

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – APRIL 17, 2019

TAMIL NADU

- ◆ **Election Commission – cancels polling for Vellore Lok Sabha constituency in Tamil Nadu, following the cases of largescale cash distribution to influence voters**
 - ✓ This marks the first time polling in a Lok Sabha constituency has been called off on grounds of voter bribery and corrupt practices
 - ✓ In 2016, assembly polls to Thanjavur and Aravakurichi were cancelled for the same reason, followed by the cancellation of a bypoll to the R K Nagar seat in 2017
 - ✓ As per a report compiled by the EC on poll-related seizures till April 16, Tamil Nadu had the highest cash seizures among states at ₹204.77 crore, which constituted 30% of the total ₹683.29 crore all-India seizures
- ◆ **The Ma. Aranganathan Literary Awards for 2019 - were presented to writers Veli Rangarajan and Yuma Vasuki in Chennai**
 - ✓ The awards carry a citation and a cash prize of ₹1 lakh each from Munril Literary Society, run by Justice R. Mahadevan of Madras High Court.
 - ✓ He had instituted the awards last year in memory of his father, a noted Tamil writer, who died on April 16, 2017 at the age of 83.

STATES

- ◆ **The Kochi Metro Rail Limited - has tied up with Google Maps to facilitate public access to metro routes, fares, stop timing at each station and duration of the trip**
 - ✓ Till now, Google Maps in Kochi showed only recommendations based on personal commute and trains

- ✓ KMRL launched the train schedule and fare information in general transit feed specification (GTFS) format and became the first metro agency in India to adopt the open data approach.
- ✓ Through this initiative, KMRL joins other metro agencies like Delhi Metro Rail Corporation and Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation to push the transit data to Google Maps

◆ **Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Ltd – is planning to introduce first Driverless trains likely from 2021**

<p>OPERATIONAL IN 40 CITIES</p>		<p>ANOTHER MILESTONE: Driverless trains will be introduced as part of the Communication Based Train Control signalling system for the Yellow Line</p>
<p>Metro lines in over 40 cities worldwide are now running at an advanced GOA4, enabling trains to operate without drivers. "Unattended Train Operation (UTO), running on the GOA4 system, helps operate automatically without any staff on board. It enables trains to automatically run between stations, halt at designated platforms, adjust speed, go to depots and to turn round," said a senior BMRCL official.</p> <p>In the CBTC signalling system, trains run based on the system's communication with the signalling software. "It will be completely automated. So the scope of human error is negligible. Headways can be made shorter, without compromising on safety. It will also help us operate trains at higher frequency and speed," said a senior BMRCL official.</p>	<p>More room for passengers</p>	<p>Officials said once the line switches to UTO, the train can accommodate more passengers as the driver's cabin will be removed. According to them, the CBTC system also reduces human error and ensures passenger safety. For instance, trains will automatically maintain a distance between one another with the help of sensors on tracks.</p>

- ✓ The driverless trains will be introduced as part of the Communication Based Train Control (CBTC) signalling system for the Yellow Line
- ✓ This is the first time that CBTC, commonly called 'driverless technology', is being used in Namma Metro
- ✓ Currently, Namma Metro uses DTG (distance to go) signalling system, in which the time between two trains is two-and-half minutes
- ✓ However, CBTC can reduce train headway to less than 90 seconds.

NATIONAL

◆ **The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) - has notified amendments to Form 16 — these revisions will come into force from May 12, 2019**

- ✓ Details of exempt allowances will be disclosed as separate line items — such as leave travel allowance (LTA), house rent allowance (HRA), death-cum-retirement gratuity, to name a few.
- ✓ Salary from previous employers, if any, during that particular financial year, will also be separately disclosed.

- ✓ Similarly, deductions claimed by the employer under chapter VI-A of the Income Tax (I-T) Act will be reflected in detail
- ✓ CBDT has also announced amendments to Form 24Q, a quarterly TDS statement on deductions against salary income that is filed by the employer

◆ **Indian Institute of Technology, Madras - launched a 'DST Centre of Excellence (CoE) in Climate Change Impacts on Coastal Infrastructure and the Adaptation Strategies' on its campus**



- ✓ It will play a major role in helping communities in India's 7,500 km-long coastal line to prepare for the impact of climate change such as rise in sea levels and increased frequency of tropical cyclones.
- ✓ The CoE is being established by Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India, at IIT Madras under Indo-German Centre for Sustainability (IGCS) centre

INTERNATIONAL

◆ **Iran Parliament - approved a bill labelling US forces in West Asia as terrorist, a day after the US terrorism designation for Iran's Revolutionary Guard formally took effect**

- ✓ Defence minister General Amir Hatami introduced the bill authorising the government to act firmly in response to "terrorist actions" by US forces
- ✓ It demands authorities use "legal, political and diplomatic" measures to neutralise the American move, without elaborating.

PERSONALITIES

◆ **A nine-year-old Indian girl - won \$1 million jackpot in Dubai Duty Free's Millennium Millionaire**

- ✓ Eliza M, a grade school student, won the jackpot with ticket No.0333
- ✓ She is the 140th Indian national to win a million dollars in the Dubai Duty Free lottery since its inception in 1999



- ✓ In the same raffle, she had won a luxury McLaren Coupe in January 2013

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

◆ Nasa's latest planet-hunting probe, The Transiting Exoplanets Survey Satellite (TESS) -has discovered its first Earth-sized exoplanet orbiting a star 53 light-years away

- ✓ It has also discovered a warm sub-Neptune-sized world in the same system
- ✓ The Planet Finder Spectrograph (PFS) on the Magellan II telescope in Chile helped confirm the planetary nature of the TESS signal, and to measure the mass of the newly discovered sub-Neptune.
- ✓ The PFS works using a technique called the radial velocity method, which is currently the only way for astronomers to measure the masses of individual planets.

AWARDS

◆ The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal were awarded Pulitzer Prizes for their separate investigations of President Donald Trump and his family

- ✓ The Times won the journalism award for explanatory reporting for its probe of the Trump family's finances
- ✓ The South Florida Sun Sentinel won the Pulitzer for public service for its coverage of failings by school and law enforcement officials
- ✓ In the breaking news category, the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette was honoured for its coverage of the October 2018 shooting at a synagogue in the city
- ✓ The Associated Press won a Pulitzer for international reporting for its coverage of the war in Yemen.
- ✓ Reuters was honoured for international reporting for its coverage of atrocities committed against Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar

NOTRE DAME FIRE – A REPORT

To understand why the fire at Notre Dame cathedral has plunged France into gloom and drawn messages of solidarity from across Europe and the world, one has to only look at its long history. But the French can take heart from the resilience that the church, whose name translates to “Our Lady of Paris”, has demonstrated down the centuries, suffering periods of damage and neglect but always succeeding in rising from the ashes

How the fire spread

1
The fire began in the attic
The attic's structure is built from wooden beams, some of which date back to the 12th century. Once they began burning, it was almost impossible to douse the fire, whose exact cause remains unknown

2
It spread to the iconic spire in an hour
In under an hour, the fire spread from the attic to the spire, a 300-foot-high wooden structure covered in lead. It was engulfed in flames in minutes, falling to one side before collapsing completely

3
The entire rooftop went up in flames
After the spire toppled, the fire spread quickly across the rest of the cathedral's roof and about two-thirds of the wooden rooftop was destroyed completely

WHAT SURVIVED: officials have recovered several relics and artefacts

Stone towers | Though fires were reported to have broken out in the North and South Towers, they were contained

The tunic of Saint Louis | A 13th century garment of King Louis, the only French king to become a saint



The Holy Crown of Thorns | Believed to contain a part of the original crown of thorns place on Jesus' head during his crucifixion

Stained glass window | North Rose stained glass window survived but conflicting reports regarding the West and South Rose windows have emerged

The Great Organ | Contains 8,000 pipes and was built in 1403. There is concern some of its pipes may have been damaged



IT HAS RISEN FROM ASHES BEFORE

The present edifice replaced an earlier church destroyed by fire. Fire struck yet again in the 13th century, prompting new work on the cathedral between 1230 and 1240. Church was also vandalised in the 16th century

Copper statues | Sixteen sculptures representing Twelve Apostles and four evangelists were removed from the spire last week for renovation

WHAT WAS LOST: Several items were damaged by the fire and the status of some is unknown

The 300-foot spire that contained relics of two patron saints of Paris was destroyed

The condition of the descent from the cross sculpture, one of the centrepieces that lies on the high altar, remains unknown though photos show it was not damaged

While the Crown of Thorns was saved, the status of the True Cross and Holy Nails, relics from Jesus' crucifixion, is not known

Madonna and Child, the statue known as Notre Dame de Paris that shares its name with the cathedral, is not yet confirmed as secured

Also, the condition of several paintings, sculptures and cathedral structures, including 10 bells, remains unknown

The spire that inspired Hugo's 'Hunchback of Notre Dame'

Napoleon Bonaparte, one of the most celebrated generals of all time, was crowned French emperor in the cathedral in 1804. But that is recent history for a church that began to take shape 856 years ago

1163 | Construction begins

1345 | Construction is completed. Time taken is a little more than 180 years

1790 | Year of the French Revolution. That decade

would see the church suffer damage, neglect

1831 | French writer Victor Hugo's novel, 'The Hunchback of Notre Dame', tells readers about the church's

decrepit state, leading to restoration efforts

1991 | Cathedral included in Unesco's list of World Heritage sites as part of "Paris, Banks of The Seine"

2000-present | Notre-Dame draws 13 million visitors every year. It continues to be used for Sunday mass and is the seat of the Archbishop of Paris



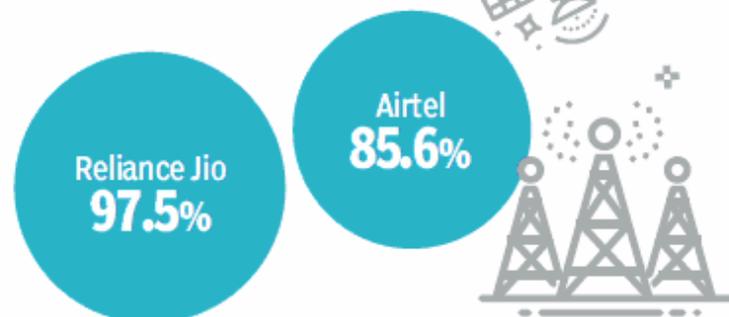
Source: NYT, media reports

OPEN SIGNAL'S MOBILE NETWORK EXPERIENCE – A REPORT

JIO HAS **BEST 4G AVAILABILITY**, **AIRTEL TOPS DOWNLOAD SPEED**

Reliance Jio is not just making rivals sweat but is also setting records globally. At 97.5%, the LTE network availability of Jio is the highest among all countries surveyed, finds global analytics firm Opensignal's Mobile Network Experience report. The study says Bharti Airtel is giving Jio a tough fight, **gaining 10 percentage points** in the last six months to **achieve almost 86% 4G availability**. Airtel also ranks first in download speeds, and offers users the best video experience. The Jio effect is hard to ignore, but India's other operators have not been complacent and are investing in improving service, Opensignal's CEO Brendan Gill told TOI

4G AVAILABILITY



AVERAGE UPLOAD SPEED (Mbps)



AVERAGE DOWNLOAD SPEED (Mbps)



LATENCY | The time taken for round trip of data through the network (milliseconds)



Source: Opensignal India Mobile Network Experience Report, April 2019

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