Retired Judge P Devadass - was appointed as the Anti-corruption Ombudsman in the Tamilnadu Lokayukta on April 1

While retired judges K Jayabalan and R Krishnamoorthy will be judicial members, retired IAS officer M Rajaram and senior advocate K Arumugam will be non-judicial members.

The selection committee headed by Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami considered the names recommended by the search committee, headed by former Madras high court judge Justice K Venkataraman and later finalised the officials.

The Tamil Nadu Lokayukta bill was passed by the Assembly on July 9, 2018 and the Act came into being from November 13, 2018.
'Kandhamal Haldi', a variety of turmeric indigenous to southern Odisha - gets the Geographical indication (GI) tag

Kandhamal in southern Odisha is famed for its turmeric, a spice that stands out for its healing properties and arresting aroma.

The recognition coincided with Odisha’s Foundation Day (Utkal Divas).

Odisha, on April 1, 1936, was declared as a separate state in the then British India.

National Capital Region (NCR) districts – switch over to Euro-VI grade fuel (also known as Bharat Stage VI grade fuel) on April 1, 2019

Several cities in the 12 neighboring districts of Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh including Agra switched over to the ultra-clean fuel.

The Euro-VI grade fuel will be rolled out across India from April 1, 2020.

Delhi in April 2018 became the first city in the country to roll-out ultra-clean Bharat Stage VI (BS-VI) grade fuel, both petrol and diesel.

India had in 2015 decided to switch over to Euro-VI emission norm compliant petrol and diesel from the Euro-IV grade at present.

The BS-VI fuel is expected to reduce the amount of sulphur released from 50 parts per million (ppm) to 10 ppm.

Moreover, the emission of nitrogen oxides (NOx) from diesel and petrol engines is also expected to reduce by nearly 70% and 25% respectively.

The BS-IV norms were in force across the country since April 2017.

Bharat Stage emission standards were introduced in year 2000 in line with recommendations made by RA Mashelkar Committee.
SUPREME COURT VERDICT

The Supreme Court - declares higher pension to all private sector employees on April 1

- The HC had asked Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) to give pension to all retiring employees on the basis of their full salary

### HOW THE CALCULATION WORKS

- Assuming a person retires in 2029 after 33 years service on a package (basic + DA + retention bonus) of ₹50,000/mth
- Under present system, contribution for EPS is ₹542/mth (8.33% of max of ₹6,500 from 1996, when scheme was launched, till Sept 2014) and ₹1,250/mth thereafter (8.33% of ₹15,000)
- Under proposed system, contribution will be 8.33% of actual salary
- Pension calculated on formula: \( \frac{\text{No. of yrs} + 2}{70} \times \text{last drawn salary} \)
- Before court order, (18 yrs [1996-2014] + 1.1')/70 X 6500 + 15 yrs (from 2014 on)+0.9/70 X 15000
- After dividing the bonus 2 on a pro rata basis, this figure will be ₹ 5,180/mth

### GOLDEN RETIREMENT?

<table>
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<th>Years of Work</th>
<th>Last Drawn Salary/Mth</th>
<th>Pension After Order</th>
<th>Pension Before Order</th>
<th>% Change</th>
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</table>

- While pension will increase, the provident fund corpus will be reduced as the extra contribution will now go to the Employees Pension Scheme (EPS) rather than PF
- The Centre had introduced the EPS in 1995, under which an employer was supposed to contribute 8.33% of the employee’s salary in a pension scheme
- However, the contribution was capped at 8.33% of ₹6,500 (or ₹541 per month).
- On September 1, 2014, the EPFO amended the act to increase the contribution to 8.33% of a maximum of ₹15,000 (or ₹1,250)
- The amendment also stipulated that in case of those who availed the benefit of pension on full salary, their pensionable salary would be calculated as the average of the last five years’ monthly salary
- Subsequently, the Kerala high court set aside the September 1, 2014 amendment and also reinstated the old system of calculating the pensionable salary as the average of the last one year’s monthly salary
- Employees who have begun working after September 1, 2014, will also be able to avail the benefit of pension on full salary.
INTERNATIONAL

The era of Japan’s next emperor, which begins May 1 - will be named “Reiwa”, symbolising ‘pursuit of harmony’

- The current three decades long “Heisei”, or “achieving peace,” era will end with Emperor Akihito’s abdication on April 30
- The era began on January 8, 1989, a day after the death of the Emperor Hirohito, when his son Emperor Akihito acceded to the throne as the 125th Emperor of Japan.
- His son, Naruhito, is to ascend the Chrysanthemum throne the following day
- Heisei will be the first era without a war in Japan’s modern history. The new ‘Reiwa’ era will be the 248th in the history of Japan
- Japan's emperor has no political power, but remains a highly symbolic figure
- It is likely to be the first time that the Japanese era name (gengo) has been drawn from a Japanese document, breaking over 1,300 years old custom of choosing the name from Chinese classics.
- The first era was named as ‘Taika’ to celebrate the great Taika reform of 645
- There have been four era names in Japan’s modern period, with the practice of "one emperor, one era name" - Meiji (1868-1912), Taisho (1912-1926), Showa (1926-1989) and Heisei (1989-till now)

United Arab Emirates (UAE) - has approved a new rule for expats under which foreign workers will now be able to sponsor their family members if they fulfill a minimum income criteria

- Earlier, ‘professions’ was listed as the criteria for expats to sponsor families
- Under the prevalent guidelines, male expats can sponsor their immediate family members such as wife and children if he earns a monthly salary of Dh 4,000 (approximately Rs 75,000) or Dh 3,000 (Rs 56,000) plus accommodation provided by his company
He also had to be employed in certain categories for him to be eligible to sponsor his family.

Similarly, a female resident could sponsor her family only if she was a teacher, engineer or a health professional and earned Dh 4,000 per month.

If she worked in any other sector, she needed to have a minimum monthly salary of Dh 10,000 (Rs 1.88 lakhs) and a special approval from the General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners Affairs.

The move will benefit approximately 3.3 million non-resident Indians, constituting about 30% of the total population of the UAE.

Indians in the UAE constitute the largest part of population of the country.

**INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES**

**Bolivia - signed the framework agreement to join the International Solar Alliance (ISA)**

The agreement was signed during the state visit of the President Ram Nath Kovind to Bolivia.

The ISA is a major initiative of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in contributing to the implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement through the rapid and massive deployment of solar energy.

The International Solar Alliance was launched jointly by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Francois Hollande on the first day of the COP-21 summit at Paris in 2015.

It aims to mobilise more than $1000 billion of investments needed by 2030 for massive deployment of solar energy.
COMMITTEES

The Union Government - constituted a tribunal to decide on banning the Jamaat-e-Islami Jammu and Kashmir (JeL) and the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front-Yasin Malik (JKLF-Y) faction

- The tribunal will be headed by Justice Chander Shekhar of the Delhi High Court
- Both the organisations were declared as unlawful associations by the centre.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

Isro - has postponed its Chandrayaan-2 mission for the fourth time.

- The launch has now been slated for May
- Isro is planning to launch PSLVC-46 followed by PSLVC-47 and Chandrayaan 2 in May
- The lunar mission was pushed from its first deadline of April 2018 to October and again to January and April 2019
- An early launch would have made India the fourth nation to land a craft on the moon.
- Israel’s Beresheet lunar spacecraft, launched by Space X’s Falcon 9, is scheduled to land on the lunar surface on April 11

ECONOMY

GST collection in March - crossed the ₹1-lakh crore mark, the highest since the tax reform measure was rolled out in July 2017

- The GST revenue in March 2019 showed a growth rate of 15.6% over the receipts in the same month last year
- The revenue for the last quarter of 2018-19 was 14.3% higher than that collected during the same period of the previous financial year
The monthly average of GST revenue during 2018-19 was Rs 98,114 crore, 9.2% higher than 2017-18

**The Integral Coach Factory - has said it produced 3,262 coaches for the year ended March 2019**

- It was 30% more than what it did in the previous fiscal
- The Railway Board had set a target of 3,230 coaches for this fiscal to the ICF
- The number of Linke Hoffman Busche (LHB) coaches, a German design which has better safety features, produced by ICF in the period doubled from 1,111 in the 2018-19 financial year
- This is a significant achievement given that Railway Ministry has taken a decision to replace all ICF model coaches into the LHB design coaches
- ICF made more LHB coaches than the other two manufacturing units Rail Coach Factory, Kapurthala and Modern Coach Factory, Raebareli
- While the Kapurthala unit makes around 1,300-1,400 coaches the Raebareli unit builds around 1400 LHB coaches
- The crowning glory was Vande Bharat Express, also known as Train 18, a high speed intercity train designed and built by ICF over a span of 18 months and delivered last fiscal.
**APPOINTMENTS**

- Vinod Dasari - has taken over as the new CEO of cult bike maker, Royal Enfield

  - Dasari takes over from Siddhartha Lal who will continue as the MD of Eicher Motors
  - He will also join Eicher Motors board as its executive director.
  - Dasari shocked the industry with his premature exit announcement from Ashok Leyland last November when his term was until March 2022
  - He was with Ashok Leyland for 14 years.
  - Eicher Motors also announced the appointment of Vinod Aggarwal as non-executive director on the company board also for a period of five years
  - Last August, Royal Enfield had appointed former Triumph India MD Vimal Sumbly as the head of Asia Pacific region
  - In May 2018, Sudhanshu Singh of Star Sports joined as head of global brand.
  - Triumph UK's design head Simon Warburton joined Royal Enfield as head of product development.

**SPORTS**

- Shreya Agarwal, 17 years old shooter – wins gold in junior women’s 10m air rifle event at the Asian Airgun meet in Taoyuan, Taipei

  - Shreya’s gold came with a world record (junior) in the final with a score of 252.5
  - She broke Chinese shooter Ruozhu Zhao’s previous record by 0.1 point
  - Shreya trains at Gagan Narang’s Gun For Glory academy in Jabalpur
  - It was a clean sweep by the Indians in the junior men's 10m air rifle category, as Yash Vardhan (249.5) clinched gold, while Keval Prajapati (247.3) won silver and Aishwarya Pratap Singh Tomar (226.1) took bronze
  - Overall, India finished with 16 gold and 25 total medals.
Former India captain and batting legend Rahul Dravid – will soon be taking over the BCCI’s National Cricket Academy (NCA)

- BCCI has decided to hand over Dravid the responsibility of reconstructing and monitoring Indian cricket’s feeder line.
- The Supreme Court-appointed Committee of Administrators (COA) will be coming up with an advertisement very soon on the role and Dravid will make himself available.
- In this new role, Dravid will be responsible for setting up the academy’s entire coaching staff across the country.
- From specialised zonal coaches to those heading individual responsibilities at the NCA and its’ region-specific centres, all appointments will be overseen by Dravid.
- The NCA head will report to the Board’s General Manager (Operations), the position currently held by Saba Karim.

Indian squash player Saurav Ghosal - broke into the top 10 in the world rankings as per the latest PSA release

- The April rankings which were released on April 1 put the Indian on his career best high of 10 and he is the only Asian to be in the top 10.
- Ghosal also became the first Indian male to reach this high in world rankings.
- Ghosal's earlier best ranking was 11 which he had touched in the October of 2018.
- He reached the quarterfinals of the PSA world championship for the first time in his career and also made it to the last eight in the PSA gold event, Grasshopper Cup in Switzerland.
- Indian squash’s two women stars Joshana Chinappa and Dipika Pallikal have earlier made it to this level in their career.
India - retained the ICC Test Championship and won the purse of $ one million for a consecutive third year

- India finished at the top of the ICC Test team rankings on the cut-off date of April 1 while New Zealand have climbed to second place from third position

- **TEAM RANKINGS**
  1. India (116 points)
  2. New Zealand (108)
  3. South Africa (105)
  4. Australia (104)
  5. England (104)
  6. SL (93)
  7. Pakistan (88)
  8. Windies (77)
  9. Bangladesh (69)
  10. Zimbabwe (13)

All India Football Federation (AIFF) President Praful Patel – was elected as the first Indian to be the member of FIFA Executive Council for a four-year period

- The elections are held in the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) headquarters in Kuala Lumpur on March 30
- Patel is currently the Vice President of AFC and his place in AFC could be taken by the Pakistan representative
- The executive council is FIFA’s highest decision making body and it has never had an Indian member in the past
- Former AIFF president Priyaranjan Dasmunsi was once elected to the technical committee of FIFA
INTERNATIONAL DAY

World Autism Awareness Day - April 2

- The observance of the day intends to spread information about Autism Spectrum Disorder and help the global ASD population lead a healthy social life
- The UN Department of Global Communication and Department of Economic and Social Affairs is the main organization responsible for this day
- According to the World Health Organisation one out of every 160 children is living with autism
- Theme 2019 - ‘Assistive Technologies. Active Participation’
- Autism or Autism Spectrum Disorder is a lifelong developmental disability that affects the functioning of the brain, mostly affecting children and adults in many countries irrespective of gender, race or socio-economic status.
- It is characterized by impairments in social interaction, problems with verbal and non-verbal communication and restricted, repetitive behaviour, interests and activities.

EMISAT – A REPORT

- Electro-Magnetic Intelligence Satellite (Emisat) - is a satellite intended to protect the country's assets including fighter jets and spacecraft by detecting radars in enemy territory
  - It will intercept radar signals and detect the kind of radar and its location.
  - A radar emits radio waves in specific frequencies that hit the targets and bounce back—telling the radar the nature of the target, its movement and distance.
Emisat is a result of a five year development jointly by Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) and Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

Isro's PSLV-C45 on April 1 made unique manoeuvres to three different circular orbits to also inject 28 foreign satellites along with Emisat.