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India successfully launched PSLV C-23 with 5 satellites

June 30, 2014

India's ANTRIX (ISRO's commercial arm) successfully launched 5 foreign satellites from four countries on board PSLV-C23 rocket which placed them in orbit.

The rocket was launched from Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota and was also witnessed by PM Narendra Modi. ISRO's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle PSLV-C23 placed all five satellites into their respective orbits.

The rocket carried with it primary payload of 714 kg French Earth Observation Satellite SPOT-7, 14 kg AISAT of Germany, NLS7.1 (CAN-X4) and NLS7.2 (CAN-X5) of Canada each weighing 15 kg and the 7 kg VELOX-1 of Singapore.

PM Modi extolled the efforts Indian space scientists and asked the space community to develop a SAARC satellite. He referred to pictures showing rocket components being transported on bicycles.

SPOT 7: French satellite, it will be part of the existing Earth observation satellite. It has been built by European space technology company Airbus Defence and Space.

AISAT: German nano-satellite, to focus on the global sea-traffic monitoring system with special emphasis on high traffic zones using AIS signals.

NLS 7.1 and NLS 7.2: Canadian satellite, they will perform Two-spacecraft precision formation flying using differential GPS with centimetre-level relative position and sub-metre level accurate position control system.

VELOX-1: Singaporean satellite, it is a technology demonstrator for in-house design of image sensor, MEMS-based attitude determination and control system and inter-satellite RF link.

Saina Nehwal clinches Australian Open Super Series title

June 29, 2014

Star Indian badminton player Saina Nehwal defeated Spain's Carolina Marin to win the \$750,000 Star Australian Super Series title.

The 6th seeded Indian, who had clinched the India Open Grand Prix Gold earlier this year, dominated the contest throughout.

New Facelock Technology obviates the need to remember complex passwords

June 28, 2014

Researchers at the University of York in the U.K have developed a new technology named **Facelock technology** which provides an alternative to remembering complicated passwords.

Retaining complicated passwords has always been a difficult job for most people. There is also a risk of hacking if the passwords are kept too simple.

The new Facelock technology attempts to deal with these issues. It is based on human psychological trait of remembering familiar faces with close to 98% accuracy.

Facelock needs users to choose from a selection of faces that are well known to them. Then when they want to log in or get access to a secure system, a series of face grids is created, and users must select the familiar face in each grid.

As per researchers, it's easy for users to select a familiar face from the crowd — but very difficult for others to hack, since none of the faces will stand out to them.

July 4 is the deadline for implementing Food Security Act

June 28, 2014

Adhering to its earlier decision of a 3-month extension to States and Union Territories to implement the National Food Security Act, the Union government's Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution is firm that the deadline for implementing the scheme is July 4, 2014. So far only 11 States have implemented the Act. 20 States and 5 Union Territories are yet to implement it.

The Trinamool Congress (TMC) government in West Bengal has urged the Centre to extend the July 4 deadline.

As per law the National Food Security Act has to be implemented within a year of its coming into force. West Bengal subsidized food grains were distributed among beneficiaries under several categories. But after the National Food Security Act is implemented in a State no such categories would exist.

The Ministry has clarified that if West Bengal does not implement the Act by the deadline, the several schemes in West Bengal under which food grains are distributed at a subsidized rate will not be stopped.

Union Government modernizes NIC-1987 to NIC-2008

June 27, 2014

Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry upgraded the National Industrial Classification -1987 (NIC-1987) to NIC-2008. The upgrade to NIC-2008 will facilitate new businesses as it is more investor friendly and more in sync

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with **international** practices as compared to the older version of NIC Code.

It provides a more modern industrial classification system in line with changes in the structure and composition of the **economy** and changing user requirements and compatibility with international standards.

National Industrial Classification

NIC is used for the purpose of classification of activities in respect of industrial license/ IEM proposals submitted to the **Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion**. It is an essential statistical benchmark for developing and maintaining comparable database as per economic activities. Such classifications are often used in classifying the economically active population, statistics of industrial production and distribution, the different fields of labor statistics and other economic data such as national income. **India's** Central Statistical Organization (CSO) has been finalizing NIC since 1960.

Poli

Over 1 million children in India are out of school: UN report

June 27, 2014

As per a **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization**

(UNESCO) report, **India**, **Indonesia** and **Pakistan** each have more than a million children out of school. According to the UNESCO report:

Globally, around 58 million kids aged 6 to 11 are out of school. This shows little overall improvement since 2007.

India had 1.4 million unschooled children in 2011 but the country is among 17 other nations that have managed to decrease the number of unschooled children in the past decade.

The aid sanctioned to **education** has further reduced combined with the lack of progress in reducing out of school numbers. With these disappointing figures, there is little chance of countries reaching the goal of Universal Primary Education by 2015.

Jean-Claude Juncker will be next president of European Commission

June 27, 2014

Backed by most EU leaders, **Jean-Claude Juncker** has been nominated as the next president of the **European Commission**. The development is a severe impact on opponent David Cameron and threatens to amplify the chances of Britain leaving the European Union (EU).

The British PM David Cameron was opposed to Juncker's nomination and said it may hamper his efforts to keep Britain in the EU ahead of an in-out referendum to be conducted in 2017.

Former **Luxembourg** PM, Juncker, was supported by all EU member states except **Hungary** and Britain.

Chung Hung Won retained as PM of S Korea

June 26, 2014

South **Korea** has retained **Chung Hung Won** as its Premier. The President of **South Korea**, **Park Geun-Hye** announced the decision to retain the Chung Hung Won as country's PM.

Won had resigned taking the responsibility of government's inability and untimely response to the ferry disaster that happened in April 2014. President Park accepted the resignation and asked him to remain in the job until new Prime Minister takes over.

Biochip developed to measure blood sugar via saliva

June 26, 2014

A new biochip sensor that can selectively measure glucose concentrations in a complex fluid like saliva has been developed by scientists at Brown University in the US. It is an important breakthrough towards developing a device that would enable people with **diabetes** to check their glucose levels without drawing blood.

Developers of the device have used a series of specific chemical reactions combined with plasmonic interferometry, a means of detecting chemical signature of compounds using light. The device is sensitive enough to sense variations in glucose concentrations that amount to just a few thousand molecules in the sampled volume.

RIMPAC 2014: World's largest international maritime drill kicks off

June 26, 2014

World's largest **international** maritime exercise named RIMPAC 2014 began on June 26. The mega drill will see participation of navies from 23 countries. The United States has sent the biggest fleet, followed by **China**.

This is China's first active participation at RIMPAC. China is also likely to join drills against non-traditional security threats.

RIMPAC 2014 is the 24th naval exercise in the series and will commence from June 26 to August 1. The 23 nations participating in this year's edition of RIMPAC are the **United States, Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, France, India, Malaysia, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Singapore, Peru, Norway, the Philippines, South Korea, Thailand, Tonga, and the United Kingdom.**



RIMPAC

RIMPAC, the **Rim of the Pacific Exercise**, is the **world's largest international maritime warfare exercise**. RIMPAC is held biennially during June and July of even-numbered years from **Honolulu, Hawaii**. It is hosted and administered by the United States Navy's Pacific Fleet, headquartered at Pearl Harbor, in conjunction with the Marine Corps, the Coast Guard, and Hawaii National Guard forces under the control of the Governor of Hawaii. The US invites military forces from the Pacific Rim and beyond to participate. **The theme for RIMPAC 2014 exercise is —Capable, Adaptive Partners.}}**

India extends ban on import of milk items from China till June 2015

June 24, 2014

The Indian government extended the ban on imports of milk and its products from **China** till **June 2015**. With this the ban on import of milk and milk products (including chocolates and chocolate products and candies/ confectionery/ food preparations with milk or milk solids as an ingredient) from China is extended for one more year.

The ban, first imposed in **September 2008** due to presence of **melamine**, used for making **plastics and fertilizer**, was to expire on June 23, 2014. Though **India does not import milk products from China** but the ban has been imposed as **apreventive measure**.

India is the world's largest producer and consumer of milk. Milk production in India is estimated to have increased by 6% to about 140 million tonnes in 2013-14 from 132.4 million tonnes during the fiscal 2012-13.

Uttar Pradesh is the largest producer of milk in India, followed by **Rajasthan** and **Gujarat**. The per capita consumption was highest in **Punjab** followed by **Haryanain** fiscal 2013-14.

Air India Ltd becomes member of Star Alliance

June 24, 2014

Air India Ltd has joined the **Star Alliance** group of carriers. The move could help enhance revenues at the loss-making staterun air carrier.

Thus, **Air India** has become Star Alliance's 27th member.

How Air India will benefit from the membership of Star Alliance?

Star Alliance membership allows **Air India** to share routes with the other airlines to more than 1,200 destinations, helping it to vie with Gulf carriers like Emirates, which have raised their share of long-distance flights into and out of India.

Star Alliance member's together own a total of 4,338 aircraft and fly over 640 million passengers annually.

The membership is hoped to provide several benefits for the airline and its passengers, including an increase in **Air India's** share on the **India-US** route by about 20% from current 13% within the first year itself.

As the India-US route is a major market for **Air India**, the membership would mean that its travelers flying to the US would have easier access to many more cities there as they would be able to smoothly travel on other Star Alliance member airlines flights going to America.

125th anniversary of Salar Jung museum

June 24, 2014

Salar Jung Museum in **Hyderabad, Telangana** celebrated its 125th anniversary in June 2014.

The art museum located at Darushifa, on the bank of the Musi River in the city of Hyderabad was established in 1951 and is one of the three National Museums of **India**.

It has a collection of 1 million objects which includes sculptures, paintings, carvings, textiles, manuscripts, ceramics, metallic artefacts, carpets, clocks, and furniture from **China, Japan, Burma, India, Nepal, North America, Persia, Europe and Egypt**.

The museum's collection was sourced from **Salar Jung's** familial property. The museum has been declared as an Institution of National Importance by the Indian Parliament.

PSUs have only 3 years to make 25% of their shares public: SEBI

June 24, 2014

With a view to boost primary markets, stock markets watchdog **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** announced a number of reforms pertaining to IPO and Offer-for-Sale. SEBI proposed that all listed PSUs (Public Sector Undertakings) must have at least 25% public shareholding in 3 years.

At present, there are over 36 PSUs where the government controls around 75%. Some of these companies include **Coal India, NHPC and NTPC**.

The market regulator opined relaxing the restrictions imposed on sale of bonus shares held by promoters or other investors during IPO.

As per SEBI chief **UK Sinha**, minimum dilution to public in IPO is to be 25% or Rs 400 crore.

Previously, if a company had more than Rs 4000 crore, it was permitted to issue only 10% which is equivalent to Rs 400

crore worth of shares. On the other hand for others if they had even Re 1 less than that then they could issue 25% which is around Rs 1000 crore.

But now this numerical incongruity has been removed and it will be 25% percent or Rs 400 crore whichever is lower. Earlier there used to be a tendency on the part of the corporates to bring their valuation to Rs 4000 crore whether they were actually worth Rs 4000 crore or not. Now that tendency is likely to moderate and they will be motivated to have real valuation. And those who are coming through with this 10% they will be given 3 years time to come to 25%.

Thus, the uneven requirement of minimum public shareholding of 25% for private promoters and only 10% for government as a promoter will be removed and it will now be made uniform. To bring this reform securities contract regulation rules will be amended in order to provide for minimum public shareholding of 25% to all the public sector companies. A 3-year time has been given to the companies to make adjustments to comply with the new requirements.

Google to globalize “Project Loon” to provide internet to even the rural and remote areas of the world

June 24, 2014

In year 2013, Google launched **Project Loon**, a program that intends to provide Internet access to the rural and remote areas that constitute around **66% of the world’s population**.

The project uses balloons floating at high altitudes that move up and down as per the signals from building antennas. Each balloon in the network moves in the **stratosphere** high above commercial air space for several months at a time.

The company began its pilot program in **New Zealand** with 30 balloons. Google wants to raise the number to 100 balloons in the air for 100 days each. It is expected that permanent balloons will start transmitting the Internet on a much larger scale within the year.

Steel to be dearer by up to Rs 1,000 a tonne

June 24, 2014

The recent 6.5% hike in railway freight rate has led to an increase of Rs 300 a tonne in the prices of steel products across the country. Traders are considering a further increase of Rs 700-1,000 a tonne in coming days.

Ingot rates at the standard **Mandi Gobindgarh market in Punjab, India’s largest spot steel market**, increased by Rs 300 a tonne to Rs 39,750 a tonne.

The cost of steel production will certainly surge on the freight rate hike, with a rise in iron ore transportation costs. With the increase in freight cost, all raw materials, including coal and iron ore, will become dearer. Consequently, coal, iron ore and steel prices will increase.

Obninsk plant: World’s 1st nuke power plant turns sixty

June 24, 2014

Obninsk Nuclear Power Plant- world’s first nuclear power plant which epitomized the peaceful use of nuclear technology, particularly during the Cold War era, **turned 60** on June 26. The plant is located in a village called Pyatkino in Obninsk city, some 150 kms from Moscow, **Russia**.

It was unveiled on **June 26, 1954**. **India’s** then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi, who strongly voiced for India’s peaceful use of nuke energy, had visited the Obninsk plant.

Igor Kurchatov who is known as **—the father of the Soviet Atomic Weapons Programme** played a key role in the establishment of this plant.

The 5 MW plant used to provide electricity to the town. But with the advancement of nuclear technology not only by Russia, but also by other nations, the reactor became **economically unviable** and therefore it was shut down in 2002. Although the plant functioned well, its main objective was to use it for experimental purposes like research in medicine and space.

Understanding the collusion between El Nino and Monsoon

June 24, 2014

Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) is anticipating an El Nino developing in the Pacific and so there is considerable worry over its impact on this year’s monsoon. These concerns seem to escalate with the delayed arrival of rains over **Kerala** and a retarded monsoon progression towards north.

Around a century back Sir Gilbert Walker, then Director-General of Observatories in **India**, found indications that changes in the Pacific affects the monsoon. With more studies, scientific understanding of the **“El Nino Southern Oscillation” (ENSO)** has increased significantly in recent decades.

It must be noted that not every El Nino hinders the monsoon. But when the Pacific Ocean becomes exceptionally warm the

probability of monsoon turning deficient rises sharply. When the Pacific is neither too warm nor cool, there is only a 16% chance of a monsoon ending in a drought. As per rainfall data for 126 years, the possibility of a drought soars to over 40% when there is an El Nino.

Some cases of El Nino's impact:

1997 was a year of one of the most powerful El Nino events in the last century. The waters of the equatorial Pacific Ocean had warmed sharply even before the onset of monsoon. As such a phenomenon typically stymies monsoon rains over India, a severe drought was widely predicted. However, the monsoon that year ended with above average rains. In 2002, a moderate El Nino surprisingly broke down the monsoon which resulted into a massive drought.

The above instances clearly show how challenging it is to accurately forecast how an El Nino will advance and what impact it will make on monsoon.

In 1997, the eastern Pacific had become unusually warm, thereby restricting the atmospheric circulation changes that negatively affected the monsoon. It was when the sea surface temperature abnormalities were highest in the **central Pacific** that an El Nino had **drought-producing** effects in India. **Central Pacific El Ninos** were witnessed in 2002 as well as in 2004 and 2009, with all three years ending in drought.

There are several factors which can influence the effect of El Nino on the monsoon. For example:

Part of Pacific that warms, Eastern or Central
Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD), Positive or Negative

How the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) affects the monsoon?

IOD which is also known as the **Indian Nino** is an irregular oscillation of sea-surface temperatures in which the **western Indian Ocean becomes alternately warmer and then colder than the eastern part of the ocean.**

Positive IOD (Indian Ocean Dipole IOD):

In this case, the eastern equatorial Indian Ocean off Sumatra in **Indonesia** becomes colder than normal while the western tropical part of the ocean near the African coast becomes unusually warm. Such an event has been found to be **beneficial** for the monsoon.

Role of EQUINOO (Equatorial Indian Ocean Oscillation):

During the positive phase of the **Equatorial Indian Ocean Oscillation (EQUINOO)**, there is enhanced cloud formation and rainfall in western part of the equatorial ocean near the African coast while such activity is suppressed near Sumatra. This phase produces good rains over India.

Negative IOD (Indian Ocean Dipole IOD):

In this case the opposite of the above mentioned case occurs. The eastern equatorial Indian Ocean off Sumatra in Indonesia becomes abnormally warm while the western tropical part of the ocean near the African coast becomes relatively colder. This effect obstructs the progression of monsoon over India.

Negative EQUINOO (Equatorial Indian Ocean Oscillation):

A negative EQUINOO causes heightened cloud formation and rainfall near Indonesia thus retards rains over India. Although EQUINOO and IOD cooperate during strong positive IOD events, as happened in 1994 and 1997, they do not always shape up so. For instance, the severe drought of 2002 occurred when a moderate El Nino as well as strong negative EQUINOO together took a toll on the monsoon. The IOD that year was somewhat positive.

Interplay between IOD and El Nino:

An IOD can weaken or aggravate an El Nino's impact on the monsoon.

A positive IOD had facilitated normal or excess rainfall over India in 1983, 1994 and 1997 despite an El Nino in those years. But during years such as 1992, a negative IOD and El Nino had cooperatively produced deficient rainfall.

The positive IOD in 2007 appeared together with La Niña which is a very rare phenomenon that has happened only once in the available historical data (in 1967).

Latest Forecast:

At present, it is difficult to say which type of El Nino would evolve this year. The current generation of climate models does not have the capacity to differentiate whether a central or eastern Pacific El Nino will manifest. As per **Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology (JAMSTEC)** group, there is a 'very high' chance of a negative IOD turning up in 2014.

Pyu Ancient Cities: Myanmar's first site on World Heritage List

June 23, 2014

Pyu Ancient Cities of **Myanmar** has become the first site from the country to get entry onto the **World Heritage List**. It was decided by the World Heritage **Committee** during its meeting in **Doha (Qatar)** under the Chair of Sheikha Al Mayassa Bint Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani. The panel also inscribed **Iran's Burnt City** on the List.

Pyu Ancient Cities (Myanmar)

The site includes the remains of three brick, walled and moated cities of Halin, Beikthano and Sri Ksetra located in huge irrigated landscapes in the dry zone of the Irrawaddy River basin. These are the evidence of the Pyu Kingdoms that bloomed for over 1,000 years between 200 B.C and 900 A.D.

Shahr-i Sokhta (Iran)

Shahr-i Sokhta means 'Burnt City'. It is situated at the junction of Bronze Age trade routes crossing the Iranian plateau. The remains of the mud brick city reflect the beginning of the first complex societies in eastern Iran. Established around 3200 BC, it was populated during four main periods up to 1800 BC, during which there developed several distinct areas within the city. These include a monumental area, residential areas, industrial zones and a graveyard. Changes in water courses and climate led to the ultimate desertion of the city in the early 2000 BC.

Note: With the inscriptions of the above two sites, **the total number of World Heritage sites increased to 994.**

Gujarat's Rani-Ki-Vav gets World Heritage site status

June 23, 2014

Rani-ki-Vav, an 11th century stepwell in the **Patan area of Gujarat**, has been approved for placement on the **World Heritage list by UNESCO**.

As per the UNESCO's statement, —**the Queen's Stepwell**|| was designed as an inverted temple highlighting the sanctity of water.

About Rani-ki-Vav

Location: On the banks of Saraswati, Patan, Gujarat.

Built by: **Queen Udayamati** as a memorial to **King Bhimdev I** of the **Solanki dynasty**.

The 11th century stepwell and is one of the finest examples of stepwells in Gujarat.

The well is subterranean structure with a series of steps, board landings, pavilions and sculpted walls which provides access to water in deep water. It is of seven storeys with five exist and there are more than 800 elaborate sculptures which are survived. This is a protected monument under the Archeological Survey of **India**.

Jalpaiguri bifurcation takes the number of districts in Bengal to 20

June 21, 2014

A new district is being carved out by bifurcating Jalpaiguri district of **West Bengal** with a view to expedite government services. The new district will be Alipurduar. This will be state's 20th district and will get status of district on June 25, 2014.

People were facing delays in delivery of government services for being far from the district headquarters. It took a lot of time to reach district headquarters. The creation of new district through bifurcation will help the people in availing government services.

Higgs Boson existence further confirmed

June 20, 2014

Scientists have confirmed that the particle found by the **Large Hadron Collider (LHC)** in 2012 is **Higgs Boson (God Particle)**.

It had already been proved that the particle discovered in 2012 matched the Higgs Boson with respect to its mass, its lack of spin, and its rapid decay into pairs of photons. However, one key property remained uncertain: **whether it gave mass to fermions, a group of particles that includes quarks and leptons.**

After studying data from the LHC scientists have confirmed that the 2012 particle meets the final criteria.

The Higgs Boson was first conjectured in 1964, and its historic discovery was announced at CERN in 2012. The significance of the Higgs Boson to our understanding of particle physics is so great that it launched a 40-year search to ascertain its existence, which led to the establishing of the LHC, the world's largest particle accelerator.

June 20: World Refugee Day observed across the globe

June 20, 2014

World Refugee Day was observed across the world on **20 June 2014**. This day observed to enhance awareness of the condition of refugees throughout the world.

The day was first observed in 2001 after the United Nations General Assembly passed Resolution 55/76 on December 4, 2000 to mark June 20 as World Refugee Day. In this resolution, it was noted that 2001 marked the 50th anniversary of the 1951 Convention relating to the **Status of Refugees**.

According to the **UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)** report, the number of refugees including internally displaced and asylum-seekers across the globe has for the first time crossed 50 million in 2013 which is the highest since the World War II.

In a single gene, a path to fight heart attacks



June 20, 2014

The availability of a new drug that would significantly reduce the chances of heart attacks, by lowering triglyceride level in the body, is a possibility. Two major researches have independently identified **mutations** in a single gene named **APOC3** that protect against heart attacks by **keeping levels of triglycerides — a type of fat in the blood — very low.**

These discoveries are expected give a fillip to the development of drugs that imitate the effect of these mutations, offering the first new class of drugs to counter heart **disease.**

Drugs like Statins, which bring down LDL cholesterol, another cause of heart disease, became an instant hit in the late 1980s. Since then there have been no major new drugs approved for reducing heart disease risk.

The Research:

As per a new research conducted on Amish people, it was found that one in 20 Amish people has a mutation that deletes a gene, APOC3, involved in triglyceride metabolism, as compared with one in 150 Americans generally. Another bigger study mapped the genes of 3,734 Americans, about 2,500 of whom were white and the remaining African-American. Here also, the researchers discovered four mutations that destroyed the function of APOC3 gene. The Amish study had discovered that people with such a mutation could consume food loaded with fat without any significant change in their triglyceride levels. As per scientists, those who have these gene mutations have a 40% decrease in triglyceride levels and a 40% lower risk of heart disease. These findings are expected to help in creating new types of drugs. But the drug development may take years and it is still uncertain whether the new drugs will work as hoped.

Iraq crisis could impact oil prices in India

June 22, 2014

Indian government is keeping a close watch on the ongoing crisis in Iraq where terrorist groups led by **ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and Syria)** are attacking and capturing regions in the country. Though the crisis hasn't yet caused any disruption in the country's crude oil supplies to **India**, it has the potential to push up global crude prices. In FY14, India imported **around 13% of its crude oil from Iraq**, the most after **Saudi Arabia**, which provided for about 20% of the country's oil imports of 190 million tonnes in the year. India's dependence on Iraq crude oil surged since FY12 after US sanctions on Iran.

The average price of Indian crude oil basket that was at \$106.94/ barrel during April-May has now increased to \$110.31/barrel. The surge in the price has been witnessed since the intensification of fighting between militants belonging to the Sunni minority and Iraq security forces.

As per experts, the oil prices may soar if militants — now fighting Iraq's security forces mostly in northern regions — advance into southern Iraq, which accounts for around three-quarters of the country's crude production.

Normally, Indian refiners have stock of crude oil ranging from 15 days to nearly a month. Any deficiency in supplies from Iraq could be replenished from other suppliers such as Saudi Arabia and **Kuwait**, but if disturbances prolong, it could impact Indian refiners.

Escalation of the price of crude oil directly impacts India's fuel subsidy and could hurt government finances. Due to gradual price increase by the government the losses on diesel have now reduced to Rs 1.62 per litre and the government aims to make the fuel's price fully market-determined. For instance, if there is an increase in **international** crude oil price by a dollar, price of diesel in India could rise by roughly 40 paise/ litre.

UP Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav presents tax free budget

June 21, 2014

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav presented a **budget** of a size of Rs 2,74,705 crore for this fiscal, with a proposed deficit of Rs 4,132 crore and no new taxes have been proposed.

Some key observations from UP Budget 2014-15:

The size of the budget for fiscal 2014-15 is Rs 2,74,705 crore which is a 24% increase from the last year's level of Rs 2,21,201.19 crore. The budget has a proposed deficit of Rs 4,132 crore.

As compared to 2013-14, the budgetary provisions of this fiscal are higher by 24%.

No new taxes.

No allocation for the ambitious free laptop, kanya vidyadhan and unemployment allowance unlike what the ruling Samajwadi Party had promised in its election manifesto during assembly polls in 2012.

Emphasis on infrastructural facilities like roads, bridges, irrigation and power sector with a provision of Rs. 49,108 crore, about 82% higher than 2013.

Rs 2,424 crore for government's ambitious Samajwadi Pension scheme that targets 40 lakh families, and Rs 7,625 crore for **agriculture** and associated services, 15% more than 2013.

Rs 41,538 crore for the **Education** sector

Allocation for the medical **health** and family welfare hiked by 34% to Rs 14,377 crore.

Provision of Rs 25,522 crore under the head of SC/ST, backward, handicapped and minorities welfare and Rs 50 crore for a scheme of rural road scheme named after the ruling party's late leader Ram Saran Das.

Provision of Rs 95 crore for the Lucknow metro project.

Rs 3,280 crore to be allocated for the six-lane Lucknow-Agra 300 km long expressway.

Proposal for special **schemes** in Purvanchal and Bundelkhand worth Rs. 291 and 758 crore respectively.

Provision of Rs 1,613 crore for old age and kisan pension schemes.

The state government targets creating 2018 man days for 41 lakh families under the MGNREGA Scheme.

Provision of Rs 178 crore for adopting the national food security mission scheme,

Rs 12,400 crore for modernisation of police force and Rs 23,928 crore for improving power set-up.

Rs 919 crore to be allocated for scholarships to students belonging to minorities, Rs 240 crore for modernisation of arbifarsi madarasas and Rs 200 crore for construction of boundaries of burial grounds.

As per the budget, ground work is on for starting up the 11.11 km extension of the metro rail project in Ghaziabad at a cost of Rs 1,838 crore.

Pen Pinter prize to novelist Salman Rushdie

June 21, 2014

Eminent novelist **Salman Rushdie** (67), author of **Midnight's Children** and **The Satanic Verses**, has been named the winner of Pen Pinter prize for 2014. The award was instituted in 2009 by writers' charity English Pen in memory of British writer Harold Pinter. The prize will be presented on October 9, 2014 at an event at the British Library in London.

Rushdie went into hiding in 1989 after **The Satanic Verses** triggered extensive protests by Muslims and a fatwa was released from Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini.

He was conferred Knighthood in 2007 contributions to literature. His other noted **books** include **Haroun and the Sea of Stories** and **The Moor's Last Sigh**.

Magnus Carlsen becomes first man to hold the Chess Triple Crown; but he is not the first player

June 21, 2014

World Champion **Magnus Carlsen** has become the **first man** in the **history** of **Chess** to hold the **Chess Triple Crown** by holding the **World Blitz, Rapid, and Classic titles consecutively**.

However, he is not the first player to have achieved this feat. Before him, **Ms. Susan Polgar** did it back in 1996. Polgar was the first chess player in the world to hold all three world titles in a row, reasonably making her **the first player** to hold a chess Triple Crown.

Ms Susan Polgar was the first chess player in the world to hold all three world titles successively, fairly making her the first player to hold a chess Triple Crown.

However, there are some dissimilarities between Carlsen's newly achieved Triple Crown and Polgar's. First, Polgar won FIDE's Women's World Blitz, Rapid, and Classic titles while Carlsen won the Men's. While, Carlsen won all three titles in one 12-month period, Polgar held her titles contemporaneously, but won them in different years.

Jnanpith Award 2013 to Hindi poet Kedarnath Singh

June 20, 2014

Renowned Hindi poet **Kedarnath Singh** (80) has been named the recipient of the prestigious **Jnanpith Award** for 2013. The award includes Rs 11 lakh and a citation.

Born in Balia, UP, Singh has also penned essays and stories and **Abhi bilkul abhi** and **Yahan se dekho** are among his high-flying works. Singh is the 10th Hindi writer to get the award and joins the class of Sumitra Nandan Pant, Ramdhari Singh Dinkar among others.

Immunotherapists from US and Japan win the inaugural „Tang Prize“

June 20, 2014

Immunologists Dr James Allison of the US and Dr Tasuku Honjo of **Japan** were named joint recipients of the inaugural Tang Prize in Biopharmaceutical Science for their discoveries that have helped advance immunotherapy and has brought new ray of hope that many types of cancers can be cured.

Prized Discoveries of Allison and Honjo

Dr Honjo:

Discovered **PD-1** in 1992, an inhibitor of the T cell, a type of lymphocyte that plays a pivotal role in cell-mediated immunity. The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved the antibodies against PD-1 as an investigational drug and are being developed as a cancer treatment.



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One such antibody is likely to be launched in year 2015 for treatment of non-small-cell lung cancer which is considered to significantly change the approach towards lung cancer treatment.

Dr Allison:

In 1995, Allison became the first researcher to identify cytotoxic T-lymphocyte antigen 4 (CTLA-4), a protein receptor that down-regulates the immune system.

CTLA-4 is found on the surface of T cells, which lead cellular immune attacks on antigens. Allison developed an antibody that blocks CTLA-4 activity. This antibody has been shown to have potential to help fight various types of tumors in mice. The study led to the development of a monoclonal antibody drug that was approved by the FDA in 2011 to treat melanoma. The therapy and a regimen combining anti-CTLA-4 and anti-PD-1 have been shown to significantly improve long-term survival rates of cancer patients.

The Tang Prize:

A Taiwanese entrepreneur Samuel Yin Established instituted the Tang Prize in 2012 to award leaders in four fields:

Sustainable development
biopharmaceutical science
Sinology
The rule of law.

Up to 3 awardees in each category can share a cash prize of NT\$40 million and a research grant of up to NT\$10 million.

Railway Ministry raised passenger fare by 14.2%, freights by 6.5%

June 20, 2014

The Railway Ministry has effected a sharp hike of 14.2% in train passenger fares in all classes and a 6.5% surge in freight rates to earn Rs 8000 crore a year for the cash-deficient Indian [railways](#).

The increased charges will come into effect from June 25, 2014 (midnight of June 24). The decision is expected to generate an additional revenue of around Rs 8000 crore for [Indian Railways](#) which is currently facing loss of Rs 30 crore a day. At a time when the cross-subsidy on passenger fares has already reached Rs 26,000 crore, the fare increase is expected to improve the financial outlook of Railways.

GMR wins Maldives airport legal battle, demands compensation

June 20, 2014

The outcome of an 18-month long [legal](#) tussle between GMR Infra and the [Maldives](#) government on the issue of government cancellation of the company's contract to develop and operate the country's main airport is in favor of the GMR. A Maldives' tribunal hearing the case has adjudged the government's cancellation of the contract —wrongful||. It has ordered Maldives and

the state-owned Maldives Airports Company (MACL) to pay \$4 million legal cost to GMR within 42 days. In addition to this, GMR has demanded an indemnification of \$1.4 billion for losses incurred in the last one year on its bid amount and investments in developing the airport.

GMR vs Maldives case:

On July 28, 2010, a contract for development and operations of Ibrahim Nasir [International](#) Airport at Male was awarded to a joint venture between GMR Infra (77%) and [Malaysia](#) Airports (Labuan) Private Limited (23%) at a bidding price of \$511 million. The contract was signed when Mohammed Nashid was the President of Maldives. However, in 2012, Mr. Nashid was forced to resign under a coup d'état and Mohammed Wahid Hassan became took over as the President. Nasheed's rivals filed a legal action holding the contract with GMR as invalid because the contract contains a \$25 airport development charge per outgoing passenger which was not authorized by the parliament. The contract was thus cancelled.

Rajeev Topno appointed Private Secretary to PM Narendra Modi

June 19, 2014

Senior IAS officer **Rajeev Topno** has been appointed Private Secretary to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Topno, a 1996 batch IAS officer of [Gujarat](#) cadre, was already working as Director in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

World Food Prize 2014 to India-born scientist Sanjaya Rajaram

June 19, 2014

Sanjaya Rajaram, an [India](#)-born plant scientist, has been chosen for the **World Food Prize 2014** for scientific **research that led to a stupendous increase in world wheat production**.

However, farm activists in the country criticised the prize as mere a public relations stunt by big agri-food companies who fund it.

Sanjaya Rajaram, a citizen of [Mexico](#), took over [Nobel](#) Laureate Norman Borlaug as head of the wheat breeding program at the [International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center \(CIMMYT\)](#) in Mexico, where he worked for 33 years. The World Food Prize acknowledges his contribution to the breeding technologies which have made significant impact in providing more

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nutritious food around the world and assuaging world hunger.

International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center

Commonly called by its Spanish acronym CIMMYT (Centro Internacional de Mejoramiento de Maíz y Trigo) is a non-profit research and training institution dedicated to both the development of improved varieties of wheat and maize, and introducing better agricultural practices to farmers, thus bettering their livelihoods.

CIMMYT is one of the 15 non-profit, research and training institutions affiliated with the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR).

BCIC recommendations on tax reforms accepted by Shome Committee

June 19, 2014

The **Tax Administration Reform Commission (TARC)** headed by **Parthasarathy Shome** has accepted the suggestions of the **Bangalore Chamber of Industry and Commerce (BCIC)** pertaining to realignment of the administration of **CBDT and CBEC** which will help move towards a more **—unified management structure**||. The **Committee** suggested abolition of the post of Revenue Secretary, merger of Central Board of Direct Taxes (**CBDT**) and Central Board of Excise and Customs (**CBEC**) and broaden the use of **Permanent Account Number (PAN)**.

The recommendations by BCIC have been incorporated in TARC's report submitted to the Finance Ministry.

Some key suggestions by BCIC included in TARC report:

Realignment of administration of CBDT and CBEC to develop a **unified management structure**.

Abolish of manual filing of TDS certificates

Single registration of both central excise and service tax

Dispute resolution based on a fundamental approach of collaborative and solution oriented

PAN as a common **business** identification number

Single registration for both central excise and service tax

Enhance the number of payment gateways for tax payments, provision to allow disclosure in the returns.

Do away with territorial jurisdiction

Industry-based assessment

Dispense with manual filing of TDS certificates

Alternate and speedier dispute resolution mechanisms

Note: The TARC was formed by the Union government with a view to review the application of Tax Administration in **India** in the context of global best practices.

Defending champions Spain eliminated from FIFA World Cup race

June 19, 2014

Defending champions **Spain** is **knocked out** from the ongoing FIFA World cup. In a match against **Chile**, which Spain needed to win to keep their title dream alive, it faced defeat by 2-0.

Spain became the third straight European defending World Cup champion to flop in the group stage. **France** in 2002 and **Italy** four years ago also failed to advance, or even win a match

Government sets up Panel to look into the cause of gas leakage in Bhilai Steel Plant

June 19, 2014

An independent **High Level Committee** under the chairmanship of **Shri K.K. Mehrotra**, former CMD, MECON has been constituted by the Government to **inquire about the cause of gas leakage from blast furnace-GCP in Bhilai Steel Plant on June 12, 2014**. The panel will hand in the final report to the Secretary, Ministry of Steel by July 17, 2014.

Bhilai Steel Plant

The Bhilai Steel Plant is located in Bhilai, **Chhattisgarh** was set up with the help of the USSR in 1955. It is **India's** first and sole producer of rails and heavy steel plates. It is also a key producer of wide steel plates and other steel products. The Bhilai Steel plant which has been the flagship integrated steel plant unit of the Public Sector steel company, the SAIL (Steel Authority of India Limited) has been a 11 time winner of the Prime Minister's Trophy for best integrated steel plant in the country. It is the sole supplier of the India's longest rail tracks, which measure 260 metres (850 ft) and is the largest and most profitable production facility of SAIL.

Germany to organize "myCopter Project Day" in November 2014

June 19, 2014

As per an announcement by myCopter coordinator, **myCopter Project Day** will be held in Braunschweig in **Germany** on 20 November 20, 2014.

myCopter Project

myCopter Project was conceptualized in 2007 with an aim to design Personal Aerial Vehicles and to develop an effective, efficient and user-friendly Personal Aerial Transportation System. The initial project is almost complete, and the next phase of

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MyCopter will end on myCopter Project Day.

Six research institutions of Europe are working together to study the feasibility of developing small commuter helicopters. The European Union had provided \$4.7 million grant for the project.

myCopter Project

The project was conceived in response to a 2007 European Union report called **Out of the Box: Ideas About the Future of Air Transport**. The report invited ideas from researchers on radical changes to Europe's current transportation system, including ideas for a personal air vehicle.

The project is the brainchild of Heinrich H. Bülthoff, director of perception, cognition and action at the Max Planck Institute, Germany.

The myCopter project aims to make progress in 3 specific research areas which include User-centred Human Machine Interface and Training, Automation and Socio-technological assessment.

Delhi is India's first kerosene-free city

June 19, 2014

As per an announcement by the Delhi Government, the national capital has become the first **kerosene-free city** in the country. It was announced that the **Delhi: A Kerosene-Free City Scheme, 2012** has been implemented successfully and now no subsidized kerosene is being provided in the national capital.

The scheme was started in 2012 in collaboration with three Oil Marketing Companies and Union Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas for which Delhi Government had spent Rs 62 crores.

Earlier, Delhi was getting about 53,000 Kilolitre of kerosene oil annually from the Centre, which was distributed to eligible households at a subsidized price.

Delhi government launched **Kerosene-Free City Scheme 2012** under which **free gas connections** along with **LPG filled cylinders**, two **burner gas stove**, **regulator and suraksha pipe** were issued to the **Jhuggi Ration Card (JRC)**, **Below Poverty Line (BPL)** and **Antodaya Ann Yojana (AAY)** ration card holders who were using kerosene oil for cooking.

This measure would boost environment conservation efforts as no toxic gases would be produced from burning the oil, lesser possibility of adulteration in petrol, positive impact on air pollution and improvement in the quality of life of people covered under the scheme in addition to fewer fire accidents and burn injuries.

As per law, any person involved in kerosene oil trade is liable for prosecution under Essential Commodities Act, 1955 and Delhi Kerosene Oil Control Order, 1962. A complaint can be registered in this regard on the helpline number 1967.

Ebola virus kills over 300 in West Africa: WHO

June 18, 2014

As per **World Health Organization (WHO)**, the deadly **Ebola virus** has killed 337 people in West Africa so far. The region has reported 14 deaths and 47 new cases. **Guinea** is worst-hit with 264 Ebola-related deaths. In **Sierra Leone**, there have been 49 deaths and in **Liberia** 24.

The outbreak of the virus began in southern **Guinea's Guekedou region**, but has now spread to its neighboring countries. There is no cure or vaccine for Ebola – one of the world's deadliest viruses. As per WHO, the virus spreads by close contact and has high rate of between 25% and 90%, depending on the strain of the virus.

Symptoms include internal and external bleeding, diarrhoea and vomiting.

Ebola virus disease (EVD)

Symptoms include high fever, bleeding and central nervous system damage

Death rate can reach 90%

2 to 21 days of Incubation period

No vaccine, No cure

Supportive treatment such as rehydration by administering fluid and electrolytes can help recovery

Fruit bats are considered to be the natural host of the virus

Nita Ambani became First woman director on Reliance board

June 18, 2014

Nita Ambani, wife of Reliance Industries Chairman Mukesh Ambani, became the first woman to be appointed on the board of the country's largest private company **Reliance Industries Limited (RIL)**.

The appointment of Nita Ambani on the board of Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) fulfills the requirement of a **new law** according to which **listed companies are required to have at least one woman in the boardroom to promote gender diversity**.

The RIL board, headed by Mukesh Ambani, 57, currently has his cousins Nikhil R Meswani and Hital R Meswani. Ramniklal H Ambani, who is the elder brother of Dhirubhai H Ambani, the late Founder Chairman of the company and father of Mukesh, was the other director from the promoter family. Nita, 50, took the place of Mukesh's uncle Ramniklal H Ambani, who retired

from the board at the age of 90. P M S Prasad and P K Kapil are the only non-family executive directors on the company board.

India ranked 143 on Global Peace Index 2014

June 18, 2014

Global Peace Index (GPI) for year 2014 has been released by Institute for Economics and Peace in London. The GPI measured peace in 162 nations on the basis of 22 parameters. **India slipped two ranks than previous year and has been positioned 143rd** in the global rankings.

Some key observations from GPI 2014:

Syria replaced **Afghanistan** as the world's least peaceful country. **Iceland** has retained its position as the most peaceful country in the world.

Georgia registered the **largest improvement in peace**, while **South Sudan** witnessed the sharpest decline and now ranks as the 3rd least peaceful nation.

Comparing India with its neighbours, **Nepal** ranked 76, **Bangladesh**(98), **Sri Lanka** (105), **Pakistan** (154), **Afghanistan** (161) and **China**(108).

From economic perspective, it cost Indian **economy** \$ 177 billion for containing and dealing with the consequences of India's level of violence. The cost is equivalent to 3.6% percent of GDP of India or \$145 per person.

Top ten performers on GPI 2014:

1. Iceland
2. Denmark
3. Austria
4. New Zealand
5. Switzerland
6. Finland
7. Canada
8. Japan
9. Belgium
10. Norway

Global Peace Index (GPI)

Launched in 2007, GPI intends to a measure levels of world peace. Produced by the **Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP)**, the Index uses 22 indicators, ranging from a nation's level of military expenditure to its relations with neighboring nations and the percentage of prison population in 162 countries.

The IEP, based in Sydney (**Australia**) is an **international** and independent think tank dedicated to draw the world's attention towards peace as a positive, achievable, and tangible measure of human well-being and development.

RBI uses OMOs to absorb excess rupee from the system

June 18, 2014

The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** conducted **Open Market Operations (OMOs)** to sell Rs 2,255 crore of government bonds between June 2 to June 6, 2014, to absorb excess rupee liquidity it has injected into the system through dollar purchasing. As per market experts, **the apex bank may have also been trying to curb volatility in government securities through these OMOs.**

Some traders apprehend that if RBI continues the practice then bond prices may fall. Since the beginning of the new financial year on April 1, 2014, these have been the RBI's largest sale of government bonds through OMOs, a platform where the apex bank **anonymously** sells or buys government securities in the **secondary market.**

The main motive behind the RBI's measure was probably the excess rupee liquidity in the system.

*The RBI's dollar buying has brought in rupee liquidity into the system, besides the central bank's routine **term repo windows**, where banks can borrow for a stipulated period like 4 to 28 days.* For instance, it did a 28-day term repo for Rs 20,000 crore on June 6, 2014. To neutralize its impact, it has already begun selling in the rupee forwards market. During April 2014, the RBI sold about \$1 billion, taking the outstanding net forwards sales to \$32.06 billion.

Do away with the post of Revenue Secretary, merge CBDT, CBEC: Shome Panel on TARC

June 18, 2014

The government appointed **Tax Administration Reform Commission (TARC)**, headed by **Parthasarathi Shome**, has recommended some radical reforms in tax administration which include:

- Abolition of the post of Revenue Secretary
- Amalgamation of CBDT and CBEC

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Broaden the use of Permanent Account Number (PAN)

Avoid retrospective amendments to tax laws

Income Tax Return should also include wealth tax details

Separate **budget** allocation to ensure time bound tax refund and a passbook scheme for TDS (Tax Deduction at Source).

Tax Administration should be given greater functional and financial autonomy and independence from governmental structures, given their special needs.

As per report submitted by the panel to the Finance Ministry, the Revenue Secretary, an IAS, is **—likely to have little experience or background in tax administration at the national level and little familiarity with tax.‖**

TCS en route to become world’s second biggest tech employer

June 18, 2014

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) is very close to becoming world’s second biggest tech employer. Currently, with **over 3 lakh employees**, it has already become the world’s **3rd largest employer** in the technology sector. Considering the pace at which it is expanding, it could become the second largest employer by the end of 2014, overtaking Hewlett-Packard, and would be fast closing in on leader **IBM**.

TCS has been **India’s** one of the biggest job creators in recent years. On an average, the number of employees in TCS is rising each year by between 25,000 and 35,000. In fiscal 2013-14, the \$13.4-billion Tata Group company hired 61,200 people, with the net addition being 24,268, brushing aside those who left the company. As per the company, it will hire 55,000 people in 2014. If the net addition is half of that, it will be significantly ahead of HP’s number by the end of fiscal 2014-15. Among Indian IT companies, **Infosys** is almost 50% of TCS with 1.6 lakh employees.

Government appoints Shaktikanta Das as Revenue Secretary

June 18, 2014

The **Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC)** approved the appointment of **Shaktikanta Das**, a 1980 batch **Indian Administrative Service (IAS)** officer of **Tamil Nadu** cadre, as the new Revenue Secretary, replacing Rajiv Takru.

Mr. Das, who is at present Fertilizers Secretary in the **Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers**, will take charge as Revenue Secretary in the finance ministry after Mr. Takru relinquishes the post.

“B2B” PM’s formula for stronger relationship with Bhutan

June 17, 2014

On his first foreign visit after becoming PM, Narendra Modi who is on a two-day **Bhutan** visit promised to foster bilateral ties which he described as **—B2B —Bharat to Bhutan‖** as he held talks with the Bhutanese King and countries Prime Minister, discussing an entire range of relationship between the two nations.

Mr. Modi also unveiled the **Supreme Court** complex built by **India** as part of the developmental cooperation. Modi described the bilateral ties as **—B2B relations — Bharat to Bhutan relations‖**.

He announced doubling of scholarships granted to Bhutanese students in India which will now be worth Rs 2 crore. Modi also assured to help Bhutan in establishing a digital library, which will provide access to Bhutanese youth to two million **books** and periodicals.

Prime Minister’s visit to Bhutan holds significance since China has lately scaled up efforts to persuade it and set up full-fledged diplomatic relationship with Bhutan.

June 17: World Day to Combat Desertification observed with the theme “Land Belongs to the Future – Let’s Climate Proof It”

June 17, 2014

World Day to Combat Desertification was observed on June 17, 2014 to promote public awareness of the issue, and the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in those countries experiencing severe drought and/or desertification, particularly in **Africa**.

The theme for 2014 is **—Land Belongs to the Future – Let’s Climate Proof It—**.

Globally, around 1.5 billion people depend on degrading areas for their livings, and nearly half of the world’s very poor (42%) dwell in degraded areas, rendering them some of the most insecure places in the world, and in some cases their imbalance can destabilize whole political regions.

The world is not isolated from the effect instability caused by the suffering of these people. As per estimates, by 2020 around 60 million people will migrate from desertified regions in Sub-Saharan Africa towards Northern Africa and **Europe**.

The theme emphasizes on raising awareness about the potential of ecosystem-based adaptation as a policy for coping with the impacts of climate change, particularly in the drylands. Ecosystem-based adaptation means the strengthening of natural systems to absorb the worst impacts of climate change. Healthy ecosystems are less susceptible to the impacts and hazards of climate change.

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June 17 as World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought was declared by the United Nations General Assembly in 1994.

Jordanian envoy first Muslim to be elected UN human rights chief

June 17, 2014

The nomination of **Prince Zeid al Hussein of Jordan** of as the **new High Commissioner for Human Rights** was unanimously approved by the **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)**. He succeeds outgoing Navi Pillay of South Africa. He is the first High Commissioner from the Asian continent and from the Muslim and Arab worlds.

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights:

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, headquartered in **Geneva**, has the authority to promote and protect the enjoyment and full realization, by all people, of all rights founded in the UN Charter and in **international** human rights laws and pacts. It is mandated to preventing violations of human rights, assuring respect for all human rights, encourage international cooperation to safeguard human rights, synchronizing related activities throughout the UN, and bolstering and streamlining the UN system in the sphere of human rights. Besides its mandated responsibilities, the Office leads efforts to incorporate a human rights approach within all work conducted by UN bodies.

Juan Manuel Santos gets another term as President of Colombia

June 16, 2014

Juan Manuel Santos has secured another term as the **President of Colombia** as he has won the recently held presidential poll. His victory symbolizes peoples support to his 18-month-old peace negotiations to end country's longest-running conflict with the left-wing **FARC rebel group**.

The violent conflict which has been running for several decades has inflicted huge damage to Colombia. It involved armed groups, drug cartels and glaring violations of human rights, although since 2002, the country has made some progress towards improving security.

Colombia: An Overview

Geographically, Colombia is the **fourth largest** country in **South America** and one of the most populous nations in this continent. The country has sizeable oil reserves and is a major producer of gold, silver, emeralds, platinum and coal. Since the 1960s, the country has been ailing from an asymmetric low-intensity armed conflict between the united group of **liberal and left-wing guerillas or FARC group** and **anti-communist Colombian government** which has the military and financial **backing of the US**. Both the paramilitary and the rebel group have been accused of engaging in drug trafficking and terrorism and violations of human rights. The conflict intensified in the 1990s, but since 2000 the conflict has decreased considerably. The peace talks between the government and the FARC began in 2012. Right-wing groups are surrendering under a peace initiative. Current President Santos maintains his predecessor's tough stance against the FARC. Economically, despite growth in recent years, millions dwell in poverty. The country has also inked a Free Trade Agreement with the US. Colombia is a big recipient of US assistance and is a steadfast ally of Washington.

NTPC seeks revocation of ban on Lata Tapovan Hydro Power Project

June 16, 2014

NTPC has filed a plea seeking continuation of work on its **Lata Tapovan Hydro Power Project in Uttarakhand** that was put on hold following the **Supreme Court's May 7 order**. The apex court has issued notice to the government in this regard.

The court had ordered a halt to **24 projects** that were proposed within **100 km of eco-sensitive zone from Gangotri**. It had also directed the **Union Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF)** and the Uttarakhand government not to grant any environmental or forest approvals for any hydroelectric project in the hill state.

The court had asked the MoEF to form an expert panel to carry out a detailed study whether hydroelectric power projects both existing and under construction have contributed to the environmental degradation in Uttarakhand, if so, to what extent. The expert **committee** was also directed to examine whether these projects had contributed to the natural disaster that had hit the state in June 2013.

As per the plea submitted by the NTPC, the expert panel constituted by the ministry deviates from the directions issued by the court, which had said it would have the representatives of the Uttarakhand government, Wildlife Institute of **India**, Central Electricity Authority, Central Water Commission and other expert bodies to undertake the detailed study as directed by it. NTPC also said that due to delay it is losing time and the costs of the projects are also escalating.

Maharashtra legislation to ban dance bars across the state

June 16, 2014

In a bid to impose a **ban on dance bars across state**, the **Maharashtra assembly** passed a law which amends **Maharashtra Police Act** which banned performance of bar dancers in all hotels, bars and restaurants. In 2005, while banning dance bars, the government had denounced the bars as **dens of immorality**. It claimed they debauched the young and were meeting places for criminals.

In 2006, a ruling by the Bombay high court held the ban as violation of the constitutional right to earn a living and held it

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against public interest. Before the ban, there were around 400 dance bars in **Mumbai** which employed over 65,000 women and 40,000 men, with the dancers earning up to Rs 25,000 per month. Post-ban, the loss to government and industry was estimated at over Rs 3,000 crore. On July 16, 2013, the **Supreme Court** upheld Bombay HC decision to scrap the ban in the state.

As per the newly amended Maharashtra Police Act, All dance performances in bars and restaurants across all types of hospitality industry are banned. Any violation of this code would attract the imprisonment of minimum 3 months to maximum 5 years and minimum 1 lakh to 5 lakh fine besides cancellation of the hotel permit. Now, all dance bars' licenses stand cancelled and will be withdrawn within 30 days. Earlier, such ban was imposed on all hotels, bars and restaurants below 3-star category. Now, the ban is applicable to even the starred hotels — from 3 to 5-star. This step has been made to avoid the discrimination between the ordinary dance bars and dance bars in starred hotels which Supreme Court had objected to. The law imposes a complete ban on dance bars and dance performances at 5-star hotels. However, family parties in pubs and discotheques, and orchestras are not within the purview of this ban.

DLF is India's first realty company to get ISO 9001: 2008 certification

June 16, 2014

Realty behemoth DLF has become **India's** first real estate firm to get ISO 9001:2008 quality certification for development of housing and commercial projects.

DLF Home Developers Ltd, an arm of DLF, has received ISO 9001:2008 certification after meeting the rigorous standards set by British Standard Institute (BSI), a recognized **business** standards company.

DLF Home Developers is the first realty firm in the country to receive this internationally recognized **Quality Management system (QMS)** accreditation.

The certification DLF has achieved the certification which focused **'The Development of Commercial and Residential Complexes'** after undergoing rigorous assessment for its adherence to delivery schedules of both residential and commercial projects, customer satisfaction and quality of construction.

With the implementation of QMS, DLF ensures highest level of process and quality control in execution of its projects. QMS has very meticulously documented procedures addressing highest level of specifications to be achieved during various stages of development. The QMS rules help enhance systems, improve areas of weakness and cut down process inefficiencies.

This system ensures conformity to all applicable **legal** and regulatory requisites. It gives an extra stress on **health**, safety and **environment** at the work place during the course of construction.

Russia turns off gas supply to Ukraine after talks fail

June 16, 2014

The tension between **Russia** and **Ukraine** has further intensified with Russia cutting off the gas supply to Ukraine. Both countries blamed the other for the failure of talks in Kiev.

The gas issue is one more dispute between the two countries, besides the annexation of Crimea peninsula by Russia. Kiev has accused Moscow of inciting unrest in the eastern region of the country.

The CEO of Russia's state gas company, **Gazprom**, alleged that the Ukrainians were trying to —blackmail|| Russia into giving them a lower price and had failed to repay a huge debt accrued over recent years.

As per Ukraine's PM, the gas talks were part of a —general Russian plan to destroy Ukraine||.

The relationship between Russia and Ukraine are under severe strain since Moscow annexed Crimea in February 2014. The move to stop gas supply will impact the **Europe** as about 15% of the EU's gas supply is Russian gas piped through Ukraine. Although, Russia will continue to supply gas to Europe but Gazprom has warned there were substantial risks for gas transportation to the EU via Ukraine.

"Gauravi"- India's first One-Stop Crisis Centre opens in Bhopal

June 16, 2014

The Government of **Madhya Pradesh** has launched **'Gauravi'- India's first One-Stop Crisis Centre (OSCC)** at J. P. Hospital in Bhopal. The centre will help women who are victims of violence by enabling them to register an FIR, medical treatment, psychological counseling and **legal** help—all under one roof. The single-window centre was inaugurated by Bollywood actor **Aamir Khan**.

'Gauravi' will provide help and assistance to survivors and victims of dowry harassment, domestic violence and other atrocities on women.

The OSCC will extend legal advice, medical and police assistance to the victims. This facility can be availed either by calling on its helpline number or visiting the centre. It will also provide assistance in filing FIRs, providing security, rehabilitation of the victim and forensic support.

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The MP government has also asked the Centre to provide Rs 80 crore under **‘Nirbhaya Fund’** to establish similar centres in the remaining parts of the state.

Queen Elizabeth confers Knighthood upon Indian-origin physicist Prof. Tejinder Virdee

June 15, 2014

Professor Tejinder Virdee, a noted **Indian-origin physicist** known for his work for the **Large Hadron Collider**, was conferred an honorary knighthood by Queen Elizabeth II in recognition to his contribution to the field of science. Prof. Virdee of Imperial College London was named a Knight Bachelor for his services to science in the Queen’s Birthday Honours List. Professor Virdee contribution in the **Compact Muon Solenoid (CMS) Experiment** is considered his most remarkable service to science. The CMS experiment, at the Large Hadron Collider, CERN, Geneva, has delivered significant results in particle physics, including the landmark discovery of the **Higgs Boson, or the God particle**, a particle that renders mass to other particles.

Australia pips Netherlands to retain men’s hockey World Cup 2014

June 15, 2014

Australia defeated The **Netherlands** to retain the **men’s hockey World Cup** title in the final played at the **Kyocera Stadium, Hague (The Netherlands)**. For Australia it is second successive World Cup victory.

Australia and The Netherlands were standing against each other and played both Women’s and Men’s Finals of the World Cup Hockey 2014.

India registered an easy win over Asian champions South **Korea** to **finish ninth** in the men’s hockey World Cup.

IUCN releases Red List of Threatened Species – FIFA World Cup 2014 mascot “Brazilian

three-banded Armadillo” enlisted as Vulnerable

June 15, 2014

The **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)** released the **Red List of Threatened Species**. **IUCN Red List of Threatened Species** is celebrating its **50th anniversary** in 2014. As of now, the Red List has 73,686 assessed species, of which 22,103 are threatened with extinction. The release includes lemurs, Japanese eels, slipper orchids. The **Brazilian three-banded Armadillo (*Tolypeutes tricinctus*)** which is **FIFA World Cup 2014 mascot** has been enlisted as **Vulnerable** as its population has decreased by more than a third in the past 10 due to destruction of half its shrubland habitat.

The Brazilian 3-banded armadillo (*Tolypeutes tricinctus*) is an armadillo species endemic to **Brazil**. In Brazil it is locally known as **—tatu-bola** as it **can roll itself into a ball**.

Lemurs are one of the most threatened groups of vertebrates on the planet as more than 90% of lemurs are now threatened with extinction.

Some of the facts about Lemurs:

Of the 99 known species, which live on the island of **Madagascar** 22 species are critically endangered, including the Indri, the largest living lemur.

48 species of lemur are endangered, including Madame Berthe’s mouse lemur, the world smallest primate.

20 lemur species are vulnerable.

Lemurs are threatened by the loss of their tropical forest habitat due to rise in illegal logging on account of political instability and surging levels of poverty in the past 20 years.

Japanese eel:

It is a traditional food in **Japan** and the country’s most expensive food fish. It is endangered due to:

Habitat loss

Unsustainable fishing

Obstructions to migration

Pollution

Changes in oceanic currents

The assessment of species is done using the **Species Information Service Toolkit**, an application developed in partnership with Solertium and IUCN.

Miss Marwadi Nepal 2014: Indian-origin Dakshina Agrawal wins the title

June 15, 2014

Indian-origin **Dakshina Agrawal** (24) has bagged the **‘Miss Marwadi Nepal 2014’** title during the second edition of the

beauty contest organized in Kathmandu, Nepal. The model received the title at a function held by Indian-origin 'Marwadi' business community.

Vishaka Agrawal (22) and Sanjoli Joshi (23) adjudged first and second runner-ups in the pageant respectively.

BHEL commissions Rampur Hydro Electric Project in Himachal Pradesh

June 14, 2014

Government-owned power equipment manufacturer **Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL)** commissioned 68 MW Unit at the **Rampur Hydro Electric Project in Himachal Pradesh**. With this, BHEL has commissioned four units of the 412 MW hydro power plant of SJVN Limited.

Rampur hydel project has been built on River Satluj in Himachal Pradesh – 120 km from Shimla. In this project BHEL contributed in supply, construction and commissioning of turbines, generators, **Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition system (SCADA)**, associated station auxiliaries, Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) and other electrical and mechanical machinery.

Lt Gen Amit Sharma appointed Commander-in-Chief of SFC

June 14, 2014

Lt Gen Amit Sharma (58) has been appointed as the new **Commander-in-Chief of Strategic Forces Command (SFC)** which guards the nuclear weapon store of the country. He takes charge from Vice Admiral S P S Cheema as the latter has moved to Kochi to head the Navy's Southern Command based there. Previously, Sharma was the Chief of Staff of Japiur-based South Western Command of the army and had headed its elite 21 Strike Corps.

The SFC is responsible to implement the directives of the **Nuclear Command Authority (NCA)**. It has the sole responsibility of starting the process of delivering nuclear arsenal after receiving approval from NCA.

Vice-President presented with Book titled "Warrior State" authored by T V Paul

June 14, 2014

Vice President Hamid Ansari was presented with the book titled **Warrior State: Pakistan in the Contemporary World** written by **T V Paul**.

The book presents a broad perspective of Pakistan's insecurity quandary using literature from sociology, **history**, religious studies, and **international** relations. In addition, it introduces the concept of geostrategic curse, an important view akin to resource curse and oil curse. The book offers potent tool for policymakers and researchers alike to understand this crucial yet disturbed country. T V Paul is James McGill Professor of International Relations in the Department of Political Science at McGill University, Montreal, **Canada**.

Rasik Ravindra elected as member of UN body on ocean issues

June 14, 2014

Indian origin scientist **Rasik Ravindra** has been elected as member of the **United Nations Commission on the Limits of Continental Shelf (CLCS)** as India's candidate for member of the Commission.

Rasik, an alumnus of the **Jammu and Kashmir** University, is one of India's eminent scientists. He has a rich experience of over four decades in different spheres of geosciences that include geological studies in Antarctica, India and **Bhutan**. He has been honored with many prestigious **awards** including the National Award for Polar Sciences and Cryosphere in the year 2013 and National Mineral Award in the year 1990. He has wide global experience and has also held coveted positions that included negotiations in policy, technical and scientific issues.

United Nations Commission on the Limits of Continental Shelf (CLCS):

The CLCS has **21 members**, who are experts in the domains of geophysics, geology, or hydrography, and are elected for a term of 5 years by the nations who are party to the **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)** among their nationals. It is the UN body that is empowered to allocate new seabed territory to countries.

Maharashtra government approves proposal to bifurcate Thane district

June 14, 2014

The **Maharashtra** government has given nod to the proposal of bifurcation of Thane district which will make Palghar Maharashtra's 36th district. This proposal has been pending for a long time. As per the Maharashtra cabinet's decision, the original Thane district will continue with mainly urban areas, while the new Palghar district will have mainly tribal dominated areas under its scope.

Thane is a district in northern Maharashtra state in western **India**. The headquarters of the district is the city of Thane, situated at the head of the Thane Creek. Thane is also known as the **City of Lakes**. It has around 35 lakes. Thane comes under **Mumbai** Metropolitan Region. It is worth mentioning that on April 16, 1854, the G.I.P. Railway's first train ever to run in India ran from **—Boree Bunder|| (now the Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus) to Thane (previously Thana), 34 kilometers away.**

Scientists locate massive underground water reservoir, „three times“ the size of Earth“s oceans

June 14, 2014

Researchers have found a massive reservoir of water three times the size of Earth's oceans located hundreds of miles beneath the surface of the planet. Scientists from Northwestern University and the University of New Mexico provided the first ever evidence for potentially oceans worth of water deep beneath the United States.

Though the water is not in the general liquid form — the elements for water are bound up in rock deep in the planet's mantle — the discovery may correspond to earth's biggest water reservoir. It is due to the presence of liquid water on the surface that makes our planet fit for human habitation, and researchers have long been trying to puzzle out just how much water may be cycling between Earth's surface and internal reservoirs through plate tectonics.

Researchers have discovered deep pockets of magma situated about 400 miles underneath North America, a possible sign of the presence of water at these depths. The discovery indicates that water from the Earth's surface can reach such great depths by plate tectonics, in due course causing partial melting of the rocks found deep in the mantle. Scientists are considering evidence for a whole-Earth water cycle, which may help explain the huge quantity of liquid water on the surface earth. Researchers have been in quest of this missing deep water for years. They have long conjectured that water is locked in a rocky layer of the Earth's mantle between the lower mantle and upper mantle, at depths between 250 miles and 410 miles.

Scientists Jacobsen and Schmandt are the first to provide direct proof that there may be water in —**Transition Zone** of the mantle on a regional scale. Scientists tried to produce evidence that melting may take place about 400 miles deep in the Earth. H₂O trapped in mantle rocks, such as those comprising the mineral **ringwoodite** is the fundamental thing to the process. If just 1% of the weight of mantle rock in this zone is H₂O that would be tantamount to around 3 times the amount of water in oceans on Earth's surface.

The water which has been discovered is not in the form of liquid, ice or vapor. It is water locked inside the molecular composition of the minerals in the mantle rock. The high pressure and temperature produced by the weight of 250 miles of solid rock breaks a water molecule to form a hydroxyl radical (OH), which can bind into a mineral's crystal structure. The research rests on a discovery in which researchers found a piece of the mineral **ringwoodite** inside a diamond spewed from a depth of 400 miles by a volcano in **Brazil**. That minuscule piece of ringwoodite — the only sample in existence from within the Earth — contained an unexpected quantity of water bound in solid form in the mineral.

Japan kills 30 minke whales despite ICJ order

June 14, 2014

As per a report by Japanese Fisheries Agency, **Japan** has continued the hunting of whales and has killed **30 minke whales** off Ishinomaki, Miyagi Prefecture (at its north-east coast), in the first hunt since the **International Court of Justice (ICJ)** March 2014 order which directed Tokyo to halt killing the whales in **the Antarctic**.

In March 2014, the ICJ ruled that Japan's annual expedition to the Southern Ocean was a commercial activity disguised as research.

ICJ ordered **ban** on **Japan's JARPA II** (started in 2005) whaling programme in **Sothern Ocean** in the **Antarctic**. The UN's apex court imposed a temporary halt on Japan's whaling programme in Antarctic waters after hearing a case brought against Japan by **Australia** and environmental groups. The **16-member panel** of ICJ decided that the whaling exercise of Japan is not justified. The court directed Tokyo to choose any one courses of action in this regard- either stop hunting the whales or redesign its hunting programme for scientific purposes. Japan agreed to the order of the ICJ.

Japan has **exploited an ambiguity** in a **1986 global moratorium** that allows lethal research on the mammals. Japan sometimes also paints the demands for an end to whaling as cultural imperialism in the country.

Insufficiency in the ICJ order

Though the ICJ judgment directs Japan to stop whaling in Antarctic under JARPA II but it doesn't make any mention on its annual hunts in the Pacific Ocean. **As a result, Japan is free to continue hunting of whales in the Pacific.**

The Netherlands lift women“s hockey World Cup

June 14, 2014

Olympic gold medal winner **The Netherlands** defeated **Australia** in the title clash at the **Kyocera Stadium, Hague (The Netherlands)** to win the **women's hockey World Cup**.

Out of 13 women's World Cups since the launch of the event in 1974, the Netherlands have bagged the title seven times. It was a fifth successive World Cup final for the Dutch and remarkably a fourth contested between the two nations, with Australia's 1998 victory in Utrecht being sandwiched by wins for Netherlands in 1990 and 2006.

“Garuda-V”: Indo-French Air drill concludes at AFS Jodhpur

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June 13, 2014

The **Indo-French Air Drill —Garuda V||** which began on June 3, 2014 successfully concluded at **Air Force Station (AFS) Jodhpur** in **Rajasthan**. During this exercise both the air forces performed various combat roles including Air to Air refuelling.

The exercise provided significant mutual learning opportunity to both Air Forces.

The French team participated with 4 Rafales and 1 C-135 French Refueller aircraft while the Indian side exercised 4 Su-30MKI, 4 MiG 21 Bison, 4 MiG 27 (Upg), as well as an IL-78 tanker aircraft and an Airborne Warning and control system IL-76 (AWACS).

Both the sides benefitted from the drill by executing difficult and realistic missions and sharing of know-how and operational lessons. This is likely to improve the operational capabilities of both the forces as well as consolidate the cooperation

between French and Indian Air Forces.

India becomes permanent member of Washington Accord

June 13, 2014

A long wait for **India** ended when the country became a permanent member of the **Washington Accord**, an esteemed **international** treaty on engineering studies and mobility of engineers across signatory countries including the US, the UK and **Australia**. **Permanent membership reflects on the country's stature in the technical education space**. Until now, India has been just a provisional member since 2007.

The meeting of the International Engineering Alliance of WA member nations met in Wellington, **New Zealand** and gave India the signatory status to join the select group of nations who are permanent signatories to the Washington Accord (WA). This will ensure highest quality assurance standards to be implemented in our technical and engineering programmes and provide global mobility to our engineering graduates. It will significantly enhance their employment opportunities around the world.

The Washington Accord:

It is an international accreditation treaty for professional engineering academic degrees, between the bodies responsible for accreditation in its signatory nations. Initially when the Washington Accord came into force in 1989, only 6 developed countries were its members.

As of 2014, the signatories are: Australia, **Canada**, **Chinese Taipei**, **Hong KongChina**,

India, **Ireland**, **Japan**, **Korea**, **Malaysia**, **New Zealand**, **Russia**, **Singapore**, **South Africa**, **Turkey**, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

The accord acknowledges that there is significant uniformity of programs accredited by those signatories. Every signatory countries recognizes the graduates of accredited programs by every other signatory countries as having met the academic requirements for entry to the practice of engineering. Recognition of accredited programs is not retroactive but takes effect only from the date of admission of the country to signatory status.

The treaty covers undergraduate engineering degrees under Outcome-based education approach. The accord doesn't take into account engineering technology and postgraduate programs, although some engineering technology programs are covered under the Sydney Accord and the Dublin Accord. Only qualifications granted after the signatory country or region became part of the Washington Accord are recognized. The pact is not directly responsible for the licensing or registration of Professional Engineers and Chartered Engineers, but it does cover the academic prerequisites that are part of the licensing processes in countries party to the accord.

RBI mulling over Payment bank as recommended by Nachiket Mor Panel

June 13, 2014

The Reserve Bank of **India** will soon come up with India's first **payments bank**, which will offer **deposit and payment services but not provide loans**.

This idea is in line with the recommendations made by the **Nachiket Morcommittee**. The central bank sees huge potential for financial inclusion with focus on remittances by involving payment system product.

As per the RBI, while full-service banks require an entry capital of Rs.500 crore, payments banks can start operations with a capital of just Rs.50 crore since all their money will be invested in safe government securities.

They will be required to comply with all RBI guidelines for commercial banks.

According to the recommendations of **Nachiket Mor committee:**

Permission should be given to existing banks to create subsidiaries to operate payments banks.

Payments banks may be created by converting prepaid payment issuers (PPIs). These companies provide cards that customers can use to make payments with the money stored in them. There are 27 PPIs in the country, including Itz Cash Card Ltd, Oxigen Services (India) Pvt. Ltd and Airtel M Commerce Services Ltd.

Entry of payments banks made easier:

In order to expedite the process, the RBI will soon start its differentiated **banking** licence regime, where the central bank

issues licences to new banks to undertake specific banking operations. The apex bank will also issue licences on a continuous basis to qualified aspirants instead of opening the licensing window after long intervals. The payments bank route is important for India Post, which failed to secure a banking licence. RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan said that India Post could begin as a payments bank. All these efforts are being made to promote financial inclusion in India, where more than half of the adult population still does not have access to banking services.

The RBI first introduced a 3-year financial inclusion programme in April 2010 to promote financial inclusion that witnessed banks opening outlets in 200,000 villages. Subsequently, it launched the phase II of the programme for 2013-2016.

UNGA elects Ugandan Foreign Minister as President of 69th session

June 13, 2014

Uganda's foreign minister **Sam Kahamba Kutesa** has been unanimously elected as the President of the 193-membered **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)**. He was in news recently for defending the Ugandan government's stringent anti-homosexuality law which President Yoweri Museveni signed in February 2014.

The members of the UNGA elect its president annually with a different regional grouping providing a candidate or candidates. Since it was Africa's turn to nominate a President, Mr. Kutesa was chosen unanimously by the African Union as the only candidate for the presidency of the upcoming 69th Session. However, Western nations and human rights advocates have expressed concerns over the Uganda's widely criticized anti-homosexuality legislation.

Gujarat gets NCA approval to raise height of Narmada Dam

June 13, 2014

The **Narmada Control Authority (NCA)** has given nod to raise the height of the **Sardar Sarovar Dam by 17 metres to 138.62 metres**, which, on its completion, would allow Gujarat to get three times more water for irrigation. The new height would make it the second highest dam in the world after Grand Coulee in the US.

A higher dam will improve the efficiency of hydro-power generation and water supply capacity of this project, and is likely to benefit not just Gujarat but also adjacent states of Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. Gujarat has been waiting for this decision for last 8 years.

Activist Medha Patkar, who drew attention to the dislocation of thousands of people as a result of this move, is protesting the decision and has called the move undemocratic.

As per Patkar, the dam with its current height has 2 lakh people in its affected region. If the height is increased by 17 metres, the thickly populated villages in Nimad area of Madhya Pradesh with houses, farms, shops, temples, mosques and standing crops would be submerged. The centre will allow Gujarat to raise the height of the dam from existing 121.91m to 138.7m

Benefits of Project:

Irrigation water to 1.8 million hectares to benefit one million farmers.

Drinking water for 9,633 villages and 131 towns

Who gets what:

WATER: Rajasthan (1.79%), Maharashtra (0.89%), Gujarat (32.14%), Madhya Pradesh (65.18%)

POWER: Maharashtra (27%), Gujarat (16%), Madhya Pradesh (57%)

Internet not responsible for newspaper decline: Study

June 13, 2014

As per a research conducted by **Professor Matthew Gentzkow of University of Chicago Booth School of Business**, the **Internet may actually not be responsible for the sharp decline of the traditional newspaper industry as most of us believe**. Researchers have found that the web may actually not have prompted this fall. Majority accepts the fact that the Internet did have a role in killing newspapers. As per the common belief, the newspaper business was growing before the mid-90s with quality journalism and pages of ads. Then, the general population started drifting towards the Internet, and the popularity of print started declining. However, as per Gentzkow, the assumptions about journalism are based on three false grounds. These are:

1. The online advertising revenues are naturally lower than print revenues, so that traditional media needs to adopt a less profitable business model that can't support paying real reports.
2. The web has made the advertising market more competitive which has driven down rates and revenues.
3. The Internet is responsible for the newspaper's demise.

Evidence given by the research discarding the above beliefs:

Several previous researches have shown that people spend an order of magnitude more time reading than the average monthly visitor online, which makes looking at these rates as analogous false.

On comparing the amount of time people actually see an ad, it was found that the price of attention for similar consumers is actually higher online.

The popularity of newspapers had already significantly reduced between 1980 and 1995, well before the Internet

revolution, and has decreased at roughly the same rate since then.

Delhi government gives nod to Rapid Rail corridors to Alwar, Meerut, Panipat

June 13, 2014

The **Delhi** government has approved the alignments of the three **Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) corridors**. These corridors will link the Delhi with **Panipat, Meerut and Alwar**. These three alignments were recommended by the **National Capital Regional Planning Board (NCRPB)**. To start work on the project a similar approval is required from other state governments for the same.

The total length of the three corridors is 349 km, as the Delhi-Alwar corridor will terminate at Delhi-Gurgaon border. The Delhi-Meerut corridor will be via Anand Vihar and Sarai Kale Khan and would be supported by **Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC)**. The Delhi-Panipat corridor would go up to Kashmere Gate.

National Capital Region Transport Corporation Limited (NCRTC) will function as the implementing agency for RRTS projects in the NCR.

It will be responsible for designing, developing, implementing, financing, operating and maintaining RRTS on a pattern similar to the Delhi Metro.

East India Company launches new office in Qatar

June 12, 2014

The **East India Company** which had ventured into India in around 1600 AD for the purpose of trade and which later became the precursor of British rule in India has launched a new office in the Qatari capital of Doha in collaboration with local partner Nasser Al Ansari of Octagon **International**. Although the Company was dissolved in 1874, it was re-born in 2010 and a revived East India Company launched its flagship Fine Foods store in London's Mayfair.

Since its creation in 1600 by The Royal Charter granted by Queen Elizabeth I, the influence of The East India Company has been great.

India-born Sanjiv Mehta acquired the over 400-year-old company in 2005. The Company offers products that have been crafted by artisans and specialists from around the globe using elements that have been sourced for their quality.

India, China decide to add a new fillip to economic ties

June 12, 2014

In a bid to explore —untapped opportunities||, **India** and **China** have together decided to infuse a new momentum in their economic relationship. The steps in this direction include establishing industrial parks to take the bilateral trade beyond current \$ 65 billion annually.

With bilateral trade standing close to USD 65 billion, China is India's biggest trading partner. However, the trade deficit between the two countries is in China's favor at about \$40 billion. The two-side trade also slipped by 1.5%, registering a declining trend for the second consecutive year in 2013. India has consistently been raising the issue of widening trade deficit and seeking greater market access in China to fill the gap. India maintains that one way to tackle the asymmetry is to open up Chinese markets to IT-enabled services, home furnishings and cotton textiles and also in pharmaceuticals

Russia gives in-principle nod on India's nuclear liability law

June 12, 2014

Russia has in principle agreed on **Civil Liability Nuclear Damage Act 2010** with **India**. This paves the way for signing a contract for **unit 3 and 4 of the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant** in July, 2014. In April, 2014, a General Framework Agreement was inked between India and Russia on unit 3 and 4 after overcoming the initial hurdles of the Civil Liability Nuclear Damage Act 2010.

The agreement which was expected to be signed in October 2013 during the then Indian PM Manmohan Singh's visit to Russia, as Moscow raised objection over some clauses of the **Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage (CLND) Act**. India has built Units 1 and 2 of **Tamil Nadu**-based **Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KKNPP)** with the help of Russian assistance at the cost of Rs 17,200 crore. The Unit 1 of the KKNPP has attained 100% capacity of 1000 MW while the second unit should start generating power from this year.

Because of high costs, insuring the nuclear power plants is a challenging task as there is no single governmental **insurance** company in the country that can insure these installations with such hefty costs. The Department of Atomic Energy has asked the **Ministry of Finance** to set up a **Nuclear Insurance Pool** after the General Insurance Company was unable to insure Nuclear Power Plants.

Cyclone Nanauk moves towards Oman, monsoon to reach Maharashtra, Gujarat in few days

June 12, 2014

—**Nanauk**||, the **tropical cyclone** that emerged in the **east-central Arabian Seas** is likely to hit Oman on June 15, 2014. Due

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to the influence of the cyclone, Delhi witnessed an unexpected hike in moisture levels which caused rain bringing the soaring temperature down. As per India's Met Department the cyclone is likely to affect the southwest monsoon. Under the influence of this cyclone, the south west monsoon will move along the west coast of Maharashtra and Gujarat.

Dilip Kumar's autobiography „The Substance and the Shadow“ released

June 12, 2014

Indian cinema's legendary actor Dilip Kumar's autobiography 'The Substance and the Shadow' that narrates his life since birth was launched. The book is written by author and former journalist Udaya Tara Nayar which chronicles the thespian's ups and downs in his much-talked about relationships, marriage and movies.

Dilip Kumar:

He was born in Peshawar, Pakistan and his original name was Muhammad Yusuf Khan. He spent his childhood in Maharashtra and left home to start a canteen before he was picked up as a potential actor.

The actor entered films with the 1944 release *Jwar Bhata*. In a career spanning six decades, he did over 60 films including *Mela*, *Naya Daur*, *Aan*, *Devdas*, *Madhumati* and *Mughal-E-Azam*. After a break of 5 years he acted in *Kranti* (1981) followed by *Vidhaata*, *Shakti*, *Mashaal*, *Karma*, *Saudagar* and *Qila* with his last appearance in 1998.

Awards and Honors:

Padma Bhushan in 1991

Dadasaheb Phalke Award in 1994

Pakistan's highest civilian award Nishan-e-Imtiaz in 1998

Nominated to the **Rajya Sabha** for a term.

Guinness World Record for winning the maximum number of awards by an Indian actor.

Madhya Pradesh to restore Mahatma's Tolstoy Farm

June 12, 2014

During his visit to South Africa, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan pledged to donate Rs. 1 crore for the restoration of Mahatma Gandhi's Tolstoy Farm in the country, a place where he first began his Satyagraha. The place is now an abandoned area, south of Johannesburg, owned by a neighboring brick manufacturing company.

Tolstoy Farm:

Mahatma Gandhi established the Tolstoy Farm near Johannesburg, South Africa in 1910. The farm drew its name from Leo Tolstoy, whose writings had influenced Gandhiji. The farm, spanned over an area of 1,100 acres, was donated by his architect friend Herman Kallenbach. The farm was a self-sufficient commune for people from diverse backgrounds, race and religion stayed together here to form a community of Passive Resisters. They adopted Gandhi's principles of Satyagraha to fight the discriminatory, unjust and racist rule of the then South Africa.

Infosys appoints Vishal Sikka as new CEO

June 12, 2014

Infosys has appointed former SAP AG top executive Vishal Sikka as Chief Executive Officer. It is for the first time the company has not selected one of its founders for the role, as it looks to recapture market share and control the high attrition rate of its staff.

With this, Infosys, India's second-largest IT services Executive Chairman N.R. Narayana Murthy would step down, nearly a year after he was brought back from retirement to assist the firm better compete with rivals including Tata Consultancy Services and Wipro. The company is still grappling with high staff exodus and management uncertainty, factors that led to loss of market share for a company that was once a dominated India's \$100-plus billion a year IT export business, and escalated investor pressure for a change of leadership.

UPSC Civil Services results out, 1,122 candidates selected

June 12, 2014

Union Public Services Commission (UPSC) which conducts Civil Services Examination among other exams has released the list of candidates to be appointed to the various civil services posts namely IAS, IPS, IFS, IRS and Groups A and B of the central services. It has recommended 1,112 candidates for appointment to these posts.

Among the selected candidates, Gaurav Agrawal has secured the all India first rank in the 3-tier appointment process. Munish Sharma and Rachit Raj secured second and third place respectively.

There are 517 candidates from the general stream, 326 OBC candidates, 187 SC candidates and 92 ST candidates in the final list.

PM Modi releases FIFA World Cup postage stamps

June 12, 2014

Prime Minister Narendra Modi released commemorative postage stamps on FIFA World Cup 2014 that kick started

in **Brazil** on the night of June 12, 2014. PM urged the **Department of Posts** to create a website on the **history** of Indian **football**.

India is also gearing up to host the under-17 FIFA World Cup.

June 12 observed as World Day Against Child Labor 2014

June 12, 2014

June 12 was observed as World Day Against Child Labour across the globe. The theme for year 2014 is **Extend social protection: Combat child labour**.

The World Day Against Child Labour was launched by the **International** Labour Organization (ILO) in 2002 to spread awareness on the global extent of child labour and the action and efforts needed to eradicate it.

World Day Against Child Labour 2014 necessitates:

Action to introduce, improve and extend social protection, in line with the ILO Recommendation No. 202 on social protection floors.

National social security systems that are sensitive to children's needs and help fighting child labour.

Social protection that reaches out to especially vulnerable groups of children.

Brasilia Declaration

At the 3rd Global Conference on Child Labour held in Brasilia in 2013, the international community adopted the Brasilia Declaration, which emphasized the need for decent work for adults, free, compulsory and quality **education** for all children, and social protection for all.

Environment clearance to Navy's Project Seabird (Karwar naval base)

June 11, 2014

The new Government of **India** has given environmental clearance to Indian Navy's ambitious naval **infrastructure** project — **Seabird in Karwar (Phase-II)**.

Project Seabird (Karwar naval base)

The **Western Fleet** of Indian Navy in **Mumbai** faced security challenges during the **Indo-Pakistan War of 1971** due to **congestion** in the shipping lanes from commercial shipping traffic, fishing boats and tourists. To address these concerns several options were mulled over after the war.

Alternative locations for a base on the west coast were considered, including Thiruvananthapuram, Kannur and Thoothukudi. In the early 1980s, then **Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Oscar Stanley Dawson** proposed a dedicated naval base **between the hills of the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea near Karwar in Karnataka state**.

Advantages of Karwar (Karnataka) as Naval Base:

1. Located south of the naval bases in Mumbai and Goa and north of Kochi and is very close to the world's busiest shipping route between the Persian Gulf and east Asia and beyond the range of most strike aircraft from neighboring countries.
 2. It has a natural deep-water harbour and considerable land area for expansion to accommodate larger aircraft carriers.
- However, due to a variety of reasons, including the 1991 economic crisis, development of the base was delayed. Following Pokhran-II in 1999, then **Defence Minister George Fernandes** approved Project Seabird to move forward with the construction of the new naval base at Karwar. Contracts were awarded to Larsen & Toubro as the lead contractor for the marine works on the harbour, in partnership with Hochtief, Ballast Nedam Dredging of the **Netherlands**, Radisson of **Australia** and Nedeco of The Netherland.

Over 5 km of breakwater were built using over 4.4 million cubic meters of rock to protect the harbour. To provide berth to even larger aircraft carriers, the **Binaga Bay** was dredged and its rock outcrops blasted. **Anjadip Island** is one of the two islands to which the breakwaters are linked for reinforcement. A second channel will be added to the base to allow warships to enter and exit the port at the same time.

The Karwar base will be one of the largest naval bases of India and will be executed in two phases. It will house various warships including India's largest warship and aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya. INS Kadamba is an Indian Navy base situated near Karwar in Karnataka.

The phase I of the base, known as **Project Seabird**, was completed in 2005 and the base was commissioned on May 31, 2005.

The phase II of the project began in 2011. At present, INS Kadamba is the third largest Indian naval base, and is expected to become the largest naval base in the eastern hemisphere after completion of expansion Phase IIB.

NABARD slashes refinance rates to promote investment in agriculture

June 11, 2014

In a bid to encourage investments in **agriculture**, **National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)** has cut the rate of interest by 20 basis points (bps) on their **long term refinance facility to banks**.

As per NABARD:

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Rates of refinance will now be 9.50% for 5 years and above and 9.70% for 3-5 years period. Banks availing more than Rs.500 crore in a single drawl will further be incentivized by 10 bps. Efficient agricultural technologies which enhance production & productivity will be provided a further incentive of 50 basis points, a step taken to fight food inflation by addressing the supply side constraint. The 50 basis points rebate will also be available for supporting single purpose under area development schemes, primarily to benefit small and marginal farmers. This step will help the Cooperative Banks, RRBs and Commercial Banks in stemming the declining trend of investment credit and will help in capital generation in agriculture.

India test-fires BrahMos from indigenous warship INS Kolkata successfully

June 11, 2014

The 290 km-range **BrahMos** supersonic anti-ship cruise missile was successfully test-fired from country's largest indigenous warship INS Kolkata off the coast of Karwar in **Karnataka**. The combat ship is yet to be formally inducted into the Indian Navy. The missile was test-fired from INS Kolkata, which is a new ship under **Project 15-Alpha series**, off the coast of Karwar and all the parameters were met during the test.

INS Kolkata:

The ship built by Mazagon Dockyards Limited is the first of its class of warships in the country and is going through extensive trials before its planned induction into the Navy in July 2014. The warship can fire 16 BrahMos missiles in one go when it enters operational service.

Current status of BrahMos

The BrahMos weapon systems has already been deployed on several Indian Navy's warships including the Russian-origin Talwar Class vessels. The missile is expected to be deployed on all future destroyers and frigates of the Navy and it is also being developed to suit submarines.

The Army and the **Air Force** have also inducted the missile and it is being readied for firing from a Su-30MKI combat aircraft. Land version of this weapon system will also be inducted into the Air Force. The Army has positioned it in both the eastern and the western fronts along the borders with both **China** and **Pakistan**.

BrahMos Aerospace, a joint venture of **India** and **Russia**, has developed several variants of the missile for different forms of warfare and is currently developing a much-faster hypersonic version of the missile.

Bharat Ratna JRD Tata award conferred upon Somasundaram

June 11, 2014

Member of Air Navigation Services of Airports Authority of **India** (AAI), **Somasundaram**, has been conferred upon the esteemed **Bharat Ratna JRD Tata Award 2013** instituted by **Aeronautical Society of India (ASI)**. He has made significant contributions not only in improving ANS infrastructure in the country for enhancing safety, efficiency and capacity of the airspace but also towards smooth ATM and global coordination.

The ASI has been presenting annual national awards in recognition and appreciation of distinguished contribution and outstanding achievements made in the field of aeronautics and aerospace sciences. The ASI gives Bharat Ratna JRD Tata Award to an individual who has made outstanding contributions in the field of civil aviation.

Madhusudhana Chary elected first Speaker of Telangana Assembly

June 11, 2014

TRS MLA **Sirikonda Madhusudhana Chary** (58), who represents Bhupalapally in Warangal district, has been elected unopposed as the first Speaker of the **Telangana** Legislative Assembly. Chary is a close aid of K Chandrasekhar Rao even before the latter founded the TRS in 2001.

PM launches book „Getting India Back on Track: An Action Agenda For Reform“

June 11, 2014

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched a book titled **„Getting India Back on Track: An Action Agenda For Reform“** edited

by Bibek Debroy, Ashley J. Tellis and Reece Trevor. The book's foreword has been written by Ratan N Tata and it comprises insightful essays by noted academicians and public policy experts.

Ranjit Kumar appointed as Solicitor General

June 11, 2014

The new government led by PM Narendra Modi has appointed senior **Supreme Court** advocate **Ranjit Kumar** as the **Solicitor General of India**. Kumar, who is considered an expert in Constitutional laws, has earlier defended **Gujarat** in a number of cases.

A few days back, **Mukul Rohatgi** was appointed as the **Attorney General of India**, who thus became the top law officer of

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the country. The Solicitor General is subordinate to the **Attorney General** for **India**.

With this, the new government has made its first appointments of law officers who would be representing it in courts. As a convention, law officers resign with the change of government.

Reuven (Ruby) Rivlin elected Israel's new President

June 11, 2014

Reuven (Ruby) Rivlin, Knesset member of Likud Party, has been elected 10th President of **Israel**, following a vote by members of the parliament. Rivlin who has been former speaker of parliament won the ceremonial post in a runoff against Meir Sheerit. He will replace outgoing president Shimon Peres. * The **Knesset** is the unicameral national legislature of Israel.

KYC norms for opening of bank accounts simplified by RBI

June 10, 2014

Making opening a bank account less cumbersome than earlier, the RBI has said that accounts can now be opened with just one address proof, permanent or local. This decision has been taken keeping in mind the **banking** needs of migrant workers and employees with transferable jobs who currently face cumbersome procedure to access banking services.

As per RBI:

From now onwards, customers may submit only one documentary proof of address (either current or permanent) while opening a bank account or while undergoing periodic update.

In case the address mentioned as per 'proof of address' undergoes a change, fresh proof of address may be submitted to the branch within a period of 6 months.

In cases where customer is not able to submit local proof of address, the bank may accept a declaration of the local address on which all correspondence will be made by the bank with the customer. Customers are not required to submit any proof for such address for correspondence/local address. Bank may verify this address through positive confirmation such as acknowledgment of receipt of letter, cheque books, ATM cards, telephonic conversation.

If the address for correspondence undergoes a change, the customer may inform about the new address to the bank within 2 weeks of such a change.

Trucks carrying PDS foodgrains to be tracked with GPS

June 10, 2014

In order to curb the menace of diversion of rations meant for lakhs of families which are below the poverty line, **Delhi** government has decided to track the trucks carrying food-grains with the help of Global Positioning System (GPS) and Radio-Frequency Identification (RFID). The Department of Food, Supplies and Consumer Affairs has started work for establishing a comprehensive web based, real time tracking system for effective implementation of the Public Distribution System.

The movement of vehicles will be continuously under vigilance to ensure that the ration commodities are properly and timely delivered to the Fair Price Shops (FPS) and are not diverted to the open market. It will be implemented by the Delhi State Civil Supplies Corporation (DSCSC) Limited which is responsible for supplying food-grains from the six Food Corporation of **India** (FCI) godowns in Delhi to about 2,500 FPS across the city.

Sikkim government reserves 12% jobs for BPL

June 10, 2014

As per an announcement made by the **Sikkim** government, there will be 12% reservation in all state government jobs and posts in public sector undertakings for candidates living Below Poverty Line (BPL). Only those BPL persons who are of Sikkimese origin will be eligible for this 12% —horizontal reservation||. As per the latest data released by the **Planning Commission**, Sikkim has just about 8% people living below poverty line which is equal to about 55,000 BPL people in the state.

Mudgal Panel: Sourav Ganguly joins Mudgal Panel probing IPL spot-fixing & betting scandal

June 10, 2014

Sourav Ganguly, former **India cricket** team skipper, has been inducted into the **Supreme Court** appointed Mudgal Panel that has been set up to investigate the IPL spot-fixing and betting scandal including probing the 13 names that are mentioned in the sealed envelope that it had submitted to the court in **February 2013**.

The apex court had asked the panel to select a cricketer of 'impeccable integrity' after which names of Ganguly was under consideration.

Petro Poroshenko takes oath as Ukraine President

June 10, 2014

Petro Poroshenko, billionaire owner of the Roshen chocolates group, who is also popular as **Chocolate King**, sworn in as the **Ukraine** President. Poroshenko offered political concessions to people in the conflict-ridden east and said he did not want war or revenge. Mr Poroshenko made an ardent appeal for the unity of the country.

He held that he has told Russian President that Crimea, which Moscow has annexed, would —always be Ukrainian|. Mr. Poroshenko has assumed power at a time when Crimea which was part of Ukraine until now, has now been annexed by **Russia**.

P.K Mishra is PM's Additional Principal Secretary

June 10, 2014

P K Mishra (65), a 1972-batch retired IAS officer of **Gujarat** cadre and former **Agriculture** Secretary, has been appointed as the **Additional Principal Secretary to Prime Minister Narendra Modi**. Mr. Mishra had served between 2001 and 2004 as Principal Secretary to Modi when he was Gujarat CM. Mishra's appointment will be co-terminus with the term of the Prime Minister or till further orders.

Former TRAI Chairman Nripendra Misra, 69, was on May 28, 2014 appointed Principal Secretary to Modi.

Uttarakhand Cabinet gives nod to Pension Scheme for Farmers

June 10, 2014

The **Uttarakhand** Government has given nod to two popular **schemes** including a pension scheme for farmers and a scheme to air-lift doctors to remote areas of the state.

Pension Scheme for Farmers: Under this scheme for farmers, all those farmers doing farming on **2 hectare** piece of land will get a monthly pension of **Rs 800**.

Air-lift of Doctors Scheme: Under this scheme, doctors and pharmacists along with medicines will be air-lifted to remote villages, where they will attend to patients for a month and then will be replaced by another group of doctors.

Kudankulam is India's first nuke plant to produce 1,000 MW of power

June 10, 2014

Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KNPP) achieved its full power generation potential and thus became **India's** first nuclear power plant to generate 1,000 Mega Watt (MW) of electricity. Other nuclear plants in India generally generate only around 540 MW of power while in the case of thermal plants it could increase up to 660 or 680 MW. Thus, in terms of capacity, Kudankulam Unit I is a significant achievement.

Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KNPP)

KNPP is a nuclear power plant in Koodankulam in the Tirunelveli district of **Tamil Nadu** in India. The plant's first reactor is the first **Pressurised Water Reactor (PWR)** belonging to the **Light Water Reactor (LWR)** category in India, and the 21st nuclear power reactor in the country. It is considered as —the harbinger of the **large-size LWR technology in India**—. The plant faced

several impediments during its construction phase from March 31, 2002 to 2013 which delayed it.

Delayed: The project was delayed mainly due to the 500-day long anti-nuclear protests by the locals, led by the **People's Movement Against Nuclear Energy (PMANE)**. The first reactor of the plant attained criticality on July 13, 2013.

Duration: Around 6 years after the scheduled date, and **12 years** after the construction of the plant started, the plant was commissioned when unit 1 was synchronized with the southern power grid on October 22, 2013.

Cost: The original cost of the two units was Rs. 13,171 crore, but it was later revised to Rs. 17,270 crore. A credit of Rs. 6,416 crore was advanced by **Russia** to both the units- I and II of Kudankulam.

RBI increases CRR to 4% for non-scheduled UCBs

June 9, 2014

From July 12, 2014, **non-scheduled Urban Co-operative Banks (UCBs)** will have to keep more of their deposits with the central bank as the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has raised the **Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR)** for these banks by 100 basis points to 4%. One basis point is equal to one hundredth of a percentage. The step will bring non-scheduled UCBs on par with scheduled primary UCBs. There are around 1,500 non-scheduled UCBs in India. To bring the primary UCBs on equal ground with commercial banks, the central bank slashed the Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR) requirement for them by 50 basis points to 22.50%.

SLR is that portion of a bank's deposits which the lender needs to keep in the form of gold, government bonds and securities. RBI has slashed the SLR requirement of banks to 22.5%.

CRR is that part of a bank's deposits that it needs to maintain with RBI. This money earns no interest. The current CRR level is 4%.

Achook and Agrim commissioned into Indian Coastguard

June 9, 2014

Two ships **ICGS Achook** and **ICGS Agrim**, the fifth and sixth ships in a series of **20 fast patrol vessels** have been inducted into the **Indian Coastguard**. These ships are new generation fast patrol vessels fitted with highly developed communication equipment and will be positioned in **Mumbai**.

These fast patrol vessels are being built at **Cochin shipyard** which is also building **India's** first indigenous aircraft carrier.

Never dispense with your debit/credit card PIN: RBI

June 9, 2014

Recently, the Reserve Bank of **India** (RBI) made it compulsory for debit and credit card holders to key in the Personal Identification Number (PIN) while making transactions at retail outlets across the country. While the guideline is followed to curb frauds, cardholders still have a lot of doubt and fear about possible misuse of their cards. Many cases of fraud have happened as many people reveal the recently-obtained PINs, either in good faith or out of ignorance. Earlier, it was easier for fraudsters to create counterfeit cards with magnetic strips, or embed details on stolen cards and misuse them. But now the number of such frauds is likely to decrease as several banks have begun issuing of cards with embedded chips. Besides, if a cardholder enters the wrong PIN three times, the card gets blocked for a day. Banks have also started to provide wireless swiping machines — Electronic Data Capture (EDC) machines.

RBI's advice to cardholders for a safer transaction:

While there are no norms against merchants seeking the PIN from customers, it is the right of the customers to key in the PIN themselves.

Customers should go where the EDC machine is kept and key in the PIN on their own for a safer transaction.

They should cover the keypad while keying in the PIN, both inside the ATM and while using EDC machines.

Customers should register their mobile numbers with their banks to get an intimation of the transaction as soon as the card is swiped.

Customers should keep changing their PIN every 3 months to prevent cyber fraud.

RBI is also collaborating with various banks to hold electronic **banking** awareness and training (**e-Baat**) programmes.

Tennis French Open: Rafael Nadal clinches men's title

June 9, 2014

Spaniard **Rafael Nadal** maintained his dominance in the French Open as he defeated Serbian Novak Djokovic in the final match. **French Open 2014 is Nadal's 14th career Grand Slam title**. World no.1 Nadal also became the first man to win five Roland Garros crowns in a row as he took his record at the tournament to 66 wins against just one defeat. **With 14 Grand Slams, Nadal has equaled the mark of Pete Sampras**. Now, he is just three behind the all-time record of Roger Federer.

Tennis French Open: Maria Sharapova wins women's title

June 9, 2014

Maria Sharapova won French Open women's title after defeating Simona Halep in the final. It was Sharapova's second French Open title victory. She has now won five Grand Slam titles, taking her to joint-11th on the Open era list alongside Martina Hingis.

The Russian rallied from a set down three straight times to reach this year's French Open final and then prevailed in thrilling three-hour finale against rising star Simona Halep, 6-4 6-7 6-4. Halep, 22, might have been playing in her first Grand Slam final but she pushed the 2012 champion to the limit as for the first time since 2001, the French Open women's final would require a final set.

ICICI Bank leaves behind HDFC Bank as biggest private bank employer

June 9, 2014

ICICI Bank has overtaken its competitor HDFC in terms of employee number with addition of over 10,000 jobs in the last fiscal. With this, ICICI has emerged as the biggest employer in the private **banking** space with more than 72,000 employees. Except HDFC, the employee strength of other five lenders – ICICI Bank, **Axis Bank**, **Kotak Mahindra Bank**, **IndusInd Bank** and **Yes Bank** has increased by over 20,000 in 2013-14. ICICI Bank has also recorded higher total income and profits than **HDFC Bank** in the latest fiscal year. The number of employees in HDFC Bank was 68,165 at the end of last fiscal, while the same of ICICI Bank expanded by 10,161 to 72,226.

With the increase in staff strength, the staff expenses have also surged. But, at the same time, the **Productivity Ratios – measured in terms of profit per employee and business per employee** have also improved for most of these banks. Even for HDFC Bank, regardless of the reduction in its employee strength, profit per employee enhanced from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 12 lakh in 2013-14, while business per employee was up at Rs 8.9 crore (compared to Rs 7.5 crore in 2012-13). For ICICI Bank, profit per employee has remained nearly unchanged at Rs 14 lakh, while business per employee

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increased slightly to Rs 7.47 crore.

Chandrababu Naidu takes oath as Andhra Pradesh CM

June 9, 2014

Head of **Telugu Desam Party (TDP)**, **Nara Chandrababu Naidu (64)** has been sworn-in as the first Chief Minister of the residuary state of **Andhra Pradesh**. Mr. Naidu was administered the oath of office by Governor E S L Narasimhan.

Mr. Naidu has served as the CM of (united) Andhra Pradesh for 8 years (from 1995 to May 2004) – the longest tenure for any CM of Andhra. He has been elected as an MLA seven times and also holds the record as the longest-serving Leader of Opposition in Andhra Pradesh between 2004 and 2014.

Post bifurcation, AP's new geographical expanse is about 1.60 lakh sq km while its population is around 5 crore. Although Andhra Pradesh has been divided into **Telangana** and residuary **Andhra**, **Hyderabad** will remain the common capital for both states for next 10 years.

RBI's second Bi-Monthly Monetary Policy Statement, 2014-15

June 8, 2014

Monetary and Liquidity Measures

On the basis of an assessment of the current and evolving macroeconomic situation, RBI has been decided the following key rates:

RR (Reverse Repo Rate)

RRR (Reverse Repo Rate)

LAF (Liquidity Adjustment Facility)

CRR (Cash Reserve Ratio)

SLR (Statutory Liquidity Ratio)

NDTL (Net Demand and Time Liabilities)

ECR (Export Credit Refiance)

Delhi LG sets up Expenditure Finance Committee

June 7, 2014

Delhi's Lieutenant Governor, Najeeb Jung, has set up **Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC)** of the Delhi government under the chairmanship of **S K Srivastava** who is also the Chief Secretary of Delhi government. The panel will concur expenditure on **Schemes/Projects/Capital works** relating to construction of roads, flyovers, footover bridges, subways, school buildings, hospital buildings etc. up to value of Rs 100 crore.

As per the norms for concurring expenditure on capital works:

The Head of Department of the concerned department is competent to concur expenditure sanctions for capital works up to Rs 5 crore

For more than Rs 5 crore, Finance Department is competent to concur expenditure sanctions worth Rs 10 crore for capital works.

For expenditure more than 10 crore and up to Rs 100 crore would need concurrence of Expenditure Finance Committee as this panel has the authority to concur expenditure sanctions up to Rs 100 crore for the projects of capital works.

The projects with expenditure of more than Rs 100 crore require concurrence of cabinet and in the absence of a cabinet such projects need concurrence of Lt. Governor.

RBI hikes CRR for non-scheduled urban co-operative banks

June 6, 2014

The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** raised the **Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR)** for **non-scheduled Urban Co-operative Banks (UCBs)** by 100 basis points from 3% to 4%. The step will bring nonscheduled UCBs on par with scheduled primary urban co-operative banks. There are around 1,500 unscheduled UCBs in India.

CRR is a part of a bank's deposits that it needs to keep with RBI. This money generates no interest. The current CRR level is 4%.

In an another step, the **apex bank** has slashed the Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR) requirement for the primary UCBs by 50 basis points to 22.50% in order to bring them on equal footing with commercial banks. SLR is that portion of a bank's deposits that it needs to maintain in gold, government bonds and securities.

Sumitra Mahajan: Speaker of 16th Lok Sabha

June 6, 2014

Sumitra Mahajan (71) was elected **Speaker of the 16th Lok Sabha** unopposed. She has gained the honor of becoming the **second woman presiding officer of the lower house** after her predecessor Meira Kumar.

Mahajan, the longest-serving woman MP, was elected after a motion moved by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and seconded

by BJP leader L K Advani was adopted by voice vote called by **pro tem Speaker Kamal Nath**.

Bashar al-Assad retains Presidency of Syria

June 6, 2014

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has been elected for a **3rd term in office**. He won the recently held presidential polls by securing around **88% votes**. President Assad's rivals- Hassan al-Nouri and Maher Hajar, got 4.3% and 3.2% of the vote respectively.

Earlier, the Supreme Constitutional Court had announced that some 11.63 million Syrians voted out of a total of 15.85 million eligible voters. Voting was held in government-controlled areas, but not in parts of the north and east under seize by rebels. The Syrian government is battling with a long running civil war waged by rebels. The victory is likely to boost Assad's supporters. Over the past year, the government has made major military gains and rebel groups have fought among themselves. Thousands of people have died in three years of civil war in [Syria](#), with millions more dislocated.

Vice Admiral Anil Chopra takes charge as the Western Naval Commander

June 6, 2014

Vice admiral Anil Chopra, took charge as the flag officer commanding-in-chief of the Western Naval Command (WNC). The ceremonial parade was held at INS Shikra, [Mumbai](#). He succeeded Vice admiral Shekhar Sinha who took voluntary retirement on April 21, 2014.

Previous to his appointment, Vice admiral Chopra was the director general Indian Coast Guard. Under his controls, the Coast Guard observed an exponential surge in both its force levels, and operational dispositions. Chopra who got commissioned into the Indian Navy on July 1, 1975, had also been the fleet commander of the Navy's Sword Arm – the Western Fleet in 2008.

Quebec becomes first province to legalize Right-to-Die

June 5, 2014

Quebec province in [Canada](#) has become the first province to legalize **doctor-assisted death** as part of comprehensive **end-of-life legislation**.

The National Assembly passed Bill 52, an Act respecting end-of-life care. The Bill was passed with 80% votes in favor. Those who voted against were all Liberals.

The law stipulates the conditions in which a terminally ill adult patient who is of sound mind may request continuous palliative sedation that would lead to death. To access this right, patients would need to be terminally ill and should be in —an advanced

state of irreversible decline in capacities. They would also have to be in constant and unbearable physical and psychological pain that doctors would view as impossible to relieve through medication.

The procedure for making the request would be overseen by the attending physician and approved through consultation with the hospital's medical team. A patient could at any time withdraw a signed request for medical aid in dying.

The contentious issue is being widely debated across the country. The law will take effect at the end of 2015.

India's Lieutenant General (retired) Abhijit Guha appointed member of UN panel on peacekeeping

June 5, 2014

Lieutenant General (retired) Abhijit Guha of Indian Army has been appointed as a member on a five-member UN expert panel on peacekeeping that will advise the [international](#) body on how to use new technologies and innovations in that field.

Guha has recently completed a term as director of the office for peacekeeping strategic partnerships in the department of peacekeeping operations and also served as the former deputy military adviser in the department from 2010 until 2012.

The panel would visit field missions and consult extensively with UN member nations, partner organizations with similar field operations, non-governmental and governmental research bodies and think tanks as well as industry leaders in areas of interest to United Nations peacekeeping.

The panel would suggest how UN peacekeeping can benefit from available and upcoming technological innovations and how it can be leveraged to facilitate peacekeepers to react more effectively to a rising number of complex, multidimensional tasks in challenging field environments.

Private schools come under the purview of RTI Act: Chief Information Commission

June 5, 2014

As per an order by the [Central Information Commission](#) (CIC), private schools, whether public authority or not, must provide information on **service records and salaries**. The order came on an RTI plea filed by an ex-employee of Jindal Public School with Directorate of [Education](#) demanding a certified copy of service book and other details from her past employer. Though the Directorate of Education provided the information available with them but the school declined to give the

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information, saying RTI Act did not apply on it.

Private unaided schools had contested an earlier CIC order in court which said that schools must provide information related to vacant seats, EWS quota but would be exempt from furnish information on disbursement of salaries, public budget estimate of receipts etc.

June 5 observed as World Environment Day 2014

June 5, 2014

June 5 was celebrated as the **World Environment Day** across the globe with an emphasis for global awareness on taking action to protect the environment.

Backed by the **United Nations Environment Programme** (UNEP), the 2014 World Environment Day (WED) coincides with the **International Year of Small Island Developing States**, which was declared by the United Nations General Assembly to spread awareness of and to draw attention to the critical problems faced by the world's islands.

World Environment Day which is also called Eco Day was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1972.

WED 2014 theme and Official Slogan

Theme: Small Islands and Climate Change.

Official slogan: —Raise Your Voice Not The Sea Level.||

Afghan-US ties strained over the issue of Bergdahl-U.S. PoW Taliban swap

June 5, 2014

Afghanistan's government has taken exception to a U.S. deal to release five high-risk Taliban militants in exchange for a U.S. soldier. Afghanistan argues that the release of the men from a Guantanamo Bay jail to **Qatar** transgresses **international law**. The five prisoners were taken to Qatar as part of the deal to free army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, the only known U.S. prisoner of war (PoW) in Afghanistan, held captive for five years. Bergdahl was flown out of Afghanistan to a military hospital in **Germany**.

Who is Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl?

Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl is a US soldier who was deployed in Afghanistan war. He was captured by Taliban terrorists in 2009 and had been held captive for five years. As part of US efforts to free him, the country negotiated a deal cut by Qatari intermediaries to swap him in exchange of 5 Taliban militant who had been in detention at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, where they had been held since it opened in 2002, and flown to Qatar where they must stay for a year.

Why Afghanistan protesting the US move?

Afghanistan is angry over the swap and suspects that the high ranked terrorists would rejoin the Taliban. It also says that no government can transfer citizens of a country to a third country as prisoners. At least two of them are suspected of committing war crimes, including the murder of thousands of Afghan Shias, according to leaked U.S. military cables. Many view the US move as a further sign of a U.S. intention to disengage from Afghanistan as quickly as possible. The US has plans to completely withdraw all of its troops by the **end of 2016**.

Researchers develop roof tiles to combat air pollution

June 5, 2014

Researchers at University of California have developed a new titanium dioxide roof tile coating that when applied to an average-sized residential roof breaks down smog-causing nitrogen oxides.

As per their calculations, 21 tonnes of nitrogen oxides would be removed daily if tiles on one million roofs were coated with their titanium dioxide mixture. It was found that the titanium dioxide coated tiles removed between 88% and 97% of the nitrogen oxides.

As per researchers, it would cost just \$5 for coating an average-sized residential roof with titanium dioxide.

Nitrogen oxides are produced when certain fuels are burned at high temperatures. Nitrogen oxide reacts with volatile organic compounds in the presence of sunlight to form smog.

EU revokes drug export ban from Ranbaxy's Toansa plant

June 5, 2014

The European **health** regulator- **the European Medicines Agency (EMA)**- revoked the suspension imposed on export of drugs manufactured at the Ranbaxy's Toansa plant to the European Union (EU), saying medicines manufactured at the site posed no threat to public health despite having a number of manufacturing deficiencies.

Former Airtel CEO Sanjay Kapoor becomes Micromax chairman

June 5, 2014

Indian handset maker Micromax has announced the appointment of Sanjay Kapoor, former CEO of Bharti Airtel as the company's chairman.

Micromax will be looking to exploit Sanjay's experience in establishing Airtel and his industry expertise.

India Elected to the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

June 5, 2014

In the elections to the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, held on June 4, 2014 at UNESCO Headquarters, Paris by the General Assembly of member states, India has been elected for the next 4 years (2014-2018). Out of the 142 member states present and voting, India won a decisive 135 votes. India got the maximum number of votes amidst the ten nations that fought the election and won.

The Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage has 24 members who are chosen for a term of 4 years. The primary tasks of the Committee are to protect the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), safeguarding esteem for the intangible cultural heritage of nations, groups and individuals, as also to increase responsiveness at the local, national and international levels of the significance of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. India has been elected to the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage for the second time (previous term being from 2006-2010).

„A Girl is a Half-formed Thing“ by Eimear McBride wins Baileys women’s prize for fiction

June 4, 2014

The Irish author Eimear McBride has been awarded the Baileys book prize for her first novel titled —A Girl is a Halfformed

Thing|. Her competitor was Donna Tartt’s colossal third novel, The Goldfinch.

McBride’s dark family story, penned in a forceful narrative of an anonymous narrator, won over the judges of the women’s prize for fiction, previously known as the Orange prize.

J&K Govt. increased retirement age of state employees to 60

June 4, 2014

The Jammu & Kashmir government has increased the retirement age of government employees from 58 to 60. The state Cabinet also enhanced the minimum age for eligibility for entry into government service by 3 years to 40. It also decided to employ into regular government service all temporary casual labourers and need-based workers who had completed 7 years of service. The decision is likely to benefit more than 60,000 employees

IAF Mountaineering Team explored Mt Garud Parvat an unclimbed peak in Arunachal Pradesh

June 2, 2014

Indian Air Force launched a mountaineering excursion to Gorichen region of Arunachal Pradesh with a goal to discover and climb unclimbed peaks. The team led by Wg Cdr D Panda, included 15 air warriors. After widespread search and scouting, the team summited an unclimbed peak of height 5887M. It was an exciting and exhausting task for the team to discover unexplored terrain and find a way up the mountain peak. This was the very first time that IAF has attempted an exploration into this area of Eastern Himalayas.

The peak lies on the west of Mt Gorichen and has been named as ‘Mt GarudParvat’ by the IAF team who ascended it for the first time in history.

CSO releases provisional estimates of national income for the financial year 2013-14

June 2, 2014

The Central Statistics Office (CSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, released the provisional estimates of national income for the financial year 2013-14 and the quarterly estimates of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the fourth quarter (January-March) of 2013-14, both at constant (2004-05) and current prices. It also released corresponding annual and quarterly estimates of Expenditure components of the GDP in current and constant (2004-05) prices, namely the private final consumption expenditure, government final consumption expenditure, gross fixed capital formation, change in stocks, valuables, and net exports.

GDP growth rates for 2013-14 and Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4 of 2013-14 at constant (2004-05) and current prices are given below:

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Provisional Estimates of the National Income 2013-14:

On February 7, 2014, the advance estimates of national income for the year 2013-14 were released. They have now been revised including now the latest estimates of agricultural production, index of industrial production and performance of key sectors like, [railways](#), transport other than railways, communication, [banking, insurance](#) and government expenditure.

Estimates at constant (2004-05) prices:

GDP at factor cost at constant (2004-05) prices in the year 2013-14 is now estimated at Rs 57.42 lakh crore (as against Rs 57.49 lakh crore estimated earlier on February 7, 2014), showing a growth rate of 4.7% (as against 4.9%t estimated earlier) over the First Revised Estimates of GDP for the year 2012-13 of Rs 54.82 lakh crore, released on January 31, 2014.

Gross National Income (GNI) at factor cost at 2004-05 prices is now estimated at Rs 56.74 lakh crore (as compared to Rs 56.81 lakh crore estimated on February 7, 2014), during 2013-14, as against the previous year's First Revised Estimate of Rs 54.17 lakh crore.

In terms of growth rates, the GNI is estimated to have risen by 4.7% during 2013-14, in comparison to the growth rate of 4.1 % in 2012-13.

Per capita net national income in real terms (at 2004-05 prices) during 2013-14 is estimated to have attained a level of Rs 39,904 (as against Rs 39,961 estimated on February 7, 2014), as compared to the First Revised Estimates for the year 2012-13 of Rs 38,856. The growth rate in per capita income is estimated at 2.7% during 2013-14 as against 2.1% during 2012-13.

Estimates at current prices:

GDP at factor cost at current prices in the year 2013-14 is estimated at Rs 104.73 lakh crore, showing a growth rate of 11.5% over the First Revised Estimates of GDP for the year 2012-13 of Rs 93.89 lakh crore, released on January 31, 2014.

Gross National Income (GNI) at factor cost at current prices is now estimated at Rs 103.45 lakh crore during 2013-14, as compared to Rs 92.72 lakh crore during 2012-13, showing a rise of 11.6%.

Per capita income at current prices during 2013-14 is estimated to have attained a level of Rs 74,380 as compared to the First Revised Estimates for the year 2012-13 of Rs 67,839 showing a rise of 9.6%.

Telangana now officially 29th state of India

June 2, 2014

[Telangana](#) formally became the country's 29th state of [India](#) and Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) chief K Chandrasekhar Rao (KCR) took oath as Telangana's first Chief Minister. Telangana consists of the 10 north-western districts of [Andhra Pradesh](#).

Backgrounder:

In the [history](#) of India, it happened for the first time that outside Hindi and Bengali speaking areas, 2 states speaking the same language have been created (Telangana and AP are both Telugu speaking states. In addition to more than one Hindi speaking state, there are two Bengali speaking states: [West Bengal](#) and [Tripura](#).

This essentially challenges the roots (*the linguistic basis of states in which language being believed as the measure for a similar culture*) on which during the first decade after Independence, the internal map of the Indian Union was re-drawn. This essentially now leaves a space for an additional exercise to redraw the internal map of India.

Albeit there was a request for a combined Telugu state even previous to our Independence, the Nehru-led regime formed AP (Andhra Pradesh) owing to vested political interests of the Congress leaders. Now, History has completed a circle.

The Congress faced a hard electoral contest from the Communists in the Andhra state that was in 1953 sliced out of the Telugu speaking regions of then Madras state. Thus, it was settled to combine Andhra with the Telugu speaking parts of the territory of the ousted Nizam of [Hyderabad](#), so as to form a bigger state where the communists could be whitewashed.

The next unspoken motive of the Nehru regime was that, after being humiliated by the experience of the integration of Kashmir it, didn't desire to let away the regions of the Nizam as they were. Consequently, whilst the Telugu language parts went to Andhra Pradesh, the Marathi and Kannada language parts went to Bombay and Mysore provinces.

This workout proved good for the Congress as it shaped a monopoly for the Congress in the 1977 post-Emergency elections. Albeit at the national level the Congress was badly beaten yet it won 41 of the 42 seats in Andhra Pradesh. The subsequent year, Indira Gandhi sailed back to the [Lok Sabha](#) from Medak.

But the Congress CMs (Chief Ministers) did nothing to encourage rural empowerment. The only CM (Mr. Narasimha Rao) who tried something, confronted resistance from vested interests and was sacked. Thus, rising rural anger led to Maoism in these areas.

In 1983, the Congress was substituted by the NT Rama Rao's TDP (Telugu Desam Party). The son-in-law of Rama Rao, Chandrababu Naidu, became the first CM all ever in India to hold on to economic developments. Chandrababu Naidu soon turned capital city Hyderabad into an IT hub. But the rural areas were ignored and suicide by farmers rose. Shortly an

isolated drive started in the state with the people of Telangana supposing that they would be well off as an independent state. Thus in 2004, Chandrababu Naidu was substituted by Congressman Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy. Reddy began a rule of —freeships||

(viz. free electricity, fee refunds to students, free houses, free medical care et al). Albeit these efforts taxed the exchequer but transformed into significant electoral gains for the Congress, permitting it to make a government at the centre. Subsequent to the sudden death of YSR, the Congress went into a panic state. In 2014, in order to benefit on apparent political gain, Congress passed a bill to split the state. Unluckily for the Congress, the attempt proved futile to gain it political bonus and it was deeply rejected in both areas.

Anand Mahindra first Indian to be honoured with Harvard Medal

June 2, 2014

Mahindra Group Chairman Anand G Mahindra became the first Indian to be honoured with the prestigious Harvard Medal for his ‘dedication, generosity and service’ to the university. In 1977, Mahindra is an alumnus of the Harvard University. He graduated with Honours (Magna Cum Laude) from Harvard College, Cambridge, Massachusetts. He completed his MBA from the Harvard Business School, Boston, Massachusetts in 1981.

Mahindra is the Co-founder of the Harvard Business School (HBS) Association of India and he is also an instituting member of the university's South Asia Institute (SAI), the HBS India Research Center, and the SAI field office in Mumbai, India. In 2010, Mahindra made a gift of \$10 million to the Humanities Centre which was then renamed the Mahindra Humanities Center in honor of his mother, Indira Mahindra.

Chester Nez, last of original Navajo code talkers of WW II, passed away

June 4, 2014

Chester Nez (93), the last one of the original Navajo code talkers credited for developing an unbreakable code during World War II, passed away. The Marine Corps mourns his death as the end of an era- for both the nation and its armed forces.

Nez was the last remaining of the original 29 Navajos recruited by the Marine Corps to develop the legendary code that was used for vital communications during battle. They created a code, including developing a dictionary.

Navajo was chosen as a code language because its syntax and tonal qualities were almost impossible for a non-Navajo to learn, and it had no written form.

The Navajo code flummoxed the Japanese, who had successfully decrypted codes used by the U.S. Army. After the war, the Japanese chief of intelligence, Lt. General Seizo Arisue, admitted they were never able to decipher the Navajo code used by the Marines.

A film was also made in 2002 named —Windtalkers,|| starring Adam Beach and Nicolas Cage, followed the fictional account of

two Marines assigned to protect two code talkers during the battle of Saipan.

India's HSBC services PMI expands for first time in nearly a year

June 4, 2014

Motivated by a spurt in new business, India's giant services industry stretched for the first time in a year in May 2014. HSBC Services Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), accumulated by Markit, climbed to 50.2 in May 2014 from 48.5 in April 2014, the first growth above the 50 mark that splits growth from contraction since June 2103. The rise was mainly reinforced by a bounce in fresh orders and development in client demand. Also a triumph for Narendra Modi has driven anticipations for key economic developments following years of policy paralysis.

Purchasing Managers' Indexes (PMI) are economic pointers ensuing from monthly surveys of private sector companies. The PMI index (which is based on 5 major indicators: new orders, inventory levels, production, supplier deliveries and the employment environment), is a gauge of the economic wellbeing of the manufacturing sector. A PMI reading above 50 indicates that the sector is expanding, a reading under 50 shows that the output in the sector is contracting, whereas a reading at 50 indicates no change.

Pakistan Budget 2014 allocates Rs.700 billion for Defense

June 3, 2014

Pakistan's Defense budget has been raised to Rs700. 2 billion for the fiscal year 2014-15 starting on July 1, compared with Rs 627.2 billion provided in the last fiscal, which shows a jack up of Rs 73 billion.

However, the military had demanded an increase of Rs 173 billion in defense spending.

As per military officials, the increase is justified as Pakistan military's expenses are lowest in the region given the volatile security atmosphere.

As per Pakistan's defense ministry, out of the whole defense budget, Pakistan Army gets 48%, 20% to Pakistan Air force and Navy will get 10%.

West Bengal, Maharashtra sign agreement to help victims of trafficking

June 3, 2014

The governments of [West Bengal](#) and [Maharashtra](#) have inked an MoU to facilitate identification and repatriation of women and children who are victims of human trafficking.

The governments signed pact to follow a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to establish identities of those rescued. It has been seen in most cases that when the Maharashtra Police rescue some women or children and find that they are Bengalispeaking,

they send them to the State without establishing their identity or following any procedures. Since the identities of those rescued are not ascertained sometimes, rescue homes in the State are flooded with women and girls from [Bangladesh](#). It has also been observed that many a time police from other States brings the victims to the shelters without informing the State government. The MoU will ensure that a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is followed to establish identities of those rescued. Maharashtra will repatriate the women directly to Bangladesh once the place they are from is confirmed.

Lalima: Female buffalo calf cloned by National Dairy Research Institute

June 3, 2014

Scientists of [National Dairy Research Institute \(NDRI\)](#) in Karnal, [Haryana](#) have cloned a female buffalo calf named as **Lalima**. The cloning is the work of advanced —hand-guided cloning technique||.

Lalima is NDRI's seventh cloned calf. The institute had produced the world's first cloned buffalo calf in 2009. Three of the 7 cloned calves had died. Lalima was born by normal delivery and its weight at the time of birth was around 36kg. The calf is in good [health](#) and weighs 42kg at present.

To produce Lalima, the donor cell was taken from the ear of a high milk yielding murrah buffalo which produced 2,713kg milk in standard lactation period of 305 days. As per experts, the new achievement of producing cloned calf from adult lactating animals by —hand-guided cloning|| technique would enable faster multiplication of elite germplasm and help tackle the challenges of increasing demand of milk in the country.

[India](#) has world's largest population of buffaloes, which produce about 55% of the total milk production in the country but still there is an urgent need to increase the population of elite buffaloes as their number is very small.

The high yielding breed of **murrah buffalo** produces up to 32kg of milk daily, almost double than that of an ordinary buffalo.

Obama administration demonstrates historic rules to cut coal pollution by 30%

June 3, 2014

The Obama administration showed notable [environment](#) directives for clipping carbon pollution from power plants by 30%, stimulating vision for a global agreement to end climate change. The fresh rules, officially declared by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), characterise the first time Barack Obama, or any other President, has been motivated to control carbon pollution from power plants. Power plants are the biggest single source of Carbon dioxide (CO₂) discharges that trigger climate change.

The directives, which would slash carbon pollution from power plants by 30% from 2005 levels by 2030, would combat climate change whilst furnishing US with steadfast and cheap power. Former US Vice-President Al Gore on EPA Carbon Emissions Guidelines held that the novel rules were —*the most important step taken to combat the climate crisis in our country's history*||.

The guidelines would hopefully prove to be a critical step to dealing with climate change. Power plants are the largest single source of carbon pollution, accounting for nearly 40% of the emissions that trigger climate change.

At present, in US there are no national restrictions to the amount of carbon pollution that Power plants can pump into the atmosphere. Albeit, CO₂ from power plants had been falling since 2005, owing to the economic recession and the shift from coal to inexpensive natural gas.

Thus, these directives would put US on passage for long term and long-term cuts to carbon pollution. These fresh standards would also send a strong communication across the world that it's occasion to face the universal risk of climate change.

The rules could affect 1,600 power plants across US. About 600 of these operate on coal, including many that are nearly 50 years old and will have the most difficulty meeting the new standards.

States and Power companies will have a variety of alternatives to accomplish the new standards: substituting coal by cleaner-burning natural gas; establishing cap-and-trade markets; increasing renewables such as wind and solar power; or boosting customers to consume less energy by switching to more effective heating and cooling appliances. States will have to come up with a plan till 2016 to mee the goals. Some states will have less go-getting targets, while others will have more.

But the lobby groups for the coal industry, which will be hit toughest by the fresh directions, held that the directives would upset the [economy](#) and lead to power outages. The Republicans also held the fresh benchmarks would "kill coal"

and eventually lead to power outages.

Union Rural Development Minister Gopinath Munde dies

June 3, 2014

Rural Development Minister and senior BJP leader from Maharashtra Gopinath Munde (64) died in a road accident in Delhi, while he was on his way to Delhi airport when his car was rammed by a speeding Indica, leading to his death. Although he didn't suffer any serious injuries, he seemingly underwent a shock in the shock of accident. Munde was chosen as the Rural Development Minister in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Cabinet.

RGCA "s Lab is India"s First NABL Accredited Aquaculture Pathology Lab

June 3, 2014

The Central Aquaculture Pathology Laboratory of **Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Aquaculture (RGCA)**, the Research & Development arm of MPEDA (Marine Products Export Development Authority), has now become the first aquaculture pathology laboratory in the India to be accredited by **NABL (National Accreditation Board For Testing & Calibration Laboratories)**.

In September 2011, RGCA MPEDA started a state-of-the-art Central Aquaculture Pathology Laboratory at its HQs in Sirkali, TamilNadu. The laboratory has been attending to the aquaculture industry of India by **furnishing well-timed and steadfast diagnosis of several diseases faced during the culture of finfish, shrimps and freshwater prawns**. The laboratory is outfitted with all the state-of-the-art disease diagnostic tools and has 3 component units for Molecular Pathology, Histopathology and Microbiology which collectively help in diagnosis of several diseases faced by the aquaculture industry. The laboratory manages periodical and requirement centred aquaculture **disease surveillance in India for the help of the seafood export industry**. All the identified diseases affecting the shrimp/prawn/ fish are identified at this laboratory which comprises the of late feared shrimp diseases viz. **Early Mortality Syndrome (EMS)/ Acute Hepatopancreatic Necrosis Disease (AHPND)**.

Uttar Pradesh Govt. to launch helpline for women in every district

June 2, 2014

The UP government which is facing criticism from all quarters over resent assaults and killing of two teenage girls in Badaun district, has directed authorities to launch a helpline in every district of the state to deal with women harassment complaints.

The helpline would be monitored by the SSPs and SPs. The inquiries into the complaints of harrassment made by women will be ensured through women cell, which will also be supervised by the SSPs and SPs of the districts concerned.

Chief Minister Akhilesh Kumar has directed the district magistrates and police chiefs to rush to the spot as soon as they receive information of any rape and ensure effective action.

India ranked 2nd in global textile export: UN Comtrade

June 2, 2014

As per the data released by UN Comtrade, India has emerged as the **second largest textile exporter** in the world beating rivals like Italy, Germany and Bangladesh in calender year 2013. **China has retained the top position**.

India commands 5.2% share of global textile export with its current exports worth \$ 40.2 billion, while the total global textiles exports estimated at \$ 772 billion.

The dominant factor behind the surge in textiles exports from India is **the growth in the apparel and clothing sector** as these owe almost 43% of the exports share.

The exports have got the backing of government's policy of diversification of market and product base. India has also enhanced its position by two ranks in the Apparel exports from 8th position in 2012 to 6th position in 2013. The country's Apparel exports stood at \$ 15.7 billion in 2013 as against \$ 12.9 billion in 2012. India's Apparel exports account for 3.7% share in the global readymade garment exports.

„Velocirobot“ : Robotic dinosaur which can faster than Usain Bolt

June 2, 2014

Researchers at **Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology** in Daejeon have built a **robotic dinosaur which has a top speed is 28.5mph (46km/h)**. The robot which has been named **Velocirobot** has two nimble legs and a tail for balance and could theoretically out-run Olympian **Usain Bolt**.

The inspiration to create a speedy dinosaur robot is based on the now extinct velociraptor, which lived between 75 and 71 million years ago.

The robot has two strong legs that can propel it to speeds of 28.5mph (46km/h) which is just fast enough to beat Usain Bolt in a race. The world's fastest runner, Usain Bolt, can run at 27.4mph.

Sushil Kumar, Yogeshwar Dutt clinch medals in Italy

June 2, 2014

Well-known Indian [wrestling](#) players **Yogeshwar Dutt** and **Sushil Kumar** put up an impressive performance on debut in new weight categories by clinching a gold and silver medal respectively in the **International Competition in Sassari city, Italy**. London Olympics bronze-medalist **Yogeshwar bagged the gold medal** in the 65kg category while two-time Olympic medalist **Sushil won the silver in the 74kg category**.

[MoEFCC launches online system for green nod](#)

June 1, 2014

The **Ministry of Environment and Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** launched a —system for online submission of applications for environment clearance||.

It is expected that the new user-friendly system would bring transparency in the controversial issue of environmental clearance.

The system will enable the applicants as well as the clearance authorities to keep a tab on the entire process while complying with the timeline of various clearances\rejections. The ministry has plans to start a similar online system for ‘forest clearance’ in July 2014.

Under the new online system:

Stage-wise approval and compliance mechanism will be monitored to ensure security of information at the same time maintaining transparency in dealings between the ministry and the applicant.

There will be a maximum time limit for the entire approval process, with stage-wise timelines.

Efforts will be made to reduce the timelines for each stage.

Applicants will be able to monitor stage-wise process of their application.

After basic verification, a password will be generated in 4-5 days and the applicant can track the progress online.

The Centre would collaborate with states to make sure that the process at their end is completed on time so that the MoEF can grant an environmental nod within a maximum of 60 days.

Note: The nomenclature of the environment ministry has been changed from ‘Environment and Forest’ to ‘**Environment, Forest and Climate Change**’.

[Salvador Sanchez is the new president of El Salvador](#)

June 1, 2014

Salvador Sanchez Ceren (69) of the FMLN party has become the first former guerrilla to sworn-in as the President of the Central American country following his March win. Mr. Sanchez defeated the conservative candidate Norman Quijano by just 0.2% in a run-off vote on March 9, 2014.

El Salvador is still violent and deeply divided notwithstanding the end of a civil war in which some 75,000 people died.

[IAF mountaineering squad explores unclimbed peaks in Arunachal Pradesh](#)

June 1, 2014

Indian Air Force launched a mountaineering expedition to **Gorichen area of Arunachal Pradesh** with an aim to explore and climb unclimbed peaks. The 15-member team of IAF personnel was led by Wg Cdr D Panda. The expedition included both experienced and newly trained mountaineers. The team climbed an unclimbed peak of height 5887M in two groups. This peak is on the west of Mt Gorichen and has been named as Mt Garud Parvat by the air warriors who climbed it for the first time in **history**. This expedition was unparalleled in a way as the valleys and mountain peaks had never been explored.

[Huge coronal mass ejection on Sun observed through IRIS](#)

June 1, 2014

NASA’s Interface Region Imaging Spectrograph captured rare footage of a huge Coronal Mass Ejections (CMEs) erupting from the Sun. The Interface Region Imaging Spectrograph (IRIS) was launched in June 2013 to observe how solar material moves, gathers energy, and heats up as it travels through a little-explored region in the Sun’s lower atmosphere.

Studying how material and energy move through this region is a vital part of understanding the dynamics of the Sun. The latest footage can help explain what causes the ejection of solar material – from the steady stream of the solar wind to larger, explosive eruptions such as CMEs.

CMEs, also known as solar storms or space storms, are colossal clouds of solar plasma with magnetic field lines that eject from the Sun during solar flares and filament eruptions. CMEs disrupt the flow of the solar wind and produce disturbances that hit the Earth with sometimes catastrophic consequences

[SBI’s Arundhati Bhattacharya amongst Forbes’ most powerful women](#)

June 1, 2014

SBI Chairperson Arundhati Bhattacharya is amongst the 5 Indian women who featured in this year’s Forbes’ 100 most powerful women in the world list. The list was topped by German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

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Indian women in the list:-

Indra Nooyi (Pepsi Co – 13th) (Indian Born but US Citizen now)
 Arundhati Bhattacharya (SBI – 36th)
 Chanda Kocchar ([ICICI Bank](#)– 43rd)
 Padamshree Warrior (Cisco – 71st)
 Kiran Mazumdar (Biocon – 92nd) (Indian Born but US Citizen now)

Top 10 Most Powerful Women in the World:

1. Angela Merkel ([Germany](#) – Politics)
2. Janet Yellen (US – Finance)
3. Melinda Gates (US – Philanthropy/NGO)
4. Dilma Rousseff ([Brazil](#) – Politics)
5. Christine Lagarde ([France](#) – Philanthropy/NGO)
6. Hillary Clinton (US - Politics)
7. Mary Barra (US – [Business](#))
8. Michelle Obama (US – Politics)
9. Sheryl Sandberg (US – Technology)
10. Virginia Rometty (US – Technology)

UN posthumously honors 8 Indian soldiers among 106 UN peacekeepers

June 1, 2014

The UN honored 106 peacekeepers, including 8 Indian soldiers, who lost their lives in various UN peacekeeping operations on the occasion of the [International Day of UN Peacekeepers](#) on May 30.

Indian Army United Nations peacekeeping missions

[India](#) has been the leading troop UN Peace Keeping Missions since its commencement. Up to now India has participated in 43 UN Peacekeeping missions with an involvement surpassing 1,60,000 troops and a noteworthy number of police personnel having been positioned. In 2014, India is the 3rd largest Troop Contributor [TCC] with 7,860 personnel positioned with 10 UN Peacekeeping Missions, of which 995 are police personnel including the **first Female Formed Police Unit under the United Nations**. Recently, Indian Peacekeepers were applauded by the UN for their works in checking a massacre in the South [Sudan](#).

Past UN Peace Keeping Missions of the Indian Army

Indian Armed forces' contributions to the United Nations Peacekeeping Missions since 1950:-

[Korea](#) (1950–54)
[Indo-China](#) (1954–70)
[Middle East](#) (1956–67)
[Congo](#) (1960–64) (ONUC)
[Cambodia](#) (1992-1993)
[Mozambique](#) (1992–94) (ONUMOZ)
[Somalia](#) (1993–94) (UNITAF & UNOSOM II)
[Rwanda](#) (1994–96) (UNAMIR)
[Angola](#) (1989-1999) (UNAVEM)
[Sierra Leone](#) (1999-2001) (UNAMSIL)
[Ethiopia-Eritrea](#) (2006–08) (UNMEE)

Current UN Peace Keeping Missions of the Indian Army

The Indian Armed Forces are currently undertaking the following UN Missions:-

[Lebanon](#) (UNIFIL) (Since Dec 1998)
[Congo](#) (MONUSCO) (Since January 2005)
[Sudan and South Sudan](#) (UNMIS/UNMISS) (Since April 2005)
[Golan Heights](#) (UNDOF) (Since February 2006)
[Ivory Coast](#) (UNOCI) (Since April 2004)
[Haiti](#) (MINUSTAH) (Since December 1997)
[Liberia](#) (UNMIL) (Since April 2007)

Government eliminates all GoMs and EGoMs for better accountability and empowerment

June 1, 2014

In a key move to authorize the Ministries and Departments, the PM Narendra Modi decided to eliminate all the prevailing 9

Empowered Group of Ministers (EGoMs) and 21 Groups of Ministers (GoMs).

Objective: This would speed up the process of decision-making and bring in more answerability in the system.

The Ministries and Departments will now process the matters unresolved afore the EGoMs and GoMs and take suitable resolutions at the level of Ministries and Departments itself. If at anyplace a Ministry faces any issues, the Cabinet Secretariat and the PMO (Prime Minister's Office) will smoothen the resolution making process.

Earlier, during the UPA regime, former **Defence** Minister A K Antony was leading most of the EGoMs. The panels were fashioned to take decisions on matters like **corruption**, inter-state water disputes, administrative reforms, gas, telecom pricing, etc. These EGoMs had the power to take judgements on the line of the Union Cabinet. The suggestions of the GoMs were placed before the Cabinet for the final verdict.

KKR wins IPL 7 trophy

June 1, 2014

Sharukh Khan's Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) chased down a huge 200-run target to beat Preity Zinta's Kings XI Punjab in the final of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 7. Kolkata Knight Riders beat Kings XI Punjab by 3 wickets.

IPL-7 which was held from April 16 – June 1, 2014 was played at venues in UAE & **India**. Based on security demands for the 2014 **Lok Sabha General Elections** the venues for some matches were shifted outside India. 8 teams participated in IPL7. Kolkata won IPL for the second time (last time in 2012).

Orange Cap (Highest Scorer): Robin Uthappa (KKR)

Purple Cap (Highest Wicket Taker): Mohit Sharma (CSK – Chennai Super Kings)

Player of the Tournament: Glenn Maxwell (Kings XI Punjab)