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1. McGill Awards Honorary Doctorate to Dr. Soumya Swaminathan (May 13, 2024)

Dr. Soumya Swaminathan, former WHO Chief Scientist, is set to receive an honorary doctorate from McGill University during the Spring 2024 Convocation ceremonies.

An Overview of the News

- McGill University, renowned for its academic excellence, bestows honorary degrees upon individuals with exceptional contributions to scholarly, scientific, or artistic fields, or significant societal impact through professional or philanthropic endeavors.
- McGill University will confer upon Dr. Swaminathan the Doctor of Science, honoris causa (D Sc) in Health Sciences on May 28.

Soumya Swaminathan's distinguished career:

- Dr. Swaminathan, aged 65, has a distinguished career spanning over 40 years in public health and infectious diseases.
- Notably, she served as WHO's Deputy Director-General (Programmes) until the end of 2022 and thereafter as its first Chief Scientist during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Swaminathan's leadership during the pandemic:

- Dr. Swaminathan played a key role in coordinating global responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Her leadership facilitated research coordination, dissemination of critical information, and guidance to policymakers on effective strategies to combat the virus.

McGill University's highest honor:

- The honorary doctorate represents McGill's highest honor, symbolizing the transformative impact of individual achievement.
- McGill President Deep Saini emphasizes that the award reflects shared values and aspirations within the university community.

2. Vice Admiral Sanjay Bhalla assumes role of Chief of Personnel in the Indian Navy (May 11, 2024)

Vice Admiral Sanjay Bhalla, AVSM, NM, took over as the Chief of Personnel of the Indian Navy on May 10, 2024.

An Overview of the News

Leadership Roles of Vice Admiral Sanjay Bhalla:

- As Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet (FOCEF), he led important events such as the Presidential Fleet Review and the sea phase of MILAN-22.
- Held key staff positions at Naval Headquarters and contributed to officer training at the Naval Academy.
- Held diplomatic assignments abroad and served as Chief of Staff of the Western Naval Command.

Background of Vice Admiral Sanjay Bhalla

- Vice Admiral Bhalla, who joined the Indian Navy on 1 January 1989, has served for 35 years in various roles.
- Specialized in communications and electronic warfare and served on several front line warships.
- Commanded several notable ships including INS Nishank, INS Taragiri and INS Beas.

About Indian Navy:

- It is under the command of the President of India and headed by the Chief of the Naval Staff.
- It serves as a blue-water navy, active in areas such as the Persian Gulf, the Horn of Africa and the Strait of Malacca.
- The navy conducts anti-piracy operations and cooperates with regional navies.
- Regular deployments last two to three months and cover the South and East China Sea as well as the western Mediterranean.

Founded - 26 January 1950

Headquarters - Ministry of Defence, New Delhi

Motto(s)- Sham No Varunah (ISO)

transl. 'May the Lord of Water be auspicious unto us'

3. R. Shankar Raman Promoted to President Position at L&T (May 10, 2024)

R Shankar Raman has been promoted to the position of President at Larsen and Toubro (L&T), the engineering and construction conglomerate.

An Overview of the News

- Alongside his new role, Raman will retain his positions as whole-time Director and Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of the company.
- Subramanian Sarma, the Senior Executive Vice President (EVP) of Energy at L&T, has also been promoted to the role of whole-time Director and President of Energy.

- Sarma's responsibilities now extend to overseeing hydrocarbon, power, and green manufacturing and development businesses within the company.
- Raman originally joined the L&T Group in November 1994 to establish L&T Finance Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary, and later transitioned into the CFO role before joining the board in October 2011.
- Larsen & Toubro is a prominent Indian multinational enterprise with a revenue of USD 27 billion, engaged in Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) projects, hi-tech manufacturing, and services across various regions.

Larsen & Toubro (L&T):

- It is a leading Indian multinational enterprise valued at USD 27 billion.
- L&T focuses on Engineering, Procurement, and Construction (EPC) projects, advanced manufacturing, and diversified services.
- The company operates across various global regions, contributing to its diverse portfolio of businesses.
- Recent leadership appointments highlight L&T's commitment to bolstering its management team.
- These appointments aim to position L&T for ongoing growth and success in the engineering and construction industry.

4. John Swinney Elected 7th First Minister of Scotland by Scottish Parliament (May 9, 2024)

On May 7, 2024, John Ramsay Swinney, leader of the Scottish National Party (SNP), was elected as the 7th First Minister of Scotland by the Scottish Parliament.

An Overview of the News

- John Swinney replaces Hamza Haroon Yusuf, who officially resigned from the position on May 7, 2024.
- Swinney's formal appointment will be granted through a Royal Warrant from His Majesty King Charles III of the United Kingdom (UK).
- John Swinney's nomination for First Minister was the result of a vote within the Scottish Parliament.
- Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) voted 64 to 57 in favor of selecting John Swinney as First Minister out of a total of 4 nominees, with seven abstentions.

About John Swinney

Background:

- John Swinney, aged 60, was born on April 13, 1964, in Edinburgh, Scotland. He joined the Scottish National Party (SNP) in 1979.

Political Career:

- In 1997, Swinney was elected as the Westminster Member of Parliament (MP) for North Tayside.
- Transitioning to Scottish politics, he became the Member of the Scottish Parliament (MSP) for Tayside North in 1999.
- Swinney held the position of deputy leader of the SNP from 1998 to 2000, and subsequently served as party leader from 2000 to 2004.

Government Positions:

- From 2011 to 2014, Swinney served as the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment, and Sustainable Growth.
- He assumed the role of Deputy First Minister from 2014 to 2023, achieving the distinction of being the longest-serving Deputy First Minister in the history of UK devolution.
- In addition to his deputy leadership, Swinney held various cabinet positions:
 - Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Constitution, and Economy from 2014 to 2016.
 - Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills from 2016 to 2021.
 - Cabinet Secretary for Covid Recovery from 2021 to 2023.

About Scotland

- First Minister- John Ramsay Swinney
- Capital - Edinburgh
- Currency - Pound sterling
- Official languages - Scots, Scottish Gaelic, English, British Sign Language
- National animal - Unicorn
- National flower - Thistle

5. Keki Mistry Approved as Chairman of HDFC Life by IRDAI (May 9, 2024)

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDAI) has approved Keki Mistry's appointment as chairman of HDFC Life on May 7, 2024.

An Overview of the News

- Mistry succeeds Deepak S. Parekh, who stepped down from the chairman and non-executive director roles.
- HDFC Life's board unanimously endorsed Mistry's appointment on April 18, awaiting IRDAI's approval.

- Formerly vice chairman and CEO of HDFC Limited, Mistry now serves as a non-executive director on HDFC Bank Limited's board post-merger.

About Keki Mistry

- With directorships in multiple companies, Mistry is a chartered accountant and fellow member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India.
- He contributes as a member of the Primary Market Advisory committee (PMAC) and has previous experience on SEBI's Corporate Governance Committee.
- Mistry chaired the CII Corporate Governance Committee for two consecutive terms (2016-17 and 2017-18).
- Currently, he leads Working Group 1 within an SEBI expert committee dedicated to enhancing business practices and aligning regulations.

HDFC Life Insurance Company Limited:

- It is a provider of long-term life insurance services.
- The company provides both individual and group insurance services.
- Establishment - 14 August 2000.
- Headquarters - Mumbai

6. 8 Indians Named Among TIME's 100 Most Influential People 2024 (April 22, 2024)

TIME, the renowned global media brand, has unveiled its 21st edition of the annual "TIME 100 Most Influential People 2024" list.

An Overview of the News

- The TIME100 list, curated by TIME magazine, acknowledges the impact, innovation, and achievements of the world's most influential personalities.

Indian-Origin Personalities

- Among the honorees are 8 individuals of Indian origin: Alia Bhatt, Dev Patel, Sakshi Malik, Satya Nadella, Ajaypal Singh Banga, Jigar Shah, Asma Khan, and Priyamvada Natarajan.

1. Alia Bhatt (Artists):

- Renowned Bollywood actress with British citizenship.
- Awarded 1st National Film Award for Best Actress in 2023 for "Gangubai Kathiawadi."
- Jointly won the award with Kriti Sanon for the film "Mimi."
- Made international debut with Netflix's "Heart of Stone" in 2023.

2. Dev Patel (Artists):

- British actor and filmmaker of Indian descent.
- Notable roles include "Slumdog Millionaire" (2008) and directorial debut "Monkey Man" (2024).
- Won the BAFTA Award for Best Supporting Actor in 2017 for "Lion."

3. Sakshi Malik (Icons):

- Renowned Indian wrestler, first Indian female wrestler to win Olympic medal.
- Notable medals in Commonwealth Games and Olympics.
- Honored with Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna and Padma Shri awards.

4. Satya Narayana Nadella (Titans):

- Indian-born American Business Executive, CEO of Microsoft.
- Honored with Padma Bhushan in 2022 by the Indian Government.

5. Ajaypal Singh Banga (Leaders):

- Indian-born American business executive, 14th President of the World Bank Group.
- Received Padma Shri in 2016 for contributions to Trade and Industry.

6. Jigar Shah (Leaders):

- Indian-born American entrepreneur, Director of the Loan Programs Office (LPO) in the US Department of Energy.

7. Asma Khan (Pioneers):

- Indian-born British restaurateur and cookbook author.
- Owner of acclaimed London restaurant Darjeeling Express.
- First British chef featured on Netflix's "Chef's Table."

8. Priyamvada Natarajan (Pioneers):

- Indian theoretical astrophysicist, professor at Yale University.
- Author of "Mapping the Heavens: The Radical Scientific Ideas That Reveal the Cosmos" (2016).

Highlights of the 2024 list:

- The 2024 list comprises 51 women and over a dozen entertainers.

- Satya Nadella and Patrick Mahomes (American football quarterback) hold the record for appearing on the list for the 3rd time in 2024, more than any other individual.
- Motaz Azaiza, a 25-year-old Palestinian photojournalist, is the youngest person included on the list.
- Joel Habener, an 86-year-old American endocrinologist, is the oldest individual featured on the list.

Key Points:

- Categories: The TIME100 list encompasses various categories such as Artists, Icons, Titans, Leaders, Innovators, and Pioneers.
- Diverse Fields: Each category includes individuals from diverse fields such as movie stars, athletes, scientists, and business leaders, who have made significant contributions through their work.
- Pairings: Each honoree is paired with a guest contributor selected by TIME to write about them, adding depth and perspective to their achievements.
- Origins: The List originated from a debate among American academics, politicians, and journalists and was first published in 1999.

7. Appointment of Vice Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi as Chief of the Naval Staff (April 22, 2024)

Vice Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi has been appointed as the 26th Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) of the Indian Navy by the Government of India (GoI).

An Overview of the News

- Currently holding the position of Vice Chief of the Naval Staff, he will succeed Admiral Radhakrishnan Hari Kumar, the incumbent CNS, upon his retirement on April 30, 2024.
- **Admiral R. Hari** assumed the role of the **25th CNS on November 9, 2021**.

Background of Vice Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi:

- Served in various capacities including Fleet Operations officer of the Western Fleet, Director of Naval Operations, and Principal Director of Naval Plans in New Delhi.
- Commanded INS Trishul, Vinash, and Kirch.
- Previously held positions such as Assistant Chief of Navy Staff (Policy and Plans), Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet, and Director General of Naval Operations.
- Commandant of the Indian Naval Academy (INA), Ezhimala, Kerala.

Awards and Recognition:

- Received the prestigious **Robert E Bateman International Prize** during Naval Higher Command Course at United States Naval War College (2007-08).

- Honored with **Ati Vishisht Seva Medal (AVSM)** and **Nausena Medal (NM)** for contributions to the Indian Navy.
- Awarded the **Thimmaiah Medal at Defence Services Staff College, Wellington, Tamil Nadu.**

8. HDFC Life Insurance Company has named Keki Mistry as the Chairman of the Board (April 22, 2024)

Keki M Mistry appointed as the new Chairman of the Board, subject to approval from the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority.

An Overview of the News

- Mistry, a Chartered Accountant and former Vice Chairman & CEO of HDFC Limited has been associated with HDFC Life since December 2000.
- Deepak S Parekh steps down as Chairman of HDFC Life Insurance, as per the company's exchange filing.

Directorship Updates:

- VK Viswanathan and Prasad Chandran conclude their tenure as Independent Directors after serving two consecutive terms of five years each, effective April 24, 2024.
- The Board acknowledges the significant contributions of Viswanathan and Chandran during their tenure with the company.
- Venkatraman Srinivasan appointed as an Independent Director for a five-year term, based on the recommendation of the nomination & remuneration committee.

HDFC Life Insurance Company Limited:

- It is a provider of long-term life insurance services.
- The company provides both individual and group insurance services.
- Establishment - **14 August 2000.**
- Headquarters - **Mumbai**

9. CRPF's Nalin Prabhat takes over as NSG Director General (April 20, 2024)

Senior 1992 batch IPS officer Nalin Prabhat of Andhra Pradesh cadre has been appointed as the Director General of the country's counter-terrorism force, National Security Guard (NSG).

An Overview of the News

- Prabhat is currently serving as Additional Director General in the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).

- The appointment was made by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) for a period up to August 31, 2028, which is the date of his superannuation.
- Before Prabhat's appointment, Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) chief Daljit Singh Choudhary held additional charge of NSG.
- The ACC also approved the appointment of Sapna Tiwari, Additional Director, Intelligence Bureau, as Special Director in the agency for a tenure of two years from the date she assumes charge of the post or the date of her superannuation or till April 30, 2026.

National Security Guard (NSG)

- The NSG, often known as the Black Cats, serves as a counter-terrorism unit within India.
- Established on 16 October 1984 in response to Operation Blue Star, the NSG comes under the purview of the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- Its primary function is to counter terrorist activities and protect states from internal disruptions.
- NSG is famous for its specialized training and quick response to security threats.

10. Ajit Kumar KK appointed as MD and CEO of Dhanlaxmi Bank (April 20, 2024)

Reserve Bank of India approved Ajit Kumar KK as Managing Director and CEO of Dhanlaxmi Bank.

An Overview of the News

- The appointment of Ajit Kumar KK is for a tenure of three years, starting from the date he assumes charge.
- The appointment follows the approval of extended tenure for outgoing MD and CEO, JK Shivan, until his successor takes charge.
- Shivan's term was originally scheduled to end in January 2024.

Kumar's background:

- Ajit Kumar KK has 36 years of banking experience primarily from Federal Bank Limited.
- Currently working as President and Chief Human Resources Officer at Federal Bank Limited.
- Awarded the Gold Award for HR Leader of the Year by the Economic Times Human Capital Awards.
- Additionally, Kumar serves as the Director of Federal Operations and Services Limited, a subsidiary of Federal Bank Limited.

Approval Process:

- Kumar's candidature was recommended to the RBI along with other candidates for the post of MD and CEO.
- The board of the bank will meet to confirm the appointment and secure shareholder approval as per the rules.

About Reserve Bank of India (RBI)

- It acts as the central bank of India and the regulatory authority that oversees the Indian banking sector.
- It is operated under the ownership of the Ministry of Finance of the Government of India.
- The primary responsibilities of the RBI include regulating and supervising the Indian financial system to ensure stability and efficiency.
- One of its major functions is to control the issuance and circulation of the national currency, the Indian Rupee.
- RBI is entrusted with the task of managing and maintaining adequate supply of currency in the economy to facilitate smooth transactions and economic activities.

Location: Mumbai, India

Established: 1 April 1935

Governor: Shaktikanta Das