

Current Affairs 2013

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INDIA & THE WORLD

INDIA AND CHINA

India and China agreed to boost defence ties. The agreement was made during the visit of Chinese Defense Minister Gen Liang Guanglie to India and his meet with his Indian Counterpart AK Antony. Last time the defence minister of China visited India in the year 2004. The two nations have agreed on improving the friendly, strategic and co-operative partnership and exchange of young officers and high level visits. An inter-collegiate exchange that includes non-traditional security fields is also a part of the agreement. During the joint Naval Practice in Shanghai, the two nations agreed on increasing the process of military exchange that includes maritime operations and navy. Last joint exercise that took place between the two nations was at Kunming in the year 2007 and at Belgaum in the year 2008. The third joint exercise scheduled for 2010 was cancelled because China disagreed to provide VISA to Lieutenant General BS Jaiswal of the Northern Command and since then India cancelled all collateral ties related to defence activities with China.

SIXTH MEKONG-GANGA COOPERATION MEETING HELD IN NEW DELHI

Mekong-Ganga sixth Cooperation meeting was held in New Delhi on 3-4 September 2012. Senior officials meeting was held on September 3 whereas the Foreign Ministers meet was held on September 4 2012. The Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC) was established on November 10, 2000 in Vientiane, Lao Peoples Democratic Republic with a purpose of cooperation amongst India and the five Mekong region countries - Cambodia, Lao Peoples Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Vietnam and Thailand. It was

basically established to emphasize on four areas of cooperation, which are tourism, culture, education, and transportation linkage, in order to build strong foundation for future trade and investment cooperation among the region. This is the first time that the Mekong Ganga Cooperation meeting was hosted by India. India had earlier chaired the 5th MGC Ministerial Meeting on the sidelines of the ASEAN-India Meetings. Five Mekong Ganga Cooperation ministerial meetings has held so far, In Vientiane, Lao Peoples Democratic Republic on November 10, 2000; In Hanoi, Vietnam on July 28, 2001; In Phnom Penh, Cambodia June 20, 2003; In Cebu, Philippines on January 12, 2007 and in Manila, Philippines on August 1, 2007.

INDIA, CHINA DISCUSSED BORDER SECURITY AND BILATERAL DEFENCE TIES

For expanding defence cooperation, India and China on September 4 2012, agreed to resume joint military exercises that were postponed since 2010 due the denial of visa to the then Northern Army Commander Lt Gen BS Jaswal by China in 2010, resulting to which New Delhi had suspended all bilateral defence exchanges with Beijing. Chinese Defence Minister General Liang Guanglie and his delegation, including high-ranking members of the defence and military establishment met Indian Defence Minister A. K. Antony on 4 September 2012 to discuss measures to help avoid flares along the border between the nuclear-armed Asian giants. Both the two sides reached on an agreement on a wide range of issues relating to defence and military. This is the first visit after eight years by a Chinese defence minister to India. The last time a Chinese defence minister visited India was in 2004. A growing

competition between the two emerging powers was highlighted as they are pushing up for influence and resources across Asia. Both the two sides went ahead on a wide range of issues relating to defence and military. The result of the meeting happened so that the both sides agreed to strengthen border security cooperation between the troops in order to maintain peace in the border areas. The Chinese delegation has also invited Antony to visit China, which he accepted and he will be visiting China next year.

INDIA AND AUSTRIA

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed on 1 October 2012 between Indian and Austria to strengthen the long-term bilateral cooperation and relationship on rail and road infrastructure. The MoU was signed in between C.P. Joshi- the Minister of Railways and Road Transport of India and Highways and the Doris Burse-the Federal Minister of Transport, Innovation and Technology of Austria during her visit to India. The identified areas of cooperation as declared by C.P. Joshi are tunnelling technology enhancement, training and skill up gradation like locomotive drivers' psychological qualification test, track monitoring as well as maintenance. The memorandum also includes provisions of mechanised track laying, traction and rolling stock and telecom and signalling.

As per the provisions of the MoU, there has been an agreement on establishing and encouraging relationship for communication and cooperation that is effective and continue for a long term. The understanding also includes exchange of information related to infrastructural development for roads, their management, administration, road safety and different areas of mutual interests that includes intelligent Transport Systems related to road transport technologies.

C.P. Joshi also declared that the Indian Railways foresee safety enhancement plans, modernization and massive capacity augmentation in the coming decade. There are Austrian companies involved in road and rail development projects across India and few of them are Starbag has been involved in major projects in Delhi and have in hand a Delhi Metro

Rail Project that worth Euro 83 million. The company also have a contract of Euro with its Indian counterpart Afcons for making of the Rohtang Pass Tunnel. In making of the bridge in between Jammu and Kashmir also an Austrian company is engaged. Ministry of Railways, India and Federal Ministry for Transport Innovation & Technology of Republic of Austria signed a MoU in relation to Technologies Specific Cooperation in Railways related projects in October 2011.

India and Austria tied up for Development of Smart Cities in India

India and Austria on 2 October 2012 tied up to develop smart cities that would include fine planning of the city including the transport system and services of internet. The decision came up after the meeting of Union Minister for Urban Development Kamal Nath with Austrian Federal Minister for Transport, Innovation & Technology Doris Bures. The plans of developing the new cities will be implemented under the second phase of Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM II). As per the plans initially two model smart cities will be developed in every state of the country that will include the mid-sized cities with a minimum population of half a million to one million.

Every State to have two smart-cities

Austrian Institute of Technology will assist the country in planning and development of the smart cities that will include things that it needs to cover, broadband facilities to its maintenance to carbon levels. As per the plans of the Central Government under JNNURM II every state will have two model towns initially.

70 cities with over a million population graph are in plan

Plans are on the paper to convert at least 70 cities with million plus population in India into smart cities. Austria that has been into different types of trade-relations for a long time with India will be offering the potential technical support.

Organizations

Involved in Project Implementation

Austrian Institute of Technology and the

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National Institute of Urban Affairs that is a research, information and training wing under the Urban Development Ministry, would be the partners in the project.

INDIA AND BELGIUM

India on 1 August 2012 signed an agreement with Belgium for the modernisation of the Indian Railways and make some of the major railway stations in the country of global standard. Under the agreement the two countries would share design and current practices in railway infrastructure and deputation of experts in areas of mutual interest. The countries will also explore the new avenues of co-operation in the Railway sector.

Belgian state run companies such as Euro Station and Euro Immostar have vast experience in developing stations. The companies have extensive expertise in transforming historical railway stations into the modern international terminals. Numerous Belgium or Belgium-based companies are already operating in India and have been involved in activities such as fastening and coating of rails to delivery of parts for train construction and software for safety and network management.

INDIA AND NEPAL

Indian Embassy in Kathmandu and Nepalese authorities signed an MoU on 19 September 2012 for granting the amount to Shri Mahendra Higher Secondary School in Achham district under Indian-Nepal Economic Cooperation Programme. The proposed building will provide better educational opportunity to over 1300 students, about half of whom are girls. Besides, India has gifted two ambulances to health care facilities in the district.

First India-CELAC Troika Foreign Ministers Meeting

The first meeting of the India-CELAC Troika Foreign Ministers was held on 7 August 2012 in New Delhi. The Indian delegation was led by the External Affairs Minister of India, Shri S.M Krishna, whilst the CELAC Troika was led by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Chile Mr. Alfredo Moreno Charme, the pro-tempore President of CELAC. Apart from both the

nations, the Foreign Minister of Venezuela Mr. Nicolas Maduro and the Vice Foreign Minister of Cuba, Mr. Rogelio Sierra participated in the meeting as members of the Troika.

Objective of the meet

- To discuss the regional and multilateral issues of mutual interest, to strengthen the multifaceted bilateral cooperation between India and CELAC.
- To co ordinate responses to regional issues and address international challenges including the UN reform, the international financial crisis, climate change and international terrorism.
- To enhance the exchange of visits at all levels including at the Summit level leading towards a 'Strategic Partnership' between India and CELAC.
- To expand relations between India and countries in the Latin America and the Caribbean region and make it possible for them to work together bearing in mind each sides' respective development priorities based on the common shared values of democracy, freedom, equality and justice.

Collective Discussions

- The two nations expressed satisfaction over the growth of commercial, economic and investment relations between India and CELAC, that has crossed US\$ 25 billion in 2012.
- The nations agreed to set up an Energy Forum to discuss energy security issues.
- Both the countries agreed to work towards providing value addition in the exchange of commodities through direct trading and by setting up of manufacturing units.
- Both sides agreed to work towards providing for food security for their people
- Both the countries agreed to initiate various projects related to tele-education, e-governance and tele-medicine that would cover the entire Latin America and Caribbean region.

The Foreign Ministers of India and the CELAC Troika ended the First Meeting of the India-CELAC Troika Foreign Ministerial Dialogue at a good note after the commencement of CELAC in December 2011. The pro-Tempore President and Troika Foreign Ministers of CELAC will present this Joint Statement

in next meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Community that will be held in September 2012 in New York.

INDIA MALAYSIA

India is going to expand bilateral trade with Malaysia to \$15 billion by 2013 from \$13 billion in 2011-12 as per the discussion in India- Malaysia CEO Forum. It was informed by Union Minister of Commerce, Industry and Textiles, Anand Shrama that India's bilateral trade with Malaysia stood at nearly \$13 billion in 2011-12 registering a growth of 34% over the previous year. In his visit to Malaysia in July 2010 and February 2011 Anand Sharma analysed that it was required an investment from Khazanah Nasional Berhad (Government of Malaysia's strategic investment fund) into Indian infrastructure sector through a collaborative venture with IDFC.

The Union minister, Anand Sharma has identified priority sectors of engagement including Roads & highways, Railways, Airports, IT & ITES, Biotechnology, Tourism, Health Services and JV projects in third countries. Subsequently, the two countries have entered into a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement which was signed in February 2011. The signing of this Agreement has provided considerable momentum to trade and investment on both sides.

INDIA AND TAJIKISTAN

India and Tajikistan signed six agreements in the field of sports, health, culture, education, labour, textiles and energy. India and the central Asian country of Tajikistan agreed to advance their ties to a strategic partnership in order to impart greater strength to the relationship through all-round co-operation and engagement. The President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Mr. Emomali Rahmon, was on a State Visit to India from 1 to 4 September 2012 at the invitation of the President of the Republic of India. This was the fifth visit to India by President Mr. Emomali Rahmon. The visiting dignitary also attended a business meeting organized jointly by ASSOCHAM, CII and FICCI. Both the countries

identified information technology, bio-technology, mining, tourism, pharmaceuticals among other sectors as high potential area. After the agreements it was decided that India will increase training slots for Tajikistan from 100 to 150 under India Technology and Eco Training Programme.

INDIA & PALESTINE

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh announced a support of \$10 Million to Palestine during a meet with Palestine's National Authority President Mahmoud Abbas on 11 September 2012. Palestinian president was here in Indian on a three day visit from 10 to 12 September 2012. Mr. Singh also promised his Palestinian counterpart about India's backing for their full and equal membership of the U.N. the one that is threatened by US for veto. During the meet, both the sides inked three different agreements comprising information and communication technology, education and vocational training. The agreements were inked in presence of the Indian external Affairs Minister S.M. Krishna and the member of executive committee of Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) Dr. Saeb M.S. Erakat. A MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) has been signed up to set up two schools at two districts of Palestine namely Abu Dees and Asera Al Shamalyeh, which will be named on the name of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister. Cost estimated for the construction of the two schools is US\$ 1.8 million and will help about eight hundred students of these districts to fetch quality education. The schools at Abu Dees and Asera Al Shamalyeh will be constructed in an area of 1700 and 1900 square meter with 10 and 12 classes respectively. In the second agreement, India will set a state-of-the-art information and communication technology center in Palestine to create IT experts and generate opportunities of employment.

To make the center of Palestine self reliable, some of the IT professionals from Palestine will be trained here in India to a higher level. As per the third agreement, India will participate in providing vocational training to the women and youth of Palestine. The training will include technical and machinery know-how to. Prime Minister Mr. Singh

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stated that he supported the Palestinian cause to achieve independent, sovereign and united state of Palestine and East Jerusalem as a capital to the state.

US, INDIA AND AFGHANISTAN HELD ITS FIRST TRILATERAL DISCUSSION

US, India and Afghanistan held its first ever trilateral meeting on 25 September 2012. The major point of discussion was on the situation in Afghanistan along with the issue of terrorism. The discussion marks the strengthening of Afghanistan relation with India and US who are totally behind the vision of a secure, peaceful, democratic and prosperous Afghanistan living in peace, security, friendship and cooperation with its region and the wider world.

The meeting was held at the Afghan Mission in New York and was attended by Joint Secretary (Pakistan/Afghanistan/Iran) Y K Sinha and Joint Secretary (America) Jawed Ashraf from the Indian side, Afghan Deputy Foreign Minister Jawed Ludin, US Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Ambassador Marc Grossman and Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs Robert Blake. The discussions also mark the beginning of a series of consultations among the three governments, who share common interests across South and Central Asia and who have pledged to work together on common challenges and opportunities including combating terrorism and violent extremism, reviewing cultural exchanges and increasing regional trade, investment and economic integration.

INDIA & EGYPT

India and Egypt on 18 September 2012 signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in New Delhi to establish an institutional framework for their ongoing cooperation in the field of election management and administration. The MOU was signed by the Chief Election Commissioner of India, V.S. Sampath and the Secretary General of the Supreme Presidential Election Committee of Egypt, Justice Hatem Bagato. The major aims of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) are:

- (a) Promotion of exchanges of knowledge and experience in the field of organizational and technical development, with a view to strengthening the administration of electoral processes.
- (b) Exchange of information, material, expertise and technical knowhow relating to electoral processes and systems; training of personnel and development of human resources.
- (c) Organizational development and capacity building. MoU was made so that it can facilitate sharing of best practices, skills and experiences between the two institutions for mutual benefit.

MoU is an extremely suitable mechanism for strengthening and carrying forward mutual collaboration in electoral management and administration. Election Commission of India has so far signed thirteen MOUs with Election Management Bodies and international organizations across the world. India and Egypt are already collaborating in the areas of Electronic Voting, Voters Education and Election Tracking Technology.

INDIA AND MOZAMBIQUE

India and Mozambique signed an agreement on Bilateral Security Cooperation on 14 July 2012. The Minister of State for Home Affairs, India Shri Mullappally Ramachandran signed the Agreement with Jose Mandra, Minister of Interior, Govt of Mozambique at Maputo, Mozambique. The objective of the agreement was to discuss cooperation and both the countries decided to develop the relationship further in various fields for mutual benefit. Amongst the key highlights of the meet was that, Mullappally Ramachandran was on a three day visit to Mozambique.

There is an estimation of almost twenty five thousand people of Indian origin living in Mozambique for generations. The relations between both the countries have remained warm and friendly. India was amongst the first countries to extend recognition to Mozambique after the later achieved independence in the year 1975. India and Mozambique have mutually rendered and benefited in the fields of industry, trade, mineral resources and culture.

INDIA AND BURUNDI

President of the Republic of Burundi visited India from 17 to 19 September 2012. During this visit, India and Burundi signed three agreements-(i) Exchange Programme for Cooperation in the field of Education, (ii) Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the field of Rural Development and (iii) Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the field of Health and Medicine. Besides, India also announced a Line of Credit of 42.38 million US dollars for Farm Mechanisation and Integrated Food Processing Complex in Burundi.

India and Burundi issued a joint statement on that occasion. The major highlights of the joint statement are as following:

- India and Burundi agreed to further enhance the bilateral cooperation in view of the considerable untapped potential.
- Burundi thanked India for approval of a concessional line of credit of 80 million US dollars for the Kabu – 16 Hydro-electric project.
- Both nations agreed to continue strengthening cooperation in the areas of economy, trade and investment, finance, human resource development, culture, etc. while striving to expand cooperation into other potential areas such as agriculture, food processing, ICT, science & technology, health, mining etc.
- Burundi conveyed its support for India's candidature for Permanent Membership in an expanded United Nations Security Council.

**INDIA, MYANMAR AND THAILAND
DECIDED TO IMPLEMENT TRILATERAL
CONNECTIVITY PROJECT BY 2016**

India, Myanmar and Thailand on 10 September 2012 reviewed the eagerly awaited trilateral connectivity project and decided to make all efforts to implement this by 2016. This was done at the meeting of the India-Myanmar-Thailand Joint Task Force, which met in New Delhi. It was also agreed during the meeting that steps be initiated to address issues related to harmonisation of customs and immigration procedures at border check-posts to enable seamless movement of goods and people to realise the full potential of the trilateral highway.

INDIA AND PAKISTAN

External Affairs of India, SM Krishna visited Pakistan from 7 to 9 September 2012 to review progress in the Dialogue process. During his visit, India and Pakistan issued a joint statement. The highlights of the statement are as following—

- Cross-LoC travel would be expanded on both sides of LoC to include visits for tourism and religious pilgrimage.
- Tourist and Pilgrimage sites will be designated on both sides of the LoC and information will be available with the designated authorities.
- Both sides will extend necessary assistance to valid entry permit holders to cross the LoC in emergency situation on crossing as well as non-crossing days. This will be facilitated by designated authorities.
- Improvement of roads and bridges for Cross-LoC trade will be facilitated.
- Transportation links on operational crossing points will be upgraded.
- Both sides agreed to facilitate the exchange of business delegations.
- Besides, List of 21 products of permissible items for Cross-LoC trade will be respected by both sides. It was agreed that the JWG (Joint Working Group) on Cross-LoC CBMs will meet on a bi-annual basis to review existing arrangements and suggest additional CBMs and measures for Cross-LoC travel and trade.
- India and Pakistan reviewed the status of bilateral relations and expressed satisfaction on the holding of meetings on the issues of Counter-Terrorism (including progress on Mumbai trial) and Narcotics Control; Humanitarian issues; Commercial & Economic cooperation; Wullar Barrage / Tulbul Navigation Project; Sir Creek; Siachen; Peace & Security including CBMs; Jammu & Kashmir; and promotion of Friendly Exchanges.
- Both nations held substantive discussions on the whole range of issues within the framework of the Dialogue process and expressed satisfaction over the progress achieved since their last review meeting in July 2011.
- India and Pakistan reaffirmed the importance

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of carrying forward the dialogue process with a view to resolving peacefully all outstanding issues through constructive and result oriented engagement, and to establish friendly, cooperative and good neighborly relations between Pakistan and India.

- The nations agreed that terrorism poses a continuing threat to peace and security. They reaffirmed the strong commitment of the two countries to fight terrorism in an effective and comprehensive manner so as to eliminate the scourge in all its forms and manifestations.
- Both nations attached importance to promoting Peace and Security, including Confidence Building Measures, between the two countries and agreed to convene separate meetings of the Expert Groups on Nuclear and Conventional CBMs, in New Delhi in the second half of December 2012.
- The nations held discussions on the issue of Jammu and Kashmir and agreed to the need for continued discussions, in a purposeful and forward-looking manner, with a view to finding a peaceful solution.
- The Ministers reviewed the existing Cross-LoC CBMs and acknowledged that the ceasefire was holding since 2003. They also reviewed the implementation of the decisions taken regarding travel and trade across the Line of Control (LoC) in their last meeting in July 2011.

THE ISLAMABAD WOMEN'S CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY AND THE PHDCCI SIGNED MOU

The Islamabad Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the PHDCCI on 12 September 2012 signed an MoU. The objective of the MoU is to develop policies in trade, investment and tourism between Pakistan and India and expand the existing business base and increase understanding. The two chambers agreed to establish and develop commercial links between the business communities of both countries and their members. According to the MoU, both trade bodies will endeavour to improve cooperation, assist trade missions, exchange information and find methods for promoting trade. The two chambers will also organise seminars,

exhibitions, trade fairs and other promotional activities. Both industry chambers have agreed on a work plan, which will cover information-sharing, networking, exploring opportunities, problem solving and reaching international markets. The IWCCI is the first women's chamber from Pakistan that has signed a MoU with a foreign chamber.

INDIA & TURKMENISTAN

India has assured Turkmenistan of all cooperation in Information and Communication technology (ICT) for the mutual benefit of both the countries. It was decided in the inaugural session of TurkmenTEL 2012 at the Turkmenistan capital Ashgabat on 17 September 2012 by the Minister for Communications & IT and HRD, Kapil Sibal. Recalling the historical ties between India and Turkmenistan, it was emphasized that the need for regional cooperation to uplift the social and economic status of the people in the region is uttermost important. Kapil Sibal shared the success story of Indian Telecom Sector and gave an overview of the spectrum of policy initiatives in India's National Telecom Policy 2012.

India could extend cooperation to Turkmenistan in the fields of e-health, e-education and e-governance services. Turkmenistan can be connected to Indian Universities through National Knowledge Network and students sitting in Turkmenistan can directly be part of academic sessions in various disciplines in India. Turkmenistan Minister and his delegation was invited to participate in India Telecom 2012 in Delhi, from 13 to 15 December 2012, as the event could be an excellent platform for further strengthening mutual cooperation and for promoting ICT and its eco system in the region.

INDIA AND SAUDI ARABIA

The Joint Committee on defence cooperation from Saudi Arabia and India met for creation of defence ties. Decisions for this establishment of joint committees was decided during the visit of Indian defence minister A.K. Antony to Saudi Arabia and his meet with the Crown Prince and defence minister of Saudi Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud in February 2012. The 11 member team from Saudi Arabia was

headed by the Chief of the Armed Forces Operations of Saudi Arabia Maj Gen Suleiman Saleh Al-Khalifa. The Indian side was headed by the Joint Secretary, Ministry of Defence. Both the sides met for formulation of the program that can enhance the areas of cooperation between the defence establishments of two nations. This upswing in the relationship between India and Saudi Arabia has been in existence ever since the visit of King Abdullah to New Delhi in the year 2006. The two nations inked several agreements on certain factors like narcotics, energy, money laundering, counterterrorism and extradition in the 2010.

INDIA & NIUE

Minister of State for External Affairs of India E Ahamed and Prime Minister of Niue H. E. Toke Talagi signed a Joint Communiqué on the establishment of Diplomatic Relations between India and Niue, at Cook Islands, on 30 August 2012. Niue is a Pacific island country, which is a member of regional bodies such as the Pacific Island Forum and the Pacific Community and also of UNESCO, WTO and FAO. It is an island of 1400 inhabitants, which is also known as the world's first "Wi-Fi nation", in which free wireless Internet access is provided throughout the country. Niue is also known as the 'Rock of Polynesia', and is situated 2400 km northeast of New Zealand in a triangle between Tonga to the southwest, the Samoas to the northwest and the Cook Islands to the southeast. Since 2002, India has intensified its cooperative relations with all countries in pacific island region.

INDIA & PAKISTAN

Pakistan's Cabinet on 31 October 2012 ratified four recent agreements with India. The major of which is landmark visa pact aimed at facilitating restrictions on several categories of travellers, including senior citizens and businessmen. The meeting was chaired by Prime Minister of Pakistan M Raja Pervez Ashraf who also ratified three other agreements that is going to promote trade between the Pakistan and India. The visa agreement was signed by then external affairs minister S.M. Krishna and Pakistan's interior minister Rehman Malik in

Islamabad on 8 September 2012. The pact was ready for signing in May 2012 but was held up entirely due to opposition from Rehman Malik, who wanted Indian External Affairs minister to come to Pakistan for signing it. The agreement introduces new categories for group tourist visas and pilgrim visas and relaxes restrictions on travel by senior citizens, businessmen and persons of one country married to a citizen of the other. The two countries are also discussing other measures aimed at boosting bilateral trade and cooperation in new areas like opening of bank branches and cross-border investments. Both the countries asserted they intend to increase bilateral trade to six billion dollars by 2014. India and Pakistan Discussed TAPI Gas Project India and Pakistan Discussed TAPI Gas Project

Pakistan's Minister of Petroleum and Natural Resources Asim Hussain met Cabinet Minister of Petroleum and Natural gas of India, Jaipal Reddy in New Delhi on 17 October 2012 in an event PETROTECH 2012 and discussed avenues for energy cooperation, including the trans-regional project TAPI. Asim Hussain in his talk underlined the need of hastening work on the TAPI and the importance of demonstrating political will.

He also stressed for setting up the economic modality by establishing a Special Purpose Vehicle or consortium duly empowered to take all necessary decisions.

About TAPI Gas Project

The TAPI is the Trans-Afghanistan Pipeline project which is also known as Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India Pipeline, TAP or TAPI. It is basically a proposed natural gas pipeline that is developed by the Asian Development Bank. The project was started on 15 March 1995 by signing a memorandum of understanding between the governments of Turkmenistan and Pakistan for a pipeline project. Under the Proposed plan, the pipeline will transport Caspian Sea natural gas from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan into Pakistan and finally to India.

India, US and Japan

India, U.S. and Japan on its third trilateral meet on 29 October 2012 discussed trilateral cooperation

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in maritime security and a route through middle or north of Myanmar leading up to Hanoi.

The other major area of discussion was on exchanging of proposals for doing projects together in Africa as well as cooperating on the economic side in Afghanistan. The three countries were on cycle of talk which they completed following this meet. The talk began with their first meeting in Washington in December 2011 which was followed by next meeting in Tokyo in April 2012. Talking of maritime security the three countries discussed some specific areas of cooperation which will be productive in the next cycle of talks that is going to begin after the U.S. Presidential elections and with the settling down of next US administration.

Each side gave a strategic overview of the Asia Pacific. While Japan's Briefing was primarily focused on dispute with China over the Senkaku islands. India with discussing issues on Myanmar had taken up a trilateral connectivity initiative with Myanmar and Thailand that touched on a route through upper Myanmar that would lead into Vietnam. Also, US briefing was about its much-talked about policy of 'pivot to Asia', which is a move driven by the allure of emerging Asian economies, especially China and India.

The 2nd India-Japan 2+2 Dialogue

The 2nd India-Japan 2+2 Dialogue was held in Tokyo on 22 October, 2012. These 2+2 consultations at Senior Official level are mandated by the Action Plan to Advance Security Cooperation concluded between India and Japan in December 2009. The first India- Japan 2+2 Dialogue was held at New Delhi in June 2010. The two countries briefed the other on their respective defence and security policies in the background of each country's security environment. In this context, both nations reviewed bilateral security and defence cooperation and discussed ways of further expanding such ties. The two sides also exchanged views on maritime, cyber and outer space security. They agreed to an early meeting of the new India – Japan Cyber Security Dialogue. They also discussed the regional and international security situation. The next and the 3rd round of the India – Japan 2+2 Dialogue will be held at New Delhi at a mutually

convenient date. The Indian delegation was led by Foreign Secretary Shri Ranjan Mathai and Defence Secretary Shri Shashi Kant Sharma. The Japanese delegation was led by Deputy Foreign Minister Akitaka Saiki and Administrative Vice Defence Minister Hironori Kanazawa.

Japan Lifted Travel Advisory on Jammu and Kashmir

The country of Japan on 19 October 2012 in a step to testimony the fact that security situation in Jammu and Kashmir is improved, relaxed the travel restriction to the state for its nationals. The move to ease restrictions is valid for Srinagar and adjoining areas like Gulmarg. With lifting of Travel Advisory Japan became the second country among G8 nations to take this step. Earlier Germany in July 2011 had relaxed travel restriction to Jammu and Kashmir for its National.

The decision of lifting travel advisory came after the Japanese embassy officials met the Jammu and Kashmir government. Many other embassies of developed countries of Australia, Canada, UK and some more countries are also making enquiries about the situation in Kashmir and are expected to lift advisory following step of two G8 countries of Japan and Germany.

Research Project to Study LNG Pricing Research Project to Study LNG Pricing

Japan and India on 10 October 2012 launched a joint research project into pricing structures in LNG markets. Japan's industry minister Yukio Edano and Deputy chairman of Planning commission of India Montek Singh Ahluwalia, signed the agreement on joint research in Tokyo. Resource-poor Japan is on the hunt for cheaper energy, with the situation further worsened by the shuttering of all but two of its nuclear reactors amid public distrust following tsunami-sparked meltdowns at Fukushima. Japan is the world's top importer of liquefied natural gas. Asian buyers pay far more than those in North America because the price is index-linked to oil on the continent.

Under the present pricing structures in LNG markets, the price in North America is determined on

the basis of supply and demand. India's expanding economy also demand more and more energy keeping this in view both the countries agreed for a research project to study price structure.

About LNG

LNG is gas that is temporarily liquefied for easier storage and transportation. Liquefied natural gas or LNG is natural gas predominantly in the form of methane, CH₄ that has been converted to liquid form for ease of storage or transport. Liquefied natural gas takes up about 1/600th the volume of natural gas in the gaseous state. It is odorless. Colorless, non-toxic and non-corrosive. Hazards include flammability, freezing and asphyxia.

INDIA AND UK

India and the United Kingdom on 30 October 2012 signed a protocol amending the 1993 bilateral convention on avoidance of double taxation and prevention of fiscal evasion related to taxes on income and capital gains. The Protocol amends the pact or Convention that was originally assigned on 25 January 1993 in New Delhi.

The protocol was signed by India's High Commissioner Jaimini Bhagwati and Exchequer Secretary to the U.K. Treasury, David Gauke. The amended protocol is going to provide tax stability to the residents of both the countries and also facilitate mutual economic cooperation with stimulating flow of investment, technology and services. Also, the withholding taxes on the dividends would be 10 per cent or 15 per cent and is equally applicable in the UK and in India.

The Protocol integrates provisions for effective exchange of information between tax authorities of the two countries in line with latest international standards including exchange of banking information and supplying of information irrespective of domestic interest. With the amendment there will now be a new article in the Convention on assistance in collection of taxes. It includes provision for taking measures of conservancy. The Protocol also constitutes the Convention anti-abuse (limitation of benefits) provisions which ensure that the benefits of the Convention are not misused.

INDIA & AUSTRALIA

India and Australia on 17 October 2012 announced the launch of nuclear negotiations for a civil nuclear deal that will enable the sale of uranium from Australian Capital city Canberra to New Delhi. The deal was announced by Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard on her visit to India. The deal is going to provide stretch in India's civilian nuclear ambitions and will also strengthen bilateral ties between both the Countries. Earlier in 2011, the Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard, Australian Labour Party refused to sell uranium to India by specifying that India had not signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The actual Supply of uranium is going to take couple of years as negotiations for the safeguards agreement are complex and lengthy. Both the Countries also signed four memorandum, the most important of which is agreement on Student mobility and welfare in which they agreed to hold annual meetings at the summit level either bilaterally or during multilateral events.

The other memorandums are:

- Memorandum on Military and Security Initiative committed to enhance maritime cooperation
- Memorandum to develop a comprehensive economic cooperation agreement

India and Australia also agreed to launch a Ministerial-level Dialogue on Energy Security, establish a Water Technology Partnership and start negotiations for an Agreement on Transfer of Sentenced Persons.

INDIA & AUSTRALIA

Australia on 28 October 2012 revealed that the country was planning to include Hindi and Mandarin as languages to be taught in its schools. This was a step forward to be taken by the county to establish deeper and strengthened links with India and other nations with booming economies, of the world. Prime Minister of Australia Julia Gillard announced the plans of the nation at the release ceremony of the sweeping policy blueprint with its title Asian Century White Paper. The white paper

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was released with an aim of link maximisation with Asia; this would help Australia to be among the top 10 most powerful economies of the world by 2025.

INDIA AND NEW ZEALAND

India and New Zealand on 19 October 2012 signed five Memorandum of Understanding, MoU in the different fields of education. The MoUs were signed in New Delhi during the first meeting of India-New Zealand Education Council.

The education institutions of New Zealand specially higher education maintain global standards. India and New Zealand share strong people to people links through increasing migration, tourism, education and sporting ties. The education can play a vital role in strengthening links between the two countries.

INDIA AND FRANCE

India and France on 7 October 2012 signed an agreement in the field of sustainable Urban Development. The agreement was signed in Paris between Union Minister of Urban Development Kamal Nath and Minister for Foreign Trade of France Nicole Bricq. Both India and France would benefit from the agreement as it would provide an enabling platform for the officials, professionals, business leaders and local self-governing bodies to meet and share knowledge and best practices in the urban sector. It would also lead to enhanced cooperation and deepen the engagement between the two countries. India and France also discussed ways to enhance economic and commercial relations between the countries.

INDIA AND SPAIN

India and Spain on 26 October 2012 signed a memorandum of understanding under which they are going to encourage collaboration between their defence industries and exchange of personnel. The MoU was signed by Indian Defence Minister A.K. Antony and his Spanish counterpart Pedro Morenés Eulate in New Delhi.

Both the Countries agreed to exchange defence-related experience and information, and will

encourage visits of personnel and collaboration in the defence industry and similar areas of cooperation. Also in another gesture of Cooperation Spanish firm Navantia is planning to offer its S-80 diesel electric submarine for the Indian Navy's Project 75-India, under which it plans to procure six large conventional submarines at a cost of more than 50000 crore of Rupees. The MoU on defence was among the five pacts signed after comprehensive talks between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and the visiting King Juan Carlos I on bilateral, regional and international issues. Other pacts signed are included as under:

- A protocol for amending the over 19-year-old double taxation avoidance pact to check tax evasion,
- A MoU in the roads and road transport sector, aimed at promoting efficient and environmentally sustainable transport systems.
- A pact to promote and facilitate co-production of films which includes feature films, documentary and animation films.

INDIA AND AUSTRIA

India and Austria on 2 October 2012 tied up to develop smart cities that would include fine planning of the city including the transport system and services of internet. The decision came up after the meeting of Union Minister for Urban Development Kamal Nath with Austrian Federal Minister for Transport, Innovation & Technology Doris Bures.

The plans of developing the new cities will be implemented under the second phase of Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM II).

As per the plans initially two model smart cities will be developed in every state of the country that will include the mid-sized cities with a minimum population of half a million to one million.

Every State to have two smart-cities

Austrian Institute of Technology will assist the country in planning and development of the smart cities that will include things that it needs to cover, broadband facilities to its maintenance to carbon levels.

As per the plans of the Central Government under JNNURM II every state will have two model towns initially.

70 Cities with over a million Population Graph are in Plan

Plans are on the paper to convert at least 70 cities with million plus population in India into smart cities. Austria that has been into different types of trade-relations for a long time with India will be offering the potential technical support.

Organizations Involved in Project Implementation

Austrian Institute of Technology and the National Institute of Urban Affairs that is a research, information and training wing under the Urban Development Ministry, would be the partners in the project.

INDIA AND CHINA

India and China agreed to boost defence ties. The agreement was made during the visit of Chinese Defense Minister Gen Liang Guanglie to India and his meet with his Indian Counterpart AK Antony. Last time the defence minister of China visited India in the year 2004.

The two nations have agreed on improving the friendly, strategic and co-operative partnership and exchange of young officers and high level visits. An inter-collegiate exchange that includes non-traditional security fields is also a part of the agreement. During the joint Naval Practice in Shanghai, the two nations agreed on increasing the process of military exchange that includes maritime operations and navy. Last joint exercise that took place between the two nations was at Kunming in the year 2007 and at Belgaum in the year 2008. The third joint exercise scheduled for 2010 was cancelled because China disagreed to provide VISA to Lieutenant General BS Jaiswal of the Northern Command and since then India cancelled all collateral ties related to defence activities with China.

INDIA MALAYSIA

India is going to expand bilateral trade with

Malaysia to \$15 billion by 2013 from \$13 billion in 2011-12 as per the discussion in India- Malaysia CEO Forum.

It was informed by Union Minister of Commerce, Industry and Textiles, Anand Sharma that India's bilateral trade with Malaysia stood at nearly \$13 billion in 2011-12 registering a growth of 34% over the previous year. In his visit to Malaysia in July 2010 and February 2011 Anand Sharma analysed that it was required an investment from Khazanah Nasional Berhad (Government of Malaysia's strategic investment fund) into Indian infrastructure sector through a collaborative venture with IDFC. The Union minister, Anand Sharma has identified priority sectors of engagement including Roads & highways, Railways, Airports, IT & ITES, Biotechnology, Tourism, Health Services and JV projects in third countries. Subsequently, the two countries have entered into a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement which was signed in February 2011. The signing of this Agreement has provided considerable momentum to trade and investment on both sides.

INDIA AND TAJIKISTAN

India and Tajikistan signed six agreements in the field of sports, health, culture, education, labour, textiles and energy. India and the central Asian country of Tajikistan agreed to advance their ties to a strategic partnership in order to impart greater strength to the relationship through all-round co-operation and engagement. The President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Mr. Emomali Rahmon, was on a State Visit to India from 1 to 4 September 2012 at the invitation of the President of the Republic of India. This was the fifth visit to India by President Mr. Emomali Rahmon.

The visiting dignitary also attended a business meeting organized jointly by ASSOCHAM, CII and FICCI. Both the countries identified information technology, bio-technology, mining, tourism, pharmaceuticals among other sectors as high potential area. After the agreements it was decided that India will increase training slots for Tajikistan from 100 to 150 under India Technology and Eco Training Programme.

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The 2nd India-China Strategic economic Dialogue held in New Delhi

The 2nd India-China Strategic Economic Dialogue was held in New Delhi on 26 November, 2012. During the 2nd meeting of the Dialogue, India and China discussed a wide range of topics including greater cooperation at the global level, strengthening communication on macro-economic policies, deepening and expanding trade and investment and promoting bilateral cooperation in the financial and infrastructure sectors. The proposals and recommendations made by the five Working Groups were considered during the 2nd Dialogue and directions given for their future activities. India and China agreed that in the current global economic situation it was important to raise the level of economic engagement between India and China. The agreements are as following:

- (i) Cooperation at the global level: Exchanging views on current global economic and developmental challenges, India and China recognized that as major developing economies, they needed to maintain close coordination and communication to pursue their common interests. Among them is the reform of international monetary and financial systems, stabilizing the volatility in global commodity markets, working towards sustainable development and climate change goals, and ensuring food and energy security. Both countries believe that the ongoing and future cooperation on existing and upcoming issues will greatly enhance mutual trust and expand common interests.
- (ii) Strengthening communication on macroeconomic policies: Following detailed discussions on the global and national economic situations, the two countries agreed that development growth trends globally have weakened as a result of a number of factors since the onset of the global financial crisis. This included weakening demand in the developed markets, the ongoing Eurozone crisis, lower business confidence, and growing inflationary trends. Both sides seek to maintain continued economic growth while adjusting manufacturing and services, upgrading levels of technologies and skills, while developing

the hard and soft infrastructure for encouraging economic growth. The two countries agreed that they would regularly conduct joint studies on issues of mutual interest, focusing on benefits of best practices and information exchanges.

- (iii) Deepening and expanding trade and investment: With a view to promoting greater economic and commercial engagement, both sides recognized the need to explore potential synergies in areas where the two sides have mutual complementarities, improve trade and investment environments, work towards removing market barriers, enhance cooperation in project contracting, deepen business to business exchanges, improve transportation links, encourage greater bilateral investment and work towards achieving a more balanced and sustainable bilateral trade.
- (iv) Expanding cooperation in the financial and infrastructure sectors: Both sides have agreed to intensify the cooperation in the financial sector by encouraging financial institutions of the two countries to set up operations in either country to support enterprises of the two countries to establish / expand commercial operations. Both sides agree to undertake studies in related areas including innovative financial methods to support the requirements of priority sectors particularly the infrastructure sector having significant scope for furthering economic development.

The main outcomes of the five Working Groups are as follows:

- (a) In the Policy Coordination Working Group, both countries discussed plan priorities and ways and means of achieving plan targets recently unveiled in their 12th Five Year Plans. They exchanged views on skills development and industrial park development. The two nations also submitted assessment reports on the investment environments in each other's country based on the experiences of the enterprises of the two countries and discussed possible solutions to improve the investment environment. India and China also agreed to carry out joint studies on planning cooperation and skills development for employability, and entered into related MoUs.

- (b) In the Infrastructure Working Group, with its focus on enhancing railway cooperation, both countries exchanged views on the broad policies and plans for railway development in each other's country. The two countries also discussed high-speed rail development programme, heavy haul and station development and entered into an MoU to exchange views and other related information in these areas.
- (c) In the Energy Working Group, India and China briefed each other on the development of the power sector in the two countries, the ongoing cooperation in the power equipment sector, opportunities and challenges in the wind energy sector, the possibility of Chinese power equipment manufacturers setting up service centres in India and relevant policy environment to support the ongoing cooperation, and reviewed the small hydro power workshop that was successfully held in Beijing in October 2012.
- (d) In the Environmental Protection Working Group, the two nations agreed to enhance cooperation in the implementation of energy efficiency projects through energy service companies (ESCOs), encouraging visits to industrial and manufacturing centres excelling in energy efficient initiatives, cooperate and jointly develop testing protocols and standards and have entered into a related MoU. The two sides also exchanged views on enhancing cooperation in water-saving technologies covering the areas of waste water recycling and water-efficient irrigation systems.
- (e) In the Hi-Technology Working Group, the two countries agreed to enhance cooperation in the Information Technology and Information Technology Enabled Services (IT/ITES). Both sides also agreed to carry out / support joint studies to better understand the IT/ITES markets of each country and have entered into a related MoU in this area. The two sides also reached a consensus to explore the possibility of working together for developing common standards for digital TV, audio and video codec standards and mobile communication technology.

India and China signed the following MoUs:

- (a) Memorandum of Understanding between the Planning Commission of the Government of the Republic of India and National Development and Reform Commission of the Government of the People's Republic of China on Undertaking Joint Studies.
- (b) Memorandum of Understanding between the Bureau of Energy Efficiency, Ministry of Power, Government of the Republic of India and National Development and Reform Commission of the Government of the People's Republic of China on Enhancing Cooperation in the Field of Energy Efficiency.
- (c) Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Railways of the Government of the Republic of India and Ministry of Railways of the Government of the People's Republic of China on enhancing technical cooperation in the railway sector.
- (d) Memorandum of Understanding between the National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM), India and the China Software Industry Association (CSIA) on Enhancing Cooperation in the IT/ITES Sector.

India and China agreed that the 3rd India-China Strategic Economic Dialogue will be convened in China in 2013. They also agreed that prior to the 3rd Dialogue, the Working Groups would meet to implement the consensus and decisions agreed to by the two sides at the 2nd Strategic Economic Dialogue.

What is India-China Strategic Economic Dialogue?

Established during the visit to India of Wen Jiabao, Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China in December 2010, the India-China Strategic Economic Dialogue is aimed at improving macro-economic policy coordination, promoting exchanges on economic issues and enhancing India-China economic cooperation. The 1st Dialogue had been successfully held at Beijing in September 2011 where the two countries agreed to constitute five Working Groups on policy coordination, infrastructure, energy, environment protection and high-technology. A working level delegation from China visited New Delhi in March 2012 following

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which the five Working Groups met in Beijing in the months of August and September 2012. This preparatory work has contributed immensely to the successful deliberations in and outcomes of the 2nd Dialogue.

India and Afghanistan Signed Four Cooperation Pacts

India and Afghanistan on 12 November 2012 signed four agreements to cooperate in areas of social welfare, fertilizer, coal mining and youth affairs. President of Afghanistan Hamid Karzai was in India on a four day visit from 9 November 2012 to 12 November 2012.

During his visit a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by External Affairs Minister Salman Khurshid and Afghanistan Foreign Minister Zalmai Rassoul under which India will provide grants to Afghanistan to implement small development projects through local bodies, community organisations, charitable trusts and educational institutions.

The three other Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed can be listed as

- The second MoU relates to fertilizer sector and was signed by Salman Khurshid and Afghanistan Minister of Mines Wahidullah Shahrani.
- The third MoU aims at cooperation in youth affairs which was signed by India's external affairs minister and Afghanistan Minister of Information and Culture Sayed Makhdoom Raheenis.
- The fourth MoU was on the development of coal resources and was signed by India's Coal Minister Prakash Jaiswal and Afghanistan Minister of Mines Wahidullah Shahrani.

Both the countries also decided to intensify the cooperation with a special focus on deepening their economic engagement in areas ranging from agriculture and small businesses to mining and infrastructure.

India and Japan Signed Two Agreements in Tokyo

The Governments of India and Japan signed the two agreements on 16 November 2012 in Tokyo: The agreements are as following: 1) Agreement between

India and Japan on Social Security 2) Memorandum between the Department of Atomic Energy of India and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan on Cooperation in the Rare Earths Industry in India. The conclusion and signing of these agreements will further enhance and strengthen the India-Japan Strategic and Global Partnership.

India-Japan-US Trilateral Dialogue held in New Delhi

Senior officials of the India, Japan and USA held their third trilateral dialogue in New Delhi on 29 October 2012 to enhance cooperation on combating maritime security, combating piracy and leveraging their strengths to shape the Asia-Pacific architecture. The trilateral meeting was the third of its kind.

The first round of talks was held in Washington in 2011 and the second round was held in Tokyo.

India Added 22 New Items to promote Indo-Myanmar Border Trade

Indian Government in the month of November added 22 commodities such as agricultural tools, bicycle, coal and garments in the list of items for border trade with Myanmar to boost the two-way commerce between the neighbours. The new items added and revised in the list of 40 tradable items was confirmed in a public notice by Director General of Foreign Trade which now make the list of 62 Consolidated items. The other new items included are edible oil, electrical appliances, steel products, medicines, tea, beverages, motor cycles and spare parts, semi precious stone, sewing machines and three wheelers/cars below 100 cc. As per Industry led Organisation CII, the bilateral trade between India and Myanmar is expected to double by 2015 from the current level of USD 1.3 billion, on the back of free trade agreement between New Delhi and Asean region. Myanmar is a key member of the 10-nation bloc Asean.

About Indo-Myanmar Border Trade

It has been seen that bilateral relations between Myanmar and India is considerably improving since 1993, overcoming strains over drug trafficking the suppression of democracy and the rule of the military junta in Burma. The proximity of the People's Republic of China gives strategic importance to Indo-

Burmese relations. India is one of the largest market for Burmese exports, it is supported from the fact that India is Myanmar's 4th largest trading partner after Thailand, China and Singapore, and second largest export market after Thailand, absorbing 25 percent of its total exports.

The Indian government had improved air, land and sea routes to strengthen trade links with Myanmar and establish a gas pipeline. The bilateral border trade agreement of 1994 provides for border trade to be carried out from three designated border points, one each in Manipur, Mizoram and Nagaland.

India, Britain decided to enhance Cooperation in Cyber Security

India and Britain on 8 November 2012 decided to step-up cooperation in Cyber Security during the Foreign Minister level talks of both the nations. Before, this during the Foreign Secretary level talks, the issues discussed was nuclear energy and counter-terrorism.

The representatives of both the nations, William Hague the British Foreign Secretary and Salman Khurshid India's External Affairs Minister after agreeing on the issues of cooperation on cyber crimes, which included cooperation in defining the ways of tackling the cyber crime, bilaterally issued a joint statement on the issues discussed.

William Hague, during the bilateral discussions, also supported Indian bid to the membership in four export control regimes looking forward to the time, when India would turn-up to be a permanent seat in the UN Security Council. The Foreign Minister and the Foreign Secretary also discussed Syria Issue.

The London Conference on Cyberspace of 2011 was attended at Ministerial level from the Indian side and following the results of the conference, both the countries started its first dialogue on cooperation in October 2012. India & Britain upgraded the relationship of strategic partnership in the year 2004 and since then the foreign ministers of both the nations have been working on the areas of common interest in the cyber domain. Hague also supported the United Kingdom's move of meeting the Chief Minister of Gujarat Narendra Modi, demonstrated it

as the chance of strengthening Britain's ties across the breadth of India.

Britain also allowed its citizens to visit Srinagar and Jammu by lifting the ban because of the changed ground realities of the land.

Core principles based on Transparency, Freedom and Liberty

The officials from both the nations tried to create and define the core principles through interactions to carry on the cooperation on the principles of liberty, freedom of expression, transparency and the rule of law that is applied to the cyber space. To tackle cybercrimes of all types and to boost the confidence of cooperation, the dialogue tried to find the facts of reducing risk of threats from cyberspace to international security.

India and Japan Signed Earths Pact on Rare Earth Minerals

India and Japan signed an Earths Pact on 16 November 2012 that will enable the latter to import the rare Earth minerals from India. These rare minerals are very important for the Tech-savvy industries of Japan. The pact came as a conclusion despite postponement of India-Japan annual summit. As per the signed pact, Japan will be able to import 4000 tonnes rare Earth minerals for a year from India. By signing the pact, Japan has branched out its supply from China for metals which are used in their industries.

Japan now hopes that the pact will reduce its dependency on China for these rare minerals. It is important to note here that Japan is in tiff on the issue of Senkaku islands with China.

Apart from this, India-Japan also signed a social security pact. These two pacts which were destined to come into force on the now-cancelled Indian PM's trip were reinforced in Japan.

The 8th Meeting of the India-UK JWG on Counter Terrorism held in New Delhi

The 8th meeting of the India-UK Joint Working Group (JWG) on Counter Terrorism was held on November 20, 2012 in New Delhi. The discussions of the JWG were held in an atmosphere of trust and mutual understanding. The two countries shared

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their respective threat assessments and informed each other of the measures taken by their governments to strengthen counter terrorism policies and structures. They also discussed the follow up on the Mumbai terror attacks of 26/11. The two countries also exchanged views on international developments, coordination in international fora and their bilateral cooperation in the area.

The first meeting of the India-UK Joint Working Group (JWG) took place in 2004. The next and the 9th meeting of the JWG will be held in the UK in 2013 on mutually convenient dates.

India and Sweden Signed Social Security Agreement in New Delhi

India and Sweden signed a social security agreement in New Delhi on 26 November 2012. This agreement will help both the countries in more investment and work opportunities for nationals of India and Sweden. It will also encourage more and more Indians to go to Sweden for employment opportunities and vice versa. Approximately, 156 Swedish companies are operating in India and expressed the hope that this agreement will encourage Swedish people to come in large numbers to India. In fact, India is the first Asian country with which Sweden has signed this type of agreement. The Social Security Agreement will enhance cooperation on social security between the two countries. The Agreement will provide following benefits to Indian nationals working in Sweden:

- (a) For short term contract up to two years, no social contribution would need to be paid under the Swedish law by the detached workers provided they continue to make social security payment in India.
- (b) The above benefits shall be available even when the Indian company sends its employees to Sweden from a third country.
- (c) Indian workers shall be entitled to the export of the social security benefit if they relocate to India after the completion of their service in Sweden.
- (d) The self-employed Indians in Sweden would also be entitled to export of social security benefit of their relocation to India.
- (e) The period of contribution in one contracting state will be added to the period of contribution

in the second contracting state for determining the eligibility of social security benefits.

There are about 18000 Overseas Indians in Sweden, most of whom are working as professional and self-employed. However, there is a huge potential for Indian workers to take employment in Sweden owing to the huge labour supply gap in the market.

As such, a bilateral Social Security Agreement with Sweden is a significant requirement from the futuristic point of view to take advantage of the emerging employment opportunities and to strengthen the trade and investment between the two countries.

India has signed similar agreements with Belgium, Germany, France, Switzerland, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Hungary, Denmark, Czech Republic, the Republic of Korea, Norway, Finland, Canada and Japan.

RBI and the State Bank of Vietnam signed a Memorandum of Understanding

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on 16 November 2012 signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the State Bank of Vietnam (SBV) for promoting greater co-operation and sharing supervisory information, between the two supervisors. The MoU between the two banks was signed at Hanoi, Vietnam in the Headquarters of State Bank of Vietnam and by the Chief General Manager-In-Charge, Department of Banking Supervision, RBI- G. Jaganmohan Rao and Chief Inspector, Banking Supervision Agency, SBV- Nguyen Huu Nghia. The Deputy Governor, SBV- Dang Thanh Binh, and Indian Ambassador to Hanoi- Ranjit Rae graced this occasion of signing the MoU.

INDIA AND RUSSIA

India and Russia on 24 December 2012 signed a pact for strengthening their economic ties with a Kremlin-backed 2 billion dollar investment fund. Both the parties also agreed to talk about a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement involving Kazakhstan and Belarus. During the twelfth straight annual summit, the leaders of both the nations Vladimir Putin - President of Russia and Manmohan Singh - Prime Minister of India finalised

10 agreements including two military contracts of 20000 crore rupees, which was under process for past some time.

The two nations were not successful in making a substantial progress on issues related to delay in commissioning of Gorshkov-the aircraft carrier, applicability of the Nuclear Limited Liability Act at Kudankulam's six new reactors developed by Russia. Plans of Sistema and Severstal- the two Russian companies investment plans in India and the tax imposed on the Indian company operating in Russia named Imperial Energy.

Sistema, whose 2G licenses were cancelled by the Supreme Court of India signed two agreements in the satellite segment with India through its sister concern company named Glonass. India has signed military side contracts with Glonass- the constellation of 34 satellites in 2011 for receiving precision signals.

Both the nations would be extending their partnership in energy sector moving beyond the investments made in Sakhalin-I and direct trade of Gazprom-Gail and are planning to boost joint investment in upstream and downstream sectors. India also managed to discuss on its areas of interest for equity participation via ONGC-OVL in the projects of Siberia, Arctic Shelf and Far East of Russia either in the existing ones or the new ones. India also put on table the interests of acquiring equity stakes in the proposed liquefied natural gas (LNG) projects in Russia.

INDIA AND PAKISTAN

India and Pakistan exchanged their nuclear units' lists on 1 January 2013, as it is customary since 20 years. The list which contains the names of nuclear units of two countries, are exchanged between India and Pakistan as a custom and part of an agreement which prevents them from aiming the nuclear installations of each others' nations.

The exchange of the list of nuclear units has been going on, on 1 January every year since 1992. This is a customary action as a part of Agreement on Prohibition of Attacks against Nuclear Installations and Facilities which was signed in December 1988. The external affairs ministry of India

announced that the two countries exchanged the list of nuclear installations through their diplomatic channels at Islamabad and New Delhi. Apart from this list, the two nations, as a part of another bilateral agreement signed back in 2008, share the list of each others' prisoners in the jails of two countries. The bilateral agreement was signed between India and Pakistan in May 2008, according to which a complete list of the citizens of both the countries living in the jails of other country should be exchanged two times every year on 1 January and in July.

What is Sir Creek?

Sir Creek is the 96 km narrow piece of water that is a subject of dispute between India and Pakistan. Sir Creek sits in the Rann of Kutch marshlands. Creek opens into the Arabian Sea and divides the region of Kutch of India's Gujarat with Sindh of Pakistan. The major dispute over Sir Creek is about understanding of the maritime boundary between the Kutch and the Sindh. Before India's independence, the region remained a part of the British India. After the partition of 1947, Sindh entered Pakistan and Kutch remained with India.

India and Pakistan jointly operationalized the new Visa Agreement on 14th December, 2012 in New Delhi during the visit of Pakistan interior minister to India. However, the Visa-on-Arrival will come into effect from 15th January, 2013 and the Group Tourist Visa from 15th March, 2013. Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan had signed on 8th September, 2012, a new Visa Agreement to facilitate travel for the nationals of both countries desirous of travelling to the other country and to promote people to people contact. Main features of the India-Pakistan new Visa Agreement are as following:

Visitor Visa

- Places of visit allowable increased from three to five places
- In exceptional cases visitor visa for one year could be issued in the past. Now provision made for issue of visa upto two years in following cases:
 - a. Persons above 65 years of age
 - b. National of one country married to national of the other country.

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- c. Children below 12 years accompanying parents in (b) above

Visa on Arrival can be granted at Attari/Wagah check-post to persons more than 65 years of age for 45 days with single entry (effective from 15 January 2013).

Business Visa

Exemption from Police Reporting for Business visa granted to businessmen with an annual income above Pak Rs. 5 million or equivalent or annual turnover above Pak 30 million rupees or equivalent.

Group Tourist Visa

- Group Tourist Visa for 30 days may be issued for travel in groups, with not less than 10 members and not more than 50 members in each group, organized by approved tour operators/travel agents (effective from 15 March 2013).

Entry and Exit

- Now entry and exit from different designated Immigration Check Posts can be allowed, if indicated in application.
- However, exit from Wagha/Attari on foot cannot be accepted unless the entry was also on foot via Attari/Wagah.

INDIA AND UKRAINE

India and Ukraine on 10 December 2012 signed five agreements in New Delhi to enhance cooperation including in areas of defence, Nuclear, Science and Technology and also to remove barriers in trade and commerce. The two countries also agreed to raise bilateral cooperation to Comprehensive partnership level. The agreements were signed during the visit of Ukraine President Victor Yanukovich. The agreements are as following:-

- (1) Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on Cooperation in the Field of Defence

The Agreement will provide the framework for expanding our military technical cooperation on an institutionalized basis. It envisages mechanisms to be set up for promoting defence cooperation. It will pave the way for moving

our relationship to a new plane, that of joint research and development in the future.

- (2) Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of Ukraine on Co-operation in the Fields of Science and Technology

The agreement envisages regular meetings of a joint committee, exchange of scientists and holding of seminars, joint research programmes and contacts between scientific organizations. There are over ten ongoing joint research programmes and this agreement will allow for further expansion of collaboration in this area.

- (3) Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Civil and Commercial Matters between the Republic of India and Ukraine

The Treaty provides for reciprocal arrangements for service of summons, execution of decrees etc. In an environment of increased contacts and enhanced engagement it eases legal procedures in the field of consular affairs.

- (4) Agreement between Atomic Energy Regulatory Board, Government of India and the State Nuclear Regulatory Inspectorate of Ukraine for Exchange of Technical Information and Co-operation on Nuclear Safety and Radiation Protection

The Agreement flows from the continuing interaction between AERB and the Ukrainian nuclear regulator and will now allow them to cooperate in a structured format. The Agreement envisages cooperation in some very important regulatory activities, including legislative regulations, safety guides and technical criteria on nuclear safety; siting, design, construction, operation, decommissioning of nuclear facilities; waste management and environment impact etc.

- (5) Memorandum of Understanding in the Field of Standardisation, Conformity Assessment and Quality between the Bureau of Indian Standards and the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of Ukraine

The MoU is in continuation of a similar MoU signed for a period of five years in 2005. It envisages enhanced economic engagement through elimination of technical barriers to trade and economic relations.

INDIA AND CANADA

The 11th meeting of the India-Canada Joint Working Group (JWG) on Counter Terrorism was held in New Delhi on 29 November 2012. The meeting took place within the framework of the enhanced interaction in bilateral relations between India and Canada, and in keeping with the desire of the governments of India and Canada towards greater cooperation in counter terrorism matters. India and Canada shared their respective threat assessments and informed each other of the measures taken by them to strengthen counter terrorism policy and structure.

Both nations also discussed the follow-up of the Mumbai terror attack of 26 November 2008. India and Canada also exchanged views on international developments, coordination in international fora and their bilateral cooperation in the area. The next and the 12th meeting of the Joint Working Group will be held in Canada in 2013 on mutually convenient dates.

The meeting was co-chaired by Asoke Kumar Mukerji, Special Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, India and Artur Wilczynski, Director General for International Relations, Canada.

INDIA AND CHINA

Shiv Shankar Menon, the national security advisor as well as negotiator in the border talks with China paid the visit here on 2 December 2012. This was the first visit by any top ranking Indian official post changes announcement in Communist Party of China. Menon would meet the next premier of China-Li Keqiang. China might look for diplomatic indicator from the Indian official suggesting that India would not join its forces with Philippines and Vietnam in the passport row which is started by China. Three countries protested against China when it embossed China's map on those areas which are controlled as well as claimed by them on the passports.

China as well as India were working over to explore the positive signal in order to rise above the criticism that both these nations have already had 15 rounds of negotiations over border but all in vain

without any significant improvements. In the meanwhile, the passport row by China has vitiated this situation.

The visit by Menon is very important, especially because China is preparing itself for change of guard with the premier as well as president being replaced in March 2013.

Impact of the Agreement

The agreement would create new pathways for greater economic integration. Post, FTA in investments and services, India was also planning to hold market opening negotiations like these with other members of the group. FTA was already implemented with Malaysia and Singapore.

Negotiations with Thailand and Indonesia were still on its way. This FTA would also create pathways for discussions on the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) which ASEAN planned sealing with its six crucial trade partners, including India. ASEAN along with the six partners, India, China, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and South Korea would begin first negotiation rounds on RCEP in 2013. This would form the economic alliance of the world in 2015. Final legal paper work on investment and services pact would be given a concrete shape by February 2013. Signing of the agreement would take place in August 2013.

India to sign Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty in criminal matters with four other nations

India would sign Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty in the criminal matters with four other countries in 2013. The treaty in general helps in mutual assistance between two nations for preventing, investigating as well as prosecuting crime. Discussions on treaty were initiated already with four countries namely Azerbaijan, Israel, Nepal and Oman. Ministry of Home Affairs announced that formal signing of this treaty will take place in 2013. As of now, India has signed the treaty with 32 countries which include Russia, Egypt, US, South Africa, France, Switzerland, UK, Canada, UAE and Iran. The agreement is important because it helps in fighting back the trans-national organised crimes such as money laundering, terrorism, counterfeit

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currency, smuggling of explosives and arms, drug trafficking and much more.

INDIA AND ASEAN

The awaited Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in investments and services was finalised between India and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on 20 December 2012. The actions would be beneficial in enhancing the trade to around 100 billion dollar by 2015.

Also, it will help in enhancing the economic ties. FTA in the goods was operationalised in 2011 and since then both the sides were busy in widening the pact by also including investments and services. Trade between the two sides is at present 80 billion dollar. India's Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh declared that after implementation of FTA in the goods, the trade between the two sides increased by 41 percent in the year 2011-2012. Manmohan Singh announced at the summit that two-way flows in terms of investment grew rapidly and reached the mark of 43 billion dollar over last 10 years. Because the investments through ASEAN in India grew, therefore the ASEAN countries also emerged as lucrative destination for the Indian companies. India was demanding from ASEAN to open the services sector even more which would also include the steps to cover contractual service suppliers along with independent professional services at all its levels. But following difficult rounds of talks and discussions on 19 December 2012, India decided to drop the demand of independent professional services. As trade-off, ASEAN on the other hand dropped the demand for prudential measures in context with financial services.

INDIA & SYRIA

India announced an assistance of 2.5 million US dollars to Syria on 30 January 2013 at the High-level International Humanitarian Pledging Conference for Syria held in Kuwait. Syria continues to face acute crisis as the impasse has become explosive and could engulf the region. India has strongly expressed its concern on the steep escalation of violence and has called upon all sides in Syria particularly the Syrian leadership to abjure violence

and resolve all issues peacefully through discussions taking into account the aspirations of the people of Syria. India is extremely concerned about the security situation in Syria and the increasing violence. India considers that the only acceptable way to resolve the internal crisis in Syria is through urgent peaceful negotiations with participation of all parties taking into account the legitimate aspirations of all Syrians.

INDIA AND USA

India and the United States inaugurated the first triangular India-US-Africa partnership in agricultural training at the National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE), Hyderabad, on 6 January 2013 for 30 trainees from three African countries – Kenya, Liberia and Malawi. The three-year triangular partnership program aims to improve agricultural productivity, strengthen agricultural value chains, and support market institutions in Kenya, Liberia, and Malawi. Supported by the U.S. Government through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), by the Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Agriculture of India, and implemented by two of India's leading agricultural training institutes - National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE), Hyderabad, and the Chaudhary Charan Singh National Institute of Agricultural Marketing (NIAM), Jaipur, the program will train 180 mid-level African Government and private sector agriculture professionals from Kenya, Malawi, and Liberia in agricultural extension practices, agri-business, and agricultural marketing. The training will include classroom sessions, group work, field trips, and interaction with industry experts. After their training, these professionals will go home with new knowledge, skills, and potential innovations to address their domestic challenges in food and nutrition security.

INDIA & ITALY

The Supreme Court of India on 18 January 2013 decided that Kerala had no jurisdiction to investigate into the matter of Italian Marines shooting incident in which two fishermen were killed on 15 February 2012. The Union Government was directed by the

Supreme Court bench of two Judges comprising Chief Justice Altamas Kabir and J. Chelameswar for setting up of a special court for proceeding ahead with the trials of the two Italian Marines namely Massimiliano Latorre and Salvatore Girone, accused of shooting the two fishermen. The highest judiciary body of India described that the Union Government of India had the jurisdiction to move ahead with the process of investigation and trial on the two Italian Marines.

Conditions Put

Forward by the Supreme Court

The Supreme Court bench in its decision lifted the orders of the High Court of Kerala that restricted the movement of the marines from the state and report to the City Commissioner of Kochi Police Station but also ordered that the same will be regulated for them at Delhi in which they can leave Delhi only after taking a leave from the court and reporting to the Station House Commissioner at Chanakyapuri Police Station, New Delhi once in a week, the relaxation may be extended further. The Court also ordered that the petitioner marines would remain under the control of Italian Embassy at Delhi and their movements will be monitored by it. The embassy will be responsible for making the duo report to the trial court when ever required to do so. Their passport, which has been surrendered to the trial court at Kollam would be transferred to the Union Home Ministry by the Court itself. The Apex Court also directed the Special Court to be constituted to carry on with the matter following the provisions enshrined in the Maritime Zones Act, 1976, the Indian Penal Code, the Cr.P.C. The Court also directed the Special Court that in situations of conflict between the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) 1982 and the domestic law, it should follow the provisions mentioned in the UNCLOS.

Italy's Stand on the Issue

- The Republic of Italy is also carrying proceedings as per the penal provisions of available in the country against the two accused marines. The available panel provisions of Italy can result into the sentence of 21 years of imprisonment to the marines.

- Italy has also been declaring its right in carrying out the prosecution of the two marines, since very beginning.

INDIA AND BANGLADESH

India and Bangladesh on 28 January 2013 signed two landmark agreements on extradition of criminals and terrorists and liberalising the visa regime. However, refusal provisions were incorporated into the extradition treaty. If extradition of someone poses a threat to national security, a nation has the right to refuse the deportation request. Moreover, no political detainee will be brought under the purview of the extradition treaty. In case of a controversy during an extradition process, the matter will be resolved according to the laws of the country concerned. The other agreement has provision for a friendlier visa regime for citizens of Bangladesh. Businessmen will be provided a five-year, multiple-entry visa. Those travelling on medical grounds will be eligible for a two-year, multiple-entry visa, which could be extended for one more year. Three attendants of a patient will also be given visa. Until now, India was granting Bangladeshi tourists visas for up to six months and had allowed one person to accompany a patient.

Rail Link Projects

India and Bangladesh decided in the third week of January 2013, to speed up its rail link projects in order to increase the contact among the people of two neighbouring nations. As of now, there are four ongoing rail link projects and these are Chilahati (Bangladesh)-Haldibari (India), Birol (Bangladesh)-Radhikapur (India), Akhaura (Bangladesh)-Agartala (India) and Shahbazpur (Bangladesh)-Mahishashan (India). The senior railway officials from the two countries decided in the joint meeting to also examine feasibility of establishment of rail link between Feni (Bangladesh) and Belonia (India). Railway delegations from India and Bangladesh discussed about the operational, technical as well as financial matters as well. Discussions on reforming inter-country freight train operations, improving functioning of Maitree Express, upgrading the infrastructure as well as establishment of even more rail connectivity points, were held. Delegations from

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India and Bangladesh also agreed in the meanwhile to increase frequency of the Maitree Express as well as introduction of the system of return tickets. Working group which includes government officials from India and Bangladesh were formed in order to check the range of issues such as operational, financial, commercial as well as security of the Maitree Express.

INDIA & PAKISTAN

Secretary level talks between India and Pakistan on water sharing, scheduled to begin in Islamabad on 28 January 2013, were postponed. The new dates for the talks are yet to be decided. The two-day talks were cancelled in the wake of tension between the two countries over ceasefire violations along the Line of Control. The two countries were scheduled to discuss the Tulbul navigation project-Wullar Barrage issue during the talks. This is the second high-level bilateral interaction that has been put off because of tension between India and Pakistan over ceasefire violations along the LoC in Jammu and Kashmir. In January 2013, Pakistan Commerce Minister Makhdoom. Amin Fahim called off a scheduled visit to India to attend a business meet in Agra.

India and Pakistan

DGMOs (Director Generals of Military Operations) of India and Pakistan on 16 January 2013 agreed not to allow escalation of tensions along the Line of Control (LoC) with the Pakistan Army asking its troops to observe ceasefire strictly and exercise restraint. The ways to defuse the tension on the LoC in Jammu and Kashmir, which was triggered by the brutal killing of two Indian soldiers by the Pakistan Army, were discussed during a telephonic conversation between the Director Generals of Military Operations (DGMOs) of the two sides. The Pakistan Army DGMO conveyed that orders have been passed to troops to strictly observe the ceasefire and exercise restraint.

India and Pakistan Exchanged Nuclear Units List as a Part of the Agreement

India and Pakistan exchanged their nuclear units' lists on 1 January 2013, as it is customary since

20 years. The list which contains the names of nuclear units of two countries, are exchanged between India and Pakistan as a custom and part of an agreement which prevents them from aiming the nuclear installations of each others' nations. The exchange of the list of nuclear units has been going on, on 1 January every year since 1992. This is a customary action as a part of Agreement on Prohibition of Attacks against Nuclear Installations and Facilities which was signed in December 1988. The external affairs ministry of India announced that the two countries exchanged the list of nuclear installations through their diplomatic channels at Islamabad and New Delhi. Apart from this list, the two nations, as a part of another bilateral agreement signed back in 2008, share the list of each others' prisoners in the jails of two countries. The bilateral agreement was signed between India and Pakistan in May 2008, according to which a complete list of the citizens of both the countries living in the jails of other country should be exchanged two times every year on 1 January and in July.

INDIA & VIETNAM

India and Vietnam on 15 January 2013 signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which is directly meant for building capacity and developing institutional framework and identifying thrust areas and opportunities for micro, small and medium enterprises in Vietnam. The MoU was signed during the 4 day state visit of Vice President Hamid Ansari to Vietnam.

Significance of the MoU

- The MoU signed would be focusing on building capacity for developing policy and institutional framework through exchange of experts for the development of MSMEs, and conducting industrial surveys and feasibility studies to identify thrust areas and opportunities for development of MSMEs in Vietnam.
- It ideates the promotion of partnership projects and institutional cooperation between the two countries, organising exhibitions and trade fairs for marketing the products of MSMEs, exchange of business missions to initiate

transfer of technology and business alliance, and providing training for improvement of managerial and technical skills for MSMEs.

The MoU is part of India's efforts to further strengthen economic ties with Vietnam. The two countries have set a trade and investment target of 7 billion dollars by 2015. A Joint Committee comprising representatives from the Ministry of Planning and Investment (Vietnam) and Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (India) is going to monitor the implementation of the MoU.

INDIA AND SRI LANKA

India and Sri Lanka after the 8th round meet of the Joint India-Sri Lanka Commission on 22 January 2013 at New Delhi inked two agreements.

The signed agreements are:

- I. Agreement on Combating International Terrorism and Illicit Drug Trafficking; and
- II. Revised Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement.

The External Affairs Ministers of India, Salman Khurshid and Sri Lanka, G L Peiris signed the following Agreements. The Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) was preceded by the Senior Officials Meeting at the level of the Foreign Secretaries of the two countries on 21 January 2013.

During the Joint Commission meet both the sides discussed bilateral relations that included development cooperation, trade, investment, power, science and technology, health, agriculture, connectivity, people to people contacts, culture and education.

Major discussions decisions made during India-Sri Lanka 8th Joint Commission Meet

- Both the nations recognized the need of creating a special economic partnership framework to achieve the shared goals of poverty alleviation, job creation and economic development for the people of the two countries, the two sides decided to take several steps to further deepen trade, tourism and investment relations. In relation to the same, an agreement was reached to encourage closer economic and trade linkages between all stakeholders with a view to double the bilateral trade to 10 billion US dollar, in next three years. For initiation of

this the two nations, agreed to initiate a dialogue between the Commerce Secretary of India and the Secretary of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development of Sri Lanka at an early date, so that a framework for a special economic partnership between the two countries can be evolved.

- Both sides noted the impressive growth of tourism traffic between the two countries both ways. India currently contributed the largest number of tourist arrivals in Sri Lanka and over 250,000 Sri Lankans visited India in 2011-2012. India and Sri Lanka agreed towards enhancement of connectivity, people to people exchanges and movement of goods and services, the two sides would meet at the earliest to explore the possibility of finalizing and signing a revised Air Services Agreement. They also agreed to work towards the resumption of ferry services between Talaimannar and Rameswaram for which the Joint Committee on Ferry Services would meet at the earliest. Decision was also made to hold the meeting of the Joint Working Group on Tourism in the first quarter to 2013 to identify potential areas of cooperation, including marketing and capacity-building.
- Sri Lanka and India made decisions to enhance bilateral cooperation in the areas of New and Renewable energy, and in this context agreed to conclude a MoU on Cooperation in New and Renewable Energy. They also decided to cooperate in establishing three power plants of aggregate capacity of 15 MW using biomass fuel, and enhance cooperation in wind and solar energy sectors. The two nations also agreed towards enhancement of bilateral cooperation in the fields of oil and gas, civil nuclear energy, science and technology and space technology was also made.
- The Joint Commission noted that both sides are committed to decrease incidents pertaining to fishing on the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL). Both countries agreed that the use of force could not be justified under any circumstances and reiterated in this regard the importance of continuing to extend humane treatment to all fishermen. Both sides welcomed the decisions arrived at the two

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meetings of the Joint Working Group on Fishing held in March 2011 and January 2012 respectively, and encouraged senior officials to meet regularly to continue the dialogue to strengthen cooperation on fishing related issues.

- The Joint Commission took note of the collaborative initiatives in the field of Information & Communication Technology, education, human resources development, training and capacity building, among others. To support the cause an agreement was reached to encourage the finalisation of the MoU between the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) and the Department of Open Distance Learning in Sri Lanka, organisation of more Education Fairs in Sri Lanka, setting up Provincial Centres for English Language Training and finalisation of the MoU for cooperation in connection with the Ten Year Presidential Initiative to Steer Sri Lanka towards a Trilingual Society by 2020.
- Expressing satisfaction at cooperation in the field of culture, both sides reviewed and positively assessed the progress of work for restoration of Thiruketheeswaram temple at Mannar, renovation of the Duraiappah Stadium, and Jaffna Culture Centre. Both sides agreed to jointly celebrate the 150th birth anniversaries of Swami Vivekananda (in 2013-14) and of Anagarika Dharmapala (in 2014-15).
- Both sides agreed to enhance cooperation in the energy sector and to promote dialogue on security and defence issues of relevance to the bilateral relationship. The Joint Commission noted that the trilateral cooperation mechanism between India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives was an important initiative to promote maritime security in the region.

Both the sides, Sri Lanka and India also expressed satisfaction at the substantive developments in bilateral relations between the two countries in existence after the 7th session of the Joint Commission held at Colombo on 26 November 2010.

INDIA & BRICS

The group set up by the BRICS nation to

exchange information regarding the prevailing systems and institutional mechanisms through meetings. The Health Ministers of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) in the second week of January 2013 decided to set up a Technical Working Group (TWG). As per the Agreed Action Plan released by the Health and Family Welfare Ministry, member countries will nominate their respective Nodal Officers to work jointly for the Working Group. The group will exchange information regarding the prevailing systems and institutional mechanisms through meetings.

INDIA AND AUSTRALIA

India and Australia on 28 January 2013 agreed to concentrate on priority areas like energy and food security for mutual benefit of the two countries. At the 14th Session of the India - Australia Joint Ministerial Commission held in New Delhi, the two sides underlined the importance of a solid institutional framework to facilitate future growth in bilateral trade and investment. The Commission was co-chaired by Minister of Commerce, Industry and Textiles Anand Sharma and his Australian counterpart, Craig Emerson. India and Australia welcomed the positive momentum in the India-Australia relationship, based on shared values, converging interests and growth in economic links. The successful state visit to India by Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard in October 2012 underlined both countries deep commitment to advance the Strategic Partnership agreed in November 2009. The Minister for External Affairs, Salman Khurshid, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator Bob Carr, held the 8th Foreign Ministers' Framework Dialogue on the 21 January 2013, to review the bilateral relations and build on the momentum achieved by Prime Minister Gillard's visit. The two countries also met at Ministerial level to advance Agriculture, Energy, Education and Science & Technology links.

India and Australia emphasised the importance of closer trade and investment relations as a critical component of the strategic partnership. Both nations underlined the importance of a solid institutional framework to facilitate future growth in bilateral

trade and investment. In this context, they highlighted the priority they placed on the conclusion of a mutually beneficial Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA). The countries welcomed progress through four rounds of negotiations to date, including the exchange of goods offers. They looked forward to a future exchange offers on services. Ministers reiterated that a comprehensive, high quality equitable agreement would broaden the base of merchandise trade, remove non-tariff barriers that impede trade in services, and facilitate and encourage investment. India and Australia welcomed the growth in the bilateral investment relationship and agreed on the importance of strong bilateral investment flows particularly in priority areas such as mining, advanced manufacturing, infrastructure, clean technology and tourism.

India and Australia recognized the critical role played by industry in driving trade and investment between the two countries. In this regard, they expressed their strong support for the initiatives of the India Australia CEO Forum. Both nations welcomed the outcomes from the second forum meeting on 16 October 2012 held in New Delhi including agreement to promote skills training, increased mutual cooperation on infrastructure development, promotion of services trade, and the creation of investment champions to identify opportunities and navigate government processes. The nations commended the important work under way in the Forum. The nations welcomed the third meeting of the Forum to be held in Australia in March 2013.

Other areas of mutual interests are as following:

- The nations discussed Australia and India's mutual interests in the effectiveness of global and regional economic institutions.
- The nations welcomed the launch of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) negotiations towards a modern, comprehensive, high quality, and mutually beneficial regional economic partnership agreement. They discussed their mutual commitment to strengthening the East Asia Summit (EAS) as a forum that incorporated all the major economies in the India-Pacific

region.

- The nations discussed the importance of consolidating the G20 as the pre-eminent global economic forum.
- The nations underlined their commitment to reinforce the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC), both during India's remaining period as chair and Australia's two year term as chair from November 2013.
- The nations reaffirmed their commitment to finding ways to break through the current impasse in the Doha Round of World Trade Organization negotiations.
- The nations welcomed the inaugural Ministerial-level dialogue on energy security in December 2012 as a significant step in developing a strategic relationship on energy and resources.
- The nations acknowledged the critical importance of education and skills development in helping to achieve both countries targets for innovation, productivity and economic growth and welcomed efforts underway to strengthen the bilateral knowledge partnership.
- The nations noted the contribution of the Australia-India Strategic Research Fund.
- The nations highlighted research work underway to lift agricultural productivity and make crops more disease-resistant. India and Australia agreed that the next Joint Ministerial Commission will be held in Australia in 2014.

INDIANS & NIGERIA

India on 19 January 2013 issued an advisory to its citizens in Nigeria, asking them to limit their exposure to areas where radical Islamic sect Boko Haram is active. The Indian High Commission in an advisory placed on its website also warned Indian crew-members to be careful while plying their ships in Gulf of Guinea, dominated by pirates.

The advisory also mentioned some Indians who were victims of recent violence caused by Islamic fundamentalists Boko Haram in the northern city of Kano. It was the first time in recent years that Indian nationals and their establishments were targeted for

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attack. Northern part of oil rich Nigeria came under terrorist attacks by Boko Haram which killed many people through shootings and suicide attacks.

INDIA & MYANMAR

The 18th National Level Meeting between Myanmar and India was held on 28 -29 December, 2012 in New Delhi. The Indian delegation was led by A.K Mangotra, Secretary, Border Management, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. While the Myanmar delegation was led by Brig. Gen. Kyaw Zan Myint, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Home Affairs, and Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. The major area of Discussion was that of drug trade, arms smuggling and extremism/terrorism.

A.K Mangotra highlighting the shared culture and traditionally close relationship between India and Myanmar, expressed India's dedication to strengthen the cooperation between the two countries to eliminate the nexus between the drug trade, arms smuggling and extremism/terrorism. Mangotra wanted Myanmar's cooperation for co-ordinated patrolling along the Indo -Myanmar border and

dismantling IIGs camps in Myanmar for peace and economic prosperity in the region. While Brig. Gen. Kyaw Zan Myint deputy minister of Myanmar assured that Myanmar is never going to allow insurgents and negative elements to use its own territory for activities inimical to its neighbour India.

Highlights of the discussion Held Between India and Myanmar:

- Both sides discussed and agreed to cooperate closely on issues like insurgent Groups along the border, arms Smuggling & drug trafficking, border management issues, Myanmar Fishermen in A&N jails, illegal smuggling of wild life parts, inspection and verification of pillars etc.
- Both sides expressed satisfaction over opening of a third Border Liaison Office (BLO) between Changlang, India and Pangsau, Myanmar.
- Both the leaders emphasized on nurturing BLOs to promote cooperation between law enforcement agencies of both the countries for peace and tranquility along the border. It was decided to open a fourth BLO in Nagaland sector between Ukhrul, Manipur, India and Somra, Myanmar.

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. Recently with which country India hold second 2+2 dialogue.
 - (a) France
 - (b) Japan
 - (c) Russia
 - (d) Britain
2. To which country India recently signed a treaty on avoidance of double taxation .
 - (a) Germany
 - (b) Japan
 - (c) U.K
 - (d) Spain
3. In which Asian Country there are the largest number of Indian origin people lives
 - (a) Kuwait
 - (b) Saudi Arabia
 - (c) Sri Lanka
 - (d) Myanmar
4. Which Indian state does not touch, Bangladesh border
 - (a) Meghalaya
 - (b) Tripura
 - (c) Assam
 - (d) Nagaland
5. Which Indian State does not touch Chinese border
 - (a) Sikkim
 - (b) Uttranchal
 - (c) Assam
 - (d) Arunachal Pradesh
6. Which European Country has emerged the top trading partner of India
 - (a) France
 - (b) Britain
 - (c) Germany
 - (d) Switzerland
7. Which was the first country with India established a strategic partnership ?
 - (a) Russia
 - (b) America
 - (c) Germany
 - (d) France
8. Consider the Following statement
 - (i) India is the Largest Investor and trading partner of Sri Lanka
 - (ii) Sittwe port is situated in myanmar
 Which of the above statement is/are true
 - (a) Both 1 & 2
 - (b) Only 1
 - (c) Only 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
9. Consider the Following statements
 - (i) India is not the signatory of united nations high Commissioner for refugees (UNHCR)

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- (ii) Mexico has the largest number of refugee population in the world
Which of the above statement is/are true
(a) Only 1 (b) Both 1 & 2
(c) Neither 1 nor 2 (d) Only 2
10. Raj Keswur Purryag is the President of
(a) Trinidad & Tobaco
(b) Singapore (c) Mauritius
(d) None of these
11. Consider the following statements
1. Australia is the world's largest Uranium producer
2. India does not sign nuclear deal with Australia
Which of the above statement is/are true?
(a) Both 1 & 2 (b) only 1
(c) only 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
12. Consider the following statements
1. BRICS headquarters is situated in New Delhi
2. India has the lowest HDI index among BRICS nations
- Which of the above statement is/are true?
(a) Both 1 & 2
(b) only 1
(c) only 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
13. Consider the following statements
1. River Brahmaputra is known as Yarlung Zangbo in China
2. 3 Indian States Touches Chinese Border
Which of the above statement is/are true?
a. Only 1
b. Only 2
c. Neither 1 nor 2
d. Both 1 & 2

ANSWERS

- | | |
|---------|---------|
| 1. (b) | 2. (c) |
| 3. (d) | 4. (d) |
| 5. (c) | 6. (c) |
| 7. (a) | 8. (a) |
| 9. (c) | 10. (c) |
| 11. (a) | 12. (c) |
| 13. (a) | |

ECONOMY

National Cancer Institute and a National Cardio Care Centre to be developed at Jhajjar

The Union Government of India on 24 November 2012 announced to set up a National Cancer Institute (NCI) and a National Cardio Care Centre (NCCC) at the second campus of All-India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Badhsa village of Jhajjar, Haryana during the inauguration of the Outreach OPD of the AIIMS-II campus spread over 300 acres. This outreach OPD is well equipped with all the facilities and has a capacity of 1000 beds and the first OPD in the nation to provide free medicines to the patients.

On this occasion, the Union Health Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad also declared that the AIIMS-II, with a total capacity of 2,100 beds, would be developed as a world-class institute. International bids in form of the Expression of Interest for drafting the master plan was already called on by the ministry. The Proposed National Cancer Institute would be the country's largest cancer institute with a capacity of 600 beds and facilities of treating almost every form of cancer.

South African Government Rolled Out Nelson Mandela Bank Notes

The South African Reserve Bank on 6 November 2012 rolled out new bank notes bearing the face of the country's first black President Nelson Mandela marking it as a tribute to him. The Note issued by the South African Reserve Bank, displayed the 94-year-old anti-apartheid icon's smiling face. Also, the earlier images of one of the five big animals featured on the old bank notes – lion, leopard, rhino, buffalo and elephant – will be retained on the reverse of the note. Nelson Mandela is currently living out his

retirement in his childhood rural village of Qunu in the Eastern Cape Province. Nelson Mandela held office between 1994 and 1999 and he is the first black face to appear on South African money.

Mallya gets lifeline, loses Royal Challenge

Dealing a shot of good news, international liquor major Diageo, on Friday, announced its decision to acquire 53.4 per cent stake in Vijay Mallya-owned United Spirits Ltd. (USL) for Rs.11,166.50 crore.

Diageo announced from London that it had entered into agreements with United Breweries (Holdings) Ltd. and USL to acquire 27.4 per cent stake in USL for Rs.5,725 crore at Rs.1,440 a share. Shares of USL closed at Rs.1,343.25 on Thursday. UB Holding and associate companies will sell 19.3 per cent stake to Diageo and a large part of this money will directly go to UB Holdings, which will de-leverage its balance sheet.

The board of directors of USL has cleared a proposal to make a preferential allotment of USL shares, amounting to 10 per cent of the company's enlarged share capital, to Diageo at Rs.1,440 a share. The proceeds from this will go into clearing a part of USL's debt of Rs.8,300 crore. After this stake sale, the UB Holdings group's shareholding in USL will come down to 14.9 per cent.

Following completion of these agreements, Mr. Mallya will continue as Chairman of USL, and UBHL. He will work with Diageo to build the USL business in India.

Open offer to buy 26 % stake

Since these agreements trigger the Securities and Exchange Board of India's takeover code, Diageo will launch an open offer to buy 26 per cent stake from the public at Rs.1,440 a share.

The open offer will cost Diageo Rs.5,441 crore. Shareholders need to approve this proposal.

On completion of this process, Diageo will hold a total of 53.4 per cent stake in USL with an aggregate cost of Rs.11,166.50 crore.

“It is completely a win-win for both. I am personally very happy that finally the dream has come true,” UB Group Chairman Mr. Mallya said in a conference call with journalists from London. He made it clear that the money generated from this deal would not be utilised to revive Kingfisher Airlines as had been widely speculated.

“I have now done what I think is best for my spirits business and, of course, we will also address the needs of Kingfisher Airlines, but these will be done separately for the good of the company and its stakeholders,” Mr. Mallya added.

“I have had a long association with Diageo and, therefore, I am confident that this winning partnership with Diageo provides USL with the best possible platform for future growth,” he said. “I am delighted to remain part of that journey as Chairman of USL as we work together to build continued value for the shareholders of USL and UBHL,” Mr. Mallya said.

Family jewel?

He denied that he sold his family jewel (USL) “I have not sold my family jewel, only embellished them,” he said.

Diageo’s COO Ivan Menezes said the acquisition USL’s shareholding was fully aligned with the company’s strategy to build its presence in the world’s faster growing markets besides enhancing its position as the world’s leading premium drinks company.

He said UB group’s manufacturing and distribution capabilities and Diageo’s marketing and brand building capabilities would be a unique combination.

“As a result of the agreements, we will be well positioned to take the growth opportunities presented by a spirits market where growth is driven by the increasing number of middle-class consumers. The combination of USL’s strong business with the capabilities which Diageo brings as the world’s leading premium drinks company will ensure that

USL continues to lead the industry in India,” Paul S. Walsh, Chief Executive of Diageo, said in a statement. Diageo has asked the UB group to release all security interests over USL shares to be acquired by it.

Good News

Analysts said this was the best Mr. Mallya could have done. “He is pushed to the wall to sell stake and there is no other choice. The deal is in line with market expectation and he fetched more money than expected. It is good for the company,” said market analyst Ambarish Baliga.

The entire deal is expected to complete in early 2013. Diageo will fund the acquisition through existing cash resources and debt.

Diageo and MR. Mallya have entered into a MoU to form a 50:50 joint venture which will own United National Breweries’ traditional sorghum beer business in South Africa.

They are also considering the possibility of extending this joint venture to maximise opportunities in Africa and Asia (excluding India). USL shares closed with a gain of 1.22 per cent at Rs.1359.70 on the BSE.

United Spirits’ brands include Royal Challenge, Directors Special, Signature whisky; Black Dog scotch and White Mischief in vodka.

Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved 9.5 percent Stake Disinvestment in NTPC

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) approved the disinvestment of 9.5 percent Government Stake in the Maharatna PSU-National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) on 22 November 2012 from its holding of 84.50 percent.

The disinvestment would be done through the stock exchanges following the SEBI Rules, via an offer for sales of the shares. The equity disinvestment of NTPC would bring back a sum of about 13000 crore rupees.

With this disinvestment the governments holding on NTPC would fall down from present 84.5 percent to 75 percent, which will adhere to the minimum public shareholding norms that was stipulated by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), the market regulators. The recorded paid-up equity capital of NTPC on of 31 March 2012

Economy

under administrative control of the Ministry of Power was 8245.46 crore rupees.

NTPC

NTPC-the National Thermal Power Corporation is a Public Service Undertaking Company engaged in power generation that came into existence in the year 1975 to accelerate the rate of power generation in India. In the Forbes Global 2000 ranking list of the World's biggest companies NTPC was ranked at 337th position in 2012.

At present NTPCs generating capacity is 39674 MW and by 2032 it is expected that the company would have a capacity of 128000 MW.

Oman Banned

Import of Eggs and Chicken from India

The Sultanate of Oman on 10 November 2012 issued an official decree banning the import of eggs and chicken from India. Oman that is the biggest egg export market of India issued the ban following the recommendations of the World Organisation for Animal Health about the outbreak of bird-flu was confirmed by the Government run Turkey Farm at Hesaraghatta, Karnataka in the month of October.

The Sultanate of Oman banned import of eggs and chicken from India for second time in 2012 and this ban is going to affect the economic conditions of the poultry farmers of India as this ban would have an impact on a third of poultry export from India. Oman resumed the import of Poultry Products from India after a ban that lasted for five months in the last week of September. The previous ban was made in effect of reports of bird flu witnessed in Bihar.

GAIL and RSPCL signed an Agreement of Joint Venture on Gas Supply Pipeline Project

The GAIL Gas Limited and the Rajasthan State Petroleum Corporation Limited (RSPCL) signed an agreement of Joint Venture on 5 November 2012 to lay down the natural gas supply pipeline in the state. Both the bodies will together formulate a long-term plan on commercial, domestic as well as industrial consumption of the gas. The agreement was signed by GAIL Gas Limited Chief Executive Officer J. Vasani and Ajitabh Sharma Managing Director of RSPCL in

presence of C.K. Mathew, State Chief Secretary.

The joint venture would help in supply of pollution free LPG, CNG and LNG to consumers of different categories and would also be responsible for development of the CNG stations on the road sides of the state and national highways. The project would also supply the gas required by the industrial units that is coming up on the Delhi-Mumbai industrial corridor. The transport, supply and distribution of gas would be carried after getting approvals from the Petroleum & Natural Gas Regulatory Board.

Moody's downgrades ArcelorMittal rating to speculative

Moody's, on Tuesday, downgraded ArcelorMittal's long-term credit rating by one notch to Ba1, putting it into speculative or 'junk' territory, saying the deterioration in steel markets means the company can no longer reduce its debt enough to keep an investment grade mark. "The downgrade reflects the deterioration in global steel markets over the last six months," said Moody's, pointing to the company posting its worst performance in three years last quarter.

Arcelor Mittal, the world's top steelmaker, had an operating loss and its gross debt rose in the third quarter.

"As a result, the amount of debt reduction the company must realise in order to hold a Baa3 rating is so large as to be unachievable..." said Steve Oman, Senior Vice-President and lead analyst for the EMEA steel industry at Moody's. The Baa3 rating is the lowest investment-grade rating at Moody's.

Air India on course for a turnaround

Air India's (AI) performance in the first half of the current fiscal indicates that the national carrier is on track to meet the various norms laid down in the turnaround plan that were approved by the government in April. Various financial and operational restructuring currently underway would accrue substantial benefits and the airline seems determined to turn EBITDA positive by March 2013, said AI officials.

On-time performance in the first half improved to 85 per cent from below 80 per cent in the first half last year. For domestic, it was 89 per cent (78 per cent) while international was 81 per cent (78 per cent).

Passenger load factor improved to 70.9 per cent with the domestic services contributing substantially, the requirement being 69.5 per cent. AI has achieved a network yield of Rs. 4.31 per passenger km, with domestic yield of Rs. 6 and an international yield of Rs. 3.5, which is comparable with other full service carriers. On fleet utilisation, AI achieved an average utilisation of 10.9 hours for its Airbus fleet as compared to 10.50 hours set in the turnaround plan. The wide body fleet hit 13 hours utilisation as against 14 hours set in the turnaround plan.

The number of passengers in November showed a substantial increase, with an average of 46,300 passengers flying daily, of which 66 per cent were domestic passengers. Productivity Linked Incentives have been abolished from July 1 and the airline has taken steps to operationalize the engineering and ground handling businesses with the appointment of SBI Caps as its advisors. Towards monetizing its real estate assets, DTZ has been appointed as global real estate consultant. The objective is to monetize Rs 500 crore a year with a target of Rs 5,000 crore in 10 years. The IT system has been upgraded. A voluntary retirement scheme (VRS) has been finalized at the board level and has been submitted to the ministry of civil aviation for approval. VRS is targeted at 5,000 surplus employees.

With 20,000 employees to be shifted to the ground handling and engineering businesses, the effective strength of the parent company would come down substantially. "The objective is to have an aircraft to employee ratio of 1:100," an official said.

"Route rationalisation continues to be a significant part of our strategy to return to profitability.

"In the first half, domestic services contributed surplus of Rs.200 crore as compared to Rs.57 crore loss in the first half of last year. 65 per cent of the domestic routes contributed to higher yield," said S Venkat, Director-Finance, Air India.

Through various cost reduction measures, AI has been able to bring down cost by nearly Rs.600 crore in the first half, officials said. The restructuring of working capital loan and non-convertible debenture issue will bring down AI's interest burden substantially. AI's short term loans will come down to Rs. 4,500 crore from Rs. 22,500 crore.

Reserve Bank of India asked Banks not to Provide Loans for Purchase of Gold

The Reserve Bank of India, in its notification released on 19 November 2012 directed banks not to provide loans to its customers for purchase of all types of gold, which includes primary gold, jewellery, bullion, gold coins, units of Gold Exchange Traded Funds (ETF) and units of gold mutual funds. The order was directed for discouraging people from getting involved in speculative activities. The notification from the Reserve Bank of India also directed the banks not to grant advances against gold bullion to traders or dealers, as such advances would be utilised with the purpose of offering finance for gold purchase at auctions and speculative holding of stocks and bullion. This notification allowed the banks to provide finances to the jewelers for their general working capital requirements.

The decision of RBI came up in response to the suggestion of the working Group constituted after the announcement of the Monetary Policy Statement of April 2012. The working group suggested that the banks are not permitted to finance purchase of any type of gold other than the working capital. This decision of RBI came up in response to the significant growth in the imports of the gold in past few years that has created pressure on the current account deficit. The Gold imports of India in 2011-12 stood up at 60 billion dollar.

Civil Aviation Ministry approved New Traffic Rights to Indian Carriers

The Civil Aviation Ministry in the first week of November 2012 approved new traffic rights to Indian carriers for the next three seasons to expand international air travel out of the country. The new cities include Rome, Madrid, Barcelona, Sydney, Melbourne, Nairobi, Al Najaf in Iraq, Moscow, Zurich, Macau, Tashkent and Ho Chi Minh City. Air India and its subsidiary Air India Express got their number of weekly flights enhanced. Air India has also got the rights for the first time to fly on sectors like Delhi-Rome-Madrid/Barcelona, Delhi-Moscow, Delhi-Sydney/Melbourne, Mumbai-Nairobi and Mumbai-Al Najaf. The allocation of flight traffic rights is expected to give a major boost to Indian carriers and spur growth in the civil aviation sector.

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The move will also enhance connectivity from various Indian cities to international destinations. It will also enhance competitiveness among airlines and is expected to bring down fares. Opening of several new international sectors and progressive increase in number of flights will also give a fillip to the domestic tourism sector which will result in overall economic growth of the country.

Government decided to digitize Cable TV Network in Thirty Eight Cities

The Union Government of India on 6 November 2012 decided to digitise Cable TV network in thirty eight cities, spread over 15 States, by 31 March 2013 in the second phase of digitisation. Earlier, the digitization was completed in Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata on the 31 October 2012, while in Chennai the deadline was extended till the 9 November 2012 by the Madras High Court.

CAG hits back at RIL, British Gas

Upset at the repeated failure of Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) to submit for audit records and information relating to the Krishna Godavari D6 block, the Comptroller and Auditor-General has asked the Petroleum Ministry to withhold all approvals to the Mukesh Ambani-owned company, except in emergency situations.

The government auditor has also asked the Ministry not to clear the plans of British Gas (BG) for exploration projects as it had also failed to submit information and records relating to the Panna-Mukta-Tapti gasfields.

Sources in the government said that soon after M. Veerappa Moily took over as Petroleum Minister this month, following the “unceremonious” exit of S. Jaipal Reddy, the CAG wrote to the Ministry, pointing to the continuous failure of the two companies to submit the records it had sought. “The CAG, in its communication, has pointed out that every effort was being made to thwart the audit by the constitutional body, and one after another obstacle was created in the conduct of a smooth audit till 2011-12. Both RIL and BG are shying away from providing information and have adopted an ‘indifferent’ attitude to the CAG, resulting in the audit coming to a standstill,” the sources said.

Furthermore, the sources said, the CAG asked the Ministry to immediately direct RIL to submit all records pertaining to the KG D6 block for audit up to 2012, as any increase in capital expenditure would have an adverse impact on the government’s interest. “Till the time RIL and BG submit the relevant records for audit and cooperate with the CAG, their approvals should be held back except in emergency circumstances,” it said.

Earlier this month, the CAG strongly objected to the “restrictive conditions” laid down by RIL for an audit, which, it said, “impinge upon the basic mandate, rights and obligations of the CAG” to conduct an audit and report the results to Parliament.

In a letter to Petroleum Secretary G.C. Chaturvedi on October 26, two days before Mr. Reddy was shunted out of the Ministry, the CAG said the conditions were unacceptable, and the CAG’s (Duties, Powers and Conditions of Service) Act, 1971, gave it unfettered right and would override all conditions sought to be imposed on the audit process.

In it, the government auditor listed the conditions laid down by RIL: audit be restricted to “accounting books and records;” audit of the years that were time-barred be subject to the consent of the operator; audit report be submitted to the Ministry and not Parliament; audit be subjected to confidentiality arrangements between parties to the production-sharing contract; and the CAG be bound not to use the information acquired during the audit for any other audit under the Act.

“It would not be possible for us to conduct audit under such restrictions imposed by the operator [RIL],” A.M. Bajaj, Principal Director of Audit, Economic and Service Ministries, said in the letter.

The CAG said it reserved the right to undertake an independent audit of the entire process of award of hydrocarbon blocks by the Ministry under Section 16 of the CAG’s Act “as profit petroleum is a non-tax revenue credited to the Consolidated Fund of India, and this would involve examination of all records (including those of the operator) that are relevant to our audit. This Section... gives us an unfettered right and will override all conditions sought to be imposed on our audit process.”

SEBI allows trading of ETFs in SLB Segment

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), on Thursday, allowed “liquid” Index Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs) eligible for trading in the Securities Lending and Borrowing (SLB) segment.

Earlier, SEBI had allowed only securities traded in the Futures & Options (F&O) segment for lending and borrowing of securities.

Securities lending is a loan of securities by a lender to a borrower for an agreed period.

The lender earns lending fee on securities lying idle, and the objective of the lender is to maximise returns on the portfolio. Borrowers’ objective would be to use SLB to cover shortages and reverse arbitrage. SEBI has also stipulated that position limits for SLB in respect of ETFs would be based on the assets under management of the respective ETF.

“ETF shall be deemed ‘liquid’ provided the Index ETF has traded on at least 80 per cent of the days over the past six months and its impact cost over the past six months is less than or equal to 1 per cent,” SEBI added.

With the introduction of the ETFs in the SLB segment, there would be wider participation as well as increased volumes.

Further, SEBI has introduced a roll-over facility wherein the lender, who is due to receive securities in the pay-out of an SLB session, may extend the period of lending and similarly a borrower, who has to return borrowed securities in the pay-in of an SLB session, may, through the same SLB session, extend the period of borrowing.

Roll-over shall be available for three months, that is, the original contract plus two roll-over contracts. SEBI, however, said that netting between borrow and lend position would not be permitted.

Core Sectors of Indian Economy Grew By 6.5 Percent in October 2012

Eight core sectors of the Indian Economy grew by 6.5 percent, the eight-month high in October 2012-2013 in comparison to 0.4 percent in same time period last year, the official data revealed on 30 November 2012. The sectors which weight approximately 38 percent in Index of Industrial

Production (IIP) increased by seven-month high in September by 5 percent and 2.3 percent in August. However, the growth of core sector is not dependent on the data of industrial production. For instance, in spite of the higher growth in core sector, the industrial production contracted around 0.4 percent in September. A lot of things are dependent on the capital goods segment which showed consistent contraction. The official data revealed that the eight main industries of the Indian economy- steel, electricity, coal, crude, cement, natural gas, refinery products and fertilisers grew 3.7 percent in initial seven months of 2012-2013 fiscal year against 4.3 percent in the same period in 2011-2012 fiscal year.

Output of the coal showed regular growth with 10.9 percent. However, on the monthly basis, it was lower when compared with 21.4 percent in September. Refinery products, steel as well as cement contributed towards the strong economic growth with 20.3 percent, 5.9 percent and 6.8 percent respectively.

Natural gas as well as crude oil remained in contractionary zone. Crude oil witnessed a fall in the growth consecutively for fifth month at 0.4 percent in comparison to 1.7 percent in September. Production of natural gas on the other hand, decreased by 14.9 percent. In September as well, it decreased 14.8 percent. Production of natural gas has continued to contract for more than a year now. Initially, in February 2012, all these sectors grew at a faster speed of 6.9 percent. The production of cement decreased from 13.8 percent in September to 6.8 percent. Generation of electricity, on the other hand increased by 5.2 percent after this segment saw a decrease in previous three months. Fertilisers indicated positive growth of 2 percent after 5.7 percent growth in September.

Income Ceiling for LIG raised by Union Government of India

The Union Government of India on 15 November 2012 decided to raise cap on the annual income which is required for qualification for the benefits under the present housing schemes for the Low Income Groups (LIG) as well as Economically Weaker Sections (EWS). This step on the part of the government will provide benefit to 20 lakh people.

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The Ministry for Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (HUPA) raised the income criterion for EWS housings from 60000 Rupees per year initially to 1 Lakh Rupees now.

This clearly indicates that people with household income below 1 Lakh Rupees will be able to avail benefits of EWS housing scheme. Likewise, the income bar for LIG category has been raised to 2 lakh Rupees now. This decision will be implemented during the 12th Five Year Plan. Instructions have been given to the state governments as well as the banks so that the decision could be implemented effectively. People will now be able to get benefits under the Rajiv Awas Yagna (RAY) and EWS Housing Schemes. Additionally, the Union Minister added that they have the target of including 20 lakh people under this plan. It is the big step because more people would qualify for the home loans now.

Definition of Economically Weaker Sections (EWS)

People falling within the income limit set by the Ministry of Urban Development fall under the category of Economically Weaker Sections (EWS). Ministry of Urban Development revised this income ceiling from Rs. 3,300 to Rs. 5,000. This income ceiling has been made applicable to loans for Interest Subsidy for Housing the Urban Poor Scheme (ISHUP) as well as Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO).

Government of India announced Minimum Support Price for Cotton

The Union Government on 2 October 2012 announced a revised Minimum Support Price (MSP) for cotton and this would help in inducing stabilisation in cotton price. Cotton has witnessed a sharp decline in the past and remained operational round about its minimum support price. After the review meet conducted on 2 October 2012, by the Union Textiles Minister, Anand Sharma the revisions were done. The decided minimum support price of medium staple cotton has gone up to 3600 rupees per quintal from initial rate of 2800 rupees. Similarly, the MSP for long staple cotton has gone up to 3900 per quintal from 3300 rupees. This rate is fixed for the fiscal year 2012-13.

The Cotton Advisory Board has declared that the estimated production of cotton in the country for this year would be about 334 lakh bales, out of which the national consumption would record to 260 lakh bales. The surplus 70 lakh bales would be available for exports purposes. The government has formulated a contingency plan to procure 90 lakh bales of cotton under MSP operations in the season of cotton production in the year 2012-13. To carry on with this procurement process, it has also operationlised 288 procurement centers across all the nine cotton growing states of the nation. The working capital requirement was raised to 15000 crore rupees by the Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) for operationlisation of the MSP fixed. To control the MSP plan a special MSP cell has also been created at the CCI's corporate office and it is headed by the A. Chokalingam, Director Marketing. To alleviate the distress of farmers from NAFED and CCI, the government would be taking serious steps for price stabilization and operationlisation of the MSP decided.

Criteria of

Selection of Procurement Centers

- Centers that would cross the expected arrivals of 50000 quintals of cotton
- It should have an existence of market yard that is functional
- Weighbridge should be available in the market
- Ginning and pressing factories must be available in proximity to the center, with availability of facilities for fire fighting

Amul loses

TRIX to U.S. giant

The Gujarat High Court has refused to set aside an order which cancelled Amul's registration of its trademark 'TRIX', on which a U.S. firm has claimed its right. In July this year, the Intellectual Property Appellate Board had directed Registrar of Trademarks to cancel Amul's registration of TRIX trademark.

A Division Bench of Chief Justice Bhaskar Bhattacharya and Justice J. B. Pardiwala, in a recent judgment, dismissed the petition filed by Kaira District Co-operative Milk Producers Union Ltd., owner of Amul, seeking cancellation of trademark

'TRIX' registered in favour of U.S. food giant General Mills. Amul, 35 years after registering the trademark and after General Mills' entry into Indian market as late as in 1995, had questioned the U.S. firm's right over TRIX.

Gujarat Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMFL), which markets milk and milk products under Amul brand under a licence from the petitioner, registered TRIX (coined from the word TRICKS from the concept of appearing and disappearing tricks as in magic show) as a trademark in 1977.

"In 1986 we launched a chocolate under 'TRIX' trademark. We advertised it in a manner that it was so tasty that the chocolate bar just disappears/melts in mouth quickly," according to the petition.

However, Amul stopped using TRIX in 1987. The U.S. food giant's subsidiary, General Mills India Pvt. Ltd., came into existence in 1995. In 2005, it applied for registration of trademark TRIX claiming that in various countries it was holding the same trademark since 1910. Since Amul already owned the trademark, General Mills India's application for registration was rejected.

Meanwhile, the U.S. firm made a foray into the Indian market by introducing a snack under the trademark 'DIP-TRIX'. At the same time, Amul also planned a re-launch of its TRIX brand for a wafer-chocolate, which was introduced in 2007. This led to a legal battle between the two giants.

Amul objected to unauthorised use of TRIX by General Mills.

The U.S. giant challenged Amul's claim over TRIX by filing a rectification application with Intellectual Property Appellate Board (IPAB), Ahmedabad. On July 16, 2012, the IPAB directed the Registrar of Trademarks to cancel Amul's right over the trademark.

The dairy brand challenged the board's verdict in the HC, arguing that IPAB had erred in its ruling.

"Rectification application could not have been allowed as there was use of its registered trademark 'TRIX' in December 2005 by AMUL leading to sale in May 2007 (of wafer chocolates) — that is during the statutorily required period of non-use for a period of five years and three months before the date of rectification application," it said.

However, the Bench did not find any error with the board's conclusion. India, China to step up infrastructure cooperation. Chinese officials said on Tuesday that next week's Strategic Economic Dialogue (SED) in New Delhi would help both countries deepen cooperation on investment and infrastructure projects, with one of the largest-ever delegations of Chinese officials set to travel to India for the November 26 talks.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying told reporters that representatives from Chinese "government agencies, enterprises and financial and research institutions" will travel to New Delhi, with a view to "stepping up communication and coordination of macro-economic policies, and deepening and expanding mutually beneficial cooperation in investment, infrastructure, high technology, energy conservation and environmental protection".

The delegation will be led by Zhang Ping, who heads the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), the top planning body. He will chair the talks along with Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission. Officials said close to 200 Chinese officials will travel to India, including representatives from the NDRC, Ministry of Commerce, the Foreign Ministry, Ministry of Railways and State-run companies.

Rail corridors

At the first round of the SED in Beijing in September 2011, both sides discussed cooperation in railways, which might pave the way for Chinese involvement in India's plans to set up high speed-rail corridors. Sources said top officials from CNR, one of China's biggest railway companies that has played a key role in China's high-speed rail expansion, will travel to New Delhi next week.

Besides railways, separate working groups on infrastructure, energy, environment and high-tech sectors will meet during the November 26 dialogue in New Delhi. Officials said the idea behind the SED was to go beyond trade issues and look at the bigger picture and macro-level cooperation. Trade issues will not be the focus of the SED — a separate Joint Economic Group dialogue headed by Commerce Ministers of both countries discusses bilateral trade

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issues, officials said. As a new leadership in China takes over, officials here have stressed their desire to expand trade and commercial engagement with India — an issue that found prominence at Monday's meeting between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao in Cambodia.

Ms. Hua, the Foreign Ministry spokesperson, said both leaders had agreed to “seize the opportunities of development” and to “step-up cooperation in infrastructure”. “The Chinese government,” she said, “will continue to encourage reputable Chinese enterprises to invest in Indian projects”.

Chinese officials stress that the leadership transition will not affect ties with India, and that there will be continuity in all areas, whether related to political, military or trade issues. Government officials who handle foreign policy and trade have not stepped down at the recently concluded National Congress, during which the Communist Party's top leadership retired. Officials in government will continue serving until March, when the Parliament meets to appoint new officials. Mr. Wen, the Premier; Mr. Zhang, head of the NDRC; and State Councillor Dai Bingguo, the “Special Representative” on boundary issues, will all continue in office until March.

Union Coal Ministry decided to deallocate Four Coal Blocks allotted to 15 Firms

The Union Coal Ministry in the fourth week of November 2012 decided to deallocate four coal blocks allotted to 15 firms, including JSW Steel and Bhushan Steel and Strips. The four coal blocks are as following:- Gourangdih ABC coal block in West Bengal, New Patrapara coal block in Orissa, the Lalgah coal block in Jharkhand and north Dhadu coal block. The ministry also asked the Monnet Ispat to deposit a bank guarantee of 62 crore rupees. The Gourangdih ABC coal block in West Bengal was allotted to Himachal EMTA Power Ltd and JSW Steel Ltd. The Coal Ministry in its letter to the company stated that it has decided to forfeit 50 per cent of the Bank Guarantee related to the development of coal block as per the recommendation of Inter-Ministerial Group.

The Ministry also decided to deallocate New

Patrapara coal block in Orissa and to return the full bank guarantee amount without any deduction. The Coal Ministry in another letter to Monnet Ispat said that the Bank Guarantee as calculated by Coal Controller is to be deposited by the allottee company within one month from the date of letter failing which the block may be deallocated. In case of Domco Smokeless Fuels, the Ministry decided to deallocate the Lalgah (North) coal block in Jharkhand. With regard to North Dhadu coal block jointly allocated to four firms, the Ministry has decided to deallocate the North Dhadu coal block in addition to the forfeiture of full bank guarantee.

Union Cabinet of India cleared Proposal for Spectrum Sharing

The Union Cabinet of India on 8 November 2012 approved levy of about 31000 crore rupees as one-time spectrum charge to be implemented on all incumbent telecom operators like Bharati Airtel, Vodafone, Idea and others. The proposed charges had been implemented to create a level ground between the old players and the new players of the telecom sector. The Finance Minister of India P Chidambaram declared that the recommendations of the EGoM (Empowered Group of Ministers) was cleared and the GSM operators would have to pay for the airwaves that they hold beyond the 4.4 Mega-Hertz, the price determined at the auction and the operators holding more than 6.2 mega hertz airwaves would have to pay a retroactive fee from July 2008 onwards. The CDMA operators would have to pay for the airwaves that they hold beyond 2.5 Mega-Hertz as per the validity of the permits offered to them.

Retail Inflation in India rose to 9.75 percent in October 2012

The data on retail inflation was released by the Government of India on 11 November 2012. The retail inflation in India rose to 9.75 percent in the month of October 2012 after being measured on the scale of Consumer Price Index (CPI). The retail inflation was marginal as it witnessed a rise of 0.02 percent of the noted rise of 9.73 percent in the month of September 2012. The rise in rural India the consumer price inflation rose to 9.98 percent from the 9.79 percent recorded in September 2012. The inflation in

urban India was recorded to be 9.46 percent in October from 9.72 percent recorded in the previous month. Reaching close to the double digit mark, the inflation witnessed the maximum price rise on Sugar that rose at 19.61 percent per year and was followed by edible oil and fat which saw a rise of 17.92 percent, whereas pulses and cereal grains witnessed a rise of 14.89 percent. Prices of vegetable grew by 10.74 percent in October 2012, and the rates of meat, eggs and fishes went up by 12.18 percent. Costs of cloths, beds and footwear went up by 10.47 percent year after year. All India Provisional General (all groups) the CPI numbers for the month of October 2012 for urban, rural and combined level were recorded as 122.6, 126.7 and 124.9 respectively.

Japan to fund Multi-billion Dollar CBIC Project soon

Japan has said it will soon announce funding for the multi-billion dollar Chennai-Bangalore Industrial Corridor (CBIC), the third mega project that will be quarter-backed by Tokyo. The other two projects that Japan is backing are the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC) and the Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC).

The announcement of the CBIC project has led to considerable enthusiasm among most south Indian states with Andhra Pradesh wanting its extension to Krishnapatnam port and Karnataka asking for the inclusion of Chitradurga with the State government planning to set up a manufacturing hub between Chitradurga and Tumkur. Kerala is the only south Indian State which has so far not expressed a desire to be included in the project, according to government sources.

The feasibility study for the CBIC is likely to be financed from a 184 billion yen Official Development Assistance (ODA) from Japan which will also fund the second phase of the DFC. This was conveyed by Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda during his second meeting in as many days with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on the sidelines of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit and related meetings with its dialogue partners, including India.

New Delhi is putting immense faith in CBIC, heralding a renewed round of industrialisation in

the south, with T. K. A. Nair, Adviser to Dr. Singh, regularly reviewing its progress.

The project was first made public during the India-Japan annual summit in 2010.

The project will initially focus on Phase-II of the Chennai Outer Ring Road, Chennai-Bangalore Expressway, modernisation of airports in Chennai, Bangalore and Sriperumbudur and ports in Chennai and Ennore, in addition to a high-speed rail link between Chennai, Bangalore and the Avadi rail link. Simultaneously, State governments and the Centre will deliberate on easing customs procedures and enhanced use of IT and automation.

According to official sources, the Prime Minister welcomed the ongoing projects under the ODA but emphasised that India's priority was investment by Japanese business in infrastructure projects such as the Delhi Metro which other cities wanted to emulate. This is the same message he gave to Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao on Monday.

Rare earths

After Dr. Singh's visit was put off, the two countries on November 16 signed an MoU on rare earths and inked a pact on social security. The pact of rare earths too was first publicly aired during the 2010 summit.

It is a fall-out of tensions between Japan and China which led to Beijing clamping down on rare earth exports to Tokyo.

India signed 70 million US Dollar loan agreement with World Bank

Government of India on 22 November 2012 signed a 70-million US Dollar loan agreement with World Bank for financing the Karnataka Health Systems Development as well as Reform Project. Primary objective of this project is improvisation of public-private collaboration, health services delivery and financial aid for vulnerable groups and underserved in Karnataka. The agreement was signed by the Joint Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs and India Operations Advisor of World Bank in New Delhi.

The components of the project include:

- Strengthening present health programs of the Government of India

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- Innovations in the health financing as well as service delivery
- Project management, evaluation as well as monitoring

Additional financing of this project is scheduled to be implemented till 31 March 2016. **Economic Growth Declined in July-September Quarter of 2012-2013 Fiscal Year**

The economy of India grew just by 5.3 percent in July-September quarter of fiscal year 2012-2013, revealed the Central Statistical Organisation. The economy dropped down the rate of growth because of poor performance of the agriculture as well as manufacturing sectors and it is persistently indicating slowdown signs. In the previous fiscal year, the gross domestic product (GDP) had grown by 6.7 percent in the same quarter. In the first quarter of 2012-2013, the economy had grown by 5.5 percent.

By the end of the July-September quarter, i.e., on 30 September 2012, the manufacturing sector had grown marginally by just 0.8 percent in comparison to 2.9 percent in the same quarter last year, the Central Statistical Organisation revealed. The output of the farm sector expanded merely 1.2 percent in this quarter in 2012-2013 financial year in contrast to 3.1 percent in same quarter last year. The economic growth for the time period of April-September in this financial year is 5.4 percent in contrast to 7.3 percent in previous fiscal year. In this quarter in the present fiscal year, hotels, transport, communications as well as trade showed slow pace at 5.5 percent in comparison to 9.5 percent last year in the same quarter. The construction sector showed signs of improvement where the growth was 6.7 percent as against 6.3 percent last year. Apart from this, the rate of growth in certain service sectors such as real estate and insurance was 9.4 percent as against 9.9 percent in last year's quarter.

Finance Minister of India P. Chidambaram concluded that the only way to overcome the situation was through increased production as well as innovation.

Petrol Price in India slashed by 95 Paise due to fall of Prices in International Market

Petrol Prices in Indian market on 15 November

2012 was slashed by 95 paise per litre. The decision came up as a result of the fall in oil prices in the International Market. The Indian market witnessed a second slash in the rates of petrol since 9 October 2012, in October there was a cut of 56 paise per liter in the price of petrol. This slash in the petrol prices would bring down the prices of petrol in different states of the country and would vary from state to state due to the difference in the state and local taxes of different states. With this fall in rates of petrol in Delhi went down to 68.19 rupees to 67.24 rupees per litre. In Mumbai the price went down by 1.20 rupees and the petrol there would cost 73.53 rupees per litre, in Chennai the price went down to 70.57 rupees from 71.77 rupees. Kolkata saw a slash of 1.19 rupees per litre in the petrol prices and it would be available to the consumers at a rate of 74.55 rupees per litre. Global Gasoline Rates helps in creating a benchmark in fixing the price of petrol in the domestic market.

The gasoline rates also witnessed a fall in rates globally but declined and non-stagnant value of Rupees against the US dollar and would have an impact on the petrol prices in the coming future. The volatility of Rupees against the value of exchange rates of US dollar is being closely monitored to get out of the uncertainties about the direction in which future decisions would head towards. The Union Government of India in June 2010 deregulated the prices of petrol by offering freedom to the oil companies for fixing the petrol rates following the costs prevalent in the international market. But this deregulation in the petrol prices also had no impact in getting the Indian Oil Companies in getting out of the losses with which they are overburdened and this happened because of the buckling political pressure on the oil companies to have a check on curbing growing inflation in Indian market.

Retail Inflation in India rose to 9.75 percent in October 2012

The data on retail inflation was released by the Government of India on 11 November 2012. The retail inflation in India rose to 9.75 percent in the month of October 2012 after being measured on the scale of Consumer Price Index (CPI). The retail inflation was marginal as it witnessed a rise of 0.02 percent of the noted rise of 9.73 percent in the month of

September 2012. The rise in rural India the consumer price inflation rose to 9.98 percent from the 9.79 percent recorded in September 2012. The inflation in urban India was recorded to be 9.46 percent in October from 9.72 percent recorded in the previous month. Reaching close to the double digit mark, the inflation witnessed the maximum price rise on Sugar that rose at 19.61 percent per year and was followed by edible oil and fat which saw a rise of 17.92 percent, whereas pulses and cereal grains witnessed a rise of 14.89 percent. Prices of vegetable grew by 10.74 percent in October 2012, and the rates of meat, eggs and fish went up by 12.18 percent. Costs of cloths, beds and footwear went up by 10.47 percent year after year. All India Provisional General (all groups) the CPI numbers for the month of October 2012 for urban, rural and combined level were recorded as 122.6, 126.7 and 124.9 respectively.

RBI Revises Definition of Infra Lending

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Tuesday revised the definition of 'infrastructure lending', which would make sectors and sub-sectors eligible for infrastructure lending by banks and financial institutions with immediate effect. The exposure of banks to projects under sub-sectors which were included under the RBI's previous definition of infrastructure — as per the circular of November 30, 2007, but not included under the revised definition, will continue to get the benefits under 'infrastructure lending' till the completion of the projects. However, "any fresh lending to those sub-sectors from the date of this circular will not qualify as 'infrastructure lending', the RBI said in a notification to all banks and financial institutions. The Government of India had notified a master list of infrastructure sectors/sub-sectors in March 2012 to avoid multiplicity of definitions among various regulators which gives rise to confusion and difficulties. The sectors and sub-sectors come under revised infrastructure lending are:

Transport: Roads and bridges, ports inland waterways, airport, railway track, tunnels, viaducts, bridges, including supporting terminal infrastructure such as loading/unloading terminals, stations and buildings, urban public transport (except rolling stock in case of urban road transport).

Energy: Electricity generation, electricity transmission, electricity distribution, oil pipelines and oil/gas/liquefied natural gas (LNG) storage facility (including strategic storage of crude oil) and gas pipelines, including city gas distribution network.

Water and sanitation: Solid waste management, water supply pipe lines, water treatment plants, sewage collection, treatment and disposal system and irrigation (dams, channels, embankments and the like) and storm water drainage system.

Communication: Telecommunication (fixed network) including optic fibre/cable networks which provide broadband / internet and telecommunication towers.

Social and commercial infrastructure: Educational institutions (capital stock), hospitals (capital stock), including medical colleges, para medical training institutes and diagnostics centres and three-star or higher category classified hotels located outside cities with population of more than one million.

Indian Economy Would Dominate the Economy of the World by 2030

US intelligence community in its report called Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds which was released on 10 December 2012 declared that India would straddle international commerce and will also dominate the economy of the whole world by 2030. This would happen with decelerating Chinese economy as well as declining West.

Key points of the report:

- India's chance of powering would begin only after 2015 as China's fortunes would start diminishing.
- By the year 2030, Asia (mainly India) would return back to its position of being the powerhouse of the world, like it was before 1500.
- Pakistan might not exist at all.
- India will rush forward after 2020 as China would begin decelerating, primarily on certain demographic trends.
- China is indeed ahead of India, but the gap between India and China would start zeroing in by 2030. The economic growth rate of India will surge while that of China will slow down.

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- In 2030, India might be rising as the economic powerhouse just like China is today. The current economic growth rate of China, 8-10 percent would become just a memory for the country.
- Overall size of the working-age population in China would increase in 2016 and decrease from 994 million to 961 million in 2030. Contrarily, working age population of India would most probably rise until around 2050.
- The demographic opportunities of India will rise between 2015 to 2050. China's opportunities' window is from 1990 to 2025. Contrarily, US's opportunity was best between 1970 to 2015.
- Median age of India which is at present 26 will increase to 32 by 2030, which would still be the least among top 10 economies of world.
- The report also mentioned that anytime after 2030, India instead of China would be having the largest middle-class consumption, which would be even larger than US and Europe combined. However, India might face trapping in the status of middle-income group in case the resources constraint, especially food, water and energy are not resolved. More investment would be required in science and technology sector in order to keep the pace of economy in the value chain. It was however made clear that the journey of economic development of both India as well as China will not be smooth. But if the difficulties were handled well, India as well as China would be dominating the world in 2030.

About Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds

The latest National Intelligence Council's (NIC) Global Trends Report was released on 10 December 2012 by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

This report is called Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds. Global Trends project offers expertise beyond government on certain factors like demography, environment, globalisation. The documents are prepared by Global Trends to assist the makers of policies in long-term planning on major issues which hold worldwide importance. First Global Trends Report was released back in 1997.

New global trends report is being published after every four years after the U.S. presidential elections. For the production of Global Trends 2030, a range of analytical tools, in-depth research as well as detailed modeling was employed.

UN Slashed

World Growth Forecast to 2.4 %

United Nations on 18 December 2012 slashed its global growth predictions to 2.4 percent for 2013 and 3.2 percent for the following year and warned of a lasting employment crisis for western countries. The UN's World Economic Situation and Prospects 2013 report warned that the Debt crises in Europe and the United States and a slowdown in China could all throw the world economy into recession. Earlier in the month of June 2012 UN had predicted a growth forecast 2.7 percent for 2013 and 3.9 percent for the year after. As per the Report, With existing policies and growth trends, it is going to take at least another five years for Europe and the United States to make up for the job losses caused by the Great Recession of year 2008-2009. The report also predicted growth in South Asia averaging 5 percent in 2013, up from 4.4 percent in 2012, led by a moderate recovery in India.

Rollout of Direct Benefits Transfers started on 1 January 2013

National Committee on Direct Cash Transfers in its meet with the Prime Minister of India Dr. Manmohan Singh decided to roll-out, the Direct Cash Benefits from 1 January 2013 in 43 identified districts of the country. The decision was taken to ensure that the benefits could be transferred electronically into the bank accounts of the individuals, without making delays and diversions of any type. A high level meet was conducted on 13 December 2012 with the District Collectors of the identified areas and fine tuned information related to steps that need to be taken in case of Direct Benefits Transfer.

Direct Benefits Transfer and it covers:

- Transfer of cash benefits like pensions, scholarships, NREGA wages and others directly through the Government in the Bank or Post Office Accounts of identified beneficiaries under the Direct Benefits Transfer (DBT) programme. The program would also

device necessary system so that the transfers can be done in a phased, time-bound manner for Direct Benefits Transfer.

- Direct Benefits Transfer would not act as a substitute for delivery of public services and it would continue to be in place via normal delivery channels.
- The Direct Benefits Transfer would not allow replacement of food through cash managed under Public Distribution System. The Government will be committed towards legislation of the National Food Security Act.

Rollout on 1.1.2013 mean in practice

The Rollout that would began on 1.1.2013 in 43 districts of 16 different states under 26 different schemes, which have been identified for first round of Direct Benefits Transfer. All these districts were selected on the basis of its coverage of bank accounts and Aadhaar.

BSE launched SME Platform Index

The Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) on 14 December 2012 launched an SME index which primarily aims at tracking the current primary market conditions in the Indian capital market and measuring the growth in investors' wealth over a period. The index is going to be constituted by small and medium enterprises (SMEs) which are listed on the BSE SME platform. Presently, there are 11 companies which are listed on the SME platform and this index is going to have features similar to the BSE IPO index. Through SME index the authorities can recognize the viability of the company and based on the report, people can invest in these companies, which will not only help the organisations to grow their businesses but also suppose to create employment. Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in India constitute an important segment of Indian economy. Currently, the contribution of SMEs alone is greater than 7 per cent to GDP and 45 per cent to industrial production. Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) is also the second largest provider of employment after agriculture. SMEs also contribute to 40% of total exports directly and a significant amount of exports indirectly through large trading houses or third parties. With the SME platform, companies did not have to rely on loans from banks,

as they can raise funds through the market and play an important role in contributing to the economic growth of the country. Out of the 11 companies listed so far, 10 are trading above their issue prices, while one is below its IPO price.

Retail Inflation Increased to 9.90 Percent in November 2012

Consumer Price Index (CPI) data released on 12 December 2012 showed that the retail inflation increased for the second successive month to 9.90 percent in November 2012 mainly because of the increase in price of food products like edible oil, sugar, vegetables as well as clothing. In October 2012, the retail inflation was 9.75 percent and in September 2012, it was 9.73 percent. Maximum increase in the price in the month of November 2012 was in oil as well as fats segment, amounting to the annual inflation of 17.67 percent. Apart from oil, the price of sugar also increased by 16.97 percent and pulses on the other hand because costlier by 14.19 percent on yearly basis. The prices of vegetables increased by 14.74 percent in November 2012, while the price of egg, fish and meat increased by 11.33 percent. Also, there was an increase in the price of footwear and clothing at 11.08 percent in November 2012. In the urban areas, retail inflation increased to 9.69 percent in November 2012 in comparison to 9.46 percent in October 2012. However, in rural areas there was a very slight decrease in inflation to 9.97 percent in November 2012 from 9.98 percent in October 2012. The rural, urban and combined All India provisional General (all groups) CPI numbers for the month of November 2012 are 126.9, 123.4 and 125.4, respectively. It is important to note that the Reserve Bank will keep an increase in retail inflation in mind while taking review about the mid-quarter policy in the third week of December 2012. In October 2012, raising concerns over rising inflation, Reserve Bank had kept the standard interest rates unchanged.

SEBI allowed 12 more Alternative Investment Funds

Indian Market regulator Security and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) allowed 12 entities to set up Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs), a newly created class of pooled-in investment vehicles for real estate, private equity and hedge funds, in the last two

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months of October and November 2012. The 12 Alternative Investment Funds AIFs that were registered with SEBI since October 2010 included India Realty Fund, Dar Mentorcap Film Fund, Capaleph Indian Millennium Small & Medium Enterprises Fund and Capaleph Indian Millennium Private Equity Fund. SEBI in last few years had already allowed nine AIFs to set up shops in the country. As on 31 August 2012, a total of 20 applications were pending with SEBI for registration as AIFs. As per the new SEBI guidelines, AIFs can operate broadly in three categories. The SEBI rules is applicable to all AIFs which also includes those operating as private equity funds, real estate funds and hedge funds.

- The Category-I AIFs are those funds that get incentives from the government, SEBI or other regulators. It includes Social Venture Funds, Infrastructure Funds, Venture Capital Funds and SME Funds.
- The Category-II AIFs are those funds which can invest anywhere in any combination but are prohibited from raising debt, except for meeting their day-to-day operational requirements. These AIFs include PE funds, debt funds or fund of funds.
- The Category-III AIFs are those trading with a view to make short-term returns and include hedge funds, among others.

Core Sectors of Indian Economy Grew By 6.5 %

Eight core sectors of the Indian Economy grew by 6.5 percent, the eight-month high in October 2012-2013 in comparison to 0.4 percent in same time period last year, the official data revealed on 30 November 2012. The sectors which weight approximately 38 percent in Index of Industrial Production (IIP) increased by seven-month high in September by 5 percent and 2.3 percent in August. However, the growth of core sector is not dependent on the data of industrial production. For instance, inspite of the higher growth in core sector, the industrial production contracted around 0.4 percent in September. A lot of things are dependent on the capital goods segment which showed consistent contraction. The official data revealed that the eight main industries of the Indian economy- steel,

electricity, coal, crude, cement, natural gas, refinery products and fertilisers grew 3.7 percent in initial seven months of 2012-2013 fiscal year against 4.3 percent in the same period in 2011-2012 fiscal year.

Output of the coal showed regular growth with 10.9 percent. However, on the monthly basis, it was lower when compared with 21.4 percent in September. Refinery products, steel as well as cement contributed towards the strong economic growth with 20.3 percent, 5.9 percent and 6.8 percent respectively. Natural gas as well as crude oil remained in contractionary zone. Crude oil witnessed a fall in the growth consecutively for fifth month at 0.4 percent in comparison to 1.7 percent in September. Production of natural gas on the other hand, decreased by 14.9 percent. In September as well, it decreased 14.8 percent. Production of natural gas has continued to contract for more than a year now. Initially, in February 2012, all these sectors grew at a faster speed of 6.9 percent. The production of cement decreased from 13.8 percent in September to 6.8 percent. Generation of electricity, on the other hand increased by 5.2 percent after this segment saw a decrease in previous three months. Fertilisers indicated positive growth of 2 percent after 5.7 percent growth in September.

FII Investment in India surpassed more than 24000 crore

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) in the month of December had pumped in more than 24000 crore rupees in the Indian stock market which is said to be the highest in 10 months timeline taking total FII inflow for the year 2012 to over 24 billion dollars. As per the SEBI Data, In December, 2012 Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were gross buyers of shares worth Rs 71595 crore rupees while they sold equities amounting to 47412 crore rupees. This translates into a net inflow of 24183 crore rupees or around 4.42 billion dollar. Earlier in the month of February FIIs had infused 25212 crore rupees in stocks, which is counted to be second highest investment in Year 2012 since their entry into Indian capital markets in 1992. If we take the latest inflows into count, FII investment in that case in the country's equity market reached 127455 crore rupees (\$24 billion) for the year 2012 with just one more trading

session left. Foreign investors are pouring money into the Indian stocks in hopes of cut in interest rates by the RBI. FIIs continued their positive standpoint on the Indian equities as the lack of investment options make the country an attractive destination. In addition to equities, FIIs invested 1178 crore rupees in the debt market the month taking the year's tally to 34462 crore rupees. As on 28 December 2012 the number of registered FIIs in the country stood at 1759 and total numbers of sub-accounts were 6358 during the same period.

About Foreign Institutional Investors

Foreign Institutional investors are those organizations which sum up huge amount of money and invest that amount in securities, real property and other investment assets. Some Foreign Institutional investors are also operating companies that decide to invest their profits to some degree in these types of assets. The most common types of typical investors includes banks, insurance companies, retirement or pension funds, hedge funds, investment advisors and mutual funds. They act as highly specialized investors on behalf of others which are considered as their economic role.

Foreign Investments through P-Notes Increased to 8-Month Highest

Foreign investments in the Indian markets through P-notes or PNs (Participatory Notes) increased to 8-month high of around 1.75 lakh crore Rupees or 32 billion dollar in October 2012. This happened because different reform measures attracted the overseas investors towards the Indian markets. Market regulator SEBI (Securities and Exchange Board of India) revealed in its data that the overall value of P-Note investments in India (debt, equity or derivatives) by October 2012 end increased to highest since February 2012, when the total value of investments like these were 1.83 lakh crore Rupees. Apart from this, the overall value of P-notes issued with the derivatives as basics stood at 95536 crore Rupees by October 2012 end.

What are P-Notes or PNs?

P-Notes or PNs or Participatory Notes are used by the HNIs or High Networth Individuals, foreign institutions as well as hedge funds. P-Notes allow

them to invest their money in Indian markets via registered FIIs or Foreign Institutional Investors. This saves them cost as well as time related to direct registrations. So basically, PNs are the tools or instruments which are issued by the registered FIIs to the overseas investors who are willing to invest in stock market of India without registering with market regulator SEBI.

RBI signed Currency Swap Agreement with Bank of Japan

The Reserve Bank of India on 4 December 2012 signed a three year Bilateral Swap Arrangement (BSA) with the Bank of Japan for swapping of the local currencies to address short-term liquidity problems. The BSA will be effective from 5 December 2012. The main idea behind the arrangement is to address short-term liquidity difficulties and supplement the existing international financial arrangements, as one of the efforts in strengthening mutual cooperation between Japan and India. The Bilateral Swap Agreement (BSA) is going to enable both the countries to swap their local currencies either Japanese yen or Indian rupee against US dollar for an amount up to 15 billion dollars. Earlier for a period of three years from June 2008 to June 2011 both the countries signed a similar agreement for an amount of 3 billion dollar. The enhancement of the BSA is going to strengthen economic and financial cooperation between the two countries and accordingly to financial market stability. The BSA is activated when an IMF-support programme already exists or is expected to be established in the near future.

More Incentives Announced to Exporters Hit By Global Meltdown

The union government on 26 December 2012 announced more incentives for the exporters who were hit hard because of global meltdown. An extension of 2 percent interest subsidiary would be provided for another year till March 2014. Additionally, the Commerce and Industry Minister Anand Sharma decided an introduction of pilot scheme of 2 percent interest subsidiary for those project exports that took place through Exim Bank. Any incremental export which would be done in the time duration of January to March 2013 would also

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be granted incentive. The ministry announced that the incentives would enable to push the exports in last quarter of 2012-2013 fiscal year. The objective of these incentives was stabilisation of the situation as well as shift from the negative territory to the positive one. Another objective of the incentives was keeping trade deficit under the control. Exports during the period of April-November 2012 shrunk by 5.95 percent to 189.2 billion. If the situation continues, it would be very difficult for India to achieve export target of 360 billion dollar in 2012-2013 fiscal year.

Setting up of CCI approved

The Union government of India on 13 December 2012 approved the setting up of a Cabinet Committee on Investment (CCI), to fast track investment clearances for mega projects. The decision was taken in the Union Cabinet meeting held under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. Prime Minister will head the CCI and he will also nominate the members of the committee. The CCI will expedite projects offering single window clearance for projects costing 1000 crore rupees or more by setting timelines for the concerned ministries.

The Union Cabinet also cleared the Land Acquisition Bill. Under the new bill consent of 80 percent land owners is mandatory for private acquisition of land where as for Public-Private-Partnership 70 per cent consent is required. The award of compensation will also be as per the new bill. The Cabinet also approved cutting the 1800-MHz band 2G spectrum auction reserve base price by 30 per cent for four circles that did not attract bidders in November. The circles are Delhi, Mumbai, Karnataka and Rajasthan. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs also cleared a new urea investment policy.

The Minimum Support Price of Wheat was Increased to 1350 Rupees per Quintal

The Union government of India on 26 December 2012 raised the Minimum Support Price, MSP of wheat by 65 rupees per quintal to 1350 rupees per quintal. The decision was taken in a Cabinet meeting this morning in New Delhi Chaired by the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh. The government also decided to export additional 25 lakh

tonnes of wheat from its go-downs. The CCEA approved the disinvestment of 12.5 per cent paid up equity capital to the Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilizers. Current government holding is about 92.5 per cent. This will make the company compliant with the SEBI norms that 10 per cent float should be there. CCEA approved the proposal to export an additional 25 lakh tonnes of wheat. Earlier, we had approved export of 20 lakh tonnes of wheat of that a little over 17 lakh tonnes have been contracted.

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Indirect Tax Collection Increased at 16.8 Percent to 2.92 Lakh Crore Rupees in April-November 2012

The Finance Ministry announced that indirect tax collection increased at the rate of 16.8 percent to 2.92 lakh crore Rupees in the period of April-November 2012 in comparison to the yearly growth target of 27 percent.

It was announced that in first 8 months of 2011-2012 fiscal year, accumulation of the indirect taxes which include excise, services tax as well as customs, was 2.50 lakh crore Rupees. Excise amounted to 108470 crore Rupees during April to November 2012, while accumulation from service taxes and customs was 78774 crore Rupees and 104864 crore Rupees respectively. In 2011-2012 fiscal year, the government had proposals of collecting 5.05 lakh crore Rupees in all, from customs, service taxes and excise, which would bring an expected growth of 27 percent from

last year's collection. Targeted collection through customs for 2012-2013 was determined at 1.87 lakh crore Rupees. The targeted collection was 1.93 lakh crore Rupees through excise and 1.24 lakh crore Rupees through service tax. In the third week of December 2012, the government found it difficult for achieving customs, corporate tax as well as excise target as it was projected in Budget. This happened because there were unresponsive corporate profits. During November 2012, indirect tax accumulation increased by 17.2 percent to 36081 crore Rupees in comparison to 30790 crore Rupees.

Union Government of India lowered the Growth Projection for Current Fiscal to 5.7 Percent

The Union Government of India on 17 December 2012 lowered down the growth projection for the current financial year 2012-13 from 7.6 percent that was estimated earlier to 5.7-5.9 percent. It also pitched for the supportive monetary and fiscal policies for improving the confidence of the investors. The projection was showcased in the Mid-Year Economic Analysis tabled in Indian Parliament.

India's Foreign Trade in November 2012:

Exports valued at 22299.63 Million Dollars

As per the data released by Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry on 11 December 2012, exports and imports during November 2012 were valued at 22299.63 and 41586.90 million US dollars respectively. The trade deficit for April - November 2012-13 was estimated at 129500.18 million US dollars which was higher than the deficit of 122638.35 million US dollars during April - November 2011-12.

EXPORTS (including re-exports)

Exports during November, 2012 were valued at 22299.63 million US dollars (122148.03 crore rupees) which was 4.17 per cent lower in Dollar terms (3.22 per cent higher in Rupee terms) than the level of 23269.71 million US dollars (118341.35 crore rupees) during November 2011. Cumulative value of exports for the period April-November 2012 -13 was 189222.20 million US dollars (1030488.22 crore rupees) as against 201185.40 million US dollars (933049.70 crore rupees) registering a negative

growth of 5.95 per cent in Dollar terms and growth of 10.44 per cent in Rupee terms over the same period in 2011.

Imports

Imports during November 2012 were valued at 41586.90 million US dollars (227795.59 crore rupees) representing a growth of 6.35 per cent in Dollar terms and 14.55 per cent in Rupee terms over the level of imports valued at 39102.48 million US dollars (198861.13 crore rupees) in November 2011. Cumulative value of imports for the period April-November 2012-13 was 318722.38 million US dollars (1734998.17 crore rupees) as against 323823.75 million US dollars (1503492.73 crore rupees) registering a negative growth of 1.58 per cent in Dollar terms and growth of 15.40 per cent in Rupee terms over the same period in 2011.

Oil imports during November 2012 were valued at 14522.1 million US dollars which was 16.77 per cent higher than oil imports valued at 12436.6 million US dollars in the corresponding period in 2011. Oil imports during April-November 2012-13 were valued at 110091.1 million US dollars which was 10.84 per cent higher than the oil imports of 99324.2 million US dollars in the corresponding period in 2011. Non-oil imports during November 2012 were estimated at 27064.8 million US dollars which was 1.50 per cent higher than non-oil imports of 26665.9 million US dollars in November 2011. Non-oil imports during April - November, 2012-13 were valued at 208631.3 million US dollars which was 7.07 per cent lower than the level of such imports valued at 224499.5 million US dollars in April - November 2011-12.

Import Duty on Gold and Platinum by 2 Percent increased

The Union Government of India on 21 January 2013 hiked the import duty on Gold and Platinum from 4 percent to 6 percent. The step of the Government came in effect to control the import of the precious metals leading a widening gap in the Current Account Deficit of the country as the import of gold has shown tumbling effects on different economic fronts and has also played a major role in distortion of the balance of trade. The Government has also linked the Gold ETFs (Exchange Traded

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Funds) along with the Gold Deposit Schemes, so that the supply of the physical gold in the market can be increased. These regulations and increased in the import duty would also show changes on the customs duty as well as the excise duty of gold ores, refined gold, gold dore bars and more. Within a year, the import duty on gold has been hiked for third time. Before this, the government increased the duty on import of gold from 1 percent to 2 percent in January 2012 and it doubled the import duty on standard gold from 2 percent to 4 percent in March 2012.

eBiz Portal to Provide one Stop Shop for all Investment

The Union Minister for Commerce on 28 January 2013 launched an eBiz portal at the CII Partnership Summit in Agra. The portal is India's Government-to-Business (G2B) portal developed by Infosys in a Public Private Partnership (PPP) Model. This Mission Mode Project will mark a paradigm shift in the Government's approach to providing Government-to-Business (G2B) services for India's investor and business communities. In order to enable businesses and investors to save time and costs and in order to improve the business environment in the country, an online single window was conceptualised in the form of the eBiz Mission Mode Project under the National e-Governance Plan. The project aims to create a business and investor friendly ecosystem in India by making all business and investment related regulatory services across Central, State and local governments available on a single portal, thereby obviating the need for an investor or a business to visit multiple offices or a plethora of websites. The core value of the transformational project lies in a shift in the Governments' service delivery approach from being department-centric to customer-centric. E-Biz will create a 24x7 facility for information and services and will also offer joined-up services where a single application submitted by a customer, for a number of permissions, clearances, approvals and registrations, will be routed automatically across multiple governmental agencies in a logical manner. An inbuilt payment gateway will also add value by allowing all payments to be collected at one point and then apportioned, split and routed to the respective

heads of account of Central and State agencies along with generation of challans and MIS reports. This payment gateway is the first of its kind designed in India and can become a universal payment gateway for all e-Governance applications.

The Department of Industrial Promotion & Policy, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India, is the Nodal Government Agency responsible for the implementation of the eBiz Project. Infosys Technologies Ltd. has been selected as the Concessionaire/ Project Implementation Partner and is responsible for the design, development, implementation and maintenance of the eBiz Solution.

The Implementation of GAAR deferred by 2 Years

The implementation of General Anti Avoidance Rules (GAAR) was deferred by two years by the government of India. It will now come into force from 1 April 2016. Earlier, the provisions of GAAR were to be implemented from 1 April 2014. GAAR will not apply to those Foreign Institutions Investors, FIIs who are not taking any benefit under an agreement under the Income Tax Act. Besides, it will also not apply to non-resident investors in FIIs. The Parthasarathi Shome Committee in its final report submitted to Finance ministry on 30 September 2012 had suggested that GAAR should be deferred by three years. The report was made public on 14 January 2013. Union Government accepted major recommendations of the Shome Committee with some modifications. Shome Committee was set up by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in July 2012 to address the issue of GAAR.

Union Cabinet Approved 50 Percent Reduction in the Reserve Prices for CDMA Spectrum

The Union Government on 17 January 2013 approved a 50 per cent reduction in the reserve price of spectrum used by CDMA mobile operators. Spectrum auction, for both GSM and CDMA, is supposed to be completed by 31 March 2013 and thereafter the markets will decide how much revenue the government will get. With the reduction of reserve price to 50 percent pan-India 5MHz of 800 MHz

spectrum (CDMA radio waves) will now cost 9100 crore rupees. It was witnessed that auction of CDMA spectrum that took place in November 2012 did not attract bidders due to high reserve price. The reserve price set was 11 times higher than what operators paid in 2008. Earlier CDMA spectrum price fixed by government was priced at 1.3 times more than the GSM spectrum in 1800 Mhz band. The Cabinet has already approved a 30 per cent cut in the reserve price of 1,800 MHz band spectrum used for offering GSM services. The Supreme Court has recently allowed the companies whose licences were cancelled to continue operations till 4 February 2013 when the government is supposed to inform it of the final reserve or minimum price for the spectrum sale.

Union Government Approved Open Policy

Union Government on 17 January 2013 lifted ban on exports of processed foods and value added agricultural products in order to facilitate uninterrupted supply. The uninterrupted export of such processed food products is projected to be regulated by duty. The list of exportable goods includes processed foods from agricultural commodities, such as wheat, rice, onion and milk.

Benefits of Lifting of Ban

- The lifting of Ban is supposed to give a push to India's weak merchandise exports and is estimated to add 5 billion dollar to exports over the next two year with West Asia identified as a key market for processed food from India.
- It will help Indian exporters to move up the value chain as well as create additional employment in the country.
- An always open policy of this sector will not only help reduce wastage of perishable products but also encourage value addition.
- Exports of processed or value-added products constitute a very small portion of overall exports and hence, their continuation would not affect the availability in the domestic market owing to very marginal processing capacity in the country.

It was seen that Exports of agricultural and processed foods have almost doubled to around 86018 crore rupees in 2012-13 from 43727 crore rupees in 2011-12. Presently the major agricultural exports of India are that of raw or primary produce

and unprocessed or semi processed agriculture commodities, which are vulnerable to restrictions attributing to various reasons such as bad weather conditions, deficient or delayed rainfall and food security issue. The Government opened up export of rice and wheat since September 2011 and has emerged a large exporter of these commodities since then.

World Bank slashed the Global Growth Forecast to 2.4 Percent

The World Bank on 15 January 2013 projected that the world economy would expand 2.4 percent in 2013, little higher than the 2.3 percent achieved in 2012. In June 2012, the Bank forecasted the growth up to 3 percent, but due to the slow growth rate, high unemployment rate and less confidence in businesses across the developing nations it managed to revise the forecast earlier made. The World Bank has reduced the projected growth rate of different countries. It has slashed the growth rate of Japan to its half from the one projected earlier and in case of US the growth rate has been slashed by 0.5 percent points. The bank also projected narrowing in the growth rate of the Euro Region. For emerging markets of Mexico, Brazil and India also the projection was lowered. The report from the lead author of the Bank's Global Economic Prospects Andrew Burns describes that the predicted recoveries of the bank in 2012 would be carried forward towards the end of the first quarter and second quarter of 2013. The bank report also has claimed that the ongoing political battle in United States for raising the borrowing limit and spending cuts by the Government would bring loss of confidence in the rate of dollar creating an alarming situation for the world financial market and effect the growth rate. It also pointed out the diplomatic tensions between China and Japan would also have an impact on the growth rate.

IMF forecasted Indian Economic Growth Rate to be 5.9 percent in 2013

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) on 23 January 2013 projected that the economic growth rate of India in 2013 would be 5.9 percent. The IMF also projected an increased growth rate of 6.4 percent for 2014 looking forward towards the gradual strengthening of the global expansion in India's

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context. In its update at the World Economic Forum (WEO), the IMF also forecasted that the global economic growth rate would be 3.5 percent, little higher than the 3.2 percent estimated earlier. As per the report of IMF, uncertainty in policy making and supply bottlenecks were one of the most visible causes that hampered the growth aspects of the economies like India and Brazil. It also stated that the scopes of easing the policy to any further extent have also gone down in these countries.

About International Monetary Fund (IMF)

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is an organization of 188 countries that works for fostering the global monetary cooperation, promote high employment and sustainable economic growth, facilitate international trade, secure financial stability and reduce poverty around the world. Since the end of World War II, the IMF had been playing a major role in shaping the global economy. The IMF has played a part in shaping the global economy.

SEBI Revised the

Mechanism of Offer for Sale

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on 25 January 2013 revised the mechanism of the Offer for Sale (OFS). The board took the decision of revising the norms because the deadline for the promoters of the listed companies to offload their stake for meeting the minimum public shareholding norm of 25 percent by June 2013 is approaching. These revisions would make the norms much more efficient, transparent and economical. The quantity for cumulative bidding would be made available online for the market across the trading session at different intervals to take care of the orders that carries 100 percent upfront margin and also of the orders which have been placed without the upfront margin. The indicative price of the market would be disclosed for the market across the trading session and is calculated on the basis of bids and orders.

Mode of Payments

For institutional investors their exists an option of paying the upfront margin in cash or without margin is available the non-institutional investors it is mandatory to pay in cash the 100 percent of upfront margin.

Facilities available

The upfront margin paid by both the institutional and non-institutional investors can be cancelled or modified up to 100 percent even during the trading hours Institutional investors would not be able to modify or cancel their orders until they pay their upfront margin but they can make upward revision of the price or quantity

Provisions available for Institutional Investors

The investors who have placed their bids or orders with 100 percent upfront margin, they can take the custodian confirmation within trading hours, with provisions of settlements within T+1 (trading plus one day) and in case of trading without upfront margin it can be done on T+1 and settlement can be on T+2 as it would be followed by the secondary market transactions.

The facility of extended half-an-hour after trading hours that was given to the custodians previously has been omitted.

CCEA approved Defreeze in the Tariff Value of Edible Oils

The Cabinet Committee of Economic Affairs on 17 January 2013 approved the de-freezing of the tariff values of the all types of edible oils and notified that the tariffs of these oils would be decided on the basis of the existing international prices in the market. Oils that would suffer the effect of this decision are Soyabean Oil - Crude Palm Oil - RBD (Refined Bleached Deoderized), Palm Oil - Crude, Palmolein - Crude, Palm Oil - others and Palmolein - others. The decision would bring an advantage to the domestic refining industry because of the impact that the imports of the edible oils will do on the collected duty.

Background

Under Section 14 (2) of the Customs Act - 1962 - the tariff value is fixed on the edible oils mentioned would be notified fortnightly. The tariff value of the edible oils remained unchanged since 31 July 2006 as a result of fiscal measures to control inflation. This halt in increase in the tariff value have created a great difference between the notified tariff and the computed landed prices following the price

of edible oils in the international market. This halt had an adverse impact on the domestic refining industry as well as the revenue collection.

The cap on Subsidized LPG Cylinders raised from 6 to 9

The Union Government of India on 17 January 2013 hiked a cap on the subsidized LPG Cylinders from 6 to 9 and offered a partial relief to the consumers of LPG cylinders. This move of the Union Government would come into effect from April 2013. As per the orders of the Government and the decisions made by the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs (CCPA) the rate of the kerosene and LPG would remain unchanged and the quota on the five subsidized cylinders from September 2012 to March 2013 would be given to the consumers. Further, from 1 April 2013 onwards people would be entitled for nine cylinders per annum. Subsidized rates of LPG for 14.2 kg cylinder in the market is 410.50 rupees and further requirement of any household beyond the cap of 6 cylinders costs 895.50 rupees per cylinder. As per the reports from Oil Ministry, it suffered a total subsidy loss of about 37411 crore rupees on cooking gas in 2012-2013 at 520.50 rupees per cylinder.

The Election Commission of India has also granted no-objection to this act of Government of raising the cap on LPG gas quota. This decision was taken in a meeting of the commission, under the chairmanship of VS Sampath the Chief Election Commissioner of India. The Union Government on 15 January 2013 wrote an application to the election commission to know its stand on the issue of raising the cap on the subsidized cylinders. The center wanted to take the permission from the commission as the model code of conduct was operational in Nagaland, Meghalaya and Tripura, where the elections are scheduled to be conducted in February 2013.

CCEA approved the Continuation of JNNURM

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs on 17 January 2013 approved the continuation of the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) to sanction new projects and capacity building activities till 31st March, 2014 under Urban

Infrastructure and Governance (UIG) and Urban Infrastructure Development Scheme for Small and Medium Towns (UIDSSMT) components of JNNURM.

New Urban infrastructure projects in States / UTs would be approved till 31st March, 2014, and taking up new capacity building activities in Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) and States has also been approved. The proposal would enable provisioning of creation of urban infrastructure, particularly in small and medium towns, in all States and UTs. These projects would be subsumed in the next phase of the JNNURM for the 12th Five Year Plan.

FDI Inflow in China Decreased 3.7 Percent

The FDI inflow of China dipped in for the first time in 3 years. There was a decline of 3.7 percent in the FDI inflow of China over 2012, as per the data revealed by the Ministry of Commerce in Beijing. However, China still holds its position as the most lucrative FDI destination in the world. It drew 111.7 billion dollar FDI in 2012 in comparison to 116 billion dollar in 2011. FDI flows nevertheless sink in for 7th month in a row in December 2012 with a fall of 4.5 percent in comparison to November 2012. Analysts are of the view that the foreign players were restricting their investments keeping in mind the taking over of new President of China, Xi Jinping in March 2013, who is expected to liberalise the Chinese economy more. This might lead to relaxation of capital account controls.

India has Crossed One Billion Mark in Tea Production

The Union Commerce Ministry of India in the third week of January 2013 released figures and it mentioned that tea-industry in India had passed the one billion kilogram mark production. This target has been crossed by the participation of the small tea-growers. To bring into net and check out the production of tea in the nation the industry regulator, Tea Board of India launched a major exercise in which it tried to rope producers from both organised and unorganized sectors of India, these producers also included those who never reported the crop statistics at their end. The exercise was taken up in 2012 and it helped in bringing up the fact that India was able to produce 75 million kilogram more tea

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than the 988 million kilogram, estimated earlier in a year from January 2011 to December 2011.

By November 2012, it was reported that 1023.9 million kilogram of tea crop was crossed following the figures of the field level data.

The SC of India ended the Tax Exemption of Cookie Man under SSI Notification

The Supreme Court of India on 14 January 2013 ended the tax benefit from the Australian Foods India Private Limited, makers of Cookie Man cookies with a claim that branded goods cannot claim excise exemption that is designed for small-scale industry, even in case those are sold loose and without packaging. The Australian cookie making company claimed the benefits of excise duty on the cookies sold by its retail stores across the nation without any brand name or packaging. The two judge bench of the Supreme Court comprising Justices DK Jain and JS Khehar heard the appeal from the revenue department against the decision of the tax-tribunal for granting the Australian company the excise exemption. The two judge bench in its decision of review stated that Physical Branding of any product is not necessary to prove that it was a branded product, as the product in itself shows its association with the brand name and thus it can't take the benefits of the SSI (small scale industry) notification. The Revenue Department went to the Supreme Court to challenge the orders of the CEGAT (Customs, Excise and Service Tax Appellate Tribunal) against the excise exemption offered to the Australian Cookie making company.

MTNL launched its Video Telephony Service in Delhi and Mumbai

Government Telecom Service Provider MTNL on 17 January 2013 launched its video telephony service in Delhi and Mumbai, the first by any service provider in these two cities. This service will change the way people communicate with each other without travelling and will improve their quality of life in many ways. The service is ideal for communication and applications like tele-medicine, tele-education and e-governance adding that the service would save time, and cost and improve productivity. Our correspondent reports that using this service, calls can be made within India on MTNL/BSNL HD-Voice

and video telephony network and the video call charges would be 2.50 rupees per minute.

RBI slashed Repo Rate to 7.75 Percent and CRR to 4 Percent

The Reserve Bank of India on 29 January 2013 slashed its key interest rates by 0.25 per cent and released 18000 crore rupees additional liquidity into the system to perk up growth through reduced cost of borrowing. RBI in its third quarter monetary policy review surprised the market by cutting short-term lending rate called repo, by 0.25 per cent to 7.75 per cent and Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) by similar margin to 4 per cent. The repo rate cut will reduce the cost of borrowing for individuals and corporates, whereas the reduction in CRR, which is the portion of deposits that banks have to park with RBI, would improve the availability of funds. Unveiling the policy review in Mumbai, RBI stated that the stance of monetary policy in this review is intended to provide an appropriate interest rate environment to support growth as inflation risks moderate. CRR cut will have impact on long term interest rates.

The RBI, however, has reduced the growth projections for the current financial year to 5.5 per cent from its earlier estimate of 5.8 per cent. On inflation, it moderated the rate to 6.8 per cent for March-end from earlier projection of 7.5 per cent. The repo rate, which was cut last in April 2012, stands revised at 7.75 per cent with immediate effect, while the liquidity infusing CRR stands at 4 per cent effective 9 February 2013. Inflation has been the prime inhibiting factor that has prevented the RBI from cutting repo rate in the last nine months, which have seen a host of liquidity infusing measures like a cut of 1.75 per cent in CRR, government bond buybacks and a one percentage point cut in SLR. RBI however, added the caveat stating that the stance will depend on how the government manages the risk from the twin deficits on the fiscal and current account side, and the evolving growth-inflation dynamics. Stating that the widening current account deficit, which represents the differential between the foreign exchange earned and expended through trade and services, is a big concern, RBI said the number is expected to widen in third quarter, beyond the 5.4 percent in the preceding quarter. RBI praised

government's recent reform measures including liberalisation of FDI in retail, deferment of GAAR and progressive deregulation of fuel prices saying these actions will help engender stable macroeconomic conditions and return the economy to its high growth trajectory. The RBI will come out with mid-quarter review on 19 March 2013 and the annual policy on 3 May 2013.

2.5 Percent Import Duty imposed on Crude Edible Oil

Union government on 17 January 2013 imposed a 2.5 per cent import duty on crude edible oil with keeping the duties unchanged on refined cooking oil fearing a hike in retail prices. The decision was taken at the meeting of Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) in New Delhi with a view to protect domestic farmers. The Agriculture Ministry had proposed an increase in the duty on crude edible oil to protect the interest of palm growers, particularly from Andhra Pradesh. Presently there is no import duty for crude edible oil but refined edible oil attracts an import duty of 7.5 per cent India imports about half of the total domestic requirement of cooking oil. In 2011-12 oil years (November-October), the total import of vegetable oils (edible and non-edible oil) was at an all-time high of 10.19 million tonnes. In the first two months of the current oil year, imports were up 5 per cent. The Agriculture Ministry sought for 7.5 per cent import duty on crude edible oil and 15 per cent on refined oil. But during the inter-ministerial meeting, the finance ministry felt such a sharp rise would lead to rise in inflation. There is zero duty on crude edible oil and 7.5 per cent on refined edible oils. India imports over 50 per cent of its domestic demand. In 2011-12 oil years, the country imported a record 10.19 million tonnes of vegetable oils.

RBI set up Working Group to review Banking Ombudsman Scheme

The Reserve Bank of India in the month of January 2013 had set up a working group to evaluate and make improvements in the grievance redressal mechanism for bank customers. The working group constituted in the Reserve Bank of India is going to review, update, and revise the Banking Ombudsman Scheme, 2006. As per the RBI annual report of the Banking Ombudsman Scheme 2011-12, In Financial

Year 2011-12, the banking ombudsman's office of the RBI received around 72889 complaints. It disposed off 94 per cent of the customer complaints, About one-fourth of the total customer complaints were about banks' failure to meet commitments and non-observance of fair practices code. Also, it was seen that the Banking Ombudsman received 14492 card-related complaints in the reporting year. Unsolicited cards and charging of annual fee in spite of being offered 'free' card formed the basis of some of the complaints against the banks. Presently, we have 15 Banking Ombudsmen with unambiguous jurisdiction covering the 29 States and seven Union Territories in India.

12517 crore Rupees of Capital Infusion approved in 10 PSU Banks

The Union Cabinet on 10 January 2013 approved a proposal of infusing 12517 crores rupees in public sector banks so that bank could enhance the lending activity and meet the capital adequacy norms. As per the Finance Minister P Chidambaram about 9-10 public sector banks are going to be benefitted from the capital infusion programme. Also, the name of the banks, the amount for each bank and terms of the conditions will be decided in consultation with them at the time of infusion. The government is supposed to Provide capital funds to PSBs during the year 2012-13 to the tune of 12517 crore to maintain their Tier-I CRAR (capital to risk-weighted assets ratio) at comfortable level. The need for that is to make the PSU remain obedient with the stricter capital adequacy norms under BASEL-III as well as to support internationally active PSBs for their national and international banking operations undertaken through their subsidiaries and associates. In principle approval of the Cabinet is accorded for need based additional capital infusion in PSBs from the year 2013-14 to 2018-19 for ensuring compliance to Capital Adequacy norms under Basel-III.

Benefits of the Capital Infusion in Banks

- The capital investment will ensure fulfillment to the regulatory norms on capital adequacy and will cater to the credit needs of productive sectors of the economy as well as to withstand the impact of stress in the economy.

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- It will support national and international banking operations of PSBs and will boost the confidence of investors and market sentiments.
- The infusion of 12517 crore rupees in the equity capital of PSBs would enable them to expand their credit growth.
- This additional availability of credit will cater to the credit needs of our economy and will also benefit employment oriented sectors, especially agriculture, micro and small enterprises, export, entrepreneurs etc. in promotion of their economic activities which would, in turn, contribute substantially to the growth of the economy.
- The Government is committed in making all the PSBs financially sound and healthy so as to ensure that the growing credit needs of our economy are adequately met. To meet the credit requirement of the economy, banks would require capital funds commensurate to the increase in their Risk Weighted Assets (RWAs). The government earlier had infused about 20117 crore rupees in public sector banks during 2010-11, and 12000 crore rupees in 2011-12.

10% Stake Sale in Engineers India Ltd (EIL) approved

The Union Government on 10 January 2013 approved 10 per cent stake sale in Engineers India Ltd (EIL), which is supposed to bring back a sum of around 800 crore Rupees to the government. The stake is going to take place this fiscal, April 2012 to March 2013 and is approved by Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA). At present 80.40 Percent of Stake in EIL is held by the Government. Earlier in 2010 Government divested 10 per cent stake through an FPO in EIL, a leader in engineering consultancy. For the July-September quarter of the current fiscal, April 2012 to March 2013, EIL reported net profit of 161.24 crore of rupees up 10 per cent over the same period in 2011-12.

The government has proposed to raise 3000 crore rupees. by way of disinvestment in 2012-13. So far this fiscal, the government has been able to realise just over 6900 crore rupees through stake sale in PSUs. Further stake sale in Oil India and NTPC is lined up for January and February 2013.

Fitch Ranked India's Sovereign Rating into Negative Status

The Rating Agency Fitch released its latest outlook on India's Sovereign Rating on 8 January 2013 and maintained the negative status for India. The negative rating came out of the concerns over the inflammatory pressures, slow economic growth and uncertain fiscal outlook. Moody's and Standard and Poor are the other two agencies along with Fitch that has rated India into its negative category of the sovereign rating outlook. There are prospects of shifting India in the junk grade in case the economic slowdown and fundamentals doesn't improve in next few months.

Manufacturing Sector Displayed Six-Month Highest Growth in December 2012

The Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) from HSBC survey revealed on 2 January 2013 that the manufacturing activity of India increased in December 2012 to maximum in six months. This happened because of an increase in the new orders as well as strengthened factory output. The survey provides a peep into the sector of manufacturing ranging from jobs to output. The survey showed that the manufacturing activity increased from 53.7 in November 2012 to 54.7 in December 2012. The parameter for measuring is a figure of 50 points. The sector showing figure more than 50 points displays growth while that below 50 points indicates contraction. The chief economist of HSBC described that the manufacturing sector gained pace because of upstick in the new orders as well as faster growth of output. An increase in the manufacturing activity of India indicated a positive sign for the economy as well.

Private Sector of India registered a Net Profit of 4.3 percent

The data released from the Reserve Bank of India on 9 January 2013 reported that the Private Corporate Sector of India registered a net profit of 91800 crore rupees in the first half of 2012-13 (April to September), which is 4.3 percent higher than the one reported in the first half of the 2011-2012. In terms of growth in Sales on the basis of the financial results of 2832 listed non-financial and non-

government companies in the first half of the current fiscal the companies grew by 12.3 percent, which is equivalent to 14.34 lakh crore. The details of the report states that the operating profit (EBITDA) of these companies has gone up by 4.9 percent to 1.88 lakh crore rupees.

The report states that with a net profit margin of 17 percent, the performance of the Information Technology (IT) sector was better, when compared with the manufacturing and non-IT service sectors. The net profit margin of the non-IT service sector and

manufacturing sector were 4.9 percent and 5.7 percent respectively. The manufacturing companies show a rise in its net profit by 2.4 percent, which is equivalent to 61200 crore rupees and the non-IT companies dropped down by 3.9 percent, from the one recorded previous year. The companies involved in computer and activities related to it show a rise in net profit of 18.6 percent that is equivalent to 18200 crore rupees. The financial companies registered a net profit of 27.3 percent that was equivalent to 8500 crore rupees, when compared to previous year profit.

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

- Which one (mention below) is not a credit rating agency .
(a) CRISIL (b) CRY
(c) FINCH (d) MODDY'S
- Recently to which Country's central bank R.B.I signed a bilateral swap agreement
(a) South Korea (b) Malaysia
(c) Japan (d) Thailand
- Reserve Bank of India has set up a supervisory college for two banks which is
(a) SBI & ICICI (b) SBI & PNB
(c) SBI & HDFC (d) SBI & IDBI
- Europe's largest bank is
(a) HSBC (b) City Bank
(c) Barclays (d) ABN Amro
- Word 'Libor' is related to
(a) Insurance sector (b) Health sector
(c) Banking sector (d) Capital market
- Consider the following statements :
1. India Imports over 30 percent of its urea requirement .
2. Recently Cabinet Committee clears new urea investment policy .
Which of the above statement is/are true?
(a) Only 1
(b) Only 2
(c) Both 1 & 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
- Consider the following statements :
1. UPA government has set up a Credit Risk Guarantee Fund with an initial corpus of Rs.1000 crore .
2. The Interest Subsidy Scheme for housing the urban poor launched in 2010 .
Which of the above statement is/are true?
(a) Both 1 & 2 (b) Only 1
(c) Only 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
- Which Indian Public Sector undertaking is the biggest company in terms of revenue followed by Reliance Industries according to the Fortune 500 list of Indian companies for 2012 ?
(a) ONGC (b) NTPC
(c) SAIL (d) Indian Oil Corporation
- Which country is the second largest consumer of Coal ?
(a) India (b) China
(c) America (d) Russia.
- Consider the following statement about South Korea
1. America is the largest buyer of Venezuelan Oil.
2. Venezuela's proven Oil reserves is more than Saudi Arabia.
Which statements is/are true?
(a) Only 1 (b) Both 1 & 2
(c) Only 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
- Recently Which Company Launched Idea Pad Yoga
(a) HCL (b) Apple
(c) Samsung (d) Lenovo
- The world's largest consumed food is
(a) Rice (b) Maize
(c) Wheat (d) Potato
- The second phase of NABARD National resources management project will be assisted by
(a) Germany (b) U.K
(c) U.S.A (d) France

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14. Consider the following statements :

1. In 12th plan envisages a 4% growth in agriculture estimated .
2. Minimum Support Price (MSP) fixed by the state government.

Which of the above statement is/are true?

- (a) Both 1 & 2 (b) Only 1
(c) Only 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

15. Stock Holding Corporation of India leading depository participant & largest custodian of securities in the country will be merged with government owned.

- (a) HDFC (b) SIDBI
(c) IDBI (d) ICICI

16. In Which Country Airbus's Plant Toulouse is situated

- (a) Switzerland (b) France
(c) Germany (d) Britain

17. Consider the following statements about the RBI's Gold Report

1. Inflation is the Prime Culprit driving up gold demand
2. There is no substitute to wean away the demand for gold

Which of the above statement is/are true?

- (a) only 1 (b) only 2
(c) Both 1 & 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

18. Consider the following statements

1. Recently Union government hiked the import duty on gold & platinum from 4% to 6%
2. Government postponed the General Anti Avoidance Rule (GAAR) of taxation to April 2014

Which of the above statement is/are true?

- (a) only 2 (b) only 1
(c) Both 1 & 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

19. Consider the following statements about eBiz portal

1. The portal was developed by infosys in a Public Private Partnership mode.
2. Portal aimed at providing Government to business (G2B) services for India's investor & business communities.

Which of the above statement is/are true?

- (a) Both 1 & 2 (b) only 1
(c) only 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

20. Etihad Airlines is related to

- (a) Saudi Arabia (b) Indonesia
(c) U.A.E (d) Brazil

21. Who is heading the empowered committee of state finance ministers on Goods and Services Tax (GST)

- (a) Soumitra Mitra (b) Sushil Modi
(c) Babulal Gaur (d) N. Paneersalem

ANSWERS

- | | |
|---------|---------|
| 1. (b) | 2. (c) |
| 3. (a) | 4. (a) |
| 5. (c) | 6. (c) |
| 7. (b) | 8. (d) |
| 9. (c) | 10. (b) |
| 11. (d) | 12. (b) |
| 13. (a) | 14. (b) |
| 15. (c) | 16. (b) |
| 17. (c) | 18. (b) |
| 19. (c) | 20. (c) |
| 21. (b) | |

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Dhanush Successfully Test Fired

India on 5 October 2012 successfully test fired nuclear capable Dhanush Missile, the naval version of short-range ballistic missile, Prithvi from a warship off Odisha coast. Dhanush, The indigenously developed naval version of the Prithvi short-range ballistic missile has a strike range of up to 350 km and can carry 500 kg of conventional or nuclear warhead. The test was conducted by the strategic force command (SFC) of the Indian Navy. The trial was a complete success. Dhanush missile is a single stage missile and was developed by the DRDO and is about 8.53 metre in length and 0.9 metre in diameter which uses liquid propellant. The Dhanush missile is going to be used as an anti-ship weapon as well as for destroying land targets depending on the range.

How much better is organic food?

Patient after patient asked — is eating organic food, which costs more, really better for me? Unsure, Stanford University doctors dug through reams of research to find out and concluded there's little evidence that going organic is much healthier, citing only a few differences involving pesticides and antibiotics.

Eating organic fruits and vegetables can lower exposure to pesticides, including for children but the amount measured from conventionally grown produce was within safety limits, the researchers reported Monday. Nor did the organic foods prove more nutritious.

“There are many reasons why someone might choose organic foods over conventional foods,” from environmental concerns to taste preferences, Bravata stressed. But when it comes to individual health, “there isn't much difference.” Specialists long have

said that organic or not, the chances of bacterial contamination of food are the same, and Monday's analysis agreed. But when bacteria did lurk in chicken or pork, germs in the non-organic meats had a 33 percent higher risk of being resistant to multiple antibiotics, the researchers reported Monday in the journal *Annals of Internal Medicine*. That finding comes amid debate over feeding animals antibiotics, not because they're sick but to fatten them up. Farmers say it's necessary to meet demand for cheap meat. Public health advocates say it's one contributor to the nation's growing problem with increasingly hard-to-treat germs. Caroline Smith DeWaal, food safety director at the Center for Science in the Public Interest, counted 24 outbreaks linked to multidrug-resistant germs in food between 2000 and 2010. The government has begun steps to curb the nonmedical use of antibiotics on the farm.

Evidence of waist-deep flowing stream on the Planet

Scientists announced that the Mars Curiosity Rover has discovered stream bed gravel, which hints towards the presence of waist-deep water on the surface of Mars in the past. The co-investigator of Curiosity Science, William Dietrich from University of California, Berkeley stated that for the first time water transported gravel was seen on Mars. Rebecca Williams a scientist at Curiosity Rover stated that the shape of these gravels proves that they have been transported by some means but its size proves that it can't be transported by the wind or some other medium of erosion.

The findings of the scientists following the proofs provided by the cameras of the curiosity rover indicate that once upon a time the dry planet Mars was once wet with the presence of water that

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followed their for millions or thousands of years. Scientists at NASA concluded that rover's central goal was to identify a potentially habitable site on Mars and till now it succeeded in achieving it. Some proofs related to presence of flowing water near by the landing site of rover, the Gale Crater were determined by the presence of pebbles and gravels in the area.

Bordeaux mixture to control coconut infestations

Farmers can make their own mixture and use it as and when required for controlling infestation in coconut. Given below are some simple steps for making the mixture. Dissolve one kg of powdered copper sulphate in 50 litres of water in a mud pot or plastic bucket. Dissolve one kg of lime in 50 litres of water (lime solution). Pour the copper sulphate solution into the lime solution slowly and slowly stir. To detect presence of more copper dip a new steel knife into this solution.

Brown Coat

If a brownish coat appears on the knife then add more lime solution. Keep repeating the procedure till the brown coat no longer forms on the knife. Presence of free copper is injurious to plants, hence to test for the excess copper if any. After preparing the solution it is advisable for farmers to use it immediately as it loses its efficacy with lapse of time. However, if mixture is to be preserved for the next days add 50 to 100 g sugar or jaggery into the 100 litre solution. Drenching of diseased coconut palms with one per cent borax solution thrice a year is effective in reducing the intensity of Thanjavur wilt disease. Drench the pits with one per cent bordeaux mixture before planting coconut seedlings. Bordeaux paste consists of the same ingredients as those of bordeaux mixture but it is in the form of a paste. It is generally made by dissolving 100 gms of copper sulphate and 100 gms of quick lime each in 500 ml of water separately.

Remove Infested Tissue

Removal of affected tissues on the coconut stem with a chisel and smearing with warm coal tar or bordeaux paste over the chiselled portion controls stem bleeding. If the disease is detected when the

central shoot withers, application of 10 per cent bordeaux paste after thorough cleaning and removal of infected plant parts can reduce further spread. The treated portion has to be covered with a plastic sheet to prevent washing of the paste during rains. Spraying one per cent mixture twice a year reduces leaf rot infestation. Spray must be in fine mist form otherwise it will coalesce and trickle down without sticking properly on the nut surface.

Signal to Tectonic Disintegration

The simultaneous earthquakes seen in past few years in the Indian Ocean may be a cause of breaking up of the Tectonic Plate for the formation of a new plate boundary within the earth surface. Keith Koper, from University of Utah Seismograph Station, states that the earthquakes with magnitude-8 in two hour in April 2012 created at least four faults within the earth's Indo Australian plate. The geological stress that split the Indo-Australian plates were caused due to the massive quakes with magnitude-8.6 and 8.2 within 2 hours on 11 April 2012 and its after effects were felt in form of small and big shocks for continuous six days. These earth quakes are being considered as the latest step towards the formation of the new boundary plates. It's suspected by the seismologists that the process of disintegration of the Indo-Australian plates has been in process since 1980's. As per Matthias Delescluse, a geophysicist at the Ecole Normale Superieure in Paris the earthquakes witnessed on 11 April 2012 was one of its kinds and was the most spectacular example of the change process.

He considers it to be one of the clearest examples of the formation of plate boundaries. The available theories that speak about plate-tectonics hints that the internal deformation of the Indo-Australian plate started at least 10 million years ago. The theories elaborate that the northward movement of the plates nearby India that was crunched against the Eurasian Plate thrust Himalayas above by slowing down India. The science fraternity suspects that the Australian portion, which was forged before by the twisting tensions is responsible for the split being caused in the plates in the Indian Ocean.

As per the findings of Delescluse and his team, they inferred the presence of seismic stress zones

using modeling changes of stress shortly before the earthquakes happened in the year 2012. Their findings signal that the 2012 earthquakes were triggered during the earthquakes of the year 2004 with magnitude-9.1 that caused the tsunami in Indian Ocean and the one felt in the year 2005.

Brain does not allow math, memory to mix

There is a limit to multi-tasking after all. The brain is not wired to allow you to balance your chequebook while introspecting, say researchers who have practically wire-tapped a hard-to-reach region of the brain. The research showed that groups of nerve cells in a structure called the posterior medial cortex, or PMC, are strongly activated during a recall task such as trying to remember whether you had coffee yesterday. However, these groups of nerve cells are also just as strongly suppressed when you're engaged in solving a math problem. The PMC, situated roughly where the brain's two hemispheres meet, is of great interest to neuroscientists because of its central role in introspective activities, the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* reports. "This brain region is famously well-connected with many other regions that are important for higher cognitive functions," said Josef Parvizi, associate professor of neurology and neurological sciences at the Stanford University Medical Centre.

Parvizi and his Stanford colleagues found a way to directly and sensitively record the output from this ordinarily anatomically inaccessible site in human subjects. By doing so, they learned that particular clusters of nerve cells in the PMC that are most active when you are recalling details of your own past are strongly suppressed when you are performing mathematical calculations.

India's first Multi-lateral Social Science Research Collaboration

India has managed to enter into its first multi-lateral Social Science research collaboration with four European Nations by the approval of projects for networking and social science research cooperation in between the researchers of these nations. The French Agence Nationale de la Recherche (ANR), the Deutsche Forschungsge-meinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation), the UK Economic and Social

Research Council (ESRC) and the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) are the four bodies with which India has been successful in created tie-ups. The social scientists will get national funds for creating collaborations with European Partners via a scheme. This is help in eradication of bureaucratic restrictions and obstacles. It's expected to economise and rationalize the efforts of Europe towards production of high impact and quality research on social science that can address to the challenges forwarded by the global arena in terms of growth, economy, development, climate change, well being and health. As per the scheme the proposal can be made on any hemisphere of social science that can be of a help in understanding the social and individual behavior of a person and influence the policies beyond the boundaries. The targeted six proposals that have been awarded with the funds after being mapped in the month of May 2011, will deal in the aspects of wellbeing, ageing, bullying, mapping the cultural authority of science, globally accessible medicine, climate governance and pupil-safety.

Indian Navy Successfully Test Fired BrahMos Missile

The Indian Navy on 7 October 2012 successfully test-fired the 290-km range BrahMos supersonic cruise missile which is capable of carrying a conventional warhead of 300 kg, from a warship off the Goa coast. The cruise missile was test-fired from guided missile frigate INS Teg—the Indian Navy's latest induction from Russia off the coast of Goa. The INS Teg, which has been built at the Yantar shipyard in Russia, had fired the missile successfully during pre-induction trials in Russia in 2011.

About Brahmos Missile

BrahMos is a stealth supersonic cruise missile that can be launched from submarines, ships, aircraft or land. It is a joint venture between Republic of India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Russian Federation's NPO Mashinostroyeniya who have together formed BrahMos Aerospace Private Limited. It is the world's fastest cruise missile in operation.

The missile travels at speeds of Mach 2.8 to 3.0.

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and have the capability of attacking surface targets by flying as low as 10 metres in altitude.

Judicious Feeding to Increase Milk Production

Dairy farming has provided income and employment generating opportunities to millions of rural families. Large scale implementation of scientific programmes helped in improving the productivity of milch animals with the available feed resources in an environmentally sustainable manner.

Better Milk Yield

To obtain a good level of milk production from a milch animal, feeding of balanced ration is must. Many farmers in North India in order to enhance milk production and calving of their dairy livestock are feeding their homemade unscientific self made formulations made of cotton seed, wheat –daliya and oil cakes, and wheat bran / rice polish. It lacks both macro and micro nutrients and not only affects milk yield but also reproductive efficiency. For better production and maximising profit potential, animals should be fed concentrate mixture made from 20-25 parts of oilcakes, 25-35 parts millets /cereals and 10-25 parts cereal by products such as brans/ polish, and 5-20 parts dal chuni. This should be fortified with 2 per cent mineral mixture and one per cent common salt. To economise the cost of milk production feed the animal 10 per cent fodder along with green grass and concentrate mixture. One kg concentrate mixture should be fed to heifers/cows during 2-3 months before calving and also feed one kg additional mixture animals in milking. Feed additional energy rich concentrate mixture up to 35 per cent during winter and 35 per cent protein rich during summers. The quality and quantity of water is very important for maximising production of milk because milk constitutes about 83-87 per cent of water.

Some Hints

Other salient points that should be kept in mind are: Do not change the feeding / watering regimen / management plan abruptly. Quality and optimal quantity of water to dairy animals is necessary to ensure efficiency of production. Always maintain regular feeding schedule of animals.

Commissioning of the Kundakulam Plant can be stopped

The Supreme Court directed to the center that if the safety measures are not found satisfactory than it would not hesitate from stopping the commissioning of the Kudankulam project in spite of the huge investments made on its installation. The bench of Justices K. S. Radhakrishnan and Deepak Misra stated that safety of the people residing around the plant is a serious concern and in case any of the safety measures have not been followed during the execution of the plant. Earlier the central Government formed a special task force that recommended 17 measures in relation to the safety concerns of the power plant but they have not been taken care of nor fully implemented. The installation of the plant also suffered several changes ever since 1989, when the environment clearance was offered to the plant.

Concerns and Issues

The petition submitted by G Sundarrajan declares that the environment clearances made during the 1989 Environment Impact Assessment was not done because the site for installation was not decided by then. Government even failed to conduct the public hearing, which is a mandatory thing to be done under law. The critical changes done in the plant are as follows:

1. The previous plan was to store the spent fuel in Russia, but now it will be stored within the plant
2. The water for being used in the nuclear plant was to be taken from the local dam, but now the decisions have been made to take the fuel from the sea
3. Then the Ministry of Environment and Forests stated that the sea temperature will suffer a change of 5 degrees but now it has been raised to 7 degrees

Affidavit Submitted by The NPCIL

The Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd submitted an affidavit to the Madras High Court on 18 August 2012 and 22 August 2012 in relation to the safety measures followed by the plant and its abilities to withstand the natural events like earthquake, cyclones and all. The same affidavit was

submitted to the Supreme Court on 26 September 2012. The provided affidavit states:

1. The plant has been designed to be safe at times with the washing away of the safety units which may be caused due to floods, Fukushima incident of washing away has been cited for an example.
2. The nuclear plant is a generation 3+ power plant and is designed taking care of the ultra-modern safety measures like auto-prevention against the general causes of failure of the safety system and is reliable and complies to the standards of redundancy available at present
3. The power plant can survive against the natural events such as tsunami, earthquakes of high reactor scale, shock waves, fire, cyclones and others. The main building of the plant is also safe against the air-craft impact. Security arrangements against the terrorists attack and sabotages have also been implemented.
4. The structural design can prevent the release of the radioactive material in the public even in cases of physical attacks
5. The affidavit also cleared that the 17 recommendations of the AERB (Atomic Energy Regulatory Board) will be taken care at times to come. This affidavit also made clear that 7 out of 17 recommendations were compiled but the power plant was safe even without the use of the 17 recommendations made by AERB.

E-cigarettes can Damage your Lungs

Electronic cigarettes used by smokers trying to quit the lethal habit of smoking can actually cause lung damage, a new study has claimed. Scientists warn that the devices can trigger changes to the lungs, despite the fact that they are being marketed as a potentially safer alternative to normal cigarettes.

The study also added new evidence to the debate over the safety of alternative nicotine-delivery products. Electronic cigarettes are devices that deliver nicotine through a vapour, rather than smoke. There is no combustion involved but the nicotine in the device is still derived from tobacco.

Debate

There has been much debate over the safety and efficiency of the products, but little scientific evidence to support either claim. Researchers from the

University of Athens in Greece aimed to investigate the short-term effects of using e-cigarettes on different people, including people without any known health problems and smokers with and without existing lung conditions.

The study included 8 people who had never smoked and 24 smokers, 11 with normal lung function and 13 people with either chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or asthma. Each person used an electronic cigarette for 10 minutes. The researchers then measured their airway resistance using a number of tests, including a spirometry test.

The Results

The results showed that for all people, the e-cigarette caused an immediate increase in airway resistance, lasting for 10 minutes. In healthy subjects (never smokers) there was a statistically significant increase in airway resistance from a mean average of 182 to 206 per cent. In smokers with normal spirometry (measuring of breath) there was a statistically significant increase from a mean average of 176 to 220 per cent. In COPD and asthma patients the use of one e-cigarette seemed to have no immediate effect to airway resistance. "We do not yet know whether unapproved nicotine delivery products, such as e-cigarettes, are safer than normal cigarettes, despite marketing claims that they are less harmful.

This research helps us to understand how these products could be potentially harmful," Professor Christina Gratiou, one of the authors and Chair of the ERS Tobacco Control Committee, said. "We found an immediate rise in airway resistance in our group of participants, which suggests e-cigarettes can cause immediate harm after smoking the device. More research is needed to understand whether this harm also has lasting effects in the long-term," Gratiou said. The result was presented at the European Respiratory Society's Annual Congress in Vienna.

'Greening' of Nylon

Working on a cancer cure, researchers have discovered a molecule which would facilitate 'greening' of nylon production. "In our lab, we study genetic changes that cause healthy tissues to go bad and grow into tumours," says Zachary J. Reitman,

research associate at Duke University Medical Centre, who led the study. The goal of this research is to design better treatments."As it turns out, a bit of information we learned in that process paves the way for a better method to produce nylon," adds Reitman, the journal Nature Chemical Biology reports. Nylon is a ubiquitous material. A key component for its production is adipic acid, which is one of the most widely used chemicals in the world, according to a Duke statement.

Currently, adipic acid is produced from fossil fuel, and the pollution released from the refinement process contributes significantly to global warming. One of the most promising approaches for eco-friendly adipic acid production uses a series of enzymes as an assembly line to convert cheap sugars into adipic acid. However, one critical enzyme in the series, called a 2-hydroxyadipate dehydrogenase, has never been produced, leaving a missing link in the assembly line. In 2008 and 2009, researchers, including Hai Yan, Duke professor of pathology, identified a genetic mutation in brain tumours that alters the function of an enzyme known as an isocitrate dehydrogenase, the missing link. They used it to create the green adipic acid, through a series of steps.

Sunita Williams became the second woman in history to take command of ISS

Sunita Williams, the astronaut of Indian American origin, took over the command of International Space Station. As per the reports released by NASA, in the traditional ceremony of change-of-command, Expedition 33 Sunita Williams took over the command from Expedition 32 Commander Gennady Padalka in the Destiny Laboratory.

Before this, Sunita Williams booked a record for total cumulative spacewalk time of 44 hours and 2 minutes by a woman astronaut with her sixth walk in the space for repairing a faulty unit of power distribution. In the spacewalk of 6 hours and 28 minutes, she used a wire brush made using a spare cable and a toothbrush for repairing the unit. Sunita Williams is accompanied with Japan's Akihiko Hoshide and Russia's Yury Malenchenko on the International Space Station.

CBI Probe into attacks on Rhinos from Poachers

Government of Assam ordered a CBI probe into the recent incidents of Rhino Poaching. The large mammals were poached for their horns recently in Karbi Anglong hills who escaped from the protected area of the flood affected Kaziranga National Park.

The Chief Minister of Assam, Tarun Gogoi ordered a probe from CBI into the matter and announced a cash reward of Rs 5 lakh to the one providing information about the poachers. The government suspecting the involvement of militant groups in the activity of poaching made a decision to deploy army in the Karbi Anglong Hills lying adjacent to the National Park. Few of the other measures taken by the government include elevation of the post of the Director of the National Park to Chief Conservator of Forest (CCF) from the previous one of Conservator. As the new Director of the park, an IFS officer N.K. Vasu has been appointed. Jayanthi Natarajan the Union Minister of State for Environment and Forests has also ordered a probe by the Wild Life Crime Control Bureau to investigate into the matter and present its report within a weeks' time.

The team formed includes:

1. The team comprises C. Behra, Regional Deputy Director of Eastern Region and Kolkata
2. A.K. Jha, Assistant Director (Intelligence), BHO, Delhi
3. L. Kuruvilla, Assistant Director, Southern Region, Chennai
4. K.K. Sarma, Wildlife Inspector, Northern Region, Delhi

Radical 'Focus Later'

Camera to hit Market soon

A radical camera that lets users adjust the focus after taking pictures will be available in October at shops in Australia, Canada, Singapore, Hong Kong and the United States. The Lytro is the creation of Ren Ng, who started work on the digital camera while studying for a doctorate in computer science at Stanford University in California. The telescope-shaped camera uses what is known as "light field technology" to allow the focal point of a digital image to be changed after the picture is taken, a feature that

Lytro calls “shoot now, focus later.” Clicking on a Lytro picture displayed on a computer screen allows a viewer to shift the focus from a subject in the foreground, for example, to a subject in the background. The Lytro can do this because it uses powerful sensors to capture significantly more light than a conventional camera. Lytro executive chairman Ng describes the images as “living pictures” because of the ability to manipulate them. When Lytro pictures are shared online, the “light field engine” travels with each image so anyone can change focal points as desired.

Alzheimer’s Treatment discovered

Australian scientists along with US experts claimed that they are a step closer to create a treatment for Alzheimer patients following a study finding a link to abnormalities inside brain cells. In a joint study, researchers at Queensland Brain Institute and Harvard medical School team found that when a toxic protein builds up, it starves brain cells of energy, causing them to die. According to ABC online report, in the study of over three years, scientists tried to unveil the mystery surrounding Alzheimer’s disease and a section of the brain cell called the mitochondria, the part responsible for metabolising energy, was analysed. This is the first study to directly link toxic levels of Tau, a protein in the brain that is related to dementia, to abnormalities in the mitochondria, which starves them of energy and destroys brain cells. Researchers claimed that the latest development was a promising step towards developing an effective treatment for sufferers.

Myths may wipe out rhinos

It is the new delicacy of choice among Vietnam’s high-rollers. When the young, fashionable and rich gather to party, they increasingly spice up their drink with a special ingredient: rhino horn powder. These status-conscious hedonists include men who believe it can enhance their sexual performance. They apparently care little that their obsession could drive a glorious animal to extinction. Between 1990 and 2005, poachers in South Africa killed an average of 14 rhinos a year. Since then the number has soared. In 2010, 333 rhinos were poached. In 2011, it was 448. So far this year, 339 rhinos have been killed, putting 2012 on course to be the deadliest since records

began. “Losing 500 a year, when it used to be 12 or 14 a year, is a crisis,” said Tom Milliken, east and southern Africa director of the wildlife trade monitoring network Traffic. “Rhino horn is fetching the highest prices I’ve ever seen in my career.” A Traffic report, published last month, blames “a deadly combination of institutional lapses, corrupt wildlife industry professionals and Asian crime syndicates”. It identifies four main consumer groups fuelling the demand.

“Belief in rhino horn’s detoxification properties, especially following excessive intake of alcohol, rich food and ‘the good life’, has given rise to an affluent group of habitual users, who routinely mix rhino horn powder with water or alcohol as a general health and hangover-curing tonic,” the report said. The notion that Asian traditional medicine used rhino horn as an aphrodisiac was a myth of the western media, Milliken said, but now, “rather incredibly”, it had been embraced by Vietnamese men. “The myth has come full circle.” A second group believe another myth: that rhino horn is a miracle cure for cancer. Milliken said: “We’ve had stories of rhino horn touts who go into cancer wards.” By monitoring online chat-rooms, Milliken and his team were able to identify a third group: middle-class and wealthy young mothers who keep rhino horn as a home preparation for high fever. Finally, there are those using it for expensive gifts to curry favour with elites or as an informal currency for luxury products.

South Africa has stepped up anti-poaching measures in Kruger national park and other game reserves, making 192 arrests this year. The Vietnamese government, however, is accused of not taking the crisis seriously, despite pressure from the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (Cites). Vietnam is the only country in the world where rhino horn grinding bowls are mass produced. South Africa has an estimated 18,000 white rhinos and 1,195 black rhinos. Milliken warns that if the country loses more than 500 a year, the population will start shrinking by about 2018.

Atlas named Aquifer System of India

Minister of water resources and parliamentary affairs Pawan Kumar Bansal on 28 September 2012

in New Delhi had released Atlas for six states namely- Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Chattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh and Meghalaya. The atlas comprises data on various aspect of ground water since its inception that was compiled and integrated by the Central Ground Water Board. The atlas was named as Aquifer System of India. The atlas provides a country wide overview and summary of the most important information available for each principal and major aquifer systems and depicts aquifer wise ground water scenario. It also deals with major issues and challenges which need immediate attention for sustainable management of ground water resources. In this process, a baseline data on GIS platform was created for initiating National Aquifer Mapping Programme and demarcating priority areas for aquifer wise management of ground water resources on scientific and sustainable basis. Attempt was also made to represent the correlations of various thematic layers such as climate, topographic settings on the occurrence, movement, and chemical quality of ground water in map forms. The Atlas is going to be of immense use for Regional and National ground water resources planning by the policy makers and anyone who needs to understand ground water scenario in the country.

Great Indian Bustard and Lesser Florican got Shonkaliya region to breed

The endangered birds, Great Indian Bustard and Lesser Florican have got a dedicated land for breeding in the Shonkaliya Region of Ajmer District, Rajasthan. The villagers of Ajmer District have agreed to conserve 30 hectares of land for the breeding activity of these endangered birds. Population of the Great Indian Bustard (the state bird of Rajasthan) is reportedly not sizeable with six males, present in the area. The Great Indian Bustard needs to lure at least three to four females in number for making of the family. Nests of the Great Indian Bustard have been noticed in the crop fields of the area. The Lesser Floricans are available in a large number as compared to the Great Indian Bustards' in the region. Nest of lesser Floricans have also seen around the crop lands of the area. Floricans make a visit to this north-western region of the country during their breeding season of advancing monsoons. This move

of conservation of the Lesser Floricans and the Great Indian Bustard is an initiative to use MNREGA, the job guarantee scheme of the central government as a conservative tool. At the time of Manju Rajpal, the former collector of Ajmer district, the villagers of Shonkaliya agreed to earmark a dedicated zone in 30 hectare of land for breeding of the birds from their total of 100 hectares. From 1st May to 30th September entry of cattle as well as people will be restricted in the protected land.

Afternoon rain more likely over drier soils

In a study that overturns conventional thinking about the effect of soil wetness on rainfall, it has been found that afternoon rain is more likely over drier soils. The study, by Mr. Christopher M. Taylor, a meteorologist working for the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, Oxon, U.K., and others, published in a recent issue of the journal *Nature*, spanned various areas in six continents. Focusing on the development of precipitation events during the afternoon, when sensitivity of convection to land conditions is expected to be maximised, a statistical analysis was done to evaluate the unexpectedness of rainfall occurring over the various regions across the globe. This unexpectedness was quantified wherever studied and expressed as a percentile value. The percentile is the likelihood whether soil wetness affects rainfall one way or another.

A low percentile value (say 10 per cent or less) of the means that rain is being observed more frequently over dry soil than one would expect if there were no soil effect. Conversely a high value (over 90 per cent) means that rain is more frequent over wet soil than one would expect with no soil effect. Explaining the rationale behind this analysis, Mr. Taylor, in an email to this correspondent, noted: "we have analysed our satellite images to pick out rain events which develop during the afternoon. We then looked at the soil moisture in that region on the morning before it rained, and compared the soil wetness in the place where it rained with a nearby (50-100km) place where it didn't rain. "If soil wetness had no impact on rain then there would be a 50 per cent chance that in the place where it rained, the soil was wetter than where it didn't rain. There would be equal probability of whether it would rain or not." So

some statistical analysis on the data was done to work out how likely it was that rain would be observed over drier soil. The study found many parts of the world had low percentiles (less than 10 per cent and often less than 1 per cent) and almost none with high percentiles (greater than 90 per cent).

Such clusters of low percentiles were found in semi-arid regions, most notably North Africa, but also in eastern Australia, Central Asia and Southern Africa. "Heat is as critical as moisture for rain clouds to build up during the afternoon. On sunny days the land heats the air, creating thermals which reach several kilometres up into the atmosphere. If the soil is dry, the thermals are stronger, and our new research shows that this makes rain more likely," notes Mr. Taylor. These findings are in contrast to climate models which tend to indicate a positive feedback. A positive feedback means that if the soil is wet to start off with, it will get wetter because there will be more rain there. Conversely, and importantly in the context of drought prediction, once the soil gets dry, a positive feedback would favour continued lack of rain, prolonging a drought.

Two Proteins that can Protect against Diabetes

Researchers discovered that two proteins that work together to kill self-reactive immune cells can protect against diseases such as type1 diabetes and rheumatoid arthritis. Researchers from the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute in Australia discovered that absence of proteins called Puma and Bim can result in to self-reactive immune cells accumulating and attacking many different body organs, causing illness. The proteins are called BH3-only. They make the self-reactive cells die by a process called apoptosis. Defects in apoptosis proteins were linked to many human diseases, including cancer and neurodegenerative disorders and autoimmune diseases. Autoimmune diseases, such as type 1 diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, inflammatory bowel disease and multiple sclerosis, develop when immune cells launch an attack on the body's own cells, destroying important body organs or structures.

Glaucoma is in the genes, says study

Scientists have isolated three new genes linked to Primary Angle Closure Glaucoma (PACG), a

leading cause of blindness, which affects 15 million people worldwide, 80 per cent of whom live in Asia. A team of scientists carried out a genome-wide association study (GWAS) of 1,854 PACG cases and 9,608 controls (who did not suffer from PACG) of over five sample collections in Asia.

They performed validation experiments in another 1,917 PACG cases and 8,943 controls collected from a sample from around the world. This is the first to study PACG genetics using a genome-wide perspective, the journal Nature Genetics reports. This finding confirms the long-standing suspicion of Aung Tin, principal project investigator, who is professor of ophthalmology at NUS. Tin has worked on PACG for over 10 years and believes, from clinical observations, that the disease is strongly hereditary, according to a statement of the Agency for Science, Technology and Research, Singapore. "This provides further evidence that genetic factors play a role in development of PACG. The results may lead to new insights into disease understanding and open the possibility of novel treatments in the future as well as the potential of early identification of people at risk of the disease," said Tin.

This research was carried out by scientists from the Singapore Eye Research Institute (SERI), with Genome Institute of Singapore (GIS), National University of Singapore (NUS), National University Hospital's Department of Ophthalmology and Tan Tock Seng Hospital.

Robot that works alongside humans

A humanoid robot with 'common sense', designed to work safely alongside its human co-workers on factory production lines, has been unveiled in the US. Baxter, the robot is priced at USD 22,000 and will go on sale in October. It could apply common sense, adapt to its environment and be trained in less than 30 minutes to complete specific tasks, by workers without robotic expertise, its makers say. Currently factory robots tend to work separately to humans, often in cages, the 'BBC News' reported.

Rodney Brooks, Rethink Robotics founder and former director of the MIT Computer and Science and Artificial Intelligence Lab, said that he hoped Baxter represented a "new concept in manufacturing."

Past successes

“Roboticians have been successful in designing robots capable of superhuman speed and precision,” Brooks said. “What’s proven more difficult is inventing robots that can act as we do — in other words, that are able to inherently understand and adapt to their environment,” he said. According to the International Federation of Robotics there are now 1.1 million working robots in the world. In car manufacture, about 80 per cent of the production is completed by machines. To teach Baxter a new job, a human guides its arms to simulate the desired task, and presses a button to program in the pattern, the report said. The robot responds with a confused expression, if it does not understand, it added.

ZSN and IUCN Released data of Species Fearing Extinction

The Zoological Society of London and International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) released a list of 100 different species to be first in line for extinction from 48 different countries during the World Conservation Congress held in Republic of Korea on 11 September 2012. Tarzan’s Chameleon, The Spoon-Billed Sandpiper, The Pygmy Three-Toed Sloth, The Saola, The Brightly Coloured Willow Blister, Loughshare Tortoise-Angonoka, Rio Pescado Stubfoot Toad and Northern Muriqui-Woolly Spider Monkey are some of the most important species fearing extinction. Some of these threatened species from India and South-East Asia are the Great Indian Bustard along with the White-bellied Heron, the Peacock Tarantula as well as the Spoon-billed Sandpiper of India. The report also includes the name of the Sumatran and Javan Rhinos, which are considered to be the extinct species by now. The species that have been counted in the Red List of IUCN is White-bellied Heron, also known as the Imperial Heron. Estimations state that its number may be in between 70 to 400. As per Bird life International, the White-bellied Bustard is mainly found in the eastern foothills of Great Himalayas mainly in the north-east India, Bhutan, hills of North Bangladesh, North, West and Central Myanmar. These can be seen in small and big rivers adjacent to the subtropical broadleaf forests.

The experts from Species Survival Commission (SSC) have suggested the development of hydel power projects as the identified reason for this increase in downfall in the number of different species. The commission suggested that to bring these species back from the verge of extinction adverse use of river based habitats must be eliminated and captive rearing and release program should be brought into practice. Peacock Tarantula with its habitat in the reserve forests of Nandyal and Giddalur in Andhra Pradesh is facing a challenge of survival because of the degradation in the habitat caused due to the cutting of timber and firewood. Great Indian Bustard, numbered to be in between 50 to 249 is also facing a challenge because of the agricultural developments. To protect the species it was recommended to create a community reserve along with few protected areas nearby Indira Gandhi Nahar Project. The number of Indian Spoon-billed Sandpiper has dropped down to be in between 240 to 400. The rhinos with an identified number of 250 across the world are facing the biggest threat as these are hunted for their horns.

Agni-IV successfully test-fired its Indigenously built

India on 19 September 2012 test fired its nuclear-capable surface-to-surface Agni-IV missile from Wheeler Island, off the Odisha Coast. Fitted with composite rocket motor technology, the missile was test fired from the road mobile launcher. The full range of the missile is 4000 kilometer. The launch was declared to be successful after the missile succeeded in hitting the pre-decided target after taking a flight of 20 minute at an altitude of about 800 kilometer in the atmosphere at a roasting temperature of about 3000°C. The support of Micro Navigation System (MINGS) along with the Ring Laser Gyro based Inertial Navigation System (RINS) ensured the two digit perfection in making the missile reach its target.

The 20 meter long, 1.5 meter broad and 17 ton in weight, is capable of carrying about 1000 kilogram of explosives along with it. Light in weight, this missile is fitted with two stage solid propulsion with a payload for re-entry into the heat shield. One of its kinds, Agni-IV Missile India’s first indigenously developed ballistic missile is embedded with 5th

Generation on Board Computer state-of-the-art Avionics and a finely distributed architecture, which allows correction and guidance during in-flight disturbances.

This missile is a proof of India's quantum jump for in relation to Missile Technology. The long range ballistic missile was designed and developed by the DRDO (Defence Research and Development Organization). This entire operation of the launch was guided to by the Project Director, Smt. Tessy Thomas, along with a team of scientists. Wheeler Island and Chandipur are the two missile launching and testing stations of India. Both long range and short range ballistic missiles are test-fired from the two stations.

Wheeler Island

Strategically located at a distance of 150 kilometer from the capital city of Odisha that is Bhubaneshwar, the Island maintains the missile launching facility for India. The nearest port to the Island of about 390 acres and 70 kilometer south of Chandipur in the Bay of Bengal is Dharama.

Chandipur Beach

The beach is about 194 kilometers from the capital Bhubaneshwar and is one of the major Indian Ballistic Missile Defence Program test range for India in the city of Balasore.

'Super-spreading,' Key In dengue Transmission

Super-spreading, where one infected person passes on a disease to lots of others, could be an important factor driving dengue transmission in places where the mosquito *Aedes aegypti* carries the virus, according to research published recently . The World Health Organisation has termed dengue as "the most important mosquito-borne viral disease in the world." Incidence of the disease has jumped 30-fold in the last five decades. *Aedes aegypti* , the mosquito that is principally responsible for spreading the virus that causes dengue, has proved adept at making use of human habitation. The female mosquito feeds on human blood and subsequently lays her eggs inside containers holding water that are found in and around homes. The eggs hatch into larvae, which grow and turn into pupae, finally

maturing into adults. Studies have found that most of the mosquitoes in each locality typically come from just a few containers and houses, termed 'super-producers.'

In the course of their research, which has been published in the journal PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases , Harish Padmanabha of Yale School of Public Health in the U.S. and his colleagues modelled how dengue would spread, given such an aggregation of mosquitoes and variations in the density of people in a place. The simulation was based on the distribution of mosquito pupae and humans in houses in two residential neighbourhoods of Armenia, a city in Colombia in South America where the disease is rife. Since mosquitoes were concentrated in only a couple of homes in each locality, an infected individual in those houses or in their immediate vicinity was likely to get bitten and pass on the virus to a large number of mosquitoes.

Those mosquitoes, in turn, would go on to bite other people, thus spreading the disease. The study indicated that dengue transmission "depends heavily on events where an infected person infects many mosquitoes," Dr. Padmanabha told this correspondent. Such people were the super-spreaders. In contrast, most people with the virus would not infect many mosquitoes. Moreover, "human density amplified the effect of *A. aegypti* super-production on dengue risk," the paper noted. Increased human density led to more possibilities for disease spread through both human-to-mosquito and mosquito-to-human transmission.

Also, greater human density in a particular area would increase the frequency of dengue-infected visitors. "We found that even small variations in human density can have a very big effect," Dr. Padmanabha said. "A mosquito where you have low human density has much less capacity to transmit [the disease] than in an area where there is high human density."

Targeting control measures in areas of high human density could reduce the epidemic potential by decreasing the abundance of mosquitoes in areas where dengue was most likely to be introduced, the paper pointed out.

100 elite forces assigned the task of saving Rhinos from Poachers

The Assam Government has deployed a 100-member team of Elite Forest Protection Force at the Kaziranga National Park on 2 October 2012. The decision came in concern to the recent killings of the one horned Rhinos in the flood-affected areas of Karbi Anglong Hills, the area outside the protected region of the Park. The park is also a UNESCO Heritage Site. The forest department of the state dispatched a team of armed forces to the park for offering protection to the one-horned animal against the Poachers. As per the available data the park has lost 39 Rhinos within 10 months bringing down the population to a total of 2,251. Out of these 28 died after being drowned in the floods of the state and the remaining 11 felt a pray to the poachers. In a hunt to stop the poachers from being successful, the forest guards till date have been successful in arresting 14 poachers and killed 3 of them.

A Gene Therapy which can restore the Sense of Smell

Scientists of the University of Michigan developed a gene therapy which they claimed could restore the sense of smell in human beings who lost the ability to sniff odours from birth. The scientists used gene therapy to regrow cilia, cell structures that are important for olfactory function. These results could result in to one of the first therapeutic options for treating people with congenital anosmia. They also set the stage for therapeutic approaches to treating diseases which involve cilia dysfunction in other organ systems. Many of these diseases can be dangerous if left untreated.

Olfactory dysfunction can be a symptom of a class of genetic disorders, known as ciliopathies. It includes diseases as diverse as polycystic kidney disease and retinitis pigmentosa—an inherited, degenerative eye disease- that causes severe vision impairment and blindness.

A Humanoid Robot Called Baxter

A humanoid robot with common sense, designed to work safely alongside its human co-workers on factory production lines, was unveiled in the US. Baxter could apply common sense, adapt to

its environment and be trained in less than 30 minutes to complete specific tasks. It is capable of superhuman speed and precision. To teach Baxter a new job, a human guides its arms to simulate the desired task, and presses a button to program in the pattern, the report said. The robot responds with a confused expression, if it does not understand.

Wooden High-rises That are Eco-friendly

Architects and engineers are reviving the use of wood as an eco-friendly replacement for concrete, as borne out by the completion of an eight-storey office building in Austria and residential block in London.

The LCT One building in Dornbirn, Austria, is a 'hybrid' building made from both wood and concrete and designed by Austrian architectural firm Cree. Assembled from solid panels made from layers of wood and other materials, the high-tech building has a central concrete core housing its lifts and utilities. From a concrete foundation, vertical posts of glue-laminated wood (known as glulam) support hybrid floor panels made from more glulam beams embedded in reinforced concrete. Made by sticking together smaller pieces of wood to create structural elements, glulam can resist compression better than concrete — but weighs much less and is more sustainable, the Daily Mailreports. Cree claims that prefabricating the glulam elements of the building cuts construction time by half, guarantees quality and slashes the buildings' carbon footprint. Concrete emits nearly its own weight in carbon dioxide as its produce; the raw material for wooden skyscrapers, by contrast, literally grows on trees and absorbs carbon from the air as it does so.

'Lab on a Chip' may Make Analytic Devices more Efficient

A technique that uses acoustic waves to sort cells on a chip may help create miniature medical analytic devices and lead to cell phone-sized medical labs, according to a team of researchers. The device uses two beams of acoustic— or sound — waves to act as acoustic tweezers and sort a continuous flow of cells on a dime-sized chip, said Tony Jun Huang, associate professor of engineering science and mechanics, Penn State. By changing the frequency of the acoustic waves, researchers can easily alter the paths of the cells. Huang said that since the device

can sort cells into five or more channels, it will allow more cell types to be analyzed simultaneously, which paves the way for smaller, more efficient and less expensive analytic devices. “Eventually, you could do analysis on a device about the size of a cell phone. It’s very doable and we’re making in-roads to that right now,” said Huang. Biological, genetic and medical labs could use the device for various types of analysis, including blood and genetic testing, Huang said.

Cell-sorting Devices

Most current cell-sorting devices allow the cells to be sorted into only two channels in one step, according to Huang. He said that another drawback of current cell—sorting devices is that cells must be encapsulated into droplets, which complicates further analysis. “Today, cell sorting is done on bulky and very expensive devices. We want to minimize them so they are portable, inexpensive and can be powered by batteries,” said Huang. Using sound waves for cell sorting is less likely to damage cells than current techniques, Huang added. In addition to the inefficiency and the lack of controllability, current methods produce aerosols, gases that require extra safety precautions to handle. The researchers created the acoustic wave cell-sorting chip using a layer of silicone — polydimethylsiloxane. According to Huang, two parallel transducers, which convert alternating current into acoustic waves, were placed at the sides of the chip. As the acoustic waves interfere with each other, they form pressure nodes on the chip. As cells cross the chip, they are channeled toward these pressure nodes. The transducers are tunable, which allows researchers to adjust the frequencies and create pressure nodes on the chip. The researchers first tested the device by sorting a stream of fluorescent polystyrene beads into three channels. Prior to turning on the transducer, the particles flowed across the chip unimpeded. Once the transducer produced the acoustic waves, the particles were separated into the channels.

Leukemia Cells

Following this experiment, the researchers sorted human white blood cells that were affected by leukemia. The leukemia cells were first focused into

the main channel and then separated into five channels. The device is not limited to five channels, according to Huang. “We can do more. We could do 10 channels if we want, we just used five because we thought it was impressive enough to show that the concept worked,” Huang said. The researchers released their findings in the current edition of *Lab on a Chip*.

Australian Scientists Unveiled the Colossal Radio Telescope

Australian Scientists unveiled a colossal radio telescope with abilities of exploring the depths of universe with unparalleled precision. The telescope will increase the abilities of astronomers in mapping black holes, survey the universe, and cracking the new light across the galaxies to an exponential level.

At present the Australian SKA Pathfinder telescope having 36 antennas with diameter of 12 meters each is placed at the remote Murchison Radio-Astronomy observatory in the deserts of West Australia. Designed and developed by making investments of Australian \$ 140 million has facilities of surveying the sky at a much faster speed than any other telescope available in the world. The sensitive antennas of the telescope are quite sensitive to the faint radiations of Milky Way hence is able to detect the galaxies far away. The radio waves generated from this telescope can provide details of the cosmos far away and the gases that resulted in the formation of any particular star. Pulsars and quasars can also be identified by the telescope with an ease pushing forward the boundaries of knowledge of the mankind ahead of the physical laws of nature. The principle of radio-astronomy can provide the details of the beginning of the universe. Basically the antennas of the telescope spread across the rocky terrain would be used for collection of the radio signals of the cosmic phenomenon. Being 50 times more powerful, when compared to other radio devices, it can easily detect the exploding stars. Hence can be of a great use in establishing the facts related to the formation of the universe that happened about 14 billion years ago.

Major Breakthrough in Microchip Technology

IBM scientists are reporting progress in a chip-making technology that is likely to ensure the

shrinking of the basic digital switch at the heart of modern microchips for more than another decade. The advance, first described in the journal *Nature Nanotechnology* on Sunday, is based on carbon nanotubes, exotic molecules that have long held out promise as an alternative material to silicon from which to create the tiny logic gates that are now used by the billions to create microprocessors and memory chips. The IBM researchers at the T.J. Watson Research Centre in Yorktown Heights, New York, have been able to pattern an array of carbon nanotubes on the surface of a silicon wafer and use them to build chips that are hybrids of silicon and carbon nanotubes with more than 10,000 working transistors. Against all expectations, the silicon chip has continued to improve in both speed and capacity for the last five decades. In recent decades, however, there has been growing uncertainty over whether the technology will continue to improve. The end of the microelectronics era would inevitably stall a growing array of industries that have fed off the falling cost and increasing performance of computer chips. Chip makers have routinely doubled the number of transistors that can be etched on the surface of silicon wafers by routinely shrinking the tiny switches that store and route the ones and zeros that are processed by digital computers. They have long since shrunk the switches to less than a wavelength of light

The process has been characterised as Moore's Law, named after Gordon Moore, the Intel co-founder, who in 1965 noted that the industry was doubling the number of transistors it could build on a single chip at routine intervals of 12 to 18 months. To continue the process, semiconductor engineers have had to consistently perfect an array of related manufacturing systems and materials that continue to perform at an ever tinier scale. In recent years, while chip makers have continued to double the number of transistors on microprocessors and memory chips, their performance, measured as "clock speed," has largely stalled. This has forced the computer industry to change its design and begin building more parallel computers.

Packing 10

Terabits on a Tiny Device

A new discovery may open the way for the

development of next generation data storage devices with capacities of up to 10 terabits (10 trillion bits) per square inch. An ultra-smooth surface may be the answer, according to a discovery by the researchers from Agency for Science, Technology and Research's (ASTAR) Institute of Materials Research and Engineering (IMRE) and the National University of Singapore (NUS), reports the journal *Nature*. The self-assembly technique is one of the simplest and cheapest high-volume methods for creating uniform, densely-packed nanostructures that could potentially help store data, according to an ASTAR statement. However, attempts to employ self-assembly on different surface types, such as magnetic media used for data storage, have shown varying and erratic results to date.

This phenomenon has continued to puzzle industry researchers and scientists globally. The researchers have now solved this mystery and identified that the smoother the surface, the more efficient the self-assembly of nanostructures. The method can now be used on more surfaces. A height close to 10 atoms, or 10 angstroms, is all it takes to make or break self-assembly," said M.S.M. Saifullah, one of the key researchers.

Waste Degradation by White rot Fungus

Composting is a natural process of rotting or decomposition of organic matter by microorganisms under controlled conditions. Raw organic materials such as crop residues, animal wastes, food garbage, some municipal wastes and suitable industrial wastes after composting enhance their suitability for application to soil as a fertilizing resource. In addition to being a source of plant nutrient, compost also improves the physiochemical and biological properties of the soil.

As a result of these improvements, the soil becomes more resistant to stresses such as drought, diseases and toxicity. Composting helps the crop in improved uptake of plant nutrients and possesses an active nutrient cycling capacity because of vigorous microbial activity indirectly leading to pathogen suppression in soil. These advantages manifest themselves in reduced cropping risks, higher yields and lower outlays on inorganic fertilizers for farmers. In recent years, decomposition of agricultural wastes

such as coir pith, banana sheath (dried), sugarcane trash, millets and pulse waste, cotton stubble with white rot fungus (*Pleurotus* sp.) is gaining importance. These wastes are decomposed with any one of the white rot fungi *P. eous*, *P. platypus*, *P. djamor* or *P. sajorcaju* by layer system. One layer of agricultural waste at 100 kg is spread uniformly in an area of 4 x 3 m² under shade. Culture of *P. djamor* at 200 gms is applied over the substrate. Another 100 kg of substrate is spread over the first layer and urea is applied at rate of one kg to the substrate.

This sandwiching is repeated to make a heap of 1,000 kg substrate with such 20 layers. A total of one kg of the fungus and five kg urea is required to decompose 1,000 kg waste. Water is sprinkled twice a day to maintain 50 -60 per cent moisture level. The heap is allowed to decompose for a month after which a turning is done. The waste undergoes degradation within 45 days. It has a narrow carbon : nitrogen ratio of 20:1 which can be used as organic manure.

New Earth Sized Planet Discovered in Neighboring Solar System

Astronomers have discovered a new earth sized planet in October 2012 which is closest to but outside our solar system. The planet is said to be astronomical stone's throw away at four light years. The discovery of planet was announced in Science Journal, Nature by Stephane Urby and Xavier Dumusque at Geneva Observatory.

The planet is very close to its sun that it is difficult to support life there. The planet is of very low mass and have a surface temperature of about 1200 degree Celsius (2192 Fahrenheit). The Planet orbits one of the suns in Alpha Centauri, roughly 25 trillion miles away. Also according to the previous study by different scientist if one planet is discovered orbiting a sun there is usually other planet in the same solar system. Almost 800 exoplanets are discovered in the recent past that is outside our solar system since early 1990's. But this Planet is very close to earth. It was also asserted that getting to the planet is nearly impossible because it would take about 40000 years to travel to new planet even with current Propulsion Technology

Process of Fruit Ripening and Change of Colours

Several major changes can take place as fruits ripen. Not all occur in every type of fruit, but taken collectively they characterize ripening processes. They include: (1) a rise in respiration rate; (2) production of ethylene; (3) flesh softening; (4) appearance of colour; (5) formation of volatiles with associated development of flavour.

Among these changes, formation of bright colour, which evolved to attract dispersal agents such as birds, browsing animals and primates, now becomes a particularly important visible indicator of maturity and ripeness. Pome fruit, stone fruit, tomatoes, mangoes and straw berries provide good examples where colour is a prime indicator of ripeness. The non-greening of leaves is called senescence. As in leaf senescence, ripening in fruits also involves chlorophyll loss and an increase in production of yellow, orange, red or purple pigments. Yellow, orange or red pigmentation, as seen in oranges and tomatoes, arise from conversion of chloroplasts to chromoplasts. In higher plants, carotenoids which are found in chromoplasts and anthocyanins which are located in the vacuoles fulfill an important purpose as colorants of fruits.

For example the red colour of tomato (*Lycopersicon esculentum*) fruits is due to the carotenoid pigment lycopene, whose concentration increases dramatically during the ripening process. The deep yellow colour of mango fruits is due to the presence of beta carotene a common phytochemical within a group of 600 known carotenoids. Similarly the red colour development in apples and purple colour development in grapes are due to the formation of anthocyanin pigments in their skin. Sometimes both types of pigments can occur in the same fruit.

These pigments are formed as end products of two separate pathways during ripening. The phytoene pathway, which leads to the accumulation of yellow-orange carotenoids or red lycopene and the anthocyanin pathway which leads to the accumulation of anthocyanins in the vacuoles are these two pathways.

Two Labour-saving Farm Mechanisation Innovations

Compared to human labour, using machines is always an easier option for agricultural activities. But the problem arises when farmers are not able to locate or source the right machine on time. Even if they are available their price is either too costly or if on hire, one needs to wait to use them.

A fabricator cum mechanic, Mr. Gurmail Singh Dhonsi from Rajasthan, has developed two agricultural machineries which he claims are easy to use and light on the pocket. The first machine is a tree pruner that can be mounted on a tractor.

The machine can be used for orchard owners like mango growers who need to prune their trees every year.

Compost Aerator

Another machine which he has devised is called compost aerator. "I got the idea to develop this machine by closely observing the earthworms that keep turning the soil," says Mr. Gurmail Singh. "The aerator is also tractor- mountable and consists of a rotating shaft on which several steel blades are fitted to mix the bio wastes thoroughly." The machine can be attached to any make and model of tractor of size 50 hp or above. The rotor, which is 16 inches in diameter, is nine feet long. "The nine-inch blades break and chop the bio wastes into very small particles. A hydraulic jack is provided to facilitate the up and down movement of the main rotor. There is provision for attaching a 1,500 litre capacity water tank to the tractor. This water is used to moisten the compost while the rotor blades turn the heap of biowastes. "A weight box has been provided next to the water tank to maintain balance during movement," explains Mr. Gurmail Singh. While the rotor rotates and the blades cut the biowaste, water is automatically added to the mixture from the tank to moisten it. The tractor is slowly made to run from one end of the heap to the other.

Fuel Consumption

"This operation needs to be repeated four to five times for five days during summer and seven days during winter. As a result the total time for converting biomass into manure reduces to 25-40 days, as

against 120-150 days using manual methods. "For the operation the machine consumes 3.5-4.0 litre of diesel per hour," he says. According to Dr. Nitin Maurya, National Innovation Foundation, Ahmedabad, the technologies for thoroughly mixing compost for rapid composting are available in many foreign countries although no such domestic product is available.

Patent filing

Moreover, the provision of providing moisture while turning biomass is rare and accordingly NIF has filed a patent for this machine in the name of Mr. Gurmail Singh. The compost made by the aerator has been tested by soil testing laboratory at the Agriculture Research Station (ARS) Durgapura, Jaipur. The percentages of nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P) and potash (K) were found to be 1.87, 1.79, 2.26 respectively as compared to 0.4-1.5, 0.3-0.9, 0.3-1.9 per cent in the conventional farm yard manure. This compost was found to be even better than vermicompost. Similar results have also been reported by a private fertilizer company which studied the aerated compost.

Gold Producing Bacteria Discovered by Scientist

Scientist and Researchers from the Michigan State University had discovered bacteria that can tolerate immense amount of toxicity and can also create 24 carat gold. The researchers found that the bacteria named 'Cupriavidus metallidurans' is metal tolerant bacteria which can grow on huge concentration of gold chloride which itself is a very toxic chemical compound found in nature. The researchers fed the bacteria with mismatched amounts of gold chloride, intimating the process they believe happens in nature. In about a week, the bacteria transformed the toxins and produced a gold nugget. The researchers used a combination of biotechnology, art and alchemy to turn liquid gold into 24-carat gold. It is now being called as Microbial alchemy - transforming gold from something that has no value into a solid, precious metal that's valuable.

Cheshire Cats and Water Soluble Electronic Devices

We are all familiar with electronic devices such

as integrated circuits, chips and tools that do a hundred useful things. They have become inseparable from our lives. What do we do once we are done with them? Throw them away, causing what has come to be known as e-waste. It is estimated that e-waste alone accounts for over 70 per cent of toxic wastes currently found in landfills, and we are yet to get a good estimate of how much it is in the seas and oceans. Again, we use electronic devices such as pacemakers and other sensors that are implanted in our bodies. The trouble with them is that once they are past their use, we need to surgically remove them (and perhaps implant a fresh one). How nice it would be if only they dissolve away and get removed from the body; much the way we discard our body liquids and solids every day! Yes, it appears possible to do so with the development of a prototype electronic chip that is made to work for a defined period of time, which is implanted into a body and dissolves after use and gets excreted away from the body after it has done its intended job.

Dr. John Rogers of the Material Sciences department of University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and his group teamed up with Dr. Fiorenzo Omenetto of the Biomedical Engineering department of Tufts University in Boston, and devised an implantable electronic thermal therapy device which lasts inside a rat's body for a few weeks before dissolving away. They report this landmark work in the 28th September 2012 issue of Science. In order that the device is water-soluble, every component in there must be made of molecules and materials which are water-soluble, not the conventional aluminium, rare-earth metal compounds or plastic stuff that are built to last forever. They must be built to stay and work for a stipulated time and then be washed away. Hence, they used magnesium or Mg as the electrical conductor, MgO and Silicon dioxide as dielectrics, specially fabricated nanomembrane silicon semiconductor and so forth, in order to build the electrothermal device. The entire device including all of its inductor, capacitor, resistor, diode and transistor dissolves away when placed in deionized water. Next, they packed this device in a sheet of silk, which is specially made so as to stay intact for a set period of time, after which it dissolves in the body water, exposing the electronic device which too

dissolves away. Here then is the 'proof of principle' – a silicon-based complementary metal oxide semiconductor (CMOS) device that is an implantable medical device, which can be custom-made or programmed to last for a defined period of time, after which it is resorbed in the body, so that no second intervention for retrieval of the device is needed.

The device they made was meant to be a heater – one that can be placed next to a site where a surgical operation has been done. It is meant to keep the area warmer so as to keep it free of infection from germs. They first implanted it sub-dermally (under the skin) of some mice. After the programmed three weeks, the implant dissolved away. Only a faint residue was left, which too cleared away, with no inflammation or any side effects. Reassured of its safety, they next implanted this transient thermal therapy device on rats through surgery. Weeks later, they found no traces of infection after the surgery. Here then is the proof of principle. Such biodegradable electronic devices can have many uses. They can be sensors placed in fields, reporting what they are meant to, and fade away. One can, in principle, even make portable consumer devices (cell phones?) which, after use, can be dissolved away in water and the starting material retrieved after evaporating the water. Lewis Carroll used the term Cheshire Cat, apparently after the practice of dairy farmers in Cheshire who would pack and mould cheese in the form of a smiling cat. The cheese was cut and eaten from the tail side of the cat, leaving the smile for last. In any event, Carroll was pre-scient; Cheshire Cats are now an electronic reality.

Scientists Developed Test to Detect Schizophrenics

Scientists developed a near to 100 percent accurate test to detect schizophrenics, by simply checking their gaze. Apparently schizophrenics can be checked just by implying some 'simple viewing tests'. The tests brought out ninety eight per cent accuracy in distinguishing between those with and without schizophrenia. This path breaking research was done by researchers at Aberdeen University. They found that people with schizophrenia showed well-documented deficits in the ability to track slow moving objects smoothly with their eyes. The study

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was led by Dr Philip Benson and Professor David St Clair which involved a range of eye tests and the volunteers were asked to track slow moving objects slowly with their eyes, inspect a variety of everyday scenes and given instructions to keep a steady gaze on a single unmoving target.

Efficient Way to Turn Waste into Resource

A staggering amount of waste is generated every day in every town and city, and the local bodies are grappling with logistics for its disposal. The problem arises as the government and individuals fail to see waste as a potential source of energy and agricultural input in the form of manure.

The Bangalore Corporation, which recently made waste segregation mandatory at the household level, is showing the way for the rest of India. It is setting up 12 Nisargruna biogas plants across the city to convert biodegradable waste into methane and organic manure. The Nisargruna biogas plant is based on technology developed by the Mumbai-based Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC). Such plants are being constructed at local levels too. Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) is planning to construct 4 tonnes a day capacity biodegradable waste conversion plant at its sprawling centre at Siruseri IT Park near Chennai. It already has similar plants operating at other locations. IIT Madras has already cleared a project for a plant with 1 tonne per day capacity. The Chennai Corporation recently initiated preliminary discussion with BARC. These are not the first plants coming up in the country. "Such plants have already been installed at 146 locations," says Dr. S. P. Kale, Head of Technology Transfer & Collaboration Division at BARC. "We have transferred the technology to 100 private entrepreneurs." In a broad sense, the principle is similar to that of gobar gas plants, but all comparisons end there — the technology is much more advanced and more methane is produced.

Better Bet

"Conventional gobar gas plants have a single digester and produce biogas containing 55-65 per cent of methane and 45-35 per cent of carbon dioxide. But the Nisargruna plants are biphasic (aerobic followed by anaerobic phase) and produce biogas containing 70-80 per cent of methane and only 30-20

per cent of carbon dioxide," he says. More the methane produced, the better is the fuel value. One tonne of biodegradable waste contains only 22-24 per cent of solid matter; the rest is water. And 30 per cent of municipal waste is biodegradable waste. So with one tonne of biodegradable waste (containing 220-240 kg of solid material) it will be possible to produce 25-30 kg of methane, about 150 kg of carbon dioxide and 50-60 kg of organic manure. The methane enriched biogas can be used directly for heating (instead of LPG) or for generating electricity. Dr. Kale underlines the higher levels of efficiency when it is used directly for heating and strongly recommends it.

Best Usage

"One metre cube of biogas has 3,500 kilo calories of heat. When this is used directly, and the efficiency of the heater is 70 per cent, about 2,400 Kcal are effectively used. But one metre cube of biogas can produce only 1.5 to 1.8 units of electricity, accounting only for 1,200 to 1,400 Kcal," he says. "It is two times more efficient to use methane for heating than for generating electricity. It may be used for electricity generation only where thermal use is not possible." Constructing a one tonne waste plant will cost Rs.15 lakh and it can be installed in two months. "If a plant runs at full efficiency and if you claim carbon credit, the payback period is two years," Dr. Kale explains.

Hazardous Waste

The best part of the technology is its ability to generate resource even from hazardous biological sludge. Waste from textile, food and chemical plants contain harmful chemicals. When the waste is treated, the biological sludge too turns hazardous as organisms absorb harmful chemicals. "The volume of hazardous solids can be reduced by 90 per cent," he stresses. "There are seven such plants already in operation." The first to come up was in 2010 in Baddi in Himachal Pradesh at Auro Textiles belonging to the Vardhman Group. He rattles off the details of one plant after another, and it becomes difficult to understand why this technology has not been adopted in a much bigger way across the country. "The concept of processing biodegradable waste is more talked about but urban local bodies are not keen to do it. Nisargruna technology offers a decentralized

way of reducing the waste reaching dumping yards,” he says. “The citizens on their part must segregate the waste resources and urban local bodies must make provision to collect these waste resources in a segregated manner. It needs a huge change in perception by the society.” So what makes Nisargruna biogas plants so very efficient? To start with, unlike a gobar gas plant, the Nisargruna plant has two digesters — aerobic and anaerobic. Aerobic digester has nine species of *Bacillus* required for breaking down waste resources.

The waste is first pulverised in a mixer before it enters the aerobic digester, where it remains for 3 to 4 days. “The smaller clumps tend to aggregate to form lumps [despite pulverisation]. These lumps of waste are attacked by aerobic bacteria. Air and hot water (using solar panels) at 70 degree C are added. “Hot water is added to accelerate the digestion process,” Dr. Kale notes. Though the temperature of the waste after adding hot water is 32 degree C to 35 degree C in winter and 42 degree C to 44 degree C in summer, the bacteria survive as they are thermophilic. “They can function in mesophilic condition as well,” he clarifies. The pulverised water-mixed waste is passed through many compartments so that the bacteria have a better chance to degrade it. What flows out of the aerobic digester to anaerobic digester is almost liquefied homogenous slurry with a reduced pH of 5-5.5. The solid content in the slurry has been reduced from 23 per cent to 10 per cent. “The solid is converted into organic acids and carbon dioxide,” Dr. Kale explains. Methane bacteria are predominant in the anaerobic digester. As a rule, methane bacteria are slow in their actions, and hence it takes about 15 days for the waste to be degraded in the anaerobic digester. “But it has been reduced from 40 days [in the case of gobar gas] to 19 days,” he points out. “This is due to the initial aerobic phase.” All that is left of the waste is methane, carbon dioxide and manure — a rich resource extracted from it.

Website Updates on Space Radiation Hazards

Scientists have developed the first on-line system for predicting and forecasting the radiation environment in near-Earth, lunar and Martian space.

Astrophysicists from the University of New Hampshire’s Space Science Center (SSC) created the new near real-time tool that will provide critical information as preparations are made for potential future manned missions to the Moon and Mars. “If we send human beings back to the Moon, and especially if we’re able to go to Mars, it will be critical to have a system like this in place to protect astronauts from radiation hazards,” said researcher Nathan Schwadron. Known as PREDICCS, the web-based tool for the first time integrates numerical models of space radiation, a host of real-time measurements being made by satellites currently in space, and “propagation codes” that can accurately project radiation levels out as far as Mars. The tool was made possible through NASA’s Living With A Star (LWS) Targeted Research and Technology programme.

On Hourly Basis

The website provides updates of the radiation environment on an hourly basis and archives the data weekly, monthly, and yearly. This historical record provides a clear picture of when a safe radiation dose limit is reached for skin or blood-forming organs, for example.

Management of Rice Blast Disease

Rice blast is a fungal infestation known to occur in all the rice growing areas of the county. The disease attacks all the parts of the crop growing above the soil. It is broadly classified into three types, leaf, collar and neck blasts.

Initially elliptical or spindle shaped lesions occurs with brown borders and grey centers. Under favourable conditions, lesions enlarge and coalesce eventually killing the leaves. Leaf blast usually increases early in the season and then declines later as leaves become less susceptible.

Black Colour

Collar blast occurs when the pathogen infects the collar that can ultimately kill the entire leaf blade. The pathogen also infects the node of the stem known as node blast that turns blackish and breaks easily. Neck blast occurs when the pathogen infects the neck of the panicle. The infected neck is girdled by a greyish brown lesion and the panicle falls over if the

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infection is severe. If neck blast occurs before the milk stage (rice forming stage), the entire panicle may die prematurely, leaving it white and completely unfilled. Later infections may cause incomplete grain filling and poor milling quality. Varietal resistant to blast is the most practical and economical approach for management. The most common resistant varieties are Aditya, CSR27, IR64, KRH2, Krishna, Hamsa, Naina, Pusa sugandha3, Rasi, Vasumati, PA6129, DRRH2, Dhan80, PR113, Swati, Narendra, Sumati, Swarnadhan, Triguna, Tulasi, IR-36 etc.

Disease Resistant

Use disease free seeds. Apply recommended dosage of nitrogen application in 3 to 4 splits and avoid final application in infested plots. Burn previous crop residues if the crop is found infested. Early sowing helps prevent this infestation spread from neighbouring fields. Avoid water stagnation. Treat seeds with *Pseudomonas fluorescense* 10g/lit of water for 30 min, dip the seedlings in *Pseudomonas fluorescense* 5gm/lit for 20 minutes before transplanting. Foliar spray of the *Pseudomonas fluorescense* 5gm/lit can be done at an interval of 15-20 days after transplanting.

Scientist Developed a Superhero Mice

Scientists of the City University of New York in month of October had genetically engineered mice that have up to 500 times more of nose cells to detect explosives and TNT-like chemicals, using the Genetically Modified technology. The mice are named as 'super-hero' sniffer mice and have the ability to smell out land-mines and explosives. The mice can be used by armed forces and can be deployed in future, to countries affected by war for rapidly sniffing out of landmines. The project was funded by the US government's health research arm.

Using of rats and mice is not common phenomenon as it is evident from the fact that a Belgian charity already uses giant African rats to sniff out TNT and has deployed them in Mozambique and Tanzania and on the Thai-Burmese border. While in this research project mice was used because they are cheaper to manage and house and easier to breed.

BCG: A Vaccine for more than just TB
BCG: A Vaccine for more than just TB

In the early years of the last century, the director of a newly-established branch of the famed Institut Pasteur in the northern French city of Lille, Albert Calmette, and his colleague, Camille Guérin, set out to create a vaccine against tuberculosis. In humans, the disease is caused by the bacterium, *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. In their quest for a vaccine, Calmette and Guérin worked tirelessly to weaken a related strain found in cattle, *Mycobacterium bovis*. The idea was that the live but thoroughly weakened microbe would, when administered to people, produce immunity against the TB-causing germ. The vaccine strain they created, 'bacille Calmette-Guérin' (BCG), was first given to a newborn infant in July 1921. Even today, it is the only vaccine available against TB. The BCG vaccine is no longer routinely given to children in rich countries where chances of catching the disease are low. However, the vaccine is still widely used in developing countries where the disease is rampant. The World Health Organisation estimates that 100 million children receive it each year. The vaccine provides limited protection against tuberculosis. It does not stop the disease-causing bacterium from establishing an infection, but can help prevent severe forms of TB in infants and young children. It does not, however, provide cover against the disease becoming active in adolescents and adults. Curiously, the protective effects of the vaccine appear to go beyond tuberculosis. When, for instance, the vaccine was introduced in a northern Swedish province in 1927, a physician noticed that those who received it at birth had a death rate only about one-third of that among unvaccinated children.

Controlled trials among children and teenagers in the U.S. and U.K. during the 1940s and 1950s too found that BCG reduced non-accidental deaths from causes other than TB by 25 per cent, noted Peter Aaby and Christine Stabell Benn of the Statens Serum Institut in Denmark in a commentary published in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)*. Trials carried out in West Africa a few years back found that the BCG vaccine reduced deaths among low-birth-weight newborns by more than 40 per cent, mainly by preventing sepsis and respiratory infections, they pointed out. Research carried out by a team of Dutch scientists and

published recently in PNAS explains why BCG could be having such a broad protective effect. Vaccines are known to stimulate the adaptive arm of the immune system, thereby establishing a 'memory' of a specific invader to be recognised and repulsed. BCG, on the other hand, was working on the evolutionarily more ancient innate immune system that is triggered by molecules that commonly marked out a pathogen, such as components of their cell wall. "The general perception in immunology is that innate immunity, as opposed to adaptive immunity, is static and does not adapt to an enhanced functional state," observed Mihai Netea of Radboud University Nijmegen Medical Centre and his colleagues in their PNAS paper. BCG was inducing "trained immunity" by reprogramming cells known as monocytes that formed part of innate immune system. When BCG was administered, the live bacteria in the vaccine would be devoured by the monocytes. Inside the monocytes, muramyl dipeptide, a constituent of the bacterial cell wall, was then able to latch on to a receptor known as NOD2. That, in turn, set off a chain of events that led to molecular tags being attached to a protein, called a histone, around which DNA is wrapped.

Such reprogramming allowed certain genes to be more active and thereby produce more protein. Those monocytes were then capable of an enhanced response when confronted with a range of different pathogens, churning out chemicals known as cytokines that mobilised the immune system to fight off an invading microbe. The Dutch scientists showed that monocytes taken from volunteers who received BCG showed a considerably increased cytokine response to unrelated pathogens, such as the bacteria *Staphylococcus aureus* and the yeast *Candida albicans*. BCG also ensured significantly better survival when mice from a strain that lacked cells of the adaptive immune system were exposed to lethal doses of *C. albicans*. The work of these scientists very likely explained why BCG has been consistently observed to reduce death and sickness to a far greater extent than could be explained by the prevention of TB, remarked Dr. Aaby and Dr. Benn in their commentary. Randomised trials had shown that after BCG and measles vaccination, the contribution of nonspecific effects to overall health far outweighed

the importance of the specific protection provided by these vaccines. With two trials of early BCG vaccination planned in Denmark and Australia, perhaps the vaccine would be reintroduced in high-income countries for its training effects rather than for protection against TB. "Disentangling the mechanisms of the nonspecific effects may establish a new paradigm in immunity with a stronger emphasis on training and innate immunity," they said. Could the elderly too, with waning immune function that makes them vulnerable to a variety of infectious diseases, benefit from BCG boosting their innate immunity? "Absolutely yes, I think that this could be a major potential treatment and we are working on that," said Dr. Netea in an email.

Solar Particles Likely Source of Lunar Water

Charged particles from the sun or solar winds, bombarding the lunar surface, could explain the presence of water locked inside its soil, new research says. Over the past five years, spacecraft observations and new lab measurements of Apollo lunar samples have overturned the long-held belief that the moon is bone-dry. In 2009, NASA's Lunar Crater Observation and Sensing satellite, known as LCROSS, slammed into a permanently shadowed lunar crater and ejected a plume of material that was surprisingly rich in water ice, the journal *Nature Geoscience* reports. Water and related compounds have also been detected in the lunar regolith, or the layer of fine powder and rock fragments that coats the lunar surface. But the origin of lunar surface water has remained unclear, according to a Michigan University statement. The findings from University of Michigan researcher Youxue Zhang and colleagues from the University of Tennessee (UT) and the California Institute of Technology support solar-wind production of water ice on the moon.

"We found that the 'water' component, the hydroxyl, in the lunar regolith is mostly from solar wind implantation of protons, which locally combined with oxygen to form hydroxyls that moved into the interior of glasses by impact melting," said Zhang, professor of geological sciences. "Lunar regolith is everywhere on the lunar surface, and glasses make up about half of lunar regolith. So our

work shows that the 'water' component, the hydroxyl, is widespread in lunar materials, although not in the form of ice or liquid water that can easily be used in a future manned lunar base." The findings imply that ice inside permanently shadowed polar craters on the moon, sometimes called cold traps, could contain hydrogen atoms ultimately derived from the solar wind, the researchers report. The researchers analysed individual grains from Apollo 11, Apollo 16 and Apollo 17 missions .

Spotting Diseases from Bone Samples

A new technology can analyse millions of gene sequences in a matter of seconds to identify diseases accurately, according to a new breakthrough.

Terry Brown, working with Charlotte Roberts, both professors at Durham University (UK), used a next-gen sequencing approach, including hybridization capture technology, to identify tuberculosis (TB) genes in a 19th century female skeleton found in a crypt in Leeds. Roberts said: "We're really pleased with the results of this study and that the technology works. It will save a lot of time in the future. "We now hope to publish more of the huge amounts of data we have acquired from the sequencing." Their study is part of wider research into the identification of strains of TB in skeletons dating from 100 AD to the late 19th century. It's hoped that understanding how the disease has evolved over time will help improve treatments and vaccines. After HIV it kills more people than any other infectious disease, according to a Durham statement. Certain strains of TB affect the sufferer's bones, especially in the spine. The marks made by the disease remain evident on the bones long after the person's death. It's this evidence that Roberts used to find suitable skeletons to screen for tuberculosis genes. She sourced 500 skeletons from across Europe that showed evidence of TB dating from the Roman period to the 19th century. Bone samples from these skeletons were screened for TB DNA, and of those 100 were chosen for this particular study. Roberts explained: "So many skeletons were needed as it's very hard to tell if any DNA will have survived in the bones. You don't really know if there will be any present until you start screening and in the past that has been a lengthy process." Brown and team then searched for TB gene sequences. Because it is a

bacterial disease the bacteria's DNA can remain in the bones after death.

Chickoo Moth Management in Sapota

Sapota, a native of Mexico, is grown widely in India for its fruit and milky latex which is the source of chicle used to make chewing gum. Of the several pests infesting the tree, the sapota leaf webber (*Nephopteryx eugraphella*) commonly called as chickoo moth is a major one.

Damage Symptoms

As the name indicates, the caterpillars of the moth spin web on the leaves and also feed on tender leaves and fruits throughout the year. Presence of dry leaf clusters and dark brown patches on the leaves are clear symptoms of the infestation and can be easily spotted from a long distance. The infestation leads to withering and drying of tree branches. The pest activity increases with appearance of new shoots and buds. A wide range of sapota varieties are susceptible to this pest. The moth is grey in colour measuring around one centimetre in length. It lays eggs on leaves and buds of young shoots. Around 350 eggs are laid by a single female. The incubation period is around one week and after hatching the pink coloured caterpillars start feeding on green leaves by scrapping the chlorophyll content leaving behind a fine network of veins. They also bore inside the flower buds and tender fruits which wither away and drop down. The larvae can damage many fruit buds during its developmental period which lasts from 13 to 60 days according to environmental conditions. Pupal stage is completed in 8 to 29 days. There are eight to nine generations of this pest in a year.

Management

- Remove and destroy all the webbed leaves, shoots, buds and fruits along with larvae.
- Crowded and crossing branches should be pruned.
- Plant resistant varieties such as PKM 1 Sapota
- Erect light trap at one per hectare to monitor the activity of chickoo moth
- Spray two rounds of carbaryl 0.1 per cent, chlorpyrifos 0.05 per cent or quinalphos 0.05 per cent at 20 days interval after new shoot formation and fruit harvest.

Scientist Discovered Source of Water on Moon

Scientists in third week of October have discovered that the most likely source of water on Moon is the constant stream of charged particles from the Sun known as the solar wind. The findings came by researchers from the University of Michigan who imply that ice inside permanently shadowed polar craters on the Moon, sometimes called cold traps, could contain hydrogen atoms ultimately derived from the solar wind.

Also, The Theoretical models of lunar water stability dating to the late 1970s suggest that hydrogen ions (protons) from the solar wind can combine with oxygen on the Moon's surface to form water and related compounds called hydroxyls, which consist of one atom of hydrogen and one of oxygen and are known as OH. The researchers have found that the 'water' component, the hydroxyl, in the lunar regolith is mostly from solar wind implantation of protons, which locally combined with oxygen to form hydroxyls that moved into the interior of glasses by impact melting. With this research it is also clear that water likely exists on Mercury and on asteroids such as Vesta or Eros further within our solar system. The study findings are published in the journal 'Nature Geoscience'.

Why and how is Water Transparent?

Light is a form of an electromagnetic energy with a wide range of wavelengths. However, the range that a human eye can 'see' is very tiny segment, ranging from about 400 nanometres to about 800 nanometres. This narrow range of wavelengths which a human eye is sensible to, is known as 'the visible region' of the electromagnetic radiation. Two of the most important interactions a material can engage with radiation are absorption and scattering. When light is incident on an object, the portion that is neither absorbed nor is scattered is, usually, transmitted through it to the other side. If a material absorbs any part of the visible region then the material appears coloured to us. The colour, an object looks, is called 'complementary' to the portion of light absorbed.

If a material absorbs all the visible range of light, then it 'looks' black to us because there is hardly any visible light left from the object to reach our eyes. If a

material does not absorb any part of the visible range of light, then the object either appears colourlessly transparent, when the light is transmitted, or white, when scattered. Water has H₂O molecules that do not have the kind of electrons which absorb any portion of the visible range (but have electrons that absorb only in the invisible ultraviolet range) of light and their size is less than 4 angstroms (tenth of a nanometre) with an average intermolecular space of less than 10 angstroms. That is why water appears transparent. Several other liquids, such as benzene, alcohol, chloroform, coconut oil, etc also look transparent for this reason. Even when the size of the non-absorbing constituents is less or more than the wavelength but if the inter space among them or the size of edges made of them is somehow comparable to the wavelength of the visible radiation, then the object just looks white because much of the unabsorbed light is scattered. A piece of chalk, ground glass, smoke, milk, etc, look white for of this reason.

High-energy

Physics in toto will Make a Switch

Till now encouragement or compulsion to publish papers in open-access journals came from universities or funding agencies like the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH), and Research Councils UK (a nodal body for seven government-funded grant agencies), and was restricted to relatively fewer countries. But the switch to be made in high-energy physics has the support and backup — both in principle and funding — from many countries involved in particle physics research. High-energy physics has been spearheading Open Access for a long time. Pre-prints are freely available on the Net. "Today about 90 per cent of HEP pre-prints are available in repositories," notes the executive summary of the Report of the SCOAP3 Working Party. Though these repositories have become the "lifeblood of HEP scientific information exchange" there is a big difference — the papers posted in the repositories are only the manuscripts submitted to the journals and not the peer-reviewed papers that appear in journals.

The change to the OA model will amount to about 10 million euros a year. The executive summary notes that annual list-price of a single journal can be

as high as 10,000 Euros. “For 500 institutes worldwide... this represents an annual expenditure of 5 million Euros.” The Sponsoring Consortium for Open Access Publishing in Particle Physics (SCOAP3) has “negotiated contracts with 12 journals that would make 90 per cent of high-energy physics papers published from 2014 onwards free to read,” Salvatore Mele, head of open access at CERN, was quoted as saying in Nature. SCOAP3 Open Access Initiative was launched at CERN on October 1. “It is gratifying to see how the model of international collaboration in particle physics has been applied to addressing the important societal issue of open access to scientific information,” Rolf Heuer, CERN Director General was quoted as saying in a CERN press release.

Itching Sensation in our Mouth when we Eat too much of Pineapple

Pineapple is a tropical plant with botanical name, *Ananas comosus*, belonging to the Bromeliaceae family. It is one of the very popular edible materials consumed in many formats. It is a rich dietary source of vitamin C, vitamin B complex, calcium, manganese, magnesium, phosphorous, potassium, etc among others.

Pineapple, botanically, is not a single fruit berry. It is a collection of individual fruits (each fruit, marked on the surface by the near-hexagonal demarcation) with their stalks impregnated collectively, with boundaries gradually becoming undefined, into the tip that appears as the grand stalk. There are two reasons with varied degrees why consumption of good quantities of pineapple make our mouth and the tongue itching. Pineapple contains a proteolytic (protein hydrolyzing) enzyme, called, bromelain. It is mostly present in the inedible stalk (the central axis part of the fruit or the grand stalk mentioned above). When we have eaten the pineapple, this bromelain temporarily stays on the tongue and interiors of the mouth and starts attacking the proteinous muscle parts of the tongue and the mouth while sensitizing the nerve endings there. These neurological signals, when transmitted to the brain, make us feel the pricking and itching sensation. The other minor but cognizably effective reason is due to the presence of nano-sized spiny

fibrils that are either left there or mixed with the pulp of the pineapple when we have cut it. These fibrils are like the eyelashes of the groves (individual fruits) on the pineapple. They are cuticle-like materials composed of glycoproteinous chitin, wax and collagen. While we eat the pineapple, these microscopic fibrils also enter the mouth and find their way into the interiors of mouth parts causing their pricks before they are slowly washed away by the saliva.

Farmers Participatory Programme Stems Coconut Tree Infestation

Bud rot is a fatal fungal disease affecting coconut trees. Young trees are more susceptible particularly during the monsoon. With this infestation, the spear leaf becomes pale and breaks at the base and hangs down. The tender leaf base and soft tissues of the crown rot into a slimy mass of decayed material emitting foul smell. The rotting progresses downwards, affecting and killing the entire tree. Lack of awareness about the disease and its management practice is also leading to a disease spread. Individual prevention adoption by few farmers here and there is ineffective as coconut is cultivated almost throughout Kannur region in Kerala.

Severe Spread

The spread of the disease is so severe that 14,350 hectares of coconut growing area is infected by this lethal menace. “Bud rot is a serious problem throughout Kannur district and prophylactic chemical treatment proves to be effective. “During 2007-08 we have successfully demonstrated this technology in Ayyankunnu Panchayath. However the disease was rampant in other agro- ecological zones also and it was found necessary as per the demands of farmers to conduct demonstrations in different regions to curb the spread of the disease,” says Dr. Abdul Kareem, Programme Coordinator, Kerala agricultural University, Kahirangad. “We planned and implemented a frontline demonstration (FLD) of perforated plastic sachets containing 2-3 grams Mancozeb, two sachets per palm tied on the inner side of the spear leaf, spraying of bordeaux mixture on affected portion as well as neighbouring trees, removal and destruction of affected portions

and application of bordeaux paste for combating the problem for four consecutive years (from 2007-8 to 2010-11),” he explains. For this demonstration, two regions Koralai and Kolacherry, were selected; farmers were identified, group discussions, trainings and method demonstrations were done. A total of 22 hectares, 4,000 trees, and 50 farmers were covered under this.

Control Measures

The Krishi Vigyan Kendra at Kannur areas has adopted farmer participatory extension approach, named as Compact Area Group Approach, which is now popularly known by its acronym, CAGA to control bud rot disease. CAGA promoted and sustained group action in a contiguous area for durable adoption of control measures by solving several hurdles. Preparation of plastic sachets manually is a cumbersome process since a lot of holes have to be made on the sachets. To overcome this problem a small machine has been fabricated to puncture holes continuously on plastic tubes of 3-inch width. This tube is cut into required length and filled with two gms of mancozeb and tied at ends. Cost of production of this sachet works out to only Rs. 2.50 per sachet. The Department of agriculture helped arrangement of climbers in a few panchayaths at a cost of Rs. 10 per tree and in the remaining areas KVK helped farmers to arrange for climbers by themselves. Coconut tree climbers are the only persons who see and feel the extent and magnitude of the disease incidence in the tree as they climb. Decision-making on their part was very important for application of control measures in an effective manner.

Training the Climbers

“Therefore the climbers were made conversant with all aspects of the technology like understanding magnitude of disease incidence, handling of sachets, placement and tying method of sachets, importance of cleaning methods, preparation of mixture and paste, areas and method to apply it etc,” says Dr. Kareem. Integrated disease management focuses not only on application of chemical but also on maintaining health of plant. The health of the plant is mainly attributed to the proper nutrition for the plant. During farmers’ meetings conducted in the

CAGA approach, a lacuna in application of organic matter came up. Recommended dosage of organic manure (25kg/ tree) cost more than Rs. 50 and farmers were not applying the manure. In this context scientists introduced a very cost effective technology of insitu green manuring using cowpea seeds.

Organic Manure

Only 100 gm of cowpea seeds are required for one coconut basin to be sown at the onset of monsoon to produce 25 kg of biomass within few months. Thus cost of organic manure came down to Rs. 5 from Rs. 50. Application of sachets, when clubbed with harvest before monsoon season, reduced the cost of application. Coconut growers throughout the district were made aware about the bud rot management practices through wide publicity. Adoption level of farmers increased to 100 per cent due to the visualised effect of control measures recording very positive results.

Control of Sigatoka Disease of Banana

Sigatoka leaf spot is a serious disease of banana that destroys large areas of plantations resulting in severe reduction in fruit yield. The commercial cultivars nendran and robusta are highly susceptible to this infestation whereas in rasthali and palayankodan varieties the disease severity is less. This infestation is caused by a fungus and was first recorded in the Sigatoka valley of Fiji. Economic losses of 50-100 per cent have been incurred due to the incidence of this disease.

Dark Brown Spots

Symptoms of Sigatoka disease first appear as small dark brown spots or lines on the underside of third or fourth opened leaf. The spots become sunken surrounded by a yellow halo. Eventually these spots or streaks expand and become brown or black and make a characteristic black patch on the leaves. The infection gives a scorched appearance to the foliage.

Infection on younger leaves is more severe causing them to dry up more quickly. Appreciable fruit loss occurs as there is drastic reduction of leaf surface area for photosynthesis. Infected banana plants produce fruits of inferior quality as the banana fingers produced do not develop properly and remain small and thin.

Monsoon Season

Spores of the fungal pathogen form in abundance during tropical and sub tropical summers along with intermittent rainfall especially if there is a film of water on the leaves. The principal means of spread is through rain but later with the progressive development, spores are also discharged through air currents. Spotting of leaves starts to increase during June, July, peaks in October-November and remains at a high level through December. Management mainly involves chemical control using fungicides like copper oxychloride, mancozeb, chlorothalonil or carbendazim at the prescribed dosage. Fungicide spraying on the foliage and pseudostem should be commenced with the initial appearance and repeated at two weeks' interval. Use of the different fungicides in rotation will reduce the risk of resistance development in the pathogen to the systemic chemicals.

Methods to Measure, Manipulate Quantum Systems

Serge Haroche and David Wineland have opened the door to a new era of experimentation with quantum physics by demonstrating the direct observation of individual quantum systems without destroying them. Through their ingenious laboratory methods they have managed to measure and control very fragile quantum states, enabling their field of research to take the very first steps towards building a new type of super fast computer, based on quantum physics. These methods have also led to the construction of extremely precise clocks that could become the future basis for a new standard of time, with more than hundred-fold greater precision than present-day caesium clocks. For single particles of light or matter, the laws of classical physics cease to apply and quantum physics takes over. But single particles are not easily isolated from their surrounding environment and they lose their mysterious quantum properties as soon as they interact with the outside world. Both Laureates work in the field of quantum optics studying the fundamental interaction between light and matter. In David Wineland's laboratory in Boulder, Colorado, electrically charged atoms or ions are kept inside a trap by surrounding them with electric fields. One of

the secrets behind Wineland's breakthrough is the mastery of the art of using laser beams and creating laser pulses. A laser is used to put the ion in its lowest energy state and thus enabling the study of quantum phenomena with the trapped ion. A carefully tuned laser pulse can be used to put the ion in a superposition state, which is a simultaneous existence of two distinctly different states. For instance, the quantum superposition of the ion's energy states can be studied by using the laser pulse to nudge the ion halfway between the high- and low-energy levels.

Controlling Single Photons

Serge Haroche and his research group employ a different method to reveal the mysteries of the quantum world. In their laboratory in Paris microwave photons bounce back and forth inside a small cavity between two mirrors, about three centimetres apart. The mirrors are made of superconducting material and are cooled to a temperature just above absolute zero. These superconducting mirrors are so reflective that a single photon can bounce back and forth inside the cavity for almost a tenth of a second before it is lost or absorbed. During its long life time, many quantum manipulations can be performed with the trapped photon. Haroche uses specially prepared atoms, so-called Rydberg atoms to both control and measure the microwave photon in the cavity. A Rydberg atom has a radius of about 125 nanometres which is roughly 1,000 times larger than typical atoms. The Rydberg atoms are sent into the cavity one by one at a carefully chosen speed, so that the interaction with the microwave photon occurs in a well-controlled manner.

The Rydberg atom traverses and exits the cavity, leaving the microwave photon behind. But the interaction between the photon and the atom creates a change in the phase of quantum state of the atom: if you think of the atom's quantum state as a wave, the peaks and the dips of the wave become shifted. This phase shift can be measured when the atom exits the cavity, thereby revealing the presence or absence of a photon inside the cavity. With no photon there is no phase shift. Haroche can thus measure a single photon without destroying it. Physics in the

quantum world has some inherent uncertainty or randomness to it. One example of this contrary behaviour is superposition, where a quantum particle can be in several different states simultaneously.

Why do we never become aware of these strange facets of our world? Why can we not observe a superposition of quantum marble in our every-day life? The Austrian physicist and Nobel Laureate (Physics 1933) Erwin Schrödinger battled with this question. Like many other pioneers of quantum theory, he struggled to understand and interpret its implications. As late as 1952, he wrote: “We never experiment with just one electron or atom or (small) molecule. In thought-experiments we sometimes assume that we do; this invariably entails ridiculous consequences...”

In order to illustrate the absurd consequences of moving between the micro-world of quantum physics and our every-day macro-world, Erwin Schrödinger described a thought experiment with a cat: Schrödinger’s cat is completely isolated from the outside world inside a box. The cat must be in a superposition state of being both dead and alive. The box also contains a bottle of deadly cyanide which is released only after the decay of some radioactive atom, also inside the box. The radioactive decay is governed by the laws of quantum mechanics, according to which the radioactive material is in a superposition state of both having decayed and not yet decayed. Therefore the cat must also be in a superposition state of being both dead and alive. Now, if you peek inside the box, you risk killing the cat because the quantum superposition is so sensitive to interaction with the environment that the slightest attempt to observe the cat would immediately ‘collapse’ the ‘cat-state’ to one of the two possible outcomes — dead or alive. Instead of Schrödinger’s cat, Haroche and Wineland trap quantum particles and put them in cat-like superposition states. These quantum objects are not really macroscopic as a cat, but they are still quite large by quantum standards. Inside Haroche’s cavity microwave photons are put in cat-like states with opposite phases at the same time, like a stopwatch with a needle that spins both clockwise and counterclockwise simultaneously. The microwave

field inside the cavity is then probed with Rydberg atoms. The result is another unintelligible quantum effect called entanglement. Entanglement has also been described by Erwin Schrödinger and can occur between two or more quantum particles that have no direct contact but still can read and affect the properties of each other. Entanglement of the microwave field and Rydberg atoms allowed Haroche to map the life and death of the cat-like state inside his cavity, following it step by step, atom by atom, as it underwent a transition from the quantum superposition of states to a well defined state of classical physics.

Computer Revolution

A possible application of ion traps that many scientists dream of is the quantum computer. In present-day classical computers the smallest unit of information is a bit that takes the value of either 1 or 0. In a quantum computer, however, the basic unit of information — a quantum bit or qubit — can be 1 and 0 at the same time. Two quantum bits can simultaneously take on four values — 00, 01, 10 and 11 — and each additional qubit doubles the amount of possible states. For n quantum bits there are $2^{\{+n\}}$ possible states, and a quantum computer of only 300 qubits could hold $2^{\{+3\}\{+0\}\{+0\}}$ values simultaneously. Wineland’s group was the first in the world to demonstrate a quantum operation with two quantum bits. Since control operations have already been achieved with a few qubits, there is no reason to believe that it should not be possible to achieve such operations with many more qubits. However, to build such a quantum computer one has to satisfy two opposing requirements: the qubits need to be adequately isolated from their environment in order not to destroy their quantum properties, yet they must also be able to communicate with the outside world in order to pass on the results of their calculations. David Wineland and his team of researchers have also used ions in a trap to build a clock that is a hundred times more precise than the caesium-based atomic clocks which are currently the standard for our measurement of time. Time is kept by setting, or synchronizing all clocks against one standard. Caesium clocks operate in the microwave range whereas Wineland’s ion clocks use visible light — hence their name: optical clocks.

Optical Clocks

An optical clock can consist of just one ion or two ions in a trap. With two ions, one is used as the clock and the other is used to read the clock without destroying its state, or causing it to miss a tick. The precision of an optical clock is better than one part in 10^{17} —if one had started to measure time at the beginning of the universe in the Big Bang about 14 billion years ago, the optical clock would only have been off by about five seconds today. With such precision, some extremely subtle and beautiful phenomena of nature have been observed, such as changes in the flow of time, or minute variations of gravity, the fabric of space-time. According to Einstein's theory of relativity, time is affected by motion and gravity. The higher the speed and the stronger the gravity, the slower the passage of time. We may not be aware of these effects, but they have in fact become part of our everyday life. When we navigate with the GPS we rely on time signals from satellites with clocks that are routinely calibrated, because gravity is somewhat weaker several hundred kilometres altitude. With an optical clock it is possible to measure a difference in the passage of time when the clock's speed is changed by less than 10 metres per second, or when gravity is altered as a consequence of a difference in height of only 30 centimetres.

Red Wine can distort the results of Testosterone Level in Body

Researchers from the Kingston University, London in January 2013 declared that Red Wine helps in boosting the performance enhancing hormone testosterone in the body of the athletes and players. The researchers also claimed that the beverage would not only help them in winning the trophies, but an athlete under influence of red wine can also cross all the anti-doping tests. A team at the University's School of Life Sciences led by Professor Declan Naughton in their findings confirmed that there are chances in which, the amount of testosterone excreted by the body is distorted under the influence of Red Wine and can easily skip the drug tests from the Urine Samples. Quercetin is the compound found in red wine that have abilities of blocking the action of enzyme called UGT2B17

partially. UGT2B17 is an enzyme that finds out testosterone in the human body and then signals kidney to excrete it. Testosterone is a natural steroid hormone available in the body of men and women with abilities of increasing the muscle mass, speed up the recovery process and boost stamina to a different level. The research was conducted in test tubes till date and the human trial is yet to be done. The clinical study of its effects on human beings would help in determining the effects of red wine on human being.

2 Billion Year Old Martian Rock Is a Meteorite with 10 Times More Water than Normal

Scientists claimed that the 2-billion year old dark black rock, called Northwest Africa (NWA) 7034 or Black Beauty, which landed into Sahara desert in 2011 is actually new kind of Martian meteorite which contains 10 times excess water than the normal.

Black Beauty weighs around 320 g. After studying it intensively for over a year, the team of US scientists finally determined that the meteorite was formed 2.1 billion years ago and that too during the starting of most recent geologic period called Amazonian, on Mars. Programme scientist for the Mars Exploration Programme at NASA headquarters, Washington explained that the age of Black Beauty was important because it is majorly older than the other Martian meteorites. NASA also explained that the meteorite is a perfect match for the outcrops as well as surface rocks which it had studied remotely through their Mars rovers as well as Mars-orbiting satellites. The composition of Black Beauty is much different than previously studied meteorites from Mars. It is composed of cemented remains of basalt, which is a rock that is formed from hastily cooled lava. These remains are mainly pyroxene and feldspar, which most probably are from the volcanic activities. This is an unusual meteorite chemistry which matches the Martian crust that was measured by Mars Odyssey Orbiter as well as Mars Exploration Rovers of Nasa. Around 110 Martian rocks have already been recovered on Earth, primarily in Sahara or Antarctica. The oldest one is from 4.5 billion years ago when Mars was much warmer and wetter. A lot of Martian meteorites are

from 1.3 billion years ago and remaining ones are from 600 million years ago. The latest meteorite is Black Beauty which was donated to University of New Mexico by a US citizen who had purchased it from the Moroccan meteorite dealer in 2011.

India's First Successful Intestinal Transplant Performed

The first successful and healthy intestinal transplant surgery in India was given to a software engineer on 24 November 2012 at Medanta Medicity, Gurgaon. Because around 60 percent intestinal transplants are not successful due to jettison and higher degree of infection of transplanted organ, therefore the hospital authorities waited for announcing the results till patient recovered completely. The earlier attempts of intestinal transplant in India have always failed. The chairman managing director of Medanta, Dr Naresh Trehan announced that this was the first successful intestinal transplant in India and it provided new hopes to the country. In context with the intestinal transplant for the Delhi gangrape victim, Dr Trehan declared that the victim was not medically fit for the surgery. In the patient who received the first successful intestinal transplant in India, merely 28 cm of small intestine was left out of 600 cm. Rest of it was removed completely. Small intestine performs the function of food absorption as well as digestion. But after finding the cadaver donour, the transplant was successfully completed on 24 November 2012. The cost of surgery was 30 lakh Rupees.

Scientists Developed a Drug That Help Paralysed Walk Again

Scientists at the Stanford University in the second week of January 2013, California developed an experimental drug called LM11A-31 which is claimed to help paralysed people reclaim their movements. The new drug enabled the mice which had no movements in lower limbs, to walk again with the coordinated steps. The mice were even able to imitate the swimming motions. In a 42-days long experiment, the scientists gave three doses of the drug to different groups of the mice starting at four hours post injury and later twice every day. In the tests, it was also observed that the medication did not cause

any pain in mice. Also, there were no toxic effects on them. Blood brain barrier, which is responsible for protecting the central nervous system (CNS) from harmful chemicals carried in the bloodstream, was also crossed efficiently. This is for the very first time that the oral drug was observed to provide effective therapy like this. This is therefore said to be the first drug that if taken orally, produced functional improvement leading to no toxicity in rodent model. Apart from this, the scientists tested the small molecule for the ability to avoid death of cells known as oligodendrocytes. Oligodendrocytes actually are the cells which surround as well as provide protection to the axons, which are long projections of the nerve cells. Protection is provided to axons by wrapping them in myelin sheath which provides protection to the fibres.

India Successfully test-fired manoeuvrable version of BrahMos

India on 9 January 2013 successfully test-fired a highly manoeuvrable version of the 290-km range supersonic cruise missile BrahMos from a naval warship off the coast of Vishakhapatnam in Bay of Bengal. The missile blasted off in a pre-designated war scenario taking a 'double— manoeuvre in S-form' hitting the designated target ship just one meter above water line. The sheer velocity and power of hit made the missile rip through the ship's hull.

The present test firing is considered to be the 34th launch of BrahMos after the successful October 2012 launch from INS Teg in the Arabian Sea.

About BrahMos Missile

BRAHMOS is a two-stage missile with a solid propellant booster engine as its first stage which brings it to supersonic speed and then gets separated. The liquid ramjet or the second stage then takes the missile closer to 3 Mach speed in cruise phase. Stealth technology and guidance system with advanced embedded software provides the missile with special features.

- The BrahMos missile system was inducted into the Indian Navy in 2005 when it began arming the Rajput-class guided missile destroyers and inducted subsequently in many warships.
- BrahMos is capable of acquiring data not only from the American GPS but also from Russian

GLONASS satellite systems also, which ensures double redundancy.

- The missile has identical configuration for land, sea and sub-sea platforms and uses a Transport Launch Canister (TLC) for transportation, storage and launch.

Astronomers discovered Magnetic Ropes in Venus's Upper Atmosphere

Astronomers found flux ropes in Venus's ionosphere (upper atmosphere), above the poles in the second week of January 2013. The flux ropes are magnetic entities stretching for hundreds of kilometers in size. Astronomers were boarding the European Space Agency's Venus Express Spacecraft. Flux ropes have been seen before around other planets, including Earth. They transport superheated plasma gas from one end of the rope to the other. Flux ropes are formed on Earth near the face of the planet opposite the Sun. The stream of charged particles known as the solar wind flows around the planet and thus a magnetotail of charged particles on the other side is created. Unlike most other planets in the Solar system, Venus has no magnetic field. The ionosphere (or upper atmosphere) of Venus acts as an obstacle to the solar wind. The ionosphere of Venus remains unmagnetised most of the time, but when the solar wind reaches a higher pressure than the surrounding atmosphere it gets magnetised. In these conditions, relatively small flux ropes can form because of the higher speed of the solar wind blowing over the slower ionosphere. In fact, the flux ropes on Venus form from solar particles on the side of the planet facing away from the Sun, in the magnetotail. Earlier, the giant flux ropes were also found in the atmosphere of Mars. Mars does not have a magnetic field like Venus.

Scientists Developed a Drug to Reverse Permanent Deafness

Scientists in the second week of January 2013, at the Harvard Medical School, US developed a drug codenamed LY411575, which is claimed to be a cure of the permanent deafness. The drug works by exciting the inner ear. It actually triggers the restoration of sensory hair cells. As of now, it was not possible to refurbish the cells which were lost because of various factors such as toxic drugs,

infection and loud exposure of noise. This kind of deafness, which usually occurred to DJs and rock musicians, was assumed as irrevocable. Scientists were successful in restoring the hearing in mice to some extent. These mice were deafened due to loud noise. The scientists believed that this research was helpful in creating effective treatments related to acute noise provoking deafness in the humans.

The sensory hairs which are very tiny are present in the cochlea and they are very crucial for hearing. Vibrations of the sound which are transferred from eardrum shake these hairs, leading to nerve messages transferred to the brain. In the absence of these hairs, the pathway to hearing remains blocked. As a result, the auditory centre of the brain does not receive any signals. Fish as well as birds have the ability to regenerate the sound-sensing hair cells. Mammals lack this ability. In the new approach, the scientists reprogrammed inner ear cells by reducing the protein known as Notch. In the early laboratory research, it was shown that the Notch signals enabled in preventing the stem cells in cochlea from transforming themselves to new sensory hair cells. Newly developed drug can curb Notch. In the study, mice suffering from noise-induced loss of hearing could generate functional sensory hair cells once the drug was injected in the damaged cochlea. The study is significant because the hearing loss affects 250 million people in the world.

Mars Curiosity Rover captured a Flower like formation on Martian Rocks

NASA in the first week of January 2013 unveiled that Mars Curiosity Rover has captured an image of a flower like object embedded on the rocks of Mars. It has also photographed a snake-like rock formation on the Martian Rocks. The picture of flower was captured by the microscope Mars Hand Lens Imager held by the robotic arm of Rover on 19 December 2012. The 2.5 billion dollar Curiosity Rover landed on Mars on 5 August 2012 with a mission to identify that was the planet in its past was habitable or had primitive microbial life. The mission would end after 2 years from the day it landed on the Glenelg, the Martian Peak base named MountSharp by the Scientists.

Researchers Discovered Fossil of First Bird with Teeth in China

Fossil skeleton of the early bird called *Sulcavis Georum* which lived 125 million years ago was discovered in the first week of January 2013 in China. The bird had strange kind of ridges on the teeth which allowed it to open up hard-shelled snails and insects as well. This is an unusual fossil which was preserved so well that some of the stomach contents were present even now. The discovery would help the researchers find out the kinds of food items that earliest birds of Earth ate during the time when dinosaurs existed. The fossil skeleton of the first bird with teeth indicated that the bird had durophagous diet, which means that the teeth of this bird were able to eat prey that had hard exoskeletons. Researchers believed that teeth of this new specimen increased the known range of tooth shapes in the early birds, which in turn would indicate about the ecological diversity.

About *Sulcavis Georum*

- *Sulcavis Georum* is the enantiornithine bird (extinct toothed bird) that existed around 125 million years ago in Liaoning Province, China.
- Enantiornithine birds are actually a kind of early birds and also the most numerous birds from dinosaurs-era.
- *Sulcavis Georum* is said to be the first bird discovered with tooth enamel. The birds are said to have evolved from the dinosaurs but the dinosaurs have carnivorous teeth that have special characteristics for eating only meat.
- Enantiornithine are the unique birds among others that show minimal tooth reduction along with assortment of the dental patterns. However, *Sulcavis Georum* has strong teeth having grooves on inside surface which strengthen their teeth against harder foods.
- No other bird species in the past had striations, preserved ridges, serrated edges or other kinds of dental ornamentation.

Indian Institute of Astrophysics to Develop World's Largest Solar Telescope

The Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), Bangalore in the first week of January 2013 informed about its decision to come up with world's largest

solar telescope in Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir. The project would commence by the end of year 2013 and the telescope is likely to be placed at Hanle or Merak village near Pangong Lake in Ladakh. The telescope would be a 2-metre class, state-of-the-art National Large Solar Telescope (NLST).

It's expected that the project would complete by 2017. The project has been planned with a budget of 300 crore rupees and after installation, it would help the astrophysicists capable of practicing day and night astronomy. This telescope would help the researchers to understand the process of creation and decay of sunspots along with other fundamental processes that takes place on the surface of sun. This telescope would also help in filling the longitudinal gap between Europe and Japan. The telescope with its innovative design and backend instruments would also provide crucial information on nature of magnetic fields due to its unprecedented spatial resolution.

Cochin Shipyard launched Aadesh

Cochin Shipyard Ltd (CSL) on 8 January 2013 launched the first fast patrol vessel (FPV), built for the Indian Coast Guard. The vessel which is named Aadesh was launched by Jayasree Muralidharan, in the presence of M.P. Muralidharan, Director General of Indian Coast Guard (ICG) and K. Subramaniam, Chairman and Managing Director of the Coast Guard.

The vessel is the first in a series of 20 numbers fast patrol vessel (FPVs) contracted by CSL for the Indian Coast Guard. The contract was signed in year 2010 with of which the delivery the last vessel scheduled for 2017. The ship was designed by the Kochi-based SEDS and this is the first association between CSL and a local design house. The yard also launched two other platform supply vessels for PSV Holdings Inc, Cyprus.

Specification of Fast Patrol Vessel (FPV)

- It has a designed speed of 33 knots with propelled water jets to attain the speed.
- Its primary role includes fisheries protection and monitoring, patrol within exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and coastal patrol, anti smuggling, search and rescue operations and for anti piracy operations.

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- The secondary role of vessel is to provide communication link and escort convoys during hostilities and war time.
- Although it is small in size and complex but is technologically very challenging.

Cochin Shipyard currently has 27 ships on order consisting of 20 FPVs, five offshore support ships for Indian and foreign owners, one buoy tender vessel for the Department of Lighthouses and Lightships and the Prestigious Aircraft Carrier for the Indian Navy.

About Cochin Fast Patrol Vessel (FPV)

Cochin Fast Patrol Vessels (FPV) are basically chain of 20 patrol boats being built by Cochin shipyard Limited for the Indian Coast Guard at its shipyard located at Cochin in state of Kerala.

- The Vessels have length of 50 m and can attain speed of 35 Knots.
- Each vessel is powered by three Tognum supplied 16V 4000 M90 engines with an output of 2,720 kW (3,648 bhp) each in combination with three Rolls-Royce Kamewa 71S3np water jets to enable them to operate in shallow waters and offer higher speeds and better maneuverability than conventional propellers.
- The vessels roles include coastal patrolling, anti-smuggling missions, fisheries protection, as well as search and rescue duties.

India Affected By the Cyber Spying Campaign Called Red October

Kaspersky Lab, the Russian cyber security firm on 14 January 2013 revealed that India is one among various nations which are hit by the cyber spying which has been targeting governmental, diplomatic and scientific research organisations for around 5 years. The cyber spying campaign is termed Red October or Rocra by the Kaspersky Lab. Rocra significantly affected countries like Kazakhstan, Russia, India, Belgium and Azerbaijan apart from other countries in Eastern Europe, Central Asia and Soviet republics. Rocra infected hundreds of the computers across the world in categories such as research institutions, government, diplomatic/embassies, nuclear/energy research, trade and commerce, aerospace and military as well as oil and gas companies. Kaspersky Lab declared that the

cyber spying campaign was functional since 2007 and at present too it is active.

Depending upon the Kaspersky Security Network, the number of infections that affected Russia was maximum (35). It was followed by Kazakhstan (21). India, Azerbaijan and Belgium had 15 infections each. Other affected nations included Armenia (10), Afghanistan (10), Turkmenistan (7), Iran (7), US (6), Vietnam (6), Ukraine (6), Pakistan (5) and Brazil (4).

About Red October

Rocra is the short name given to Red October. Apart from attacking the established computer workstations, Rocra can also steal the data from various smartphones, catch the files from the removable disk drives as well as abandon the network equipment configurations. Rocra can also scan through the local network FTP servers as well as email databases. Rocra is not like the other highly automatic cyber-spying campaigns such as Gauss and Flame. The attacks of Rocra are very carefully chosen. The configuration of the hardware as well as software of the victim's device is what drive every operation. Apart from the software and the hardware, every habit of document use and the native language also drive the operation.

Intel Developed New Device That Helps Stephen Hawking Communicate Faster

A team at Intel, the computer hardware firm created a device, which is said to allow Stephen Hawking, the renowned scientist of the world to communicate faster than before. With the help of new device, Hawking will be able to discuss his ideas about fundamental physics in speedy manner. The 71-year old physicist has been affected by the degenerative disease, due to which he composes sentences at very slow speed, i.e., one word per minute. But Intel created a new device which allows him to create five words per minute. The rate of sentence composition could also increase to ten words per minute. Hawking, from last 10 years has composed the sentences at a pace of one letter at a time while making use of the jerk of the cheek in order to stop the cursor as it runs on the on-screen keyboard. He therefore composes his sentences at a pace of one word at a time and the computer, which

is attached to the wheelchair reads it aloud in the metallic voice.

However, in the recent past, Hawking, who is suffering from the motor neuron disease, finds it difficult to control the cursor using the jerk of his cheek, which significantly slows down the pace at which he can communicate with everyone. Intel started working on the new device for Hawking in 2011 after he requested for the help from Gordon Moore, the Intel co-founder. The new device or system which was created by Intel makes use of the facial recognition technology in order to identify not just the cheek movements of Hawking, but also the jerks from the mouth as well as the eyebrows, which eventually sends his words to the new machine for speech. Justin Rattner, Intel's chief technology officer described that a device with character-driven interface has been created, which is actually a better word forecaster. The new technology of the device would enable Hawking to make use of two diverse signals in order to express his ideas, which in turn also means that he would be able to communicate while making use of the Morse code. This in turn is a great improvement.

World's First 3-D Printed Building Planned by Dutch Architect to come up by 2014

The Dutch architect, Janjaap Ruijssenaars in the fourth week of January 2013 unveiled his plans to design the first 3D-printed house of the world. The Landscape House will appear as a continuous looping Möbius strip that rises from the ground and then folds back in seamless rolling band. However, the intricate geometry of the planned building is not crafted from concrete, but from the layers of printed sand. Janjaap Ruijssenaars is at present, working with the mathematician and artist Rinus Roelofs for creating this building in sections of up to 6x9m, which are printed with the help of D-Shape printer. The special D-Shape printer is developed by the Italian engineer Enrico Dini and it makes use of the stereolithography principles just like the small printers. The only difference is that this D-Shape printer is scaled up and uses the sand fused together with the help of chemical binding agent.

The sections of the building will be printed like the hollow shells and later they will be filled with the

fibre-reinforced concrete in order to imbibe it with the extra strength. The special, first-of-its-kind 3D printed building will take an estimated time of 18 months, which means that it will be available in 2014. The cost of constructing this building is estimated to be €4-5m (£3.3-£4.2m). Earlier, the largest ever 3D-printed object was created by the Italian architect Andrea Morgante of Shiro Studio. This architect made use of the same printer in order to fabricate the 3m-high pavilion in 2009.

Iran Announced Sending a Monkey Successfully Into Space

Iran on 28 January 2013 announced that it had successfully sent into space a monkey. While declaring the sending of a monkey into space, Iran also declared that it was yet another step towards the space flight goal of Tehran. The rocket called Pishgam (meaning Pioneer) reached at a height of 120 km. Though the details about timing or the location were not disclosed, but Iran declared that the monkey had come back to the Earth successfully. Since a long time, Iran wanted to send an astronaut in space as its aerospace programme in 2012. In 2010, Iran declared that it had launched the Explorer rocket into space which carried worms, turtle and mouse. Iran's effort to launch a monkey into the space had earlier failed in 2011. However, US and the allies worried that the technology from the space programme might be utilised for creation of missiles which could potentially also be armed with the nuclear warheads. Iran, in the meanwhile, denied that it took atomic weapons and also claimed that it was using the nuclear reactors for medical and energy applications. In its joint project with Russia, Iran had announced that it had successfully launched satellites into space back in 2005. Though Iran conceals details of the new space facility that it has planned, but the most important satellite launch complex of Iran is near Semnan.

Early monkeys sent into space

- The first country to launch the primate into space was US. It sent a rhesus monkey known as Albert into a sub-space altitude of 39 miles in the V2 rocket in 1948. However, Albert died because of suffocation in the flight.

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- Another monkey called Albert II was sent into space achieving the altitude of 83 miles in the V2 rocket in 1949. Though Albert II survived but it died because of parachute failure.
- In late 1949, other two monkeys called Albert III and Albert IV were sent but again did not survive.
- In 1951, Albert V died because of parachute failure.
- In 1951, Albert VI, also called Yorick survived the flight but only reached the height of 45 miles. The boundary of outer space is considered beyond 62 miles.
- The landmark was achieved by the US in 1959 when two primates were recovered alive after their spaceflight. These primates were a rhesus monkey called Able and a squirrel monkey called Baker. These primates were aboard a rocket called Jupiter.

River Ran on the Mars 3.5 Billion Years Ago

The European Space Agency released surprising pictures of the remains of huge river which ran across the Red Planet, Mars at some point of time, on 17 January 2013. The images which were captured by the ESA's Mars Express showed Reull Vallis, the river-like structure, which is believed to have formed when water ran from the surface of Mars in distant past. The Reull Vallis, cut a steep-sided channel through Promethei Terra Highlands and then ran towards the floor of huge Hellas basin. The structure which surprised the astronomers stretches for around 900 miles or 1500 km across the Martian surface and also shows various tributaries. One of the tributaries was seen cutting the main valley towards the upper side in the north. Experts from ESA opined that these images displayed a resemblance with the morphology which is found in various areas affected by glaciation on Earth. Planetary scientists, in the meanwhile opined that images represented the presence of high water or the glacial levels on Mars, before the water or ice evaporated.

ESA described that the sides of Reull Vallis were mainly sharp as well as steep in the images captures by the Mars Express. The parallel longitudinal features covered floor of the channel. The structures

like these were believed to be formed due to passage of loose ice or debris during Amazonian period because of the glacial flow along the channel. These structures, it is believed, were formed somewhere around 3.5 billion years ago. The lineated structures like these, which were rich in ice, were also found in the surrounding craters. Such images were useful because they provided the scientists and astronomers a glimpse into the past of the Red Planet.

Astronomers measured the Process how Universe cooled on lines of Big Bang Theory

Astronomers in the fourth week of January 2013 revealed that they have made the most precise measurement of the fact that how the Universe has cooled down in a period of 13.77 billion years history following the prediction made in the Big Bang Theory. To find out the fact and to carry on the study, the astronomers studied molecules in the gas cloud at a distance of 7.2 billion light years from us somewhere in the universe – a distance so far that the light emitted from it took half the age of the Universe to reach us. A team of Astronomers from France, Germany, Sweden and Australia used the Australian Telescope Compact Array to measure the heat of Universe at the time when it was half of its current age. A statement released from the CSIRO Astronomy and Space Science described that the study has been able to find out the most precise measurement to identify the fact that how the Universe has cooled over a time of 13.77 billion years. The scientists looked back halfway across the Universe to look back halfway into the Universe history and the basic reason to do so is to identify the time, when the light left the galaxies. Astronomers studied gas at a distance of 7.2 billion light years away in an unnamed galaxy and identified that the cosmic background radiation was the only thing that kept it warm – left over by the big bang. Behind this unnamed galaxy PKS 1830-211 quasar is also in existence.

Space Telescope of NASA Discovered Magnetic Braids in Sun's Atmosphere

The space telescope of NASA discovered astonishing magnetic braids of super-hot matter in outer atmosphere of the Sun. The scientists claimed

that this discovery could help in explaining the mysterious hot corona of the Sun. The scientists of NASA additionally also explained that the discovery made by High-Resolution Coronal Imager, or Hi-C of NASA would help in forecasting the space weather in a better way. The 9.5-inch (24 centimetres) telescope was launched by NASA in July 2012 on the 10-minute flight merely beyond the atmosphere of the Earth in order to know about the corona, which is the million-degree outer atmosphere of the Sun. The NASA's telescope captured 165 photographs depicting astonishing details, before it came back to the Earth. It was found out that the Sun's surface was very hot, as expected. It was almost up to 6125 degrees Celsius. However, it was found that the corona, the outer atmosphere which is way above the surface of the Sun was even hotter, by around a 1000 times more, despite the absence of solar flares.

The scientists also discovered that the powerful magnetic waves which rippled from below the surface of the Sun could heat up the corona by 1.5 million degrees Celsius. However, it was made clear that this was not the only reason that accounted for ultra-hot temperatures of the corona. With the high-resolution images of the corona of the Sun, it is clear that magnetic braids generated a lot of heat, which is enough to support the fact that the temperature is as high as up to 6 million degrees Celsius.

The scientists from NASA revealed that they had observed the bundle of magnetic fields, which in turn wrapped various other bundles to create magnetic bundle ensemble. The magnetic fields in the ensemble have different kinds of lengths. Also, there may be difference in the rate of curvature along the solo field lines. Some of the fields are curved highly, while the others are curved less. The magnetic fields were also visible physically within the super-hot plasma that composes the Sun. For example, the highly curved magnetic fields could appear like the coronal loops or the giant arches which rise from the Sun. The magnetic braids in turn can also grow unbalanced so that the individual magnetic field lines of force can communicate within themselves.

This phenomenon is called reconnection and it diminishes the magnetic field's curvature, which in turn releases huge amount of energy that heats up the plasma or increases the speed of solar flares or other

outbursts. Even though the magnetic braids were visible on the Sun's surface, but there are not enough ways to find out how common these magnetic braids were in corona. The scientists explained that there was a possibility that the braids being observed were not actually the bundles of magnetic fields but actually the sets of various magnetic loops which were overlying or underlying on each other. If this was the case, then it was possible that they stored less energy than what it was analysed. Despite all this, the corona of the Sun still held 100 times the amount of energy which needed to be super-heated.

Device to

Remove Insect Pests from Stored Grains

Stored grains are attacked by several pests. They assume importance as they start their damage in the field itself. Generally insects fly from nearby farms, farm store houses or farmer storehouses and start laying eggs on the grains that are stored. Eggs are the root cause in of damage to the grains during storage. As the use of pesticides and fumigants on or near stored grain is more dangerous to human beings and due to the development of resistance to the insects, mechanical methods like rotation, tumbling and impact of infested grains prove to be effective in the removal of stored-product insects.

Limited Information

Mechanical removal of insects from stored grains is an important pest control strategy. Till now only very limited information is available in using the mechanical mode for controlling the egg stages of insects. Hence, a device to remove adult stored product insects and crush the eggs present in stored grain has been developed by Department of Agricultural Entomology, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore. The device has a grain feeding hopper, insect cleaning unit with an outlet to collect them separately and an outlet for the treated grain. It can be easily operated and within five minutes majority of the insects present in the food grains can be removed and collected in the collection outlet. Further inner arrangement in the insect cleaning unit facilitates crushing of the eggs, if any, in the grains. The capacity of the hand operated machine is 200 – 250 kg/hr. It can be easily motorized depending on the need.

Scientists Discovered Gene That Restricts Tumours

Scientists at the Jawaharlal Nehru University's School of Biotechnology claimed in the third week of January 2013 that they found the SCO2 gene which has potential qualities of restricting tumours.

Scientists claimed that this SCO2 gene can therefore be used for the treatment of various kinds of cancers. As of now, p53 gene was considered as the protein that holds back tumours and therefore prevents occurrence of cancer. But as per the combined research studies which were conducted by the scientists of JNU School of Biotechnology and Ohio State University Medical Centre as well as other universities, p53 gene employs SCO2 gene to imbibe this tumour-suppressing quality to it. In the research study, the scientists injected SCO2 protein which is encoded in SCO2 gene, in the colon as well as breast tumour xenografts in the mice. The result was constant decay of the tumours. When SCO2 was combined with cancer drugs such as tamoxifen and cisplatin, the success rate of hypoxic tumour regression was 85 percent in 4 weeks.

Actually, SCO2 is responsible for enhancing the production of reactive oxygen species (ROS), which in turn activates the apoptosis signal-regulating kinase 1 (ASK1). Apoptosis signal-regulating kinase 1 (ASK1) then degenerates the growth rate of tumours. ROS is a kind of unstable molecule which encompasses oxygen, which in turn leads to easy reaction with the other molecules in the cell. Building of ROS in the cells can lead to damaged DNA, RNA as well as proteins, eventually being fatal. But SCO2 causes promotion of ROS for positive reasons, i.e. to activate the cell death and thus shrinking these tumours.

The scientists however also made it clear that translating these findings into the real-time treatment or therapy would take time. But it is still a very important step in the process of understanding mechanistic reasons of cancer. The scientists declared that all the genes which are involved in cancer cell metabolism hold importance, but they need to be understood and discovered. However, with the advanced therapies and the treatments in the future, cancer would not remain a deadly disease.

Researchers Discovered Protein behind Scaly and Dry Skin in Eczema

A team of researchers including that of an Indian-origin, at Oregon State University discovered in the first week of January 2013, one malfunctioning protein which leads to itchy, dry as well as inflamed skin wounds in a kind of eczema. The protein is called Ctip2 and it actually causes certain skin conditions by controlling body fat which keeps the skin hydrated and healthy. Eczema actually causes major loss of certain fluids through the skin which in turn leads to penetration of certain allergens. In the study conducted by the researchers, it was found that insufficient Ctip2 leads to reduction in the lipids in skin which are required for staying healthy and performing its function. Additionally, this leads to unwanted creation of proteins which can cause inflammation.

The ability of the skin to oppose to inflammation goes down because the quantity of inflammation is rising and the main factor is Ctip2 not performing its job. One of these or both these issues can cause eczema. It was known that Ctip2 controls the body fats which can keep your skin hydrated and healthy, but researchers discovered that in case this protein starts malfunctioning, it could lead to atopic dermatitis which is a common kind of eczema. At present, the treatment includes moisturizing the skin for protection. In certain difficult cases, powerful steroids are used but it also leads to negative effects, especially long term side effects. The skin is actually the largest human body organ and also the important one. It fights against the external factors and therefore is also influenced by environment and genetics. In the condition of eczema, the function of skin slows down. The findings in turn can help the researchers in discovering the new treatments for eczema.

The main findings of the study were as follows:

- Protein called Ctip2 starts controlling body fats which are helpful in keeping the skin cell hydrated as well as healthy.
- However, in the people suffering from eczema, this starts malfunctioning leading to itchy, red and dry skin.
- The researchers believed that the findings could lead to certain new treatments as well.

Astronomers discovered Largest Cosmic Structure in the Universe

Astronomers in the first week of January 2013 discovered the largest known structure in the Universe called Large Quasar Group (LQG) that is powered by super massive black holes clump together. This cluster of galaxies spans across four billion light years. Quasars are considered to be the nuclei of galaxies of the universe, which undergoes brief period of extremely high brightness making them visible in the sky from extreme distant positions. The LQG was identified by a research team from the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) that is led by Dr. Roger Clowes and the significant size of the same is challenging the Albert Einstein's Principle of Cosmology. The principle states – the Universe when viewed at a large scale, it seems to be the same; it doesn't matter that from where it is being observed from. The Einstein's principle is just an assumption but was never demonstrated after observations so it's beyond reasonable doubts. The newly, discovered LQG carries a dimension of 500 megaparsecs (Mpc). The elongated structure makes its longest dimension to a size of 1200 Mpc or 4 billion light years, which is 1600 times larger than the distance between the Milky Way Galaxy and the Andromeda Galaxy.

Andromeda Galaxy is the nearest neighbour of the Milky Way Galaxy and is separated from each other by about 0.75 Mpc or 2.5 million light years. The cluster of whole galaxies of the Universe can be up to 2 to 3 Mpc and the LQGs can go up to 200 Mpc and above. The modern calculations of astrophysicist's states that they can't find any structure larger than 370 Mpc and these calculations are made on the basis of modern theory of cosmology and the principle of cosmology. One will take 4 billion years to cross the LQG if one travels with the speed of light and this is just not because of its huge size but also because it has challenged the accepted principle of cosmology given by Einstein. Astronomers in the first week of January 2013 discovered the largest known structure in the Universe called Large Quasar Group (LQG) that is powered by super massive black holes clump together. This cluster of galaxies spans across four billion light years. Quasars are considered to be the nuclei of galaxies of the universe, which undergoes

brief period of extremely high brightness making them visible in the sky from extreme distant positions. The LQG was identified by a research team from the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) that is led by Dr. Roger Clowes and the significant size of the same is challenging the Albert Einstein's Principle of Cosmology. The principle states – the Universe when viewed at a large scale, it seems to be the same; it doesn't matter that from where it is being observed from. The Einstein's principle is just an assumption but was never demonstrated after observations so it's beyond reasonable doubts.

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Agartala to turn a 'Green' City

Aiming to make Agartala an environmentally safe city, the Tripura government is preparing a report to make use of solar energy mandatory by owners of buildings. The present building rules would be changed to make use of solar energy compulsory in buildings to reduce dependence on conventional energy, TripKar said the company would soon provide PNG connections to 10,000 new domestic consumers here. The Agartala Municipal Council has made a Rs 452.32 crore-master plan to make Agartala a "solar city". The Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy would bear 90 per cent of the cost and the remaining 10 per cent would be borne

by the state government in the next three years. The Transport department has already introduced 70 Compressed Natural Gas -run buses and CNG kits would be fitted to those vehicles run either by petrol or by diesel. "About four lakh people live in the city, but the density of automobiles in this city is higher than many big cities in the country," state Transport and Urban Development Minister Manik Dey said. There are over 200,000 various types of vehicles, including 4,500 auto-rickshaws, plying in the city and many such auto-rickshaws are now fitted with CNG kits, he said.

"At present there are three CNG stations and we have a plan to set up more such stations. PNG connections would be given to additional 10,000 households within six months," Kar said. Tripura Science, Technology and Environment Minister Joy Gobinda Debroy said. "The rules would be applicable to private, government and commercial buildings," Debroy said. With the Centre suggesting that Northeastern state capitals should be included among 60 cities in the country to be turned into solar energy hotspots, Debroy said the state government had started preparing a detailed project report. Meanwhile, the Tripura Natural Gas Co Ltd (TNGCL) has announced a plan to run all vehicles in the city with CNG by 2013.

Curiosity Rover Set to Drill its First Martian Rock

NASA's Curiosity rover is preparing to drill the Martian surface and is driving towards a flat rock with pale veins that may hold clues to a wet history on the Red Planet. It's the most highly anticipated milestone since the six-wheel, nuclear-powered rover landed near the Martian equator five months ago on its two-year prime mission, investigating whether the planet ever offered an environment favourable for microbial life. If the rock meets rover engineers' approval when Curiosity rolls up to it in coming days, it will become the first to be drilled for a sample during the mission, NASA said. "Drilling into a rock to collect a sample will be this mission's most challenging activity since the landing.

It has never been done on Mars," said Mars Science Laboratory project manager Richard Cook of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory. "The drill

hardware interacts energetically with Martian material we don't control. We won't be surprised if some steps in the process don't go exactly as planned the first time through," Cook said in a NASA statement. Curiosity first will gather powdered samples from inside the rock and use those to scrub the drill. Then the rover will drill and ingest more samples from this rock, which it will analyse for information about its mineral and chemical composition.

The chosen rock is in an area where Curiosity's Mast Camera (Mastcam) and other cameras have revealed diverse unexpected features, including veins, nodules, cross-bedded layering, a lustrous pebble embedded in sandstone, and possibly some holes in the ground. The rock chosen for drilling is called "John Klein" in tribute to former Mars Science Laboratory deputy project manager John W Klein, who died in 2011. The target is on flat-lying bedrock within a shallow depression called "Yellowknife Bay". The terrain in this area differs from that of the landing site, a dry streambed about 500 metres to the west. Curiosity's science team decided to look there for a first drilling target because orbital observations showed fractured ground that cools more slowly each night than nearby terrain. "The orbital signal drew us here, but what we found when we arrived has been a great surprise," said Mars Science Laboratory project scientist John Grotzinger. "This area had a different type of wet environment than the streambed where we landed, maybe a few different types of wet environments," said Grotzinger.

LHC to Re-awaken in 2015 with doubled Energy, Luminosity

After a successful three-year run that saw the discovery of a Higgs-boson-like particle in early 2012, the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) at CERN, near Geneva, Switzerland, will shut down for 18 months for maintenance and upgrades. This is the first of three long shutdowns, scheduled for 2013, 2017, and 2022. Physicists and engineers will use these breaks to ramp up one of the most sophisticated experiments in history even further. According to Mirko Pojer, Engineer In-charge, LHC-operations, most of these changes were planned in 2011. They will largely concern fixing known glitches on the

ATLAS and CMS particle-detectors. The collider will receive upgrades to increase its collision energy and frequency. Presently, the LHC smashes two beams, each composed of precisely spaced bunches of protons, at 3.5-4 tera-electron-volts (TeV) per beam. By 2015, the beam energy will be pushed up to 6.5-7 TeV per beam. Moreover, the bunches which were smashed at intervals of 50 nanoseconds will do so at 25 nanoseconds.

After upgrades, "in terms of performance, the LHC will deliver twice the luminosity," Dr. Pojer noted in an email to this Correspondent, with reference to the integrated luminosity. Precisely, it is the number of collisions that the LHC can deliver per unit area which the detectors can track. The instantaneous luminosity, which is the luminosity per second, will be increased to 1×10^{34} per centimetre-squared per second, ten-times greater than before, and well on its way to peaking at 7.73×10^{34} per centimetre-squared per second by 2022. As Steve Myers, CERN's Director for Accelerators and Technology, announced in December 2012, "More intense beams mean more collisions and a better chance of observing rare phenomena." One such phenomenon is the appearance of a Higgs-boson-like particle. The CMS experiment, one of the detectors on the LHC-ring, will receive some new pixel sensors, a technology responsible for tracking the paths of colliding particles. To make use of the impending new luminosity-regime, an extra layer of these advanced sensors will be inserted around a smaller beam pipe. If results from it are successful, CMS will receive the full unit in late-2016. In the ATLAS experiment, unlike with CMS which was built with greater luminosities in mind, pixel sensors are foreseen to wear out within one year after upgrades. As an intermediate solution, a new layer of sensors called the B-layer will be inserted within the detector for until 2018. Because of the risk of radiation damage due to more numerous collisions, specific neutron shields will be fit, according to Phil Allport, ATLAS Upgrade Coordinator. Both ATLAS and CMS will also receive evaporative cooling systems and new superconducting cables to accommodate the higher performance that will be expected of them in 2015. The other experiments, LHCb and ALICE, will also undergo inspections and upgrades to cope with

higher luminosity. An improved failsafe system will be installed and the existing one upgraded to prevent accidents such as the one in 2008. Then, an electrical failure damaged 29 magnets and leaked six tonnes of liquid helium into the tunnel, precipitating an eight-month shutdown. Generally, as Martin Gastal, CMS Experimental Area Manager, explained via email, "All sub-systems will take the opportunity of this shutdown to replace failing parts and increase performance when possible."

Tough times and calorie intake

People tend to seek higher-calorie foods that will keep them satisfied longer when there is a perception of tough times, a new study has claimed. According to the study, bad news about the economy could cause you to pack on the pounds.

The study found that when subconsciously primed with such messages, a 'live for today' impulse is triggered causing people to consume nearly 40 per cent more food than when compared to a control group primed with neutral words. When the same group primed with "tough times" messages was told the food they were sampling was low-calorie, they consumed roughly 25 per cent less of the food.

The Oldest Super Predator Living on Earth, Tyrant Swimmer Discovered by the Scientists

Scientists at the University of Edinburgh's School of Biological Sciences in the second week of January 2013 discovered that the oldest known super predator of the world was the marine crocodile. Predators are the carnivores that are capable of feeding on the prey which is large or even larger than them. This recently discovered oldest known super predator of the world, a marine crocodile was a toothy beast which looked partly like a shark and partly like a threatening dolphin. The scientific name of this oldest predator of the world is *Tyrannoneustes lythrodictikos* or simply Tyrant Swimmer. The lead author of the University of Edinburgh's School of Biological Sciences, Mark Young described that the Tyrant Swimmer was the oldest metriorhynchid macrophage, an animal with a capability of feeding on the large-bodied prey. The term called

metriorhynchid basically represents the bunch of marine crocodiles which were identical to dolphins that we see now. However, they do not have bony armour, but do have tail fluke and flipper-like forelimbs. Tyrant Swimmer was capable of opening its mouth wider. The remains of the Tyrant Swimmer which were found in Oxford Clay Formation, the Jurassic marine sedimentary rock formation originally from Southeast England were studied. These remains were stored for sometime at Hunterian Museum in Glasgow. Tyrant Swimmer basically is known to be from the shallow marine areas across Europe, primarily Poland, England and France. Around 165 million years ago, a lot of Europe was completely covered by the shallow sea, which also led to the formation of large to small islands. It is in this shallow sea that the Tyrant Swimmer lived with various other marine reptiles. However, the Tyrant Swimmer might have been faster in water than others, which allowed it to out-swim possible predators. Tyrant Swimmer could have used its swimming capabilities for capturing the prey. However, no contents of the stomach of Tyrant Swimmer were located as of now, which meant that what it ate precisely, is still a mystery.

Two New-Born Giant Planets Observed Around the Star

Astronomers studying about the newborn star called HD 142527, observed glimpses of the planets which were forming around it, depicting the stage of planetary evolution which was never seen before. The new-born planets were observed using the largest radio telescope on Earth, Atacama Large Millimetre /submillimeter Array in the Atacama Desert of Chile. It was observed that streams of gases were flowing through the gap found in the disc of the material that was surrounding the young star supported theories, about how these planets grew.

The European Southern Observatory (ESO) described the vast stream of gases were flowing through the gap in disc. Astronomers were studying the HD 142527 which is 450 light years away from the Earth. It was found that this star is surrounded by cosmic dust as well as a disc of gases. The disc is segregated into an inner as well as an outer part with the help of a gap. The gap might have been created by

newly formed giant planets of gas which were clearing out the orbits as they revolved around the star. The astronomer leading the study, Simon Casassus explained that these giant planets grew in size by capturing gases from the outer discs, from the streams which act like bridges across the gap in the disc.

U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved New Tuberculosis Drug

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration on 31 December 2012 approved a Johnson & Johnson tuberculosis drug that is counted to be first new medicine to fight the deadly infection in more than four decades. The agency approved J&J's pill, named Sirturo, for use with older drugs to fight a hard-to-treat strain of tuberculosis that has not responded to other medications. Sirturo, which chemically known as bedaquiline, is the first medicine specifically designed for treating multidrug-resistant tuberculosis. That's a form of the disease that cannot be treated with at least two of the four primary antibiotics used for tuberculosis. Sirturo provides much-needed treatment for patients who don't have other therapeutic options available. However, it was also mentioned by the agency that the drug carries risks of potentially deadly heart problems and should be prescribed carefully by doctors. It is estimated that roughly one-third of the world's population is infected with the bacteria causing tuberculosis. The disease is rare in the U.S., but kills about 1.4 million people a year worldwide. Of those, about 150,000 succumb to the increasingly common drug-resistant forms of the disease. About 60 per cent of all cases are concentrated in China, India, Russia and Eastern Europe.

The standard drugs used to fight the disease were developed in the 1950s and 1960s. It was seen during company testing that Nine patients taking Sirturo died compared with two patients taking a placebo. Five of the deaths in the Sirturo group seemed to be related to tuberculosis, but no explanation was apparent for the remaining four. Regardless of the deaths, the FDA approved the drug under its accelerated approval program, which allows the agency to clear innovative drugs based on promising preliminary results.

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. What is ARKA ?
 - (a) Anti Tank Missile developed by DRDO.
 - (b) India's first passenger solar electric vehicle.
 - (c) New oil field discovered by ONGC in Gujarat.
 - (d) Microsoft's new version of Windows.
2. Consider the following statements:
 1. Glaucoma is a leading cause of Blindness.
 2. ENCODE is a foundation data set for understanding the human genome.
 3. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease is known as Tuberculosis.

Which of the above statement are/is true ?

 - (a) All of the above
 - (b) Only 2
 - (c) Only 1
 - (d) 1 & 2
3. Consider the following statements about Narcondam Hornbills:
 1. Narcondam hornbills found in Andaman islands.
 2. It is the only place in the world where these colorful birds are found.

Which of the above statement are/is true ?

 - (a) Only 1
 - (b) Both 1 & 2
 - (c) Only 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
4. In which country you will find Tigrayans, Armharas & Oromos ethnic groups?
 - (a) Ethiopia
 - (b) South Sudan
 - (c) Somalia
 - (d) Ghana
5. Consider the following statements:
 1. Krishna district (Andhra Pradesh) is known for the Pelican Paradise.
 2. Spoon billed Sandpiper of India is in IUCN's Red list.

Which of the above statement are/is true ?

 - (a) Both 1 & 2
 - (b) Only 1
 - (c) Only 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
6. A severely incapacitating developmental disability that happens in the first three years of life is known as
 - (a) Autism
 - (b) Stigma
 - (c) Hepatitis
 - (d) None of these
7. Consider the following statements:
 1. Space Applications Centre is situated in Hyderabad.
 2. G. Madhvan Nair is the Chairman of ISRO.

Which of the above statement are/is true ?

 - (a) Only 1
 - (b) Only 2
 - (c) Neither 1 nor 2
 - (d) Both 1 & 2
8. Consider the following statements about Agni-IV missile:
 1. Its an surface to air missile.
 2. Its Range is 4000 km.
 3. It is designed to carry a payload of 1000 kg.

Which of the above statement are/is true ?

 - (a) 1 & 2
 - (b) 2 & 3
 - (c) 1 & 3
 - (d) All of the above
9. Consider the following statements:
 1. Secretary, Department of Defence Research & Development also serve scientific Advisor to the Defence minister.
 2. Currently Tessy Thomas is the DRDO Chief.

Question:
Which of the above statement are/is true ?

 - (a) 1 & 2
 - (b) 2 & 3
 - (c) 1 & 3
 - (d) All of the above
10. Consider the following statements about dengue:
 1. Aedes aegypti mosquito is principally responsible for spreading the Virus.
 2. The WHO has termed dengue as the most important mosquito borne viral disease in the world.

Which of the above statement are/is true ?

 - (a) Only 1
 - (b) Only 2
 - (c) Both 1 & 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
11. Consider the following statements:
 1. India has the second highest burden of MDR-TB in the world.
 2. The most important fact in the draft (TB control policy 2012-17) is to erected services to patients diagnosed & treated in the private sector.

Which of the above statement are/is true ?

 - (a) Only 1
 - (b) Only 2
 - (c) Both 1 & 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
12. Consider the following statements:
 1. Eleventh Conference of the parties to the convention on Biological diversity to be held in New Delhi.

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2. Aichi Biodiversity Targets was adopted in Nagoya (Japan).
Which of the above statement are/is true ?
(a) Only 1 (b) Only 2
(c) Both 1 & 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
13. Consider the following statements about Rabies:
1. Rabies spreads to people through close contact with infected saliva via bites & scratches.
2. There is no treatment available globally after the disease develops.
Which of the above statement are/is true ?
(a) Only 1 (b) Only 2
(c) Both 1 & 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
14. Consider the following statements:
1. India's first aquifer atlas points to a sharp decline in groundwater levels.
2. The Atlas suggests that the alluvium aquifer followed by basalt is most suitable for artificial recharge & development of groundwater.
Which of the above statement are/is true ?
(a) Only 1 (b) Only 2
(c) Both 1 & 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
15. Consider the following statements about National Knowledge Network (NKN):
1. NKN is a gigabyte speed information Technology.
2. It aims to connect all public universities & research laboratories by the end of 2015.
Which of the above statement are/is true ?
(a) Only 1 (b) Only 2
(c) Both 1 & 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
16. Consider the following statements about GSAT-10:
1. It is India's heaviest satellite.
2. It will directly boost telecommunications & D.T.H. Broadcasting.
3. It will become operational in November.
Which of the above statement are/is true ?
(a) Only 1 & 2 (b) Only 2 & 3
(c) Only 1 & 3 (d) All of the above
17. Consider the following statements about GPS:
1. The GPS is a part of the modernisation plan for Our Traffic management & communication.
2. DRDO has developed GPS.
Which of the above statement are/is true ?
(a) Only 1 (b) Only 2
(c) Both 1 & 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
18. Consider the following statements:
1. The Nagoya - Kuala Lumpur supplementary protocol dealt with the liability & redressing damage resulting from living modified organisms.
2. Cartagena protocol is related to CO₂ emissions.
Which of the above statement are/is true ?
(a) Only 1 (b) Only 2
(c) Both 1 & 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
19. A genetically modified cow whose milk lacks a substance that causes allergic reactions in people has been created by scientists in
(a) Australia (b) Germany
(c) New Zealand (d) America
20. A genetically modified cow whose milk lacks a substance that causes allergic reactions in people has been created by scientists in
(a) Australia (b) Germany
(c) New Zealand (d) America
21. Consider the following statements:
1. The Nagoya Kuala Lumpur Supplementary protocol dealing with liability and redress (due to consequences arising from the use of living modified organisms).
2. The Sixth meeting of the conference of the parties to the convention on Biological diversity held in Hyderabad.
Which of the above statement is/are true?
(a) Only 1 (b) Only 2
(c) Both 1 & 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
22. Consider the following statements about Dhanush missile:
1. Its full range is 350 km.
2. Dhanush is a surface to surface missile.
3. It is one of the five missiles developed by the Defence research & development organisation (DRDO) under the integrated guided missile development programme.
Which of the above statement is/are true?
(a) Only 1 (b) Only 2
(c) Both 1 & 2 (d) All of the above
23. Consider the following statements:
1. Jayanthi Natarajan assumed charge as president of conference of the parties (COP-11).

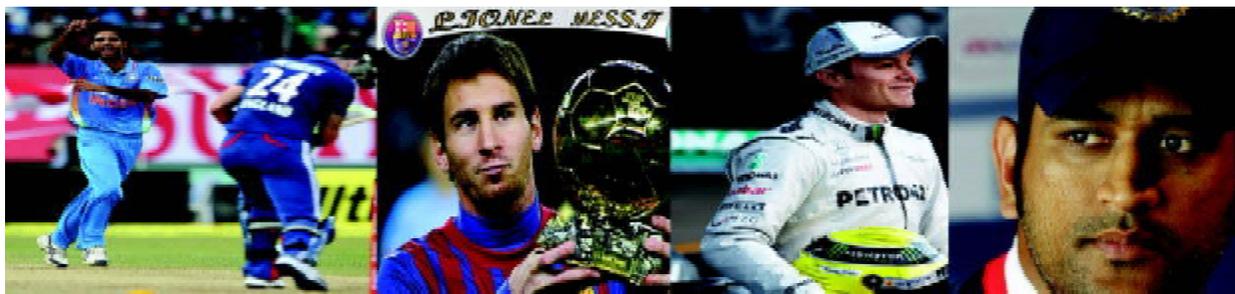
2. COP-10 was held in Bali .
Which of the above statement is/are true?
(a) Both 1 & 2 (b) Only 2
(c) Only 1 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
24. What is All Star ?
(a) First indigenously manufactured (by Sanofi India) reusable insulin pen.
(b) A hepatitis-B drug developed by Cadila .
(c) A Cancer drug developed by Cipla .
(d) None of these
25. Frenchman, Serge haroche & American, david Wineland won the Nobel Prize 2012 for
(a) Chemistry (b) Physics
(c) Medicine (d) Biology
26. Consider the following statements:
1. Conference on biodiversity target of protecting 10% of marine & coastal areas by 2015.
2. Seabirds are now the most threatened group of birds .
3. An e-Atlas of Marine-Important Bird Areas was launched by the bird Life international at the ongoing 11th Conference of the parties to the convention of Biological diversity.
Which of the above statement is/are true?
(a) 2 & 3 (b) Only 2
(c) 1 & 3 (d) 1 & 2
27. Calmette & Guerin invented
(a) TV vaccine (b) Rabbits vaccine
(c) SARS vaccine (d) Plague vaccine
28. Consider the following statements:
1. The Nagoya - Kuala Lumpur supplementary protocol dealt with the liability & redressing damage resulting from living modified organisms.
2. Cartagena protocol is related to CO2 emissions.
Which of the above statement are/is true ?
(a) Only 1 (b) Only 2
(c) Both 1 & 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
29. A genetically modified cow whose milk lacks a substance that causes allergic reactions in people has been created by scientists in
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(c) 1 & 3 (d) 1 & 2
37. Calmette & Guerin invented
(a) TV vaccine (b) Rabbits vaccine
(c) SARS vaccine (d) Plague vaccine
38. Chasma II Nuclear power plant is situated in
(a) Iran (b) Pakistan
(c) China (d) India
39. Last year NASA (National Aeronautics Space Administration) launched MESSENGER Space Craft for
(a) Venus (b) Mercury
(c) Jupiter (d) Saturn
40. The world's largest Nuclear desalination demonstration plant is located in
(a) Kalpakkam (b) Kaiga
(c) Rawatbhata (d) Tarapur
41. What is Instagram ?
(a) Picture sharing application
(b) Newly found virus
(c) Apple's latest iPod
(d) None of these
42. NASA's Ebb & Flow gravity mapping Satellites have ended their successful mission to the _____ .
(a) Moon (b) Mars
(c) Jupiter (d) Venus
43. What is 'P - 81'?
(a) Supersonic missile recently tested by North Korea
(b) Maritime Surveillance Aircraft
(c) Antibiotic which use in Cancer treatment
(d) NASA's specially designed aircraft for Mars.
44. Consider the following statements about CERN (European organisation for nuclear research):
1. CERN is the first physical science research organisation to become an observer for United nation's general assembly .
2. CERN founded in 1954 under the auspices of UNESCO.
Which of the above statement is/are true?
(a) Only 1 (b) Only 2
(c) Both 1 & 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
45. CDMA technology is developed by
(a) Apple (b) Motorola
(c) Samsung (d) Qualcomm
46. Consider the following statements
(i) The Houbara bustard is listed in the convention on migratory species of wild Animals
(ii) Convention on migratory species of wild Animals also known as the Bonn Convention
Which of the above statement is/are true
(a) only 2 (b) Both 1 & 2
(c) Only 1 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
47. Consider the following statements
1. NDM-I is a superbug discovered by British scientist.
2. The Chennai Declaration is related to antimicrobial resistance in India.
Which of the above statement is/are true?
(a) Both 1 & 2 (b) only 1
(c) only 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
48. What is K-15 ?
(a) India's underwater missile
(b) India's nuclear Submarine
(c) India's new station on South Pole
(d) Pilot less Aircraft developed by DRDO

ANSWERS

- | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|
| 1. (b) | 2. (d) | 3. (b) |
| 4. (a) | 5. (a) | 6. (a) |
| 7. (c) | 8. (b) | 9. (b) |
| 10. (c) | 11. (c) | 12. (b) |
| 13. (c) | 14. (c) | 15. (a) |
| 16. (d) | 17. (a) | 18. (a) |
| 19. (c) | 20. (c) | 21. (c) |
| 22. (c) | 23. (c) | 24. (a) |
| 25. (b) | 26. (a) | 27. (a) |
| 28. (a) | 29. (c) | 30. (c) |
| 31. (c) | 32. (c) | |
| 33. (c) | 34. (a) | |
| 35. (b) | 36. (a) | |
| 37. (a) | 38. (b) | |
| 39. (b) | 40. (a) | |
| 41. (a) | 42. (a) | |
| 43. (b) | 44. (b) | |
| 45. (d) | 46. (b) | |
| 47. (a) | 48. (a) | |



SPORTS

CRICKET

India Lost the Series against Pakistan by 2-1

India won the last match of the Pakistan in India ODI Series on 6 January 2013 against Pakistan by 10 Runs. With this win over Pakistan, India lost the three matches one day series by 1-2.

1st Match: The first match was played at MA Chidambaram Stadium, Chepauk, at Chennai on 30 December 2012. India scored 228 runs at a loss of 6 wickets and Pakistan managed to achieve the target to win the match by 6 wickets (with 11 balls remaining). At the end of the match Dhoni was chosen as the player of the match.

2nd Match: In the second match played at Eden Gardens, Kolkata on 3 January 2013 – (day/ night format) Pakistan gave a target of 251 runs for India to win but India was able to score 165 in 48 over with no wicket remaining in hand. Nasir Jamshed was elected as the Player of the match.

3rd Match: India playing first at Feroz Shah Kotla, Delhi on 6 January 2013 – (day/ night format) scored 167 runs in 43.4 over and Pakistan was all out at 157 runs in 48.5 over. India won the match by 10 runs and MS Dhoni was once again chosen as the Player of the match.

At the end of the series, Nasir Jamshed of Pakistan was declared as the Player of the tournament.

Kevin Pietersen Signed Full-Central Contract with the ECB

Kevin Pietersen on 9 January 2013 signed the full-central agreement with the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB). Pietersen was dropped from the

final Test against South Africa because of the alleged claims that he had sent the text messages to the rival players in which he criticised the then-England captain Andrew Strauss. By the end of 2012, Kevin Pietersen returned back to the team, but he only had his short-term contract. However, now he signed the full-central contract which gave him the same status like other team-mates of England cricket team.

Pietersen saw a very chaotic 2012 in which he announced his retirement not just from the 50-over internationals but also from the Twenty20 internationals. There were doubts about his future in Test cricket as well. Apart from this, Pietersen missed the World T20 in Sri Lanka. He was denied one of the ten central contracts which were distributed in September. Nevertheless, after having conversation with the ECB, he came back to the England team in October 2012 and thereafter in all forms of the game.

Virat Kohli named CEAT International Cricketer of the Year

Vice-captain of Indian Cricket team Virat Kohli on 4 January 2013 was named the International Cricketer of the Year while Pakistan cricket team bagged the top honours for the best team at the CEAT Cricket Awards 2011-12 in New Delhi. Virat Kohli had defeated Hashim Amla, Kumar Sangakkara and Michael Clarke to bag the prestigious award. Kohli was the top run-getter for India in both Tests and ODIs in 2012 with his career-best 183 which came against Pakistan in the Asia Cup in March 2012 only. The Former Pakistan cricket captain Zaheer Abbas was honoured with the lifetime award while Saeed Anwar got the best audience choice awards. In the special category-India-Pakistan awards, former Pakistan skipper Inzamam-ul-Haq was awarded with the best ODI batsman honour,

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India's Sunil Gavaskar-Best Test batsman, Kapil Dev-Best Test bowler and Wasim Akram was adjudged as the best ODI bowler. Unmukt Chand, the man who led the Indian side to win the U-19 World Cup 2012 was declared the Indian Youngster of the Year award.

CEAT awards is based upon Ceat Cricket Rating (CCR)

The Ceat Cricket Rating (CCR) system ranks the best players and teams in the world based on their performance in Tests and One Day Internationals over a period of 12 months from 1st May to 30th April. The points are allocated on overall performances and the system takes into account the batting, bowling, fielding and wicket-keeping performances making truly international, comprehensive and most credible cricket rating in the world.

In its first year of Inception of Award in 1995-96 the 'CEAT International Cricketer' award was bagged by Brian Lara. A year later the 'CEAT International Team' award was instituted with Pakistan as the best team in the world. During the World Cup in 1999, CEAT also instituted the 'CEAT International Cricketer of the World Cup' and Rahul Dravid was the recipient of the award in acknowledgment of his outstanding cricketing performance in the championship.

Mumbai won its 40th Ranji Trophy

Mumbai won its 40th Ranji trophy at Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on 28 Jan 2013. Mumbai won the final match against Saurashtra by an inning and 125 runs on the third day of Ranji Trophy final. The Mumbai team so far has played in 44 finals of Ranji Trophy. Mumbai in their first inning scored 355 runs while Saurashtra in reply could manage only 148. In its second inning Saurashtra was bundled out for merely 82. Mumbai pacers Ajit Agarkar (4-15) and Dhawal Kulkarni (5-32 & 9-56) did an excellent job. Wasim Jaffar was declared Man of the Match. Ajit Agarkar was the captain of the winning team.

India won the

ODI series against England 3-2

England defeated India by seven wickets in the fifth and the last ODI played at Himachal Pradesh

Cricket Association Stadium, Dharamshala on 27 January 2013. Despite England's win in this match, India won the series against England by 3-2. India batted first in the match and scored 226 in 49.4 overs. In reply, England easily reached the target with seven wickets remaining. The details of the remaining matches are as following:

- First ODI- Played at Saurashtra Cricket Association Stadium, Rajkot on 11 January 2013. England won by 9 runs.
- Second ODI-Played at Nehru Stadium, Kochi on 15 Jan 2013. India won by 127 runs.
- Third ODI-Played at JSCA International Stadium Complex, Ranchi on 19 January 2013. India won by 7 wickets.
- Fourth ODI-Played at Punjab Cricket Association Stadium, Mohali, Chandigarh on 23 Jan 2013. India won by 5 wickets.

Suresh Kumar Raina of India was declared player of the series. Alastair Cook was the skipper of England ODI team while Indian ODI team was led by Mahender Singh Dhoni.

Kohli became the Quickest Indian and Second at World Level to complete 4000 ODI Runs

The Indian Cricketer and the right handed batsman Virat Kohli on 19 January 2013 completed his 4000 runs in One day International cricket tournament. He is the 12th Indian batsman and 84th at world level to reach this milestone. By scoring these runs in just 93 innings, he became the first quickest from India and second at world level to accomplish this milestone. Viv Richards, the West Indies player reached this milestone in 88 innings in the year 1985 and is placed at the 1st position in the list of crickets to touch the mark of 4000 runs in less number of innings. Both Richards and Kohli played in 96 matches to reach the score. Before Kohli, the former Indian Captain Sourav Ganguly had this record of scoring the fastest 4000 runs in ODI in 110 matches and 105 innings.

- Virat Kohli is an Indian right handed batsman and a right-arm medium fast bowler
- He captained the India Under-19 cricket team, for a memorable U-19 World Cup triumph at Malaysia in 2008.

- Virat Kohli played his first ODI match against Sri Lanka in the 2008 Idea Cup

M S Dhoni climbed up to Fourth Position in the ICC ODI Players Ranking

ICC on 7 January 2013 released the ICC Player Rankings of ODI batsman placing Mahendra Singh Dhoni, the Captain of Indian Cricket Team at fourth position in its list. Dhoni was ranked at the fourth position, due to the consistent performance he had displayed in the past three-match ODI series - against Pakistan. Virat Kohli slipped by one rank to third position in the list. Suresh Raina managed to move one point upward to twenty-sixth position and Yuvraj Singh reached to forty-first spot in the latest ranking released. South African batsman Hashim Amla and AB de Villiers are sharing first and second position respectively in the latest ranking released. Nasir Jamshed, the Pakistani opener batsman managed to jump forty-five places to reach thirty-first spot, due to the consistent performance displayed in the three one-day-international series against India.

Simon Taufel to be the First Umpire to deliver the MCC Spirit of Cricket Cowdrey Lecture 2013

Simon Taufel, the umpire who has been the five-time ICC Umpire of the Year from 2004 to 2008 would be the first umpire to deliver the prestigious MCC Spirit of Cricket Cowdrey Lecture that would take place on 24 July 2013. This announcement was made by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) on 11 January 2013. The lecture of 2013 would be the 13th lecture, ever since its inception and Taufel would be the third Australian after Adam Gilchrist (2009) and Richie Benaud (2001 – the first lecture) to deliver this lecture.

MCC Spirit of Cricket Cowdrey Lecture

MCC Spirit of Cricket Cowdrey Lecture first began in the year 2001 in the memory of the former Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) president Colin Cowdrey. He played an important role in enshrinement of the Spirit of Cricket in the preamble of the Code of the Laws of Cricket in the year 2000.

Sachin Tendulkar announced Retirement

Sachin Tendulkar on 23 December 2012

announced retirement from one day cricket which put an end to his 23-year old glorious career. Sachin Ramesh Tendulkar is an Indian batsman who is considered one of the greatest batsmen of the world after Don Bradman in Test Cricket and the second most successful one day batsman after Viv Richards as per the ranking done by Wisden-the Bible of Cricket. Tendulkar who belongs to Mumbai Maharashtra made his appearance in six world cups for India and was the member of the 2011 World Cup winning squad of the nation.

The major facts related to his one day international career are as follows:

- Sachin scored 18426 runs in 463 one-day matches at an average of 44.83
- Tendulkar made his ODI debut on his international tour against Pakistan in 1989 in Gujranwala, where he scored zero runs
- He scored his first half century in the 9th ODI
- He made 49 hundreds in the one-day format, including a double hundred which is the first in this form of cricket and 96 half centuries
- He scored his first century in the 79th ODI against Australia in 1994 at R Premadasa Stadium, Colombo in a day-night match-this was the third match of the world series
- In the 2003 World Cup in South Africa he finished as the highest run-getter
- He became the first cricketer to score a double century in the history of One Day international Cricket against South Africa in February 2010
- He played his last One Day International Match against Pakistan in Asia Cup Dhaka played at Shere Bangla National Stadium, Mirpur and scored a half century to help India win the match
- Tendulkar scored his 100th international century on 16 March 2012 against Bangladesh, where he scored 114 runs

India retained their Number Five Position

India retained their number five position as per the latest ICC Test Championship rankings issued in Dubai on 17 December 2012 despite losing to England 1-2 in the home Test series. South Africa topped the ranking at 123 points. India, however, dropped a ratings point to 105, and is now four-points behind arch-rival Pakistan who are placed at

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the fourth position. England, on the other hand, consolidated their number two slot by adding a point after drawing the final Test at Nagpur, thereby winning a Test series in India after a long gap of 28 years. England now stands just five points behind South Africa. Australia is positioned at number three in the rankings.

India Lost the Test Series to England

The last test match between India and England of the Tournament England Tour to India ended up as a draw and with this India lost the four-test match cricket series against England by 1-2 on 17 December 2012. With this win England succeeded in ending a 28 year long wait of winning a test series on Indian Soil. Before this the English side under the captaincy of David Gower won the test series in India 1984-85.

- The first Test was played at Ahmedabad from 15 November to 19 November 2012 in which India won the match by 9 wickets.
- The second was played at Mumbai from 23 November to 26 November 2012 in which England won the match by 10 wickets
- In the third test match played at Kolkata from 5 December to 9 December 2012 England won the match by 7 wickets
- The last test resulted in a draw and was played at Nagpur from 13 December to 17 December 2012

SBI T20 World Cup for the Blind 2012

India won the inaugural SBI T20 World Cup for the Blind on 13 December 2012 after beating Pakistan in the finals at Central College grounds in Bangalore. A total of 5000 crowd cheered as India shattered Pakistan from 29 runs and the Indian captain Shekhar Naik lifted the trophy. India decided to bat first and scored 119 for 4 in 10 overs. India put up a competitive score of 258 runs in 20 overs. Rescuer of the team India was middle-order batsman Ketan Patel who scored 98 runs off 43 balls and is completely blind. Pakistan entered into finals unbeaten. Pakistan is the only team that entered the finals of all the four international blind cricket tournaments till now. At the break of the innings, Pakistan might have thought of winning the match on the grounds of excellent batting skills of the team throughout this tournament. The opener Mohammad

Akram who had the highest score in the history of international blind cricket (264 against West Indies) was sent back to the pavilion for 32 runs only. Eventually, India won the T20 World Cup for the Blind and the team was later crowned as the world champions. It is also worth noticing that Men-of-the-Series were all Indians. These were Ketan Patel, Fully blind category (B1); Prakash Jayaramaiah, Partially blind category (B2) and Ajay Kumar Reddy, Partially sighted category (B3).

About T20 World Cup for the Blind 2012

T20 World Cup for the Blind was a 12-day tournament which comprised of nine teams. The T20 World Cup for the Blind 2012 was hosted by India. The tournament ran from 1 December 2012 to 13 December 2012 in Bangalore. The competing teams included Bangladesh, Australia, India, Nepal, England, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, West Indies and South Africa. The tournament was played on league-cum-knockout basis. Cricketer Saurav Ganguly is the Brand Ambassador of T20 World Cup for the Blind. The Cricket Association for the Blind (CABI) is main body which organises as well as conducts cricket for visually impaired in India. CABI is registered NPO which is affiliated to World Blind Cricket Council (WBCC).

About World Blind Cricket Council (WBCC)

World Blind Cricket Council (WBCC) laid its foundation in 1996. The founding chairman of WBCC was George Abraham of India. The primary purpose of WBCC is promotion as well as administration of the game of blind cricket in the world. About Cricket Association for the Blind (CABI) CABI is a non-profit organisation affiliated to World Blind Cricket Council (WBCC). Pakistan, South Africa and England Blind Cricket bodies receive sponsorship from their mainstream cricket bodies but CABI does not receive any such sponsorship from Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI). CABI survives with the support from corporate houses as well as a few public sector organisations.

Composition of the team

Among the 11 players, four players are under

completely blind or B1 category (partially-sighted), four players are under B2 category (players who are able to see up to 3 metres) and three players are under B3 category (players who are able to see up to six metres). According to the rules, B1 players get the scores doubled, which means that when they hit, they can add major difference to the score of the team.

Alastair Cook became the youngest Batsman to score 7000 Runs

England Cricket team captain Alastair Cook on 6 December 2012 claimed his place among the cricketing greats when he set an England record for the most Test centuries and became the youngest player in the long history of the game to pass 7000 runs. The 27 years old Alastair Cook scored his 23rd Test hundred to leave England closing in on a rare series win in India. He has ahead of past legends Wally Hammond, Colin Cowdrey and Geoffrey Boycott. Team-mate Kevin Pietersen has also scored 22 tons. Alastair Cook made an unbeaten 136 to put England on 1 for 216 at stumps at Eden Gardens on 6 December 2012 only 100 runs behind India's first innings total of 316.

Glenn McGrath to be inducted into the ICC Cricket Hall of Fame

Australian pace legend Glenn McGrath is going to be inducted into the ICC Cricket Hall of Fame during the third Test between Australia and Sri Lanka starting from 4 January 2013 in Sydney. McGrath became the third inductee of the year 2012-13 to the ICC Cricket Hall of Fame and will join Enid Bakewell and Brian Lara to the list and also became the 68th male member of the Hall of Fame. Lara and Bakewell were inducted in September 2012 at the ICC Awards; McGrath will be inducted at his home ground of the SCG. A fourth and final inductee of 2012-13 would be announced next summer.

Glenn McGrath's Career

- McGrath represented Australia in 124 Test matches between 1993 and 2007 and claimed 563 Test wickets at an average of 21.64.
- He took more Test wickets than any other seam bowler currently in the game or retired.
- Glenn McGrath represented Australia in 250

ODIs, claiming 381 wickets at an average of 22.02, and was part of the Australian side that won three successive World Cups — 1999, 2003 and 2007.

- He still holds the record for most wickets in World Cup competitions, with 71 scalps and his figures of 7-15 against Namibia are the best in the competition's history.

Michael Hussey Announced Retirement

Australian veteran Michael Hussey on 29 December 2012 announced that he would retire from Test cricket after playing the final match of the series against Sri Lanka at Sydney starting on 3 January 2012. Sydney Test match is going to be the 79th and final Test in 37-year-old Hussey's career having made his debut at 30. However Hussey will continue playing the ODI tri-series involving Australia, West Indies and Sri Lanka which will be his last international assignment. Michael Hussey, the senior left-hand batsman who is known as Mr Cricket for his consistency, had a successful year 2012 with four centuries and has been in great scoring form this summer season against South Africa and Sri Lanka.

A Brief insight into Hussey's Career

- Hussey made his Test debut at the age of 30 in the Gabba cricket ground of Brisbane on 3 November 2005, as a replacement for fellow Western Australian batsman Justin Langer in the Australia vs. West Indies series.
- Hussey has till now played 78 Tests scoring 6183 runs including 19 centuries and 29 half centuries at an impressive average of 51.52.
- Hussey who is also the Australia's 393rd Test Captain had a fantastic ODI record having scored 5442 runs in 185 ODIs with three hundreds and 39 half-centuries at an average of 48.15.
- He was a member of the victorious 2007 ICC World Cup squad. He also played 38 T20 Internationals.
- He had played in the Indian Premier League (IPL) for the Chennai Super Kings, although he opted out of the 2009 season. He was retained by Chennai Super Kings in the 2011-2012 season of Indian Premier League for 425000 dollars.

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BB Nimbalkar Passed away

Bhausahab Babasaheb Nimbalkar, a giant of Indian domestic cricket who came close to breaking Sir Don Bradman's first-class score in the Ranji Trophy, passed away due to age related ailments in his residence in Kolhapur on 11 December 2012 just one day shy of his 93rd birthday. Nimbalkar is survived by his son Netaji.

His other three sons died a few years ago due to ill-health. Nimbalkar, holds the record for the highest individual first-class score by an Indian - 443 not out for Maharashtra against Kathiawar at Poona Club in December 1948. Nimbalkar had claimed that he was not aware of Bradman's record at the time of batting, else he would have batted faster.

A Brief insight into his Career

- He made his Ranji Trophy debut in 1939 against Baroda.
- Bhausahab's first-class cricket spanned decades. From 1939-40 to 1963-64 he played for six teams: Baroda, Maharashtra, Holkar, Madhya Bharat, Rajasthan and Railways.
- Bhausahab was the ADC for Maharaja of Baroda, and despite having a first-class batting average of close to 48 in 80 matches (12x100s), never played for India. He once represented the Indians against a Commonwealth team and scored 48.
- BCCI honoured him with the Col. CK Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Award, for his contribution to the sport, in 2002.
- Nimbalkar had 58 wickets in his domestic career which spanned from 1939-40 to 1964-65, and also kept wickets in some matches.
- He was a prolific run getter and in his 80-match long first-class career he had scored 4577 runs at an average of 52.01 with 12 centuries.

With an aggregate of 3,687 runs at a healthy average of 56.72 with 11 centuries he is counted among the outstanding batsmen in the Ranji Trophy.

TENNIS

Australian Open 2013

Novak Djokovic of Serbia defeated Andy Murray of UK in four sets to win Australian Open 2013 final. The tournament was held in Melbourne. It was

Djokovic's third consecutive Australian Open title and fourth overall. Nine other tennis players had won consecutive Australian open tournament, but none three straight years. Djokovic had five break-point chances in the opening set, including four after having Murray at 0-40 in the seventh game, but couldn't convert any of them. In 2012, Djokovic had started with an epic 5-hour, 53-minute five-set win over Rafael Nadal at the Australian Open, the longest Grand Slam final. Djokovic won his first major title in 2008 Australian Open. He now has six Grand Slam titles altogether. Federer has won four of his 17 majors at Melbourne, and Agassi is the only other player to have won that many in Australia since 1968.

Victoria Azarenka of Belarus on 26 January 2013 won the Women's Singles title of the Australian Open Tennis tournament at Melbourne. The World Number One defeated Li Na of China, 4-6, 6-4, 6-3 in the final to win the title for the second successive time. The match lasted for 2-hour and 40-minutes which featured 16 service breaks, with Li losing her service nine times. Top seeded American brothers Bob and Mike Bryan won the men's doubles title. Americans Mike and Bob Bryan won their record 13th Grand Slam doubles title, defeating the Dutch team of Robin Haase and Igor Sijsling 6-3, 6-4.

Brisbane International Tennis Title

Andy Murray, the third seeded Scottish tennis player retained his Brisbane International Tennis Title after defeating the Bulgarian Grigor Dimitrov on 6 January 2013. Murray defeated Dimitrov by 7-6 and 6-4 in straight sets. This is the first title won by Murray in the year 2013 and twenty-fifth title of his career. With this win, Murray was successful in winning 78800 dollar and 250 Emirates ATP Ranking Point and Dimitrov ended up with 150 Emirates ATP Ranking Point and 41540 dollar.

Women's Doubles

Indian Tennis player Sania Mirza and her American partner Bethanie Mattek-Sands on 5 January 2013 lifted the WTA Brisbane International trophy with a win against Kveta Peschke and Anna-Lena Groenefeld. The second seeded Indo-American pair Sania Mirza and Bethanie Mattek-Sands defeated fourth seed Anna-Lena Grönefeld of

Germany and Czech Kvetta Peschke with 4-6 6-4 10-7 in the summit face-off of the 1000000 US dollar event. The win is supposed to be Sania's first doubles title of the season and 15th of her career. Sania and Mattek earned 470 ranking points each and shared 51022 US Dollar as prize money. On the other hand, In the same tournament World no. 3 Serena Williams claimed her first ever single Brisbane International Title with 6-2, 6-1 victory over Russian tennis player Anastasia Sergeyevna Pavlyuchenkova.

Brisbane International Tennis Title

Brisbane International Tennis Title is an internationally acclaimed Tennis Tournament that is organised every year in the month of January at Queensland Tennis Centre in Brisbane, Queensland in Australia. The tournament is played on the outdoor hard courts and is a part of ATP World Tour 250 series of the World Tour of the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) as well as the WTA Premier tournaments of the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) Tour. The tournament is held before the Australian Open, the first Grand Slam tournament of the season.

World Tennis Championships

Novak Djokovic on 29 December 2012 won World Tennis Championship final against Spanish tennis player Nicolas Almagro. Novak Djokovic beat Nicolas Almagro to clinch the Mubadala World Tennis Championship exhibition tournament held in Dubai. Novak Djokovic, the world number one from Serbia beat Nicolas Almagro the Spaniard by 6-7 (4-7) 6-3 6-4 to get his season off to the perfect start. Also, Spain's David Ferrer defeated Janko Tipsarevic of Serbia 7-6 (7-4) 6-2 to take third place in Abu Dhabi. All the four players are going to compete in the Australian Open which is meant to be started in Melbourne on 14 January 2013 with Serbia's Djokovic the defending champion. Novak Djokovic beat world number five Ferrer in straight sets to book his place in the final, while Almagro, a late replacement for the injured Rafael Nadal, fought back from a set down to beat Janko Tipsarevic.

Swiss Male Athlete of the Year 2012

Roger Federer, 31, the No. 2 of the world and 17 times Grand Slam champion, was named Swiss Male

Athlete of the Year on 16 December 2012. Federer received the honour for the fifth time. Earlier in 2012, Federer had grabbed the 17th Grand Slam title at Wimbledon Championships, London, while also reclaiming his No. 1 ranking in the month of July 2012. He also acquired top most position by the end of the season. Roger Federer, the Swiss tennis player acquired the same title in 2003, 2004, 2006 and 2007. The female Athlete of the year was Nicola Spirig, the Olympic triathlon champion of Switzerland.

TABLE TENNIS

Junior World TT Championship

China got the clean sweep of titles at Volkswagen 2012 World Junior Table Tennis Championship after it won girls as well as boys trophies on 16 December 2012. In the second week of December 2012, China had won girls' and boys' team titles. Petrisa Solja of Germany who was the only non-Chinese, lost in the semifinal to Chinese top seed Zhu Yuling who finished by turning over Gu Yuting 4-0 for the title of girls. Her top speed, superior technique as well as great attitude helped her win the title. Thereafter, Fan Zhendong also overcame to beat Lin Gaoyuan 4-2 and thus claimed boys singles title. Initially, he was also the winner of mixed doubles title. Second-seeded team of Liu Gaoyang and Fan Zhendong recovered fast to beat top-seeded competitors Gu Ruochen and Lin Gaoyuan 4-3 to claim their gold in boys doubles. Gu Yuting and Zhu Yuling defeated Gu Ruochen and Liu Gaoyang with a score of 4-3 to claim girls double gold. The mixed doubles gold was claimed by Fan Zhendong and Liu Gaoyang who defeated Lin Gaoyuan and Gu Ruochen combine 4-3.

GOLF

Farmers Insurance Open

Tiger Woods on 29 January 2013 won his 75th PGA Tour title in the Farmers Insurance Open at Torrey Pines. Woods entered into the fifth day of play with a six-shot lead over his closest competitors, Brandt Snedeker and Nick Watney. Although, he was far from his fluent best and he dropped four strokes

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in three holes from the 15th, it did not stop his progress to victory and he finished on 14 under par. He parred his first five holes without any problem before birdieing the 13th after two puttings from 52 feet. Woods dropped another shot on the 17th and missed a 15ft birdie putt on the last, however, his level-par 72 was enough to secure him victory. Snedeker had just five holes to try and put any type of pressure on Woods, but he could produce no late wonderful stint and had to settle for a final-round 69 and a tie for second place along with Josh Teater, who also carded a three-under-par round. Watney was placed at the best position to challenge Woods but four bogeys in 10 holes undermined his effort and he finished in joint fourth, alongside Jimmy Walker on nine under. American duo Rickie Fowler and Robert Garrigus and Australia's Aaron Baddeley finished a shot further back.

FOOTBALL

FIFA Ballon d'Or Award for fourth time

Lionel Messi, the Argentine footballer won FIFA Ballon d'Or Award on 7 January 2013 as a reward to his 91-goal in a year for Barcelona and Argentina, in the year 2012. Messi voted to be the best player for the fourth year in a row managed to beat his close competitors, Cristiano Ronaldo of Spanish champion Real Madrid and Barcelona teammate Andres Iniesta. To win this award, Messi won 41.60 percent votes and was followed by Ronaldo, who won 23.68 percent votes and Andres Iniesta, who won 10.91 percent votes of all the votes casted. The votes were casted by National Team Coaches and Captains as well as journalists invited. All these people, helped in selecting the top three from a huge list of 23 nominated players.

With this win for the fourth time, Messi has left behind the three time FIFA winners namely Zinedine Zidane of France and Ronaldo of Brazil.

The FIFA Ballon d'Or

FIFA Ballon d'Or Award was started in the year 2010 after merging the two, France Football's Ballon d'Or and the men's FIFA World Player of the Year Award. It is the association's football award that is awarded to the year's best performer. The player is

selected via voting process and the votes are casted by the captains and coaches of the International Teams as well as the journalists from across the world.

Mohun Bagan banned for Two Years

I-League football club Mohun Bagan on 29 December 2012 slapped with a two-year suspension by the All India Football Federation (AIFF) for abandoning their violence-marred I-League match against East Bengal on 9 December 2012. As per the AIFF's Statement Mohun Bagan had breached Regulation 22, the 123-year-old club, had been withdrawn from the current I-League season, with all its past and future matches in the 2012/13 null and void. In effect, this season will have 13 teams now. The I-League Core Committee of All India Football Federation (AIFF) received the detailed Report dated 26th December 2012 of the Justice A K Ganguly relating to I-League Match No. 68 between Kingfisher East Bengal (KEB) and McDowell Mohun Bagan (MMB) played at Yuba Bharati Stadium, Salt Lake City Kolkata on 9 December 2012. Justice Ganguly in his report has concluded that the decision of MMB for not playing the match after the interval cannot be supported on the grounds of Force Majeure and accordingly MMB has breached Regulation 22 of the I-League Regulation 2012-2013.

The I-League core committee is going to meet on 9 January 2013 to decide if the quantum of punishment on Mohun Bagan is enough or if additional fine and suspension were needed.

About Mohun Bagan Football Club

- Founded in 1889, Mohun Bagan is the oldest football club in India.
- It is the first Indian club to win the IFA Shield final, in 1911, beating East Yorkshire Regiment.
- It have won the erstwhile National Football League thrice — in 1997-98, 1999-2000, 2001-02 — and their best performance in the re-christened I-League has been a runner-up finish in 2008-09.

Lionel Messi set the Record for most Goals in a Calendar Year

Lionel Messi, the renowned soccer player on 9 December 2012 set the record for most goals in a

calendar year by scoring his 86th goal of 2012. He set the record while scoring the winning goal against Real Betis. Messi's record included 12 for Argentina and 74 goals for Barcelona in 66 games. The earlier record was made by Gerd Mueller who had scored 85 goals in 1972 which included 72 goals for his club Bayern Munich and 13 for his country West Germany.

Messi still has to play two league matches and one King's Cup match before the end of 2012. The record breaking performance has made Messi favourite to claim his fourth FIFA World Player of the Year award. Lionel Andrés Leo Messi is a footballer who plays for La Liga club FC Barcelona and as the captain of the Argentina national team.

HOCKEY

Sardar Singh costliest player in Hockey India League Auction

In the Hockey India League Auction held at New Delhi on 16 December 2012 the Indian Skipper Sardar Singh became the highest marquee player after commanding for the best price of 78000 dollar. Sardar Singh was bought by the Delhi Franchisee. The five marquee players for the league were drawn by Delhi Wave Riders, Jaypee Punjab Warriors, Mumbai Magicians, Ranchi Rhinos and Uttar Pradesh Wizards. The marquee players would be offered with 15 percent more price than the commanded best price by the player by their respective teams. The price quoted for the players would be same for next three years and the teams are allowed to buy the players from other teams. Few more players who commanded best prices were V. Raghunath bought by Uttar Pradesh Wizards for 76,000 dollar, Moritz Fuertse bought by Ranchi Rhinos for 75500 dollar, Teun de Nooijer brought by Uttar Pradesh Wizards for 66000 dollar and Jamie Dwyer bought by Jaypee Punjab Warriors for 60000 dollar and Sandeep Singh moved to Mumbai Magicians with a base price of 27800 dollar. The Hockey League will comprise of 33 matches in all and would be played in India from 16 January 2013 onwards.

Australia Won Hockey Champions Trophy

At the Champions Trophy 2012, Australia won

once again, adding to fifth victory consecutively after it earned a 2-1 win in a match against Netherlands in Melbourne. The fifth consecutive victory of Australia at this event re-established it as the hockey team (men's) to beat, after Australia had missed on gold at Olympics. For the Netherlands, it was silver medal with the silver lining. Netherlands upgraded itself from bronze which they acquired last two years. The bronze was claimed by Pakistan after they beat India 3-2 on a match on 9 December 2012. India missed the chance to win bronze, which would have been its second Champions trophy medal as well as the first since 1982. For the fifth place, Belgium won the match against Germany, the Olympic champion. New Zealand, in the meanwhile stood at seventh position over England.

The awards for the tournament were as follows:

- Top Scorer: Nicholas Wilson (NZL)
- Best Player: Shakeel Abassi (PAK)
- Fair Play Award: The Netherlands
- Best Goalkeeper: Jaap Stockmann (NED)

Records of Hockey Champions Trophy (Men's)

- In the men's tournament Australia has won Champions Trophy 13 times.
- Germany has won this trophy 9 times.
- Netherlands won the Champions Trophy 8 times.
- Pakistan is only Asian champion that has three titles in its name.

About Hockey Champions Trophy

Hockey Champions Trophy is held every year by International Hockey Federation. The tournament features some of the best teams of the world which compete against each other in round-robin format.

Lal Bahadur Shastri hockey tournament

Air India emerged champion against Bharat Petroleum in the 23rd Lal Bahadur Shastri hockey tournament at the Shivaji Stadium on 4 December 2012. This was second title of this season for Air India. Air India had already shared the MCC-Murugappa Cup with Indian Oil. Air India had an edge over Bharat Petroleum because the team was full of experienced players. Besides, there was also an advantage because Bharat Petroleum did not give its 100 percent which was evident when it wasted a lot of opportunities. For Bharat Petroleum this was

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another runner-up in the second event consecutively. Air India, in the meanwhile, won the cheque worth 2 lakh Rupees along with the title of the tournament. Amir Khan, the Bharat petroleum striker was decided as the Best Player of the Tournament. V.S. Vinaya of Air India team, on the other hand won the title of Top Scorer of the Event with six goals.

BOXING

Government de-recognised the Indian Amateur Boxing Federation

The Union government of India on 7 December 2012 de-recognised the Indian Amateur Boxing Federation and the Archery Association of India.

The government took this step in the interest of sportspersons.

Earlier, the International Boxing Association (AIBA) had suspended the Indian Amateur Boxing Federation, IABF alleging possible manipulation in its recent elections. However, the IABF has denied the charge, insisting that the process was transparent. The development comes within a few days of the International Olympic Committee suspending the Indian Olympic Association. During the September elections, outgoing President Abhay Singh Chautala, who was elected IOA President despite IOC's suspension, was retained in the body as nominated Chairman.

SHOOTING/ARCHERY SHOOTING/ARCHERY

National Shooting Championship

Mahaveer Singh of Rajasthan and Tejaswini Sawant of Maharashtra won gold medals on 28 December 2012 in National Shooting Championship. In the category called standard-pistol, Mahaveer Singh shot 569 to get hold of the prestigious prize ahead of Pemba Tamang (567) who belongs to Army as well as Samaresh Jung (563) belonging to CISF at Karni Singh Shooting Ranges. ONGC's Amanpreet Singh shot 580 + 99.5 to secure gold in the men's air pistol. The silver was grabbed by Army's Jitu Rai scoring 579 + 100. Karnataka's P N Prakash was the one to win bronze with 580 + 98.4 score. In 3-position women's event, Tejaswini Sawant

shot 581 + 98.2 for the gold. Army's Raj Chaudhary grabbed silver with 579 + 98.5 score while the bronze was grabbed by Lajja Gujarat's Gauswami who scored 578 + 96.6. In the category of air pistol junior, Army's Sarjeet Singh claimed gold medal by scoring 573.

Women's Air Rifle

Apurvi Chandela of Rajasthan on 24 December 2012 won Women's Air Rifle Gold in the Sahara 56th National Shooting Championship. The 19 year old managed to take a lead with 0.2 points from Pooja Ghatkar with a 10.7 last shot, till the ninth shot the game between two was tied. Pournima Zanane, the former champion and National record holder was successful in winning the Bronze and was 0.2 points ahead of the Avneet Sidhu the World Championship finalist. Pournima clinched the bronze 0.2 point ahead of the World championship finalist Avneet Sidhu. Nikita Salunke lost her race in the final but was successful in winning a junior gold.

KABBADI

World Cup Kabaddi Tournament 2012

India on 15 December 2012 won the 3rd World Cup Kabaddi Tournament for the third consecutive time in the Men's category and second consecutive time in the Women's category. Indian men thrashed arch rival Pakistan with a decisive margin of 37 points whereas, Indian women out scored Malaysia 72-12. Both the finals were played at the Guru Nanak Dev Stadium in Ludhiana. The Kabaddi world cup was a 15-day tournament. In men's category, third prize went to Canada and in women's category, it went to Denmark. Indian men registered a hat trick by dashing Pakistan to the ground in every aspect. At the end of the first half, Indian men squad was leading with a point difference of 34-9. India's raider and stoppers showed an extraordinary sport in collecting points for their country. Women's final was virtually a one sided show as Malaysian team was no match against Indian eves. India on 15 December 2012 won the 3rd World Cup Kabaddi Tournament for the third consecutive time in the Men's category and second consecutive time in the Women's category. Indian men defeated arch rival Pakistan

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BADMINTON

Badminton World Federation Rankings

Saina Nehwal, the Olympics bronze medalist on 17 January 2013 clinched her career best second rank in the latest rankings released by the Badminton World Federation (BWF). To clinch the second position in the latest rankings released, Saina scored 80091.7444 points and is leaded by the Chinese Li Xuerui, who has 94626.7153 points by her name. Parupalli Kashyap the quarterfinalist in London Olympics was also successful in clinching his career best tenth position in men's list and he has 51986.6900 points by her name. Kashyap is the only Indian player to be within the list of top-25 players in the BWF list.

Saina Nehwal regained her world number two position after an interval of two years. For the first time, she achieved this position in December 2010. On the day, when Saina Nehwal achieved the number two position once again she displayed a dominant performance on her journey to quarter finals against Pui Yin Yip of Hong Kong in the Malaysian Open Super Series and won it in the straight sets with 21-12, 21-9 points.

SQUASH

Women's World Open Squash Championship 2012

Dipika Pallikal of India who ranked 10th in the

world and 13th seed in tournament lost in the pre quarters of Women's World Open Squash Championship. Pallikal lost to second seed Weleily in the 38-minute match at South Sound squash club on 20 December 2012. In the pre-quarters at Grand Cayman Island, Caribbean, Dipika Pallikal of India played a fruitless game to lose against Egypt's Raneem El Weleily. In the match there were short rallies and also some errors on both the sides. Pallikal had good shots in the beginning of the match but the opponent took away the match. Pallikal, the Chennai girl had earlier won against Malaysian qualifier Delia Arnold 3—0 in USD 188,000 WISPA event first round.

CHESS

London Chess Classic

Viswanathan Anand, the World Chess Champion in a match against Luke McShane of England finished with a draw in second round of the London Chess Classic on 3 December 2012. In the game which was finely crafted, the number one of the world Norwegian Magnus Carlsen achieved himself the position of highest-rated player in the history by defeating second seed Levon Aronian of Armenia. The former World Champion Russian Vladimir Kramnik ensured in the meanwhile that victory wouldn't come easy to Carlsen in merely two rounds. He also grinded US-based Hikaru Nakamura in the endgame that had queen and the pawns. Another game that concluded in a draw was a match between Gawain Jones of England and Judit Polgar of Hungary. With eight rounds still remaining in the 9-player tournament, Carlsen and Kramnik rushed forward with six points respectively.

In first round, Carlsen thrashed McShane; while on the other hand, Kramnik achieved an advantage at Polgar's expense. Michael Adams of England as well as Nakamura shared third position with the three points each and Michael Adams had his extra match in hand when he bid adieu in second round only. Just like Adams, Anand too had a game in hand and now he shares fifth spot jointly in the rankings with Jones, McShane and Polgar. Aronian on the other hand, is at the lowest position in table because he has still not opened his account.

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Women's World Championship Crown

Anna Ushenina of Ukraine on 1 December 2012 won the Women's World Championship Crown of Chess at Khanty-Mansiysk, Russia after defeating Antoaneta Stefanova of Bulgaria in first set of tie-break game. Anna won the title along with 60000 US dollar for the efforts made by her to win the Chess championship. In 2013 Anna would be playing the next world championship against Chinese Yifan Hou, which is a part of new cycle in Women's World Championship.

ATHLETE

Athlete of the Year Award At JAAA Golden Cleats Awards Ceremony

Usain Bolt, the fastest man of the world and Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, the women's 100m Olympic champion won the male and female Athlete of the Year awards respectively on 8 January 2013 at Jamaica Athletics Administrative Association (JAAA) Golden Cleats Awards ceremony which took place at Terra Nova Hotel in St Andrew. Glen Mills, the Racers Track Club head coach won the Coach of the Year Award for the second time in a row, bringing his total of winnings to 3. It was Mills who conditioned Bolt and Yohan Blake, which in turn helped them in grabbing gold and silver respectively in 100m and 200m at the London Olympics. In the meanwhile, the Howard Aris Award was won by Fedrick Dacres, the 2012 World Junior discus champion and Jeneive Russell, the 2012 World Junior 400m hurdles champion. Howard Aris Award was established in 2012 to commemorate late former JAAA president. The award recognises the athletes who represent their county with the distinction in non-traditional events. The athletes additionally, also won the scholarships worth 250000 dollar, acceptable at the University of Technology, the University of the West Indies or GC Foster College. Usain Bolt acclaimed the renowned status by defending three gold medals, which are 100m, 200m and 4x100m at 2012 Olympic Games in London.

Asian Championship

Shiva Keshavan, the top luge athlete of India won the gold medal for second time successively and

set the Asian record of 49.590 seconds in the Asian Championship. In the race, at first Keshavan was at second place during his first run at 0.129 seconds behind Hidenari Kanayama of Japan. At the third place was the runner up of last year Oguchi Takahisa with just 0.058 seconds after Shiva. All the three athletes broke the track record of previous years. The previous record was 50.072, which was set back in 2004. In the second heat however, the champion of last year, Shiva collapsed the scores, breaking the Asian track record by 0.482 seconds. In spite of having the disadvantage from his first run, Shiva won with good margin. At fourth and fifth position were Yamaura Yohan of Japan and Kim Dong Hyeon of Korea respectively. Shiva Keshavan now has two out of three Asian records. The only record that he needs to break is start record of 3.190 seconds which was set in 1999.

WRESTLING

National Weightlifting Championship 2013

Manpreet Kaur, 23, of All India Police claimed the women's +75kg gold medal in the final day of the National weightlifting championship at SRM University campus, Uttar Pradesh on 10 January 2013. Manpreet Kaur lifted 189 kg to secure maiden National title. At the second position stood Binitha Devi by lifting 187 kg and Amanpreet Kaur finished at 3rd position with 185 kg. In the men's +105kg category, Himanshu Kumar Chang of Railways bagged the top most honour by lifting 346 kg in all. Former champion, Sandeep Kumar of Services on the other hand lifted 328 kg and grabbed the Silver. At the third position was Pardeep Kumar with 327 kg. Manpreet who was also the champion at AIP meet in December 2012 lost to Binitha in snatch by just 1 kg when she lifted 85 kg in the previous attempt. But in her final approach, she winched 104 kg in the last attempt and won the gold.

Final results were as follows:

Men: +105kg:

1. Himanshu Kumar Chang (RSPB) snatch 154kg, clean and jerk 192kg, total 346kg
2. Sandeep Kumar (SSCB) snatch 135kg, clean and jerk 193kg, total 328kg

3. Pardeep Kumar (MP) snatch 139kg, clean and jerk 188kg, total 327kg

Women: +75kg:

1. Manpreet Kaur (AIP) snatch 85kg, clean and jerk 104kg, total 189kg
2. Binitha Devi (Kar) snatch 86kg, clean and jerk 101kg, total 187kg
3. Amanpreet Kaur (Pun) snatch 84kg, clean and jerk 101kg, total 185kg

Five wrestlers suspended for testing positive

Five wrestlers which also include four medalists were tested positive on banned substances during Senior National Wrestling Championship at Gonda, Uttar Pradesh which was held from 8 November 2012 to 11 November 2012. All five wrestlers were provisionally suspended while they have pending hearing against them.

All these wrestlers agreed to B Sample testing which would be conducted soon. Four out of these five wrestlers were till now attending national camp at Sonapat, Haryana. After the information, they were asked to leave the camp till this issue was sorted finally. The wrestlers who failed the test include Manoj and Balraj, winners of bronze in 55kg freestyle; Sukhwinder, finishing at the fifth position in same category of the weight; Jitender, silver medalist in 74kg and Manish (60kg), winner of bronze in Graeco-Roman.

VARIOUS

International GP Circuit for Disabled

International Paralympic Committee (IPC) decided to launch the international grand prix circuit especially for the elite athletes who are disabled. This international grand prix circuit is scheduled to be launched in April 2013. The version of IPC of the strong Diamond League shall comprise of eight meetings in all, at various venues across the world. Two of these venues which also include the final one shall be held in Britain.

Fauja Singh Announced Retirement

Fauja Singh, 101, the oldest marathon runner of the world decided to stop running in the

competitions after Hong Kong marathon which will be held in February 2013. However, before the Hong Kong marathon, Singh will be running in the Australia marathon as well.

Fauja Singh is also popularly known as the Turbaned Tornado in all the international events. Though Fauja Singh announced his retirement from marathon, but he admitted that he would keep running for inspiring the masses. Fauja Singh was born on 1 April 1911. Fauja was also felicitated at the Buckingham Palace by the queen in London on December 7, 2005.

IOC asked Armstrong to return back the Sydney Olympic Bronze Medal

The International Olympics Committee (IOC) on 17 January 2013 asked the all time popular Cyclist Lance Armstrong facing the charges of doping to return the Olympic Bronze Medal and Certificate of 2000 Sydney Games.

The IOC wrote a letter to the defamed Cyclist and the winner of seven times Tour de France and asked him to return back the bronze medal and the certificate that accompanied it for the men's time trial event. The dominoes continue to fall for Lance Armstrong, with the International Olympic Committee formally requesting that the disgraced cyclist return his Olympic bauble from the 2000 Sydney Games.

Lance Armstrong

- He was stripped off from the seven Tour de France titles that he won from 1999 to 2005 on 22 October 2012 and was banned from cycling for life.
- U.S. Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) accused Armstrong of leading a doping programme with his team and submitted a 202 page report
- Lance Armstrong is a cyclist, who used performance enhancing drugs and banned substances.

Athens Olympics Athletes Lose Medals over Doping After 8 Years

International Olympic Committee (IOC) announced on 5 December 2012 that four 2004 Athens Olympic medalists had their medals taken away because the re-tested samples, which were

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stored for 8 years, proved positive. The four medalists included shot put champion of Ukraine Yuriy Bilonog, women's shot putter of Russia Svetlana Krivelyova, discus thrower Irina Yatchenko of Belarus and Belarussian hammer thrower Ivan Tsikhan. 3-times world champion Tsikhan also had to give away his bronze medal from the 2008 Beijing Games. However, this decision was reversed at Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) on the grounds that there were errors in laboratory procedures. IOC declared that the case which involved fifth athlete from Athens Games was pending. The four athletes who had to give their medals had tested positive for the anabolic steroids. Around 100 samples from Athens Games were target tested eight years ago by IOC with the help of modern methods. IOC has a procedure of storing the samples for eight years in order to enable re-testing of newly found substances or those substances for which no tests were available at that time. IOC also declared additionally that respective federations had the responsibility to check whether medals were returned or not. Athens Olympics doping cases tally now stands at 31 after 26 positive tests as of now. This is the maximum in any game. IOC declared that it would like the extension of law of limitation from current 8 years. It was added by IOC that World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) was considering this law of limitation to extend to 10 years.

IOC suspended IOA

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) suspended the India Olympic Association (IOA) on 4 December 2012 and eventually this might also lead to IOA ban from Olympic movement. IOC suspended IOA because India was following the Sports Code of government in the IOA elections, which is against the Olympic Charter. IOC declared that following of Sports Code of government is actually the interference of the government in the Olympic Movement. Suspension of IOA from Olympics came just before the Election Day. IOA officials declared that the elections would go as planned and scheduled. IOA has been holding the elections on direction by the Delhi high court which had asked this body to conduct its polls as per the Sports Code and its own constitution. IOA decided this after it put down the

bid of IOA to send the 2-member delegation for explaining its scenario. It was already evident that the suspension was in the line because of the development in run-up to these elections. After sending various letters to IOA, asking it to follow the Olympic Charter, IOC warned for the first time regarding suspension on 23 November 2012. Then it gave the second warning of suspension to IOA on 28 November 2012. It is worth noticing that the decision of IOC was welcomed by several former as well as current sportspersons. They believed that suspension was an opportunity of cleaning the hassles in IOA. IOA ban from Olympic would result in consequences such as:

- No funding from IOC
- No officials from India would be invited by IOC to any events such as Paralympics and Olympics
- No India athlete would be allowed competing under India's flag; but could be permitted competing under IOC flag
- Commonwealth Games Federation as well as The Olympic Council of Asia might also go with the trend which would lead to similar sanctions in case of Commonwealth Games as well as the Asian games

Golf World Challenge

Graeme McDowell of Northern Ireland ended his two-year wait of winning the tournament on 2 December 2012 with his three-shot victory in World Challenge which was hosted by Tiger Woods. McDowell had last won in 2010 season in which he captured the victory in US Open but since then, he hasn't won anywhere. For the 72-hole total out of 17-under 271, McDowell carded four-under par 68 in his final round. He received a three-stroke triumph over Keegan Bradley. Bradley, in the meanwhile posted 69 for 274. Bradley had won PGA Championship in 2011. After he took the 54-hole lead on 1 December 2012, McDowell accepted that though this tournament was not a part of the tour but it would definitely help him check the mixed season in which he tied the match for second at US Open and also tie for the fifth in British Open. Another player, Bo Van Pelt carded 70 acquiring the individual ownership of third place on 278. The host, Tiger Woods, on the other hand carded one-under 71 on the courses of

Sherwood Country Club for the fourth place on 279. Rickie Fowler (69) and Jim Furyk (70) joined him as well.

Kobe Bryant Became Youngest Player to Reach 30000 Career Points

Kobe Bryant, 34, achieved the title of youngest ever player to reach the milestone of 30000 career points in NBA (basketball) on 5 December 2012. He achieved the milestone when he took Los Angeles Lakers towards the 103-87 victory over New Orleans Hornets. In the second quarter, only 1:16 time was left and within that time period, Bryant took his jump shot, taking his career points to 30001. With that accomplishment, Kobe Bryant joined the elite list of just 5 more players to reach that milestone in the

history of NBA. Other four of this elite segment are Kareem Abdul-Jabbar (38387 points), Karl Malone (36928 points), Michael Jordan (32292) and Wilt Chamberlain (31419). He is the youngest player in NBA history to reach this landmark at the age of 34 years. Chamberlain was aged 35 when he achieved this milestone; Malone and Abdul-Jabbar were 36 years of age while Jordan on the other hand was 38 years old to achieve this landmark. Bryant however was the fifth-fastest NBA player in context to the games played for reaching this milestone. He achieved this milestone in 1179th match. Chamberlain on the other hand achieved it in 941 games only.

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

- Recently which Footballer broke German Legend Gerd Mueller's 40 year old record for the most goals in a calendar year
 - Cristiano Ronaldo
 - David Beckham
 - Lionel Messi
 - Ronaldinho
- Rory McIlroy is a famous player of
 - Basketball
 - Golf
 - Rugby
 - Polo
- World Junior Table Tennis Championship recently held at Response:
 - Hyderabad
 - Chennai
 - New Delhi
 - Banglore
- India defeated _____ in Men's final to retain the Title at the third world cup Kabaddi.
 - Iran
 - Pakistan
 - Bangladesh
 - Sri Lanka
- Which football Player won world soccer's world Player of the year award for the third time.?
 - Louis Figo
 - Christino Ronaldo
 - David Bechham
 - Lionel Messi
- In which state the Dr. Karni Singh Range is situated in
 - Delhi
 - Punjab
 - Haryana
 - Uttranchal
- James Willstrop is the no.1 player of
 - Chess
 - Golf
 - Squash
 - Badminton
- Leslie Claudius Parres away He was the famous player of
 - Hockey
 - Ice Hockey
 - Football
 - Chess
- P. Kashyap is a famous player of
 - Badminton
 - Football
 - Squash
 - Hockey
- Wayne Rooney is the famous Player of
 - Basket Ball
 - Football
 - Golf
 - Rugby Football
- Which Indian athlete clinched a silver medal in the men's high jump event in the London Paralympics which was held just after the main games ?
 - Girisha Hosanagara
 - Akhil kumar
 - S. Lingappa
 - None of these
- Tomas Berdych is an Famous player of
 - Football
 - Tennis
 - Cricket
 - Badminton
- Recently Which cricket Legend inducted into the international cricket council's hall of fame
 - Virendar Sehwag
 - Glenn McGrath
 - Kevin Peterson
 - Hashim Amla
- Wegelin & Co the oldest bank to shut doors after guilty plea
 - German
 - French
 - Norway
 - Switzerland

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15. The iconic Ghost Gum trees were found in
 (a) Australia (b) Austria
 (c) Italy (d) Sweden
16. Farzad gasfield is situated in
 (a) Kuwait (b) Saudi Arabia
 (c) Iran (d) Lebia
17. Recently who become the first player (Football) to win four successive Ballon d'or awards.
 (a) Cristiano Ronaldo
 (b) Lionel Messi
 (c) Wayne Rooney (d) Gerd Mueller
18. Andy Murray is a famous Player of
 (a) Football (b) Badminton
 (c) Tennis (d) Golf
19. MRF Pace Foundation is headed by
 (a) Dennis Lillee (b) Glenn McGrath
 (c) Kapil Dev (d) None of these
20. Australian Open 2013 crown to
 (a) Roger Federer
 (b) Andy Murray
 (c) Novak Djokovic
 (d) Rafael Nadal

ANSWERS

- | | |
|---------|---------|
| 1. (b) | 2. (b) |
| 3. (a) | 4. (b) |
| 4. (d) | 6. (a) |
| 7. (c) | 8. (a) |
| 9. (a) | 10. (b) |
| 11. (a) | 12. (b) |
| 13. (a) | 14. (d) |
| 15. (a) | 16. (c) |
| 17. (b) | 18. (c) |
| 19. (b) | 20. (c) |

AWARD & PRIZES

CSIR Fellowship Program

Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) on its 70th Foundation Day celebration greeted the scientists aged above 70 years with research fellowships. The fellowship will offer a sum of Rs 20 lakh per year for continuous 5 years to scientists who will guide students and publish research papers. A scientist who has won the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Award is eligible for the fellowship program. Samir Brahmachari the Director-General of CSIR said that advantage of the services of scientists, who remain active even after the age of 70 years, should be taken. At present there are about 10 scientists who are eligible for the fellowship program. On the 70th Anniversary of CSIR Dr. Brahmachari also announced the names of scientists who have won Swarup Bhatnagar Award 2012. The name includes:

1. Suman Kumar Dhar of the Jawaharlal Nehru University (Biological Sciences)
2. Shantanu Chowdhury of the CSIR-Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology
3. Ravi Shankar Narayanan of the Indian Institute of Science
4. Govindasamy Mugesh of the Indian Institute of Science
5. Gangadhar J. Sanjayan of the CSIR-National Chemical Laboratory (Chemical Sciences)
6. Sandip Basu of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (Medical Sciences)
7. Shanti Pavan of the IIT, Madras (Engineering Sciences)
8. Siva Ramachandran Athreya of the Indian Statistical Institute (Mathematical Sciences)
9. Arindam Ghosh of the Indian Institute of Science
10. Debashish Goswami of the Indian Statistical Institute (Mathematical Sciences)

11. Krishendu Sengupta of the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science (Physical Sciences)

FICCI Healthcare Excellence Award 2012

FICCI Healthcare Excellence Award-2012 went to the Jaipur based Fortis Escorts hospital for its operational excellence in the category of private hospital with multi-specialty hundred beds. The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry has instituted this award for felicitation of the individuals and institutions for their contribution in increasing the efficiency of health care by imparting innovative steps. The laid norms were specified by the Quality Council of India. Parameter on which the judgment was made includes efficiency in staff excellence, functioning and patient track record management. As per the director of Fortis Escorts Hospital, Prateem Tamboli, the hospital is the first hospital in the state of Rajasthan to receive this award. The chief guest to this award function was the President of India Pranab Mukherjee.

Norman Borlaug Award

Aditi Mukherjee, a Delhi based scientist, won the prestigious Norman Borlaug Award in Field Research and Application. Mukherjee was picked for the award for her work in transforming access to water for thousands of farmers in West Bengal. The award will be formally presented to Mukherji on 17 October 2012 in Des Moines, Iowa, US. Mukherji, 37, is a senior researcher at the Delhi office of the International Water Management Institute (IWMI). As alumnus of Presidency College (Kolkata), JNU (Delhi), she completed her PhD at the University of Cambridge. The international award is conferred by the World Food Prize Foundation, which was started by Norman Borlaug, the father of Green Revolution

Awards & Prizes

in India. The award carries 10000 dollar cash prize. The Borlaug Award is restricted to scientists under 40.

Lal Bahadur Shastri Award

President Pranab Mukherjee on 1 October 2012 conferred the prestigious Lal Bahadur Shastri National Award 2012 to ISRO scientist Tessy Thomas at an award function in Rashtrapati Bhawan.

The award was given on the eve of Birth anniversary of Former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri. Tessy Thomas 48 years old is the Key Scientist for Agni-V in Defence Research and Development Organisation Hyderabad. She is the first woman scientist to head a missile project in India. Tessy Thomas was an associate Project director (mission) for Agni-I, II and III systems. She was associated with the Agni Programme since their developmental stages. She has designed the guidance scheme for long-range missile systems, which is used in all Agni missiles. Presently, she is the Project Director of Agni -IV, which is a major project with state of the art technologies. The Agni-IV was successfully flight tested on 15th November, 2011.

What is Lal Bahadur Shastri National Award?

The Lal Bahadur Shastri National Award, instituted by the Lal Bahadur Shastri Institute of Management (LBSIM) is given each year each year to an Indian, residing either in India or abroad, who is an exceptionally outstanding and distinguished business leader, management practitioner, public administrator, educator or institution builder for his/her sustained individual contributions and achievements of high professional order and excellence. The honour carries a cash award of Rupees Five Lakh plus a Citation and a Plaque. The Awardee's name is inscribed on the Roll of Honour of LBSIM and he/she is designated as Lal Bahadur Shastri Fellow. The Award is presented by the President of India on October 1 each year which is the eve of the birth anniversary of Lal Bahadur Shastri. The Award process begins in January each year with the nomination of a twelve member Jury by the Chairman of LBSIM, who is the ex-officio convenor of the Jury.

Saraswati Samman

AA Manavalan was awarded with the prestigious Saraswati Samman for his work, Irama Kathaiyum Iramayakalyum. This is a comparative study of epic Ramayana in 48 different languages. M Veerappa Moily, the Corporate Affairs and Power Minister presented him with a cheque of Rs 7.5 lakh, a memento and a citation plaque at a function organized by K K Birla Foundation. The characters, plot and individual insertions of the book deals with the changes that happened in the due course of migration.

This book has tried to come up with the effect of Ramayana over the South East Asia, its language and culture. This book is a comparative study of Ramayana written in different languages over a certain period of time and some of the languages include Pali, Tibetan, Prakirt, Tamil, Japanese, Old Javanese, Assamese, Thai, Telugu, Malayalam, Bengali, Marathi, Kannada, Sanskrit, Odisi, Hindi, Malay, Persian, Maranao, Burmese, Laotian and Kashmiri. The samman/award was instituted in the year 1991 by KK Birla Foundation and is a prestigious award in the field of literature.

Golden Lion Venice Top Prize

The Golden Lion Prize for best movie was given to the South Korean Movie, Pieta directed by Kim Ki-duk at the 69th Venice Film Festival on 8 September 2012.

The Master by Paul Thomas Anderson walked off with two major awards namely, Special Jury Award and Best Actor for Joaquin Phoenix. Pieta is the brutal story about a debt collector with a habit of crippling those, who were unable to pay his debt. The brutality stops at a certain point of time, when he meets a woman who claims to be his mother.

Business Excellence Award

Managing Director of Kunnath Pharmaceuticals and the producer of world famous Musli Power X-tra won Switzerland Business Excellence Award 2012 on 8 September 2012 at Zurich, Switzerland. He got shortlisted for the award because of his visionary leadership skill, hard working nature and dedication. The award has helped Kunnath Pharmaceutical to become a name of rapport across the nation.

US Congress Highest Honour

The Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi received, the US Congress highest Civilian Honour at a ceremony organized in the Capitol Rotunda on 19 September 2012, before her meet with the US president Barack Obama. Before her, the recipient of this award includes George Washington, Pope John Paul II and Dalai Lama-the Tibetan Buddhist Leader. During her 15 year long house arrest against the military rule in Myanmar, she received the Congressional Gold Medal in 2008.

Other awards received by Suu Kyi before the US Congress highest Civilian medal are:

1. Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought in the year 1990
2. Rafto Prize in the year 1990
3. Nobel Peace Prize in the year 1991
4. The government of India awarded her with Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding in the year 1992
5. The government of Venezuela awarded her with International Simón Bolívar Prize
6. The Government of Canada in 2007 awarded her with Honorary citizenship, she was among the only four people by then to receive the award
7. She won Wallenberg Medal in 2011

Shiksha Ratna Award by Petroleum University

The University of Petroleum and Energy Studies on 5 September 2012, on the occasion of teacher's day felicitated Dr. AN Purohit with siksha ratna award. Dr. Purohit is a former vice-chancellor of HNB Garhwal University. He was born in 1940 in Kimni village of chamoli district, Uttrakhand and did his schooling from Nanital and had his doctorate from Punjab University. Dr Purohit has widely worked in the Himalayan belt, particularly in Uttarakhand, on specific subject of plant physiology, ecophysiology of trees and the environment. He was awarded Padmashree in 1997 by the President.

Lifetime Achievement Award

Waheeda Rehman, the veteran actress of Bollywood has been nominated to receive the Lifetime Achievement Award. The award will be presented to the actress during the forthcoming 14th

Mumbai Film Festival going to start from 18 October 2012 and end on 25 October 2012. C.I.D. (1956), Pyasa (1957), Solva Saal (1958), Kaagaz Ke Phool (1959), Baat Ek Raat Ki (1962), and Sahib Biwi Aur Ghulam (1962), Kohra (1964), Guide (1965), Teesri Kasam (1966), Mujhe Jeene Do (1966), Neel Kamal (1968) and Khamoshi (1969) are some important films by her name.

The committee chaired by Filmmaker, Shyam Benegal in presence of Ramesh Sippy, Sudhir Mishra, MAMI trustee and Amit Khanna, chairman, Reliance Entertainment stated that they have made their decision to award Waheeda Rehman with life time achievement award for her contributions to Indian Cinema.

About 14th Mumbai Film Festival

Mumbai Academy of Moving Image (MAMI) under the Chairmanship of famous Indian Filmmaker, Shyam Benegal is organizing the mega event that will last for eight days. The festival is an initiative of Reliance Entertainment and will be organized at INOX theatre in south Mumbai and National Centre of Performing Arts (NCPA). During the festival 200 movies including 9 silent ones will be showcased.

Nobel Peace Prize 2012

The European Union (EU) won Nobel Peace Prize 2012 on 12 October 2012 for its effort to promote peace and democracy in Europe. The award was announced by Norwegian Nobel Committee.

The award was given to European Union even though the Union is struggling with its biggest crisis since it was created in the 1950s. Practically, the EU was being honored for six decades of contributions to the advancement of peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe. Different Social media exploded with strong reactions both for and against, awarding the prize to European Union – worth 8 million Swedish kronor (\$1.2 million). The EU grew out of the tremendous devastation created by World War II, fuelled by the conviction that ever-closer economic ties would make sure that century-old enemies never turned on each other again. The European Union is now made up of 500 million people in 27 nations, with other nations lined up, waiting to join.

Awards & Prizes

About Nobel Peace Prize

The Nobel Peace Prize is awarded annually by the Norwegian Nobel Committee to the person who shall have done the most or the best work for fraternity between nations, for the abolition or reduction of standing armies and for the holding and promotion of peace congresses. It is one of the five Nobel Prizes established by the 1895 will of Alfred Nobel (who died in 1896), awarded for outstanding contributions in chemistry, physics, literature, peace, and physiology or medicine. The recipient of Nobel Peace Prize receives a medal, a diploma, and a monetary award prize that has varied throughout the years. The first Nobel Peace Prize was awarded in 1901 to Frédéric Passy and Henry Dunant. The 2011 Nobel peace Prize was awarded to Leymah Gbowee of Liberia for their non-violent struggle for the safety of women and for women's rights to full participation in peace-building work. And, The 2010 Nobel peace Prize was awarded to Liu Xiaobo of China for his his long and non-violent struggle for fundamental human rights in China.

Mo Yan, the Chinese writer won 2012 Nobel Prize for Literature on 11 October 2012. The Swedish Academy of Stockholm praised the Chinese writer for the writer called his hallucinatory realism. The writer combines the folk stories, modern events and the history in his works. He is the first Chinese writer in the 111 years of Nobel history to become a Nobel Prize winner. Before him, Gao Xingjian a French citizen born in China won a Nobel in literature in 2000. The Swedish Academy compared him with two writers of twentieth century namely William Faulkner from America and Gabriel Garcia Marquez from Colombia. Mo Yan will receive the prize medal and the prize amount of more than 1 million \$ on 10 December 2012, the death anniversary of the prize founder, Alfred Nobel. Mo Yan means Don't Speak. The original name of Mo is Guan Moye. The writer changed his name to be Mo Yan, to remind himself of talking less to avoid the trouble that follows. Nobel Prize for Peace 2012 would be declared on 12 October 2012.

Nobel Prize for Economics 2012

Alvin Roth and Lloyd Shapley of America were awarded the Nobel economics prize on 15 October

2012 for their work in market design and matching theory.

The research work helps in explaining the market processes at work, say, when doctors are assigned to hospitals, students to schools and human organs for transplant to recipients. The award was cited to the economist by The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences for the theory of stable allocations and the practice of market design. The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, which awards the 8 million crown (\$1.2 million) prize, called their work an outstanding example of economic engineering. The two economists were working independently on the same research project. Lloyd Shapley used game theory to study matching models, and Alvin Roth built on them to make real-world changes to existing markets, including school choice and organ transplants, Alvin Roth is a professor at Harvard and Lloyd Shapley teaches at the University of California in Los Angeles. The Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences was the last of the 2012 Nobel awards to be announced. The economics award is not among the original prizes created in 1895 by Swedish industrialist Alfred Nobel to honor work in physics, medicine, chemistry, literature and peace. It was added as a category in 1969 by the Swedish central bank in memory of the industrialist.

Nobel Prize 2012 for Physics

Serge Haroche and David Wineland of France and US respectively, won the Nobel Physics Prize on 9 October 2012.

They received Nobel for their work on quantum physics, which would open a gate for supercomputers in future. The two physics have developed the technology for examining the intimate relationship between matter and light. This research by the duo would help in development of precise clocks, which will be hundred-times precise than the caesium clocks of present-time. The eight million Swedish Krona (\$1.2 millions) would be divided in between the two and the award will be received by them on 10 December 2012 on the death ceremony of the Prize Founder, Alfred Nobel. The remaining prizes in Chemistry, Literature and Peace would be announced on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday respectively.

Nobel Prize-2012 for Medicine

John Gurdon and Shinya Yamanaka, the British and Japanese researchers respectively on 8 October 2012 won the Nobel Prize-2012 in Medicine. They were awarded with the prize for the discovery of reprogramming the specialised and matured cells of the body into blank slate and this may one day this can start repairing the damaged organs. The Prize committee based in Karnolinska Institute at Stockholm stated that this discovery has helped in understanding the theory of cell and organism development.

The discovery has turned up to be a tool for the scientists round the world allowing them to make remarkable progress in different areas of medicine and can help in tissue transplantation for treatment of diseases like Diabetes and Parkinson. The Nobel Prize in Medicine sector is the first announcement made for the year. Awards for physics, Chemistry, Literature and Peace will be announced on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday respectively. The declared prizes will be handed out to their respective winners on the death anniversary of prize founder Alfred Nobel on 10 December 2012.

Nobel Prize Winner for the year 2011 in Medicine/ Physiology segment:

Bruce Beutler and Jules Hoffmann from America and France respectively won the 2011 Nobel Prize for the discoveries related to the activation of innate immunity. The duo shared the prize with Ralph Steinman of Canada for discovering dendritic cell. The Canada born, Ralph Steinman died few days before receiving the prize. Although the Posthumous prizes in case of Nobel is not allowed but it remained unchanged just because the decision was made previously without being aware of his death.

Nobel Prize 2012 for Chemistry

Robert Lefkowitz (69) and Brian Kobilka (57), the two Americans won the Nobel Prize 2012 for Chemistry on 10 October 2012. They won the award for their study and research on Protein Receptors, which allows the body to respond the signals from outside world. The study is a key and would pave the path for developing better drugs to different ailments. Lefkowitz and Kobilka from Duke University

Medical Center in Durham, North Carolina and Stanford University School of Medicine in Palo Alto, California respectively will be sharing the prize amount of 8 million-krona (\$1.2 million).

The Nobel Prize 2012 for Literature and Peace would be announced on Thursday and Friday respectively.

Booker Prize 2012

British Writer Hilary Mantel on 16 October 2012 won the prestigious literary prize, the Booker Prize for her novel *Bring up the Bodies*, the second in a historical trilogy set during the reign of King Henry VIII. Hilary Mantel had earlier won the Booker prize in 2009 for "*Wolf Hall*," the first novel in the trilogy.

Hilary Mantel is the third author to win the prize twice, alongside South-African-born J.M. Coetzee and Australian Peter Carey. With this she also became the first British author, and the first woman, to achieve a double Booker Prize. *Bring Up the Bodies* is also the first sequel to win the prize. *Bring up the Bodies* and *Wolf Hall* are parts of a planned trilogy about Thomas Cromwell, the powerful and ambiguous chief minister to King Henry VIII. Hilary Mantel beat five other shortlisted books to take the prize. She was the Bookies favourite, although Britain's Will Self was also considered a strong contender for the century-spanning stream of consciousness "*Umbrella*." Indian poet Jeet Thayil was also nominated for his first novel, "*Narcopolis*," set among heroin addicts in 1970s and 80s Mumbai, and Britain's Alison Moore for "*The Lighthouse*," about a middle-aged man's life-changing ferry trip to Germany.

About Man Booker Prize

The Man Booker Prize for Fiction is a literary prize awarded each year for the best original full-length novel, written in the English language, by a citizen of the Commonwealth of Nations, Ireland, or Zimbabwe. The winner of the Man Booker Prize is generally assured of international renown and success. The selection process for the winner of the prize commences with the formation of an advisory committee which includes an author, two publishers, a literary agent, a bookseller, a librarian, and a chairperson appointed by the Booker Prize Foundation. The winner of Booker Prize is usually

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announced at a ceremony in London's Guildhall, usually.

Indira Gandhi National Award

Lyricist and well known poet Gulzar on 31 October 2012 awarded with Indira Gandhi National Integration Award by congress President Sonia Gandhi.

The award was given on the eve of 28th death anniversary of the late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi who was assassinated on 31 October 1984. Marking the event, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh congratulated the poet for the award and asserted the fact that Gulzar Sahab is real talent and a great personality who is spreading the message of peace and brotherhood in the country. Gulzar had written some charismatic lyrics for songs like Raah pe rehte hain, Do deewaane shehar mein, Hazaar raahen mud ke dekhi, Tujhse naraaz nahin zindagi and Mera kuchh saamaan. He is a versatile lyricist and had also shown his magic in new age songs like Kajra re and Beedi jalaile and had used his poetic talent for late filmmaker Yash Chopra's Film Jab Tak Hai Jaan as well. Earlier, Gulzar was awarded Sahitya Akademi Award in 2002 and the Padma Bhushan in 2004 for his contribution to the arts.

India Biodiversity Award

The Government of India in collaboration with United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) announced Biodiversity award 2012 in Hyderabad on 17 October 2012. The winners of the awards were: Pir Jahania Jungle Suraksha Samiti from Odisha in the community stewardship category, Shankarpur Village Gram Panchayat from Maharashtra in the category of decentralised management, Van Utthan Sansthan from Rajasthan in the category of co-management and Periyar Tiger Reserve in the protected areas category.

The programme was hosted by the Ministry of Environment and Forests. The award recognizes the outstanding models of biodiversity governance across the country. The award was actually presented at ministerial reception of Eleventh Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. With the presentation of Award, the Minister of Environment and Forests Jayanthi Natarajan announced that the India Biodiversity

Awards will now be given annually, to mark International Biodiversity Day on 22 May each year. The winners of the India Biodiversity Awards represent innovative approaches that combine the basic needs of livelihoods, wellbeing and dignity while respecting biodiversity conservation and the earth's limits. India Biodiversity Awards was declared after short listing people from 150 received nominations from across the country. A six-member jury for the awards was made which was headed by eminent agriculture scientist M S Swaminathan.

Best TV Host Award

Amitabh Bachchan, was rewarded as the 'Best Television Host' for the popular game show 'Kaun Banega Crorepati' by People's Choice Award of Colour Television channel.

Amitabh is presently hosting Season 6 of Kaun Banega Crorepati, which is being aired on Sony channel. He had earlier hosted 5 seasons of KBC except for the third one, which was hosted by Bollywood actor Shahrukh Khan. The first appearance of Amitabh Bachchan on Indian television is marked with Kaun Banega Crorepati, (KBC) which first aired in the year 2000. Amitabh Bachchan, the 70-year-old Indian Bollywood megastar had previously won the Indian Telly Awards, BIG Television Awards, The Global Indian Film and TV Honours among major award by television channel.

British Safety Council Award

Reliance Industries Ltd's (RIL) Jamnagar Refinery on 15 October 2012 won the British Safety Council's Globe of Honor Award for excellence in Environmental management. The award would be presented on 23 November 2012 at Mansion House in London. RIL's Jamnagar SEZ Refinery is the only Indian organisation which had made it to the list and it is for the first time that a Reliance Industries' manufacturing site has grabbed this very well known award.

In all, there were 13 applicants and 9 received the Globe of Honour. The eligibility of a organization for the award which is a five-star environment audit is that the applicant organisations should demonstrate a culture of best practice for health and safety throughout the business - from the boardroom

to the shop floor. All applications for the Globe of honour were marked by an independent adjudicator and SEZ Refinery received 68 marks out of 72.

About British Safety Council

The British Safety Council is a global health, safety and environmental charity which was founded in 1957. For over 50 years, the British Safety Council has been a champion of workplace health and safety. The British Safety Council over years has progressed to become one of the largest independent occupational health, safety and environmental organizations in the world.

The Knight of the Order of Arts and Letter

The Aishwarya Rai Bachchan on 1 November 2012 was conferred with the Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters (Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres) by the French Ambassador to India François Richier. She was awarded on behalf of the French Authorities. She was conferred with the award for the contributions made by her to Indian and World Cinema and the developments in Indo-French cooperation in art, culture and the most important one, Cinema.

Late Habib Tanvir, Nandita Das, Raghu Rai, Shahrukh Khan, and Upamanyu Chatterjee are few more Indians who had been conferred with this prestigious French award.

About Aishwarya Rai Bachchan About Aishwarya Rai Bachchan

- The youngest Indian Actress to win Padmashree in 2009. Padmashree is the fourth highest civilian award given by the Union Government of India
- She is the first Indian Actress to be among the jury members at Cannes
- She made her debut in the Indian film industry with Mani Ratnam's Tamil Film Iruvar in 1997
- Has received two Best Actress Awards at Filmfare for her films Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam in 1999 and Devdas in the year 2002
- In the year 2012, she was appointed as the goodwill ambassador for UNAIDS
- To promote eye donation in India, she was appointed as the brand ambassador for the Eye Bank Association of India's nationwide campaign

- She became the brand Ambassador for Pulse Polio in 2005 a mission established by the Union Government of India for polio eradication from the country
- To raise awareness about the main goals and priorities of the United Nations' poverty alleviation efforts, she was appointed as the spokesperson for the International Year of Microcredit
- For Smile Train, she was appointed as its first Goodwill Ambassador in the year 2009. It is an international charity established to provide free Cleft lip and palate surgery to children across 76 different developing countries

Singham Bravery Award

Narendra Kumar the IPS officer who was brutally killed by illegal mining mafia in Madhya Pradesh and many other Security Personnel who had laid down their life for fighting against Maoists and anti Social element on 20 October 2012 were awarded with Singham Bravery Awards.

The awards were handed over to the family members of the police officers by reel life 'Singham' Ajay Devgan, who is also the brand ambassador of Maharashtra police, actor Sunil Shetty and former CRPF Director General K Vijay Kumar. Besides Narendra Kumar, the award was posthumously presented to Surinder Singh, Narinder Singh Ranjeet Singh, Prakash S Meena, K C Meena, Tanveer Singh and Sanjeev Kumar. Marking the occasion, Ajay Devgn and Rohit Shetty, were also bestowed with 'Pride of Nation' awards. The Singham Bravery Award was organised by the All India Anti Terrorist Front (AIATF) and were held on the occasion of National Police Day 2012 to felicitate those who had risked - some had even sacrificed their lives in the line of duty.

Lifetime Achievement Award

Pakistani Sufi legend Abida Parveen was honoured with a lifetime achievement award on 7 October 2012 by Kaladharmi Begum Akhtar Academy of Ghazal in New Delhi. 58 years old Abida Parveen is the famous Pakistani singer of Sindhi descent and one of the foremost exponents of Sufi music. She was born in a musical family and had received initial training from her father Ustaad

Awards & Prizes

Ghulam Haider. She sings mainly ghazals, Urdu love tracks and her forte, Kafis, a classical form of Sufi poetry. Some of her hits are 'Duma Dum Mast Qalandar', 'Teray Ishaq Nachaya', 'Latthe Di Chadar', 'Kuch Is Ada Se Aaj' and 'Kafian Bulleh Shah'. She began her career with Radio Pakistan in 1973 and gained new fans following her appearance in Coke Studio, a TV music programme that showcases collaborations between classical and rock artists. She was also awarded with the 'Pride of Performance' and the 'Sitara-e-Imtiaz' by the Government of Pakistan.

Friends of Liberation War Honour

Former Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister of India, Babu Jagjivan Ram was Posthumously awarded with the Friends of Liberation War Honour by the Government of Bangladesh for his contribution in the 1971 War. The award was received by Babuji's grandson, Anshul Avijit at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in Dhaka. Anshul Avijit, is a journalist and academician and also the son of Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Meira Kumar. Babu Jagjivan Ram as the Defence Minister of India in 1971, helped in liberation of Bangladesh. He assured that the war for liberation of Bangladesh ended in the remarkably short time of 13 days. He was among the remarkable figure that had helped in creation of the Joint Command of Bangladesh and the Indian forces for the final outrage which led to the victory.

An Insight into Political Career of Babu Jagjivan Ram

Babu Jagjivan Ram was born near Arrah in Bhojpur district of Bihar in 1908 and had joined the freedom struggle while student in BHU in Benares and at Calcutta University.

- He as a freedom fighter founded the All India Depressed Classes League.
- He was the youngest serving member of Jawaharlal Nehru's Interim Government of 1946 as the Minister of Labour and had also hold a number of critical portfolios including Agriculture, Railways, Communications and Defence.
- He holds the record for having an uninterrupted Parliamentary career that

spanned almost half a century with holding the record for being the longest-serving cabinet minister in India for 30 years.

Indo-American Malayalees to be Honoured at New York

The Veteran Indian Diplomat Vijay K. Nambiar along with five Indo-American Malayalees would be honoured at New York by Indian American Kerala Cultural and Civic Center. The honour would be conferred for their service to the society and outstanding contributions in the respective field of specialization. These awardees would be honoured on 3 November 2012 during the annual banquet in the Long Island and they are Vijay K. Nambiar, Geeta Menon, Joy Kuttiyani, Viju Menon, Narayanan Neithalath and Roy Thomas.

Key details of the people to be honoured:

- Vijay K. Nambiar is the Under Secretary General and Special Adviser of the UN Secretary General of Myanmar and would be honoured for his services to United Nations. He would be the Chief Guest to the occasion.
- The second person to be honoured is Geeta Menon who will be the keynote speaker of the occasion and is a dean for Undergraduate College and Abraham Krasnoff professor of Global Business, Stern School of Business, New York University. She would be honoured for her contributions in the field of education
- Viju Menon, the Vice president of Supply Chain Management at Verizon, would be conferred with this honour for his contributions in the field of supply chain management. Verizon is the largest wireless carrier in the US
- Joy Kuttiyani, president of Kerala Samajam of South Florida
- Narayanan Neithalath, the associate professor in the School of Sustainable Engineering and the Built Environment at Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona
- Roy Thomas, deputy director at New York State Mental Health Department

13th Annual

Greentech Environment Award

Indian Oil's Mathura Refinery was awarded the Platinum Award in the 13th Annual Greentech

Environment Awards. The award was felicitated on 31 October 2012.

Mathura Refinery was awarded in regard to the company's outstanding achievements and contribution to apt implementation of environmental friendly technologies and methodologies. Greentech Awards is a key component that values the need of environmental management in business sustainability.

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) President Award for 2012 Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) President Award for 2012

The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) on 29 September 2012 awarded the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) President Award for 2012 for its outstanding contribution to the development of human resources, society and economy of India and also for promoting mutual understanding between India and Japan.

The award was formally presented to DMRC Managing Director Mangu Singh at a function organised at Metro Bhawan in Delhi for Delhi Mass Rapid Transport System Project (I) – (VI). Also, a commendation certificate along with a tribute to this effect duly signed by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) President Akihiko Tanaka was presented to Mangu Singh who asserted that it will go a long way in strengthening bilateral ties between the two countries. It is the ninth edition of the JICA awards which in the past has been given mostly to Japanese organisation such as research institutions, non-government organisations and medical organisations. JICA and DMRC have been associated since the beginning of the Delhi Metro construction in 1998 in the National Capital Region. The award came to DMRC after competing with four other projects across the globe which was chosen by JICA.

Sharmila Tagore Honoured with Honorary Doctorate of Arts Sharmila Tagore Honoured with Honorary Doctorate of Arts

Veteran actress Sharmila Tagore on 25 October 2012 was Awarded with an Honorary Doctorate of Arts for her outstanding contribution to Indian cinema by the Edinburgh Napier University.

The Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University Dame Joan Stringer called her as an excellent ambassador for the Indian Culture.

Sharmila Tagore whose films are appreciated and enjoyed all over the world is also a strong advocate of educational rights of Indian children. At present, she is a Goodwill Ambassador for UNICEF that is working for literacy, maternal health and AIDS-related issues and is also an active spokesperson for Indian Children Child Rights and YOU (CRY). The University stressed its strong links with India and Indian Culture and pointed out that to promote and establish a relationship with Indian culture, philosophy, education, art and literature it has created a Scottish Center for Tagore Studies (ScoTs), which highlights the legacy of Rabindranath Tagore the first Asian, who won a Nobel Prize for Literature in the Year 1913. This study center is first of its kind in United Kingdom. The 67 year old Indian actress announced that her recognition and honour from the University proves the role of Indian Cinema and its cultural influence across the world.

Career of Sharmila

Tagore in the Indian Film Industry

Sharmila Tagore started her career as an actress in 1959 with Satyajit Ray's Bengali film Apur Sansar (The World of Apu). Some more films of Sharmila Tagore includes Kashmir Ki Kali in 1964, Evening in Paris in 1967, Aradhana in 1969 and Amar Prem in 1972, Safar in 1970, Daag in 1973, Maalik in 1972 and many more. For Mausam, a film directed By Gulzar based on the novel named The Judas Tree by A.J. Conin, she won the National Film Award for Best Actress in 1976 and received the Silver Lotus Award at the 23rd National Film Festival for this film.

Awards and Honours

- Filmfare Best Actress Award for Aradhana in 1969
- Nominated, Filmfare Best Actress Award for Safar in the year 1970
- National Film Award for Best Actress in 1976 for her role in the movie Mausam
- Filmfare Lifetime Achievement Award in 1997
- Star Screen Lifetime Achievement Award in the year 2002
- National Film Award for Best Supporting Actress for Abar Aranye in the year 2004
- Commander of the Order of Arts and Letters of France in 2004

Awards & Prizes

- In the year 2006 was nominated for Filmfare Best Actress Award in Viruddh- Family Comes First
- Lifetime Achievement National Award (Actress) in the year 2007 honoured by Journalist Association of India
- In 2011 was awarded with Outstanding Achievement in Indian cinema at Floriana IIFA Awards, Toronto

Sharmila Tagore has also served the Central Board of Film Certification in India as its Chairperson.

2012 Hoover Medal

V. Narayan Murthy was honoured with 2012 Hoover Medal at the Global Humanitarian Technology Conference in Seattle in Washington on 22 October 2012. Murthy, who is the 70th recipient since the medal's inception, was recognized for establishing a foundation that forges outstanding improvements in healthcare, social rehabilitation, rural uplift and education. Previous awardees include former US presidents Herbert Hoover, Dwight D. Eisenhower and James Earl Carter. Narayan Murthy co-founded Infosys limited in 1981. He contributed significantly in India's success in information technology outsourcing. The Hoover Medal was established in 1930 to recognize great, unselfish, non-technical services by engineers to humanity. The Infosys Science Foundation was established in 2009 to promote science research in India. The Hoover Medal is administered by a board representing five engineering organizations: The American Society of Mechanical Engineers, the American Society of Civil Engineers, the American Institute of Chemical Engineers, the American Institute of Mining, Metallurgical and Petroleum Engineers and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers.

11th Economist Crossword Book Award

The 11th Economist Crossword Book Award was declared on 18 October 2012 at Mumbai. The Folded Earth and A Free Man-a nonfiction book, written by Anuradha Roy and Aman Sethi respectively were declared among winners of the 11th Economist Crossword Book Award. The Folded Earth was declared winner in English Indian Fiction

Category, whereas, A Free Man won the award in the English Non-Fiction Category for 2011.

Few more books that won awards in different categories were:

- English Translation by Arunava Sinha of a book on short stories, 17 written by Anita Agnihotri and The Araya Woman written by Narayan and Translated by Catherine Thankamma were declared joint winners of the award for Indian Language Translation.
- The Incredible Banker written by Ravi Subramanian fetched the Popular Award

Overall, there were 330 entries of the books published in 2011 for the awards. Renowned writer Sudha Murthy distributed the Prizes on 18 October 2012.

About the Crossword Book Award About the Crossword Book Award

The Award is among the prestigious literary awards in India, which recognizes the best Indian Writings and rewards them to make sure that the merit works reach easily reaches to wider audience group.

The Awards are given in different categories and it includes Crossword Fiction Award, Crossword Non-Fiction Award, Crossword Translation Award, Crossword Children's Award and Crossword Popular Award. The Prize for Non-Fiction, Fiction, Translation and Children's writing carries an amount of 3 lakh rupees and a citation and a trophy. The Popular Award winner author gets a cash prize of 1 lakh rupees and a certificate.

Sahitya Akademi Award

Jeet Thayil - nominated to Booker Prize 2012, Subrata Mukhopadhyay - the Bengali novelist, K Satchidanandan - the Malayalam poet and HS Shivaprakash - the noted Kannada writer are among the 24 authors, who were chosen for the Prestigious Sahitya Akademi Awards 2012 on 20 December 2012 by the Sahitya Akademi - India's National Academy for Letters. Six short stories, twelve books of poetry, four novels along with an autobiography and criticism have been chosen for being awarded. The works were chosen after the recommendation of the Jury members who represented from 24 Indian languages and then the Executive Board of the

Akademi approved the selected candidates for the award to be presented this year.

The nominations were done in the chairmanship of Dr. Vishwanath Prasad Tiwari, who also is the acting President of the Sahitya Akademi. Jeet Thayil was chosen and awarded for his poetry collection in English - These Errors are Correct. Marannu Vecha Vasthukal the poetic creation of Satchidanandan helped him to be nominated for the award whereas the Novel Birasan helped Subrata Mukhopadhyay in winning the nomination for the award.

About Sahitya

Sahitya Akademi Award the literary honour in India is annually conferred to the writers for their outstanding works in the field of literature by Sahitya Akademi, the National Academy of Letters in India. The award is conferred for the works done in 24 major languages of India including English as quoted in Sahitya Akademi. The Sahitya Akademi Award had been into existence since the year of its inception in 1954 and was conferred for the first time for meritorious literature published in India in the year 1955. Since day of inception the prize amount of the Sahitya Akademi has been changed constantly and it followed like 5000 rupees since inception which was enhanced to 10000 rupees from 1983, 25000 rupees from 1988, 40000 from 2001 rupees, 50000 rupees from 2003 and is now 100000 rupees from 2009.

2011 Jnanpith Award

Renowned Oriya novelist, Pratibha Ray on 27 December 2012 selected for the prestigious Jnanpith award for the year 2011 for her contribution to the field of Indian literature. Pratibha Ray is the first Oriya woman and fourth Oriya writer to get the coveted award. Earlier Gopinath Mohanty (1973), Sachidananda Routray (1986) and Sitakant Mohapatra (1993) were conferred the honour. The award carries a cash prize of 7 lakh rupees, a citation and a bronze statuette of Goddess Saraswati.

About Pratibha Ray

- Pratibha Ray was born in Alabol, a village in Jagatsingpur district of Odisha.
- Ray's literary journey started at nine, she

received recognition as a writer with her first novel Barsa Basanta Baishakha in 1974 followed by Aranya, 1977, Nishidha Prithivi, 1978, Parichya, 1979, Aparichita, 1979 (a film was made and won Best Film-Story award from the state government), Punyatoya, 1979, Meghamedura, 1980, Ashabari, 1980, Ayamarambha, 1981, Nilatrishna, 1981, Samudrara Swara, 1982.

- Ray's Shilapadma in 1983 won her the Orissa Sahitya Academy Award, 1985, while Yajnaseni (1984) got her the Moorti Devi Award in 1991 and Sarala Award in 1990.
- Ray has 20 novels, 24 short stories, 10 travelogues, two poetry collections and a number of essays to her credit.
- Ray's writings have been translated into English, other foreign languages as also a number of other Indian languages.
- Other renowned works of the eminent writer include Yjnaseni (1985), which won Jnanpith Trust's Moorti Devi Award in 1991, Mahamoh (1997), Shilapadma (1983), Uttarmarg (1988), Magnamari (2003), among others.

She described Odisha's first Jnanpith awardee (1973) Gopinath Mohanty as her role model and favourite among Oriya novelists. Pratibha Ray is one of the most widely read Oriya novelists and short story writers. Her novels and stories are deeply and persuasively grounded in the great tradition of storytelling.

Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowships and Akademi Awards

The General Council of Sangeet Natak Akademi, the National Academy of Music, Dance and Drama, New Delhi on 21 December 2012 in a meet elected and declared N. Rajam, T.H. Vinayakram and Ratan Thiyam as the three eminent personalities in the field of Arts, as Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellows (Akademi Ratna). This fellowship is the rare and most prestigious honour, restricted to a limited number of people at a given pint of time. At present, there exist only 40 fellows of the Sangeet Natak Akademi. Thirty Six persons from field of Music, Theater, Puppetry and Dance were also elected by the General Council of the Akademi for the Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards (Akademi Puraskar) 2012.

Awards & Prizes

Nine eminent artists are from the field of Music and they are Mysore M. Nagaraja, (Violin) and K.V. Prasad (Mridangam) for Carnatic Instrumental Music, Sabir Khan (Tabla) and Bahauddin Dagar (Rudra Veena) for Hindustani Instrumental Music, O.S. Thyagarajan for Carnatic Vocal Music, Rajashekhar Mansur and Ajay Pohankar for Hindustani Vocal Music, Illayaraja for Creative and Experimental Music and Bhai Balbir Singh Ragi (Gurbani) for other major traditions of music.

Nine Artists were also selected for the Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards in the field of Dance and they are Vijay Shankar (Kathak), Priyadarsini Govind (Bharatanatyam), Vedantam Ramalinga Sastry (Kuchipudi), Painkulam Damodara Chakyar (Kutiyattam), Vazhengada Vijayan (Kathakali), Sharmila Biswas (Odissi), Jai Narayan Samal (Chhau), Jwala Prasad (Music for Dance) and Aditi Mangaldas (Creative & Experimental Dance). Eight artists from the Theatre world were also selected for the Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards 2012 namely Tripurari Sharma and Waman Kendre for Direction, Arjun Deo Charan for Playwriting, Parvesh Sethi, Murari Roychoudhury for Theatre Music, Nirmal Rishi and Purisai Kannappa Sambandan for Acting and Ghulam Rasool Bhagat for Major Traditions of Theatre (Bhand Pather).

Eight more artists were selected for making the contributions in other folk/traditional/dance/tribal music/ theatre and puppetry for the Akademi Awards and their names are Goru Channabasappa for Folk Music (Karnataka), Kinaram Nath Oja for Suknani Ojapali (Assam), Prem Singh Dehati for Folk Theatre (Haryana), Sulochana Chavan for Lavani (Maharashtra), Mattannur Sankaran Kutty Marar for Thayambaka (Kerala), Govind Ram Nirmalkar for Nacha (Chhattisgarh), Heera Das Negi for Mask Making (Himachal Pradesh) and Prafulla Karmakar for Traditional Puppetry (West Bengal). Nandini Ramani and Arun Kakade would be awarded with the Akademi Award 2012 for their Overall Contribution/Scholarship in Performing Arts.

Akademi Award

The Akademi Award has been conferred on people since 1952 and the Akademi Fellow honour has been conferred since 1954. The honour and the

award is the symbol of highest standards of excellence and achievements on national level and also recognises sustained work of the individual and his/her contribution to the practice and appreciation of arts via scholarship, teaching and performance. Akademi Fellowship carries a prize amount of three lakh rupees and the Akademi Awards carry a prize amount of one lakh rupees, besides Tamrapatra and Angavastram.

Grammy Lifetime

Achievement Award 2013

Organisers of the Recording Academy announced on 13 December 2012 that Pandit Ravi Shankar, the sitar maestro would be honoured with the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award posthumously. Pandit Ravi Shankar would become first Indian to receive the prestigious award. The award would be presented at 55th Grammy Awards ceremony on 10 February 2013 in Los Angeles.

Pandit Ravi Shankar is a three-time Grammy Award winner. Pandit Ravi Shankar, 92 had passed away on 11 December 2012 after heart-valve replacement surgery in California. The organisers had decided to honour Pandit Ravi Shankar before his dismissal and he was also notified about this personally. Ravi Shankar is said to be a pioneer for introducing Indian music to Western world. The most well-known Sitar player of not just India, but the world, he is also said to be ambassador of the international music. For the 55th Annual Grammy Awards, Shankar's The Living Room Sessions Part 1, which was released in April, has been nominated for the category of Best World Music Album. It is important to note here that his daughter Anoushka Shankar has also been nominated in this category for the album Traveller. Shankar performed for the last time on 4 November 2012 in California with his daughter Anoushka Shankar. Apart from Pandit Ravi Shankar, others who would be receiving the lifetime achievement Grammy award are Temptations, Carole King, Patti Page, Lightnin' Hopkins, Glenn Gould and Charlie Haden.

Other honours received by

Pandit Ravi Shankar

- Apart from being three times Grammy Award winner, Ravi Shankar has also been honoured

with over 14 honorary doctorates from across the world.

- He was honoured with Bharat Ratna, the highest honour of India.
- Other honours include Polar Music Prize from Sweden which is also referred as the Nobel Prize for Music, Praemium Imperiale from Japan, Commandeur de la Legion d'Honneur, which is the highest French civilian award, Honorary Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire awarded by Queen Elizabeth.

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Life of Pi was given two National Tourism Awards by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India on 8 December 2012 recognizing the impact it has had in promoting India as a tourism destination, especially Puducherry and Munnar (Kerala). These Awards will be given to Ang Lee, Director of the film 'Life of Pi' and Yann Martel, writer of the book of the same name. The Ministry of Tourism identified Film Tourism as a Niche Tourism product. It has requested the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations to recognize the potential of Film Tourism and constitute special bodies/cells to facilitate filming in their respective States/Union Territories. In February 2012 the Ministry of Tourism signed a MoU with Ministry of Information & Broadcasting as a major initiative to promote the Incredible India campaign and Cinemas of India as a sub brand of Incredible India at various international film festivals and markets abroad.

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Bharat Muni Samman

Famous Bollywood actress and Bharatanatyam exponent Hema Malini had been selected for the prestigious Bharat Muni Samman of year 2012 for her outstanding contribution to the field of art and culture. Bharat Muni Samman is named after the author of Natyashastra Bharat Muni and has been instituted by Bhubaneswar-based organisation Kalingayana Touryatrikam.

The award is going to be presented to Hema Malini on 18 December 2012 for her outstanding contribution towards promotion of Indian arts and entertainment which is also marked by the concluding day of the three-day Bharat Muni Festival scheduled to be held in Bhubaneswar. Hema Malini is 64 years old and she would be the fifth recipient of the award. The earlier recipients are Thankamani Kutty, Pandit Birju Maharaj, Pandit Jasraj and Ratan Thiyam. Hema Malini was also awarded with Padma Shri, India's fourth highest civilian award in year 2000.

Aryabhata Award by the ASI

The Astronautical Society of India (ASI) in the last week of December 2012 announced names of former secretary of the Department of Ocean Development, Dr. A.E. Muthunayagam and Dr. V.K. Saraswat, Scientific Adviser to the Defence Minister for prestigious Aryabhata Award for the year 2010 and 2011 respectively. The two have been selected for the achievement in rocketry. Dr. G. Satheesh Reddy an associate Director of Research Centre Imarat Hyderabad and P. Kunhikrishnan of the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), Thiruvananthapuram would receive ASI Awards for rocket and rocket related technologies for the year 2010 and 2011 respectively.

Dr. A.E. Muthunayagam

- Served as a director for the Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre, ISRO

Awards & Prizes

- He served the Department of Atomic Energy as head of a committee to look into safety issues related to the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project in Tamil Nadu in 2011

Dr. V.K. Saraswat

- Director-general of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and was an architect for the interceptor missile Agni and Prithvi programme

G. Satheesh Reddy

- He is a specialist in navigation system and is the person who developed Avionics, with ring laser gyroscope based navigation system as well as the fibre-optic gyroscope-based inertial navigation system

P. Kunhikrishnan

- He has served as a Mission Director for different Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV)

Tagore Peace Prize

Emirati poet and translator Shihab Ghanem became the first Emirati and Arab to win the Tagore Peace Prize.

Tagore Peace Prize is instituted by the Indian government to commemorate the birth anniversary of India's poet, philosopher and Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore. Shihab Ghanem is officially going to receive the Tagore award by the Asiatic society in a ceremony to be held in Kolkata on 6 May 2012. Ghanem was awarded the accolade in recognition of his creative literary and translation works, both in Arabic and English, and for promoting human understanding and values of love and peace Tagore had advocated. The award is given to one person every two years.

Ghanem was chosen due to the promotion of the human values of love and peace via his poetic works. Ghanem had written 31 Arabic poems and 36 English poems and had published 45 books mainly in Arabic verse.

Awards and Honours won by Shihab Ghanem

- Rashid Award for Scientific Excellence in 1989
- 1st prize for poetry in the UAE in 1984
- Book prize from the Ruler of Sharjah for poetry translation in 2003 and 2007.

Best Administrator in India Award

Union Finance Minister P. Chidambaram on 20 December 2012 awarded with the Best Administrator in India Award instituted by K. Karunakaran Foundation. The award was presented to him by Vice President of India, M. Hamid Ansari.

The award is given to him for his role in evolving Indian economy as Finance Minister in the late 1990s when he presented what was widely called a dream budget which gave a road map for economic reforms in India and lowered income and corporate tax rates.

After the consequences of the horrific Mumbai terror attacks in 2008, the tenure as Home Minister of P. Chidambaram was marked by his constant efforts at streamlining and modernizing national security apparatus of the nation which did provide a sense of security and calm to a traumatized and angry population.

As a Minister in the Union Government, P. Chidambaram had held the important portfolios like Finance, Home and Commerce. He has won admiration for his vision, articulation, diligence and determination.

P. Chidambaram is second recipient of the Best Administrator in India Award. Earlier in year 2011 Prime Minister Manmohan Singh presented the Best Administrator in India Award 2011 of the K Karunakaran Foundation to former finance minister Pranab Mukherjee on 21 December 2011. The award carries a purse of 1 lakh rupees, citation and a memento.

Nobel Peace Prize 2012

The Nobel Peace Prize 2012 was awarded to the European Union (EU) leaders on 10 December 2012 at Oslo, Norway. The award was given to the European Union leaders for the efforts in promotion of peace as well as human rights. The award was given despite criticisms from some. Around 20 European government leaders which included French President Francois Hollande, German Chancellor Angela Merkel as well as the Italian Premier Mario Monti, attended this ceremony in Oslo, the capital city of Norway. It is important to note that Norway, which is a country rich in oil, has rejected joining EU twice.

Thorbjorn Jagland, the head of Nobel Committee hailed EU on the grounds that it brought peace after years of war. The Nobel diplomas as well as medals were handed over to EU Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso, president of the EU Parliament Martin Schulz as well as EU Council President Herman Van Rompuy at a ceremony initially at the City Hall of Oslo. The ceremony was attended by international dignitaries, heads of state as well as royalty. The prize came this year despite protests. Protests are being organised because of the debt crisis being faced by countries which use Euro currency. This has triggered tensions in union, leading to soaring unemployment. EU institutions as well as the member countries were criticised for their slow reactions to this crisis which kept going for 3 years.

Nobel Peace Prize

Nobel Peace Prize is awarded on 10 December always in Oslo. 10 December is the anniversary of Alfred Nobel's death which happened back in 1896. Ceremonies like these were also held in Swedish capital for Nobel laureates in literature, physics, chemistry and medicine.

Order of Canada Award

Venkatesh Mannar a Chennai-born Scientist of Indian Origin and President, Micronutrient Initiative, Canada was awarded with Canada's Highest Civilian Award – the Order of Canada in the last week of December 2012. Mannar, a Graduate from Indian Institute of Technology, Madras and a post graduate in chemical engineering from Northwestern University, US, was honoured with the award for his forty years long contribution working towards reduction of debilitating micronutrient deficiencies among the worlds most vulnerable.

Micronutrient Initiative

The not-for-profit organization, Micronutrient Initiative is dedicated towards ensuring the world's most vulnerable, the children and the women mainly in the developing countries get a proper amount of minerals and vitamins (supplements) that they require for survival and it tries to thrive the same through food fortification programme. The organization works for identifying, development,

implementation and monitoring the cost effective solutions for hidden hunger. The Support offered by Canada to the organization allows it to improve lives of more than 500 million people in 70 different countries, annually. All this is being done through different programs of the organization and they are child health, child survival, growth and development, and women's and newborn survival and health programs.

About Order of Canada Award

The Order of Canada instituted by Queen Elizabeth II in the year 1967 is a Canadian National Order and is the second highest honour of merit in the Country. It is placed next to Order of Merit. The order is given to people with lifetime outstanding achievements and their dedication towards the community and service to the nation and people in Canadian Society in all the sectors.

Queen's 2013 New Year Honours

London's Olympic champions on 29 December 2012 had been generously rewarded for their exploits in a special New Year Honours list, with Bradley Wiggins and Ben Ainslie receiving knighthoods.

Bradley Wiggins with his historic Tour de France triumph is the first British cyclist to be awarded with the honors. He had won a fourth Olympic gold medal and first on the road. On the other hand Ben Ainslie became the most successful Olympic sailor of all time with his fourth successive gold. Along with Bradley Wiggins and Ben Ainslie, inspiring British Cycling performance director Dave Brailsford is also knighted as he once again masterminded a stunning medal haul as well as leading Team Sky to a one-two in the Tour de France. The fourth knighthood went to David Tanner, the performance director for British Rowing, who also overseen a record medal pull as Britain's rowers won four golds and nine medals in all. Four Olympic stars are made CBEs, including the king and queen of British athletics, Mo Farah and Jessica Ennis, after they lit up the Olympic Stadium. London was the a final performance or effort for cyclist Victoria Pendleton, who added a second Olympic gold and is made a CBE after playing a trailblazing role for women sprinters on the track. Rower Katherine

Awards & Prizes

Grainger receives the same honour in the year she finally made it gold with Anna Watkins in the double sculls following three successive silvers. Three of Britain's double gold medallists have been awarded OBEs - dressage star Charlotte Dujardin and cycling couple Jason Kenny and Laura Trott - along with tennis' Andy Murray, who was both a gold medallist and a grand slam winner in 2012.

Long jumper Greg Rutherford, another gold medal winner in the Olympic Stadium on that Super Saturday, has been given an MBE. Also honoured with MBEs are 51-year-old three-day eventer Mary King, who won team silver in London, and gymnast Louis Smith, now a three-time Olympic medalist.

About New Year Honour

The New Year Honours is a part of the British honours system, where New Year's Day, 1 January, is marked by naming new members of orders of chivalry and recipients of other official honours. A number of other Commonwealth Realms also mark this day in this way. The awards are presented by or in the name of the reigning monarch British honours are published in supplements to the London Gazette. Honours have been awarded at New Year since at least 1890, in which year a list of Queen Victoria's awards was published by the London Gazette on 2 January.

Web Ratna Award-2012

Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity (DAVP) was conferred the prestigious Web Ratna 2012, Golden Icon Award for Innovative use of Technology. The DAVP Website (<http://davp.nic.in/>) has enabled a complete change from the manual mode to the online mode where the media plans are made and released for the end users. The website with several user friendly features is the only advertising agency in the country which releases its designs, Release orders, payments online. The DAVP website has added a great deal of transparency to the entire system in its billing as well as other procedures which have not only helped the organisation but also its stakeholders. DAVP also keeps as much information as possible on the website for public scrutiny and information. The entire chain has contributed a great deal of efficiency to the DAVP's operation and vastly improved the

satisfaction levels of the client ministries as well as newspapers, channels and other agencies. The Project was headed by A P Frank Noronha, DG, DAVP.

The Web Ratna Awards

The Web Ratna awards, constituted by the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, acknowledges exemplary initiatives/practices in the realm of e-governance. In order to promote more innovative e-governance initiatives, the Web Ratna Awards have been instituted under the ambit of the National Portal of India.

Nominees for Padma Awards

High-level committee met on 26 December 2012 to shortlist the nominees of prestigious Padma awards. Rajesh Khanna, singer Kailash Kher as well as director of much-acclaimed movie 'Sholay', Ramesh Sippy might be honoured with the prestigious awards on 26 January 2013. Rajesh Khanna, who died on 18 July 2012, was shortlisted for highest category of Padma awards- Padma Vibhushan.

Ramesh Sippy and Kailash Kher were shortlisted for the award of Padma Shri. The high-level committee that shortlisted the nominees of the award included cabinet secretary Ajit Seth, home secretary R K Singh, scientist Anil Kakodkar, principal secretary to the PM Pulok Chatterjee as well as actor Ratna Pathak Shah. Awardees' names would be declared on 25 January 2013 after PM Manmohan Singh's approval. Rajesh Khanna, Kailash Kher and Ramesh Sippy were shortlisted after recommendations from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

Usually, the Padma awards are not conferred after the death of an individual, but Rajesh Khanna was considered by the Government as highly deserving candidate for Padma Vibhushan. This would make an exception to the Padma awards. Similar exceptions were made earlier when singer and music director Bhupen Hazarika was conferred with the prestigious Padma Vibhushan posthumously in 2012. It is quite ironical that Rajesh Khanna had never received Padma award during his lifetime, while a lot of his colleagues had achieved the honour in various years.

Brand Laureate Legendary Award

47 Years old Bollywood Actor Shah Rukh Khan on 13 December 2012 awarded with the prestigious BrandLaureate Legendary Award in Malaysia. The award was given by the Malaysia-based Asia Pacific Brands Foundation for his contributions to the Bollywood film industry and as India's foremost brand ambassador.

The BrandLaureate Legendary Award had been earlier given to well known personality like those to Nelson Mandela, Nobel Laureate recipient Mohammad Yunus, Ratan Tata, Steve Jobs, Mark Zuckerberg, Michael Schumacher and more.

Earlier in 2008 Shah Rukh was conferred with the prestigious Malaysian title of Datuk by the governor of Malaysia's southern state of Malacca for promoting tourism through his movies in that region. Malaysian title of Datuk is equivalent of the British Knighthood, the highest awards given to an individual in the UK. Shah Rukh Khan went to Malaysia to attend Malaysian Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir bin Mohammad's birthday.

The BrandLaureate award is the sobriquet for the APBF Brand Excellence Awards.

Sahitya Akademi Award

Jeet Thayil - nominated to Booker Prize 2012, Subrata Mukhopadhyay - the Bengali novelist, K Satchidanandan - the Malayalam poet and HS Shivaprakash - the noted Kannada writer are among the 24 authors, who were chosen for the Prestigious Sahitya Akademi Awards 2012 on 20 December 2012 by the Sahitya Akademi - India's National Academy for Letters. Six short stories, twelve books of poetry, four novels along with an autobiography and criticism have been chosen for being awarded. The works were chosen after the recommendation of the Jury members who represented from 24 Indian languages and then the Executive Board of the Akademi approved the selected candidates for the award to be presented this year.

The nominations were done in the chairmanship of Dr. Vishwanath Prasad Tiwari, who also is the acting President of the Sahitya Akademi. Jeet Thayil was chosen and awarded for his poetry collection in English - These Errors are Correct. Marannu Vecha Vasthukal the poetic creation of

Satchidanandan helped him to be nominated for the award whereas the Novel Birasan helped Subrata Mukhopadhyay in winning the nomination for the award.

About Sahitya Akademi Award

Sahitya Akademi Award the literary honour in India is annually conferred to the writers for their outstanding works in the field of literature by Sahitya Akademi, the National Academy of Letters in India. The award is conferred for the works done in 24 major languages of India including English as quoted in Sahitya Akademi. The Sahitya Akademi Award had been into existence since the year of its inception in 1954 and was conferred for the first time for meritorious literature published in India in the year 1955. Since day of inception the prize amount of the Sahitya Akademi has been changed constantly and it followed like 5000 rupees since inception which was enhanced to 10000 rupees from 1983, 25000 rupees from 1988, 40000 from 2001 rupees, 50000 rupees from 2003 and is now 100000 rupees from 2009.

2011 Jnanpith Award

Renowned Oriya novelist, Pratibha Ray on 27 December 2012 selected for the prestigious Jnanpith award for the year 2011 for her contribution to the field of Indian literature. Pratibha Ray is the first Oriya woman and fourth Oriya writer to get the coveted award. Earlier Gopinath Mohanty (1973), Sachidananda Routray (1986) and Sitakant Mohapatra (1993) were conferred the honour. The award carries a cash prize of 7 lakh rupees, a citation and a bronze statuette of Goddess Saraswati.

About Pratibha Ray

- Pratibha Ray was born in Alabol, a village in Jagatsingpur district of Odisha.
- Ray's literary journey started at nine, she received recognition as a writer with her first novel Barsa Basanta Baishakha in 1974 followed by Aranya, 1977, Nishidha Prithivi, 1978, Parichya, 1979, Aparichita, 1979 (a film was made and won Best Film-Story award from the state government), Punyatoya, 1979, Meghamedura, 1980, Ashabari, 1980, Ayamarambha, 1981, Nilatrishna, 1981, Samudrara Swara, 1982.

Awards & Prizes

- Ray's Shilapadma in 1983 won her the Orissa Sahitya Academy Award, 1985, while Yajnaseni (1984) got her the Moorti Devi Award in 1991 and Sarala Award in 1990.
- Ray has 20 novels, 24 short stories, 10 travelogues, two poetry collections and a number of essays to her credit.
- Ray's writings have been translated into English, other foreign languages as also a number of other Indian languages.
- Other renowned works of the eminent writer include Yjnaseni (1985), which won Jnanpith Trust's Moorti Devi Award in 1991, Mahamoh (1997), Shilapadma (1983), Uttarmarg (1988), Magnamari (2003), among others.

She described Odisha's first Jnanpith awardee (1973) Gopinath Mohanty as her role model and favourite among Oriya novelists. Pratibha Ray is one of the most widely read Oriya novelists and short story writers. Her novels and stories are deeply and persuasively grounded in the great tradition of story-telling.

Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowships and Akademi Awards

The General Council of Sangeet Natak Akademi, the National Academy of Music, Dance and Drama, New Delhi on 21 December 2012 in a meet elected and declared N. Rajam, T.H. Vinayakram and Ratan Thiyam as the three eminent personalities in the field of Arts, as Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellows (Akademi Ratna). This fellowship is the rare and most prestigious honour, restricted to a limited number of people at a given pint of time. At present, there exist only 40 fellows of the Sangeet Natak Akademi. Thirty Six persons from field of Music, Theater, Puppetry and Dance were also elected by the General Council of the Akademi for the Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards (Akademi Puraskar) 2012. Nine eminent artists are from the field of Music and they are Mysore M. Nagaraja, (Violin) and K.V. Prasad (Mridangam) for Carnatic Instrumental Music, Sabir Khan (Tabla) and Bahauddin Dagar (Rudra Veena) for Hindustani Instrumental Music, O.S. Thyagarajan for Carnatic Vocal Music, Rajashekhar Mansur and Ajay Pohankar for Hindustani Vocal Music, Illayaraja for Creative and Experimental Music and Bhai Balbir Singh Ragi (Gurbani) for other

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Awards & Prizes

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The Astronautical Society of India (ASI) in the last week of December 2012 announced names of former secretary of the Department of Ocean Development, Dr. A.E. Muthunayagam and Dr. V.K. Saraswat, Scientific Adviser to the Defence Minister for prestigious Aryabhata Award for the year 2010 and 2011 respectively. The two have been selected for the achievement in rocketry. Dr. G. Satheesh Reddy an associate Director of Research Centre Imarat Hyderabad and P. Kunhikrishnan of the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), Thiruvananthapuram would receive ASI Awards for rocket and rocket related technologies for the year 2010 and 2011 respectively.

Dr. A.E. Muthunayagam

- Served as a director for the Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre, ISRO
- He served the Department of Atomic Energy as head of a committee to look into safety issues related to the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project in Tamil Nadu in 2011

Dr. V.K. Saraswat

- Director-general of Defence Research and

Development Organisation (DRDO) and was an architect for the interceptor missile Agni and Prithvi programme

G. Satheesh Reddy

- He is a specialist in navigation system and is the person who developed Avionics, with ring laser gyroscope based navigation system as well as the fibre-optic gyroscope-based inertial navigation system

P. Kunhikrishnan

- He has served as a Mission Director for different Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV)

Tagore Peace Prize

Emirati poet and translator Shihab Ghanem became the first Emirati and Arab to win the Tagore Peace Prize. Tagore Peace Prize is instituted by the Indian government to commemorate the birth anniversary of India's poet, philosopher and Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore. Shihab Ghanem is officially going to receive the Tagore award by the Asiatic society in a ceremony to be held in Kolkata on 6 May 2012. Ghanem was awarded the accolade in recognition of his creative literary and translation works, both in Arabic and English, and for promoting human understanding and values of love and peace Tagore had advocated. The award is given to one person every two years. Ghanem was chosen due to the promotion of the human values of love and peace via his poetic works. Ghanem had written 31 Arabic poems and 36 English poems and had published 45 books mainly in Arabic verse.

Awards and

Honours won by Shihab Ghanem

- Rashid Award for Scientific Excellence in 1989
- 1st prize for poetry in the UAE in 1984
- Book prize from the Ruler of Sharjah for poetry translation in 2003 and 2007.

Best Administrator in India Award

Union Finance Minister P. Chidambaram on 20 December 2012 awarded with the Best Administrator in India Award instituted by K. Karunakaran Foundation. The award was presented to him by Vice President of India, M. Hamid Ansari.

The award is given to him for his role in evolving Indian economy as Finance Minister in the

late 1990s when he presented what was widely called a dream budget which gave a road map for economic reforms in India and lowered income and corporate tax rates.

After the consequences of the horrific Mumbai terror attacks in 2008, the tenure as Home Minister of P. Chidambaram was marked by his constant efforts at streamlining and modernizing national security apparatus of the nation which did provide a sense of security and calm to a traumatized and angry population.

As a Minister in the Union Government, P. Chidambaram had held the important portfolios like Finance, Home and Commerce. He has won admiration for his vision, articulation, diligence and determination.

P. Chidambaram is second recipient of the Best Administrator in India Award. Earlier in year 2011 Prime Minister Manmohan Singh presented the Best Administrator in India Award 2011 of the K Karunakaran Foundation to former finance minister Pranab Mukherjee on 21 December 2011. The award carries a purse of 1 lakh rupees, citation and a memento.

Nobel Peace Prize 2012

The Nobel Peace Prize 2012 was awarded to the European Union (EU) leaders on 10 December 2012 at Oslo, Norway. The award was given to the European Union leaders for the efforts in promotion of peace as well as human rights. The award was given despite criticisms from some. Around 20 European government leaders which included French President Francois Hollande, German Chancellor Angela Merkel as well as the Italian Premier Mario Monti, attended this ceremony in Oslo, the capital city of Norway. It is important to note that Norway, which is a country rich in oil, has rejected joining EU twice.

Thorbjorn Jagland, the head of Nobel Committee hailed EU on the grounds that it brought peace after years of war. The Nobel diplomas as well as medals were handed over to EU Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso, president of the EU Parliament Martin Schulz as well as EU Council President Herman Van Rompuy at a ceremony initially at the City Hall of Oslo. The ceremony was attended by

international dignitaries, heads of state as well as royalty. The prize came this year despite protests. Protests are being organised because of the debt crisis being faced by countries which use Euro currency. This has triggered tensions in union, leading to soaring unemployment. EU institutions as well as the member countries were criticised for their slow reactions to this crisis which kept going for 3 years.

Nobel Peace Prize

Nobel Peace Prize is awarded on 10 December always in Oslo. 10 December is the anniversary of Alfred Nobel's death which happened back in 1896. Ceremonies like these were also held in Swedish capital for Nobel laureates in literature, physics, chemistry and medicine.

Order of Canada Award

Venkatesh Mannar a Chennai-born Scientist of Indian Origin and President, Micronutrient Initiative, Canada was awarded with Canada's Highest Civilian Award – the Order of Canada in the last week of December 2012. Mannar, a Graduate from Indian Institute of Technology, Madras and a post graduate in chemical engineering from Northwestern University, US, was honoured with the award for his forty years long contribution working towards reduction of debilitating micronutrient deficiencies among the worlds most vulnerable.

Micronutrient Initiative

The not-for-profit organization, Micronutrient Initiative is dedicated towards ensuring the world's most vulnerable, the children and the women mainly in the developing countries get a proper amount of minerals and vitamins (supplements) that they require for survival and it tries to thrive the same through food fortification programme. The organization works for identifying, development, implementation and monitoring the cost effective solutions for hidden hunger. The Support offered by Canada to the organization allows it to improve lives of more than 500 million people in 70 different countries, annually. All this is being done through different programs of the organization and they are child health, child survival, growth and development, and women's and newborn survival and health programs.

Awards & Prizes

About Order of Canada Award

The Order of Canada instituted by Queen Elizabeth II in the year 1967 is a Canadian National Order and is the second highest honour of merit in the Country. It is placed next to Order of Merit. The order is given to people with lifetime outstanding achievements and their dedication towards the community and service to the nation and people in Canadian Society in all the sectors.

Queen's 2013 New Year Honours

London's Olympic champions on 29 December 2012 had been generously rewarded for their exploits in a special New Year Honours list, with Bradley Wiggins and Ben Ainslie receiving knighthoods.

Bradley Wiggins with his historic Tour de France triumph is the first British cyclist to be awarded with the honors. He had won a fourth Olympic gold medal and first on the road. On the other hand Ben Ainslie became the most successful Olympic sailor of all time with his fourth successive gold. Along with Bradley Wiggins and Ben Ainslie, inspiring British Cycling performance director Dave Brailsford is also knighted as he once again masterminded a stunning medal haul as well as leading Team Sky to a one-two in the Tour de France. The fourth knighthood went to David Tanner, the performance director for British Rowing, who also overseen a record medal pull as Britain's rowers won four golds and nine medals in all. Four Olympic stars are made CBEs, including the king and queen of British athletics, Mo Farah and Jessica Ennis, after they lit up the Olympic Stadium. London was the a final performance or effort for cyclist Victoria Pendleton, who added a second Olympic gold and is made a CBE after playing a trailblazing role for women sprinters on the track. Rower Katherine Grainger receives the same honour in the year she finally made it gold with Anna Watkins in the double sculls following three successive silvers. Three of Britain's double gold medallists have been awarded OBEs - dressage star Charlotte Dujardin and cycling couple Jason Kenny and Laura Trott - along with tennis' Andy Murray, who was both a gold medallist and a grand slam winner in 2012.

Long jumper Greg Rutherford, another gold medal winner in the Olympic Stadium on that Super

Saturday, has been given an MBE. Also honoured with MBEs are 51-year-old three-day eventer Mary King, who won team silver in London, and gymnast Louis Smith, now a three-time Olympic medalist.

About New Year Honour

The New Year Honours is a part of the British honours system, where New Year's Day, 1 January, is marked by naming new members of orders of chivalry and recipients of other official honours. A number of other Commonwealth Realms also mark this day in this way. The awards are presented by or in the name of the reigning monarch British honours are published in supplements to the London Gazette. Honours have been awarded at New Year since at least 1890, in which year a list of Queen Victoria's awards was published by the London Gazette on 2 January.

Web Ratna Award-2012

Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity (DAVP) was conferred the prestigious Web Ratna 2012, Golden Icon Award for Innovative use of Technology. The DAVP Website (<http://davp.nic.in/>) has enabled a complete change from the manual mode to the online mode where the media plans are made and released for the end users. The website with several user friendly features is the only advertising agency in the country which releases its designs, Release orders, payments online. The DAVP website has added a great deal of transparency to the entire system in its billing as well as other procedures which have not only helped the organisation but also its stakeholders. DAVP also keeps as much information as possible on the website for public scrutiny and information. The entire chain has contributed a great deal of efficiency to the DAVP's operation and vastly improved the satisfaction levels of the client ministries as well as newspapers, channels and other agencies. The Project was headed by A P Frank Noronha, DG, DAVP.

The Web Ratna Awards

The Web Ratna awards, constituted by the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, acknowledges exemplary initiatives/practices in the realm of e-governance. In order to promote more innovative e-governance initiatives,

the Web Ratna Awards have been instituted under the ambit of the National Portal of India.

Nominees for Padma Awards

High-level committee met on 26 December 2012 to shortlist the nominees of prestigious Padma awards. Rajesh Khanna, singer Kailash Kher as well as director of much-acclaimed movie Sholay', Ramesh Sippy might be honoured with the prestigious awards on 26 January 2013. Rajesh Khanna, who died on 18 July 2012, was shortlisted for highest category of Padma awards- Padma Vibhushan. Ramesh Sippy and Kailesh Kher were shortlisted for the award of Padma Shri. The high-level committee that shortlisted the nominees of the award included cabinet secretary Ajit Seth, home secretary R K Singh, scientist Anil Kakodkar, principal secretary to the PM Pulok Chatterjee as well as actor Ratna Pathak Shah. Awardees' names would be declared on 25 January 2013 after PM Manmohan Singh's approval. Rajesh Khanna, Kailash Kher and Ramesh Sippy were shortlisted after recommendations from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Usually, the Padma awards are not conferred after the death of an individual, but Rajesh Khanna was considered by the Government as highly deserving candidate for Padma Vibhushan. This would make an exception to the Padma awards. Similar exceptions were made

earlier when singer and music director Bhupen Hazarika was conferred with the prestigious Padma Vibhushan posthumously in 2012. It is quite ironical that Rajesh Khanna had never received Padma award during his lifetime, while a lot of his colleagues had achieved the honour in various years.

Brand Laureate Legendary Award

47 Years old Bollywood Actor Shah Rukh Khan on 13 December 2012 awarded with the prestigious BrandLaureate Legendary Award in Malaysia. The award was given by the Malaysia-based Asia Pacific Brands Foundation for his contributions to the Bollywood film industry and as India's foremost brand ambassador.

The BrandLaureate Legendary Award had been earlier given to well known personality like those to Nelson Mandela, Nobel Laureate recipient Mohammad Yunus, Ratan Tata, Steve Jobs, Mark Zuckerberg, Michael Schumacher and more.

Earlier in 2008 Shah Rukh was conferred with the prestigious Malaysian title of Datuk by the governor of Malaysia's southern state of Malacca for promoting tourism through his movies in that region. Malaysian title of Datuk is equivalent of the British Knighthood, the highest awards given to an individual in the UK. Shah Rukh Khan went to Malaysia to attend Malaysian Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir bin Mohammad's birthday.

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. Balaguer Prize given in which field?
 - (a) Biology
 - (b) Mathematics
 - (c) Economics
 - (d) Medicine
2. Balaguer Prize given in which field?
 - (a) Biology
 - (b) Mathematics
 - (c) Economics
 - (d) Medicine
3. Consider the following statements
 1. Man Booker International Prize money is 50,000 Pounds (Currency).
 2. This years 5000 \$ DSC Prize for South Asian Literature given to Jeet Thayal.
 Which of the above statement is/are true?
 - (a) only 1
 - (b) only 2
 - (c) Both 1 & 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
4. Recently which personality got congress (American parliament) highest civilian honour?
 - (a) Manmohan Singh
 - (b) Dalai Lama
 - (c) Aung San Suu Kyi
 - (d) Mukesh Ambani

ANSWERS

- | | |
|--------|--------|
| 1. (b) | 2. (b) |
| 3. (b) | 4. (c) |

IN THE NEWS

APPOINTED

Justice D.K. Jain

Union Government of India on 7 January 2012 appointed Justice D.K. Jain as Chairman of the 20th Law Commission of India. Justice Jain would take on the chair of the Chairman of the Law Commission on 24 January 2012 after he retires of a Judge of Supreme Court on the same day. The Law Commission is responsible for offering advices on complex issues to the Government. He would be heading the commission as its chief for a period of three-years from the date of being in the office.

20th Law Commission of India

The 20th Law Commission of India was constituted with the Order of the Government of India with effect from 1 September 2012. The functioning of the commission would end on 31 August 2012. The commission would be responsible for identification of obsolete laws and suggest measures suitable for quick grievance handling and redressal of the citizens. It would also be examining the laws that effects poor and suggest measures which would help in harnessing the law and the legal process for the economically weaker and poor section of the society.

Roelant Oltmans

Hockey India on 17 January announced that Roelant Oltmans, the Dutch Coach would serve the Indian Hockey Team as Director - High Performance and would look forward towards the sports in India till 2016 Rio Olympics. Oltmans would be responsible for the planning the training program as well as calendar for both the junior and the senior Players in Men and Women sections.

Roelant Oltmans

- He is a Dutch field hockey coach and has coached the Dutch team for 14 years
- He is Dutch Olympic Committee as performance manager for elite sports
- He is serving Uttar Pradesh Wizards team in the ongoing Hockey India League
- He was the coach of the Dutch side that won Gold Medal in Atlanta Olympics
- He has also been a part of Dutch side in two FIH World Cups, Euro Hockey League and three FIH Champions Trophy

Sam Pitroda

The Information and Broadcasting Ministry on 29 January 2013 constituted a seven-member expert committee to review the institutional framework of Prasar Bharti. The committee will be headed by the Advisor to the Prime Minister on Public Information Infrastructure, Sam Pitroda. The committee will have Prasar Bharati CEO Jawhar Sircar as its convener. The committee will review the relationship of Prasar Bharti with the government, its continuing role as a public broadcaster and measures needed to ensure its technical upgradation. It will also suggest ways of using the new media to deliver digital content both in broadcast mode (DTH) and in a demand based mode like YouTube. The committee comprises members; retired IAS officer Asha Swaroop, who had earlier served as secretary in the I&B Ministry, Professor M P Gupta of IIT Delhi, B K Gairola (Mission Director e-Governance), Jitendra Shankar Mathur, additional secretary and nominated member on the Prasar Bharati Board and Shekhar Kapur (a member of the National Innovation Council).

Kamal Nath

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh elected Kamal

Nath, the Union Minister for Urban Development and Parliamentary Affairs, as a leader of Indian delegation for annual meetings for World Economic Forum which will be held in Davos from 23 to 27 January 2013.

There will be other three members in the delegation and these involve Power Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, Heavy Industry Minister Praful Patel and Commerce & Industry Minister Anand Sharma. Kamal Nath being chosen as the leader of the delegation surprised the government because this is the first time when someone not from the ministries of finance or commerce is leading the delegation. Choice of Kamal Nath as the leader reflected his importance in the UPA.

Back in 2006 as well, when the economy was at its boom, Kamal Nath launched India Everywhere campaign, depicting India as a lucrative destination for the investment purpose and for placing it in the top most table at the global level. However, now Indian delegation has the challenge of convincing business tycoons at the global level that India is among the most lucrative investment destinations.

Milos Zeman

Milos Zeman became Czech Republic's first directly elected President as per the Czech Republic Presidential election results declared on 25 January 2013. He won 55 percent as compared with 45 percent of Karel Schwarzenberg. Milos Zeman is the former Prime Minister of Czech Republic and head of the Party of Civic Rights-Zemanovci (SPOZ) while Karel Schwarzenberg is foreign minister in the present centre-right coalition government. Zeman succeeds Vaclav Klaus as the President of Czech Republic.

Milos Zeman is the first directly elected President in Czech history (and overall third President), with the presidential elections held prior to 2013 all being decided internally by the senate. Prior to this, he served as the Prime Minister of the Czech Republic from 1998 to 2002. As leader of the Czech Social Democratic Party during the 1990s, he transformed it into one of the country's major political parties. He was also the Chairman of the Chamber of Deputies- the lower house of the Czech parliament- from 1996 to 1998.

Rajnath Singh

Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) on 23 January 2013 elected Rajnath Singh as its new President. His appointment to the post was announced by Thawar Chand Gehlot, the Central Election Officer at the headquarters of the party, at New Delhi. Rajnath Singh replaced Nitin Gadkari, who served the party as its President for a period of three years from December 2009 to January 2013.

About Rajnath Singh

- He has served BJP as its former National President from December 2005 to November 2009
- In 1988, Rajnath Singh was elected as the Member of Legislative Assembly for UP Legislative Council in 1988
- He was elected as the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh on 28th October 2000
- He have been the MLA from Haidargarh constituency in Barabanki, two times
- He was appointed as the Union Minister of Agriculture and subsequently for Food Processing on 24th May 2003 during his term in the office; he initiated a few projects like Kisan Call Centre and Farm Income Insurance Scheme.

Rahul Gandhi

Rahul Gandhi on 19 January 2013 was formally elevated and was appointed at the position of party Vice-President of Congress at the Chintan Shivir organised at Jaipur in January 2013. With this appointment, Rahul Gandhi took over the second highest chair of the oldest political party of the nation, just after the party-president and her mother Sonia Gandhi. His appointment to the post came up following the decision made by the Congress Working Committee, the party's highest decision making body.

Jaipur

Jaipur is the capital city of western state of India Rajasthan and also known as the Pink City. The city was built in 1727 by Sawai Jai Singh-II, Jaipur and was the first planned city of its time. It's a place with beautiful palaces, forts and havelis namely - palace of Amber, Hawa Mahal, Jal Mahal and more. The city holds a long history of battles for power within it.

In The News

Congress Vice Presidents in the Post Independent India

- Arjun Singh in 1986 was designated as the first Vice-President of the party
- Jitendra Prasada was appointed as the party Vice-President in 1997

Urjit Patel

Urjit Patel was appointed as the Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India on 3 January 2013. Urjit Patel succeeds Subir Gokarn, who handled Monetary Policy in RBI. The three-year term of Subir Gokarn terminated in November 2012 but he was given an extension which ended finally on 31 December 2012. Urjit Patel was chosen over current Deputy Governor Subir Gokarn and International Monetary Fund (IMF) economist Kalpana Kochhar. There are in all four Deputy Governor Posts in RBI. With the termination of term of Subir Gokarn, one post was vacant.

S. Ramakrishnan

A senior Scientist from ISRO, S. Ramakrishnan took over as the Director of the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC), Thiruvananthapuram in the first week of January 2013. Ramakrishnan carries a four decades of experience in rocketry and headed the Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC) at ISRO. He replaced P S Veeraraghavan.

Brij Bihari Lal Butail

Brij Bihari Lal Butail was unanimously elected as the new speaker of Himachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly on 9 January 2013. Brij Bihari Lal Butail is the five-time MLA as well as Senior Congress leader. Butail was elected as the speaker unanimously after the BJP decided that none of its candidate should field for this designation, leaving him as the only choice. Three nominations for Butail were filed which included, Chief Minister Virbhadra Singh and Agriculture Minister Sujan Singh Pathania, second by Leader of the opposition P K Dhumal and state BJP chief Satpal Singh Satti as well as third by the Irrigation and Public Health Minister Vidya Stokes and Housing Minister Sudhir Sharma. Butail got elected for the fifth time to Vidhan Sabha from Palampur. He remained as the minister as well as political advisor to Chief Minister. Butail is the 12th

Speaker of the state Assembly as well as second from Palampur.

Syed Asif Ibrahim

Syed Asif Ibrahim, the 1977 Madhya Pradesh cadre IPS officer took over the office of Intelligence Bureau as a director on 1 January 2013 from Nehchal Sandhu. Alok Joshi, the Haryana cadre IPS officer on the other hand took over the office of RAW as the director on 31 December 2012. The names of the head of IB and RAW were cleared in November 2012 by the cabinet committee which was headed by the Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. Syed Asif Ibrahim was appointed as officer on special duty in the Intelligence Bureau after his name was cleared from appointments panel. With this, Ibrahim became the first Muslim to acquire such a prestigious post in the IB. Nehchal Sandhu retired as the head of IB on 31 December 2012 after which Asif Ibrahim took over. Before holding the position of head of IB, Asif Ibrahim served as a special director in IB. He became the special director after returning from London where he held the designation of Minister (Coordination) in the Indian high commission.

Srikanth Srinivasan

Indian-American Srikanth Srinivasan on 4th January 2013 re-nominated by US President Barack Obama as Federal Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit. Srikanth Srinivasan is among the 33 federal judges re-nominated by the President Barack Obama for the US Court of Appeals and the only Indian American re-nominated by Obama for the District of Columbia Circuit. The nomination is pending over the United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary which is charged with conducting hearings prior to the Senate votes on confirmation of federal judges nominated by the president. Srinivasan was born in Chandigarh, and grew up in Lawrence, Kansas and had received his BA with honors and distinction in 1989 from Stanford University and his JD (Juris Doctor) with distinction in 1995 from Stanford Law School, where he was elected to Order of the Coif and served as an editor of the Stanford Law Review.

Rajiv Takru

Rajiv Takru, the Senior IAS officer on 9 January 2013 promoted and appointed as Secretary of

Financial Services in the Finance Ministry. Rajiv Takru was promoted from his present post of Additional Secretary and Financial Adviser in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. The job of Rajiv Takru is that of looking after the functioning of banks, insurance companies and other financial institutions. Rajiv Takru, is a 1979-batch officer of Gujarat cadre and was earlier CEO of Prasar Bharti and had worked in the Information and Broadcasting Ministry. Rajiv Takru is going to succeed Dinesh Kumar Mittal, who retires on 31 January 2013. Also, in an another appointment, the Appointments Committee of Cabinet (ACC) headed by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had approved the appointment of Ravi Mathur as Secretary in the Department of Disinvestment under the Finance Ministry. Ravi Mathur, is a 1979-batch IAS officer of Rajasthan cadre and is currently Additional Secretary in Ministry of Labour and Employment. Prof K Vijayraghavan, was also appointed by the Appointments Committee of Cabinet (ACC) as Director, National Centre for Biological Sciences, Bangalore as Secretary, Department of Biotechnology.

Justice Amitava Roy

Justice Amitava Roy on 2 January 2013 was sworn in as the Chief Justice of Rajasthan High Court. The oath was administered to him at Raj Bhavan by the Governor of Rajasthan Margaret Alva. With taking over the oath he asserted that there was scope for strengthening the trial processes related to prevention of atrocities against women. He acknowledged the need for the courts to reduce the trial time. He also stressed that there was shortage of judges at the Rajasthan high court. At present there are 21 judges against the 40 posts of high court judges and he also highlighted accorded priority to setting up of fast track courts for cases pertaining to sexual abuse and other atrocities against women. Chief justice Amitava Roy was until now working at the Guwahati high court and was second in seniority there. He had replaced chief justice Arun Kumar Mishra who was transferred to the Calcutta high court in month of December 2012.

Narendra Modi

Narendra Modi on 26 December 2012 was sworn-in as the Chief Minister of Gujarat for the

fourth consecutive term. Governor Kamla Beniwal administered the oath of office and secrecy to him at Sardar Patel Stadium at Ahmedabad. Seven cabinet Ministers and nine Ministers of State also took oath. Narendra Mdoi was sworn-in as the Chief Minister of Gujrat for the first time on 7 October 2001. He was sworn-in as the Chief Minister of Gujrat for the second time on 22 December 2002. He was born in September 1950 at Vadnagar, a small town in Mehsana district of North Gujarat.

Virbhadra Singh

Former Union Minister of India and Veteran Congress leader Virbhadra Singh on 25 December 2012 was sworn-in as Chief Minister of Himachal for a record sixth term in Shimla. 78 years old Virbhadra Singh was administered the oath of office by Governor of Himachal Pradesh Urmila Singh. Oath of office and secrecy to the chief parliamentary secretaries was administered by the Chief Minister.

Besides Virbhadra Singh, nine Cabinet members and three chief Parliamentary secretaries were also sworn-in. Virbhadra Singh is often referred to as the Raja of Rampur because his ancestors were royalty. He had served five terms as chief minister of Himachal Pradesh between 1983 and 2007. In his five-decade political career, he has been an MLA seven times and a parliamentarian five times.

Ranjit Sinha

Ranjit Sinha, IPS officer of 1974-batch Bihar cadre on 3 December 2012 acquired the office as new CBI director. Ranjit Sinha, 59, who was holding the designation of director general Indo-Tibetan Border Police, succeeded A.P. Singh who retired from the CBI office on 30 November 2012. Sinha will have two-year duration as the CBI director. He had served in CBI agency initially as the DIG and joint director as well. Sinha accepted that there were challenges which the agency needed to face and these included lack of proper manpower, Letters Rogatory execution delays as well as delays in the forensic field. During his tenure, he would try solving and addressing these issues. Sinha accepted the prestigious designation with a greater sense of responsibility. He believed that the faith in CBI would be strengthened under his guidance and supervision.

In The News

Vinod Rai

United Nations gave Vinod Rai, the comptroller and auditor general of India a second term as the designation of chairman of UN Panel of External Auditors for 2013. CAG of the UK, Amyas Morse was re-elected as the vice-chairman. Panel of the United Nations is the deciding body of the course as well as subject of audit of the different UN organisations which also include International Atomic Energy Agency. The UN Panel of External Auditors for 2013 includes apex auditors of various countries such as Switzerland, Tanzania, Canada, China, India, Italy, Philippines, UK, France and Pakistan as the members.

Role of UN Panel of External Auditors

The UN Panel of External Auditors has a crucial role to play in promotion of accountability as well as strengthening of the governance mechanisms in various organisations of UN. The Secretary General of UN, Ban-ki-Moon appreciated this panel of the auditors which was headed by Vinod Rai. In the meeting held on 11 December 2012, the panel of auditors at UN headquarters in New York held discussions about the business transformations which were at present underway in United Nations with secretary general.

Composition of UN Panel of External Auditors

UN Panel of External Auditors comprises of Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) which are always engaged in auditing the United Nations as well as the specialised agencies and International Atomic Energy Agency.

Shinzo Abe

Shinzo Abe, the conservative leader of Japan was elected as the prime minister of the country by lower house of the Parliament called the House of Representatives, on 26 December 2012. Shinzo Abe took oath to rebuild Japanese economy as well as mend the coalition with US. The lower house of the parliament in Japan, which is said to be very powerful, picked 58-year old Shinzo Abe as the new leader of the country. All this came after the loud victory of Liberal Democratic Party which is headed by Abe, in national election earlier in December 2012.

The Liberal Democratic Party had won over Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ). The lawmakers in Japan voted in favour of Abe by 328 votes. Opponent Banri Kaieda, the newly chosen leader of DPJ received merely 57 votes. The cabinet of Yoshihiko Noda resigned as a whole before LDP-powered lower house of the Parliament named Abe as the next Prime Minister. Abe had initially served as the Prime Minister of Japan from 2006 to 2007.

Kamal Nath

Prime Minister's Office on 26 December 2012 re-constituted the Planning Commission and appointed the Parliamentary Affairs and Urban Development Minister - Kamal Nath as its new ex-officio member, replacing Jairam Ramesh. The decision was taken with the view to lay down government emphasis on the Urban Development and schemes like MNREGA, already in existence for rural development. The other ex-officio members of the Commission are Finance Minister P Chidambaram, Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar, Home Minister Sushilkumar Shinde, Health Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad, Chemicals and Fertilisers Minister M K Alagiri, Communications Minister Kapil Sibal, Law Minister.

Justice Swatanter Kumar

Justice Swatanter Kumar in the fourth week of December 2012 took over as the Chairperson of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) - the apex body constituted under The National Green Tribunal Act 2010. He would look forward to the issues related to the cases of environmental protection and conversation of forests and the natural resources.

Justice Kumar is the first Judge of Supreme Court of India to preside over the Tribunal that never had a full-time Chairperson for itself. He would be retiring from the Supreme Court on 30 December 2012. A retired judge of Madras High Court - Justice P. Jyothimani took his charge as the judicial member of the NGT on 24 December 2012.

Parthasarathi Shome

The Union government of India appointed Parthasarathi Shome, the tax expert, as the adviser to finance minister P Chidambaram. Shome was appointed with a rank of minister of state and this

also indicated his comeback to the Secretariat building after almost 5 years. Shome was also the adviser to P Chidambaram during the UPA-I. He was the working brain behind fringe benefit tax as well as banking cash transaction tax on the withdrawals of the cash. These tax policies were aimed towards keeping a check on black money which was a subject of sharp criticisms apart from the securities transaction tax. For past few months, he was also associated with acquiring back the investor confidence. He was the head of committee on General Anti-Avoidance Rules (GAAR) as well as retrospective amendments, the controversial legislative idea which was taken by Pranab Mukherjee in previous budget session.

Naina Lal Kidwai

Naina Lal Kidwai on 15 December 2012 took over as President of FICCI, becoming the first woman to head the leading industry body. Kidwai, is the first woman and professional manager to be elected as President of the chamber. She is 55 years old. Digjam Ltd, Sidharth Birla was elected as Senior Vice-President of FICCI. Kidwai succeeds R V Kanoria of Kanoria Chemicals & Industries Ltd.

Chairman of Xpro India Ltd. Naina Lal Kidwai on 15 December 2012 took over as President of FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry), becoming the first woman to head the leading industry body. Kidwai, is the first woman and professional manager to be elected as President of the chamber. She is 55 years old. Chairman of Digjam Ltd, Sidharth Birla was elected as Senior Vice-President of FICCI. Kidwai succeeded R V Kanoria of Kanoria Chemicals & Industries Ltd. Chairman of Xpro India Ltd. Naina Lal Kidwai is the Country head of HSBC India and Director of HSBC Asia Pacific.

Patrick Suckling

Career diplomat Patrick Suckling on 30 December 2012 had been appointed as Australia's next High Commissioner to India. Patrick Suckling who is a career diplomat and had been previously posted to New Delhi and Washington is going to take up the position in New Delhi in January 2013. The appointment of Patrick Suckling was announced by Foreign Minister Bob Carr who asserted that the

role was important because India is Australia's fourth largest export market, with trade between the two countries reaching 18-billion dollars a year. Suckling is replacing Peter Varghese, who is returning to Australia to head the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Suckling holds a Post-Graduate Diploma in Hindi from the University of Sydney and as a career diplomat had an expertise in policy development, public diplomacy and consular service. Patrick Suckling was adviser to Foreign Minister D

MS Sahoo

MS Sahoo, the former member of SEBI (Securities and Exchange Board of India) on 27 December 2012 had been appointed secretary of the Institute of Company Secretaries. The appointment of MS Sahoo is going to be effective from 1 January 2013.

- MS Sahoo had over three decades of rich work experience in self-employment, private sector, public sector, regulator and government in varied functional areas such as reforms, policy, regulations, research and analysis.
- Before joining the ICSI, he was an eminent legal practitioner in the field of securities laws.
- He was a Whole Time Member of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) during 2008-11.

MS Sahoo was instrumental in development of human resource capacity in securities markets through various interventions such as NSE's Certification in Financial Markets (NCFM), National Institute of Securities Markets (NISM) and a number of reputed publications. He has served / serves as a member on several expert committees / boards and professional groups.

Praful Patel

Praful Patel on 20 December 2012 was re-elected as the President of All India Football Federation (AIFF) during the annual general body meet that was held at Football House at New Delhi. This would be the second term for him as the President of All India Football Federation. The election concluded in the presence of Radhica Sreeman-Regional Director of SAI, P. C. Makholia of SAI, Mun Si Song of Asian Football Confederation and Shaji Prabhakaran of FIFA Regional Developmental Officer, South and

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Central Asia and the members of the federation were elected unopposed to the AGM.

Justice Arun kumar Mishra

Justice Arun Kumar Mishra took over as the new Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court on 14 December 2012. Arun Kumar Mishra was earlier the Chief Justice of Rajasthan High Court. He was administered the oath of office by West Bengal Governor M K Narayanan.

Taking over the office Justice Mishra in his address said he would strive to ensure speedy disposal of cases to reduce pendency and his endeavour will be to work tirelessly for the interest of common men. Justice Mishra called on the Bar to ensure speedy and inexpensive justice to the people.

S.A. Ibrahim

The Competent Authority on 3 December 2012 approved appointment of S. A. Ibrahim the IPS (MP-77) as officer on Special Duty in the Intelligence Bureau and also as the Director for Intelligence Bureau for a next two years from the date he acquires his charge or till the next order that is is further sent. His tenure to the post of Officer on Special Duty in the Intelligence Bureau started from 1 December 2012. At Present S.A. Ibrahim is serving as Special Director, Intelligence Bureau and will be taking over the charge of Director, Intelligence Bureau after vice Nehchal Sandhu will retire from his office on 31 December 2012.

S Raman

Indian Market Regulator SEBI on 28 December 2012 appointed S. Raman as Whole-time Member of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI). Prior to this appointment, Raman, had served as Chairman and Managing Director of Canara Bank from September 2010 to September 2012 and had also served as Executive Director of Union Bank of India from October 2008 to August 2010. As per the Finance ministry Raman is going to hold the post of SEBI whole-time member for a period of five years from the day he assumes charge or up to 65 years of age or until further orders, whichever is earlier. With this appointment, SEBI has three wholetime members, including Prashant Saran and Rajeev Kumar Agarwal.

Subhash Joshi

Subhash Joshi on 18 December 2012 appointed as the new chief of Border Security Force (BSF) while. Subhash Joshi is at present is the director general of National Security Guard and he is going to lead the 1.8 lakh strong border force BSF. The post of the chief of Indian Border Force had fallen vacant on 1 December 2012 due to retirement U K Bansal's, the director general of the Border Security Force (BSF). Subhash Joshi is a 1976 batch IPS officer from Uttarakhand cadre and is due to retire in February 2014. He has also served in CRPF as special director general of Police.

Ajay Chadha

Special secretary in home ministry Ajay Chadha appointed to head the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), appointment cleared by appointments committee of cabinet. Ajay Chadha is a 1977 batch IPS officer of AGMU cadre and is going to have his tenure till August 2013. The post of director general of ITBP had fallen vacant after Ranjit Sinha was appointed as director of CBI.

Arvind Ranjan

The Special director general of BSF Arvind Ranjan was appointed as new director general, National Security Guard (NSG). Arvind Ranjan is a 1977 batch IPS officer of Kerala and will continue his service till April 2015.

All the appointments is going to be in effect from the dates these officers assume charge of their posts and till their superannuation or until further orders, whichever event takes place earlier.

DEATH

Rusi Framroze Surti

Rusi Framroze Surti, the former all-rounder of India from Surat died on 13 January 2013 in Mumbai. Surti was aged 76 years. Surti was often also called poor man's Garry Sobers and played 26 Test matches for India from the time period of 1960 to 1969. He played for Rajasthan as well as Gujarat in Ranji Trophy. In Sheffield Shield, he represented Queensland 35 times.

About Rusi Framroze Surti

- In the Ranji Trophy, Surti played for Gujarat from 1956-57 to 1967-68. He also played for Rajasthan from 1959-60 and 1960-71.
- While playing 26 tests for India, he scored a total of 1263 runs which included nine 50s. He grabbed 42 wickets during the tests.
- Overall, Surti played a total of 160 first-class matches scoring 8066 runs including 6 centuries and 54 fifties. His highest was 246 not out.
- The best performance of Surti came during 1967-68 during the tour of New Zealand and Australia.

Haradhan Bandopadhyay

Haradhan Bandopadhyay, the renowned Bengali actor died on 5 January 2013 in Kolkata after struggling for his life for 15 days. Haradhan Bandopadhyay was aged 86 years and is survived by wife and two sons. Haradhan Bandopadhyay worked in a total of 66 films and he had a career span of six decades. He worked with Satyajit Ray in movies such as Mahanagar, Shonar Kella, Jai Baba Felunath and many more. He worked with some of the renowned directors such as son of Satyajit Ray, Sandip Ray and Mrinal Sen.

Aaron Swarth

Aaron Swarth, the internet activist and co-founder of Reditt committed suicide by hanging himself on 11 January 2013. The 26 years old computer genius was the developer of the early version of the RSS (Rich Site Summary) – web feed system was facing federal criminal charges in cases of a controversial fraud and hacking allegations. He was largely credited as the co-author of the specifications of the RSS 1.0 web feed format at the age of 14. RSS feed generally is a format that supports the users to find out content from the sites, where updates keeps on changing regularly like a news website or a blog.

Pandit Ram Sanehi Shukla

Pandit Ram Sanehi Shukla, the veteran freedom fighter died at the age of 98 at Sahebpur Village under Madiyahon tehsil on 3 January 2013. Shukla, who was a disciple of Mahatma Gandhi, died after

surviving a long illness. The last rites of the freedom fighter were performed at the Manikarnika Ghat of Varanashi with full state honour.

Koto Okubo

Koto Okubo, the lady who received the title of world's oldest lady alive after the death of Dina Manfredini of United States, died on 12 January 2013. The 115 years old Okubo was born on 24 December 1897 in a town near Tokyo, Japan. Dina Manfredini after receiving the title died within two weeks time and she received the award after the death of Japanese Jiroemon Kimura. Jiroemon born on 19 April 1897, in the ancient capital of Kyoto also died at the age of 115 years.

Gerda Lerner

Gerda Lerner, the leader in women's history as well as the founding member of National Organization for Woman died on 2 January 2013 at Wisconsin. She was aged 92 years. Lerner died in peace at the assisted-living facility in the city of Madison. She founded the doctoral programme in the women's history in Madison at the University of Wisconsin.

Neil Adcock

Former South Africa fast bowler, Neil Adcock died on 6 January 2013 at the age of 81 in Howick, KwaZulu-Natal province of South Africa. He had pneumonia and was also suffering from cancer for a long period of time. Brief Insight into Neil Adcock's Career

M.S. Gopalakrishnan

Padma Bhushan M.S. Gopalakrishnan, the Violin maestro died on 3 January 2012 at the age of 82. He died with the complaints of breathlessness and a brief illness.

The violinist was an expert in Hindustani and Carnatic systems of classical music. He is now survived by his wife and a violinist son and daughter M Narmada and Suresh Respectively and another daughter Latha. Hailing from the Parur lineage he was a recipient of both Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri and had a career span of about 75 years. The Music Academy conferred him from the Sangita Kalanidhi title.

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Tony Greig

Tony Greig, 66, the former captain of England cricket team and renowned commentator passed away in Sydney on 29 December 2012 following lung cancer. Tony Greig was born in Queenstown in South Africa. He was awarded with the Best Cricketer of the Year award in 1975. Greig had the test career of 58 matches and he scored 3599 runs while claiming 141 wickets. He played 22 ODIs and scored 269 runs while grabbing 19 wickets. Greig was diagnosed with the ailment in October 2012.

Pandit Ravi Shankar

Renowned Indian sitarist and Bharat Ratna Recipient Pandit Ravi Shankar passed away in San Diego city of California on 11 December 2012. He was 92 years old. The musician was admitted to the Scripps Memorial Hospital in La Jolla on 6 December 2012 after he complained of breathing difficulties. Pandit Ravi Shankar is survived by his wife Sukanya and musician daughters, sitar player Anoushka Shankar, singer Norah Jones, 3 grandchildren, and 4 great-grandchildren. Pandit Ravi Shankar was suffering from upper-respiratory and heart issues over the past year and underwent heart-valve replacement surgery on 6 December 2012. Though the surgery was successful, recovery proved too difficult for him. Pandit Ravi Shankar was the sitar exemplar and was also called India's musical ambassador who was responsible for making Indian classical music popular in the West. He had collaborated with several international artists including George Harrison of The Beatles which had earned him fame and adoration all over the world. In his 60 years as a musician Pandit Ravi Shankar had won numerous national and international awards.

Awards and Honours won by Pandit Ravi Shankar

- He received the Padma Bhushan in 1967, Padma Vibhushan in 1981 and Bharat Ratna in 1999.
- He is also a three-time Grammy winner.
- He is a honorary member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and is a member of the United Nations International Rostrum of composers.

- He is winner of Magsaysay award in year 1992.
- He received the music award of the UNESCO International Music Council in 1975.
- Pandit Ravi Shankar had won the Silver Bear Extraordinary Prize of the Jury at the 1957 Berlin International Film Festival for composing the music for the movie Kabuliwala.
- He was awarded the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for 1962
- He received the Kalidas Samman from the Government of Madhya Pradesh for 1987–88, the Fukuoka Asian Culture Prize in 1991, the Ramon Magsaysay Award in 1992, and the Polar Music Prize in 1998.

A three-time Grammy award winner Pandit Ravi Shankar last performed in California on 4 November 2012 along with his Daughter Anoushka Shankar. Pandit Shankar has also been nominated for the 2013 Grammys for his album The Living Room Sessions Part—1 and was pitted against Anoushka in the same category.

Pandit Ravi Shankar wrote an autobiography, Raga Mala, with Harrison as editor in year 1997. The autobiography was named Raga Mala: The Autobiography of Ravi Shankar.

Pandit Ravi Shankar's Career

- Born in 1920 in Varanasi to a well-off Brahmin family, Shankar left a possible career as a dancer behind to study sitar.
- Ravi Shankar was trained under Baba Allauddin Khan of the Senia Maihar gharana.
- Pandit Ravi Shankar had authored violin-sitar compositions for Yehudi Menuhin and himself, music for flute virtuoso Jean Pierre Rampal, music for Hosan Yamamoto, master of the Shakuhachi and Musumi Miyashita - Koto virtuoso, and has collaborated with Phillip Glass (Passages).
- Shankar also composed for ballets and films in India, Canada, Europe and the United States. The latter of which includes the films Charly, Gandhi, and the Apu Trilogy.
- He was also nominated as a member of the Rajya Sabha in year 1986.
- Between the early 1950s and the mid-1960s he became the leading international emissary for Indian music, first performing as a solo artist

in the USSR in 1954, in Europe and North America in 1956, and Japan in 1958.

- He developed a characteristic sitar sound, with powerful bass notes and a serene and spiritual touch in the alap movement of a raga.
- He was the man responsible for incorporating many aspects of Carnatic (south Indian) music into the north Indian system, especially its mathematical approach to rhythm. He also gave a new prominence to the tabla player in concert.
- He was appointed Director of Music at the Indian People's Theatre Association, and later held the same position at All India Radio (1949–56).
- He composed his first new raga in 1945 (30 more would follow) and began a prolific recording career.
- In 2001, Shankar was made an honorary Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire by Elizabeth II for his services to music.
- Pandit Ravi Shankar is the brother of dance exponent Uday Shankar and had also scored music for Satyajit Ray's Pather Panchali and other Bengali and Hindi movies.
- In 2010, Shankar received an Honorary Doctor of Laws from the University of Melbourne, Australia.

Pandit Ravi Shankar is to receive a posthumous lifetime achievement Grammy award to be presented at 55th Grammy Awards ceremony on 10 February 2013 in Los Angeles becoming the first Indian to receive the prestigious award.

His daughter Anoushka Shankar was also nominated in the same category for her Deutsche Grammophon release, Traveller.

Nityanand Swami

The first chief minister of Uttarakhand, Nityanand Swami, passed away on 12 December 2012. He was 84 years old and belonged to the Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP). Nityanand Swami, served the people throughout his life, focused on developmental issues and built a very good rapport with the people. Nityanand Swami was born on 27 December 1927 in Haryana. He was the first chief minister of the Uttarakhand and had served from 9 November 2000 to 29 October 2001 and then

resigned willingly in favor of Bhagat Singh Koshiyari when asked by the BJP leadership. Nityanand Swami's father served in the Forest Research Institute of India where he had spent almost all of his life in Dehradun. He joined India's freedom struggle at an early age, under the umbrella of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh(RSS) and contributed to local resistances in Dehradun.

Nityanand Swami's Political Career

- In year 1969 Nityanand Swami was first elected as the member of U.P legislative from the Dehradun constituency.
- In Year 1984, he was elected as a member of Uttar Pradesh legislative council by the graduate and one of the largest constituency of kumaon and garhwal.
- He had represented the constituency of Garwal and Kumaon for three years.
- He served as the deputy chairman of the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Council in 1991 and was unanimously elected the chairman of the same in 1992.

Leslie Claudius

The legendary hockey player Leslie Claudius, India's triple Olympic Gold Medallist died after a prolonged illness on 20 December 2012. Cirrhosis of the liver became the region of his death and is now survived by a wife and three sons. Claudius was a legendary Hockey player from the Indian side, who won three Olympic Gold Medals in the year 1948 London Olympics, 1952 Helsinki Olympics and 1956 Melbourne Olympics. He also won a silver medal at 1960 Rome Olympics. Udham Singh along with him is the only two Indians who share a tally of 4 Olympic Medals in the history of Hockey. The 85 year old was a part of legendary trio of the Indian Hockey team and shared the berth with Dhyan Chand and Roop Singh. During the Bangkok Asian Games of 1978, Claudius was appointed as the manager for the Indian Team. Claudius was the First Indian Hockey Player to play more than 100 games for the country.

Besse Cooper

Besse Cooper, the woman listed as the oldest person of the world died on 4 December 2012 in Georgia nursing home at 116 years of age. Besse Cooper had died peacefully in Monroe. Besse was

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recently taken ill with the stomach virus. Besse Cooper was declared as the oldest person of the world in January 2011 by the Guinness World Records. She was also the first Georgian who had world record with her. The birth place of Besse was Tennessee and she had moved during the First World War to Georgia. Guinness World Records declared that as of now, merely 8 people have reached the age of 116. Besse Cooper held this title of oldest person of the world since 2011. She explained her secret of living for such a long time, to Guinness World Records. She explained that she didn't eat junk food.

After the death of Besse Cooper, the title of oldest person of the world now goes to Dina Manfredini of Johnston who is aged 115 years of age. Jeanne Calment, the French woman is the oldest known person till now. She was aged 122 when she died in 1997.

Norman Schwarzkopf

Norman Schwarzkopf – the retired US General and a person who led the U.S. Forces for a Victory in the first Gulf War in Operation Desert Storm in 1991 died at Florida on 27 December 2012. He led an international coalition of U.N. authorized forces from 34 different nations into Kuwait to drive out the forces of Iraq from the country, when the forces of Iraq invaded Kuwait during the regime of President Saddam Hussein.

The retired general died at the age of 78 due to the complications of pneumonia. Norman Schwarzkopf last served the U.S. Army as commander-in-chief of U.S. Central Command on their assignment in Tampa - the headquarter that is responsible for U.S. military and security concerns in nearly 20 countries from Africa to Pakistan and the Eastern Mediterranean.

Norman Woodland

Norman Woodland, the inventor of bar code, which revolutionised retail in 70s, died at 91 on 8 December 2012 at New Jersey. He died because of complications resulting due to Alzheimer's disease. He is survived by his wife (61), two daughters, one brother and granddaughters. Woodland was the co-inventor of bar code; the zebra pattern which stores information about the products. He as well as his partner Bernard Silver (who died in 1963) patented

this idea of bar code back in 1952 and also sold that to Philco, the electronics company for 15000 US dollar.

- Woodland was mechanical engineer.
- He worked at IBM for around 35 years.
- He worked with the team that had developed laser scanner which could read bar codes during the 70's.
- For his invention, Woodland was also awarded National Medal of Technology in 1992.

Bar code

Woodland along with his partner Silver started working on a project which eventually led to bar code. At that time, they taught at Drexel University in Philadelphia.

They developed bar code after the head of one supermarket asked for a way of keeping a better record of the inventory. Woodland thought if Morse Code was useful in tracking inventory and then he started drawing lines of varied thickness on sand. That is how the code came up and is today known as Universal Product Code (UPC).

First bar code scan occurred on 26 June 1974 in Troy, Ohio. Today, there are 5 billion products which are scanned optically with the help of bar code or UPC. The laser scanner which is handheld is today used in industrial, transportation as well as shipping industries across the world. Today, the bar code saves countless hours of shoppers in the supermarkets.

ACCUSED/RESIGNED/CONTROVERSY

Arjun Munda

The Arjun Munda Ministry in Jharkhand on 8 January 2013 resigned and recommended dissolution of the two-year-old Assembly to the governor in Ranchi. The decision of his resignation came after his coalition partner, the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), decided to withdraw its support from the 28-month-long BJP-led coalition government. Arjun Munda called an emergency meeting and notified Governor Syed Ahmed of the cabinet decision just an hour before JMM chief Shibu Soren met the governor with his 18 MLAs, and handed over a formal letter of withdrawal of support. Now, it is Governor Syed

Ahmed who has to decide whether to invite another possible coalition to form the government, after being convinced that it will have the strength to prove its majority on the floor of the Assembly, or heed Munda's recommendation to dissolve the assembly to pave the way for elections. The BJP and the JMM have 18 MLAs each in the 82-member Assembly. The outgoing Munda government had the support of 47 MLAs. Though the JMM has walked out of the coalition, the BJP still enjoys the support of six members of the AJSU, two of the Janata Dal (United), two independents and one nominated member who has voting right in a trial of strength.

Akbaruddin Owaisi

Akbaruddin Owaisi, the Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (MIM) MLA who was indicted of making hate speech was arrested on 8 January 2013 after going through the medical tests in government hospital in Hyderabad. The MLA on 7 January 2013 sought time of four days for appearing in front of the police on certain medical grounds. The MIM leader Akbaruddin Owaisi is facing charges which range from sedition to waging a war against the state. He was booked on 3 January 2013 under two different sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) by the police in Nirmal Town, 200 km away from Hyderabad. He was booked under the charges of promoting hostility between different groups as well as performing actions which are harmful to the harmony, apart from the charge of attempting to wage war against the state. The last charge if proved, leads to life imprisonment or death sentence. Akbaruddin Owaisi, who is the member of Andhra Pradesh assembly, is at present facing five charges which include doing public mischief, threatening people for giving false evidence, criminal conspiracy, sedition and disobeying the official orders. He was booked in Nirmal Town by the police on grounds of delivering malicious speech in town on 22 December 2012 at a public meeting. He is also facing other such charges in Nizamabad town. Hyderabad police, Ranga Reddy police as well as police in other districts also booked various cases against him.

JBT Teachers' Recruitment Scam

The Delhi Court on 22 January 2013 sentenced 10 years in prison for the former Chief Minister of

Haryana and the leader of the National Lok Dal (INLD) Om Prakash Chautala and his Son Ajay Singh Chautala, who is an MLA from Dabwali constituency. The two along with 53 others have been sentenced for their alleged involvement in the Junior Basic Trained (JBT) teachers' recruitment scam in which 3,206 JBT teachers were recruited illegally in the state in the year 2000. Vinod Kumar, the special CBI judge after found all the accused guilty of forgery, use of fake documents as genuine, cheating, conspiracy under the IPC and abuse of the official position under the Prevention of Corruption Act. Among the convicted, there exists the name of two IAS officers Sanjiv Kumar, the then Director in the Directorate of Primary Education and Vidya Dhar, Chautala's former Officer on Special Duty and both of them have been sentenced with 10 years of imprisonment. The Political advisor to the then Haryana CM and MLA, Sher Singh Badshami was also sentenced with 10 years of imprisonment. Among the other 50 convicted, one was sentenced for five years in jail and the rest 49 have been sentenced with 4 years term in jail.

David Coleman Headley

David Coleman Headley, the Pakistani-American and the mastermind of the 26/11 Mumbai Terror Attack 2008 was sentenced to 35 years in Prison on 24 January 2013 by a U.S. Court. The Court sentence would be followed by a five years of supervised release. The sentence was pronounced by the U.S. Federal District Court Judge Harry Leinenweber, who said that Headley was a terrorist and numerous crimes were committed by Headley but his confessions turned up to be the reason that lenient sentences were issued for him. It was admitted by the U.S. Government that the nature of role played by Headley in 26/11 attacks were deplorable and the prosecution pressed for a sentence of 30 to 35 years for him. The death penalty and extradition options were dropped because of the cooperation shown by him. Headley, under a deal with U.S. Government supplied major information about the terror suspects, which was really helpful in carrying on the investigation and bring defendants like Ilyas Kashmiri, Tahawwur Rana and other Pakistan-based operatives under criminal

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charges. Justice Leinenweber in third week of January 2013 sentenced 14 years in Jail to Tahawwur Rana, the Chicago based businessman and immigration consultant for his alleged involvement in supporting the terrorist group from Pakistan, which worked with the intelligence service of Pakistan and carried out the 26/11 Mumbai Attacks in 2008. He was also a convict for a Denmark strike in a Jyllands-Posten – a Danish newspaper.

Tahawwur Rana

Tahawwur Rana, the Chicago based businessman and immigration consultant was sentenced for 14 years in Jail by the Federal Judge of US. He was sentenced by the court for his alleged involvement in supporting the terrorist group from Pakistan, which worked with the intelligence service of Pakistan and carried out the 26/11 Mumbai Attacks in 2008. He was also a convict for a Denmark strike in a Jyllands-Posten – a Danish newspaper that published cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed. The court described Rana as a partner in crime of Mumbai Attacks, when 166 people were killed and among them six were Americans. The trails undertaken in the year 2011 identified string evidences against the Spy Agency of Pakistan the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI) of playing a direct role in the operations that was planned and designed to kill people from west and the US. The sentence was pronounced by U.S. District Judge Harry Leinenweber and he chose a punishment that was higher than the minimum 11 years in prison under the guidelines of federal sentencing. The Judge claimed that the crime in the newspaper building at Copenhagen and the act of beheading the hostages and throwing the heads out of the windows to create a situation of panic was very serious. Rana being aware about Headley's involvement in the Mumbai Attack was the proof of the murderous potential of him. The Federal Court Judge also added post-prison supervision for five years of Rana in his sentence.

Darul Uloom Deoband

Darul Uloom Deoband, the leading Islamic seminary on 23 January 2013 demanded that the controversial writers should be banned from the sixth edition of Jaipur Literature Festival (JLF) which began on 24 January 2013. The demand of the

Deoband is in line with the warnings of certain Muslim groups to the organisers of JLF against the invitation of the authors who have remained in controversy for hurting the religious sentiments of communities. Certain Muslim groups had also warned the organisers of JLF on 21 January 2013 against inviting the controversial authors. It is important to note that the Darul Uloom Deoband also pleaded to the Government of India to ban authors like these from visiting India. In the similar context, the youth wing of the Bhartiya Janata Party warned JLF against the presence of Pakistani litterateur in the event, citing beheading of Indian soldiers at the LoC. In the meanwhile, the Producer of the Jaipur Literature Festival announced that even though everyone had an equal right to express the feelings, but JLF would not be hijacked. JLF was first held back in 2005 and since then, it is one among the most notable annual gatherings of book lovers as well as literati.

Nitin Gadkari

Nitin Gadkari resigned from his post as the BJP President on 22 January 2013. After his resignation, Rajnath Singh was appointed as the party chief. A lot of senior BJP leaders had earlier sought removal of Gadkari as BJP chief after his name came up in the Purti scam in 2012. Nitin Gadkari's name surfaced in the corruption charges in his company purti Group.

Narhari Amin

Senior party leader and former Deputy Chief Minister of Indian National Congress in Gujrat Narhari Amin on 6 December 2012 switched sides and joined the BJP with his supporters. Narhari Amin had over 21-year-old association with the Congress, where he worked hard to build and maintain a strong base of party workers. His decision of joining BJP came after he was denied ticket by the party for 2012 Assembly polls. Amin alleged that Union Minister C P Joshi, who was in-charge of screening committee on ticket distribution, had been giving tickets to unknown faces and fixed the polls before voting. Amin resigned from the Congress along with his six supporters. Another 175 of his supporters also had resigned on 5 December 2012 from the primary membership of the party. All of them joined BJP along with him.

Mario Monti

Italian Prime Minister Mario Monti on 21 December 2012 resigned after 13 months in office with handing over his resignation to President Giorgio Napolitano after parliament gave final approval to the 2013 budget law. With the resignation of Mario Monti the President is expected to call early national elections within 70 days of the parliament dissolution, possibly on 24 February 2013.

69-year-old Mario Monti is an economist and former European commissioner and was appointed by the President Napolitano to fill former premier Silvio Berlusconi's place after he resigned in 2011 under pressure for failing to control Italy's debt and a series of scandals. Monti's term was originally set to expire in mid-2013, but his earlier departure is expected to bring elections forward. Former Prime Minister Berlusconi had announced that he intends to run for re-election in the New Year.

BOOKS

China's Travel Attractions

Zhao Jiang the Director of the Government-run China Radio International's (CRI) Tamil station has written a book in Tamil titled China's Travel Attractions. The book will carry her Tamil name Kalaimakal. This is her first book in Tamil and would make a debut in the Chennai Book fair that is going on in YMCA College Ground in Nandanam and will continue till 23 January 2013. The book by Zhao Jiang would be available on the stall of the publication house named Gowtham Pathippagam. The book named China's Travel Attraction is a compilation of the history and culture of the Beijing, Sanghai and Tibet and can be considered as an introduction these. The book also carries the story of changes seen by the Chinese Capital in recent past to its turning up as a city of subways. The author has tried to capture the Indian mindset and introduced the historical sites of China, architectural brilliance of Shanghais and would act as a travel guide to Tibet.

Er Ist Wieder Da

New novel about Adolf Hitler, called Er Ist Wieder Da (He's Back) authored by Timur Vermes became the bestseller in Germany, replacing Winter Of

The World by Ken Follet. Er Ist Wieder Da is the novel that makes use of the proactive approach with a tinge of comedy and satire. The book was released in September 2012. The book has a different plot in which Hitler, instead of dying by the end of Second World War, goes to sleep in 1945 and wakes up in modern Berlin in 2011. The novel with a different approach climbed up to the Germany's bestseller list with over 250000 copies sold. 75000 audio books have also been sold. The German press plans to publish the book in English as well. There have been mix reviews about the book, where some literary critics applauded the book, while some called it a marketing machine in the name of Hitler to earn money.

Tamil Version of the Book Still Counting the Dead

Tamil version of the book, Still Counting the Dead- Survivors of Sri Lanka's Hidden War authored by Frances Harrison was released on 15 December 2012. The first copy of the translated work was received by noted art critic and writer Sadanand Menon. This book reveals the unprecedented killings in the last phase of civil war-also called as Eelam War in Sri Lanka in the year 2009.

The Book

The book states the killings of thousands of people who lost their lives in the No Fire Zones because mortars, artilleries, rocket launchers and supersonic jets were used by the armed forces of Sri Lanka to fight with the rebel group Tamil Tigers. The book includes interviews of the people who had shared their experiences and condition during the war with the author.

VARIOUS

Silk Letter Movement

The President of India, Pranab Mukherjee on 11 January 2013 released a Commemorative Postage Stamp on Silk Letter Movement at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. The Silk Letter Movement refers to the golden history of India's freedom struggle in which, the Deobandi leaders tried to generate a pan-Islamic revolt in British-India against the British Empire by gaining support of Afghanistan and Turkey

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Governments. Obaidullah Sindhui and Maulana Mahmood Hasan were the two main leaders of the movement. In 1916 few letters, which were written on Silk, were caught by the British.

11th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas

The three-day 11th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) kicked off in Kochi on 7 January 2013. The event saw delightful response from the people with more than 2000 registrations.

The distinctive feature of this year's Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is that this is the first time that there is going to be an exclusive session on Middle East. The organizing partner of this year summit is Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce (ICCC). Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs Vayalar Ravi is leading the day-long Middle-East session along with Chief Minister of Kerala Oommen Chandy and Joseph. The whole day event of 7th January 2013 would see discussions on problems that people from Kerala face in the region. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh will inaugurate the annual flagship event on 8 January 2013 and President Pranab Mukherjee will deliver the valedictory address on 9 January 2013 and also confer the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman awards.

About Pravasi Bharatiya Divas

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) is celebrated on 9th January every year to mark the contribution of Overseas Indian community in the development of India. January 9 was chosen as the day to celebrate this occasion since it was on this day in 1915 that Mahatma Gandhi, the greatest Pravasi, returned to India from South Africa, led India's freedom struggle and changed the lives of Indians forever. PBD conventions are being held every year since 2003. These conventions provide a platform to the overseas Indian community to engage with the government and people of the land of their ancestors for mutually beneficial activities. These conventions are also very useful in networking among the overseas Indian community residing in various parts of the world and enable them to share their experiences in various fields. During the event, individuals of exceptional merit are honoured with the prestigious Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award to appreciate their role in India's growth. The event also provides a forum for discussing key issues concerning the Indian Diaspora.

World Conference on International Telecommunications (WCIT-12)

International telecommunication Union (ITU) summoned the World Conference on International Telecommunications (WCIT) in Dubai, United Arab Emirates which was held from 3 to 14 December 2012. In the landmark conference, it was decided that the current International Telecommunications Regulations (ITRs) shall be reviewed. After negotiating for two weeks, the delegates from the length and breadth of the world agreed to a fresh international treaty called New Global Telecoms Treaty, which will welcome the power of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to everyone in the world. More than 2000 delegates from across the world were registered for this conference.

The main points of the treaty were as follows:

- The treaty basically embarks general principles for making sure that there is free flow of the information across the world.
- New provisions ensured that there was special emphasis on the future efforts for helping the developing countries, on promotion of accessibility to the disabled as well as on emphasising the right to freedom of expression of people over all the ICT networks.
- In another provision, there was an inclusion of a Resolution for creating one, globally-harmonised number for access to various emergency services, improving the energy efficiency of the ICT networks, new text making it mandatory for the prices set for mobile roaming as well as fighting against the e-waste.

Issues that provoked debate at the World Conference on International Telecommunications:

There were certain tough issues which led to debate at this conference. These issues were-

- Network security
- Unwanted bulk content like spam e-mails
- Definition of the entities which provided services under terms of the treaty,
- Whether the language on freedom of expression in the Preamble text of the treaty should be included or not

The principle of non-discriminatory access of the networks of each other's countries

ITU's Gold Medal

In WCIT-12, the ITU's Gold Medal, which is the highest honour of the organisation, was awarded by ITU Secretary-General Dr Hamadoun Touré to Chairmanship of Al Ghanim.

About WCIT-12

WCIT-12 was among the most open treaty-making conferences of the world which had live as well as archived webcasting. There was English-language captioning of the meetings of substantive working committee (Committee 5 – Review) as well as the conference Plenary sessions. There were in all, 1275 proposals to this conference from the member States. WCIT-12 included around 1600 delegates onsite from 151 Member States. This also included around 70 Ministers, Ambassadors and Deputy Ministers.

Medium Lift Helicopter Complex at Phalodi

The Chief of the Air Staff, N.A.K. Browne inaugurated the Medium Lift Helicopter Complex on 7 January 2013 at Phalodi, near Jodhpur. The complex has been developed with the purpose of raising the new Mi-17 V5 helicopter Unit. The Hanger Complex inaugurated by the Chief is one of the biggest pre-engineered hangers of its type and in the Indian Air Force. This unit would add up to the operational capabilities of the new Air Base. The new air base would be utilized by the Air Force in the forthcoming exercises namely Iron Fist scheduled for 22 February 2013 and Live Wire in March 2013.

6th Vibrant Gujarat summit

Chief Minister of Gujarat Narendra Modi on 8 January 2013 inaugurated the biennial (held every second year) Vibrant Gujarat Global Investors meet by throwing open a mega trade exhibition that has over one thousand firms from as many as 16 countries displaying their products. The highlight of the sixth edition of the summit is an international conference of academic institutions with expected participation of 200 delegates from 130 institutions from 50 countries. The six-day global trade show spread across over 1 lakh square metres is supposed to receive a whopping 15 lakh visitors and has 13 domes, 14 pavilions, over a thousand stalls and over

25000 products on display and is going to be one of the largest of its kind in the country. Unique and interesting displays from various companies are a centre of attraction at the Global Trade Show: like a unique Solar Aircraft model from Solvay Group, Craft Village by Industrial Extension Cottage, Solar Village by Gujarat Energy Development Agency and Gujarat Power Corporation Ltd.

About Vibrant Gujarat Summit

Vibrant Gujarat is the name given to a biennial investors' summit held by the government of Gujarat. The Global Trade Show is an integral component of Vibrant Gujarat Summit. This platform offers a unique opportunity to corporate houses, institutions and industrial giants to showcase their innovations, products and services to a large gathering of Indian and global summit delegates and also allows having meaningful business-to-business interactions resulting in serious business and trade opportunities. Apart from Partner Countries Japan and Canada, various other countries like USA, UK, Australia, Netherlands, Rwanda, Israel and Mozambique etc., have marked their presence at the event.

Sunmeet Kaur

Sunmeet Kaur Sawhney, a housewife from state of Punjab in January 2013 emerged as first woman to win 5 crore rupees on TV game show Kaun Banega Crorepati 6 (KBC). Sawhney who had studied till XII class only is a home tutor and she presently resides in city of Mumbai. She used to give tuitions to young children in suburban Mumbai to add to the family income. Sunmeet's husband Manmeet is a small time actor who has appeared in about 150 commercials and Ram Gopal Varma's Jungle. The show featuring Sunmeet winning the game show will be aired on 12 January 2013. The show is hosted by Bollywood Actor Amitabh Bachchan and it features on Sony TV. 37 year old Sunmeet Kaur Sawhney plans to donate a part of the money for prayer rituals. The other contestant who had win the amount of 5 crore rupees is Sushil Kumar a computer operator from Motihari district of Bihar. Sushil Kumar was a contestant in season 5 of KBC. He was the first participant in the history of KBC to claim the amount of 5 crore rupees.

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Air Marshal Kulwant Singh Gill

Air Marshal Kulwant Singh Gill on 8 January 2013 took over the charge of National Defence Academy, Khadakwasla as its new Commandant. Kulwant Singh replaced outgoing Lt. Gen Ashok Singh to take over this post.

Mukesh Ambani

Mukesh Ambani, the Indian business tycoon is the 18th richest person of the world having personal wealth of 24.7 billion dollar in 2012, as per the Bloomberg Billionaires Index, which is the daily ranking that describes 100 wealthiest individuals of the world. Mukesh Ambani is the chairman and MD of Reliance Industries and for the sixth time in a row, he retained his rank as the richest Indian of the world. Infact, his ranking jumped up from 19th position to 18th and his wealth increased from 21 billion dollar to 24.7 billion dollar in the world, the Index revealed. The Index also revealed that the Mexican telecommunication tycoon Carlos Slim was the richest person of the world in 2012 with personal wealth of over 70 billion dollar. The founder of Microsoft, Bill Gates as well as the founder of Zara, the fashion retail, Amancio Ortega retained the position in top three with their wealth standing just more than and a little less than 60 billion dollar respectively. The investor Warren Buffett came down to fourth position despite adding a personal wealth of approximately 5 billion dollar and donating a huge chunk to the charity. The net worth of IKEA founder, Ingvar Kamprad got the net worth increased to around 40 billion dollar, thus achieving the fifth position. The Index revealed that the top 100 billionaires of the world became richer even more in 2012 with the total wealth increasing by approximately 15 percent to 1.81 trillion dollar.

Oldest Fossil of the Earth

Scientists while analysing the Australian rocks claimed that they discovered certain traces of bacteria in Western Australia's Pilbara region, which lived a record-breaking 3.49 billion years ago. The biochemist at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Nora Noffke described that the traces of bacteria are among the oldest fossils ever found and therefore they are said to be the oldest ancestors of humans. In

case these fossils are actually so old, then it could assist the scientists in understanding about initial phases of life on this planet. The discovery is also helpful in stimulating the search for the ancient life that exists on other planets apart from Earth. These newly-discovered fossils are not the horrified body parts, unlike those of dinosaurs' bones. They actually appear like the textures on surface of the sandstone which is believed to be sculpted by the living organisms that existed during that time. These fossils were discovered in the sandstone at bottom of Strelley Pool rock formation in the Western Australia.

During the analysis, the carbon which created the textured rocks was measured. Around 99 percent of the carbon which is found in non-living things is called carbon-12, which is actually the lighter version of element in comparison to carbon-13, which forms the remaining 1 percent. Microbes which make use of the process of photosynthesis for making their food comprise of even more carbon-12 and less quantity of carbon-13. This predisposition was evident on that Australian rock from which fossils were discovered.

Navi Pillay

Calling the sexual violence and brutality against the females as national issue in India, the human rights chief of UN, Navi Pillay asked the union government of India to strengthen the legal administration against sexual crimes, primarily rapes. The UN human rights chief was however against death penalty for the rapists. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights gave her detailed reaction to the heinous Delhi gangrape of 23-year old Para-medical student which took place on 16 December 2012. The Delhi gangrape victim had died in Singapore. The UN human rights chief declared that attacks like these were happening against females in all the social classes in India. She expressed that this was the national problem which affected women of almost all the castes and classes. Pillay in the meanwhile also welcomed the protests supporting anti-rape, declaring that these would help women in overcoming their fears in New Year. It was announced that though the union government of India took a few steps for ensuring women safety but a lot more needed to be done. Pillay also asked the Indian government for inviting UN Special

Rapporteur on the violence against the females to visit India for helping in the process. UN Special Rapporteurs are the autonomous experts who are especially trained for investigating issues like these.

First Earthquake-Proof Hindu Temple of the World

One among the biggest Hindu temples in US, which is built at an enormous cost of 100 million dollar near Hollywood city, Los Angeles was opened on 3 January 2013. The temple became an attraction for its majesty as well as eco-friendly design ever since it was inaugurated on 23 December 2012. This is the 68th Swaminarayan temple built by Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS) by making use of the 35000 hand-carved Italian Carrara marble pieces as well as Indian Pink Sandstone. The temple is also said to be the first earthquake-proof Hindu temple of the world and it is expected to standstill for 1000 years. Making use of the state-of-the-art technology for providing it protection from the earthquakes, the temple includes two huge domes, 122 pillars, five pinnacles, 129 archways and four balconies. The upper portion of the entire complex is earthquake-proof because it is segregated from base with line of 40 base-isolator units. There are 6600 hand-carved motifs which are a depiction of assortment of devotion, dedication and inspiration apart from historical figures that showcase Hinduism. The temple is located on 20-acre site comprising of 91 foot pond that is lotus-shaped, gymnasium, classrooms as well as Cultural Centre. For generating electricity, the temple makes use of the solar power system. The temple in all is said to be an amalgamation of traditional stone art as well as architecture along with modern technology.

Heritage Status to Neta Ji's Ancestral House

The West Bengal Government on 22 January 2013, the day of Neta Ji Subhash Chandra Bose's birth anniversary, declared that it would give a heritage status to his ancestral house at Kodalia in South 24 Parganas district. The Government also announced that if the need arises to acquire the land, than it is also ready to do so.

3rd National voters' Day

The Election Commission of India celebrated the 3rd National Voters' Day across the country on 25 January 2013. The theme for the 3rd NVD is Inclusion. NVD functions were held at more than 6.5 lakh locations across the country covering nearly all 8.5 lakh Polling Stations. Around 46000 Educational Institutions also celebrated National Voters' Day. Around 4867 Youth Voter Festivals have been held across the states to engage youth in the registration process. The National Function to mark the 3rd National Voters' Day was held at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. 25th January is also the foundation day of the Commission, which came into being on this day in 1950. The Commission's objective through NVD is to increase enrolment of voters, especially of the newly eligible ones, to make universal adult suffrage a complete reality. The National Voters' Day is also utilized to spread awareness among voters regarding effective participation in the electoral process.

Ballistic Missile K-15

India on 26 January 2013 successfully test fired an underwater ballistic missile, K-15 (code-named Bo5), with a strike range of around 700 kilometres, from an underwater platform in Bay of Bengal. The medium range K-5 ballistic missile was test-fired from an underwater pontoon and all parameters of the test firing were met.

The major features of K-15 are as following:

- K-15 is the 10-metre tall Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missile (SLBM).
- India is only the fifth nation to have SLBM. The other four nations are Russia, China, France and USA.
- The process of integrating K-15 missile with INS Arihant, the indigenously built nuclear submarine will start now.
- India is also in the process of developing K-4 missile with a range of 3000 km.

Oldest Elephant of Japan

Hanako, the third oldest elephant of the world, celebrated its 66th birthday at the Inokashira Park Zoo of Japan. Hanako is also the oldest elephant of Japan at the Inokashira Park Zoo which is situated in border of Mitaka and Musashino in western Tokyo.

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The ceremony in which the birthday celebrations took place was attended by approximately 800 people. Hanako was born in Bangkok and was brought to Japan from Thailand in 1949 when it was just 2 years old. Hanako has lived in the Japan's zoo since 1954. The actual birthday of Hanako is not known, which is why 1 January is celebrated as its birthday every year by the zoo authorities. In 2012, Hanako matched record of the oldest elephant of Japan, Suwako who died back in 2008 at the Kobe zoo.

Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck

Bhutan King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck is to be the chief guest at the Republic Day parade for the year 2013. The Bhutan King is also to be the chief guest at the Confederation of Indian Industry Partnership Summit-2013 to be held at Agra from 27th to 29 January 2013. Bhutan King's visit will contribute to further strengthening and expanding the close bilateral relations between India and Bhutan. The unique and special relations between the two neighbouring countries are characterized by everlasting friendship, deep understanding and mutual trust.

World Anti-Leprosy Day

World anti Leprosy Day was observed to focus on disease. World anti Leprosy Day was observed on 30 January 2013 to focus attention and create awareness about the air-borne disease. The day is chosen in the memory of Mahatma Gandhi, who took a keen interest in the eradication of leprosy and the plight of people affected by it. Several programmes are being organised across India to galvanise people to fight the stigma and discrimination against leprosy which is now completely curable.

Latest data by the National Leprosy Eradication Programme stated that there was a marginal reduction of 1.24 per cent in Annual New Case Detection Rate. In 2011-12, it stood at 10.35 per lakh population as against 10.48 in 2010-11. In order to contain spread of the disease, ASHA workers under the National Rural Health Mission are being involved in the anti-Leprosy programme. Treatment of leprosy is available free of cost in all government health facilities.

Sreeramamurthy Janaki

Sreeramamurthy Janaki, the renowned playback singer, refused to accept the Padma Bhushan award. She refused on the grounds that only some people from the Southern states were awarded and that honour given to her was too late.

The padma awards are announced every year on the occasion of Republic Day. Apart from Janaki, the other person from Tamil Nadu who was chosen for the Padma Bhushan was industrialist Ramamurthy Thyagarajan.

Major facts related to Sreeramamurthy Janaki

- S. Janaki was given Padma Bhushan award in Art discipline.
- She hails from Tamil Nadu state.
- She remained in her field for 55 years. She is 75 years old.
- The singer had won four national awards and was selected for Padma Bhushan in the art category, among 24 other padma bhushan awardees who were from different fields.

Halimah Yacob

Halimah Yacob (58) became the first woman and the 9th Speaker of the Singapore Parliament on 14 January 2013. She replaced Michael Palmer, the former People's Action Party MP. Palmer got down from the post of Speaker of the Parliament and as an MP on 12 December 2012. Prime Minister of Singapore, Lee Hsien Loong nominated her for the designation of speaker. Halimah Yacob came down from her post of Minister of State (Social and Family Development) and was elected as the Speaker by Members of Parliament. In her role, she is expected to play an independent role during all the parliamentary debates, but she stressed the fact that she would remain ahead for the Singaporeans' concerns and would also share the views on various policies. Various MPs stood up in favour of the appointment of Halimah Yacob in the Parliament, which also highlighted the importance to women as well as the Malay-Muslim community.

Halimah Yacob, 58, is an Indian-origin woman born in Singapore. She belongs to the People's Action Party. She has remained the Minister of State, Ministry of Community Development, Youth and

Sports from 21 May 2011 to 31 October 2012. She has also held office as the Minister of State, Ministry of Social and Family Development from 1 November 2012 to 13 January 2013.

Emergency in Three Major Cities of Egypt

President Mohamed Morsi announced emergency as well as curfew in three main cities of Egypt on 27 January 2013. Emergency and curfew was declared by the Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi in three main cities, i.e., Suez, Ismailia and Port Said because of increasing violence and protests in the streets. The violence posed serious threats to Morsi's government as well as the democracy of Egypt. It is important to note that the three major cities sit on the economically crucial Suez Canal. The state of emergency was imposed for one month in three major cities of Egypt. Under the Mubarak-era laws which are in-effect to the Egypt's new constitution, under the state of emergency, the ordinary judicial process as well as most of the civil rights is suspended. Also, the state of emergency imparts extraordinary powers to the police and the President. In Port Said, the violence ignited over the death sentences which were imposed by the court on 21 local soccer fans for the role they played in riots.

Kalyan Singh

Kalyan Singh, the former Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh on 21 January 2013 merged his Jan Kranti Party with Bhartiya Janta Party. Singh merged his party with BJP during the Atal Shanknaad Rally of BJP in Lucknow's Jhelum Park. He himself was unable to join the party himself as he is an independent MP from Etah Constituency and before joining the party it is required for him to resign from the membership of the house as it is an electoral cause under anti-defection law. His resignation from the Parliament would have created a space for by-elections for the Etah Seat. Kalyan Singh left BJP before the Lok Sabha Elections of 2009 due to the differences with the senior leaders of BJP.

National Test House

Pranab Mukherjee, the President of India on 20 January 2013 inaugurated the centenary celebrations of the National Test House at Kolkata, West Bengal. The Governor of West Bengal, H.E. Mayankote Kelath

Narayanan released a book on history of the National Test House and gifted its first copy to the President on this occasion.

INS Saryu

The Indian Navy on 21 January 2013 commissioned INS Saryu, its largest shore patrol vessel for the maritime surveillance around Andaman and Nicobar Islands. INS Saryu, the 105 meter vessel is built at Goa Shipyard Limited is the first among the four new class naval Off Shore Patrol Vessels (NOPVs) to be commissioned, rest would be commissioned by the Indian Navy in next one and a half year or so. Air Marshal PK Roy, commander in chief of Andaman and Nicobar Command of Indian Navy commissioned the ship in the Vasco Town. The ship would be patrolling across the exclusive economic zone of the exclusive economic zone across the island and discharge its duties on the eastern coast. INS Saryu has a capacity of being offshore for a period of a month.

Tahir-Ul Qadri

Tahir-ul Qadri, the Canada-returned cleric led thousands of the protestors in Pakistan and rallied in Islamabad for the third consecutive day on 16 January 2013. Qadri asked the government to quit as well as dissolve the provincial and national assemblies on 16 January 2013. The demand is electoral reforms, among others.

In his speech, Qadri who marched on 14 January 2013 to Islamabad with thousands of supporters to protest near the Parliament in Pakistan outlined four major demands, which included electoral reforms as per the Constitution before the elections as well as reconstitution of Election Commission. On 16 January 2013, Qadri's protests leveraged as the apex court passed an order for arresting Prime Minister Raja Pervaiz Ashraf on the corruption charges associated with power projects.

National Girl Child Day

This day is celebrated as the National Girl Child Day every year by the Government of India with an objective to raise consciousness of Indian society towards the girl children. The Women and Child Development Ministry observed National Girl Child Day on 24 January 2013. 24 January is

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celebrated as the National Girl Child Day every year since 2008 by the Government of India. The primary objective of the National Girl Child Day is raising awareness and consciousness of the society towards the girl child.

The primary aim is to ensure that every girl is respected and valued in Indian society. On this day, the Women and Child Development Ministry take up multi-pronged approach for addressing as well as working towards the trend of diminishing child sex ratio in India. The initiatives like these ensure that girl child is born as well as nurtured in a way that it gives them equal opportunities as well as rights like those to the boys. On the National Girl Child Day, the aim is to address issues related to health, education and nutrition of the girl child. The State's Women and Child Development Department instructed the District Programme Officers of various states of India to organise programmes for the National Girl Child Day.

Sixth National Conference on Implementation of PWDVA

The National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW) in collaboration with the Lawyers Collective Women's Rights Initiative (LCWRI), supported by UN Women held the Sixth National Conference on implementation of PWDVA (Protection of Women of from Domestic Violence Act), 2005 on 21 January 2013. The Sixth Monitoring and Evaluation Report titled Staying Alive: Evaluating Court Orders was released at the National Conference along with the release of the Best Practices Manual on the implementation of PWDV Act 2005 and a Resource Tool for Monitoring & Evaluation of PWDV Act 2005.

The Best Practices Manual sets out to acknowledge the exemplary efforts of some States in implementation of PWDV Act. The Resource Tool builds a normative framework which can be used by state and central nodal agencies to comply with obligations under the PWDVA. The Monitoring & Evaluation Report documents implementation of the Act and evaluates its functioning by analyzing the judgments and orders passed. It also presents the attitudes, knowledge and practice of stakeholders under the Act.

Shah Rukh Khan

Shah Rukh Khan, the Bollywood superstar topped the inaugural Forbes India Celebrity 100 list. The ranking was given based on the popularity as well as income of the biggest entertainers of India. Second on the list was Salman Khan and MS Dhoni followed in the third position. The special edition of Forbes India judged in eight different categories, i.e., directors, film actors, TV personalities, models, comedians, sports stars, authors and singers/musicians. Even though Salman Khan and MS Dhoni were ahead in the ranking in terms of popularity, in comparison to SRK, but the Bollywood King ranked high because of his earning, most of which came from the brand endorsements. The list prepared by Forbes India is meant to rank most powerful Indians in media as well as entertainment sector. After collecting data, the ranking was given based on income of the celebrities which came from business of the entertainment sector as well as the fame which was measured in terms of online presence, media mentions and social media follower. Among the sportspersons, MS Dhoni, the captain of India cricket team grabbed the top most position. In the category of singer/musicians, AR Rahman led the pack. Malaika Arora Khan was declared as the leading TV personality. On the other hand, Karan Johar was listed as the most powerful director. In other categories were comedian Vir Das, model Esha Gupta and author Chetan Bhagat. The youngest celebrity in the list of Forbes India was Saina Nehwal, aged 23 years.

Chakan-Da- Bagh

The Indian and Pakistani armies held Brigade Commander-level flag meeting at Chakan-Da-Bagh in Poonch district in Jammu and Kashmir on 14 January 2013. The objective of the meeting was to de-escalate tension along the Line of Control and border. Beheading of Indian soldier at the LoC was taken up strongly by India in the meeting apart from repeated cease fire violations.

The Indian Army reportedly voiced its concern over the violation of the ceasefire by Pakistani Army and the mutilation of the bodies of two Indian soldiers killed in Pakistani firing on 8 December 2012.

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. Ranjit Sinha takes over as the new chief of Response:
 - (a) RAW (Research & Analysis wing)
 - (b) IB (Intelligence Bureau)
 - (c) SEBI (Securities and Exchange Board of India)
 - (d) CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation)
2. Recently which eminent economist appointed as the adviser to Finance minister P.Chidambaram
 - (a) Raghuram Rajan
 - (b) Rakesh Mehra
 - (c) Parthasarathi Shome
 - (d) E. Sreedhra
3. Recently Oscar Niemeyer died, he was famous
 - (a) Architect
 - (b) Writer
 - (c) Film Director
 - (d) Painter
4. Patrick Moore was famous
 - (a) Astronomer
 - (b) Writer
 - (c) Pianist
 - (d) Musician
5. Mario Monti is the prime minister of
 - (a) Greece
 - (b) Germany
 - (c) Spain
 - (d) Italy
6. Currently who is the chairman of national Human Rights commission
 - (a) Justice K. G. Balakrishnan
 - (b) Justice Markandey Katju
 - (c) Justice A. S. Anand
 - (d) Justice S. H. Kapadia
7. On Which year late Pandit Ravi Shankar awarded Bharat Ratna
 - (a) 1996
 - (b) 1997
 - (c) 1998
 - (d) 1999
8. Hugo Chavez is the President of
 - (a) Cuba
 - (b) Argentina
 - (c) Venezuela
 - (d) Brazil
9. Japan's New Prime Minister
 - (a) Yorlihiko Noda
 - (b) Shinzo Abe
 - (c) Sinharo Auda
 - (d) None of these
10. Recep Tayyip Erdogan is the Prime minister of
 - (a) Greece
 - (b) Turkey
 - (c) Germany
 - (d) Switzerland
11. Miss Universe 2012
 - (a) Brooke Lee
 - (b) Olivia Culpo
 - (c) Leila Lopez
 - (d) Shilpa Singh

ANSWERS

- | | |
|---------|---------|
| 1. (d) | 2. (c) |
| 3. (a) | 4. (a) |
| 5. (d) | 6. (a) |
| 7. (d) | 8. (c) |
| 9. (b) | 10. (b) |
| 11. (b) | |

BUDGET

Highlights of Economic Survey 2012-13

According to Economic Survey Indian economy likely to grow between 6.1% to 6.7%. The survey points out that the priority for the Government will be to fight high inflation by reducing the fiscal impetus to demand as well as by focusing on incentivizing food production through measures other than price supports.

Economic Survey 2012-13: Government initiatives generate optimism

The latest seasonally adjusted annualized growth of industrial output indicate that the growth of the sector could remain positive at around 3% for the current year.

Economic Survey 2012-13: Govt to raise Rs 400bn through disinvestment

There were altogether 260 CPSEs under the Administrative control of various Ministries/ Departments as on March 31, 2012.

Economic Survey 2012-13: Industrial growth expected to improve

There was, however, a sharp pick-up in growth in October 2012 with manufacturing growth improving to 9.8 per cent, the highest recorded since June, 2011.

Economic Survey 2012-13: Energy Production and Consumption

As on March, 2011 India's estimated coal reserves were about 286 billion ton, 81 billion ton of lignite, 757 MT of crude oil and 1241 bn cubic meter (BCM) of natural gas.

Economic Survey 2012-13: Gross tax revenue in April-December 2012 up 15%

The Survey points out that growth in April-December, 2012 comprises of 17.4% in union excise duties, 6% in customs, 22.5% in personal income tax,

33% in service tax and 10.6% in corporate income tax.

Economic Survey 2012-13: More than 900 Infra Projects under PPP Model

There seems to be a strong importance given to the PPP mode as an effective tool for bringing private sector efficiencies in creation of social and economic infrastructure and delivery of public services.

Economic Survey 2012-13: Foreign Exchange reserves remain steady

By end of December 2012, reserves stood at US \$ 295.6 billion, indicating a marginal increase of US \$ 1.2 bn from US \$ 294.4 bn in March, 2012.

Economic Survey 2012-13: Agriculture does well in output growth

The Survey finds that despite an all time high total food grain production during 2011-12, the production of 2012-13 kharif crops is likely to be adversely affected by deficiencies in south west monsoon and the resultant acreage losses.

Economic Survey 2012-13: Railway freight up by 5.1%

The Railways carried a total freight of 969.1 MMT as against 921.7 MMT in 2010-11.

Economic Survey 2012-13: Tourism, Railways and Telecom continue to lead other sectors

Every year approximately 60,000 to 70,000 law graduates join the legal profession. India is ranked 45, with a score of 4.5 in terms of judicial independence by the Global Competitiveness Report 2012-13.

Economic Survey 2012-13: Robust inflow of FDI in services sector

FDI inflows in the top five services also fell by 9.7% to US \$ 8.19 billion.

Economic Survey 2012-13: Legal services show a steady annual growth of 8.2%

The Indian legal profession consists of nearly 1.2 million registered advocates, about 950 Law schools and approximately 4 to 5 lakh law students.

Economic Survey 2012-13: Overall employment increased by 69.4mn in June 2012

In export oriented units, employment at the overall level has increased by 5.81 lakh whereas in the non-exporting units, it has increased by 1.10 lakh during the period June 2012 over June 2011.

Economic Survey 2012-13: India has highest increase in share of services in GDP at 8.1%

While China's highest services compound annual growth rate (CAGR) stood at 11.1%, India's very high CAGR of 9.2% was second highest and also accompanied by highest change in its share.

Economic Survey 2012-13: WPI inflation may decline between 6.2 to 6.6% in March 2013

Inflation has remained muted in the current financial year and declined to a three year low of 6.62% in January 2013.

Economic Survey 2012-13: Significant market diversification in India's trade

India's exports to Europe and America have declined to 18.7 per cent and 19.5 percent respectively in 2012-13 from 25.9 per cent and 24.7 per cent in 2000-01.

Economic Survey acknowledges benefits of market diversification

Region wise, India's exports to Europe and America have declined to 18.7% and 19.5% respectively in 2012-13 from 25.9% and 24.7% in 2000-01.

Economic Survey 2012-13: Focus on curbing imports of Gold

The Survey observes, external commercial borrowing needs to be monitored carefully so that entities without access to foreign exchange revenues do not leave significant exposures unhedged.

Economic Survey 2012-13: Need to raise Diesel and LPG prices in line with global markets

The Survey states that a beginning has already been made with the decision in September, 2012 to raise the prices of diesel and again in January, 2013 to allow oil marketing companies to increase prices in small increments at regular intervals

Economic Survey 2012-13: Fiscal outcome indicates improvement

The fiscal outcome of 2011-12 was affected by macro economic developments of slow down in growth, higher global crude oil prices and sluggish financial market conditions for effecting the budgeted disinvestments programme.

Economic Survey 2012-13: Govt takes steps to achieve greater Financial Inclusion

Particular attention has been paid to the rural areas where a large segment of the society was not having access to organized banking.

Economic Survey 2012-13: Government's key initiatives to boost manufacturing

Some of major initiatives that can change the manufacturing landscape of the country are the National Manufacturing Policy (NMP), implementation of the Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC) Project and reforms to promote foreign direct investment (FDI) and an e-Biz project.

Economic Survey 2012-13: Government to expedite projects under NHDP

Highways which are not viable to be constructed under the BOT (toll) mode will be taken up under the new EPC mode.

Economic Survey 2012-13: India's social sector seen a continuous increase

Survey says that under Phase 2 of Unique Identification Authority of India (UIAI), 40 crores residence care to be enrolled before end 2014. As of December 2012, 25 crores Aadhaars had been generated and approximately 20.00 crore Aadhaars letters has been dispatched.

Economic Survey 2012-13: RS. 125.17bn Capital to be infused in PSB's to augment Tier-1 Capital

Performance of Indian banks during the year 2011-12 was conditioned to a large extent by fragile recovery of global financial markets as well as a challenging operational environment on the domestic front.

Following are the major Highlights of the Economic Survey 2012-13

- GDP growth seen at 6.1-6.7 percent in 2013/14
- Government target for fiscal deficit is 4.8 pct of GDP in 2013/14
- Government target for fiscal deficit is 3 pct of GDP in 2016/17
- Headline WPI inflation may decline to 6.2-6.6

Budget

pct by March 2013

- Focus on curbing imports, making oil prices more market determined to reign in current account deficit
- Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) flows need to be targeted towards long-term rupee instruments
- Prioritisation of expenditure seen as key ingredient of credible medium-term fiscal consolidation plan
- Raising tax to GDP ratio to more than 11 percent seen as critical for sustaining fiscal consolidation
- Room for accommodative monetary policy with expected fiscal consolidation
- India likely to meet fiscal deficit target of 5.3 pct of GDP in 2012/13, despite significant shortfall in revenues
- Recommends curbing gold imports to reign in current account deficit
- Room to increase exports in the short run limited
- Industrial output seen growing around 3 pct in 2012/13
- Govt priority to fight inflation by reducing fiscal impetus to demand as well as by focusing on incentivizing food production.
- More jobs in low productivity construction sector
- Balance of Payments under pressure with net exports decline
- Service sector has shown more resilience despite global slowdown
- Pitches for hike in price of diesel and LPG to cut subsidy burden
- Railway freight grows by 5.1 per cent in 2012-13
- Foreign Exchange reserves remains steady at USD 295.6 Billion at December 2012 end.

Economic Survey is presented every year, just before the Union Budget. It is a flagship annual document of the Ministry of Finance, Government of India. Economic Survey reviews the developments in the Indian economy over the previous 12 months. It summarizes the performance on major development programmes, and highlights the policy initiatives of the government and the prospects of the economy in the short to medium term.

The economic survey 2012-13 was prepared by a team of economists led by Chief Economic Advisor Raghuram Rajan, and pitches for speeding up economic reforms to activate a sluggish economy. It serves as an indicator of what is likely to be contained in the General Budget proposals.

Union Budget 2013-14: Highlights

Union Finance Minister P Chidambaram on 28 February 2013 tabled the Union budget in the Parliament for the financial year 2013-14. P. Chidambaram was presenting his 8th Union Budget. The union Budget of 2013-14 emphasized fast track economic growth with due importance on infrastructure development, skill development, employment generation and funding for social schemes. Three factors of Economic Concern discussed in the Union Budget 2013-14 were high fiscal deficit, slow growth and high inflation. Expressing his confidence on India returning back to the higher growth path Chidambaram advocated for support from all quarters to navigate through economic crisis. The Union Budget of year 2013-14 stressed on achieving a growth of 8 per cent on an immediate effect. The finance minister expressed his worry on Current Account deficit (CAD). CAD which required 75 billion Dollars to finance was high because of high import in Oil, coal and gold imports.

The Highlights of the Union Budget 2013-14 are as Follows:

- Total budget expenditure was Estimated at 16.65 trillion rupees in 2013-14
- India's 2013-14 plan expenditure seen at 5.55 trillion rupees
- To allocate 801.94 billion rupees to rural development in 2013-14
- Plan to allocate 270.49 billion rupees for agriculture in 2013-14
- RBI expected GDP growth of 5.5% for Financial Year 2013-14
- 80194 crore rupees allocation have been made for rural development schemes including MGNAREGA, PMGSY, INDIRA AWAS YOYANA. The Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission will to continue during the 12th plan period.
- 3511 crore allocation to minorities which is 12 per cent hike over budget estimates, 110 crore

- rupees allotted for welfare of disabled.
- 65867 crore rupees have been allocated to the Ministry of Human resources development which is 17 per cent hike over the revised estimates.
 - 500 Crore rupees have been earmarked for high tech crop diversification program.
 - Allocations also include 13215 crore rupees for mid day meal programme. 27,049 crore rupees for agricultural ministry and additional 200 crore to women and child Welfare Ministry.
 - 14000 crore Rupees will be provided for PSB recapitalization. He will constitute a panel on transaction costs, and financial policies.
 - Education gets 65867 crore rupees, an increase of 17 percent over RE for 2012-13.
 - ICDS gets 17700 crore rupees. This is 11.7 percent more than the current year.
 - Drinking water and sanitation will receive 15260 crore rupees. 1,400 crore was provided for setting up water purification plants to cover arsenic and fluoride affected rural areas.
 - Health and Family Welfare Ministry had been allotted 37330 crore rupees.
 - Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) Refinance Fund doubled to an amount of 10000 crore rupees.
 - Plans of Government are to encourage PPP projects along with Coal India.
 - P Chidambaram announced setting up of a new all-women's bank.
 - 1000 crore Rupees initial capital for a new women's bank which will be another public sector bank. The Bank will be set up by October 2013.
 - An amount of additional 10000 crore rupees allotted for Food Security Bill in FY14.
 - 3000 km of road projects will be awarded in first six months of FY14.
 - Finance ministry approved 50000 crore Rupees tax-free bonds in FY14. The government expects to raise 25000 crore rupees via tax-free bonds in FY13.
 - Refinancing capacity of SIDBI raised to Rs. 10,000 crore.
 - Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (TUFS) for textile to continue in 12th Plan with an investment target of 151000 crore Rupees.
 - 14000 crore Rupees will be provided to public sector banks for capital infusion in 2013-14.
 - A grant of 100 crore each has been made to 4 institutions of excellence including Aligarh Muslim University, Banaras Hindu University, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Guwahati and Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH).
 - New taxes to yield 18000 crore Rupees.
 - A surcharge of 10 percent on persons (other than companies) whose taxable income exceeds Rs.1 crore have been levied.
 - Tobacco products, SUVs and Mobile Phones to cost more.
 - Relief of Rs. 2000 for the tax payers in the first bracket of 2 to 5 lakhs.
 - Voluntary Compliance Encouragement Scheme launched for recovering service tax dues.
 - 9000 crore Rupees earmarked as the first installment of balance of CST compensations to different States/UTs.

Union Budget 2013-14:

Tax Proposals at a Glance

The Union Finance Minister announced tax proposals while tabling the Union Budget 2013-14 in the Lok Sabha on 28 February 2013. The tax proposals as announced by the Union Finance Minister are as follows:

Relief for taxpayers in the bracket of 2 lakh Rupees to 5 lakh Rupees tax credit of 2000 Rupees to every person with total income up to 5 lakh Rupees

The Union Budget 2013-14 proposed a relief of 2000 Rupees to every person with a total income up to 5 lakh Rupees in the financial year. He announced that the income slabs which were introduced in 2012-13 financial year were same and that there was no provision of revising the slabs or the rates, apart from some relief to the taxpayers in the first bracket of 2 lakh Rupees to 5 lakh Rupees.

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INCOME In RUPEES	WORKING MEN			WORKINGWOMEN		SENIOR CITIZENS	
	Old Tax	New Tax	Old Tax	New Tax	Old Tax	New Tax	
2 Lakh	0	0	0	0	0	0	
5 Lakh	30900	28840	30900	28840	25750	23690	
8 Lakh	92700	92700	92700	92700	87550	87550	
10 Lakh	133900	133900	133900	133900	128750	128750	
25 Lakh	597400	597400	597400	597400	592250	592250	
50 Lakh	1369900	1369900	1369900	1369900	1364750	1364750	
100 Lakh	2914900	2914900	2914900	2914900	2909750	2909750	
110 Lakh	3223900	3546290	3223900	3546290	3218750	3540625	

Railway Budget 2013-14 Presented in Lok Sabha : Highlights

Union Railway Minister Pawan Kumar Bansal presented the Union Railway Budget for 2013-14 in Lok Sabha on 26 February 2013. The major highlights of the budget are the introduction 106 new trains with no fare hikes. The present year railway budget laid emphasis on host of proposals for travel safety and comfort, such as escalators at key stations, a new e-ticketing system and a high-class coach in select trains.

Railway Budget 2013-14 at a Glance:

The Thrust of this year Railway Budget was on Safety, Consolidation, Passenger Amenities and Fiscal Discipline.

- Deployment of new generation energy efficient electric locomotives and EMUs.
- Five Percent Increase in freight to push Inflation.
- Elimination of 10797 level crossings during the 12th Plan and no addition of new LCs to the IR system henceforth.
- Introduction of Train Protection Warning System on Automatic Signalling Systems.
- Rigorous trials of the indigenously developed Train Collision Avoidance System.
- Four companies of women RPF personnel set up and another 8 to be set up to strengthen the security of rail passengers, especially women passengers
- Recruitment to RPF with 10% vacancies reserved for women.
- No increase in passenger fares
- 500-km new lines to be completed in 2013-14
- Diesel price hike added 3300 crore rupees to fuel bill of Railways
- Railways hopes to end 2013-14 with a balance of 12506 crore rupees

- Concessional fare for sportspersons
- Five fellowships to be announced to motivate students
- Seek to fill 1.52 lakh vacancies in railways this year. 47000 vacancies for weaker sections and physically challenged to be filled up soon
- Target of 4000 crore rupees for railway production units in 2014
- Induction of e-ticketing through mobile phones, SMS alerts to passengers
- Free wi-fi facilities in select trains. 60 more 'adarsh' stations
- The number of passenger trains has increased from 8000 in 2001 to over 12000 in 2012 - yet losses continue to mount. It is estimated to be Rs. 24000 crore in 2012-13
- Proposal for setting up of Railway Tariff Regulatory Authority formulated and at inter-ministerial consultation stage.
- Supplementary charges for super fast trains, reservation fee, clerkage charge, cancellation charge and tatkal charge marginally increased.
- Complimentary card passes to Olympic medalist and Dronacharya Awardees for Rajdhani Shatabdi Trains.
- Announcement Facility and Electronic display boards in train.

Railway Budget 2013-14: New Plans and Schemes

Union Railway Minister Pawan Kumar Bansal presented the Union Railway Budget for 2013-14 in Lok Sabha on 26 February 2013. Some of the New Plans and Schemes proposed in Railway Budget 2013-14 are as under:

- Proposal for setting up of Railway Tariff Regulatory Authority formulated and at inter-ministerial consultation stage.

- To provide a memorable experience to the visitors especially the children, a revamp plan will be rolled out for National Railway Museum in 2013-14.
- To create a corpus for meeting IR's committed liabilities for debt servicing of JICA and World Bank loans taken for the DFC Project, it is proposed to set up a new Debt Service Fund.
- In order to meet the growing demand, 72 additional services in Mumbai and 18 in Kolkata are being introduced. Besides, rake length is being increased from 9 cars to 12 cars for 80 services in Kolkata and 30 services in Chennai.
- A target to complete 500 km of new lines has been set for 2013-14.
- There is target to convert 450 km of MG/NG lines to broad gauge during 2013-14.
- Announcement of resumption of work on new line projects of Chickmagalur - Sakleshpur and Bengaluru - Satyamangalam, which were

pending for want of resources and other mandatory clearances, after State Government of Karnataka agreed to give land free of cost and bear 50% of the cost.

Green Energy Initiatives

Some of the new steps that have been taken or are proposed to be taken include:-

- Setting up of Railway Energy Management Company (REMC) to harness potential of solar and wind energy
- Setting up of 75 MW windmill plants and energizing 1000 level crossings with solar power
- Deployment of new generation energy efficient electric locomotives and electrical multiple units (EMUs) saving about 60 crore units in 2011-12. Railways have also won the National Energy Conservation Award
- Encourage more usage of agro-based and recycled paper and ban use of plastic in catering.