

India and states

India, Netherlands agree to strengthen ties

- **India** and the **Netherlands** on April 11, 2019 discussed ways to **strengthen bilateral, political and economic ties, including boosting cooperation at the United Nations and other international forum.**
- This was discussed during the foreign office consultations held in New Delhi, in which the Indian side was led by **A Gitesh Sarma, Secretary (West), Ministry of External Affairs** and the **Dutch delegation by Johanna (Yoka) Brandt, Secretary General, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.**
- India and the Netherlands share a multi-faceted relationship. The two nations used the dialogue exchange as an opportunity to review the entire extent of bilateral relations, including political, economic, commercial, scientific and cultural cooperation.
- They exchanged views on regional and multilateral issues, including cooperation at the United Nations and other international forum.

Ministry of Rural Development presented recommendations for fostering Finance Commission

- The **Ministry of Rural Development headed by Secretary Amarjeet Sinha**, made a detailed presentation on the Ministry's plans on fostering higher inclusive growth, equity, efficiency and transparency – **to the Chairperson N.K. Singh and Members and senior Officials of the Fifteenth Finance Commission on April 11, 2019.**
- The Presentation dwelled upon the changing structure of rural economy; Gram Panchayat led, data driven and accountable development approach; governance reforms for better outcomes and other specific proposals for rural development.

Appointments

Najma Akhtar appointed as first woman VC of Jamia Millia

- **Professor Najma Akhtar of the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi** was appointed as the **Vice-Chancellor of Jamia Millia Islamia University on April 11, 2019.**
- **Akhtar is the first woman to be appointed as the JMI V-C.** She has four decades of academic scholarship in educational leadership.
- She is known for spearheading international educational administrators' course for senior officials from 130 countries for more than 15 years at National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration.

Awards

Russia honours PM Narendra Modi with highest award

- **Russia** on April 12, 2019 announced that it had honoured **Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi with the Order of St Andrew the Apostle, the highest order of the Russian Federation**, for promoting partnership and friendly relations between the two countries.

- **PM Modi has been decorated with the order for exceptional services in promoting a special and privileged strategic partnership between Russia and India and friendly relations between the Russian and Indian people.** The information was shared by the Russian Embassy in India.

Namami Gange awarded at Global Water Summit in London

- India's flagship programme, **National Mission for Clean Ganga or Namami Gange** was felicitated with the coveted **Public Water Agency of the Year** award at the **Global Water Summit on April 9, 2019** at London.
- The coveted **Global Water Awards** are presented by the **Global Water Intelligence** at the **Global Water Summit**, the major business conference for the water industry worldwide.
- **The Global Water Awards** recognise excellence across the entire international water industry and reward those initiatives in the water, wastewater, and desalination sectors which bring remarkable improvements in the lives of people.

World

India to be Guest of Honour at ADIBF 2019

- **India will be the Guest of Honour country at the 2019 Abu Dhabi International Book Fair (ADIBF)** to be held during April 24-30, 2019.
- The fair aims to highlight the UAE's rich heritage, and showcase its authenticity, cultural and literary output. **This will be the 29th edition of the Abu Dhabi International Book Fair**
- Through India's participation in the fair, the UAE expects to witness significant increase in the number of visitors in various events and activities that will be held throughout the entire duration of ADIBF. A number of activities in the fields of literature, culture, and art are expected to engage the audience.

SpaceX launches its first commercial flight with Falcon Heavy

- US space flight company **SpaceX** carried out its **first commercial launch with its Falcon Heavy rocket** by placing a **Saudi satellite in orbit on April 11, 2019**. The 13,000-pound Saudi Arabian telecommunication satellite is operated by **Arabsat** and is expected to provide television, internet and mobile phone service to the Middle East, Africa and Europe.
- The bright white Falcon Heavy rocket was launched from the **Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida**. The launch was initially scheduled on April 10 but was postponed due to fierce winds in the upper atmosphere.
- This was also the first time that all three of the rocket's reusable boosters returned safely to Earth.

Scientists discovered new human species in Philippines

- Scientists have discovered a new human species '**Homo luzonensis**' in Philippines recently. Scientists found **these remains aged between 67,000 years to 50,000 years old and it was unknown to science till date**.
- It is classified a separate species on the ground of 13 bones and teeth from two adults and one child found in a cave on the island of Luzon in the Philippines.
- **Homo luzonensis**, described in the journal *Nature*, informs about features comparable to different species of hominins.
- Unlike **Homo sapiens**, whose premolar teeth generally have a single root, **Homo luzonensis'** premolars had two or three roots, similar to more primitive species such as **Homo erectus**, which lived in Africa and Asia between about 1.89 million and 143,000 years ago.

Days

International Day of Human Space Flight 2019 observed globally

- **The International Day of Human Space Flight was observed across the world on April 12, 2019.**
- The day celebrates the anniversary of the **first ever human space flight undertaken by Yuri Gagarin**, a Soviet Union citizen then.
- Gagarin carried out Vostok 1 space flight on April 12, 1961, making one orbit around the Earth in over 108 minutes in the Vostok 3KA spacecraft.
- The spacecraft was launched by Vostok-K launch vehicle. This space flight opened the way for space exploration for the benefit of all humanity.

Sports

Kohli, Mandhana named Wisden's leading Cricketers of the Year

- Indian cricketer **Virat Kohli** on April 10, 2019 was named **The Wisden Almanack's Leading Cricketer of the Year for 2018.**
- At the same level **Smriti Mandhana** won the **Women's Leading Cricketer award**. Now 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.
- Virat Kohli 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.