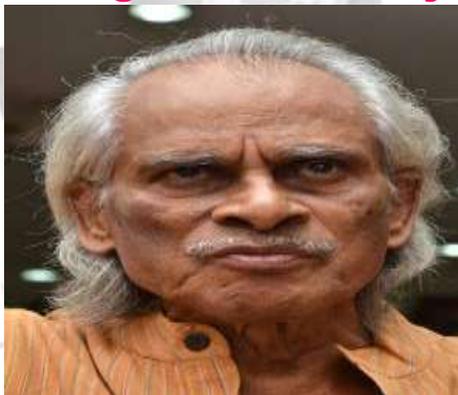
AWARDS

- ◆ **'Namami Gange' programme - was awarded the honour of "Public Water Agency of the Year" by Global Water Intelligence at the Global Water Summit in London**



- ✓ The National Mission for Clean Ganga or the Namami Gange programme, approved as 'Flagship Programme' by the Union Government in June 2014 with budget outlay of Rs.20,000 crore, aims to accomplish the twin objectives of effective reduction of pollution and the conservation and rejuvenation of National River Ganga
- ✓ The awards aim to recognize excellence across the international water industry and reward those initiatives in the water, wastewater, and desalination sectors, which have brought remarkable improvements in the lives of people
- ✓ Global Water Summit is the annual business conference for the water industry worldwide

◆ **Telugu poet K Siva Reddy - was selected for the prestigious 'Saraswati Samman 2018' for his collection of poetry titled 'Pakkaki Ottigilite' (Turning Aside While Lying Down)**



- ✓ The award is given annually by the KK Birla Foundation, since 1991, for an outstanding literary work written in any Indian language and published during the last 10 years
- ✓ The award carries a cash prize of 15 lakh rupees, a citation and a plaque
- ✓ It is the highest recognition in the field of Indian literature
- ✓ Pakkaki Ottigilite, published in 2016, is an anthology of 104 poems in blank verse
- ✓ Past recipients of the Saraswati Samman include poet Harivansh Rai Bachchan, and writers Vijay Tendulkar, Shamsur Rahman Faruqi and Dr Indira Parthasarathy Ramanujar, among many others.
- ✓ To felicitate writers, the KK Birla Foundation has instituted three awards in the field of literature - namely the Saraswati Samman, Vyas Samman (for Hindi) and Bihari Puraskar (for Hindi and Rajasthani writers of Rajasthan)

SPORTS

◆ Indian cricketer Virat Kohli - was named The Wisden Almanack's 'Leading Cricketer of the Year' for 2018



- ✓ It had named India's Smriti Mandhana for the Women's Leading Cricketer award
- ✓ Kohli has won the title thrice, is third only to Sir Don Bradman and Jack Hobbs who have won it 10 and eight times respectively
- ✓ He has been named among England's Rory Burns, Jos Buttler, Sam Curran and Tammy Beaumont in receiving the honour Wisden's Five Cricketers of the Year
- ✓ Afghanistan's Rashid Khan has been named as Wisden's Leading Twenty20 Cricketer in the World for the second year in a row
- ✓ On October 24, 2018, Kohli became the fastest cricketer to score 10,000 runs in One-Day Internationals
- ✓ In January this year, Kohli became the first player in the history of the game to win the Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy for ICC Cricketer of the Year, his second consecutive, the ICC Test and the ODI Player of the Year awards for the year 2018
- ✓ Mandhana became only the second India woman player to win an ICC award after fast bowler Jhulan Goswami, who was named the ICC Player of the Year in 2007
- ✓ The Wisden Cricketers' Almanack – often labelled the “Bible of cricket” – is an annual publication founded in 1864
- ✓ It publishes the list of five cricketers of the year since 1889 and announces the leading cricketer in the world since 2004

◆ India's A Harshini – wins Silver in the Asian youth U-18 girls competition held in Sri Lanka



- ✓ She finished second with 6.5 points from 9 rounds while Vietnam's Nguyen Hong Anh won gold with 8 points

