

April 14th news:

International:

Nawaz Sharif stands disqualified for life, rules Pakistan SC

Pakistan's Supreme Court dashed former prime minister Nawaz Sharif's hopes of returning to power on 13th April, ruling that the disqualification handed to him last year in the Panama Papers Case was for life.

Both Sharif and former Pakistani Tehreek-e-Insaf secretary general Jahangir Tareen have been barred from holding public office for life.

A report in Dawn.com, said the disqualification under Article 62 (1)(f) of Pakistan's constitution is for life. Article 62(1)(f), which sets the precondition for a member of Pakistan's parliament to be 'sadiq' and 'ameen' (honest and righteous), was the one under which Sharif was disqualified as PM last year.

The verdict was issued unanimously by all five judges of the bench while hearing a case related to determination of time duration for disqualification of a lawmaker under the Constitution.

Sharif, a three-time prime minister, was ousted by the judiciary in July 2017 over corruption charges which he is currently facing in Pakistani courts.

The present ruling addressed an ambiguity over Sharif's disqualification and whether he was barred from office for life or a specific period.

Sharif has denied any wrongdoing and has blamed "hidden hands" for his dismissal.

Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) leader Jahangir Tareen was disqualified on December 15 last year by a separate bench of the apex court under the same provision.

Following the verdict, both Sharif and Tareen have become ineligible to ever hold public office.

Reacting on the judgment, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that he believes people of Pakistan should make such decisions about the fate of politicians.

National:

Bilateral:

Indian, Russian companies sign seven MoUs at DefExpo

Seven MoUs were signed between Indian and Russian companies on 13th April at the ongoing DefExpo that was formally inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Infrastructure major Larsen and Toubro and Moscow-based Rosoboronexport signed an MoU for developing underwater platforms for Indian Navy, a press release said.

City-based Ananth Technologies and JSC Concern Radio-Electronic Technologies (KRET) inked pact for product support to develop defence systems and to manufacture spare parts and providing service and maintenance for such items.

Ananth Technologies signed another MoU with Research and Production Corporation Uralvagonzavod to set up technical and logistic support for T90S and T72 Tanks to the Indian Army.

Space Era and Concern Radio-Electronic Technologies formed a strategic partnership for technical and logistics support to ensure maximum operational availability of SU-30 MKI and Helicopters of MI 8, MI 17 and MI 35 Type helicopters.

Russian firm OSKROSOMARINE and JSC AGAT signed an MoU for development of Fregat radar on-board Indian Naval frontline warships.

India, China agreed continue talks

National Security Advisor Ajit Doval on 12th April held talks with the top official of China's ruling Communist Party Yang Jiechi in Shanghai during which both sides agreed to maintain the pace of high-level exchanges.

Mr Doval's visit is part of regular high-level engagements between India and China. The discussions covered a wide agenda spanning bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual interest. The two sides agreed to maintain the pace of high-level exchanges, with a view to fully realise the potential of closer development partnership between India and China

Economy:

March exports decline 0.66% to \$29.11 bn

Exports fell in March due to a contraction in refinery products, gems and jewellery and textiles, but managed to cross the \$300-billion target for the first time in two years in 2017-18. A decline in the growth rate for three straight months till February led to a 0.66 per cent fall in exports in March. The growth rate had slipped to 4.48 per cent in February, down from 30.5 per cent in November.

According to data released by the commerce and industry ministry on 13th April, exports stood at \$29.11 billion in March, taking the total tally in 2017-18 to \$302.84 billion, marginally above the government's target of \$300 billion. In 2016-17, exports stood at \$275.85 billion.

India's annual exports remained above the \$300-billion mark till 2014-15, but declined to \$262.29 billion in 2015-16 due to a global slowdown.

Imports grew 7.15 per cent in March to \$42.80 billion, against 10.4 per cent growth in February. During 2017-18, imports increased 19.59 per cent to \$459.67 billion.

The trade deficit came in at \$13.69 billion in March, higher than \$11.98 billion in February. For the full financial year, the deficit stood at \$156.83 billion, up from \$108.50 billion in 2016-17, mainly due to a rise in oil import bill.

In March, the country imported \$11.10 billion worth of crude oil, a 13.92 per cent rise, compared to 32.05 per cent in the previous month. This took the cumulative import bill for 2017-18 to over \$459 billion, from \$384 billion in 2016-17.

Non-oil, non-gold imports, a sign of domestic industrial demand, rose 12.2 per cent in March, after a 7.28 per cent decline in February.

US announces GSP eligibility review of India

Based on the market access concerns it has with India, the US announced eligibility review of India for the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP). US has also announced eligibility review of other two countries -- Indonesia and Kazakhstan, which it said was based on concerns about the countries' compliance with the programme. The GSP is the largest and oldest US trade preference programme and is designed to promote economic development by allowing duty-free entry for thousands of products from designated beneficiary countries. Congress last month had voted to renew the GSP through 2020

Sports:

India marching ahead in CWG

On 13th April Indians win three Gold, Four Silver and Four Bronze medals. India's gold medal tally also surpassed the previous edition's haul as they had bagged 15 medals in the 2014 Glasgow Games.

Anish Bhanwala, the Haryana kid, won gold in the 25-metre rapid fire pistol event.

Tejaswini Sawant was the other gold-winner to emerge at the Belmont Shooting Centre in the 50-metre rifle 3 position event.

Anjum Moudgil settled for a silver in the same event.

The wrestlers dominated the mat at the Carrara Sports and Leisure center, picking up five medals. Bajrang Punia (65kg) stood on top of the podium in the 65 kg division.

Mausam Khatri (97kg) and Pooja Dhanda (57kg) picked up silver medals while Divya Kakran (68kg) notched a bronze. In the boxing ring, Vikas Krishan (75kg), Satish Kumar (+91kg) and the fast-rising trio of Amit Panghal (49kg), Gaurav Solanki (52kg) and Manish Kaushik (60kg) entered the finals.

Awards:

National Film Awards

65th National Awards were declared on 13th April. Newton was adjudged as the best Hindi film. Actor Pankaj Tripathi, who played a pivotal role in the engaging election drama, has been bestowed with

Special mention award. Legendary actress Sridevi has been adjudged for the best actor (female) award for her role in the movie 'MoM'.

Abbas Ali Moghul has won Best action direction award for 'Baahubali 2-The Conclusion'. 'Baahubali – The Conclusion' has won the best popular film

Veteran actor Vinod Khanna was conferred Dada Saheb Phalke Award. The announcements were made by Mr. India, Bandit Queen director Shekhar Kapur, who is the chairman of the central panel of the 65th National Film Awards.

Best Screenplay (Original) Award goes to Malayalam movie 'Thondimuthalum Driksakshiyum' starring Fahad Faasil and directed by Dileesh Pothan.

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65th National Film Awards for Feature Films

BEST MALE PLAYBACK SINGER: K.J Yesudas (Viswasapoorvam Mansoor)

Song: Poy Maranja Kalam

Best film on social issues: Aalorukkam

Best direction: Director- Jayaraj (BHAYANAKAM)

Best actress: Sridevi (MOM)

Best actor: Riddhi Sen (NAGARKIRTAN)

Best child artist: Bhanita Das (Village Rockstars)

Best supporting actress: Divyadutta25 (IRADA)

Best supporting actor: Fahad Fazil (Thondimuthalum Driksakshiyum)

Best female playback singer: Kaatru Veliyidai

BEST SCREENPLAY

i) Screenplay Writer (Original): Sajeev Pazhoor (Thondimuthalum Driksakshiyum)

ii) Screenplay Writer (Adapted): JAYARAJ (Bhayanakam)

iii) Dialogues : Sambit Mohanty (Hello Arsi)

Best action direction award: Abbas Ali Moghul (Baahubali-The Conclusion)