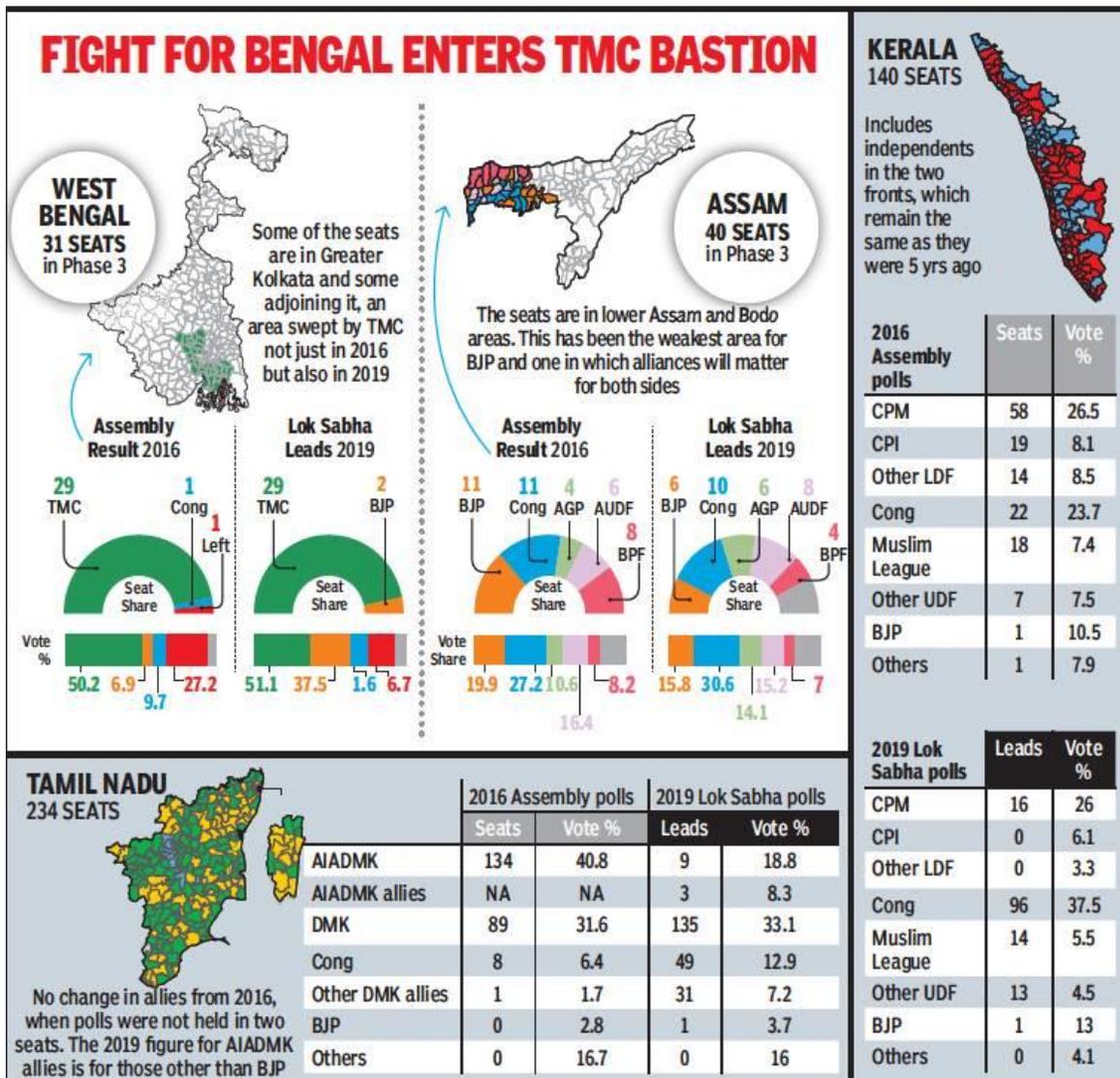


EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – APRIL 6, 2021

TAMIL NADU

- On April 6, the Assembly elections in Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry – to be held in a single phase



- ✓ Further, Assam will witness the third and last phase of the elections on the day, while Bengal will witness the third round of polling, out of the total eight rounds
- ✓ In all, the polling exercise covers 475 seats on the day, by far the biggest of this round of state polls.
- ✓ A total of 3,998 candidates are in the fray for the 234 seats for the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly.
- ✓ Polling will open for 12 hours from 7am on April 6, with the last hour from 6pm to 7pm reserved for Covid patients.
- ✓ All voters will have to wear masks to the polling booths, where their temperature will be checked before they are given a glove to go in and cast their vote.
- ✓ As many as 1.58 lakh security personnel, including 23,200 from Central forces, will on duty at the 88,937 polling booths in the state
- ✓ This includes the 30,000 booths added in view of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- ✓ The authorities will webcast polling at 46,203 booths.
- ✓ There are 537 critical and 10,813 vulnerable booths in the state, which will be monitored by the micro observer-led teams who would report to the observers.
- ✓ As many as 4.17 lakh government staff members have been trained for poll duty.
- ✓ The ruling AIADMK and its arch-rival, the DMK are in a direct contest in 131 seats.
- ✓ The AIADMK allies, the BJP and the PMK, contest in 20 and 23 seats respectively, while seven smaller allies, including the TMC contest in 12 seats on AIADMK's 'two leaves' symbol.
- ✓ The DMK allotted 25 seats to its ally Congress, and six each for CPI, CPM, VCK and MDMK.
- ✓ The MDMK, VCK and six DMK allies contest in 14 seats on the DMK's 'rising sun' symbol.
- ✓ As per the latest data, the state has 6.28 crore voters, including 3.09 crore male and 3.19 crore female voters and 7,192 of the third gender.

STATES

- **IAF helicopters - began their firefighting operations in Uttarakhand on April 5**



- ✓ They have conducted several sorties over the burning forests in the Garhwal region to spray water over the raging flames and extinguish them.
 - ✓ An IAF helicopter with a bucket carrying around 5,000 litres of water from the Tehri lake doused the flaming forests of Gaja, Pokhri and Quili in the Narendra Nagar forest division
 - ✓ The boating activities in the Tehri lake were kept suspended during the day so that the IAF helicopters can collect water from the lake in an uninterrupted way.
 - ✓ The state has reported 85 fresh forest fire incidents in the last 24 hours in which 165.45 hectares of forests have been destroyed.
- **West Bengal – has emerged as the top contributor to the Small Savings Scheme in the country**
- ✓ The state contributes 15% of the total corpus and has collected Rs 90,000 crore so far, under the Small Savings Scheme.
 - ✓ This was announced by the National Savings Institute operating under the Ministry of Finance
 - ✓ West Bengal was followed by Uttar Pradesh with a contribution of 15.09% and a total collection of Rs 69,660 crore.
 - ✓ Maharashtra was ranked third with a contribution of 10.57% amounting to Rs 63,026 crore.
 - ✓ Gujarat was ranked fourth and contributed 8.16% and Rs 48,645 crore.
 - ✓ Tamil Nadu ranked fifth contributed 4.8%, which is equivalent to a total collection of Rs 28,598.
 - ✓ The Small Savings Schemes attracted an overall deposit of Rs 6 lakh crore in 2017-18.
 - ✓ The Small Savings Schemes consist of twelve instruments such as National Savings Certificate, Public Provident Fund, Kisan Vikas Patra, Sukanya Samriddhi Scheme etc.,

NATIONAL

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi - will address the fourth edition of his annual interaction with students — “Pariksha Pe Charcha”— at 7 PM on April 7 in a new virtual format.**



- ✓ The new format will have several interesting questions on a wide range of subjects along with a discussion with students, parents and teachers.
 - ✓ In February, it was announced that the PM's interaction with students will be held online this year in view of the Covid-19 situation.
 - ✓ The first edition of the interactive programme with school and college students was held at Talkatora Stadium, New Delhi on February 16, 2018.
 - ✓ The second edition of the interaction programme was also held at the same venue on 29th January, 2019.
 - ✓ The third edition was held at the same venue, Talkatora Stadium on 20th January, 2020.
 - ✓ The programme will be aired on TV channels and digital media in Hindi and other major Indian languages.
 - ✓ An online creative writing competition was recently conducted on various topics from February 17 to March 14 for children studying in Classes IX-XII, teachers and parents.
 - ✓ Around 14 lakh participants registered for the contest which included 10.5 lakh students, 2.6 lakh teachers and 92,000 parents.
 - ✓ For the first time, students from 81 countries participated in the creative writing contest.
- **The construction of the arch of the world's highest railway bridge - was completed on April 5 by the Northern Railways**



- ✓ The overall weight of the Arch is 10,619 metric tonnes and the arch span is 467 metres
- ✓ The bridge is located at 359 metres above the bed of the Chenab river in Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir
- ✓ The 1.3-kilometre-long bridge aims to boost connectivity of the rest of the country with the Kashmir Valley
- ✓ The bridge is being constructed at a cost of ₹1,486 crore as part of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Railway Link (USBRL) project.
- ✓ The bridge, which is 35-metre higher than the Eiffel Tower in Paris, is expected to be completed within a year.

- ✓ Railway Minister Piyush Goyal watched the lowering of the closure segment of the arch by cable crane through a video link from Delhi.
- ✓ The construction of Chenab bridge was declared as a national project in 2002.
- **The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) - recently launched a 100-day drive named “SANKALP SE SIDDHI”.**
- ✓ The main aim of the drive is to activate the Van Dhan Vikas Kendras located in tribal villages to generate more revenue
- ✓ It aims to cover 1,500 villages in India within hundred days starting from April 1, 2021
- ✓ Around one hundred and fifty teams have been formed to visit ten villages each, as part of the drive.
- ✓ The visiting teams will identify locations and shortlist potential Van Dhan Vikas Kendras for clustering as TRIFOOD, and SFURTI units as larger enterprises.
- ✓ SFURTI is Scheme for Fund for the Regeneration of Traditional Industries.
- ✓ TRIFOOD, a joint initiative of Ministry of Food Processing and TRIFED operating under Ministry of Tribal Affairs, was launched in August 2020.
- ✓ TRIFOOD aims to enhance the income of tribals through better utilization of and value addition to the Minor Forest Produce collected by the tribal forest gatherers.
- ✓ It will also identify tribal artisans and other groups and empanel them as suppliers
- ✓ This will provide the tribals more access to larger markets through the Tribes India network - both physical outlets and TribesIndia.com.
- ✓ The Van Dhan Vikas Kendras were established under the Van Dhan Yojana.
- ✓ A Van Dhan Vikas Kendra is formed by fifteen tribal self-help groups with each group consists of twenty artisans or tribal food gatherers.
- ✓ The first Van Dhan Vikas Kendra was established in Bijapur district, Chhattisgarh.
- **The National Statistical Office - recently released the ‘Women and Men in India’ report.**
- ✓ The report consolidates the main socio-economic indicators that tracks gender situation in the country.
- ✓ This is the twenty second issue in its series.
- ✓ The report is published annually by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)
- Key findings of the report
- ✓ As per the report, the projected population of India in 2021 is 136.13 crores.
- ✓ The sex ratio has increased from 933 in 2001 to 943 in 2011.
- ✓ Delhi recorded the maximum increase in sex ratio followed by Chandigarh and Arunachal Pradesh, while Daman and Diu had the highest drop in sex ratio.
- ✓ The age specific fertility rate for the females belonging to the age group 25-29 years stood at the highest at 146.4.
- ✓ The infant mortality rate declined from 39 in 2014 to 32 in 2018.
- ✓ The maternal mortality rate dropped from 212 in 2007-09 to 113 in 2016-18.

- ✓ The total fertility rate of rural and urban India stood at 2.3 and 1.7 in 2018.
 - ✓ According to National Family Health Survey-5 (NFHS-5), almost 100% institutional delivery was observed in the states of Goa, Kerala and Lakshadweep.
 - ✓ The HIV incidence per 1000 people declined from 0.07 in 2017 to 0.05 in 2019.
 - ✓ The literacy rate of India went up from 73 in 2011 to 77.7 in 2017.
 - ✓ The gender gap in literacy rates was the highest in Rajasthan, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.
 - ✓ As per the report, only 8.3% of females of age 15 years had completed graduation, while 12.8% of males of the same age had completed graduation.
 - ✓ According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey, 2018-19, the worker population ratio in rural sector was 52.1 for males and 19 for females, while in urban areas, it was 52.7 for males and 14.5 for females.
 - ✓ The representation of women in the Central Council of Ministers is 9.26% in 2020.
 - ✓ In 2019 Lok Sabha election, there were 437.8 million women electors as against 397 million in 2014 election
 - ✓ Highest women participation in the Panchayati Raj institutions was observed in the states of Rajasthan, Uttarakhand and Chhattisgarh.
- **The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs - recently announced that over twenty lakh street vendors have been provided loans under the PM SVANidhi scheme as on March 29, 2021.**
- ✓ Of this, eighteen lakh loans were provided by the public sector banks, while the private sector banks have provided only 32,534 loans.
 - ✓ Among the public sector banks, the State Bank of India topped the list and has provided 5.8 lakh loans under the scheme, followed by Union Bank of India and Bank of Baroda.
 - ✓ Among the private banks, Jammu and Kashmir Limited was the largest contributor with 9,595 loans disbursed under the scheme.
 - ✓ Among the States and Union Territories, Uttar Pradesh has disbursed maximum number of loans under the scheme, followed by Madhya Pradesh and Telangana.
 - ✓ Of the total beneficiaries, fruits and vegetable vendors accounted 45% of the total loans.
 - ✓ Further, the hawkers selling fast food accounted 21%, while the hawkers selling cloth and handloom material accounted 13% of the loans
 - ✓ The PM SVANidhi scheme is the Prime Minister Street Vendor Atma Nirbhar Nidhi launched in June 2020.
 - ✓ The scheme aims to provide credit facilities to street vendors affected by COVID-19.
 - ✓ It is implemented by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.
 - ✓ Under the scheme, the vendors are provided with an initial capital loan of Rs 10,000 with an interest subsidy of 7% without any collateral security

- **The Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan - recently launched the Integrated Health Information Platform.**



- ✓ According to the health ministry, India is the first country to adopt such an advanced surveillance system.
 - ✓ The Integrated Health Information Platform is to operate under the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme.
 - ✓ The Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) operates under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
 - ✓ The platform aims to strengthen the disease surveillance in the country.
 - ✓ This is to be achieved by establishing a decentralised state-based surveillance system for epidemic prone diseases.
 - ✓ The key features of the platform are real time data reporting through use of mobile applications, geo-tagging of health facilities, etc.
 - ✓ The platform will hold information about prevalence of disease in different districts of the country.
 - ✓ The information is to be collected through ASHA workers and ANMs.
 - ✓ The IDSP was launched in 2004 to detect and respond to disease outbreaks quickly with the assistance of the World Bank.
- **The WazirX, one of the leading cryptocurrency exchanges - has recently launched India's first market place for NFT.**
 - ✓ The new market place allows Indian creators to place their digital assets (such as images or videos, music, etc) for auction and earn royalty.
 - ✓ NFT refers to Non-Fungible Tokens, which represents a unique digital item
 - ✓ It is applicable to audios, art, videos, video games or other forms of creative works.
 - ✓ A NFT is a cryptographic token, which are not mutually interchangeable, i.e., not fungible, unlike cryptocurrencies
 - ✓ A NFT is created when a file of art work is uploaded to the NFT auction market.
 - ✓ NFTs were first created on Ethereum standard.
 - ✓ The other block chains used to create NFT assets are Flow and Tezos.
- **India – has achieved a record level of ethanol blending in the first four months of ethanol supply year 2020-21**

- ✓ India has reached an ethanol blend of more than 7.2%, the first time country has reached this level.
 - ✓ At this rate, India shall reach an average blending of 8% by November 2021
 - ✓ So far, the best ever ethanol blend with petrol in India was 5.2%.
 - ✓ This puts the country right on its course of achieving the target of 10% blending by 2022.
 - ✓ In states of Karnataka, Gujarat, Goa, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Delhi, Daman and Diu, Himachal Pradesh, 9.5% to 10% ethanol is being blended with petrol.
 - ✓ These states and union territories are very close to achieving the 2022 target.
 - ✓ As ethanol consists of oxygen, it allows easy and complete combustion of the fuel.
 - ✓ Ethanol is considered as a renewable fuel as it is produced from plants that use the power of sun
 - ✓ Ethanol can be mixed with gasoline to form different blends
 - ✓ The ethanol blended programme was launched in 2003
- **The President of India, Ram Nath Kovind - recently promulgated the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Ordinance, 2021 and was notified by the government on April 5, 2021**
- ✓ The ordinance will allow Pre-packaged Insolvency Resolution Process called 'PIRP', exclusively for MSMEs, hit by Covid-19 pandemic
 - ✓ The ordinance introduces PIRP for corporate persons classified as MSMEs under the MSME Development Act, 2006.
 - ✓ It aims to provide an efficient alternative insolvency resolution process for the corporate persons classified as MSMEs.
 - ✓ The ordinance allows the corporate debtor to submit a "base resolution plan" to the resolution professional to initiate PIRP.
 - ✓ If the committee of creditors did not approve the plan, then the resolution professional shall invite applicants to submit different plans.
 - ✓ The new pre-pack framework is applicable to MSMEs with a maximum default value of Rs 1 crore.
 - ✓ During the PIRP framework, the management of affairs of the corporate debtor will continue to vest with the Board of Directors.
 - ✓ The management control lies with the corporate debtor in possession with creditor in control.
 - ✓ PIRP provides 90 days of timeline to submit a resolution plan.

SUPREME COURT

- **On April 5, the Supreme Court - appointed two judicial officers, Arun Bhardwaj and Sanjay Bansal, as special judges to try the coal block allocation scam cases pending since 2014.**

- ✓ Earlier, five judicial officers were selected by the Chief Justice of the Delhi high court to decide on these cases
- ✓ A bench headed by Chief Justice of India S A Bobde, comprising Justices A S Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian, examined the names and appointed two of them to try 41 pending coal scam case
- ✓ The two judges will replace special judge Bharat Parashar
- ✓ The coal block allocation matter has been pending for about six years when the law contemplates the disposal of such matters in two years which may be extended up to four times by periods of six months each.
- ✓ On March 15, the Supreme Court had asked the chief justice of the Delhi high court to suggest five judges of high caliber to replace Parashar.
- ✓ In 2014, the Supreme Court quashed 214 coal block allocations made by the Centre between 1993 and 2010

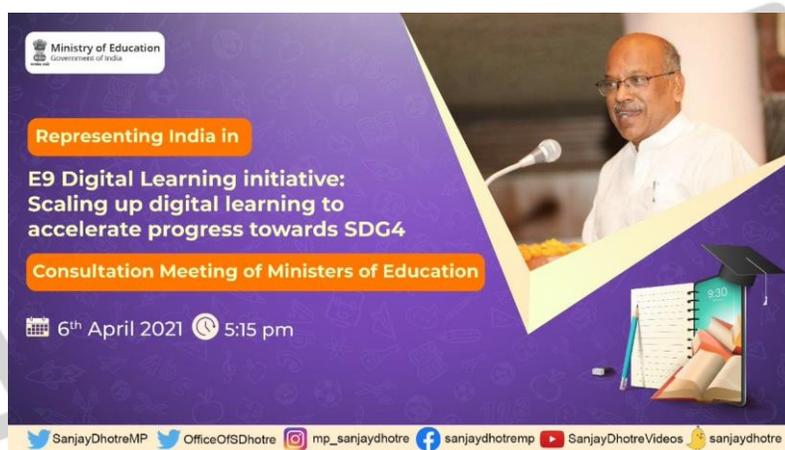
INTERNATIONAL

- **On April 5, Russian President Vladimir Putin - gave final approval to legislation allowing him to hold office for two additional six-year terms, giving himself the possibility to stay in power until 2036.**
- ✓ The 68-year-old Russian leader has already been in power for more than two decades
- ✓ According to Article 81 of Russian Constitution, the same person cannot hold the office of President more than two terms in a row.
- ✓ Putin proposed the change last year as part of constitutional reforms that Russians overwhelmingly backed in a vote in July.
- ✓ Russians ultimately voted 78% in favour of the changes.
- ✓ The lawmakers approved the bill last month, which will reset presidential term limits
- ✓ It will allow Putin to run in elections again after his current and second consecutive term expires in 2024.
- ✓ Putin was first elected president in 2000 and served two consecutive four-year terms.
- ✓ His ally Dmitry Medvedev took his place in 2008
- ✓ While in office, Medvedev approved a law extending terms to six years starting with the next president.
- ✓ Putin then returned to the Kremlin in 2012 and won re-election in 2018.
- ✓ Putin would be 85 when he leaves office if he is elected and serves two additional terms to their end in 2036.

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- **The upcoming Raisina Dialogue 2021, India's flagship global conference on geopolitics - will be held as a fully digital event.**

- ✓ The decision to hold the event in the digital format was taken as a measure of “abundant caution” considering the Covid-19 pandemic situation.
 - ✓ Earlier, the event was planned as a hybrid event that envisaged both online as well as in-person speakers and delegates.
 - ✓ The conference is being organised by the Observer Research Foundation in partnership with the ministry of external affairs (MEA).
 - ✓ It is scheduled to be held from April 13-15, 2021
 - ✓ US Special envoy for Afghan peace process Zalmay Khalizad, Australian foreign minister Marise Payne, French foreign minister Jean-Yves Le Drian, Afghan national security advisor Hamdullah Mohib are among the key personalities who are scheduled to speak at the dialogue.
- **Minister of State for Education Sanjay Dhotre – will attend a consultative meeting of Education Ministers of E9 countries on April 6.**



- ✓ The meeting is to be held under the following theme – “E9 initiative: Scaling up digital learning to accelerate progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 4”
- ✓ The consultation is the first of a three-phased process to develop an initiative on digital learning and skills
- ✓ It aims to target marginalised children and youth, especially girls.
- ✓ The initiative will mainly accelerate three of the 2020 Global Education Meeting objectives - support to teachers, investment in skills and narrowing of the digital divide
- ✓ The 2020 Global Education Meeting was organised by UNESCO.
- ✓ The E9 forum consisting of nine countries was created to achieve the goals of “Education for All” global initiative of UNESCO.
- ✓ The ‘Education for All’ initiative was adopted by the Dakar Framework in April 2000.
- ✓ It aims to meet the learning needs of youth, children and adults.
- ✓ In E9, E stands for Education and 9 represents nine member countries.
- ✓ The member countries of E9 initiative are Brazil, Bangladesh, China, Egypt, Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Mexico and Nigeria.

- ✓ The E9 initiative was launched at the EFA Summit in New Delhi.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **The Chinese scientists - have recently identified the transfer of genes from plants to insects.**



- ✓ Usually transfer of genes happen among the same family of species.
- ✓ The transfer of gene from one family to another is referred to as 'horizontal gene transfer'.
- ✓ As per the latest discovery, a type of insect called whiteflies has incorporated a portion of DNA from plants into their genome.
- ✓ The Chinese scientists have found that the insect whiteflies use the stolen gene, named 'BtPMT1', to neutralize and degrade common toxins in plants.
- ✓ Plants use these toxins to defend themselves against insects.
- ✓ The incorporation of the plant gene in the whiteflies allows the insects to feed on the plants safely.
- ✓ According to the scientists, the whiteflies have incorporated the gene from the plants more than 35 million years ago.
- ✓ This is one of the main reasons why whiteflies are still considered as the major threat to agricultural crops.
- ✓ The whiteflies have built a strong defence mechanism against the plants using this gene incorporation.
- ✓ Whiteflies are one of the major agricultural pests in the world.
- ✓ They are capable of attacking 600 different plants all over the world.
- ✓ Using this discovery, the Chinese scientists have now developed a new molecule that will interfere with the gene BtPMT1.
- ✓ In 2020, the National Botanical Research Institute, Lucknow developed a Whiteflies resistant cotton variety.
- ✓ Cotton is one of the worst hit crops by whiteflies in India.

DEFENCE

- **India and the three other Quad countries - kicked off a major naval exercise "La Pérouse" with France in the Bay of Bengal on April 5**

- ✓ India deployed its advanced stealth frigate INS Satpura and anti-submarine warfare corvette INS Kiltan, along with P-8I long range maritime patrol aircraft, for the three-day exercise led by France.



- ✓ The exercise will witness complex and advanced naval operations
 - ✓ This includes surface warfare, anti-air warfare and air defence operations as well as weapon firings, cross-deck flying, tactical manoeuvres and seamanship evolutions such as replenishment at sea
 - ✓ The ongoing Quad-plus-France exercise will showcase high levels of synergy, coordination and interoperability between the five friendly navies.
 - ✓ France has fielded amphibious assault warship Tonnerre and frigate Surcouf for the exercise
 - ✓ The US is represented by amphibious transport dock ship Somerset.
 - ✓ Australia, in turn, has deployed frigate Anzac and tanker Sirius, while Japan is represented by destroyer Akebono.
 - ✓ The navies of the Quad, namely India, the US, Japan and Australia, had also come together for the high-voltage Malabar exercise in the Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea in November last year after a gap of 13 years.
 - ✓ Last week, Indian warships and fighters also held another exercise with the mammoth nuclear-powered USS Theodore Roosevelt and its accompanying warships in the same region
- **On April 4, the multinational military exercise “Shantir Ogroshena, 2021” - began at Bangabandhu Senanibas, Bangladesh.**
- ✓ The exercise is being held to commemorate the birth centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Father of Bangladesh.
 - ✓ The exercise is to be held between April 4, 2021 and April 12, 2021.
 - ✓ Indian Army contingent of thirty personnel are participating in the exercise.
 - ✓ The other participants in the exercise are Sri Lankan Army, Royal Bhutan Army, Bangladesh Army.
 - ✓ Also, military observers from UK, USA, Turkey, Kuwait, Singapore and Saudi Arabia are to participate in the exercise.
 - ✓ The armies of the participating nations are to share their experiences in peace keeping during the exercise.

- ✓ The theme of the exercise is “Robust Peace Keeping Operations”
- **The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) - recently developed an Advanced Chaff Technology to safeguard naval ships against enemy radar and radio-frequency missile attacks.**
- ✓ One of the DRDO laboratories located in Jodhpur developed three variants of the Advanced Chaff Technology.
- ✓ They were Short Range Chaff Rocket, Long Range Chaff Rocket and Medium Range Chaff Rocket.
- ✓ The technology uses very less chaff material to deflect enemy missiles and is now ready for mass production.
- ✓ Chaff is originally called Window, which is basically a radio frequency counter measure.
- ✓ It consists of aluminium coated glass fibres ranging in lengths of 0.75 centimetres to 0.8 centimetres, which are released in packets of 100 million such fibres.
- ✓ Most of the modern armed forces use chaff to distract the missiles from their targets.

ECONOMY

- **Edtech major Byju’s - has acquired brick-and-mortar test preparation firm Aakash Institute in a mega deal valued at nearly \$1 billion.**

CASH-AND-STOCK TRANSACTION

➤ Byju’s is paying under \$600mn in cash for this acquisition	Top Acquisitions of Byju’s (in \$mn)								
➤ Blackstone and Aakash founders will get stake in Byju’s parent firm									
➤ Aakash Chaudhry will continue running Aakash Institute independently	<table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td>Aakash Instt (2021)</td> <td style="background-color: #f44336; color: white;">Nearly 1,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>WhiteHat Jr (2020)</td> <td style="background-color: #f44336; color: white;">300</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Topprr (2021)</td> <td style="background-color: #f44336; color: white;">150</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Osmo (2019)</td> <td style="background-color: #f44336; color: white;">120</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Aakash Instt (2021)	Nearly 1,000	WhiteHat Jr (2020)	300	Topprr (2021)	150	Osmo (2019)	120
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➤ Byju’s raised \$1bn in 2020 alone and is using it to acquire firms	➤ It is looking to raise another \$600mn from US-based investors								

- ✓ The acquisition, which will create one of the largest education groups in India, is through a mix of cash and stock.
- ✓ J C Chaudhry and Aakash Chaudhry, founders of Aakash Educational Services that runs the coaching centres under the name of Aakash Institute, and Blackstone, an investor in Aakash, have sold parts of their stakes for cash.
- ✓ They have also got shares in Byju’s parent firm, Think and Learn, at a valuation of around \$12 billion.
- ✓ Neither company disclosed the financial details of the acquisition.
- ✓ According to Byju’s, the acquisition will pave the way for it to offer various models of ‘blended learning’, consisting of both online and offline coaching

- ✓ Byju's move to acquire the 33-year-old coaching centre network comes at a time when the education sector is seeing dynamic changes due to the pandemic.
- ✓ This is the largest acquisition by Byju's as well as by any edtech venture in India.
- ✓ Earlier, Byju's acquired coding startup WhiteHat Jr in a \$300-million cash deal.
- ✓ Byju's plans to expand Aakash Institute to more Indian cities.
- ✓ Currently, there are over 215 Aakash centres in India.
- ✓ Blackstone had first invested in Aakash in 2019 by putting around \$183 million for an over 37% stake.

NATIONAL DAY

➤ National Maritime Day - April 5



- ✓ The National Maritime Day is celebrated every year to support global economy through transport of goods by sea and is dedicated to seafarers
- ✓ The first National Maritime Day was celebrated in 1964.
- ✓ Theme 2021 - 'Sustainable Shipping beyond COVID-19'
- ✓ The day is observed every year on April 5, as the Indian shipping service began on this day in the year 1919
- ✓ The first ship of India 'The SS Loyalty' sailed from Mumbai to United Kingdom on April 5, 1919
- ✓ It was manufactured by the Scindia Steam Navigation Company Limited.
- ✓ On National Maritime Day, the National Maritime Day Awards are presented, which recognise the efforts of people from the Indian Maritime Sector.
- ✓ Further, Varuna award is presented for their long and exceptional contribution.
- ✓ Also, the NMD Award of Excellence is presented on this day.
- ✓ World Maritime Day is celebrated on September 30 every year by United Nations and also by other international organisations.
- ✓ The theme of 2021 World Maritime Day is 'Seafarers at the core of Shipping's future'
- ✓ The Day of Seafarer is celebrated on June 25 by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and also by other international organisations.
- ✓ India became the member of IMO in 1959.

KILLER DISEASES IN INDIA – A REPORT

Biggest killer in India is not a virus

Non-communicable diseases, like diabetes and hypertension, are now responsible for roughly two out of every three deaths. Across 16 states and UTs, at least 10% of the population has such a disease

Since the 1990s, **non-communicable diseases (NCDs) like hypertension and diabetes** have become bigger killers than infectious diseases in India.

In 2017, NCDs killed **6.3 million Indians** – about two-thirds of all deaths that year – and India alone accounts for **15.3%** of global NCD deaths.

A study of 2 lakh people in 21 states by the **Thought Arbitrage Research Institute** found that about one in 10 Indians suffers from an NCD, mainly caused by poor lifestyle and environmental conditions.

Every 4th person in some states has an NCD

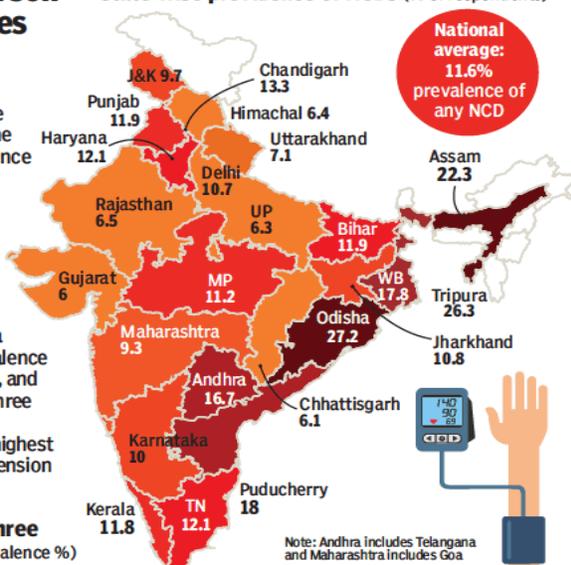
Among the 21 major states covered in the study, **Odisha** had the highest NCD prevalence (27.2%), followed by **Tripura** (26.3%) and **Assam** (22.3%).

Hypertension, digestive diseases and diabetes are the most prevalent NCDs in India. Odisha has the highest prevalence of digestive diseases, and is among the worst three for hypertension. Puducherry has the highest prevalence of hypertension and diabetes.

Worst states for three biggest NCDs (prevalence %)

HYPERTENSION		DIGESTIVE DISEASE		DIABETES	
State/UT	Prevalence	State/UT	Prevalence	State/UT	Prevalence
Puducherry	11.5	Odisha	15.9	Puducherry	9.3
Odisha	9.4	Tripura	7.6	Tamil Nadu	6.6
Andhra	8.5	Bihar	5.1	Kerala	5.9

State-wise prevalence of NCDs (% of respondents)

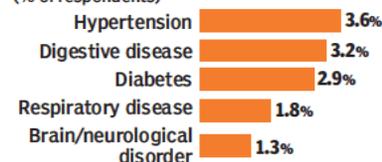


Note: Andhra includes Telangana and Maharashtra includes Goa

1 in every 28 Indians has hypertension

Thirty years ago, the five most common diseases in India were communicable, and caused more than half of all deaths. But today, three of the top five causes of death in India are NCDs.

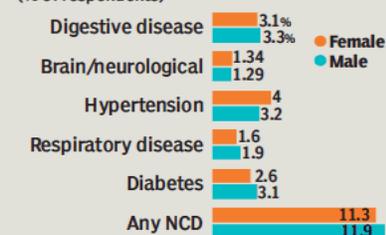
Most prevalent NCDs in India (% of respondents)



Urban men at highest risk

Overall, men are more likely to suffer from an NCD, particularly diabetes and heart disease, but hypertension is more common among women.

Prevalence of NCDs by gender (% of respondents)



Risk multiplies with age

The risk of metabolic illness, like diabetes or hypertension, increases four-fold from 25 to 35 years of age, and three-fold from 35 to 45 years. For critical NCDs like heart disease, cancer and respiratory disease, the risk doubles from age 35 to 45.

Poor air quality is the biggest risk factor for NCDs with a prevalence rate of 76% among Indians, followed by **low physical activity** (66.5% prevalence), **poor diets** (55% prevalence of low legume intake, for instance), and **high stress** (44% prevalence)

Prevalence of NCDs by age group (% of respondents)

Disease	Below 18	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-59	60+
Diabetes	0.2%	0.4	1.3	4.1	8.5	11
Respiratory disease	0.4%	0.4	1.2	2.1	3.5	8
Hypertension	0.1%	0.5	2.2	5.1	9.3	15.5
Brain/neurological	0.5%	0.6	1.1	1.9	2.4	3.9
Digestive disease	0.5%	1.2	3.5	5.7	6.4	7.4

Common in rural areas too

NCDs are only marginally less prevalent in rural areas, despite more active lifestyles and better environmental conditions.

Prevalence of NCD by location (% of respondents)

