



EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – OCT 15, 2019

TAMIL NADU

- **Tamil Nadu government – is planning to launch a unified skill registry for the educated, skilled and unemployed workforce in the state soon**
 - ✓ The registry has been developed by the Tamil Nadu Skill Development Corporation (TNSDC) of the ministry of labour and employment
 - ✓ It aims to bridge the gap between the young workforce and the industries.
 - ✓ The registry will be the consolidation of various skill training programmes carried out by the ministry of labour and employment.
 - ✓ The candidates trained in various trades by the TNSDC, National Skill Development Agency (NSDA), National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), other government agencies and training partners would be enrolled in the registry
 - ✓ The registry will contain the demographic data of the workforce, including age, gender, trade, districts and education qualification

- **Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) - launched a website — www.clcchennai.in — and a toll-free number 1800 425 8973 for its 'Livelihood Centre' for the welfare of the urban poor.**
 - ✓ The website and toll-free number were inaugurated by GCC commissioner G Prakash on October 14
 - ✓ The livelihood centres contain a registry of the urban poor working in informal sector such as carpentry, plumbing, teaching, housekeeping work, mechanic work, driving and tailoring.
 - ✓ There are four such centres in the city, which acts as a one-stop solution for those seeking services from the informal sector.
 - ✓ These livelihood centres are maintained by Self Help Group (SHG) women who conduct field surveys to gather data on skilled workers among the urban poor
 - ✓ There are 6,334 SHGs in the city with over 76,000 members.
 - ✓ The city is expected to get a total of eight such livelihood centres soon in various neighbourhoods

NATIONAL

- **Eight road-owning state Government agencies - signed MoUs with National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), for allowing use of FasTags to pay toll charges even on state roads.**
- ✓ The government has named this initiative as “One Tag One Nation”
- ✓ The initiative also aims to facilitate people to buy fuel and pay parking charges through the smart card.
- ✓ The agencies that have agreed include UP Expressway Industrial Development Authority, Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation, Tamil Nadu Road Development Corporation, AP Road Development Corporation, Haryana PWD, Karnataka PWD and Karnataka Road Development Corporation.
- ✓ PWDs of Haryana, Punjab, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh too signed MoUs with NHAI for the early rollout of the programme.
- ✓ The GST Network (GSTN) also entered into an agreement with NHAI to integrate GST way bill with FasTags in all commercial vehicles by April 2020, which will help revenue authorities track the movement of such vehicles.
- ✓ The government has already announced that FASTags will be mandatory for all vehicles on all National Highways from December 1.
- ✓ FASTags are a device which make automatic payments at toll booths — the equivalent of Aadhaar for vehicles, thereby allowing the government to track their movement across the country
- ✓ FASTags are acceptable across 490 National Highways out of the total 527, apart from being used at nearly 39 State Highways.
- ✓ Till now, there are six million users in the country.
- ✓ A FASTag uses Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology to make cashless payments through a prepaid account linked to it.
- ✓ The tag is fixed to the windscreen of a vehicle and an RFID antenna in the the toll gate scans the QR code and the tag identification number, following which the vehicle is allowed to pass through the tollgate without the need to stop.

INTERNATIONAL

- **Pakistan – to face strong action by the international terror financing watchdog, FATF and the country may be put in the ‘Dark Grey’ list**
- ✓ The ongoing plenary of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) in Paris has found that the country was ‘compliant’ in only 6 of 27 items
- ✓ The FATF will finalise its decision on Pakistan on October 18
- ✓ According to FATF rules, there is one essential stage between ‘Grey’ and ‘Black’ lists, which is referred to as ‘Dark Grey’.
- ✓ ‘Dark Grey’ means issuance of a strong warning, so that the country concerned gets one final chance to improve.
- ✓ ‘Dark Grey’ was the term used for warning upto third Phase.

- ✓ Now it's just called warning, which is the 4th phase.
- ✓ The FATF is an inter-governmental body established in 1989 to combat money laundering, terror-related financing and other similar threats to the integrity of the international financial system.
- ✓ Pakistan was placed on the Grey List by the Paris-based watchdog in June 2018 and was given an action plan to complete it by October 2019, or face the risk of being placed on the black list on the likes of Iran and North Korea.
- ✓ If Pakistan continues with the 'grey list' or put in 'Dark Grey' list, it becomes tough for the country to get financial aid from the IMF, the World Bank and the European Union, making its financial condition even worsen.

PERSONALITIES

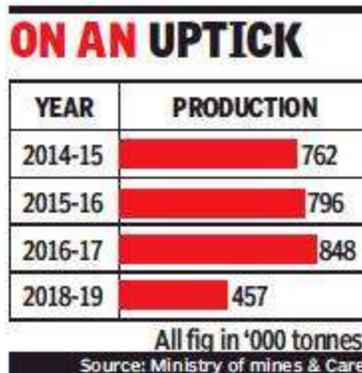
- **Pranjal Patil, India's first visually challenged Woman IAS Officer – takes over charge as the Sub-collector of Thiruvananthapuram on October 14**



- ✓ Hailing from Ulhasnagar in Maharashtra, Patil lost her eyesight at the age of 8 due to retinal detachment.
- ✓ Before the present appointment, the 2017 Kerala cadre officer has served as the assistant collector of Ernakulam during her training period.
- ✓ Earlier, Patil was denied her post in Indian Railway Accounts Service despite a UPSC rank of 773 in 2016
- ✓ In her next attempt, Patil cleared UPSC again with a rank of 124 in 2017, becoming the first blind woman to achieve the honour.
- ✓ Pranjal Patil completed her graduation in political science from St. Xavier's college and Master's in International relations from Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU)
- ✓ Incidentally, International White Cane Day (White Cane Awareness Day in India), which aims to celebrate and honour the achievements of visually-challenged people, is observed on October 14, when Pranjal took charge

ECONOMY

- For the first time in 18 years, India - became a net copper importer as its largest copper smelter — Sterlite in Tuticorin was ordered a permanent closure by the Tamil Nadu state government



- ✓ Copper, an important nonferrous base metal has wide industrial applications, being used in various components including copper motors, wiring, radiators, connectors, brakes and bearings.
- ✓ There are three major companies in Indian market which dominate the primary copper industry - State owned Hindustan Copper and privately held Hindalco Limited and Vedanta's Sterlite
- ✓ Sterlite's unit, part of the billionaire Anil Agarwal controlled Vedanta group, was closed down in May 2018, by the Tamil Nadu government following a protest by locals, leaving 13 dead, who claimed the smelter was a polluter.
- ✓ The Tuticorin Sterlite smelter accounts for 40% of the country's copper smelting capacity
- ✓ The country's copper production fell by 46.1% during FY19 due to the permanent closure of Sterlite's four lakh tonnes per annum copper factory (smelter) in Tuticorin on May 28, 2018
- ✓ Similarly, Imports of copper cathodes have increased by 82.6% and exports have fallen by 72.7%
- ✓ Copper is the third most used metal after steel and aluminum
- ✓ India has just 2% of copper ore reserves and hence these disruptions impact supply side issues dramatically.
- ✓ India imported refined copper from Japan (71%), Congo (6%), Singapore (5%), Chile (4%), Tanzania (4%), UAE (4%) and South Africa (3%) and exported refined copper to China (75%), Taiwan (13%), Malaysia (5%), South Korea (5%) and Bangladesh (2%) during FY19

APPOINTMENTS

- In a first, a serving district and sessions judge, Anoop Kumar Mendiratta - has been appointed as the new law secretary (secretary, legal affairs) in the Union law ministry
- ✓ At present, Mendiratta is serving as the district and sessions judge, North-East District, Karkardooma Courts, Delhi.
- ✓ He has been appointed to the new post on contractual basis till March 30, 2023, i.e. till his attaining the age of 60 years
- ✓ Secretary (Justice) Alok Shrivastava, an IAS officer in the law ministry, was holding the additional charge of law secretary till now.
- ✓ Usually the posts of secretary (legal affairs), also called the law secretary and secretary (legislative department), are held by Indian Legal Service officers
- ✓ The Indian Legal Service has officers till the post of joint secretary, and additional secretaries and the secretary are “ex-cadre” officers

AWARDS

- Mumbai-born, Kolkata-bred economist Abhijit Banerjee - wins the 2019 Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel, popularly called the Nobel Prize in Economics
- ✓ Abhijit will share the award with his colleague and wife Esther Duflo and fellow researcher Michael Kremer for their groundbreaking experiment-based research to reduce global poverty

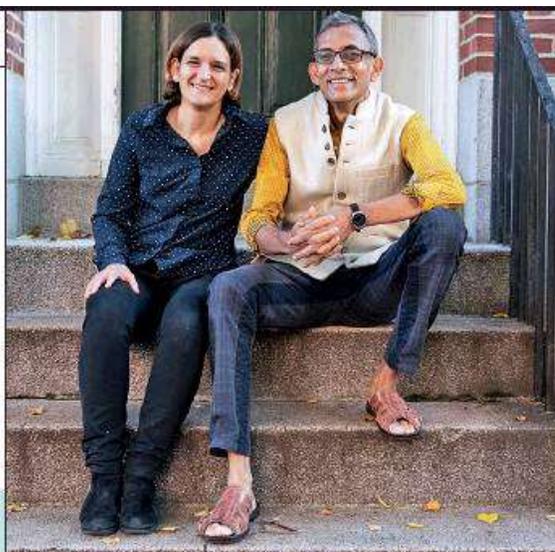
LAUREATE'S LIFE & WORK

- **Born:** Feb 21, 1961 in Mumbai to economist parents Dipak and Nirmala Banerjee
- **Studied at** South Point School and Presidency College, Kolkata; Masters at JNU, PhD at Harvard
- **Taught at** Princeton (4 yrs), Harvard (1 yr) & MIT since 1993
- **Currently** professor of economics at MIT, co-founder of Abdul Latif Jameel Action Lab
- **Shares Nobel with** Esther Duflo (MIT) and Michael Kremer (Harvard). Duflo, his wife, is the 2nd woman and youngest person

- (46) to win the Economics Nobel
- **9th Indian Nobel Winner** including overseas citizens; fourth from Bengal, counting Mother Teresa, and the second from Presidency
- **On hearing of the prize**, Banerjee went back to sleep. “I’m not an early morning person. I figured it would be an assault to the system if I don’t continue my sleep,” he told NobelPrize.org
- **Amartya Sen** said he was “very very happy and delighted” on hearing the news

“In just two decades, their new experiment-based approach has transformed development economics, which is now a flourishing field of research

— Nobel Prize Committee



Abhijit Banerjee & Esther Duflo at their Boston home. She was his doctoral student at MIT and they got married in 2015

- ✓ Banerjee is the second Indian to win an Economics Nobel after Amartya Sen, who was a good friend of his father, the late Dipak Banerjee, who headed Kolkata’s Presidency college economics department

- ✓ Dr. Banerjee and Dr. Duflo are both affiliated with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Dr. Kremer is associated with Harvard University.
- ✓ The three will equally share the prize money of 9 million Swedish krona (about \$916,798/₹6.53 crore).
- ✓ In 2003, Duflo and Banerjee (along with Sendhil Mullainathan, also from India and now with the University of Chicago) co-founded the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL), a global network of anti-poverty researchers that conducts field experiments, at MIT
- ✓ Among J-PAL's notable interventions are deworming programmes that have been adopted widely

The 2019 economics laureates' work shows how the challenge of ending global poverty can be dealt with by breaking it down into a number of smaller, more precise, questions at individual or group levels. These component questions are then sought to be answered using specially designed field experiments



WHY THE LAUREATES CHOSE FIELD EXPERIMENTS: TWO EXAMPLES

1 Say, the search is for solutions that enhance educational outcomes at the lowest cost? One could wonder whether pupils' results would improve if they had access to more textbooks? Or if giving them free school meals be more effective?

HOW THE LAUREATES' APPROACH WORKS: They identified groups of schools and provided those with extra resources. In one study, one group was given more textbooks, while another examined free school meals

- The experiments showed that neither more textbooks nor free school meals made any difference to learning outcomes. If the textbooks had any positive effect, it only applied to the very best pupils

The trio found that the chief issue in many low-income countries is not a lack of resources but that teaching is not sufficiently adapted to students' needs

- Further, through an experiment that provided remedial tutoring for pupils in Mumbai and Vadodara, Banerjee and Duflo would go on to show that it is help directed towards the weakest pupils that has a positive impact in the short and medium term

2 Another field experiment explored how the demand for deworming pills was affected by price. They found that 75% of parents gave their children these pills when the medicine was free, compared to 18% when they cost less than a \$1

- The experiment, done in Africa, showed that poor people are extremely conscious of the price when it comes to spending on preventive medicine and that low service quality is another factor that prevents them from spending on health
- Banerjee, Duflo would show that mobile vaccination clinics – where the care staff were always on site – could fix the problem. Vaccination rates tripled in villages that were randomly selected to have access to these clinics. And, it increased dramatically if families received a bag of lentils as a bonus when they vaccinated their children



In the laureates' field experiments, more textbooks and free school meals had small effects, while targeted help for a weak students significantly improved education outcomes

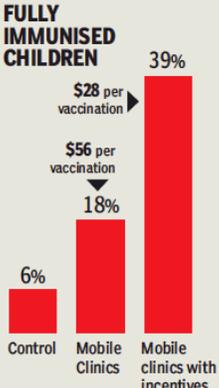
WHAT ARE RANDOMISED CONTROL TRIALS?

- The main tool employed by the trio to gauge the efficacy of policies to combat development challenges was the randomised controlled field trial
- A randomised controlled trial (RCT) is a method to estimate the causal impact of a certain intervention or policy. RCTs were pioneered by agricultural researchers in crop studies a century ago and are now majorly associated with clinical and field trials in medicine

POLICY INFLUENCE OF THE LAUREATES' WORK

- The studies of remedial tutoring paved the way for large-scale support programmes that have now reached more than five million Indian children
- In light of the deworming study, the WHO recommends that medicine be distributed free to the over 800m schoolchildren living in areas where more than 20% of them have a specific type of parasitic worm infection

FULLY IMMUNISED CHILDREN



Source: nobelprize.org; media reports

- ✓ Much of Banerjee's work centres on economic policies and research relating to India, particularly in the field of microfinance and financial inclusion
- ✓ Abhijit Banerjee and his wife Esther Duflo have been working with the Tamil Nadu government on improving governance

- ✓ The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) has signed an MoU with the Tamil Nadu government in November 2014 - to evaluate and monitor ongoing or new schemes and to adopt a result/outcome-based approach

KEY STUDIES IN INDIA

MIT's Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab, or J-PAL, was co-founded in 2003 by Esther Duflo, Abhijit Banerjee and Sendhil Mullainathan. It has since conducted over 900 trials, including many in India, to test policy effectiveness. Some of the more well-known studies in India include:



Smokeless chulhas/ improved biomass cookstoves may not help reduce indoor air pollution | Duflo's study in Odisha found that villagers given such stoves stopped using them after some time

Remedial tutoring in schools may help improve learning | Testing Pratham's Balsakhi programme in Mumbai and Vadodara, researchers found it to be a cost-effective way to improve test scores

Incentives can increase immunisation | Researchers in Rajasthan found regular vaccination camps along with an incentive – a bag of lentils – increased the likelihood of immunisation more than six times

- ✓ J-PAL works with 7 Tamil Nadu government departments --health, education, labour and employment, housing and urban development, social welfare and nutritious meal programme, MSMEs, and commercial taxes in various projects.

OTHER INDIANS IN THE NOBEL GALLERY



RABINDRANATH TAGORE
(1861–1941)
Literature, 1913



CV RAMAN
(1888–1970)
Physics, 1930



SUBRAHMANYAN CHANDRASEKHAR
(1910–1995)*
Physics, 1983



AMARTYA SEN
(b. 1933)
Economics, 1998



HAR GOBIND KHORANA
(1922–2011)*
Medicine and physiology, 1968



MOTHER TERESA
(1910–1997)**
Peace, 1979



VENKATRAMAN RAMAKRISHNAN
(b. 1952)*
Chemistry, 2009



KAILASH SATYARTH
(b. 1954)
Peace, 2014

*Of Indian origin, these people took citizenship of other nations: Khorana (American), Chandrasekhar (American), and Ramakrishnan (American and British).
**She was of Albanian origin, but took Indian citizenship.
Source: www.nobelprize.org

- ✓ The Tamil Nadu government's spending of \$3.5 million is matched by J-Pal's co-funding on projects, researchers, policy dialogues and capacity building.
- ✓ J-Pal was entrusted with 15 studies, of which pilot or scoping studies (formative research) were completed in respect of 9

Married Nobel Couples



- ✓ Abhijit has also been the secretary of the high-level panel of the United Nations for the post-2015 development agenda
- ✓ His book 'Poor Economics' won the title of Goldman's Sach Business Book of the Year.

SPORTS

- **Former East Zone chief curator Ashish Bhowmick - has been named head of BCCI's panel of curators.**

LIST OF CURATORS

ELITE PANEL: Ashish Bhowmick (Head/East), Taposh Chatterjee (Central), Prashanth K (South), Sunil Chouhan (North), Prakash Adhav (West)
EMERGING PANEL: SB Singh, K Nagamallaiiah, Mohananan, Ishtyaque Khan, Rakesh Kumar

- ✓ He will be replacing Daljit Singh, who is retiring soon
- ✓ The BCCI has decided to remove the zonal curators system and instead formed an elite panel along with an emerging panel.
- ✓ The elite panel consists of one curator from each zone.
- ✓ All curators — appointed for a period of one year effective from October 1, 2019 — will work under Bhowmick
- **Zimbabwe – has been readmitted as an International Cricket Council member on October 14 following a three-month suspension over political interference**
- ✓ Nepal has also been readmitted as an ICC member on a conditional basis following their 2016 suspension

- ✓ Nepal was earlier suspended for a breach of the ICC regulations which prohibit government interference and require free and fair elections.
- ✓ The ICC had also approved the establishment of an under-19 women's T20 World Cup with the first edition to be played in Bangladesh in 2021 and every two years after that.

REMEMBERING FORMER PRESIDENT AND MISSILE MAN OF INDIA, DR. A.P.J.ABDUL KALAM ON HIS 88TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY

- The great scientist, former President of the country and 'Bharat Ratna' APJ Abdul Kalam was born in Rameshwaram (Tamil Nadu) on October 15, 1931

THE PEOPLE'S PRESIDENT
A. P. J. Abdul Kalam
(15 October 1931 – 27 July 2015)

11th President of India from 2002 to 2007.

Made India a nuclear state. Was project coordinator of Pokhran-II, 1998.

In DRDO, developed & operationalized the AGNI and PRITHVI Missiles.

Received honorary doctorates from 30 universities and institutions.

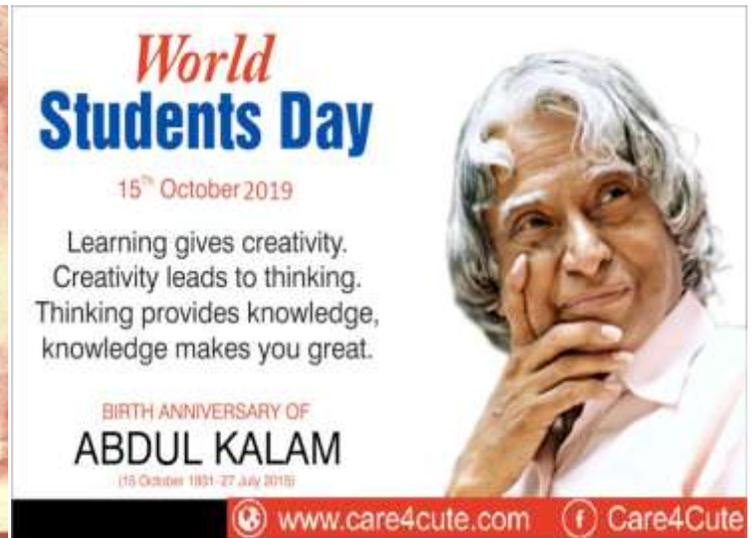
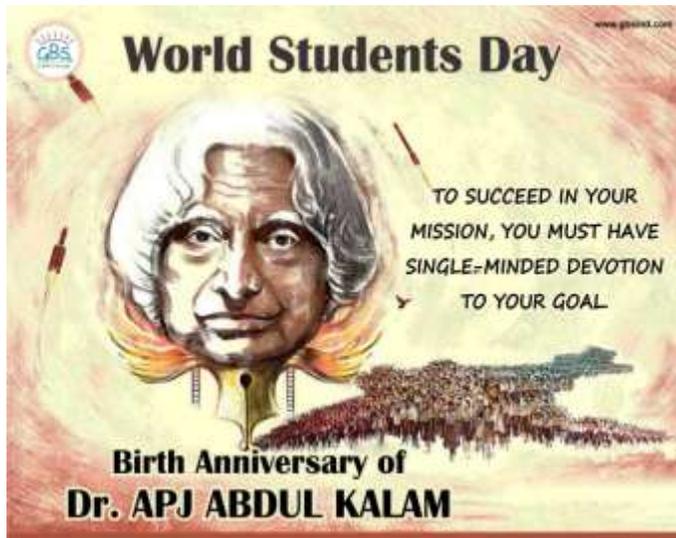
Was Project Director of India's first indigenous Satellite Launch Vehicle (SLV-III) which injected the 'Rohini' satellite in the orbit of earth in 1980.

Responsible for evolution of ISRO's launch vehicle programme, particularly the PSLV configuration.

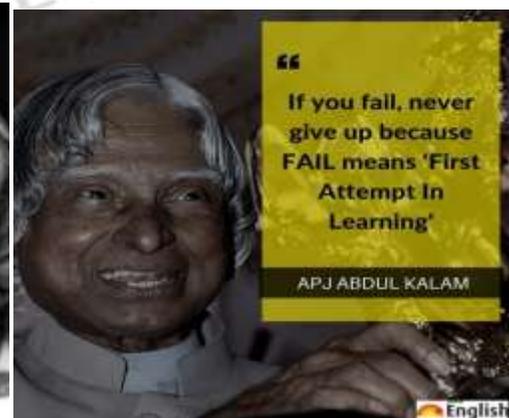
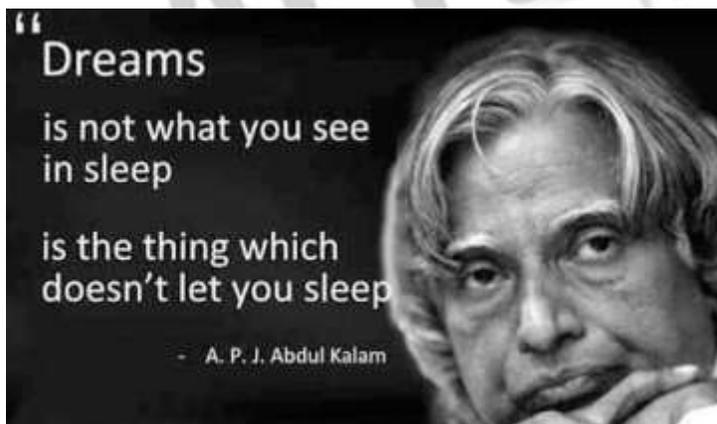
Awarded Bharat Ratna in 1997

DD NATIONAL @DDNational

- ✓ The former President used to sell newspapers to support family's income in childhood
- ✓ In 1954, Kalam completed his undergraduation in Physics from St. Joseph's College in Tiruchirappalli (affiliated to Madras University)
- ✓ Dr. Kalam received a degree in aeronautical engineering from Madras Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1960.
- ✓ India built its first indigenous satellite launch vehicle SLV-3 under Dr. Kalam's direction apart from building other missiles such as 'Agni' and 'Prithvi'.
- ✓ Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam prepared a vision 2020 document so that India can become a superpower in the field of science and technology by 2020.



- ✓ Dr Kalam has written many books and some of the famous books include - Wings of Fire, India 2020, Ignited Maid, My Journey among others.
- ✓ Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam received doctorate degree from more than 40 universities
- ✓ Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam was awarded the country's highest civilian honor, the Padma Bhushan in 1981 and then the Padma Vibhushan in 1990 and the Bharat Ratna in 1997
- ✓ Kalam is the third President of the country, after Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan and Zakir Hussain, to receive the Bharat Ratna before the appointment as the President of the country



- ✓ He served as visiting professor at the Indian Institute of Management, Shillong, an honorary fellow of Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore and visiting professor at the Indian Institute of Management Indore after leaving office of President of India.
- ✓ Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam passed away on July 27, 2015, while delivering his last lecture at the Indian Institute of Management Shillong when he experienced some discomfort and collapsed
- ✓ APJ Abdul Kalam Memorial was built in the memory of great scientist by DRDO in Pei Karumbu, in the island town of Rameshwaram, Tamil Nadu.

REPORT

WHY THE MOST IMPORTANT LIVING BEING ON EARTH IS

THE BEE

Its sting can hurt, but if they were to disappear, it would hurt a lot more

Bees have been declared the most important living beings on this planet, the Earthwatch Institute concluded in the last meeting of the Royal Geographical Society of London. However, according to wildlife experts and scientists, the bees have joined the long list of endangered species



Why bees are so important

70% of the world agriculture depends on these insects. To put it more clearly and directly, we could say that 70 of 100 foods are intervened in favour by the bees



Pollination by bees facilitates reproduction in plants that in turn helps in the production of food. Indirectly, bees help ensure there's food on your table



Bees are the only living beings that are not carriers of pathogens, be it fungi, viruses or bacteria. Bees are mostly not seen as vectors of diseases affecting humans



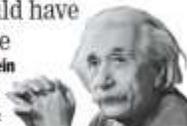
The honey produced by bees not only serves as food, but also provides many health benefits



“If the bees disappear, humans would have 4 years to live”

— Albert Einstein

Though this quote has been widely attributed to Einstein, there is no proof of it.



■ The oldest known honeybee specimen dates back 100 million years. It was discovered in 2006



■ The 17th century naturalist Jan Swammerdam discovered that the 'king bee' had ovaries and was in fact a queen



■ In 1923, scientist Rudolf Steiner predicted that within 100 years artificial cultivation of honeybees would have severe consequences on bee population



Why are they facing extinction?

Pesticides

1 One of the issues is the use of pesticides in agriculture. These products contain chemicals that act as neurotoxins and attach themselves to insects. They end up being carried by bees to their hives, where they contaminate the colony. Not only does it affect the honey they produce, but it also endangers the survival of the colony itself



Mobile towers

2 A major reason for large-scale disappearance of bees is mobile telephony. This was affirmed by the Federal Institute of Technology in Switzerland after proving that the waves emitted by devices are capable of disorienting bees, resulting in them losing their sense of direction and ending in their death



3 Other reasons include deforestation, climate change and industrial pollution



Are there solutions to the problem?

Since the crisis is linked to agriculture and food production, large-scale solutions will require time and significant investment. But at the ground level, these are some strategies that experts say could work



1 Prohibit, not reduce, the use of toxic pesticides



2 Promote completely natural agricultural practices



3 Perform constant research and monitor the health, welfare and conservation of bees

Source: Earthwatch Institute & the Royal Geographical Society of London