

SNIPPETS

April 1-10

- In a major decision ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, the Election Commission has allowed the Reserve Bank to go ahead with issuing new banking licences. The directive ends weeks of uncertainty and allows the RBI to issue licences to set up new banks.
- The International Association of Athletics Federation (IAAF), in a surprise move, has removed all the Indian athletes from its current Registered Testing Pool (RTP) despite the country sharing the top spot with Russia in the list of dope offenders.
- Sri Lanka banned the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and 15 other Tamil diaspora groups for their alleged terror links and involvement in reviving the Tamil rebel movement. Defence Ministry spokesman Brigadier Ruwan Wanigasooriya said Sri Lanka has banned 16 organisations, including the LTTE, in accordance with the UN Security Council resolution 1373. These organisations have been classified as "terrorist" under the new government proclamation, he said.
- In a major blow to India's bid for the extradition of Ravi Shankaran, key accused in the infamous Naval War Room leak case, a top British court has rejected the demand and ordered the CBI to pay over Rs one crore to him as legal costs.
- NATO suspended all practical cooperation with Russia in protest at its annexation of Crimea, and ordered military planners to draft measures to strengthen its defenses and reassure nervous Eastern European countries. Foreign ministers from the 28-nation, U.S.-led alliance were meeting for the first time since the Russian occupation of Ukraine's Crimea region touched off the worst East-West crisis since the Cold War. NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said Russia's actions meant there could be no "business as usual".
- The government has appointed R Gandhi as deputy governor of the Reserve Bank of India for three years, effective April 3. Mr. Gandhi was the executive director at the RBI before being promoted to this post. He will look after the department including banking operations and development, non-banking supervision, risk monitoring, urban banks and expenditure and budgetary control. The RBI has four Deputy Governors; the other three are Urjit Patel, H R Khan and K C Chakrabarty.
- Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) successfully launched IRNSS-1B, the second navigation satellite among the seven satellites that will eventually constitute the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS). PSLV-C24 carrying IRNSS-1B blasted off from Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh.
- Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca was elected President of the Republic of Malta on the 4th April 2014. At the age of 55, Coleiro Preca is the youngest serving President of Malta and only the second woman to hold the post of Head of State. Her nomination marked another development in the constitutional history of Malta, as the President was elected with the unanimous approval of all Members of Parliament.
- Despite warnings of violence by the Taliban, Afghans turned out in large numbers to vote in the presidential election on 5th April. Afghan forces were dispatched in a massive operation across the nation to protect voters.
- Sri Lanka clinched an emphatic victory with 6 wickets to spare at the finals of the ICC World T20 played against rivals India in Dhaka. This is the first time in history Sri Lanka has ever won a T20 world cup title. Meanwhile, Australia beat England to win the women's T20 title.

- India's third-biggest drug company Sun Pharma announced a \$3.2-billion deal to buy domestic larger rival Ranbaxy from Daiichi Sankyo, ending the Japanese company's costly run as owner. Despite Ranbaxy's huge US safety regulatory problems, Sun Pharmaceutical Industries said the transaction offered "tremendous growth opportunities" thanks to Ranbaxy's "significant presence" in the US market as well as in India and other high-growth emerging markets. "Sun Pharma and Ranbaxy will have a diverse, highly complementary portfolio of specialty and generic products," Sun Pharma managing director Dilip Shanghvi, who founded the company in 1983, said.
- Pro-Russian activists in eastern Ukraine declared Donetsk a sovereign republic and asked Russian President Vladimir Putin to send in peacekeepers.
- The decommissioned aircraft carrier of the Indian Navy, INS Vikrant, which played an important role in the 1971 Indo-Pak war, has been sold for Rs 60 crore to IB Commercial Pvt. Ltd. Vikrant, the Indian Navy's first aircraft carrier, was commissioned in 1961 and decommissioned in January 1997.
- The National Assembly of Pakistan passed the Pakistan Protection Ordinance (PPO) amid a massive opposition boycott. The Pakistan Muslim League – Nawaz (PML-N), rejecting all amendments proposed by the opposition, passed the bill without opposition members being present. The bill is opposed by Pakistan People Party (PPP), Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) and Jamaat-e-Islami (JI). Under the new laws, Pakistan's law enforcement agencies, namely the police, military, paramilitary, frontier corps, rangers, and frontier constabulary, receive extraordinary powers. These powers include fire or order firing as a preemptive measure (in other words, shoot on suspicion rather than self defence), enter and search premises without a warrant, confiscate property, detentions up to three months without a trial, the mandate to tap into private conversations including telephone and internet, and the establishment of a parallel judiciary.
- Kim Jong-un was "re-elected" as North Korea's leader as parliament met in a session closely watched for power shifts in the regime following the execution of his once-powerful uncle. Kim Yong-nam retained his status as de facto head of state when he was re-elected chairman of parliament's standing committee. The country does not have a president because the current leader's grandfather Kim Il-sung, who died in 1994, has been declared its "eternal president". The parliament known as the Supreme People's Assembly also reshuffled the cabinet, the Supreme Court and prosecution authorities.
- Former Maoist rebels and security forces who committed torture, killings and other crimes during Nepal's decade-long civil war could be granted amnesty under new legislation approved by Nepal parliament.
- An Italian court recognized a gay couple as married for the first time in Italy, which does not have any form of official acknowledgement of same-sex unions.

April 11-April 20

- Justice Rajendra Mal Lodha, the most senior judge of the Supreme Court, was sworn in as the 41st Chief Justice of India by President Pranab Mukherjee. 64-year-old Justice Lodha took over from Justice (retd.) P Sathasivam who demitted office after nine months as the head of the judiciary. Justice Lodha will have a brief tenure of five months as CJI and will retire on September 27, this year. He is heading the bench which is monitoring CBI's probe into coal blocks allocation scam.
- Gulzar, best known for penning memorable hits like 'Tujhse Naaraaz Nahi' and 'Tere Bina Zindagi Se' besides directing critically acclaimed films like 'Aandhi' and 'Mausam', was chosen for the prestigious Dada Saheb Phalke award, the highest official recognition for film personalities in India. The 79-year-old veteran

filmmaker, who has directed films like 'Mere Apne', 'Koshish', 'Khushboo', 'Angoor', 'Libaas' and 'Maachis' will be the 45th recipient of the award.

- Breaking the male bastion in the five decade-old Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), the government has approved recruitment of young women as 'combat officers' in the second largest border guarding force.
- Former India cricket captains Sachin Tendulkar and Sourav Ganguly bagged the franchisee rights for Kochi and Kolkata while Bollywood stars Ranbir Kapoor, Salman Khan and John Abraham bought Mumbai, Pune and Guwahati in the eight-team based inaugural Indian Super League (ISL) football.
- Libya's interim prime minister, Abdullah al-Thinni, handed his resignation to parliament, just one month into the job, saying gunmen had tried to attack his family. His resignation adds to the growing chaos in Libya, where the government has struggled to control brigades of former rebels nearly three years after the fall of Muammar Gaddafi.
- The Guardian US and the Washington Post are among the winners of a prestigious journalistic Pulitzer award. The newspapers shared the 2014 Pulitzer Prize for Public Service Reporting for coverage of NSA surveillance and whistleblower Snowden's leaks. The prize is awarded "for a distinguished example of meritorious public service by a newspaper or news site through the use of its journalistic resources," according to the Pulitzer Committee.
- Centuries of having to live with the oppression of an indeterminate identity came to an end for transgenders — or hijras — when the Supreme Court recognized them as the "third gender", separate from male or female, and gave them a leg up in their effort to secure a better social and economic future by ordering their inclusion in the OBC category for education and jobs. This judgment would also entitle transgenders to avail the legal benefits of law related to marriage, adoption, divorce, succession, inheritance and other welfare legislations like National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA).
- India-born poet Vijay Seshadri has won the prestigious 2014 Pulitzer Prize in the poetry category for his collection of poems "3 Sections." Seshadri's '3 Sections' is a "compelling collection of poems that examine human consciousness, from birth to dementia".
- The 61st National Film Awards winners' list was declared. The winners include Arshad Warsi's *Jolly LLB* as Best Feature Film – Hindi, and Farhan Akhtar's *Bhaag Milkha Bhaag* as Best Film Providing Wholesome Entertainment. *Gulabi Gang* got the award for Best Film on Social Issues, so did the Marathi movie *Tuhya Dharma Koncha*. Anand Gandhi's *Ship of Theseus* won the Best Feature Film.
- Vice Admiral Robin K Dhowan is the new chief of the Indian Navy. Vice Admiral Dhowan had taken over as the acting Naval Chief on February 26 after the incumbent, DK Joshi put in his papers owning "moral responsibility" for a series of accidents. Vice Admiral Dhowan, who would have otherwise retired on May 31, will now serve for an additional two years.
- In a ruling that turns a new leaf on the scrutiny of accounts of public-private partnerships and joint ventures, the Supreme Court ordered that the Comptroller and Auditor General of India was authorized to examine the accounts of even private companies if they were dealing with natural resources.
- Faced with a credibility crisis arising out of the IPL spot-fixing and betting scandal, the BCCI suggested to the Supreme Court a three-member committee made up of eminent persons to probe the corruption case on the directives of the apex court. The all-powerful Working Committee of the Board in its emergent meeting here decided to suggest names of former India all-rounder Ravi Shastri, former Calcutta High Court Chief Justice J N Patel and ex-CBI Director R K Raghavan as members of the probe committee.

April 21- April 30

- The Supreme Court allowed resumption of mining in Goa but restricted iron ore extraction to 20 million tonnes a year. It also ruled that the Goa government will have to formulate a scheme within six months for utilizing the funds generated by e-auction of the iron ore. The ruling lifts the court's nearly one-and-a-half-year-old order stopping operations in all 90 mines in Goa after the Justice M B Shah Commission estimated a Rs 35,000-crore loss to the state due to illegal mining over 12 years.
- Justice Gorla Rohini, who was the senior most Judge of the Andhra Pradesh High Court, was sworn in as the first woman Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court.
- Rival Palestinian factions Fatah and Hamas have announced a reconciliation deal, saying they will try to form a unity government in the coming weeks. Hamas and Fatah split violently in 2007. Previous reconciliation agreements have never been implemented. The deal comes amid troubled peace talks between Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and Israel.
- A panel headed by justice Mukul Mudgal agreed to continue to probe the Indian Premier League (IPL) spot-fixing and betting scandal after the Supreme Court rejected a three-man committee proposed by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).
- India and Bhutan signed an agreement for the development of joint hydropower projects in a bid to further strengthen their bilateral strategic partnership.
- Pakistan successfully test-fired a short-range surface-to-surface ballistic missile Hatf III (Ghaznavi), capable of carrying nuclear and conventional warheads to a range of 290 kilometres.
- The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) amended the rule which banned use of portable electronic devices (PEDs) and allowed their usage in all phases of flight but on a non-transmitting or flight mode. With the implementation of the new rule or Civil Aviation Requirement (CAR), flyers can now turn on their cellphones, tablets or laptops on 'flight mode' to work, play video games, listen to music, watch pre-loaded movies or type their emails.
- The centuries-old Sree Padmanabhaswamy temple in Kerala, whose administration has been facing charges of large-scale financial bungling after gold, silver and precious stones worth crores of rupees were discovered in secret vaults three years ago, will undergo scrutiny by former Comptroller and Auditor-General Vinod Rai, as per a Supreme Court directive.
- The Supreme Court referred the matter to a Constitution bench to decide whether the Centre or the Tamil Nadu government had the authority to release the seven convicts in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case after remission of their jail terms.
- Three years after it began investigations, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) charged former telecom minister A Raja, DMK patriarch M Karunanidhi's wife Dayalu Ammal and daughter Kanimozhi with money laundering in connection with the 2G spectrum scam. Kanimozhi, a Rajya Sabha member who was jailed in connection with the alleged Rs 200 crore kickback received by DMK's Kalaigarnar TV from one of the key accused in the 2G scam — Swan Telecom promoted by DB Realty — and her mother were directors at Kalaigarnar TV, with Dayalu Ammal owning a 60 per cent share.
- Grandmaster B Adhiban clinched a silver medal and also a berth at the next year's World Chess Cup after a hard-fought draw with Yu Yangyi of China in the final round of the Asian Continental Chess Championship.

- South Korean Prime Minister Chung Hong-won resigned amid criticism of the government's handling of the sinking of a passenger ferry.
- Pope Francis made history, elevating to sainthood John XXIII and John Paul II, two of his most famous papal predecessors, in a ceremony bearing themes of hope and reconciliation for the world's one billion Roman Catholics.
- President Pranab Mukherjee gave his approval for the dissolution of the Andhra Pradesh Assembly and a fresh proclamation for Central Rule in the state. The President's nod came after the Union Cabinet had recommended dissolution of the state Assembly and proclamation of the President's Rule there beyond April 30, circumventing the need for convening a special session of Parliament to ratify the proclamation.
- The United States imposed new sanctions on seven Russian officials and 17 firms linked to President Vladimir Putin's inner circle to punish the Kremlin for failing to ease tensions in Ukraine.
- An Egyptian court recommended the death sentence for 683 alleged Islamists including Muslim Brotherhood leader Mohamed Badie, and handed down a final capital punishment ruling for 37 others.

PEOPLE IN NEWS

Abdelaziz Bouteflika

Abdelaziz Bouteflika, whose poor health forced him to vote from a wheelchair in Algeria's presidential election, has won a fourth term with 81.53 percent of the votes. The 77-year-old incumbent's main rival, Ali Benflis, received 12.18 percent in an election which saw 51.78 percent of Algerians cast their ballots.

Abdullah al-Thani

Libya's interim Prime Minister Abdullah al-Thani handed in his resignation, citing an attempted attack on his family. He is the second Libyan premier to leave the post in as many months. Al-Thani's decision to step down is widely regarded as being symptomatic of the turmoil the Libyan authorities have been in since the overthrow of longtime strongman, the late Moammar Gadhafi three years ago.

Ajay Shriram

Industry body CII has elected chairman and senior managing director of DCM Shriram Limited Ajay Shriram as its president. Mr. Shriram succeeds Infosys Executive vice chairman Kris Gopalakrishnan as the new president.

Anand Kishore Sahay

Anand Kishore Sahay has been elected president of the Press Club of India, while Dinesh Sharma was elected the vice-president.

Andrej Kiska

Political newcomer Andrej Kiska has been elected to the largely ceremonial post of Slovakia's President, in an embarrassing defeat for his rival, Prime Minister Robert Fico.

Arturo Licata

The world's oldest man who was awarded the Guinness World Records title of oldest living man on February 28, 2014 at the age of 111 years and 302 days, died in April in Italy.

Arvind Mayaram

Arvind Mayaram, economic affairs secretary, has been appointed the new finance secretary. He has been the economic affairs secretary since 2012. He would continue to handle the Department of Economic Affairs. The post of Finance Secretary was lying vacant after Sumit Bose retired on March 31.

Ashish Bose

The country's foremost demographer, Ashish Bose, died at 83. While he was a man of many accomplishments, Bose shot to national limelight after his coinage, the now-well known acronym BIMARU —Bihar, (then undivided) Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh — caused national umbrage in the 1980s.

Chung Hong-won

South Korean Prime Minister Chung Hong-won resigned amid criticism of the government's handling of the sinking of a passenger ferry.

Damodar Prasad Sharma

Damodar Prasad Sharma has been appointed the new chief justice after the parliamentary hearing special committee endorsed the recommendation made by the Constitutional Council. The top judicial position was vacant after former chief justice Khil Raj Regmi, who also acted as the chairman of the interim election council, resigned on February 11.

Gabriel Garcia Marquez

Nobel prize-winning Colombian author Gabriel Garcia Marquez died in Mexico aged 87. Garcia Marquez was considered one of the greatest Spanish-language authors, best known for his masterpiece of magical realism, One Hundred Years of Solitude. The 1967 novel sold more than 30 million copies and he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1982.

James Hellwig Alias Ultimate Warrior

Pro Wrestler James Brian Hellwig, better known as "The Ultimate Warrior," died, at 54. A wrestling icon, and one of US professional wrestling's most celebrated athletes, he began his career in 1987 and rose to fame when he defeated Hulk Hogan to become a WWE champion and was inducted into the World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) Hall of Fame.

John C Houbolt

US engineer who was the catalyst in securing US commitment to the science and engineering theory that eventually carried the Apollo crew to the moon and back safely in 1969, is dead.

K. Radhakrishnan

The Appointment Committee of the Cabinet has approved the extension of tenure of K. Radhakrishnan, Chairman, Indian Space Research Organisation, and Secretary, Department of Space from August 29 to December 31, 2014 "on functional grounds and in the public interest."

Manuel Valls

President Francois Hollande named former Interior Minister Manuel Valls as France's new prime minister. Valls is consistently voted France's most popular Socialist in opinion polls and is considered part of the right wing of the party. He replaces unpopular Jean-Marc Ayrault.

Marie-Louise Coleiro

Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca was elected as the ninth President of the Republic of Malta on the 4th April 2014. At the age of 55, Coleiro Preca is the youngest serving President of Malta and only the second woman to hold the post of Head of State.

Medithi Ravi Kanth

Dr. Medithi Ravi Kanth has taken over as Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of Housing and Urban Development Corporation Limited (HUDCO).

Mickey Rooney

Legendary actor Mickey Rooney, whose roller-coaster, nine-decade career in show business included vaudeville, silent films, movies, television and Broadway, died at 93. He was credited with performances in more than 200 films and was awarded an honorary Oscar in 1982.

Moussa Mara

Mali's Prime Minister Oumar Tatam Ly submitted his government's resignation and will be replaced by the country's town planning minister, Moussa Mara. Ly was appointed prime minister by Keita just six months ago.

Nancy J. Powell

The United States' Ambassador to India, Nancy J. Powell handed in her resignation on 31st March, less than four months after India – US relations chilled over the arrest, strip-search and detention of Indian Consul General in New York, Devayani Khobrogade. Powell resigned from her assignment to India after little more than one-and-a-half year.

Narendra Kothari

After remaining headless for over two years, NMDC Limited will finally have a full time chairman as the Union Cabinet cleared the appointment of Narendra Kothari to head the state-run miner.

Phuntso Wangye

Phuntso Wangye, a veteran Tibetan Communist leader who became an outspoken critic of Beijing's hard-line policies towards the autonomous region, died at 91.

R.Chandrasekaran

The National Association of Software and Services Companies (Nasscom) appointed Executive Vice-Chairman of Cognizant India R. Chandrasekaran as its Chairman for 2014-15.

R.Gandhi

The government appointed R. Gandhi as Reserve Bank deputy governor for a period of three years in place of Anand Sinha. He was executive director of the Reserve Bank before being elevated to the post of deputy governor.

Rajendra Mal Lodha

Justice Rajendra Mal Lodha was sworn in as the 41st Chief Justice of India by President Pranab Mukherjee at the Rashtrapati Bhavan. 64-year-old Justice Lodha took over from Justice (retd) P Sathasivam who stepped down after nine months as the head of the judiciary. Justice Lodha will have a brief tenure of five months as CJI and is due to retire on September 27, this year.

R.K.Dowan

The Union Government appointed Admiral RK Dhowan as India's new navy chief, ahead of his senior, Vice-Admiral Shekhar Sinha. The navy has been without a chief since the resignation of Admiral Devendra Joshi in August, owning moral responsibility for a series of lethal accidents on board.

Sudarshan Seneviratne

Sudarshan Seneviratne has been appointed Sri Lanka's new high commissioner to India. He will succeed Prasad Kariyawasam.

Suresh Reddy

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) appointed Suresh K. Reddy as the first Ambassador to the separate Indian Mission to ASEAN and East Asia Summit.

V. K. Murthy

Well known cinematographer and Dada Saheb Phalke winner Kannadiga, V K Murthy died at 91. V K Murthy won many awards in a career spanning four decades. While he was adjudged the best cinematographer by Filmfare for films like 'Kaagaz Ke Phool' and 'Sahib Biwi Aur Ghulam', he got the Lifetime Achievement Award from IIFA in 2005. He was honoured with the Dada Saheb Phalke Award in 2008.

Win Tin

Win Tin, a veteran of Myanmar's pro-democracy movement, died at the age of 85. A founder of the Aung San Suu Kyi-led National League for Democracy, Win Tin was seen as highly influential in the push for reform in the South East Asian nation, formerly called Burma. He served 19 years in prison under Myanmar's military rulers for his activism, but was released in 2008.

AWARDS & HONOURS

Baileys Prize Shortlistings

Pulitzer Prize-winning Indian American novelist Jhumpa Lahiri's "Lowland" has been shortlisted for this year's Baileys Prize, the UK's only annual book award for fiction written by a woman. "The Lowland", which is about the lives of brothers Subhash and Udayan, their choices and their fate, was described by Helen Fraser, Baileys Women's Prize for Fiction 2014 Chair, as "Moving and vivid, an unforgettable story of two brothers and the different paths they take. A novel about how political passion can destroy lives." Earlier known as the Orange Prize, the winner will be announced on June 4 in London and presented with a cheque for USD 30,000. The other five shortlisted books are "Americanah" by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (Nigeria), "Burial Rites" by Hannah Kent (Australia), "The Undertaking" by Audrey Magee (Ireland), "A Girl is a Half-formed Thing" by Eimear McBride (Ireland) and "The Goldfinch" by Donna Tartt (the US).

DADASAHEB PHALKE AWARD

Veteran poet and film lyricist Gulzar has been chosen for the coveted Dadasaheb Phalke Award for 2013. The multi-faceted Gulzar, whose real name is Sampooran Singh Kalra, is a lyricist, director, screen writer, producer and poet. He is the 45th winner of the Dadasaheb Phalke Award. The Dadasaheb Phalke Award is India's highest award in cinema given annually at the National Film Awards. The award is presented by the Directorate of Film Festivals, an organization set up by Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and is conferred on a film personality for the "outstanding contribution to the growth and development of Indian cinema". The award comprises of a Swarna Kamal (Golden Lotus) medallion, a shawl, and a cash prize of 1,000,000.

FEMINA MISS INDIA 2014

Winner of fbb Femina Miss India 2014 Koyal Rana was the winner of Femina Miss India 2014, with Jhataleka Malhotra and Gail Da Silva as the first and second runners up.

IIFA AWARDS

Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra's *Bhaag Milkha Bhaag*, a biopic on legendary athlete Milkha Singh, became the top prize winner at the 15th International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) awards, held in Tampa Bay, Florida (USA) on April 27, taking home five major honours including best actor, best director and best picture.

Best Actor: Farhan Akhtar (*Bhaag Milkha Bhaag*)

Best Actress: Deepika Padukone (*Chennai Express*)

Best Supporting Actor: Aditya Roy Kapoor (*Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani*)

Best Supporting Actress: Divya Dutta (*Bhaag Milkha Bhaag*)

Best Debut (Male): Dhanush (*Raanjhanaa*)

Best Debut (Female): Vaani Kapoor (*Shudh Desi Romance*)

Best Director: Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra (*Bhaag Milkha Bhaag*)

Best Performance in a Comic Role: Arshad Warsi (*Jolly L.L.B.*)

Best Performance in a Negative Role: Rishi Kapoor (*D Day*)

Best Playback Singer (Female): Shreya Ghoshal for *Sun Raha Hai Na Tu* (*Aashiqui 2*)

Best Playback Singer (Male): Arijit Singh for *Tum Hi Ho* (Aashiqui 2)

Entertainer of the Year: Deepika Padukone

Lifetime Achievement Award: Shatrughan Sinha

Most Popular All Time International Star in India: John Travolta

MILLENNIUM TECHNOLOGY PRIZE

British-American physicist Stuart Parkin has won the 1 million-euro (USD 1.3 million) Millennium Technology Prize for discoveries leading to a thousand-fold increase in digital data storage on magnetic disks.

MTV MOVIE AWARDS

The 23rd annual MTV Movie Awards were held in Los Angeles. Prominent awards were:

Movie of the Year: The Hunger Games: Catching Fire

Best Male Performance: Josh Hutcherson, "The Hunger Games: Catching Fire"

Best Female Performance: Jennifer Lawrence, "The Hunger Games: Catching Fire"

NATIONAL FILM AWARDS

61st National Film Awards were announced on April 16, in New Delhi.

Best Film (Hindi): Jolly LLB

Best Actress: Geetanjali Thapa (Liar's Dice, Hindi)

Best Actor: Raj Kumar (Shahid, Hindi) & Suraj Venjaramoodu (Terariyathavar, Malayalam)

Supporting Actor (Female) – Aida Elkashef, Ship of Theseus and Amruta Subash, Astu

Best Direction: Hansal Mehta for Shahid (Hindi)

Direction (Non Feature): Chidiya Udh

Special Effects: Jal

Short Fiction (Non Feature): Mandrake! Mandrake! (Hindi)

Non Feature Film on Social Issues: Gulabi Gang (Hindi, Bundelkhandi)

Environmental Film including Agriculture: Foresting Life (Hindi, Assamese)

Non Feature Film: Rangbhoomi (Hindi)

Best Book on Cinema: Cinema Ga Cinema (Telgu) by Nandagopal

Sound Design: Bishwadeep Chatterjee, Madras Cafe

PULITZER PRIZE

India-born poet Vijay Seshadri has won the prestigious 2014 Pulitzer Prize in the poetry category for his witty and philosophical collection of poems titled "3 Sections", while The Washington Post and Guardian were awarded for their reports on America's secret global surveillance programmes. The 98th annual Pulitzer Prizes in Journalism, Letters, Drama and Music, awarded on the recommendation of the Pulitzer Prize Board, were announced by Columbia University.

SANGEET NATAK AKADEMI AWARDS

The President of India, Pranab Mukherjee bestowed the Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowships and Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards for the year 2013 at a function at Rashtrapati Bhavan on April 11, 2014. Dr. Kanak Rele, R. Sathyanarayana and Mahesh Elkunchwar were bestowed with Akademi Ratna (Fellowships) with a cash purse of Rs. 3 lakh, an angavastram and a tamrapatra. V. Subramanya and N. Ramanathan received the Awards for their Overall Contribution and Scholarship in the Performing Arts. Prominent musical artistes including Ritwik Sanyal, Veena Hari Sahasrabuddhe, Dhruva Jyoti Ghosh, Hashmat Ali Khan, Aruna Sairam, D. Raghava Chary, D. Shesha Chary, Trichy Sankaran, Bankim Sethi and Thiruvizha Jayasankar among others were bestowed with Akademi awards for their contribution in the field of music. The Akademi Awards in the field of dance were conferred to Kalamandalam M.P. S. Namboodiri, Jamuna Krishnan, Herambanathan, Ramanjaneyulu, Rajashree Shirke, Sangeeta Dash, Srinivasa Ranga Chariar, Dhaneshwar Swain and Jogen Dutta Bayan among others. Rameshwar Prem, Kamalakar Muralidhar Sontakke, Pundalik Narayan Naik, Kewal Dhaliwal, Prasanna Ramaswamy, Kusum Haidar, Krishna Arjunn Borkar, Vasant Josalkar were honoured with Akademi award in the field of theatre.

SIMON DACK AWARD

An Indian-American cardiologist Dr. Sumeet Chugh has been named as one of the recipients of a prestigious award from the American College of Cardiology. Dr. Chugh, an MD and associate director of Cedars-Sinai Heart Institute, will receive the Simon Dack Award along with Dr. Eduardo Marbán, MD, PhD, and director of the Cedars-Sinai Heart Institute.

Business & Economy

- Boosted mainly by the government's 9% stake sale in **Axis Bank**, a large chunk of which was bought by foreign investors, and also the buyback of forex which was given to oil companies last year, India's foreign exchange reserve jumped a massive \$5 billion during the week ended March 28 to go past the \$300 billion mark after over two years. The figure was last above this mark in December 2011.
- **BTC China**, one of the country's leading digital currency exchanges, has installed China's first bitcoin ATM and launched an online app allowing individuals to buy and sell bitcoins using mobile phones, skirting local banking regulations seen as increasingly hostile to so-called crypto-currencies.
- **Cadbury India**, a subsidiary of Mondelez International, changed its name to Mondelez India Foods Limited. The change in name of Cadbury is in line with the gradual changeover of the name of all subsidiaries of Mondelez International globally, the company said in a statement. However, the company said change in name of the company will have no impact on the names or packaging of its products like Cadbury Dairy Milk, 5 Star, Gems, Bournville, Perk, Celebrations, Choclairs, Halls, Bournvita, Tang and Oreo, which will continue to be sold under the same brand names as before. From now onwards, the new name of the company will appear on the back of the products.
- Social media giant **Facebook** has crossed 100 million active users of India, its largest base outside the US.
- To bring down volatility in foreign flows through the debt market route, the RBI on April 1 barred **foreign institutional investors (FIIs)** from investing in short-term government debts like treasury bills (T-bills).
- Once known as the biggest gateway for flow of funds into India, Mauritius has slipped to the second place after the US in terms of quantum of money being brought in by overseas investors into Indian markets. US accounted for the largest chunk of 'assets under custody' of **foreign institutional investors** investing in the Indian equity and debt markets at the end of 2013 with over Rs. 437 lakh crore worth of funds.
- The government, on 1 April, reduced the **import tariff** value on gold to \$421 per 10 grams from \$445 per 10 gram earlier. Also, the import tariff value -- the base price at which customs duty is determined to prevent under-invoicing -- in case of silver has been reduced to \$644 per kg from \$694 per kg earlier. The tariff value is revised on a fortnightly basis after analysing the global price trend. Gold is the second largest import item for India after petroleum. The government had taken several measures to curb gold shipments to address the high current account deficit.
- The **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA)** has launched 'highway ambulance pilot project' from April to study the accident patterns and identify long-term solutions in terms of medical, insurance and accident prevention measures.
- **Mozilla** Chief Executive Brendan Eich stepped down after an online dating service urged a boycott of the company's web browser because of a donation Eich made to opponents of gay marriage. The software company came under fire for appointing Eich as CEO last month. In 2008, he gave money to oppose the legalization of gay marriage in California, a hot-button issue especially at a company that boasts about its policy of inclusiveness and diversity. His resignation came days after OkCupid.com, the popular online dating site, called for a boycott of Mozilla Firefox to protest the world's No. 2 Web browser naming a gay marriage opponent as chief executive.

- The **National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX)** announced the launch of world's first bajra contract for the benefit of Indian farmers who contribute close to half of the global supply. The contract will be available for trading from April 1.
- Japanese telecom major **NTT DOCOMO Inc.**, decided to exit from its joint venture with the Tatas. In March 2009, NTT DOCOMO had entered the Indian market by acquiring 26.5 per cent stake in Tata Tele Services for \$2.7 billion (Rs.12,700 crore as per the then exchange rate). But the joint venture never made profit in the last five years, forcing the Japanese firm to exercise the sale option to pull back its investment.
- **Online retail** reached USD 12.6 billion (Rs 62,967 crore) in the country last year, an annual increase of 32.63 percent, Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) said. In 2012, it was USD 9.5 billion (Rs 47,349 crore). Apparel and jewellery brands which are marketing and selling their products increasingly through the online channel were the key drivers of the trade.
- Noted economist Ila Patnaik has been appointed **Principal Economic Adviser** in the Ministry of Finance. Patnaik, who is currently RBI Chair Professor at the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, replaces Dipak Dasgupta.
- **Reliance Jio**, the telecom arm of Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries Ltd, will use 11,000 towers in India owned by of Boston-based American Tower Corporation (ATC) to fast track the rollout of 4G services.
- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** Governor, Raghuram Rajan said that the central bank had adopted the new Consumer Price Index (CPI) (combined) as the key measure of inflation. Earlier, RBI had given more weightage to Wholesale Price Index (WPI) than CPI as the key measure of inflation for all policy purposes.
- The **RBI** has liberalized hedging limit of domestic investors to \$250,000 from existing \$100,000 on the basis of a simple declaration without any requirement of further documentation.
- Nation's largest lender **State Bank of India** has mopped up \$1.25 billion in overseas debt sale through a dual tranche bond programme, making it the largest ever offering from a domestic issuer. The bank raised \$750 million in 5-year money at US treasury interest rate plus 205 basis points, while it priced the 10-year \$500 million issue at 225 bps over the treasury.
- **State Bank of India** launched three digital banking facilities at the customer's door step using TAB banking; one for customers opening Savings Bank accounts and another for Housing Loan applicants. The third is e-KYC (Know your Customer).
- Noel Tata has taken over as chairman of **Trent**, the retail company created by his mother in the nineties after selling off the cosmetics business, Lakme, to Hindustan Unilever. The 57-year-old has succeeded Tata Group old-timer FK Kavarana. The development is in line with the fact that Tata and his mother (Simone) have always been in charge of the company.
- Deciding to focus on the cash-and-carry segment in India, retail giant **Wal-Mart** plans to open 50 wholesale stores in the next four to five years to expand its footprint in the country.