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World Parkinson's Day: April 11th

- **World Parkinson's Day** is observed annually on **April 11** to raise awareness about Parkinson's disease, a neurodegenerative disorder that affects millions of people worldwide
- This day serves as a reminder of the challenges faced by individuals living with Parkinson's, as well as their caregivers and families.
- This day is commemorated the birth anniversary of **Dr James Parkinson**, the **British physician** who first described the symptoms of the disease in his groundbreaking essay, '**An Essay on the Shaking Palsy**,' published in **1817**.
- Dr. Parkinson's work laid the foundation for the understanding of Parkinson's disease, and his contributions are honoured on this day.



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International Day of Human Space Flight: April 12th

- The International Day of Human Space Flight is commemorated every year on April 12 to mark the beginning of the space era for mankind.
- **The United Nations General Assembly, on April 7, 2011,** passed a resolution to establish the International Day of Human Space Flight on a particular day every year.
- The primary reason behind choosing April 12 as the date is rooted in the **Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin's** achievement to orbit Earth aboard the **Vostok 1 spacecraft** on this day.
- This achievement by Gagarin paved the path for space exploration for the benefit of humanity.



- The International Day of Human Space Flight is celebrated to reaffirm the role of space science and technology in accomplishing sustainable development goals, while also contributing to the improvement of the well-being of states and peoples.
- The first human-made satellite **Sputnik I** was launched into outer space by **the Soviet Union in 1957**, paving the way for space exploration. It took four years for another momentous occasion to occur.
- Yuri Gagarin, the Russian cosmonaut, made the first human space journey on **April 12, 1961**, in Vostok 1, his space spacecraft.
- Gagarin took 108 minutes to complete his journey in space, which was a watershed moment in the Space Race.

British man Russ Cook became the first person to run the length of Africa

- Extreme marathon runner **Russ Cook** completed his race **across Africa** after traveling through **16 countries along the 352-day odyssey**.
- In April 2023, Mr. Cook began his adventure from the **South African village of L'Agulhas**, the southernmost point of Africa, and proceeded to the west coast of the continent, covering a total distance of more than 16,000 kilometers.
- Before reaching Ras Angela, Mr. Cook passed through Namibia, Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of the Congo, Cameroon, Nigeria, Benin, Togo, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Guinea, Senegal, Mauritania, and Algeria.
- He is Known as the “**Hardest Geezer**”, he has also raised over half a million pounds for charity during this time.



UK appoints its first women High Commissioner to India

- **The UK** has appointed **Lindy Cameron** as its new and first women **high commissioner to India**.
- Cameron will succeed incumbent **Alex Ellis**.
- Cameron has been serving as the Chief Executive of the UK's National Cyber Security Centre since 2020.
- She also had a stint as the director general of the UK's Northern Ireland Office.
- Her appointment comes as the UK and India are engaged in negotiations for a long-pending free trade agreement.

About United Kingdom:

Capital: London

PM: Rishi Sunak

Currency: Pound sterling/GBP



PhonePe partners with eSewa, HAN Pokhara to promote UPI service in Nepal

- Fintech firm **PhonePe** has partnered with **Nepal's digital wallet service eSewa** and **the Hotel Association of Nepal (HAN) Pokhara** to promote digital payments through UPI on the Himalayan country's payment processor **Fonepay Network**.
- The partnership is a part of the **Fewa New Year Festival** which will be held from April 11-14 in Nepal.
- PhonePe aimed at raising awareness about digital payments among local merchants while demonstrating the convenience of digital payments for customers.

About Nepal:

Capital: Kathmandu

PM: Pushpa Kamal Dahal

President: Ram Chandra Poudel

Currency: Nepalese Rupee



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Lubrizol opens its new Global Capacity Centre in Pune

- **Lubrizol**, a global leader in speciality chemicals, has opened a new **Global Capability Center (GCC)** in **Pune, India**, as a strategic hub to accelerate its growth in the region and enable closer collaboration for its customers and employees leveraging local talent to enable regional and global success in the many markets and industries it serves.
- The campus is WELL- and LEED Gold certified to enable a safe, healthy, and environmentally conscious workspace.
- Lubrizol has a long history in India, dating back to 1966 when the company started manufacturing chemical additives to support the transportation and industrial sectors.
- Since then, Lubrizol has improved the quality of life for those in India and surrounding regions through innovative solutions that help advance mobility, improve well-being and enhance modern life.



- The Company currently has its workforce employed across India through various in-region commercial offices, labs and manufacturing plants.
- **In 2023**, Lubrizol announced a more than **150 million USD** investment to enable the world's largest CPVC resin plant in Vilayat, Gujarat, double capacity at its site in Dahej, Gujarat, open a grease lab in Navi Mumbai and enable significant in-country job growth and innovation.

About Lubrizol:

Founded: 28th July 1928

Headquarters: Ohio, United States

CEO: Rebecca B Liebert

Eight South African venues confirmed for 2027 World Cup

- **Eight of South Africa's top cricket stadiums, including Wanderers in Johannesburg, Durban's Kingsmead and Newlands in Cape Town, have been confirmed as venues for the 2027 ICC ODI World Cup.**
- **The 2027 World Cup will be jointly hosted by South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Namibia across October and November.**
- “While the main venues will be the Wanderers, Centurion Park in Pretoria, Kingsmead, St George's Park in Gqeberha, Boland Park in Paarl and Newlands, the Mangaung Oval in Bloemfontein and Buffalo Park in East London will also host some fixtures, with other games being staged in tournament co-hosts Zimbabwe and Namibia.
- Hosts South Africa and Zimbabwe have directly qualified for the tournament, but Namibia will have to go through the African qualifiers.



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- The top eight teams in the ICC ODI rankings gain direct qualification, while the remaining four spots will be determined through global qualifier tournaments.
- The tournament will see two groups of seven teams each. The top three teams from each group will progress to the Super Six stage, leading to semi-finals and a final to determine the winners.

About South Africa:

Capitals: Cape Town, Pretoria, Bloemfontein

President: Cyril Ramaphosa

Currency: South African rand

Sarhul Festival celebrated in Jharkhand, Odisha and Bihar

- **Sarhul** is the festival of the New Year celebrated on **April 11th** in the state of **Jharkhand** by the **tribal communities** as part of the local **Sarna religion**.
- The festival is a vibrant reflection of the tribal culture and their close connection with nature
- It is celebrated in the **Hindu month of Chaitra**, three days after the appearance of the new moon.
- It is also a celebration of the beginning of spring. The word “Sarhul” is connected with tree worship. It is a festival where nature is venerated.
- Sarhul is a well-known celebration observed by several tribes in the Jharkhand region. The word “**Sarhul**” is derived from two words, “**Sar**” meaning “**seed**” and “**Hul**” meaning “**to worship**”.



- This festival is celebrated by many tribes in Jharkhand, but most notably the **Munda, Ho, and Oraon tribes**.
- Among these many cultural events like “Baa Porob”, the festival of flowers and the worship of the Sal Tree as well as a special Sarhul dance.
- Sarhul festival is also celebrated in Odisha, and parts of Bihar,

About Jharkhand:

Capital: Ranchi

Chief Minister: Champai Soren

Governor: C. P. Radhakrishnan

QS World University Rankings by Subject 2024: JNU ranked as India's Top University for Development Studies

- **Quacquarelli Symonds (QS)** released the **14th edition** of the **QS World University Rankings by subject 2024**, which marks the university topped by **Harvard University of United States**.
- Followed by **University of Cambridge, UK** and **third University of Oxford, UK**.
- As many as **69 Indian universities** have made it to the latest '**QS World University Rankings**' with a total of **424 entries across 55 subjects**, a **19.4 per cent jump** from the previous year's **355**.
- With this, **India** became the **second** most represented country in **Asia** after **China** whose **101 institutions** were on the list.



- And, of the total Indian entries this year, a whopping 72 per cent were either new to the list, showed improvement, or maintained their positions. A mere 18 per cent experienced a decline.
- **The Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU)** emerged as the highest ranked Indian university in the list. Under the subject of Development Studies, JNU was ranked **20th in the Rankings**.
- JNU was also the country's top-ranked university in the subjects of Geography, History, Modern Languages, Politics & International Relations, Anthropology, English Language & Literature and Linguistics.
- **Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Ahmedabad** grabbed the next best rank of **22nd** in the subject of Business & Management Studies.
- **Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Bangalore** stood the **first** spot in India, under the **Accounting & Finance** subject.
- The rankings were a comparative analysis on the performance of/ over 16,400 individual university programmes, taken by students at/ over 1,500 universities/ which in/ **95 countries and territories**,/ across 56 academic disciplines.
- **Five broad faculty areas of Arts & Humanities, Engineering & Technology, Life Sciences, Natural Sciences and Social Sciences.**
- **The Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay (IITB)** secured **25th rank** in the subject of Engineering-Mineral & Mining.

- **Indian Institute of Technology, Madras (IITM)** secured **29th** spot in Petroleum Engineering.
- According to QS, India stands as one of the world's most rapidly expanding research centres.
- “In terms of volume, **India** is now the world's **fourth-largest** producer of research, generating **1.3 million academic papers** in this period, trailing only behind **China's** 4.5 million, the **United States'** 4.4 million, and slightly less than the **United Kingdom's** 1.4 million.

About Quacquarelli Symonds (QS):

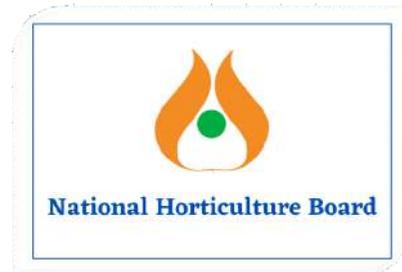
Started: 2004

Headquarters: London, UK

CEO: Jessica Turner

Central government launched CDP-SURAKSHA portal for Horticulture farmers

- The Indian government has launched a new platform called CDP-SURAKSHA to disburse subsidies to horticulture farmers under **the Cluster Development Programme (CDP)**.
- This initiative is part of the government's efforts to promote horticulture crops across the country.
- The CDP-SURAKSHA is essentially a **digital platform**. **SURAKSHA** stands for “**System for Unified Resource Allocation, Knowledge, and Secure Horticulture Assistance**.”
- The platform will allow an instant disbursement of subsidies to farmers in their bank account by **utilising the e-RUPI voucher** (more on this later) from **the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)**.
- The CDP-SURAKSHA has features such as database integration with PM-KISAN, cloud-based server space from NIC, UIDAI validation, eRUPI integration, local government directory (LGD), content management system, geotagging, and geo-fencing.
- The platform allows access to farmers, vendors, implementing agencies (IA), and cluster development agencies (CDAs), and officials of the National Horticulture Board (NHB).



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- According to the NPCI, the e-RUPI can be shared with the beneficiaries for a specific purpose or activity by organizations or government via SMS or QR code.
- In the old system, a farmer had to buy planting materials on their own. They would then have to approach the officials concerned for the release of the subsidy.
- The CDP-SURAKSHA platform, however, will provide subsidies to farmers upfront, at the time of purchasing the planting material.
- While the platform is yet to be unveiled at the national level, around **8,400 farmers'** details have been uploaded on **the CDP-SURAKSHA platform** so far.
- These included **8,000** farmers of **Sahyadri Farms Private Ltd**, which is implementing the grape cluster in **Nasik, Maharashtra**. The rest of the **400 farmers** are from **Meghalaya Basin Management Agency (MBMA)**, which is implementing the turmeric cluster in **Meghalaya**.
- Besides this, **four banks -HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India (SBI) and Bank of Baroda** — have been onboarded on the platform. These banks will generate e-RUPI vouchers for fund disbursement.
- The **CDP** is a component of the central sector scheme of **National Housing Bank (NHB)**.
- It is aimed at leveraging “the geographical specialization of horticulture clusters and promoting integrated and market-led development of pre-production, production, post-harvest, logistics, branding, and marketing activities.”

IPPB introduces Aadhaar ATM Services for Convenient Cash Withdrawals

- **The Aadhaar Enabled Payment System (AePS)** service offered by **India Post Payments Bank (IPPB)** enables cash withdrawals from the comfort of your home.
- Through the AePS facility, a bank customer can employ their Aadhaar number as an identity verification tool to access their Aadhaar-enabled bank account.
- This service allows for basic banking transactions such as balance enquiries, cash withdrawals, and remittances through a business correspondent.
- For customers to take advantage of the AEPS service, several criteria must be met. Firstly, the customer's bank must participate in AEPS. Secondly, the customer's Aadhaar number must be linked to their bank account. Lastly, transactions are authenticated through biometric data.



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- This service particularly benefits those who find it challenging to visit banks or ATMs, such as senior citizens, individuals with disabilities, and others preferring the safety and convenience of home delivery.

The AePS platform offers a variety of services, including:

- Cash Withdrawal, Balance Enquiry, Mini Statement, Aadhaar to Aadhaar Fund Transfer.

About IPPB:

Founded: 17th August 2016

Headquarters: New Delhi

CEO: R. Viswesvaran

FSIB selected Manoj Mittal as CMD of SIDBI and Sanjay Shukla named as MD of NHB

- Financial Services Institution Bureau (FSIB), the headhunter for directors of state-owned banks and financial institutions, has recommended the name of **IFCI Managing Director Manoj Mittal** as **SIDBI Chairman and Managing Director**.
- Besides, FSIB has suggested name to **Sanjay Shukla** as **Managing Director** of **National Housing Bank (NHB)**.
- **Mittal** will replace **S Ramann** as Chairman and Managing Director of Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI).
- **Mittal** earlier worked as a **Deputy Managing Director at SIDBI** from **2016-2021**. He was closely involved in the development of SIDBI Vision 2.0.
- Sanjay is currently working in **Centrum Housing Finance**, he has earlier worked in various private sector organisations including **LIC Housing Finance**.

About FSIB:

Established: 1st July 2022

Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra

Chairman: Bhanu Pratap Sharma



India, Mauritius amends Double Tax Avoidance Agreement

- **India and Mauritius** have signed a protocol to amend the **double taxation avoidance agreement (DTAA)**, which included a **principal purpose test (PPT)** to decide whether a foreign investor is eligible to claim treaty benefits.
- The introduction of PPT could result in more scrutiny of investments, with experts suggesting that authorities will test if obtaining tax benefits under the treaty was one of the main objectives of routing investments via the African nation.
- “The introduction of the PPT aims to curtail tax avoidance by ensuring that treaty benefits are only granted for transactions with a bona fide purpose.
- In Feb, the Mauritius government had agreed to amend the tax treaty with India to comply with OECD norms and amendments were signed last week.
- In past there were several “post box” entities, which operated out of Mauritius only to take treaty benefits.



- Companies are likely to face the test as the preamble itself makes it clear that instead of “encouragement of mutual trade and investment”, now the idea is to there are no “opportunities for non-taxation or reduced taxation or avoidance (including through treaty shopping arrangements aimed at obtaining reliefs in this Convention for the indirect benefit of residents of third jurisdictions”.
- With amendment of the treaty in **2016**, when capital gains benefits were taken away, Mauritius, which has been the largest source of **FDI**, has now slipped to **fourth spot**.

About Mauritius:

Capital: Port Louis

PM: Pravind Jugnauth

President: Prithvirajsing Roopun

Currency: Mauritian Rupee

WTO Projects Global Merchandise Trade Volume to grow by 2.6% in 2024

- The growth in the **global merchandise trade** is likely to decline by **1.2 per cent**, in value terms, due to the ongoing geopolitical uncertainties, economic think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI).
- The US dollar value of world merchandise trade fell **5 per cent** in **2023** to **USD 24.01 trillion**, but this decline was mostly offset by a strong increase in commercial services trade, which rose 9 per cent to USD 7.54 trillion.
- This allowed world goods and commercial services exports on a balance of payments basis to slip **2 per cent** in **2023** to **USD 30.8 trillion**.
- “Despite the **World Trade Organization (WTO)** expecting a **2.6 per cent** rise in trade volume for 2024, the value of world merchandise trade is still seen to decline by **1.2 per cent in 2024 from 2023**, continuing the trend of trade values falling behind the trade volumes,” .



- The WTO has projected that the world merchandise trade volume will grow by **2.6 per cent in 2024** and **3.3 per cent in 2025**.
- The WTO forecast does not include impact on trade values, which is a commonly used parameter to measure trade performance.
- Calculating the trade value is straightforward, as it involves adding up the values of all transactions.
- However, calculating trade volume is not as simple as just adding up quantities of different goods like iron ore and diamonds, which could lead to inaccurate conclusions.
- “The WTO adjusts the value of trade to account for changes in prices, a process known as deflation.

About World Trade Organization:

Founded: 1st January 1995

Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland

Director General: Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala

Inaugural National Women's Hockey League 2024-25 will be held in Ranchi

- **Hockey India (HI)** has announced that the inaugural **National Women's Hockey League** will take place in **Ranchi** from **April 30 to May 10**.
- The league aims to provide a platform for emerging players across the country to enhance their skills.
- Teams representing Haryana, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Bengal, Mizoram, Manipur and Odisha, the eight quarterfinalists at the Senior Women's National Championships in Pune, will compete in the initial phase of the league.
- Additionally, U21 players will also participate, offering selectors the chance to spot and nurture talent for upcoming international tournaments.
- The second phase of the league is scheduled for next year.



ADB raises India's GDP growth forecast for FY25 to 7% from 6.7%

- **The Asian Development Bank (ADB)** raised India's GDP growth forecast for the current fiscal to **7 per cent from 6.7 per cent** earlier.
- The robust growth will be driven by public and private sector investment demand and gradual improvement in consumer demand.
- The 2024-25 growth estimate is, however, lower than **7.6 per cent** projected for the 2022-23 fiscal. Strong investment drove GDP growth in the 2022-23 fiscal as consumption was muted.
- The ADB had in December last year projected the Indian economy to expand 6.7 per cent in the 2024-25 fiscal.
- Growth will be robust despite moderating in FY2024 and FY2025. For the **2025-26** fiscal, the ADB has projected India's growth at **7.2 per cent**.
- The ADB's growth forecast for FY25 is in line with the projections made by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

About ADB:

Founded: 19th December 1966

Headquarters: Mandaluyong, Philippines

President: Masatsugu Asakawa

Member Countries: 68 (Niue)



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George Lucas to Receive Honorary Palme D'Or at Cannes Film Festival

- **George Lucas** will receive an **honorary Palme d'Or** at the Cannes Film Festival next month in Cannes, France.
- Lucas will be honored at the closing ceremony to the **77th French film festival** on May 25.
- He joins a short list of those to receive honorary Palmes. Last year, Harrison Ford, a regular leading man for Lucas in “Star Wars” and “Indiana Jones,” was awarded one.
- Other recent recipients include **Michael Douglas, Tom Cruise, Forest Whitaker and Jodie Foster.**
- The Cannes Film Festival runs **May 14-25**. The closing ceremony, during which the festival’s top prize, the Palme d’Or, will be awarded to one of the films in competition, will be broadcast in France on France Télévisions and streamed on Brut.
- After a long wait of **three decades**, Indian filmmaker **Payal Kapadia’s All We Imagine As Light** has been selected for the 2024 **Cannes Film Festival** in the prestigious “**Competition**” category.



- Payal Kapadia's film will be competing for the coveted Palme d'Or alongside 19 others, including *Kinds of Kindness* by Yorgos Lanthimos, *Megalopolis* by Francis Ford Coppola, *Oh Canada* by Paul Scrader, *Bird* by Andrea Arnold, *The Shrouds* by David Cronenberg, and *Anora* by Sean Baker.
- Directed by **Shaji N Karun**, **Swaham** was the last Indian film to enter the "Competition" category in **1994**.
- Before this, of all the Indian films that the 1983 Cannes Film Festival screened, Mrinal Sen's *Kharij* bagged the "Special Jury" prize.
- Prior to that, films such as M S Sathyu's *Garm Hava* (1974), Satyajit Ray's *Parash Pathar* (1958), Raj Kapoor's *Awaara* (1953), V Shantaram's *Amar Bhoopali* (1952), and Chetan Anand's *Neecha Nagar* (1946) were chosen to participate in the "Competition" segment at Cannes.
- **Neecha Nagar** became the first **Indian film** to gain recognition at the Cannes, after it was awarded **Palme d'Or**.
- Previously, in 2021, **Payal Kapadia's A Night of Not Knowing Nothing** won the **Golden Eye Award** for Best Documentary playing in the Director's Fortnight.

Belgium's Ingmar De Vos Elected as New President of ASOIF

- The **48th** General Assembly of the **Association of Summer Olympic International Federations (ASOIF)** convened in **Birmingham, United Kingdom**, and unanimously elected **Ingmar De Vos** as its next President.
- The **third term** of incumbent President **Francesco Ricci Bitti** will come to an end on **31 December 2024**. Ingmar De Vos ran unopposed and was elected by secret ballot for a term of **four years**, starting on **1 January 2025**.
- The Ingmar has served as **International Equestrian Federation (FEI) President** since **2014** and as **ASOIF Council member** since **2019**. Since **2017** he is a **Member** of the **International Olympic Committee (IOC)**.

About Belgium:

Capital: Brussels

PM: Alexander De Croo

Currency: The euro



KABIL & CSIR-IMMT signed MoU for Technical and Knowledge Cooperation for Critical Minerals

- **Khanij Bidesh India Limited (KABIL)** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research - Institute of Minerals and Materials Technology (CSIR-IMMT)** for Technical & Knowledge cooperation for Critical Minerals.
- The MoU was signed by Shri Sadashiv Samantaray, Director (Commercial), NALCO & CEO, KABIL and Dr. Ramanuj Narayan, Director, CSIR-IMMT, in the presence of Shri Sridhar Patra, CMD, NALCO & Chairman, KABIL, at NALCO Corporate Office in **Bhubaneswar, Odisha**.
- Under the MoU, KABIL will leverage the technical expertise and services of CSIR-IMMT to undertake various projects, including the design and analysis of metallurgical test work-plans, development and review of process flowsheets, and the selection of process technologies for mineral processing, beneficiation, and metal extraction.
- KABIL is a JV company of **three Indian public sector undertakings** - National Aluminium Company Limited (NALCO), Hindustan Copper Limited (HCL) and Mineral Exploration and Consultancy Limited (MECL), under the aegis of **Ministry of Mines, Government of India**



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Ministry of Road Transport and Highways to construct 12,349 km of national highways in the year 2023-24

- The Road Transport and Highways Ministry constructed 12,349 km of national highways in 2023-24, the **second highest** in its history.
- Previously, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) had constructed a record **13,327 kilometres** of national highways **in 2020-21**.
- National highways of **10,331 kilometres** were constructed in **2022-23** against **10,457 kilometres** in **2021-22**. Highways of **10,237 kilometres** were built in **2019-20**.
- Further the ministry awarded 8,581 national highway projects in 2023-24.
- The government has launched a pilot project to provide **cashless treatment** to **road accident victims** is upto **Rs 1.5 lakh**.



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Siddharth Rajasekar unveils 'I Can Coach' Volume 2 & 3 at Pioneering Freedom Business Retreat 2024

- Bestselling author and digital coaching leader **Siddharth Rajasekar** announced the release of **volumes 2 and 3** of his transformative book series, **'I Can Coach'**.
- The books were launched at the **Freedom Business Retreat 2024**, a two-day event at the **Leela Palace, Chennai**.
- Building on the success of the first volume, "I Can Coach, Stories of Transformation," volumes 2 and 3 showcase inspiring stories of commitment and aspiration within the digital coaching revolution.
- "Stories of Aspiration" features digital coaches beginning their paths to success as Freedom Finishers through Hackathons.



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- **Founder of the Internet Lifestyle Hub**, Siddharth Rajsekar has been a pioneer in India's digital coaching domain since **2018**.
- He is one of the world's largest communities of trainers, coaches, and mentors, with a mission to empower individuals to turn their knowledge into a super-profitable business that gives them freedom.
- Each book reflects Siddharth Rajsekar's ethos of nurturing innate potential and guiding others.