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Articles

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Current Affairs, Sports & Awards

**Study Notes: CSE Pre 2010
Special Package For Polity,
Constitution and Social Issues**

March-2010

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Right Thinking Leads You To Success..

Dear UPSCPORTAL Members, it is the time, when you should be serious about your goal. If you are serious, things will take shape automatically and success will be yours. But it is true that often, ordinary people lose their confidence; specially when they want to achieve something very important.

Well Civil Services is not for ordinary people, it is for the best, so you should have everything best in you. It may be strategy, confidence, perseverance, hard work and intellect-each of these must be of best quality in you. So at this juncture, when you are at the opening gate of success, do not lose confidence. Confidence comes from right thinking, so you should have a really positive attitude.

'Orison Swett Marden' said that our thoughts influence our lives and our life circumstances. So I would like to quote him -

"The finding of the larger possibilities of man, the unused part, and the undiscovered part is the function of the New Philosophy. It may be covered under all sorts of debris-doubt, lack of self-confidence, timidity, fear, worry, uncertainty, anxiety, hatred, jealousy, revenge, envy, selfishness. These may all be neutralized by right thinking."

He further says -

"How often it happens that people who have long been "down-and-out," who have been considered "nobodies," "good-for-nothings," not well balanced, have changed suddenly, as though touched by a magic wand, and have quickly become men or women of power, inspirers, and helpers of others! Something happened that quickened their spirit, and from miserable liabilities they have suddenly been converted into valuable assets to their community."

In this 12th Aspirants volume of Times, we have presented the Articles Indian Budget 2010-11, Indian Railway Budget 2010-11, India- Turkey Relation and India -Britain Relation. In the section of Hot topics Korean President's India Visit and United Nations Report on Toxic Electronic Waste are available. Also Current Affairs and Sports & awards are included. And for the best preparation of Civil Services Pre examination 2010 we have presented very special package for Polity & Constitution and Social Issues.

So dear aspirants have a right thinking and give your best. UPSCPORTAL.COM is with you as always.

Best Wishes
Ram Kumar Pandey
& UPSCPORTAL Team.

Union Budget 2010-11

An Effort to Boost Up Economy

By: Ram Kumar Pandey



"The government is conscious of the situation of price rise and is taking steps to tackle it and Public spending and mobilising resources need to be reviewed. The government hopes to implement direct tax code and General Sales Tax from April 2011."

Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee presented the Union Budget for 2010-11 in the Lok Sabha on Feb 26. Finance Minister said that Indian economy was facing grave uncertainty. Growth had started decelerating when interim and full budget for 2009-10 were presented. Also he said that at home there was added uncertainty because of subnormal south-west monsoon. Indian economy now in a far better position than it was eight years ago.

India weathered economic crisis well, said Mukherjee, adding, the first challenge before the Government is to quickly revert to high GDP growth path of 9 per cent.

According to him second challenge is to harness economic growth to make it more inclusive and consolidate gains. Country has seen impressive recovery in the past few months and can witness faster recovery in the coming months.

The Finance Minister added the focus shifted to non-governmental actors, enabling the government to concentrate on supporting and delivering services to the economically backward sections.

Admitting that financial year 2009-10 was challenging for the Indian economy, Mukherjee said 18.5 per cent manufacturing growth in December was the highest in two decades.

He said figures for merchandise exports for January are encouraging after turnaround in November and December last year.

Reasoning the double digit food inflation last year, the minister said it was due to bad monsoon and drought-like conditions, though "we have strengthened food security".

He said the government is conscious of the situation of price rise and is taking steps to tackle it. The Finance Minister also said there is need to review stimulus imparted to the economy.

Analysing the price rise situation in the country, Mukherjee said there's a need to ensure that the demand-supply imbalance is managed and stressed on the need to make growth more broad-based. He said, Public spending and mobilising resources need to be reviewed. The government hopes to implement direct tax code and General Sales Tax from April 2011.

Increase in Defence Budget

The government has allocated Rs 1,47,344 crore towards defence in 2010-11 budget, a paltry 4 per cent increase from last year's Rs 1,41,703 crore. Of the allocation provided, Rs 60,000 crore would go for capital expenditure. The four per cent increase in real terms would amount to only Rs 5,641 crore.

Last year, the government had provided a steep hike of about 34 per cent for the defence working out to an increase of Rs 36,103 crore. Mukherjee, however, said considering the importance of defence of the country, more funds would be provided on the basis of requirements in the future.

The defence allocation continues to hover over 2.5 per cent of the GDP, though there have been suggestions to increase it substantially in view of the prevailing security situation.

Fiscal Deficit

The Finance Minister presented Union Budget with fiscal deficit of 5.5 per cent of GDP as he pegged total expenditure at Rs 11.09 lakh crore while the total tax and non-tax revenue estimated at Rs 6.82 lakh crore for the year 2010-11. The deficit is much lower than the budgeted estimate for the current fiscal at 6.8 per cent, which, however, has been revised to 6.7 per cent.

To meet the shortfall, the government has estimated borrowing of Rs 3.81 lakh crore for fiscal 2010-11, lower than the current fiscal's Rs 4.01 lakh crore. The rolling targets for fiscal deficit are pegged at 4.8 per cent and 4.1 per cent for 2011-12 and 2012-13.

Interest subvention scheme for home loans extended

Finance Minister extended by a year the one per cent interest subvention scheme for housing sector and provided Rs 700 crore for it, in the Union Budget 2010-11.

Under the scheme, introduced last year, home buyers get one per cent interest subsidy for banking loans up to Rs 10 lakh, provided the cost of house does not exceed Rs 20 lakh.

Interest subsidy for exporters extended

The government has proposed to extend the concessional export finance regime for select exporters for one more year till March 31, 2011, thus giving the slowdown-hit sector further relief. The scheme was to expire on March 31.

With a view to insulate the employment-oriented sectors like handlooms, handicrafts, carpets and leather from the impact of demand slowdown, the government had extended the scheme for concessional export finance in the last Budget till March 31.

Crop loan at 5% interest for farmers, farm credit up by 16%

In a bonanza to farmers, the government has announced a subsidised 5 per cent interest rate on crop loans on timely repayment, while proposing a 15 per cent hike in credit made available for farm sector.

This would be as a result of Finance Minister proposing to increase by 2 per cent the interest subvention provided to farmers, giving them at an effective rate of 5 per cent per annum. Farmers get crop loan of up to Rs 3 lakh, at 7 per cent.

In his budget speech for 2010-11, Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee also allocated Rs 400 crore to raise farm production in the eastern parts of India, comprising Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Eastern UP, West Bengal and Orissa.

Noting that banks are consistently meeting the targets set for agriculture credit flow in past few years, Mukherjee said that for 2010-11, target has been raised to Rs 3,75,000 crore from Rs 3,25,000 crore in the current year.

In view of drought and severe floods in some parts of the country, he extended the period for repayment of loan amount by farmers under the Rs 71,000 crore debt waiver scheme by six months till June 30.

To give impetus to food processing, Mukherjee said five more mega food parks would be established to provide latest infrastructure facilities, in addition to the 10 already being set up.

Mukherjee said external commercial borrowings would be available for cold chain sector for preservation or storage of agricultural and allied produce, marine products and meat.

Listing the four-pronged strategy to spur growth in the farm sector, Mukherjee said the government would focus on raising agriculture production, reduction in wastage, credit support to farmers and

thrust to the food processing sector.

According to budget the first element of the strategy is to extend the green revolution to the eastern region of the country comprising Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Eastern UP, West Bengal and Orissa, with the active involvement of Gram Sabhas and the farming families. For the year 2010-11, I propose to provide Rs 400 crore for this initiative.

The Finance Minister proposed to organise 60,000 "pulses and oil seed villages" in non-irrigated areas during 2010-11, in order to raise output of pulses and oilseeds where there is a deficit and country is dependent on import.

For this purpose, he has provided Rs 300 crore in the budget and said the initiative will be an integral part of the Rs 25,000 crore Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana.

Mukherjee has earmarked Rs 200 crore for launching climate resilient agriculture initiative, which involves concurrent attention to soil health, water conservation and preservation of biodiversity. This fund will benefit states like Punjab and Haryana which were the centre of action during green revolution but due to excessive use of chemicals and fertilisers, the soil condition has deteriorated over the years.

Pointing out that there is wastage of grains procured for buffer stocks due to acute shortage of storage capacity, he said that the government has extended the guarantee period given by Food Corporation of India to private parties for hiring godowns to seven years from the current five years.

Budget Summary:

» Government will raise Rs 25,000 cr from disinvestment in PSUs.

» Market cap of five PSUs listed since October, up 3.5 times.

» Fuel price deregulation proposal will be taken up.

» Nutrient-based fertiliser subsidy from April 1.

» FDI inflows steady; government simplifying FDI regime.

» To set up Financial Stability and Development Council.

» 2% interest subvention on handicraft exports for 1 more year.

» Rs 200 crore for climate resilient agriculture initiative.

» Committed to growth of Special Economic Zones.

» Need for firm view on opening up retail sector.

» Farm loan repayment eased by 6 months till June 30.

» Crop loan interest subsidy for timely payment raised to 2%.

» IIFCL authorised to refinance infrastructure projects while Rs 1,73,552 crore provided for infrastructure development

» Railways allocation increased by Rs 950 crore to Rs 16,752 crore.

» Government proposes to set up Coal Development Regulatory Authority.

» Mega power plant policy modified to lower generation cost while allocation to power sector more than doubled to Rs 5,130 crore.

» Rs 500 crore for solar and hydro projects in Ladakh region.

» New Clean Energy Fund for research in new energy sources and Renewable Energy Ministry allocation up 61% to Rs 1000 crore.

» Rs 200 crore one-time grant to Tirupur textile cluster in Tamil Nadu.

» Outlay for Ganga River Basin Authority doubled

to Rs 500 crore.

» Alternative port at Sagar Island in West Bengal.

» Draft of Food Security Bill ready; in public domain soon.

» Outlay for social sectors pegged at Rs 1,37,674 crore.

» Social sector outlay 37 per cent of total plan allocation.

» Planned allocation for school education at Rs 31,036 crore.

» Allocation for health and family welfare at Rs 22,300 crore.

» Allocation for rural development at Rs 66,100 crore.

» Indira Awas Yojana unit cost raised to Rs 45,000 in plains & Rs 48,500 in hilly areas.

» Allocation for urban development raised 75% to Rs 5,400 crore.

» 1% loan interest subsidy for houses upto Rs 20 lakh.

» Outlay for micro & small scale sector raised to Rs 2,400 crore.

» Rs 1,270 crore for slum development programme, up 700%.

» National Social Security Fund with Rs 1000 crore outlay.

» Allocation for women and child development hiked 80%.

» Rs 1,000/yr to account holders under New Pension Scheme.

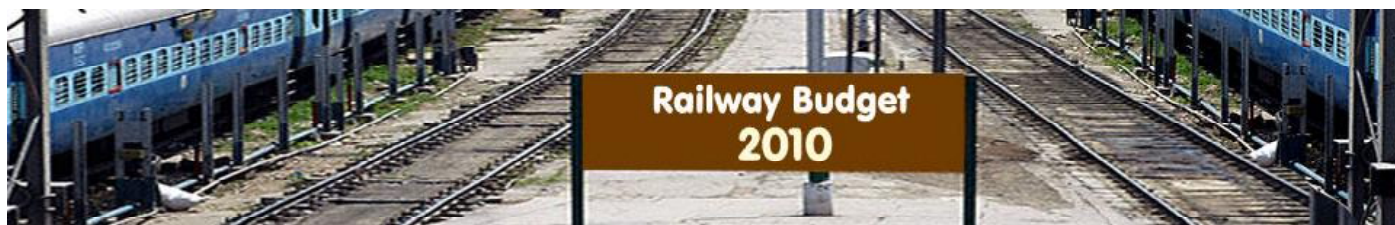
» Outlay for Minority Affairs Ministry raised to Rs 2,600 crore.

» Rs 1,900 crore for Unique Identification Authority of India

Indian Railway Budget 2010-11

No Increase in the Passenger Fares

By: Avadhesh Kumar Pandey



"A centre for Railway Research will be set up at IIT, Kharagpur for research in key areas of railway technology and a state-of-the art advanced loco pilot training centre at Kharagpur and an advanced railway track training centre at Belegghata."

Railway Minister Mamata Banerjee has presented the Rail Budget in the Parliament on Feb 24, 2010. According to budget draft there will be no increase in the passenger fares of any class or category of trains. Freight tariffs will also remain the same for 2010-11.

Railway has proposed INR 41,426 crore, the highest ever plan investment to provide efficient, customer focused and modern railway network. Out of this allocation, INR 4,411 crore has been proposed to achieve the target of 1,000 kilometers for new lines and INR 1,302 crore for passenger amenities. The Plan would be financed through gross budgetary support of INR 15,875 crore, Diesel Cess of INR 877 crore, internal resources of INR 14,523 crore and EBR of INR 10,151 crore including market borrowing through IRFC of INR 9,120 crore.

Railway is committed to take up socially desirable projects connecting backward areas of the country. Surveys for 114 projects for such areas will be updated and surveys for 55 new lines will be taken up during the year. 800 kilometer Gauge Conversion and 700 kilometers of doubling the rail line will be achieved during the year besides a number

of new projects on cost sharing with state governments or through PPP route.

Target has been set to add 25,000 kilometers of new lines in next 10 years.

In order to bring more transparency in freight business, the Railway Minister announced RFID technology will be introduced for tracking of wagons, allotment of the rakes would be accessible through the web.

In order to upgrade railway infrastructure, the Minister said that a centre for Railway Research will be set up at IIT, Kharagpur for research in key areas of railway technology and a state-of-the art advanced loco pilot training centre at Kharagpur and an advanced railway track training centre at Belegghata.

To overcome of the shortage of coaches, new coach factories are being set up at Rae Bareilly, Kancharapara and Palakkad. A wagon repair shop will be set up at Badnera and a new Rail Axle Factory will be set up at New Jalpaiguri through PPP or Joint Venture mode. Besides 5 state-of-the-art wagon factories also through joint venture and PPP mode at Sikandrabad, Bardhaman, Bhubneshwar/Kalahandi, Guwahati and Haldia.

Proposing several new initiatives for freight business, the Minister said that Railways will introduce a modified wagon investment scheme for high capacity general purpose and special purpose wagons for carrying iron ore, coal and cement. A scheme to run special freight train by private operators for commodities such as automobiles, vegetable oil, molasses, chemicals and petrochemicals will be notified.

Reiterating Railways' commitment for time bound completion of dedicated corridors, the Minister said preliminary Engineering-cum-Traffic Surveys for North-South, East-West, East-South and South-South corridors will be taken up this year. She also said that Railways is also working on high speed passenger rail corridors, a National High Speed Rail Authority will be set up for planning, standard setting and implementing these projects.

In order to promote industrial activity, Kumari Mamata Banerjee said that Railways would welcome investment through PPP mode for providing rail connectivity to important ports. Additional 2,000 kilometers routes will be electrified within two years.

Vision 2020

Following the Rs 14,00,000 crore investment requirement estimated in the Vision 2020 document for the next 10 years, the railway budget needs to contain out-of-the-box measures for raising revenues on a much larger scale than hitherto. Roughly, the required annual investment to meet this target is 3.5 times the highest amount of Rs 40,000 crore allocated in 2009-2010. Of the total, 64% or Rs 8,96,000 crore is to come from internal resources, supported by prudent borrowing and PPP initiatives. And around 36% or Rs 5,00,000 crore is to come from the general revenues.

The figures are mind-boggling: the annual budgetary support has to increase over three-fold from around Rs 9,000 crore in 2008-09, to Rs 28,000 crore; internal resources have to go up over three-fold from Rs 28,000 crore to Rs 92,000 crore; revenues need to be boosted three-fold from around Rs 90,000 crore to Rs 2,70,000 crore; and IR's share in the GDP should rise to 3%. A number three syndrome all round!

All these necessitate Indian Railways (IR) tackling a few crucial issues on priority. The first of them is raising additional revenues through fare collections. Now there is heavy cross-subsidisation of coaching services (passenger and allied services) by

the freight services. These social obligations, which stood at Rs 4,875 crore in 2000-01, are expected to settle at Rs13,958 in 2008-09. Since IR closes the annual operations with a profit, it is obvious that the bulk of the social service burden is borne by the freight service

And the rail users in the freight sector have been complaining, rightly, about this overcharging. It also has an impact on inflationary pressures, since higher freight charges inevitably get passed on to the consumers. Even on the basis of the not-too-scientific costing procedures of IR, not more than 70% of the cost is recovered from passenger services, while it is over 125% from freight services. A 10 to 15% increase in the basic fare for second class, with proportionate adjustments for other classes needs to be considered. To meet corporate social responsibility, suitable concessions, targeted at deserving groups can be built in. If small revisions in the passenger fares are not made annually, a stage may be reached when it becomes impossible to bridge the gap between cost and recovery.

Highlights of Railway Budget 2010-11

- » No fare hike for passengers.
- » Railways not to be privatised; It will remain with the government, says Banerjee. While not privatising, Railways have to develop business models for improving earnings, says Banerjee.
- » Railways 2020 vision document will contain short, medium and long-term goals. Commitments fulfilled to the maximum. Out of 120 trains announced in last budget, only three remain to be flagged off because of lack of broad-gauge lines, says Banerjee.
- » Plans to launch a pilot project for fire detection. The government also plans to construct more underpasses for safety, the minister said while presenting the Railway Budget.
- » Railways to start six water bottling plants in places like Ambala, Thiruvananthapuram, Farakka,

Amethi and Nasik to provide clean and cheap drinking water to passengers.

» Indian Railways aims to add 25,000 route kilometers by 2020. The railways currently has 64,015 route kilometers, she said.

» India's railways has set up a special task force to clear investment proposals in 100 days

» Indian Railways plans to keep rail freight rates unchanged, Bloomberg-UTV news channel reported, without saying where it got the information.

» Railways to set up mobile e-ticketing centres at hospitals, universities, courts, IITs, IIMs, district headquarters and village panchayats. All 13,000 unmanned level crossings to be manned in the next five years.

» Railway Protection Force to be strengthened through amendments in RPF Act; women's wing to be formed in RPF to ensure security of women. Ex-servicemen to be inducted in RPF. Railways will be the lead partner in the Commonwealth Games in Delhi.

» Railways to set up Rabindra Museum in Howrah and Geetanjali Museum in Bolpur -- both in West Bengal -- to commemorate Rabindranath Tagore's 125th birth anniversary.

» Railways will provide houses to all its employees in the next 10 years in collaboration with the Urban Development ministry.

» Railways to enhance contribution to central staff benefit fund. Centre for Railway Research to be set up at IIT-Kharagpur. Chittaranjan Locomotive Works capacity to be augmented from 200 to 275 engines a year.

» Work on Rae Bareilly Coach Factory in Uttar Pradesh to start within a year. Wagon Repair Shop to be set up in Badnera near Amravati in Maharashtra.

» Integral Coach Factory in Chennai to be modernised and a new unit to be set up there. If land is available, Railways willing to set up a Diesel Multiple Unit factory in West Bengal.

» No forcible acquisition of land for freight corridor project. One member of each family of land losers to be given employment in the freight corridor as also in the new projects.

» High-speed dedicated passenger corridors to be constructed; National High Speed Rail Authority to be set up.

» Revenue from non-core business of Railways to go up from Rs 150 crore to Rs 1,000 crore. Indian Railways has set a target to transport 944 million tons of goods in the year beginning April 1.

» Railways expects to increase earnings from non core activities. The government aims to increase non core earnings to Rs10 billion rupees from Rs1.5 billion.

» Railways expects to increase earnings from non core activities. The government aims to increase non core earnings to Rs10 billion rupees from Rs1.5 billion.

» Despite slowdown, Railways to exceed freight loading target by eight million tonnes during 2009-10. Freight loading target for 2010-11 fixed at 944 million tonnes, 54 million tonnes more than the current year's revised target. Gross traffic receipt for 2010-11 pegged at Rs94,765 crore.

» Allocation for construction of new lines increased from Rs2848 crore to Rs 4411 crore.

» Rs1,302 crore provided for passenger amenities in the 2010-11 railway budget against Rs 923 crore last year.

» Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC) will borrow 91.2 billion rupees (\$1.97 billion) from the market in 2010-11.

» Railways to have master plan for North Eastern region. Special train between India and Bangladesh to be started to commemorate 150th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore.

» 101 additional services to start on Mumbai suburban railways. Survey will be conducted to connect Sealdah and Howrah stations in West Bengal. To commemorate Rabindranath Tagore's 150th

birth anniversary, 'Bharat Teertha' trains to connect several pilgrimage centres across the country.

» Indian Railway Finance Corporation will borrow Rs91.2 billion (\$1.97 billion) from the market in 2010-11.

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India-Turkey Relation

Joint Declaration on Scientific and Technological Cooperation

By Dr. Sachchidanand



“India and Turkey will actively study the possibilities of working together in mutually identified projects in areas such as telecommunication, computerisation, information technology, space research, biotechnology and environmental technology.”

India and Turkey on February 9, 2010 desired to develop and expand cooperation in science and technology and in other areas of common interest and launched an Advanced Science and Technology Dialogue, besides offering to actively study the possibilities of working together in mutually identified projects in areas such as telecommunications, computerization, non-technology space research, bio-technology and environmental technology and convene a joint workshop in 2010.

On the occasion of the visit of the President of the Republic of Turkey, Abdullah Gul, to India, a joint statement was issued in which both sides:

Considering the importance of science and technology for the economic and social development of both the countries have desired to develop and expand cooperation in the field of science and technology in areas of common interest besides noting that together with economic and commercial relations, cooperation in science and technology offer great potential as a driver of bilateral relations.

The joint statement has recognized that cooperation in science and technology will not only advance the state of science and technology to the benefit of both countries but also strengthen the bonds of friendship and understanding between people of both countries.

The statement also reaffirmed the Agreement on Cooperation in the field of Science and Technology between the Government of the Republic of Turkey and the Government of the Republic of India signed on 17 September 2003,

It also declared that the two countries launch an Advanced Science and Technology Dialogue, which will strive to promote the maximum use of the opportunities that have risen for mutually beneficial interaction in the field of science and technology, which would add to the strength of the two national economies, and to the welfare and prosperity of the people of both the countries.

The dialogue will also strengthen this interaction with special emphasis on high-technology and frontier areas of research and application and will encourage and support broadened and expanded relations between the scientific and technological communities in both countries by creating favorable conditions for cooperation.

Advanced Science and Technology Dialogue will also encourage cooperation through exchange of ideas, information, skills and technologies; exchange of scientists and technical experts; the

convening of joint seminars, scientific conferences, and meetings; training and enhancing the skills of scientists and technical experts; the conduct of joint research projects and studies and other forms of scientific and technological cooperation as may be mutually agreed upon,

India and Turkey will actively study the possibilities of working together in mutually identified projects in areas such as telecommunication, computerisation, information technology, space research, biotechnology and environmental technology.

Both sides will actively explore the possibilities for joint research and development activities making use of best practices in this field and encourage, facilitate and support the development of direct contacts and cooperation between government agencies and organizations, universities, science and research centers, institutes and institutions, private sector firms and other entities of the two countries.

The joint statement stated "We also agree, therefore, that Turkey and India convene a joint workshop in 2010 among designated representatives to elaborate and bring into being the Advanced Science and Technology Dialogue in accordance with this Joint Declaration."

Joint Declaration on Terrorism

On the occasion of the visit of the President of the Republic of Turkey to India, both sides:

- » Recognising that terrorism poses a grave threat to global peace and security;
- » Noting that the forces of terrorism are nourished by extremist ideologies;
- » Stressing that terrorism should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group;
- » Recognising further that terrorism seeks to weaken, in particular, democratic societies and polities that are based on the rule of law and committed to inclusive growth;

» Denouncing those who sponsor, abet and instigate terrorism and provide them safe havens;

» Affirming their common commitment to fight terrorism and recognising that their counter-terrorism efforts constitute an important part of the international community's efforts to eradicate terrorism;

» Calling upon the international community to comply with all the provisions of international counter-terrorism conventions and protocols as well as other related international instruments and strengthen international cooperation in this regard;

» Recognising the need for the conclusion of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism as a vital component of the international legal framework in the global struggle against terrorism; calling on the international community to conclude the Convention without further delay;

» Decided to enhance their cooperation in this field;

» To this end, their officials have been tasked to work towards developing an action plan with timelines and specific measures. For this purpose, the officials will take into account the existing structures of cooperation such as the Joint Working Group against Terrorism;

» Agreed to work together and with other like-minded States for the finalization of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism at the earliest.

Turkey Profile

Name of the country : Republic of Turkey

Capital: Ankara

Population : 67.9 million (2000 census), 71.52 million(Est: Dec 08)

Languages spoken : Turkish

Basic foreign, international trade policies: Turkey seeks membership of the European Union which is central to its foreign policy. Relationship

with neighbouring countries and with the Middle-East, Balkans and the Central Asian/Caucasus countries is another priority area. Economic liberalization was initiated in 1981. Turkey follows liberalized economic policy and has a number of PTA/FTA including Customs Union arrangement with EU.

Major industries, global companies : Major industrial houses including Koc, Sabanci, Dogan etc. Numerous multinational companies functioning in Turkey

Significant economic activities : Textiles & garments, construction, tourism, leather, food processing, automobile, mining, agriculture etc.

Global Trade and Investment : Large adverse balance of trade despite high export growth (nearly 60% trade with OECD countries).

Total imports into Turkey : \$ 69.3 bn (2003); \$97.1 bn (2004); \$ 110 bn (2005); \$ 133 bn (2006); \$ 170 bn (2007), \$ 202 bn (2008)

Major exporting countries : Russian Federation, Germany, China, Italy, the USA, Iran, UK, Switzerland and Spain

Total exports from Turkey : \$ 47.2 bn (2003); \$62.7 bn (2004); \$ 73.1 bn (2005); \$ 92 bn (2006), \$ 107 bn (2007), \$132 bn (2008).

Investments in Turkey

Turkey is an attractive country for foreign investors with a business-friendly regulatory environment. It has a large dynamic market with a relatively high quality labour force and location advantage, with easy access to regional markets. It is a member of EU Customs Union, providing access to the large European market. The net foreign direct investment in Turkey was \$ 10.03 billion in 2005, 19.92 billion in 2006 and 21.97 billion in 2007. The main beneficiaries of FDI have been hotels, tourism and leisure, textile and auto component sectors and the main sources of investment are USA, UK and Germany.

India-Turkey Relation

During the Turkish War of Independence, the people of India contributed funds for the Turkish cause – which was partly used to train and assist the Turkish Army and partly for establishing the first Turkish bank (Isbank). Diplomatic relations between India and Turkey were established in 1948.

Political Relations: Bilateral relations are characterized by warmth and cordiality. The two countries share common values including commitment to secularism and democratic principles. Indian economic progress and technological advancement have been instrumental in recent upsurge in interest towards India in Turkey.

India-Turkey Bilateral Trade (in US\$ million)

2002 - 2003 - 2004 - 2005 - 2006 - 2007 - 2008

India's Export : 564.0 718.8 1043 1,274.4 1,579.0 2,300.0 2457.48

Turkey's export : 69.5 71.4 136 219.8 222.0 347.0 543.0

Total : 633.5 790.2 1179 1,494.2 1,801.0 2,647.0 **3000.487 ???**

The major items of India's exports to Turkey include cotton yarn, synthetic yarn, organic dyes, organic chemicals, denim, steel (bars and rods), granite, antibiotics, carpets, unwrought zinc, sesame seed, TV CRTs, mobile handsets, clothing and apparel.

Turkey's exports to India includes poppy seed, auto components, marble, textile machinery, denim, carpets, cumin seeds, minerals (vermiculite, perlite and chlorites) and fittings and steel products.

Indian companies in Turkey

More than 60 Indian companies have registered businesses in Turkey in the form of joint ventures, trade and representative offices.

IRCON undertook railway projects in nineties. Kalpataru, in association with Barmek, a Turkish company undertook electricity transmission projects in Turkey in 2003. Punj Lloyd, in association with LIMAK, a Turkish construction company, constructed a segment of the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline.

An Indian company Polyplex set up a polyplex film manufacturing factory in Chorlu, Turkey in 2005 with a total capital investment of US \$ 60 million. The production from the factory is utilized mostly for exporting to West European countries and partly to Turkish market.

Indo-Rama Group started a production unit for polyester fibre. TATA Motors have an existing tie-up with Mesin Limited of Isotlar Group for marketing and after sale service for TATA vehicles in Turkey. For past few years, they have been selling TATA Pickup vehicles in Turkey. In February 2005, TATA Motors launched their Passenger Vehicles in Turkey.

This included TATA Indica and TATA Indigo models. TATA Motors has started an Assembly Unit in Adana for assembly of TATA buses primarily for export to Middle East. Mahindra & Mahindra has formed a joint venture marketing network with ILCE Otomotiv Servisve Ticaret A.S. for its utility vehicles and tractors in Turkey. Approval for utility vehicles has been obtained.

Limak Constructions, a consortium of GMR Infrastructure Ltd and Malaysia Airport Holding won a BOT contract of Euro 1.932 bn for building a new international passenger terminal at the Sabiha Gokcen Airport in Istanbul. Industrial houses such as Reliance, Ispat, Aditya Birla Group etc have established their trading offices in Turkey to look for opportunities in the market here.

Tractors and Farm Equipment Ltd(TAFE), a Chennai-based company of the Amalgamations group, has announced on October 13 2008 that it plans to set up a tractor manufacturing plant in Turkey. This \$ 20 million plant to be operational in 2009 and this plant will have an initial capacity of 15,000 units/year.

The Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL), in collaboration with Çalik Enerji of Turkey, was granted license for establishing an oil refinery with a capacity of 15 million tons a year in Ceyhan, envisaging a total investment of approx. US\$ 5 billion. The project would primarily focus on exports to the European markets and the USA.

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India-Britain Relation

Declaration on Civilian Nuclear Cooperation

By Sant Prasad Gupta



India on feb 11 signed a “declaration” on civilian nuclear cooperation with the U.K. which officials described as a “general umbrella agreement.”

The two sides are expected to make a public announcement in the coming days. The U.K. becomes the eighth country with which India has signed a civilian nuclear pact since breaking out of restrictions imposed on it.

The agreement was signed by Atomic Energy Commission Chairman Srikumar Banerjee and British High Commissioner Richard Stagg. The pact will provide a legal framework for British companies that have expertise in supplying components. According to the Nuclear Industry Association of the UK, 185 British companies in the island nation which include the nuclear plant operators, those engaged in decommissioning, waste management, nuclear liabilities management and all aspects of the nuclear fuel cycle.

The British nuclear industry exports nuclear goods and equipment worth over 1.11 billion dollars and can supply 70-80 per cent parts of a new nuclear reactor.

Since September 2008, when the Nuclear Suppliers Group lifted the embargo on India's participa-

tion in international nuclear commerce, India has signed civil nuclear cooperation agreements with France, USA, Russia, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Argentina and Namibia. India has also finalised a civil nuclear cooperation deal with Canada, which is expected to be signed soon.

India-UK Bilateral Relations

India's multi-faceted bilateral relationship with the UK has intensified over the past few years. Recent dialogues at the highest level have underlined the bilateral strategic partnership in all areas. The UK is an important interlocutor in the bilateral, EU, G8 and global contexts.

Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh visited the UK on 19-20 September 2004 and met PM Tony Blair. During the visit, the two Prime Ministers adopted a Joint Declaration titled 'India-UK: Towards a new and dynamic partnership' which envisages annual Summits and meetings between Foreign Ministers. It also outlined areas for future cooperation in civil nuclear energy, space, defence, combating terrorism, economic ties, science and technology, education and culture.

The then PM Tony Blair mooted the idea of India joining G-8 discussions. At his invitation PM vis-

ited the UK on 7-8 July 2005 for the “G-8 Plus 5” Gleneagles Summit (India, China, South Africa, Brazil and Mexico). He visited India on 6-8 September 2005 in his capacity as EU President for the EU/ India Summit on September 7, and also for the bilateral Summit held on September 8 in Udaipur. PM met the then PM Blair in St. Petersburg in July 2006 during the meeting of the Outreach Countries with G8 leaders.

Prime Minister Dr. Singh visited UK from 9-11 October 2006 and held the third annual India-U.K Summit. Prime Minister Gordon Brown’s visit to India (20-21 January 2008). The fourth India-UK Annual Summit was held in Delhi on January 21, 2008 during the visit of Prime Minister Gordon Brown. Building on the achievements of the two declarations (2002, 2004), the two sides issued a joint statement on India-UK Strategic Partnership.

The two sides agreed:

On the importance of more representative and effective international institutions to address global challenges. The UK reaffirmed its firm support for India’s candidature for a permanent membership in an expanded UNSC.

To cooperate in developing collaboration between small and medium

enterprises, entrepreneurs and venture capitalists. To forge a closer partnership of two knowledge societies in the field of higher education. In particular, it was agreed to establish an Education Forum to work towards an early conclusion of an education partnership agreement and to enter into a MoU on an Indo-UK Higher Education Leadership Development programme to develop leadership skills in higher education.

To establish a Science Bridge Initiative shall be established to build institution to institution relationship on equal partnership with joint funding under the principle of parity. To promote cooperation in civil nuclear energy and would work towards a bilateral agreement for this purpose. The UK supports the India-US civil nuclear cooperation initiative.

Both sides expressed satisfaction over the announcement of UK-India agreement on the second phase of UK-India Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation study aimed at identifying the barriers to local carbon technology transfer. Remain committed to build on existing cooperation on counterterrorism including establishment of bilateral dialogue on terrorist financing.

Prime Minister met Prime Minister Brown on the sidelines on the UNGA Summit in New York on 26 September 2008. The two leaders discussed the global economic crisis, terrorism, and other bilateral and regional issues. Prime Minister of UK Gordon Brown was on a half-day visit to New Delhi on 13th December 2008 as part of his visit to the region following Mumbai terror attacks. He met the Prime Minister and conveyed his condolences on the Mumbai terror attacks.

India-UK Round Table

The 11th India-UK Round Table was held in India in 2-5 May 2008 at Shimla. The issues discussed include prospects for the world economy, the demographic dimension, health care, the dialogue of cultures & education, research and innovation. The next round of India-UK RT will be held in Dichley, UK on 3-5 July 2009 (both days inclusive). Economic and Commercial Relations

Bilateral economic linkages have strengthened through increased trade and investment flows. Two-way bilateral trade in goods has crossed £ 8.11 billion in 2007-08 and is expected to cross £ 10 billion before 2010. Trade in Services is estimated to be more than £3.5 billion in 2007-08 and thus the total bilateral trade in goods and services amount to £ 11.6 billion in 2007-08. The export basket from India has undergone substantial diversification and more than 50% of India’s exports now constitute non-traditional and hi-tech goods like petroleum products, engineering products and pharma products.

UK fourth largest investor in India

UK is the fourth largest investor in India and the cumulative investment by UK from April 2000 till September 2008 was \$ 5,058 million. For the period April-September 2008, the total investment by UK was \$ 695 million. The UK is the most preferred nation for investments by Indian companies in 2008 so far, accounting deals worth \$6 billion. (till August 08). India has emerged as the third largest foreign investor in the UK and the second largest overseas investor in London and Northern Ireland in terms of number of acquisitions / investments. India is the second largest creator of jobs in the UK with opening of offices by over 500 Indian companies. London Stock Exchange hosts 52 Indian companies, with a combined market cap of £9 billion. Indian firms have raised a total of £3 billion through listings on the exchange. In March 2008, Tata acquired Jaguar and Land Rover for £2.3 billion.

India-UK Joint Trade and Economic Committee (JETCO)

The fifth meeting of JETCO was held during the visit of Peter Mandelson, Secretary of State for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform and Shri Kamal Nath, Minister for Commerce and Industry on 20 January 2009. Liberalisation of visa regime, progress on the eight working groups set up was among the issues discussed. The fourth meeting in London on 13th December 2007 had constituted Working Groups under the JETCO in order to identify the barriers and to promote the business.

The working groups have been set up in Hi-Tech Industry, Agribusiness, Accountancy, Financial Services, Intellectual Property Rights, Legal Services, Infrastructure and Healthcare sectors.

India-UK Financial Dialogue:

This initiative was launched in January 2007 by Finance Minister Shri Chidambaram and UK's then

Chancellor of the Exchequer Mr. Gordon Brown with a view to exchange views on bilateral and global financial issues. The second meeting of the India-UK Financial Dialogue was held on 11 August 2008 between Shri P. Chidambaram, Finance Minister and UK Chancellor of the Exchequer Alistair Darling.

The discussion focused on the Doha trade talks and financial services liberalisation in India. The Ministers also discussed commodity markets and energy policy. The two Ministers signed a Memorandum of Understanding to encourage sharing of best practices in the development of Public Private Partnerships.

India-UK Investment Summit:

The first ever India-UK Investment Summit took place in London on 10 October 2006 to coincide with Prime Minister's visit to the UK. The second India-UK Investment Summit took place in India in January 2008 during the visit of Prime Minister Gordon Brown. At the summit, both sides agreed to cooperate in developing collaboration between SMEs and entrepreneurs and venture capitalists. The British side agreed to support the establishment of a capacity building programme in India for public private partnership in infrastructure. CII delegation was invited by Prime Minister Gordon Brown on 25th March 2008 to follow up issues discussed during the summit. UK side agreed to consider CII's request to implement a UK funded three year programme to impart vocational skills to one million Indians in rural areas.

Education

The 2004 Joint Declaration identified education linkages as a priority. India has (November 2004) become a strategic partner in the Global Gateway Initiative of the UK Department for Education and Skills for linkages between schools. The share of Indian students in UK universities and higher education is growing steadily. There are about 22,000 Indian students in Britain. The annual intake has crossed 18,000.

In September 2005, then PM Tony Blair had announced £ 10 million UK-India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI), during his visit to India, and launched it in April 2006. Four corporates – BAE, BP, GlaxoSmithKline and Shell, have together contributed £ 4 million. The first meeting of the India-UK science and Innovation Council in London (June 2006) had endorsed UKIERI and agreed to match the UK's contribution for bilateral research projects. Overall, total anticipated fund for UKIERI is in excess of £ 25 million over 5 years. The three main strands of the initiative are Higher Education and Research, Schools, and Professional and Technical Skills.

Indian Community in Britain

Indian on Britain's population of 59.8 million, the population Community of Indian origin is estimated to be around 1.5 million, accounting for the single largest segment of ethnic population. Over 40% of them live in inner and outer London. Outside London, Indian community's main concentrations are in West and East Midlands, Leicester and Greater Manchester. Over the years Indians have performed extremely well in various fields.

Majority of the second generation have opted for higher education and are in white collar professions like doctors, engineers, solicitors, chartered accountants, etc.

House of Commons MPs of Indian origin: Parmjit Dhanda, Dr. Ashok Kumar, Marsha Singh, Keith Vaz (all Lab.) and Shailesh Vara (Cons.).

House of Lords: Raj Bagri, Narendra Babubhai Patel, Meghnad Desai, Navnit Dholakia, Shreela Flather, Tarsem King, Bhikhu Parekh, Adam Patel, Swaraj Paul, Usha Prashar, Diljit Rana, Kumar Bhattacharya, Kamlesh Patel, Karan Bilimoria, Sandip Verma, Mohamed Sheikh. In addition, there are Indian origin Councillors in active politics in many Councils across UK.

UK Profile

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, commonly known as the United Kingdom, the UK or Britain, is a sovereign island country located off the northwestern coast of continental Europe. The UK includes the island of Great Britain, the northeast part of the island of Ireland, and many small islands.

Northern Ireland is the only part of the UK with a land border, sharing it with the Republic of Ireland. Apart from this land border, the UK is surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean, the North Sea, the English Channel and the Irish Sea. The largest island, Great Britain, is linked to France by the Channel Tunnel.

The UK has an area of 244,100 sq. km. forming a group of islands lying off the North-West coast of Europe. The two largest islands are Great Britain proper (comprising the greater parts of England, Wales and Scotland) and Ireland (comprising Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland). Britain does not have extreme weather, but is subject to frequent changes depending on the prevailing southwesterly winds. The temperature rarely rises above 32 C or falls below -10 C.

According to statistics compiled in 2000, the population of UK was 59,755,700 with England accounting for 50.0 million, Scotland 5.1 million, Wales 3.0 million and Northern Ireland 1.7 million. United Kingdom is set to become Europe's most highly populated nation within two generations, driven by immigration. Forecasts published by the European Commission suggest that UK will overtake Germany within 50 years as the population rises from 60.9 million today to 77 million.

The UK has a parliamentary system of government where the Constitution is not based on a written constitution but is the result of gradual evolution over many centuries. Unlike most countries, the British Constitution is not set out in a single document but is made up of statute law, common law and convention. The monarchy is the oldest insti-

tution of the Government, with Queen Elizabeth II as the Head of the State. Britain follows universal adult suffrage from the age of 18. It has a bicameral system of Parliament, with an elected House of Commons (646 seats) and a nonelected House of Lords, which has recently been reformed to consist mainly of appointed life peers.

Economy

The economy of the United Kingdom is the fifth largest in the world in terms of market exchange rates and the sixth largest by purchasing power parity (PPP). It is the second largest economy in Europe after Germany's. Its GDP PPP per capita in 2007 is the 22nd highest in the world.

The credit crunch and the ongoing economic crisis have severely affected UK. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) in UK revealed that Britain's economy shrank during the third quarter of the year for the first time since 1992 and endured the worst single quarter since 1990. It said gross domestic product (GDP) from July to September 2008 was down 0.6 per cent on the previous quarter.

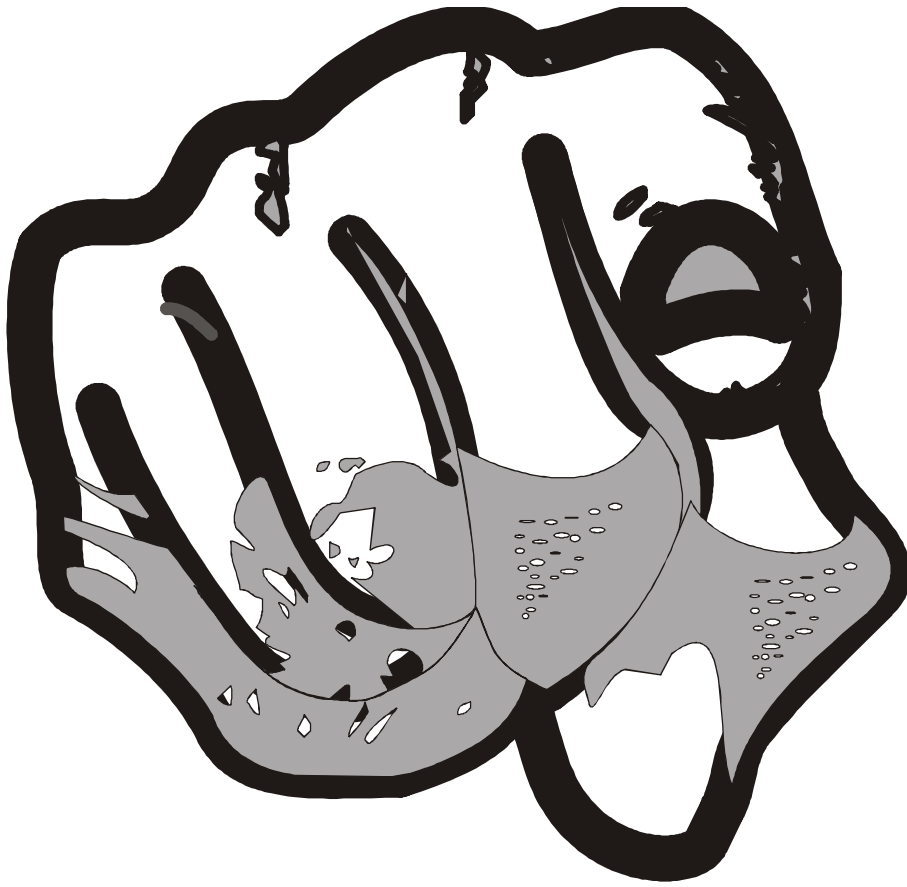
The contraction came at a faster rate than previously thought, and was down from last month's initial estimate of a 0.5 per cent contraction.

- » GDP (PPP): \$2.772 trillion(2007 est.) (5th)
- » GDP growth: (-) 0.6 % (Q3 2008)
- » GDP per capita: £ 23,500 (2008 est.)
- » GDP by sector: agriculture (1%), industry (26%), services (73%)
- » Inflation (CPI): 4.4% (2008 est.)
- » Population below poverty line: 14% (2006 est.)
- » Labour force: 31 million (includes unemployed)
- » Labour force by occupation Services: (81%), industry (18%) and agriculture (1%) (excludes unemployed) (2007)
- » Unemployment: 6.0% (Oct.2008)
- » Exports: \$470 billion (2007 est.)

» Main export partners: USA 15%, Germany 11%, France 10%, Ireland 7%, Netherlands 6%, Belgium 6%, Spain 5%, Italy 4% (2007)

» Imports: \$600 billion (2007 est.)

» Main import partners: Germany 14%, USA 9%, France 8%, Netherlands 7%, Belgium 6%, Italy 5%, The People's Republic of China 4%, Ireland 4%



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Korean President's India Visit



"We are delighted that a friend of India is at the helm of affairs in Korea and that together we will have the opportunity to realize your vision and our common vision of a strong and vibrant India-Korea partnership."



"I have tried to realize the vision of New Asia Diplomacy. This trip to India marks a key point of such efforts. This is (civil nuclear) an area which will be very productive for both of us."

Taking India's ties with Republic of Korea (ROK) to a new height, the Chief Guest at India's Republic Day celebrations (January 26) was ROK President Lee Myung-bak. Lee's India visit assumes significance as he is the first Korean President to be Chief Guest at India's Republic Day function. Besides, this is his third Korean presidential visit to India in a period of less than 13 years. The discussions held and agreements reached during Lee's visit clearly signal that both countries are optimistic about further strengthening India-ROK ties in several key areas.

Lee paid a state visit at the invitation of his Indian counterpart President Pratibha Devisingh Patil, from January 24 to 27. He was accorded a ceremonial welcome on January 25 at the Rashtrapati Bhawan. This was followed by his meeting with

Patil. The highlight of Lee's visit was his summit meeting with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

Welcoming Lee, in his opening remarks at the delegation level talks, Singh said: "We are delighted that a friend of India is at the helm of affairs in Korea and that together we will have the opportunity to realize your vision and our common vision of a strong and vibrant India-Korea partnership. Your State visit today reflects our mutual commitment to strengthen relations between our countries. This is a relationship that rests on our shared values of democracy, rule of law and respect for human freedoms."

Ahead of his India visit, Lee projected it as a key part of Seoul's "New Asia Diplomacy" campaign, to improve ties with Asian countries. In his message, Lee said: "I have tried to realize the vision of New Asia Diplomacy. This trip to India marks a key point of such efforts." He described India as a key player in Asia taking center on the global stage in the 21st century. "Asia is developing as a new growth engine in the world. Asia is expected to account for 35 percent of the world's GDP (gross domestic product) ten years from now," he said. "I am paying attention to India because of its potential," Lee asserted.

With both the countries eager to push forward bilateral ties, during the summit meeting, Singh and Lee discussed ways to develop them and also exchanged views on regional and international issues.

The joint statement released after the summit meeting, stated that during the talks, the two leaders “expressed satisfaction on the strong development of India-ROK relations based on the ‘Long-term Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Prosperity,’ established in October 2004.” They “welcomed the steady growth in high level exchanges and contacts between the two countries, and the expansion in various areas of bilateral relations including defense, trade, science & technology, information & communication technology, education, and culture.”

Singh and Lee agreed that there was “immense scope for further enhancing bilateral relations in various areas.” They “welcomed entry into force of Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)” from January 1, 2010 as “bedrock of a new comprehensive partnership between India and ROK.” With both countries as major economies in the region, their “partnership has the capacity to promote regional growth, and to contribute to prosperity and economic development of Asia,” they stated.

To enhance bilateral relations to a “strategic partnership,” Singh and Lee identified key aspects of their future relationship. These include, political & security cooperation; enhancing trade & investment flows; strengthening cooperation in field of science & technology; increase in cultural exchanges & people to people contacts; and cooperation in the international arena. Affirming “their commitment to ensure implementation of CEPA,” they agreed to set a target of \$30 billion for bilateral trade to be achieved by 2014. The India-ROK bilateral trade stood at \$13 billion in 2008-09. Bilateral trade, which was less than \$3 billion in 2001, crossed the \$10 billion mark in 2007.

Singh and Lee agreed to designate 2011 as “Year of Korea” in India and “Year of India” in ROK to strengthen cultural exchanges and people to people contacts. India welcomed ROK’s initiative to open a Korean Cultural Center in New Delhi in 2011, which according to the joint statement will go a long way in “promoting awareness about Korean life and culture in India.”

Four Pacts

Lee’s India visit was also marked by inking of four pacts. These include: Agreement on transfer of sentenced persons; Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on cooperation in information technology & services; Program of cooperation in science and technology for the period 2010-2012 and MoU for cooperation in peaceful uses of outer space.

Singh and Lee agreed “to facilitate development of a framework for bilateral civil nuclear cooperation.” They shared the view that “nuclear energy can play an important role as a safe, sustainable and non-polluting source of energy.” Lee is understood to have told Singh that he was “very optimistic” about progress in this area and that ROK nuclear companies were “very competitive” on this front.

Civil nuclear cooperation figured prominently in the summit meeting and the talks Lee held with Indian External Affairs Minister S.M. Krishna. After his meeting with Krishna, Lee said: “This is (civil nuclear) an area which will be very productive for both of us.” A member of Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), ROK had supported consensus for reopening global civil nuclear trade with India in September 2008. Lee recently succeeded in marching ahead of western contractors by securing a \$20 billion contract to build four nuclear reactors in UAE. While from the Korean-angle, Lee’s India-visit is a part of his New Asia Diplomacy, from the Indian it is certainly suggestive of India looking towards East more seriously than before.

Strategic Partnership

As part of their Strategic Partnership between the two countries, the two leaders decided to main regular contacts, including on the margins of international meetings and conferences.

They reiterated the importance of the India-South Korea Joint Commission co-chaired by the Foreign Ministers of the two countries and acknowledged the necessity of holding the Joint Commission on

an annual basis. It was agreed that the sixth meeting of the Joint Commission will be held in 2010. Dr Singh and Mr Lee agreed that the Foreign Policy & Security Dialogue between the two countries would be raised to the level of Vice Foreign Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MOFAT) of South Korea and Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) of India. It was also agreed that the first meeting of the upgraded dialogue will be held in 2010.

The two leaders agreed to strengthen dialogue and exchanges in the area of defence through regular high-level military exchanges. They also agreed to explore the possibilities of joint venture cooperation in research & development, and manufacture of military equipment including through transfer of technology and co-production. It was agreed that the third meeting of the Joint Committee on Defence Logistics and Industry will be held during the first half of 2010.

The two leaders also agreed on the need for greater cooperation between the navies and coast guards in areas pertaining to the safety and security of international maritime traffic. They shared the view that developing long-term cooperative relations in this area will contribute to peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region.

As far as economic and trade cooperation was concerned, the two sides felt that the CEPA would contribute to enhancing trade and investment flows between the two countries. It was agreed that the first meeting of the Joint Committee headed by Trade Ministers of the two countries or their representatives will be held in the second half of 2010 to review the status of the implementation of the CEPA.

Dr Singh and Mr Lee set a target of \$ 30 billion for bilateral trade to be achieved by 2014 from the present level of about \$ 16 billion. They also agreed to strengthen cooperation in trade and investment, SMEs, SPS and Standards related measures, trade remedies and IPR issues.

Both sides agreed to enhance cooperation in the financial sector through bilateral consultations on macroeconomic policy, budget, taxation, finance, and public sector reform.

Noting that the expansion of mutual investment will contribute to the reciprocal economic growth of both countries, the two leaders agreed to enhance cooperation and support at the governmental level to nurture a favourable environment, including through mutual agreement on a revised Double Taxation Avoidance Convention (DTAC) before the end of 2010.

The Indian side expressed the hope that investment from South Korea into India would expand, including in the infrastructure and manufacturing sectors. In this context, referring to the project to set up a Korean industrial complex and technology zone in Gujarat, the two leaders noted its potential to further accelerate the bilateral trade and investment linkages.

According to the joint statement, the two leaders also recognized the need to expedite the implementation of the POSCO project in Orissa. The Korean side hoped that Indian investment in Korea will also expand. It was agreed that the fourth meeting of the India-South Korea Joint Committee on Investment Promotion will be held in New Delhi in 2010.

The two leaders agreed to explore the possibility of enhancing air connectivity between the two countries. They also agreed to consider the early conclusion of a mutually beneficial Maritime Shipping Agreement.

Dr Singh and Mr Lee agreed to designate 2011 as the Year of Korea in India and the Year of India in Korea.

The Indian side also welcomed the Korean initiative to open a Korean Cultural Centre in New Delhi in 2011.

The two leaders recognized the legitimate and long-term interests of both countries in the peace

and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region, and the importance of developing an open and inclusive economic regional architecture that is based on the principles of mutual benefit and shared opportunity.

In this context, they affirmed that both India and South Korea had a significant role to play in such a regional architecture and agreed to maintain regular consultations and close coordination in the EAS, ARF, ACD and ASEM processes. Both sides agreed to work for comprehensive United Nations reform, including Security Council expansion.

The two leaders reiterated their commitment to the eradication of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and agreed to enhance cooperation in this area, including through information sharing.

Both sides also reiterated their common commitment on nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

The two leaders valued the G-20 as the premier forum for international economic cooperation and commended its timely and strong policy response in the crisis. They welcomed the Framework for Strong, Sustainable and Balanced Growth launched at Pittsburgh and looked forward to its implementation.

They welcomed the Copenhagen Accord and reaffirmed their determination to work closely together in the negotiations both under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol towards an Agreed Outcome to be adopted at the 16th Session of the Conference of the Parties.

India-South Korea Relation

India-South Korea relations has been relatively limited, although much progress arose during the three decades. Since the formal establishment of the diplomatic ties between the two countries in

1973, several trade agreements have been reached: Agreement on Trade Promotion and Economic and Technological Cooperation in 1974; Agreement on Cooperation in Science & Technology in 1976; Convention on Double Taxation Avoidance in 1985; and Bilateral Investment Promotion/ Protection Agreement in 1996. Trade between the two nations has increased exponentially, exemplified by the \$530 million during the fiscal year of 1992-1993, and the \$10 billion during 2006-2007.

During the 1997 Asian financial crisis, South Korean businesses sought to increase access to the global markets, and began trade investments with India. The last two presidential visits from South Korea to India were in 1996 and 2006, and the embassy works between the two countries are seen as needing improvements.

Recently, there have been acknowledgments in the Korean public and political spheres that expanding relations with India should be a major economical and political priority for South Korea. Much of the economic investments of South Korea have been drained into China; however, South Korea is currently the fifth largest source of investment in India.

To the Times of India, President Roh voiced his opinion that cooperation between India's software and Korea's IT industries would bring very efficient and successful outcomes. The two countries agreed to shift their focus to the revision of the visa policies between the two countries, expansion of trade, and establishment of free trade agreement to encourage further investment between the two countries.

Korean companies such as LG and Samsung have established manufacturing and service facilities in India, and several Korean construction companies won grants for a portion of the many infrastructural building plans in India, such as the National Highways Development Project. Tata Motor's purchase of Daewoo Commercial Vehicles at the cost of \$102 million highlights the India's investments in Korea, which consist mostly of subcontracting.

Pre-Modern Relations

This cordial relationship between the two countries extends back to 48AD, when Queen Suro, or Princess Heo Hwang-ok, travelled from the kingdom of Ayodhya in North India to Korea. According to the Samguk Yusa, the princess had a dream about a heavenly king who was awaiting heaven's anointed ride.

After Princess Heo had the dream, she asked her parents, the king and queen, for permission to set out and seek the man, which the king and queen urged with the belief that god orchestrated the whole fate. Upon approval, she set out on a boat, carrying gold, silver, a tea plant, and a stone which calmed the waters. Archeologists discovered a stone with two fish kissing each other, a symbol of the Gaya kingdom that is unique to the Mishra royal family in Ayodhya, India. This royal link provides further evidence that there was an active commercial engagements between India and Korea since the queen's arrival to Korea. Current descendents live in the city of Kimhae as well as abroad in America's state of New Jersey and Kentucky.

Trade And Investment

In the era of globalization and liberalization, if there is one issue which has remained at the forefront of every discussion in world trade, it is the issue of regionalism versus multilateralism.

Against the backdrop of the prolonged Doha round, with no consensus being reached on several issues in the WTO, both developed and developing countries are left with no option but to pursue regionalism in a rigorous way to cater to their development needs.

In today's age, every country in the world is a party to the signing of an advanced form of regional trade agreements such as the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement. India is no exception and has signed several agreements in the last five years, with the CEPA with Korea being the most recent.

The signing of the India-Korea CEPA on Aug. 7, 2009 though delayed, has been welcomed (and rightly so) by both the business community and policymakers of both countries. This agreement has provisions for substantial reduction of both tariffs and nontariff barriers in a phased manner. It will take India-Korea relations to a higher level and also expand India's presence in East Asia.

The Asian growth story mainly revolves around India and China. However, Korea is the fourth-largest economy in Asia and remains a key trading and investment partner to India. Bilateral economic relations between India and Korea have been strengthening over the years, particularly after 1991. The opening up of the Indian economy has not only enhanced the market access for Korean goods but also provided investment opportunities for the internationally competitive Korean companies.

However, the current amount of trade and investment between the two countries is relatively low in consideration of their sizes and structural complementarities. The main hindrances to expanded ties include several tariff and nontariff barriers.

The CEPA addresses these problems and will contribute to expanding bilateral trade and investment and boosting cooperation between the two countries at various multilateral forums like the WTO, IMF, etc. The CEPA is the right step in support of India's "Look East Policy." On the other hand, Korea is looking beyond its traditional trading partners like the United States and China to sustain its trade and economic progress.

India-Korea Trade

Indian economic reforms were considered timely by Korean companies as they were looking for alternative destinations to enhance their trade and investments.

The share of both countries in their respective total exports and imports has increased over the years.

In 1990, Korea's share in Indian exports and imports was 1.01 and 1.28 percent, respectively, and increased to 1.69 and 2.69 percentages in 2007.

On the other hand, during the same period India's share in total Korean exports and imports has continuously increased from 0.67 and 0.41 percent in 1990 to 1.70 and 1.15 percent, respectively, in 2007. From 1991 to 2007 India's exports to Korea increased by 10 times, and imports by more than 17 times, resulting in an increase in the trade deficit.

The increase in merchandise trade between the two countries has been attributed to changing demand structure and comparative advantages of both economies in complementary sectors.

India's export basket has traditionally consisted of low value-added products which shifted over time to a wider range of industrial products. On the other hand, some conventional export commodity groups, such as cotton, have lost their dominant position.

However, India's import basket from Korea in recent years mainly consisted of relatively high value-added products such as electrical machinery and equipment, nuclear reactors, iron and steel, transport equipment, mineral fuels and their products, organic chemicals, etc.

The abolition and reduction of tariffs on 90 percent of Indian goods and 85 percent of Korean goods in terms of value under the CEPA would make exports competitive in each others markets. Further, renegotiation regarding goods concession and preferred tariff rates are encouraging for India-Korea trade.

Bilateral trade in services has continuously increased in some sectors, such as IT/software services and travel services. Since India is the ninth-largest exporter of commercial services and Korea is the 11th-largest importer in commercial services, the CEPA will be beneficial for India. It allows the inflow of Indian information technology workers, engineers, and English teachers into Korea. The

CEPA also has provisions such as allowing the opening up of bank branches and professional human resources exchange between the two countries.

India-Korea Investment Relation

Sensing the opportunity in the Indian economy, many Korean companies aggressively started entering the Indian market after 1991. Within a short period of time Korean enterprises such as LG, Samsung and Hyundai have not only established their presence but also diversified their businesses into various sectors.

Korea accounted for around 4 percent of the total cumulative FDI received by India from 1991 to 1999. However, Korea's share declined to 0.6 percent in total cumulative FDI during the period from April 2000 to November 2008. The major sectors attracting Korean FDI approval are electrical equipment (including computer software and electronics), metallurgical industries and food-processing industries.

Although Indian investment in Korea is negligible, the CEPA has come at the right time for Indian companies which are showing increasing eagerness to expand in Korea. This is a good opportunity for the Indian IT industry looking to establish a stronger presence in the APEC region.

The CEPA provides the right opportunity for diversified Korean investment opportunities in almost all Indian manufacturing industries across 20 areas. Some of the sectors where Korean investors will be able to invest and benefit are food processing, textiles, garments, chemicals, metals and machinery due to tariff reduction.

Now Korean companies can invest in the telecom, accounting, medical and advertising markets. Further, Korean financial firms are also allowed in the investment market.

Trade And Investment Barriers

In some of the product categories such as vehicles, rail/tram rolling stock, iron and steel which constitute a major proportion of Korea's exports, India's tariff rates are very high.

The imports of certain products, like electrical appliances, where Korea is very competitive, are subject to license from the Bureau of Indian Standards, which is cumbersome and expensive.

As a result of the CEPA, some of the barriers to Korean investors such as high regulation, nationality or residency requirements, bias in the awarding of projects, compulsory registration with local specific service provider associations, etc. will be relaxed, thereby increasing Korean FDI in the future.

Similarly, Indian exporters would benefit from the CEPA in sectors like textile and apparel products and agricultural and fishery products where Korea maintains high tariffs of more than 30 percent.

Similarly, Indian exporters who have been subject to rigid standards, technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures, particularly in drugs, food, cosmetics, etc., would find it easy to enter Korean markets.

Further, the restrictions on the telecommunication, film and broadcast industry, voice-overs, local advertising or foreign re-transmission channels would also be removed.

The agreement would create an enabling framework to reduce barriers and resolve disputes, thereby reducing anti-dumping cases in the future.

Future Areas of Cooperation

The successful conclusion of the CEPA should encourage collaboration between small and medium-sized Korean companies to synergize with Indian SMEs in the areas of semiconductors, plastics, auto

parts, agricultural instruments, textiles, multimedia, ceramic products, etc.

The agreement proposes bilateral economic cooperation in 13 areas such as audio-visual content, energy, information/communications technology and science technology. As such it should strengthen economic cooperation and benefit both countries immensely.

Since, infrastructure development in India is a high priority and requires both advanced technology and huge investment, there is tremendous scope for Korean companies to participate and collaborate in the infrastructure and construction sectors.

Further, there is a tremendous scope for improving trade in services between the two countries, particularly for India. There are areas such as information technology, science and technology, pharmaceuticals, broadcasting, tourism, health care, construction and related services and human resource development where the relations would go up further due to the CEPA.

Overall, the India-Korea CEPA is a step in the right direction given the slowdown of world trade. The reduction and abolitions of tariffs due to the CEPA would result in an increase in trade and investment relations between the two largest economies of Asia. Apart from an increase in trade, the two definite positive results expected from the agreement are an increase in Korean FDI inflows into Indian manufacturing and inflows of professionals from India to Korea.

Although the agreement did not pay much attention to reduction in tariffs and other regulations in agriculture, fisheries and mining due to their sensitive nature, the India-Korea CEPA will boost trade and investment between the two countries when the developed world is turning to protectionism because of the global financial crisis.

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United Nations Report on Toxic Electronic Waste



According to a United Nations report released recently Developing countries face increasing environmental and health hazards from electronic waste unless toxic materials are collected and recycled properly.

The report highlights the problem of recycling and salvaging procedures in poorer countries, often in unsafe conditions by unregulated operators. Sales of electronic devices are set to rise sharply in the next 10 years, particularly in emerging economies such as China and India, the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) said.

According to report, titled Recycling - from E-Waste to Resources, the world produces about 40 million tons of waste from electronic devices, known as e-waste, every year.

Main Feature

Experts said exposure to toxic chemicals from e-waste - including lead, cadmium, mercury, chromium and polybrominated biphenyls - can damage the brain and nervous system, affect the kidneys and liver, and cause birth defects.

The report was launched in Indonesia's resort island of Bali. It used data from 11 developing countries to estimate current and future e-waste generation from discarded computers, printers, mobile phones, pagers, cameras, music players, refrigerators, toys, televisions and other items.

China produces an estimated 2.3 million tons of e-waste annually, and though the country has banned e-waste imports, it remains a major dumping ground for waste from developed countries, the report said.

The UN research predicts that in South Africa and China, e-waste from old computers may jump by 200 to 400 per cent from 2007 levels and by 500 per cent in India.

E-waste from mobile phones in the same period is forecast to rise seven times in China, and 18 times in India.

According to the report, over 1 billion mobile phones were sold in 2007 worldwide, up from 896 million in 2006.

The report said most e-waste in China was improperly handled, with much of it incinerated by backyard recyclers to recover valuable metals like gold. Jim Pucket of the Basel Action Network, a non-governmental organization fighting the international trade in toxic wastes, said massive amounts of discarded devices had been exported to China for years.

But China is not alone in facing the serious e-waste problem. India, Brazil, Mexico and others may also face rising environmental damage and health problems if e-waste recycling is left to the vagaries of the informal sector.

Report urged governments to establish e-waste management centres, building on existing organi-

zations working in the area of recycling and waste management.

What is Electronic Waste

Electronic waste, e-waste, e-scrap, or Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) describes loosely discarded, surplus, obsolete, broken, electrical or electronic devices. The processing of electronic waste in developing countries causes serious health and pollution problems because electronic equipment contains some very serious contaminants such as lead, cadmium, beryllium and brominated flame retardants. Even in developed countries recycling and disposal of e-waste involves significant risk to workers and communities and great care must be taken to avoid unsafe exposure in recycling operations and leaching of material such as heavy metals from landfills and incinerator ashes.

Problems

Rapid technology change, low initial cost, and planned obsolescence have resulted in a fast-growing surplus of electronic waste around the globe. Dave Kruch, CEO of Cash For Laptops, regards electronic waste as a "rapidly expanding" issue. Technical solutions are available, but in most cases a legal framework, a collection system, logistics, and other services need to be implemented before a technical solution can be applied. An estimated 50 million tonnes of E-waste is produced each year. The USA discards 30 million computers each year and 100 million phones are disposed of in Europe each year.

In the United States, an estimated 70% of heavy metals in landfills comes from discarded electronics, while electronic waste represents only 2% of America's trash in landfills. The EPA states that unwanted electronics totaled 2 million tons in 2005. Discarded electronics represented 5 to 6 times as much weight as recycled electronics.

The Consumer Electronics Association says that U.S. households spend an average of \$1,400 annually on an average of 24 electronic items, leading

to speculations of millions of tons of valuable metals sitting in desk drawers. The U.S. National Safety Council estimates that 75% of all personal computers ever sold are now gathering dust as surplus electronics. While some recycle, 7% of cellphone owners still throw away their old cellphones.

Surplus electronics have extremely high cost differentials. A single repairable laptop can be worth hundreds of dollars, while an imploded cathode ray tube (CRT) is extremely difficult and expensive to recycle. This has created a difficult free-market economy. Large quantities of used electronics are typically sold to countries with very high repair capability and high raw material demand, which can result in high accumulations of residue in poor areas without strong environmental laws. Trade in electronic waste is controlled by the Basel Convention. The Basel Convention Parties have considered the question of whether exports of hazardous used electronic equipment for repair or refurbishment are considered as Basel Convention hazardous wastes, subject to import and export controls under that Convention. In the Guidance document produced on that subject, that question was left up to the Parties, however in the working group all of the Parties present believed that when material is untested, or contains hazardous parts that would need to be replaced as part of the repair process, then the Convention did apply.

Like virgin material mining and extraction, recycling of materials from electronic scrap has raised concerns over toxicity and carcinogenicity of some of its substances and processes. Toxic substances in electronic waste may include lead, mercury, and cadmium. Carcinogenic substances in electronic waste may include polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). Capacitors, transformers, and wires insulated with or components coated with polyvinyl chloride (PVC), manufactured before 1977, often contain dangerous amounts of PCBs.

Up to 38 separate chemical elements are incorporated into electronic waste items. Many of the plastics used in electronic equipment contain flame retardants. These are generally halogens added to the plastic resin, making the plastics difficult to

recycle. Due to the flame retardants being additives, they easily leach off the material in hot weather, which is a problem because when disposed of, electronic waste is generally left outside. The flame retardants leach into the soil and recorded levels were 93 times higher than soil with no contact with electronic waste.[12] The unsustainability of discarding electronics and computer technology is another reason commending the need to recycle or to reuse electronic waste.

When materials cannot or will not be reused, conventional recycling or disposal via landfill often follow. Standards for both approaches vary widely by jurisdiction, whether in developed or developing countries. The complexity of the various items to be disposed of, the cost of environmentally approved recycling systems, and the need for concerned and concerted action to collect and systematically process equipment are challenges. One study indicates that two thirds of executives are unaware of fines related to environmental regulations.

Hotspots

Increased regulation of electronic waste and concern over the environmental harm, which can result from toxic electronic waste, has raised disposal costs. The regulation creates an economic disincentive to remove residues prior to export. In extreme cases, brokers and others calling themselves recyclers export unscreened electronic waste to developing countries, avoiding the expense of removing items like bad cathode ray tubes, the processing of which is expensive and difficult.

Defenders of the trade in used electronics say that extraction of metals from virgin mining has also been shifted to developing countries. Hard-rock mining of copper, silver, gold and other materials extracted from electronics is considered far more environmentally damaging than the recycling of those materials. They also state that repair and reuse of computers and televisions has become a "lost art" in wealthier nations, and that refurbishing has traditionally been a path to development. South Korea, Taiwan, and southern China all excelled in

finding "retained value" in used goods, and in some cases have set up billion-dollar industries in refurbishing used ink cartridges, single-use cameras, and working CRTs. Refurbishing has traditionally been a threat to established manufacturing, and simple protectionism explains some criticism of the trade. Works like "The Waste Makers" by Vance Packard explain some of the criticism of exports of working product, for example the ban on import of tested working Pentium 4 laptops to China, or the bans on export of used surplus working electronics by Japan.

Opponents of surplus electronics exports argue that lower environmental and labor standards, cheap labor, and the relatively high value of recovered raw materials leads to a transfer of pollution-generating activities, such as burning of copper wire. In China, Malaysia, India, Kenya, and various African countries, electronic waste is being sent to these countries for processing, sometimes illegally. Many surplus laptops are routed to developing nations as dumping grounds for e-waste.

Because the United States has not ratified the Basel Convention or its Ban Amendment, and has no domestic laws forbidding the export of toxic waste, the Basel Action Network estimates that about 80% of the electronic waste directed to recycling in the U.S. does not get recycled there at all, but is put on container ships and sent to countries such as China. This figure is disputed as an exaggeration by the EPA, the Institute for Scrap Recycling Industries, and the World Reuse, Repair and Recycling Association.

Guiyu in the Shantou region of China, Delhi and Bangalore in India as well as the Agbogbloshie site near Accra, Ghana have electronic waste processing areas. Uncontrolled burning, disassembly, and disposal can cause a variety of environmental problems such as groundwater contamination, atmospheric pollution, or even water pollution either by immediate discharge or due to surface runoff (especially near coastal areas), as well as health problems including occupational safety and health effects among those directly involved, due to the methods of processing the waste. Thousands of

men, women, and children are employed in highly polluting, primitive recycling technologies, extracting the metals, toners, and plastics from computers and other electronic waste.

Proponents of the trade say growth of internet access is a stronger correlation to trade than poverty. Haiti is poor and closer to the port of New York than southeast Asia, but far more electronic waste is exported from New York to Asia than to Haiti. Thousands of men, women, and children are employed in reuse, refurbishing, repair, and remanufacturing, sustainable industries in decline in developed countries. It is held that denying developing nations access to used electronics denies them affordable products and internet access.

Opponents of the trade argue that developing countries utilize methods that are more harmful and more wasteful. An expedient and prevalent method is simply to toss equipment onto an open fire, in order to melt plastics and to burn away unvaluable metals. This releases carcinogens and neurotoxins into the air, contributing to an acrid, lingering smog. These noxious fumes include dioxins and furans. Bonfire refuse can be disposed of quickly into drainage ditches or waterways feeding the ocean or local water supplies.

In June 2008, a container of electronic waste, destined from the Port of Oakland in the U.S. to Sanshui District in mainland China, was intercepted in Hong Kong by Greenpeace. Concern over exports of electronic waste were raised in press reports in India, Ghana, Ivory Coast, and Nigeria.

Recycling

Today the electronic waste recycling business is in all areas of the developed world a large and rapidly consolidating business. Electronic waste processing systems have matured in recent years, following increased regulatory, public, and commercial scrutiny, and a commensurate increase in entrepreneurial interest. Part of this evolution has involved greater diversion of electronic waste from energy-intensive down cycling processes (e.g., con-

ventional recycling), where equipment is reverted to a raw material form.

This diversion is achieved through reuse and refurbishing. The environmental and social benefits of reuse include diminished demand for new products and virgin raw materials (with their own environmental issues); larger quantities of pure water and electricity for associated manufacturing; less packaging per unit; availability of technology to wider swaths of society due to greater affordability of products; and diminished use of landfills.

Audiovisual components, televisions, VCRs, stereo equipment, mobile phones, other handheld devices, and computer components contain valuable elements and substances suitable for reclamation, including lead, copper, and gold.

Electronic Waste Substances

Some computer components can be reused in assembling new computer products, while others are reduced to metals that can be reused in applications as varied as construction, flatware, and jewelry.

Substances found in large quantities include epoxy resins, fiberglass, PCBs, PVC, thermosetting plastics, lead, tin, copper, silicon, beryllium, carbon, iron and aluminium.

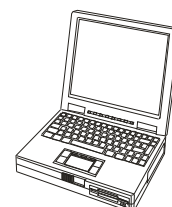
Elements found in small amounts include cadmium, mercury, and thallium.

Elements found in trace amounts include americium, antimony, arsenic, barium, bismuth, boron, cobalt, europium, gallium, germanium, gold, indium, lithium, manganese, nickel, niobium, palladium, platinum, rhodium, ruthenium, selenium, silver, tantalum, terbium, thorium, titanium, vanadium, and yttrium.

Almost all electronics contain lead and tin (as solder) and copper (as wire and printed circuit board tracks), though the use of lead-free solder is now spreading rapidly.

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Current Relevant Facts



» Making an initial estimate of economic growth at 8.2 per cent in 2010-11 and nine per cent in 2011-12, the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council (PMEAC) has listed a host of farm sector measures that need to be put in place for a bounce-back in agricultural GDP and avert the cascading effect of the current food price spiral on overall inflation during the new fiscal.

The overall growth projections, however, are based on certain basic assumptions. In its 'Review of the Economy 2009-10' the Council said that the growth assessments of both these years assume a normal South West monsoon and absence of any major calamity or setback at the international level, continuation of strong expansion in industrial and service sector activity during the period, along with the implementation of the government's priorities and initiatives in the creation of infrastructure with private sector participation along desired lines. Moreover, these growth estimates are based on the expectation that farm sector growth would bounce back from the current fiscal's projected decline of 0.2 per cent. "The Council expects a bounce back in agricultural GDP in the next year and maintenance of the desired trend growth of four per cent in 2011-12," the review said.

To achieve the projected farm growth target, the PMEAC has prescribed a number of measures that need to be implemented over a period.

For the short term, while noting that the authorities should be alert in pre-empting a food inflation spill-over to headline inflation through the manufacturing sector during the coming months, the

PMEAC said: "The RBI's monetary policy must remain alive to the danger that a significant transfer of food price inflation to the general price level may occur in 2010-11."

It also pointed towards the potential of commodities prices rising globally owing to a revival in developing countries and the current unsettled financial conditions.

While calling for better farm practices, soil research, irrigation and increased productivity through the supply of quality high-yielding seeds to farmers during the medium term, the PMEAC suggested urgent imports of sugar to the extent of three to five million tonnes to bridge the demand-supply gap during the new fiscal.

The PMEAC also urged the Centre to consider rice imports to build stocks if procurement falls below 27 million tonnes in the current season.

» Less than one in three women know that a condom can be used just once, and just one in six know that a condom cannot disappear into a woman's body.

These are some of the findings of "Youth in India: Situation and Needs," a study carried out by the Indian Institute of Population Sciences and the Population Council.

The findings show that just 46 per cent of young men and 24 per cent of young women were aware that a condom cannot disappear inside a woman's body. Only 31 per cent of young men and 25 per

cent of young women felt that condoms do not reduce sexual pleasure.

Marital status affects condom consciousness, with 57 per cent married young men compared to 44 per cent unmarried young men being aware that condoms cannot slip off the man and disappear into a woman's body; the corresponding percentages among young women were 29 and 17 .

The findings also underscore the limited awareness young people have of most sexual and reproductive matters with only 37 per cent of young men and 45 per cent of young women being aware that a woman could get pregnant in her first sexual encounter, and 19 and 15 per cent respectively of young men and women reporting awareness of sexually transmitted infections other than HIV.

Leading sources of information on sexual matters, according to the study, were friends and the media for both young men and women. In contrast, just 10 per cent of young men and women cited teachers and 3-7 per cent cited health care providers as a source of information; just 2 and 9 per cent of young men and women respectively cited family members.

Teachers and health care providers were relatively infrequently reported as sources of information on contraception.

The study further points out that only 15 per cent of respondents had attended sex education programmes either in or outside the school setting, notwithstanding the Adolescence Education Programme, the School AIDS Education Programme, the Red Ribbon Clubs and special programmes for out-of-the-school youth.

Speaking on the occasion, Nobel laureate Amartya Sen stressed the need for education on sexual and reproductive matters. Basic schooling can be central to human security as illiteracy and innumeracy are forms of insecurity themselves, he said.

Problems

When people are illiterate, their ability to understand and invoke their legal rights can be very limited. This can be a significant barrier for illiterate women to make use even of the rather limited rights that they do actually have. Importantly, it can also muffle the political voice, Prof. Sen said. "The removal of survival disadvantages of women, the reduction of child mortality and moderating influences on fertility rates are all among the basic issues involved in removing the "downside risks" that threaten life and dignity," he said.

The study was carried out in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu in 2006-07, and is based on interviews of over 51,000 individuals.

» In what may be a broad prescription for the government's economic policy road map ahead of the Budget for 2010-11, the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council (PMEAC) pitched for a partial roll-back of stimulus measures to usher in fiscal correction by scaling up excise duties and service tax and "adjusting" Central expenditure without hurting capital spending on infrastructure. After releasing the 'Review of the Economy 2009-10' which projected a GDP (gross domestic product) growth of over 7.2 per cent this fiscal, 8.2 per cent in 2010-11 and 9 per cent in 2011-12, PMEAC Chairman C. Rangarajan said that since the expenditure stimulus was directed at augmenting consumption and not investment, the corrective measures must also focus on adjusting expenditure.

"There is a case for adjustment of duties. Adjustments are possible both on the revenue side and the expenditure side in order to bring down fiscal deficit," he said.

Noting that government finances have come under severe strain and the fiscal imbalance "is now a matter of concern", the PMEAC said: The Government cannot continue with the kind of large revenue and fiscal deficits recorded in the last two

years and will have to initiate fiscal consolidation in the coming fiscal year (2010-11) itself ...in the forthcoming budget to ensure fiscal sustainability, enable greater flexibility in monetary policy calibration, contain interest payments and to avoid upward pressure on interest rates.”

Alongside, in pursuing the exit strategy, the Council noted that since more of fiscal expansion was owing to an increase in expenditure than from tax cuts, the Centre's expenditure would need to be curtailed. At the same time, while some items of spending such as salaries and interest payments are committed and cannot be reduced, infrastructure spending is critical and the government will have to provide adequate viability funding. “Thus, there is no scope for compressing capital expenditure while undertaking fiscal correction”.

On the revenue side, while the Goods and Services Tax (GST) is unlikely to be implemented from the April 2010 deadline, the PMEAC suggested expansion of the base of service tax “by converting the selective taxation of services into a general taxation, unify the threshold and rate structure of CENVAT and service tax to introduce GST at the Central level. This along with inflows from disinvestment and spectrum auctions, it would be realistic to budget for a cut in the Centre's fiscal deficit by 1-1.5 per cent in 2010-11 without any adverse impact on economic growth.

Amplifying on the suggested roll-back of excise and service tax, PMEAC member Govinda Rao said: “Partially, we need to roll back and if you partially roll back, you need to unify (excise duty and service tax rates)...There is one possibility that you unify both the rates at 10 per cent. There is another possibility... that both be raised to 12 per cent.” Mr. Rao, however, made it clear that it was for Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee to take a call on this issue in the budget.

As part of the stimulus package to industry to tackle the impact of the global meltdown, the government had reduced the excise duty from 14 per cent to 8 per cent and service tax from 12 per cent to 10 per cent.

On the whole, Dr. Rangarajan noted that a cut in fiscal deficit during 2011-12 by one per cent by outlay rationalisation and another 0.5 per cent from the revenue side would be a possibility.

On the issue of inflation, he said he would go by the overall projection of the Reserve Bank of India that it would more or less come down to 8.5 per cent by the end of the current fiscal.

However, the impact of food inflation, now hovering around 18 per cent, could spill over to other sectors by the next fiscal if adequate steps are not taken.

In this regard, the PMEAC has advised the government to ensure timely release of sufficient amount of foodgrains below prevailing market prices, plan for imports at the first indication of production shortfalls and develop better distribution channels. It also sought urgent steps to import white sugar (about 3-5 million tonnes) to meet the shortfall next fiscal.

» A little-known rainforest in north-east India could be home to the world's largest number of wildcat species, with no less than seven species photo-documented by a wildlife biologist at the end of her two-year survey.

Kashmira Kakati's camera-trap shots reveal that the wildcats share a relatively small, 500 sq.km. patch of rainforest in the Jeypore-Dehing lowlands in Assam, which includes the Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary.

Among the cats are the elusive and rare clouded leopard (*Neofelis nebulosa*), the marbled cat (*Pardofelis marmorata*) and the Asian golden cat (*Catopuma temminckii*), besides the relatively more widely distributed tiger (*Panthera tigris*), the leopard (*Panthera pardus*), the leopard cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*), and the jungle cat (*Felis chaus*).

The discovery comes in the backdrop of growing concern among environmentalists over deforesta-

tion, poaching, crude oil and coal extraction and mega hydro-electric projects that threaten the ecology of the eastern Himalayas. However, new wild-life species continue to be discovered in this part of the eastern Himalayas — listed as a “biodiversity hotspot” comprising Bhutan, parts of northeast India and Nepal.

Twelve other carnivore species were also recorded in the Kakati survey, among them the endangered dhole (Asiatic Wild Dog), the Malayan sun bear, binturong, mongoose, otter and civets. And among the 45 mammals documented are six species of primates, deer, porcupine, wild pig and rodents, which are prey for the rainforest carnivores.

» The fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution are inherent and cannot be extinguished by any constitutional or statutory provision, the Supreme Court held on feb 17.

Upholding the power to order a CBI probe without a State’s consent, a five-judge Constitution Bench, headed by Chief Justice K.G. Balakrishnan, said: “Any law that abrogates or abridges such rights would be violative of the basic structure doctrine.”

The Bench was disposing of a batch of cases filed by the West Bengal government and others, challenging CBI probe ordered by the High Courts concerned. Since important questions of law were raised in these appeals, the matter was referred to the Constitution Bench.

According to Bench “The State has a duty to enforce the human rights of a citizen for fair and impartial investigation against any person accused of commission of a cognisable offence, which may include its own officers.

“The power of judicial review being an integral part of the basic structure of the Constitution, no Act of Parliament can exclude or curtail the powers of the constitutional courts with regard to the enforcement of fundamental rights.

“In a federal Constitution, distribution of legislative powers between Parliament and State Legislatures involves limitation on legislative powers and, therefore, this requires an authority other than Parliament to ascertain whether such limitations are transgressed.

“Judicial review acts as the final arbiter not only to give effect to distribution of legislative powers between Parliament and State legislatures, it is also necessary to show any transgression by each entity.”

The Bench noted that when the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act says that subject to the consent by the State, the CBI can take up investigation in relation to the crime that was otherwise within the jurisdiction of the State police, the court could also exercise its constitutional power of judicial review and direct the CBI to take up the investigation within the jurisdiction of the State.

The Bench held that the power of the High Court under Article 226 could not be taken away, curtailed or diluted by Section 6 of the DSPE Act. Irrespective of there being any statutory provision acting as a restriction on the powers of the courts, the restriction imposed by Section 6 of the Act on the powers of the Union could not be read as restriction on the powers of the constitutional courts. The Bench directed that all individual cases be placed before the respective Benches for disposal in terms of this judgment.

» India and Bangladesh have decided to set up a joint-venture 1,320-megawatt power plant as a mark of co-operation. The two neighbours have also agreed to a cross-border power grid. The joint-venture power plant, to be constructed in southern Khulna in Bangladesh, will be operational within two years.

The decisions were taken at the second meeting of the Bangladesh-India Joint Steering Committee on the power sector which was formed during Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's recent visit to New Delhi.

Bangladesh Power Secretary Abul Kalam Azad, who led the host team in the talks, said the two countries had finalised the details of the grid and reached a broad agreement on building the coal-fired plant. The two-unit power plant (660mw each) will cost about \$1.8 billion.

The cooperation will facilitate Bangladesh's import of 250 mw to meet the power demand. Power Secretary HS Brahma said India was offering “the cheapest rates” — varying between Rs 2 and Rs 2.5 (Tk 3-3.5).

India's National Thermal Power Cooperation (NTPC) and the Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) signed the MoUs.

Mr. Brahma told journalists that the project required 130km grid connectivity 85km in India and 45km in Bangladesh. The grid costs will be shared proportionately Tk 1100 crore by Bangladesh and about Tk 200 crore by India.

» The Council of Boards of School Education (COBSE) took a “unanimous” decision to adopt a core curriculum for physics, chemistry, biology and mathematics at the senior secondary level. The new curriculum will come into effect from the 2011-12 academic year, Union Minister for Human Resource Development Kapil Sibal said.

Mr. Sibal described the decision as a “milestone in the history of education.” Though the meeting began with scepticism among some boards, the Minister claimed that apprehensions were addressed, and now “there will be a core curriculum which will be accepted by all stakeholders at the senior secondary level.”

“What it means is that in all schools of India affiliated to boards that are members of COBSE, the core curriculum will be taught, so that all our children have a level-playing field.” The core curriculum for these four subjects has been finalised after consultations within COBSE.

While the boards will have to draw up the syllabi on the basis of the core curriculum, they will have to work out how to tailor their examinations as per the new regime. And, now that a beginning has been made with the pure sciences and mathematics, COBSE has been asked to explore the possibility of replicating this in the commerce stream. The meeting was attended by representatives of 20 boards, including State boards.

With the core curriculum agenda clinched, the Council has now been asked by the Minister to work towards a single entrance examination by 2013 in each discipline where entrance examinations are conducted for entering professional courses. A task force will be set up to explore the possibility.

» A high-powered laser destroyed a target missile in flight off the Central California coast in a milestone test of a futuristic but troubled national defence system, the Air Force announced. A laser weapon mounted on a Boeing jumbo jet tracked the missile as it accelerated over the ocean off the Point Mugu Naval Warfare Center, then fired an energy beam that heated the missile until it cracked and broke up, according to statements from the Air Force and two aerospace companies involved in the programme.

The test is a boost for a programme that has had billions in cost overruns and saw its budget sharply cut last year by Defence Secretary Robert Gates, who called the concept “fatally flawed”.

The airborne laser programme began in 1996 and is one in a series of missile defence programmes that originated in President Ronald Reagan's Strategic Defence Initiative in 1983 — the much-maligned “Star Wars” missile shoot-down effort that was criticised as impractical, expensive and over-reaching. While the success of the test is a technological triumph, it will not save the airborne laser programme from being placed on life-support, said a defence analyst.

The system used two low-energy lasers to target the missile as it was boosting into the sky from a sea platform, then fired a megawatt-class Chemical Oxygen Iodine Laser, or COIL.

While ballistic missiles like the one ALTB destroyed move at speeds of about 4,000 miles per hour, they are no match for a superheated, high-energy laser beam racing towards it at 670 million mph.

» Asserting that the diversification and market product focus policy had started bearing fruit, Union Minister for Commerce and Industry Anand said that exports were on the path of positive growth for the third consecutive month, recording a 11.5 per cent growth in January at \$14.3 billion. In January 2009, these stood at \$12.9 billion.

Mr. Sharma said this had been possible due to the adoption of the new Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) that had focussed on new markets and new products. "We could not have waited for revival of the traditional markets in the U.S. and Europe and adopted a cautious but proactive approach.

Revealing the January export numbers, Mr. Sharma said, "Between now and March 31, we hope to maintain and further strengthen the growth, which will help us in registering healthy export figures and reducing gap (dip in year-on-year exports) substantially."

Exports were hit badly by slump in demand in key markets in the wake of global financial crisis and fell continuously for 13 months and dipped to around 39 per cent in May 2009. However, the trend was reversed under the new FTP in November 2009 by growing 18.2 per cent. In December, the rise was 9.3 per cent. The rising trend of the past three months mirrors that the outward shipments have come out of the woods.

Cautioning against abrupt withdrawal of the stimulus package, Mr. Sharma said it was still early to feel upbeat as some sectors were still struggling to

come out of the bad phase. He said engineering goods, textiles, jute, carpets, handicrafts and leather "continue to do badly" and were a cause for concern. He further said that though there had been recovery in global economy it would take time for the demand for Indian goods to return to pre-recession level.

During April-January 2009-10, exports were about \$133 billion against \$144.2 billion in the year-ago period. In the Foreign Trade Policy 2009-14, the government had set an export target of \$200 billion for 2010-11.

» ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL)-led consortium has announced that it had bagged 40 per cent stake in a \$19-billion project to develop a major crude oil block in Venezuela.

OVL, Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) and Oil India Limited (OIL) along with Spain's Repsol YPF SA and Malaysia's "Petroleum Nasional Bhd" won rights to develop the Carabobo-1 block in Venezuela's Orinoco Belt.

The consortium would pay \$1.05 billion to Venezuela as the signing amount and initially invest another \$9 billion in developing the block that could produce four lakh barrels of oil a day. The total spending on the block over 25 years would be \$19 billion. Besides, it would extend \$1.05 billion credit to Venezuela's state oil company Petroleos de Venezuela SA (PdVSA), which would have 60 per cent interest in the project.

OVL, Repsol and Petronas will have 11 per cent share each in the Empresa Mixta which will develop the Carabobo-1 Norte and Carabobo-1 Centro blocks located in the Orinoco Heavy Oil Belt, while IOC and OIL will split a 7 per cent stake in the project equally. OVL, IOC and OIL will seek the government approval to invest \$2.45 billion their share of signature bonus loan to PdVSA and phase-I development cost.

Since signature bonus is to be paid by only the foreign firms, the share of OVL, IOC and OIL would

be \$472.5 million or 45 per cent of \$1.05 billion. They will also contribute a similar amount to PdVSA as their share of credit.

The license agreement for the block that is likely to start production in three years would be signed on March 25, 2010.

» Commercial banks will be made to extend loans at base rates from next fiscal year, which is expected to benefit consumers and borrowers. According to Reserve Bank of India Deputy Governor Subir Gokarn, the apex bank is keen on ensuring that banks provide loans on a base rate from April onwards and not on the basis of current benchmark prime lending rate (BPLR) as the latter was not considered a transparent system.

Addressing the conference on Capital markets 'growth with governance' organised by Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (Assocham), Dr. Gokarn said that a draft proposal had been circulated to all stakeholders for their opinion on fixed rate with the aim of ensuring that consumers and borrowers gain the best. Under the BPLR arrangement, banks used their negotiating power for extending loans and based on that the rates for lending were decided which meant that for different consumers banks charged different interest rates.

» Even as people across Sri Lanka protested the detention of the former Army Chief, General Sarath Fonseka, it was announced that the snap parliamentary elections would be held on April 8. The election schedule was announced after President Mahinda Rajapaksa dissolved Parliament. The new Parliament is scheduled to meet on April 22. Meanwhile, a fundamental rights violation petition, challenging the alleged arbitrary arrest of Gen. Fonseka, was filed before the Supreme Court by his wife Anoma and New Democratic Front secretary Shamila Perera.

The petition said the government had infringed on the General's fundamental rights to the free-

dom of thought and conscience and the freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and punishment, right to equality and equal protection of the law, freedom from discrimination on grounds of political opinion, freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention, freedom of speech and expression and freedom of association guaranteed in the Constitution.

» The Moon Mineralogy Mapper (M3) on Chandrayaan-1, which famously discovered the presence of water and hydroxyl molecules on the lunar surface material last year, has now identified a new lunar rock type on the far side of the moon. The M3 is a NASA instrument. This was reported by Carle Pieters of Brown University, lead author of the present study, at the Sixth Chandrayaan-1 Science Meeting being held at the Physical Research Laboratory (PRL), a unit of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

The rock-type is dominated by a mineral termed as 'magnesium spinel.' Spinel is a generic name given to a class of minerals having the chemical formula $AB_{-2}O_{-4}$ and the usual spinel formations found in lunar rocks is an iron-magnesium admixture of the form $(Mg, Fe)(Al, Cr)_{-2}O_{-4}$. These rocks are usually found along with magnesium-iron silicate (olivine) and calcium-rich aluminium silicate (pyroxene).

According to Professor Pieters, the interesting feature of the new rock type is that it is exclusively composed of magnesium-rich spinel "with no detectable pyroxene or olivine present." This, she said, does not easily fit with current lunar crustal evolution models.

The generally accepted characterisation of the lunar crust is based principally on retrieved lunar material by the Apollo-Luna missions and meteorite samples. The crust is described as a rocky accumulation, basically rich in calcium-aluminium silicates (anorthosites) infused with a mix of compounds containing magnesium and iron ('mafic' minerals).

However, the western ring of the Moscoviense Basin of the moon appears to be one of the several discrete areas that exhibit unusual compositions relative to their surroundings, but without morphological evidence for separate geological processes leading to their exposure.

The findings are based on data acquired by M3 in January 2009 during the first observation period of Chandrayaan-1 from its initial 100 km altitude orbit over a 40 km wide strip field of view, with a spatial resolution of 140 m/pixel. The mapping was done using the emission spectrum of the surface over the wavelength region 460-3000 nanometres with a spectral resolution of 20-40 nm.

» The Dutch coalition government collapsed on Feb 20 after the two largest parties disagreed over whether to withdraw the 2,000 Dutch troops from Afghanistan as planned this year. Following is a look at the consequences of the collapse.

Elections will be called and could be held mid-year at the earliest. Talks aimed at forming a coalition may take several months. Polls suggest four or five parties may be needed to gain a majority coalition in the parliament.

The fallen government would operate in caretaker mode until a new government is installed. Minority-rule governments are possible, however. If elections are held mid-year, a new government could be installed in time for a budget for 2011 to be unveiled as scheduled in September.

Impact

Polls show public opposition to extending the Dutch mission in Afghanistan and a television survey showed 76 percent of those polled have little or no confidence in the government.

Struggling in polls, Labour could regain some electoral support by its stance over Afghanistan.

Labour did not want to extend the Afghanistan mission because it was agreed in 2007 to end it in 2010 and there was no longer majority support in parliament to extend. Labour is willing to continue the Dutch deployment of F16s in Afghanistan and give training and development aid to the country. A poll showed the PvdA could count on an extra seat in the Parliament compared with the previous poll, while the CDA would lose two if elections were held now, but both would still be below the number they won at the 2006 election.

The Freedom Party of right-wing MP Geert Wilders, which had called on the government to end the Afghan mission, could be the big winner at the next election. Polls tip his party to either become the biggest or second biggest party, campaigning on mistrust of the government and an anti-immigration ticket.

Troop Withdrawal

Dutch troops will most likely return home from their mission in Afghanistan's Uruzgan Province from August as planned. It is unlikely that an interim government would take a large policy decision such as extending the mission.

Budget Cuts

A government collapse will add uncertainty to up to 40 billion euros in budget cuts called for by the Finance Ministry. Some 20 panels are due to present recommendations in March on austerity measures to rein in a budget deficit that is expected to top 6 percent of gross domestic product this year. Some of those measures were expected to be implemented in September for the 2011 budget, but the worst of them were expected to be delayed until after the next scheduled general election in the spring of 2011.

The new government will have to do something, though, as the finance ministry pledged EU counterparts last December that the deficit would be cut by 50 to 75 basis points a year every year from 2011 through 2013.

Among the various contentious proposals on the table are a rise in the retirement age, changes to international aid programmes and a new 60 per cent income tax rate for anyone who earns more than the prime minister.

Dutch Relationship with NATO

A Dutch withdrawal from Afghanistan is not expected to influence how NATO is perceived within the Netherlands, but it may sour relations with the military alliance.

The Netherlands will also lose visibility as one of the players in the Afghanistan issue, which could in turn have a negative influence on the nation's international standing.

The Netherlands can, however, claim they have participated in NATO actions on a much higher level than can be expected of a relatively small country.

Mission in IN Afghanistan

The withdrawal will have a limited impact on NATO's Afghanistan mission, but will deliver a blow to U.S. hopes to boost international troop numbers.

In Uruzgan Province it could mean a different approach, such as a more confrontational stance if the United States takes a lead role in the province. Most NATO members only have a symbolic presence in Afghanistan and the fact the burden is on only a few shoulders is considered harmful to NATO.

Dutch-U.S. Relations

The U.S. will likely be disgruntled by the withdrawal after it had heightened pressure on the Netherlands in recent weeks to keep its combat troops in place.

» Scientists are working on a tiny liquid sensor that may detect cancer instantly and could lead to the creation of its home detection kit.

Jae Kwon, assistant professor of electrical and computer engineering, University of Missouri, is working on developing an acoustic resonant sensor that is smaller than a human hair and could test bodily fluids for a variety of diseases, including breast and prostate cancers.

Many disease-related substances in liquids are not easily tracked. In a liquid environment, most sensors experience a significant loss of signal quality, but by using highly sensitive, low-signal-loss acoustic resonant sensors in a liquid, these substances can be effectively and quickly detected - a brand-new concept that will result in a noninvasive approach for breast cancer detection.

» Natural progesterone, the sex hormone used in the first contraceptive pills, is to be tested on patients with severe head injuries.

Scientists will begin a phase III clinical trial and say the drug could save patients' lives and reduce damage to their brains.

They announced the trial at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. It will involve 1,000 patients in 17 trauma centres across the US.

Dr David Wright, associate professor of emergency medicine at Emory University in Atlanta, will lead the trial.

Previous studies have shown that progesterone supports the normal development of neurons in the brain, and that the hormone has a protective effect on damaged brain tissue.

Dr Wright said that traumatic brain injury is a complex condition - there's swelling, and neuronal death and damage occurring all at the same time. The beauty of progesterone is that it seems to work on all of those things.

In earlier tests, the Emory University researchers found that progesterone reduced the risk of death in patients with brain injuries.

Dr Wright hopes that, following this trial, progesterone will become the first drug treatment in 30 years to be approved specifically for severe traumatic brain injury.

» The Army's military doctrine is being reviewed and it will now include an added thrust in five key areas that will propel the doctrine. This includes wars in faraway lands, besides strategy on how to face future challenges posed by China and Pakistan.

The key areas include preparation for a two-pronged war with China and Pakistan. Both countries will have to be looked at separately and also collectively. The nature of conflict, if ever, with both countries will vary greatly in terms of terrain and use of weapons and fire-power.

The Army, which is involved in fighting insurgency in J&K and the North-East, is also looking to optimise capabilities to fight asymmetric war waged by both State and non-State actors, such as terror attacks and proxy wars. This will include cyber and electronic warfare.

The doctrine will look at ways to enhance the strategic reach of the Army and joint operations with the Navy and the Air Force. Countries like the USA already have airborne division while China has capability of rapid induction of troops. The reviewed doctrine will also touch upon space-based capability and methods to achieve technological edge over the enemy. The doctrine is reviewed every five years by the Army's Shimla-based Training Command.

» The 13th Finance Commission, which makes recommendations on sharing of tax revenues by the Centre and States, has suggested a new path for fiscal prudence in its report submitted to President Pratibha Devi Singh Patil on December 30, 2009.

The Commission was headed by Vijay Kelkar. Other members of the Commission were B.K. Chaturvedi, Indira Rajaraman, Atul Sarma and Sanjiv Misra.

The government had consigned the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM), the self-imposed fiscal prudence guidelines, to the backburner in 2008 when it stepped up official spending beyond its means in order to insulate the economy from the global financial meltdown. The country's fiscal deficit, a reflection of government borrowings, is estimated to touch 6.8 per cent in 2009-10, up from 6.2 per cent in the previous fiscal, mainly on account of the stimulus measures.

The recommendations of the 13th Finance Commission, Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee said "would get reflected in the 2010-11 Budget". The report, Kelkar said, dealt with the sharing of tax revenue between the Centre and States, distribution of funds among States and support to local bodies. The Finance Commission report assumes significance in view of the ongoing reforms in indirect and direct taxes, which will have a bearing on the tax collections.

Currently, the States and Union Territories get Rs 1.64 lakh crore in a year, or around 30 per cent of the shareable taxes collected by the Centre. The 12th Finance Commission had recommended that 30.5 per cent of the shareable Central taxes should be shared among the States and Union Territories. The shareable central taxes include corporation tax, income tax, wealth tax, customs, excise duty and service tax.

» China has found a one-billion tonne iron ore deposit, which is the biggest discovery of the mineral since 1980's. This is bound to cause some worries in India as iron ore accounts for nearly half of Indian exports to China.

The latest discovery is a 6-km long deposit with thickness ranging between 41.43 and 108.95 meters. It lies 100 to 600 meters deep underground in Luannan County in the northern province of Hebei.

It will be some time before the new deposit will begin to yield iron ore, but the discovery will definitely enable China to make long-term plans on steel production and strengthen its hands in price negotiations. The discovery gives a new boost to China's ongoing efforts to reduce its dependence on major world suppliers and avoid getting caught in price fluctuations of the spot market. Indian suppliers mostly deal in the spot market and refuse to enter into long-term supply contracts.

» The Union government has launched the Maulana Abul Kalam Azad National Fellowship Scheme for minority students and another one to computerise State Wakf Boards.

Under the scheme, 756 fellowships (30 per cent to be reserved for women) will be offered per year to minority students wishing to pursue higher studies. The objective is to grant integrated five-year fellowships in form of financial assistance to students from minority communities as notified by the Central government to pursue MPhil and PhD.

The scheme will cover all universities or institutions recognised by the UGC under Section 2 (f) and Section 3 of the UGC Act and will be implemented by the Ministry of Minority Affairs through UGC for students belonging to minorities.

The fellowships will be on the pattern of UGC fellowships awarded to research students pursuing regular and full time MPhil and PhD courses. Holders of the new fellowship will be called MoMA scholars.

» Jharkhand Mukti Morcha chief Shibu Soren has been elected as the Chief Minister of Jharkhand after successful conclusion of the Assembly polls in December 2009. The JMM, which won 18 seats, garnered the support of the BJP-JD(U), the All Jharkhand Students Union and Jharkhand Janadhikar Manch led by Bandhu Tirkey, taking up the tally to 44 MLAs in a house of 80.

The BJP won 18 seats and the JD(U) 2 seats, All Jharkhand Students Union has 5 MLAs and the Jharkhand Janadhikar Manch has one MLA.

» The Gujarat Assembly has passed a landmark Bill which makes, for the first time in the country, voting mandatory in local body polls. The Gujarat Local Authorities Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2009, which also seeks to raise the reservation of seats for women in local self governance bodies from 33 to 50 per cent, was passed by voice vote. Under the Bill, if a voter fails to vote for the reasons other than prescribed in the rules, he may be declared a "defaulter voter" and would face consequences for which rules will be framed and placed before the Assembly for its approval later.

» Authors of musical, cinematographic and literary works may now be entitled to royalty in case their works are used for commercial purposes, a benefit denied to them so far. This can be possible because of certain amendments in the Copyright Act of 1957, which has been approved by the Union Cabinet for introduction in Parliament.

The amendment is proposed to give independent rights to authors of literary and musical works in cinematography of films, which were hitherto denied and wrongfully exploited by producers and music companies.

Another amendment ensures that the authors of the works, particularly songs included in the cinematography of films or sound recordings, receive royalty for commercial exploitation of such work.

» The curtain came down on L.K. Advani's tenure as Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha on December 18, 2009. And while he made way for Sushma Swaraj, the 82-year-old veteran BJP leader said he saw a new chapter opening in his political career.

After a meeting of BJP parliamentary party amended its constitution, Advani was elected chair-

man, a post that has been created for him. The assembled party MPs then elected Swaraj as leader of the party in LS, the first woman to hold the post in BJP.

The next act in the generational change was played out on December 19, when Rajnath Singh stepped down as BJP President and Maharashtra unit chief Nitin Gadkari took charge. The change of guard completed a process that had been in the works since the party lost its bid for power in 2009 national elections.

Sushma Swaraj, at 57, clearly marks a generational change as does 52-year-old Gadkari. Advani is expected to play a role as mentor and the amended constitution says he will appoint the two leaders of Opposition.

Nitin Gadkari is the youngest BJP president. His elevation marks the culmination of the exercise to effect a generational shift at the top in the party hierarchy—both in its organisational and parliamentary wings.

Mr Gadkari assumes his new responsibility at a very crucial time. After tasting defeat in a series of electoral battles, cadre morale is low. The party was also bogged down by a debilitating infighting among the so-called second generation leaders. The BJP has also failed to keep pace with the changing times, and lost the trust of the youth and the burgeoning urban middle class in the process.

Mr Gadkari, who hails from Nagpur and over the years cultivated the image of an honest, hard-working leader who has toiled his way to the top, thus has task cut out.

» On December 2, 2009, India expressed its gratitude to Bangladesh for taking speedy action to foil a conspiracy by the LeT to attack the Indian mission in Dhaka recently as the two countries finalised three key agreements to combat terrorism. The agreements were signed during the visit of Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to New Delhi.

The two sides arrived at an agreement on: Mutual legal assistance in criminal matters, combating international terrorism, organised crime and illicit drug trafficking; and agreement on transfer of sentenced persons. However, the two sides have not yet been able to resolve differences over a bilateral extradition treaty.

The finalisation of the three accords marks a major confidence-building measure (CBM) to address the issue of Indian insurgents taking shelter in Bangladesh, which had marred ties between the two nations in recent years. New Delhi, however, is quite happy over the manner in which the Sheikh Hasina government has been cooperating with it in checking the activities of these insurgents.

» Increasing the pace of cooperation in the hydro-power sector, India and Bhutan have signed four agreements to conduct technical surveys for hydro-power projects. The four MoUs related to the hydro-power sector were part of 12 agreements that were signed after discussions between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and visiting Bhutanese King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, who was on his first foreign visit in December 2009, since his coronation in 2008.

India and Bhutan have decided to prepare detailed project reports for the Kuri Gongri, Chamkharchhu-1 and Kholongchhu hydro-power projects and Amochu reservoir project. The Kuri Gongri project is proposed to generate 1,800-mw power, the Chamkharchhu-1 670 mw and the Kholongchhu 670 mw. Further, the two sides have also agreed to conclude implementation agreements for Punatsangchhu-2 project

Bhutan uses 400 mw and has an installed capacity of 1,500 mw of power. The entire surplus comes to India which is helping Bhutan increase its capacity to 10,000 mw till 2020. .

» Prime Minister Yokio Hatoyama of Japan visited New Delhi in end-December 2009.

During the high-level talks, Japan urged India to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), but Prime Minister Manmohan Singh put the onus for its ratification on China and the US.

The issues of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation were discussed with both sides agreeing to the need for an early start to the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty negotiations. But on the issue of the non-proliferation treaty both sides agreed that there was a difference of perception. Mr Singh reiterated that India is “deeply interested in working with Japan and other like-minded countries to promote the cause of universal, verifiable and non-discriminatory disarmament”.

» Two years after it was submitted to the government, report of the National Commission on Religious and Linguistic Minorities is ready to be tabled in the Parliament.

Constituted to assess the status of minorities and suggest ways of improving their lot, the Commission, headed by Justice Ranganath Misra, has recommended 15 per cent reservation in non-minority educational institutions and Central and State government jobs for all religious and linguistic minorities.

Out of the 15 per cent earmarked seats in education institutions, Muslims should be given 10 per cent reservation (commensurate with their 73 per cent share in the total minority population in India) and the remaining 5 per cent to other minorities, states the report.

It adds that if Muslim candidates are not available to fill 10 per cent seats, the remaining vacancies should go to other minorities and in “no case to the majority community.” On employment front, the report argues that since the minorities, especially Muslims, are much under-represented in government jobs, “we recommend they should be regarded as backward in this respect within the meaning of that term as used in Article 16 (4) of the Constitution.”

Accordingly, the recommendation is to reserve 15 per cent of posts in all cadres and grades under the Central and State governments for the religious and linguistic minorities. Of this, 10 per cent quota is recommended for Muslims and the rest for other minorities.

The report, co-authored by Tahir Mahmood, also recommends the inclusion of Muslim and Christian Dalits in SC list, something the National Commission for Minorities has also been supporting.

» On December 16, 2009, the Supreme Court of Pakistan declared the National Reconciliation Order (NRO) null and void. Lawyers termed the decision as a landmark judgement and demanded that President Asif Ali Zardari step down from his post. The Court ruled that the decree protecting Zardari and his allies against charges of corruption was illegal and against the constitution.

The Supreme Court further ruled that all cases under investigation or pending enquiries and which had either been withdrawn or where the investigations or enquiries had been terminated on account of the NRO shall also stand revived and the relevant and competent authorities shall proceed in the matter in accordance with law.

The NRO, issued by former President Pervez Musharraf, had scrapped all corruption cases against politicians and bureaucrats filed between January 1986 and October 1999, on the grounds that they may have been politically motivated. The ordinance had allowed Benazir Bhutto and her husband Zardari to return to Pakistan.

In the first fallout of the Supreme Court ruling arrest warrants were issued against Pakistan Interior Minister Rehman Malik and Defence Minister Chaudhry Ahmed Mukhtar on December 18, 2009. Both were also barred from going abroad on an official visit.

The National Accountability Bureau, Pakistan's main anti-corruption agency, also banned 250 other officials from going abroad following the order.

» Japan's government has unveiled \$81 billion of new stimulus spending to keep the world's second-biggest economy from lurching back into recession.

Despite shrinking tax revenue, Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama and his Cabinet agreed to 7.2 trillion yen (\$80.6 billion) in new spending after days of negotiations with coalition partners.

The largesse underlines that the world's biggest economies are still too fragile to get by without government life support even as a recovery from the global recession takes shape. In export-reliant Asia that's partly because demand from Europe and the US is improving only tepidly and efforts to reduce dependence on trade by boosting consumer spending will take several years to fully bear fruit.

Japan also faces falling prices while brand-name exporters like Toyota Motor and Sony are losing record amounts of money as a galloping yen adds to their woes.

The Copenhagen Accord, the first global agreement of the 21st century to comprehensively influence the flow and share of natural resources, was agreed upon by 26 most influential countries in the wee hours of December 19, 2009, in the capital of Denmark. The US led the pack of architects with the BASIC four—China, India, Brazil and South Africa (in that order)—working as sometimes reluctant and sometimes willing, but always key partners in framing the agreement.

The accord demands that increase in global temperatures be kept below 2 degrees on the basis of equity. It requires global emissions as well as all national emissions to peak at a certain time but is mindful of concerns of economic development. It asks industrialized countries, except the US, to take emission cuts in future, but not necessarily under the Kyoto Protocol. It lays out up to \$30 billion of quick-start finance and \$100 billion starting 2020, using all the routes of transfer possible. It requires mitigation actions from developing countries for

the first time to be listed in an international agreement.

The rules of multilateral engagement got re-written as new alignments created a coterie of the powerful that brokered deals in closed rooms: each working at the end to preserve, if not improve its immediate economic status.

The pact they forged did cause heartburn as less powerful economies felt left out. Tuvalu and Sudan said it was too weak, while Venezuela and Bolivia were upset because it had not been negotiated in the open by all the 192 countries attending the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) conference. The low-ambition deal was seen as a triumph of the US which defied estimates to influence the outcome. But the negotiations also saw the Chinese leveraging their clout in the resource-rich African continent, at a multilateral forum.

For India though, the Accord came out of hard bargaining lasting almost 20 hours among Heads of governments of some of the most influential countries in the world. At the end of the day, when the battle was over, India appeared to have ceded ground on some issues but blocked intrusion on other red lines.

With stakes too high and the rich countries making abjectly clear that they were not playing to the rules, but to change the rules altogether, the four emerging economies decided to instead scratch up a low-ambition deal—a pact that would lower the pressure on them by lowering the demands off the rich countries in parallel.

Finally the Copenhagen Accord take a morphed form of the US-backed schedules approach of 'pledge and review'. The Copenhagen Accord is not what the US or Europe would have wanted it to be, but it still contains some elements India would have to, at best, fight to defend again in coming years or those that could be titled a lost battle by the end of the talks.

India, along with the other three emerging countries, fought hard and won the battle to retain the reference principle of common but differentiated responsibility which creates the firewall between the commitments of the rich countries and the actions of rest. India was also able to wrest the creation of a green climate fund as well as fight back the attempt to force emission cuts through the back-door.

But fighting a defensive battle, evidently wanting not to be labelled obstructionist by the US, India, along with the other three partners loosened up its stance on some key issues. This loosening of stance may not hit home immediately but it left the window open for growing inequitable burden falling on India's head to prevent climate change.

» The US Environmental Protection Agency has cleared the way for regulation of greenhouse gases without any new laws being passed by Congress, reflecting President Barack Obama's commitment to act on climate change. The agency can now begin to make rules to regulate emissions from vehicle tailpipes, power utilities and heavy industry under existing laws.

The EPA ruling applies to six gases scientists say contribute to global warming, including the main one, carbon dioxide.

The UN climate summit finally passed the Copenhagen accord Saturday after two days of intense negotiations and back-room manoeuvres. The accord, proposed by India and four other countries, is now "operational", a relieved UN chief, Ban Ki-Moon, said. The accord that is meant to be a first step towards fighting the climate change that is affecting millions worldwide was still held up for hours by four countries.

» Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin inaugurated the East-Siberia-Pacific Ocean oil pipeline on December 28, 2009, which will enable Moscow to enter markets in Asia-Pacific region and reduce dependency on European customers.

The project is designed to pump up to 1.6 million barrels (220,000 tonnes) of crude per day from Siberia to Russia's far east and then on to China and the Asia-Pacific region. The project's first leg envisages the construction of a 2,757-kilometre section with annual capacity of 220.5 million barrels of crude. It will link Taishet, in East Siberia's Irkutsk Region, to Skovorodino, in the Amur Region, in Russia's far east. The second stretch will run 2,100 kilometres from Skovorodino to the Pacific Ocean.

Currently the crude beyond Skovorodino goes by rail to China and the Pacific coast.

» India has floated a concept paper among the SAARC countries to start a container train on a pilot basis, running from Bangladesh to Pakistan via India and Nepal, in a bid to give a big boost intra-regional trade. The possible corridor for running the train is from Chittagong Port in Bangladesh to Katihar in India, Birgunj in Nepal and to Lahore in Pakistan.

The proposal being considered could unify the entire region and will lead to a seamless, borderless trade.

At present, India operates one passenger train each to Pakistan and Bangladesh for the benefit of the citizens on the either side of the border. While the train to Pakistan operates between Delhi and Lahore, the other to Bangladesh operates between Kolkata and Dhaka.

» David Coleman Headley aka Daood Gilani, has been formally charged for conspiracy in the 26/11 terror attacks in Mumbai in 2008. After an intensive probe, the FBI has said that Headley delivered, placed, discharged and detonated explosives and other lethal devices in, into, and against places of public use in India.

The FBI has indicted Headley on six counts. Significantly, the FBI has also formally charged a retired Major of the Pakistan army, Abdur Rehman

Hashim Syed, for the plot against a Danish newspaper that Headley wanted to attack for the publication of cartoons of Prophet Mohammad. Indian officials said Rehman was closely linked to the ISI. He has been arrested by Pakistan; if the charges are upheld during the trial, it would be the first smoking gun that the ISI is involved in exporting terror.

» US President Barack Obama, who unveiled his administration's Af-Pak policy on December 2, 2009, ordered a surge of 30,000 US troops in Afghanistan and a "transfer of forces out" to begin in July, 2011.

The strategic and security communities are uneasy over the President's withdrawal plans. While The Washington Post called it a "surge, then leave" policy, security experts are of the view that withdrawal decisions must be determined by the conditions on the ground and not by arbitrary deadlines. "The Obama administration has no exit strategy, it has only exit timeline," said Republican opponents.

As the speech clearly rejected the counter-insurgency principle of "clear, hold and build," there are fears that any setback would only invigorate the jihadist cause and put untenable pressure on Pakistan and India. But President Obama appears to be keen on winding down the war when he enters the political build up to the 2012 Presidential election.

In his address, President Obama described Pak-Afghan border as the epicentre of the violent extremism practised by Al-Qaeda. "It is from here that we were attacked on 9/11, and it is from here that new attacks are being plotted as I speak. "The people and governments of both Afghanistan and Pakistan are endangered. And the stakes are even higher within a nuclear-armed Pakistan, because we know that Al Qaeda and other extremists seek nuclear weapons, and we have every reason to believe that they would use them."

In his address, President Obama said the US will deny Al Qaeda a safe haven and will reverse the Taliban's momentum and crush its ability to overthrow the government. "We're in Afghanistan to prevent a cancer from once again spreading through that country. But this same cancer has also taken root in the border region of Pakistan. That's why we need a strategy that works on both sides of the border," he said justifying inclusion of Pakistan in his Afghan policy.

Stating that this was an international effort, President Obama sought the same war escalation measures from his allies. "Some have already provided additional troops, and we are confident that there will be further contributions in the days and weeks ahead. Our friends have fought and bled and died alongside us in Afghanistan. Now, we must come together to end this war successfully. For what's at stake is not simply a test of NATO's credibility; what's at stake is the security of our allies, and the common security of the world," he said.

» On December 27, 2009, US Federal officials brought criminal charges against a Nigerian man suspected of trying to destroy a Northwest Airlines aircraft on December 25, 2009 as it approached the airport in Detroit, Michigan.

The US Department of Justice said that Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, 23, had boarded the plane in Amsterdam, Netherlands, and tried near the end of the nine-hour-flight to set off an explosion using PETN, also known as pentaerythritol, a high explosive.

Fellow passengers rushed to subdue the terror suspect after they heard popping sounds and saw smoke and fire coming from Abdulmutallab's seat.

Even though the US authorities are yet to confirm the Yemen connection of the 23-year-old Nigerian man's plot to blow up a Detroit-bound airliner on Christmas Day, they see Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab's account that Al-Qaida had supplied explosive powder to him in Yemen "highly plausible."

The suspect, reportedly, told US investigators that he had obtained explosive chemicals and a syringe that were sewn into his underwear from a bomb expert in Yemen associated with Al-Qaida, as part of a "mission to bring down a jet on US soil".

» Britain has now emerged as the "terror capital of the West" as whenever a major terrorist attack is attempted, suspicion swings on this country, according to a media report.

"It comes as no surprise to learn that the Nigerian accused of blowing up the US airliner is said to have been living here. We have become the number one source of terrorism in the Western world. We shelter foreign jihadis, and even grow our own... For years now, Islamic extremists wanted on terror charges in their own country have taken sanctuary in Britain... Our judges (not our politicians) say it would be cruel to send them back to their own countries, in case they're tortured," the 'News of the World' quoted the Editor of Spectacle, Fraser Nelson, as saying.

Years ago, the CIA had a name for it: "Londonistan".

» India's total external debt rose by 8.1% to \$242.8 billion at the end of September 2009, from \$224.6 billion at March-end 2009. The long-term debt increased by 10.6% to \$200.4 billion, while short-term debt declined by 2.3% to \$42.4 billion. Most of the increase in the debt (\$8.3 billion or 45.6%) is due to depreciation of dollar against major global currencies, out of total increase of \$18.2 billion.

» East and South-East Asian countries have decided to launch a \$120-billion emergency fund in March, 2010, the first such alliance in the region, to shield themselves from a financial crisis. Under the scheme— known as the Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralization (CMIM)—Japan, China, South Korea, Hong Kong and the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations

(ASEAN) can swap their own currency into US dollars in case of a liquidity crunch.

» India's share in the global flow of FDI almost doubled to 2.45% in 2008 compared to the previous year, according to Union Commerce Minister Anand Sharma. Among developing countries, India ranked fourth in terms of FDI inflows in 2008 as per figures published in UNCTAD World Investment Report (WIR) 2009. During 2008-09, India attracted FDI inflows worth \$35.17 billion.

» Financial Action Task Force (FATF) was founded by the G-7 countries in 1989 to develop and promote national and international policies to combat money laundering and terror financing. The membership of the FATF is limited to 35 countries at present. India has an observer status. India is a member of the Asia-Pacific Group, a FATF-style regional body. Membership of FATF will allow India easy access to real-time information on money laundering and terror financing and help to raise the diplomatic pitch against perpetrators. It will also make India more attractive in the eyes of global investors.

» Every third Indian is living below poverty line, says an expert group headed by Suresh Tendulkar, former chairman of PM's Economic Advisory Council. The report puts the incidence of poverty in India at a high 37% of population, 10 percentage points more than estimated earlier. Among the States, Orissa and Bihar are at the bottom, while Nagaland, Delhi and J&K have the least number of poor. As much as 41.8% of the rural population survives on a monthly per-capita consumption expenditure of Rs 447, spending only so much on bare necessities such as food, fuel, light, clothing and footwear. Among urban population, 25.7% are poor, who spend only Rs 578.8 on essential needs. The expert group was set up following criticism of the existing official estimates of poverty released by the Planning Commission in 2007.

» History is being created inside a hangar at Dubendorf Air Base (Switzerland) that will radically change the way an aircraft flies. The prototype of an aircraft, to be propelled entirely by solar power even at night, has already been successfully tested for a 'flea hop' or a short flight at this airbase.

Scientists and engineers are working full-steam to fly the aircraft around the world for 36 hours through day and night in the spring or summer of 2010.

Indian engineers and students have also shown a keen interest in being part of this historic feat but are yet to become part of the 70-member team which is working on making the project a reality.

The aircraft, bearing call sign HB-SIA, has a weight of only 1,600 kg but has a wingspan of 63 metre, length of 21.85 metre and 6.4 metre height. Its weight can be compared to a family car and the engine power to a scooter's. It generates power from 11,628 photovoltaic solar cells spread over the wings having a span of an Airbus A-340.

The aircraft is expected to be flown about 8,000 km each in five legs, having five stops in five continents. The stoppages would be in Europe, the US, Pacific (probably Hawaii), the Emirates and China.

The idea is to take off an hour before sunrise, climb to the maximum altitude of 8,000 metres and not use energy stock in the battery. When the sun goes down, the aircraft would go down to an altitude of about 1,000 meters to use lesser energy.

The aircraft has been designed for short take-offs and landings. Its Version-II, to be called HB-SIB, would be built by 2013 to undertake a Trans-Atlantic flight.

Bertrand Piccard is the force behind the project and its test-pilot, which probably means taking forward a family tradition of innovation and adventure. His grandfather went in a balloon to the stratosphere and his father reached the bottom of the ocean in one of the first submarines

» The first four Russian-made MiG-29K fighters to be deployed on the aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya, formerly the Admiral Gorshkov, when it is inducted into the Indian Navy have been received in a knocked-down condition and will now be assembled in this country. The jets arrived in the country on December 4, celebrated as Navy Day.

The jets were purchased by the Navy as part of a \$1.5 billion deal signed with Russia in January 2004 for the Admiral Gorshkov. Of this \$740 million was meant for the aircraft and the balance for the refitting of the carrier. Russians have now upped the price to between \$2.2 billion and \$2.9 billion.

The Navy will eventually be getting 12 MiG-29K single-seater aircraft and four MiG-29KUB twin-seat trainer aircraft, some in flyaway condition.

The Navy has named its MiG-29K squadron the Black Panthers. As the 45,000-tonne Kiev class aircraft carrier is scheduled to be delivered by 2012, the jets will undertake shore-based sorties from Goa.

» For 38 days, Reena Kaushal Dharmshaktu, a mountaineer and outdoor instructor based in Delhi, along with seven other women skied for eight to 10 hours a day, traversing a 915 km path through one of the coldest and most desolate regions of the world. At 11.09pm on December 30, 2009, Reena reached the trademark mirror-ball in the middle of nowhere that marks the geographic South Pole, becoming the first Indian woman to ski to the southern-most tip of the Earth.

She was part of the Kaspersky Commonwealth Antarctic Expedition mounted to mark the 60th anniversary of the Commonwealth.

For 38-year-old Reena, who had edged out 116 compatriots to get the right to represent India in the expedition, it marked a unique achievement. Her mountaineer husband, Love Raj Singh Dharmshaktu, climbed Mt Everest in May 2009.

“That is the highest point on Earth and I will be skiing to South Pole, the lowest point on Earth,” Reena had written in the expedition’s web-page.

It was an arduous journey through the incredibly cold, all-white expanse of the continent, where the team had to negotiate hundreds of metres deep crevasses. The expedition left behind nothing in the icy wilderness, even carrying back human waste on 80 kg sledges that each member towed.

» India will create a five million tonne strategic petroleum reserve by 2012, raising the country’s total storage capacity to 8.5 million tonnes—enough to meet 90-days consumption.

“To cater to situations like wars and natural calamities, we have established an SPV (special purpose vehicle) called Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserve Limited (ISPRL) that will create a storage facility of five million tonnes by 2012,” according to Minister of State for Petroleum Jitin Prasada.

ISPRL says it would create the storage facilities at Visakhapatnam, Mangalore and Padur (near Udupi). The proposed storages would be in underground rock caverns near the east and west coasts so that they are readily accessible to the refining sector. Underground rock caverns are considered the safest means of storing hydrocarbons.

» On December 22, 2009, Reliance Industries (RIL) announced its third successive discovery of natural gas in 2009. All three finds have been in the Krishna-Godavari (KG) basin off India’s eastern coast.

The commercial potential of the discovery in the block, known as KGD3, was being evaluated by gathering more data, RIL said in a statement. RIL holds a 90% equity stake in the block, which covers 3,288 square kilometres, and UK-based Hardy Oil holds the rest.

» Reena Kaushal Dharmshaktu, a mountaineer and outdoor instructor based in Delhi

reached the trademark mirror-ball in the middle of nowhere that marks the geographic South Pole, on December 30, 2009, becoming the first Indian woman to ski to the southern-most tip of the Earth. She was part of the Kaspersky Commonwealth Antarctic Expedition mounted to mark the 60th anniversary of the Commonwealth.

38-year-old Reena did her mountaineering training from the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute in Darjeeling and has been on IMF expeditions to Gangotri 1, the first ascent of Argan Kangri, Fluted Peak, Stock Kangri, Phawararang, Mt Nun and others.

She is currently a freelance instructor with the US-headquartered National Outdoor Leadership Schools (NOLS) that teaches outdoor skills to people. Her father was an Armyman and during his posting in Darjeeling, Reena fell in love with the mountains. “Being from an Army background, we used to go for long walks with our father which set the groundwork for my tilt towards mountaineering,” said Reena, who now wants to spread awareness about conserving the environment.

» The 77th birth anniversary of late Dhirubhai Ambani, on December 28, 2009, was chosen by Anil Dhirubhai Ambani group (ADAG) to switch on its Rosa Power plant in Uttar Pradesh.

After synchronising with the State grid, it became northern India’s first thermal power plant in the private sector to do so.

The total capacity of the project, costing Rs 6,000 crore, is going to be 1,200 MW. The first unit of 300 MW would get fully operational by April 2010. The second stage of 600 MW is likely to get operational by March 2012.

What makes the project significant for UP is that 900 MW would be supplied to the UP Power Corporation Limited (UPPCL). The rest 300 MW would be used as ‘merchant capacity’— company can sell it to others.

Spreading over an area of around 1,500 acres, the construction of the project started in June 2007. The plant would take water from Garrah river which flows nearby. Around 75 cubic metres of water taken in would then be heated into steam to turn turbines of over 250 tonnes at a pace of 3,000 rotations per minute in order to generate the requisite power.

» The sun virtually rose in the border belt of Punjab with Union Minister for New and Renewable Energy Farooq Abdullah inaugurating India's first-ever 2-MW solar power plant at Awan, near Amritsar, Punjab, on December 15, 2009.

The plant, set up by US company Azure Power in the independent power producers (IPP) mode in this sleepy village, started functioning as Dr Abdullah switched on its button. The 2MW plant will subsequently be expanded to enable it to produce 5 MW of power.

» Scientists have identified all the changes in cells of two cancers to produce the first entire cancer gene maps, calling the findings a “transforming moment” in their understanding of the disease. The mapping of the complete genetic codes of melanoma skin cancer and lung cancer will set the stage for a medical revolution in which every tumour can be targeted with personalized therapy.

The studies by international scientists and Britain's Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute in Cambridge are the first comprehensive descriptions of tumour cell mutations and lay bare all the genetic changes behind the two cancers. Such a detailed picture of the fundamental causes of the disease will lead to earlier detection, new breeds of drugs and better understanding of what causes the disease, scientists claim.

The scientists sequenced entire DNA from both tumour tissue and normal tissue from a melanoma patient and a lung cancer patient, using a technology called massively parallel sequencing. By comparing the cancer sequences with the healthy ones,

they were able to pick up all changes specific to cancer.

The lung tumour carried more than 23,000 mutations and the melanoma had more than 33,000. A smoker develops one mutation for every 15 cigarettes smoked.

Scientists now have to track specific mutations that lead to cancer. This would help in producing drugs to suppress these mutations. By about 2020, cancer patients could have their tumours analysed to find the genetic defects that drive them.

• The tiny tea tablet developed by scientists in Tocklai Experimental Station (TES) of the Tea Research Association (TRA), located amid lush green tea gardens in Jorhat in Upper Assam, may soon become an alternative for the age-old tea bag, a favourite with tea drinkers all over the world.

Tea tablets can be chewed or added to a cup of hot water for a cup of tea. Chewing a tablet will freshen and cheer up a person with nearly the same effect as having a hot cup of brewed tea.

The tea pill is one of the innovations of the TES in Jorhat, the oldest and the largest research station of its kind in the world. Since its inception in 1911, TES has become synonymous with the research on its scientists have developed many technologies for boosting the tea production, especially in the North-east India.

Some of major contributions of the TES to the tea industry include technique for vegetative propagation of tea by inter-nodal cuttings, development of 30 high-yielding and better quality clones and 14 hybrid seeds, selecting 154 region specific clones. TES also takes up collaborative projects with some leading research institutes of the country, which include making tea manufacture a continuous process by an integrated monitoring system, studies on the pharmacological, physiological and medicinal values of tea, tissue culture.

• European researchers have drawn up the first full map of the Earth gravity field on the basis of

information supplied by the GOCE probe of the European Space Agency (ESA). The research vehicle was launched from Russia's Plesetsk spaceport in March 2009 with a Rokot rocket.

The map confirmed earlier hypothesis that the gravity force is not constant throughout the plane due to geological and other peculiarities. For instance, St Petersburg is the area with largest gravity in the European part of Russia.

» A team of scientists of the CSIR have declared success in decoding the genome sequencing of an Indian citizen, a move that opens vistas for low-cost health care and predictive medicine for the masses.

The sequencing of the genome puts India in a select group of countries, including the USA, the UK, Canada, Korea and China, which have demonstrated such capability.

The Indian genome sequence, achieved in about nine weeks, was among sequences of 14 persons available worldwide. The first genome sequencing was a global effort achieved by several scientists across the world over a period of 13 years, beginning in 1990.

The sequencing opens up vistas for accurate treatment of individuals or a group of population whose genome has been mapped.

Scientists at the CSIR could achieve this feat by adopting new technology and by effectively integrating complex computational and bio-informatics tools with high throughput analytical capability using super-computers.

» Russia is considering sending a spacecraft to a large asteroid, Apophis, to knock it off its path and prevent a possible collision with Earth.

When the 270-m asteroid was discovered in 2004, astronomers estimated the chances of it smashing into Earth in its first flyby in 2029 were as high as

1-in-37, but have since lowered their estimate. Further studies ruled out the possibility of an impact in 2029, when the asteroid is expected to come no closer than 29,450 kilometers above Earth's surface, but they indicated a small possibility of a hit on subsequent encounters. According to NASA, another close encounter in 2068 will involve a 1-in-330,000 chance of impact.

Calculations show that it's possible to create a special purpose spacecraft within the time on hand, which would help avoid the collision without destroying the asteroid and without detonating any nuclear charges.

• US astronomers have detected the second smallest exo-planet ever discovered with a mass just four times heavier than the Earth, adding to a growing number of low-mass planets dubbed "super-Earths."

The exo-planet, a name given to planets outside our solar system, has been dubbed HD15668b, and is located around 80 light years from Earth in the direction of the Hercules constellation. A light year is rough 9,460 billion kilometres.

The planet orbits around its parent star in just over four days.

The smallest exo-planet previously discovered by astronomers was Gliese 581 e, detected by a Swiss astronomer in April 2009 some 20.5 light years from Earth in the Balance constellation. But it orbits much closer to its star, making its temperature much higher than that on Earth.

Some 423 exo-planets have been identified by astronomers so far, according to specialist site exoplanet.eu, but none appear to be similar to Earth or capable of supporting life.

However, astronomers generally express confidence that either the Kepler telescope or the European Corot telescope will eventually find exoplanets like Earth.

» Astronomers have discovered one of the fieriest stars in the galaxy which is 35 times hotter than the sun. The dying star which has a surface temperature of 200,000 degrees was captured by astronomers at Jodrell Bank Centre for Astrophysics in the University of Manchester by using the recently refurbished Hubble Space Telescope (HST).

The star was located at centre of the Bug Nebula which is about 3,500 light years away in the constellation Scorpius. This is the first time the star has been pictured.

“This star was so hard to find because it is hidden behind a cloud of dust and ice in the middle of the nebula,” explained Prof Albert Zijlstra from the University of Manchester.

» Imagine zipping between Mumbai and Delhi in four hours flat on a superfast train. Well, Indians may have to dream about it for a long time to come but China, on December 26, 2009, launched what it described as the world’s fastest train, one that can travel at an average speed of 350 kph.

On its inaugural run, the train covered the 1,068 km between Wuhan in central China and Guangzhou in the south in two hours 45 minutes.

By comparison, the average for high-speed trains in Japan is 243 kph while in France it is 277 kph.

The high speed line will use technology developed in co-operation with companies such as Siemens, Bombardier and Alstom.

China’s new rail service is expected to act as a catalyst in the development of central parts of the country by linking it to highly developed industrial hubs in the south.

The Chinese government has also announced plans to build 42 high-speed lines by 2012 in order to spur economic growth amid the global downturn.

The goal is to take the rail network from the current 86,000 km to 120,000 km.

» Indian citizens can now fly the national flag even at night, provided the flagpole is above 100 feet and the flag is well-illuminated. The Home Ministry took the decision following a proposal by industrialist and Congress MP Naveen Jindal, who had earlier won a court battle to make flying the Tricolour a fundamental right for every citizen.

In a representation to the Ministry in June 2009, Jindal had sought permission to fly a mammoth-sized national flag on huge flagpoles at night. Jindal had said the national flag is to be flown “as far as possible between sunrise and sunset” as per Flag Code of India, but it was a common practice worldwide for massive national flags to be flown day and night on flagpoles of 100 feet and above in height. Citing the example of countries like Malaysia, Jordan, Abu Dhabi, North Korea, Brazil, Mexico and Turkmenistan where monumental flags are flown at night, Jindal proposed that such flags to be flown in India also.

The Ministry said that such flagpoles could be installed, provided there was adequate arrangement for proper illumination of flags at night with backup in case of power failure and the flags are replaced immediately as soon as they get damaged due to vagaries of nature.

» Scientists, on December 9, 2009, unveiled a Dow Jones-style “climate-change index” aimed at showing in user-friendly form the perils posed by man-made global warming. The index takes a basket of complex factors—carbon dioxide (CO₂), temperature change, sea level and sea ice—and distils them into a single figure that is more easily understandable for the public, they said.

In 1980, the index stood at 34, its creators, the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme at the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, said.

But from 1997, the barometer leapt suddenly, adding dozens of points each year as evidence of climate change accumulated. As of 2007, the index stood at 574.

» S.C. Sinha has been appointed Director-General of the National Investigation Agency. He succeeds the first chief of the agency, Radha Vinod Raju, whose tenure ended last month.

· Bhairavi Jani has taken over as National Chairman of CII's Young Indians (Yi) for 2010-11. Bhairavi Jani, Director, SCA Group of Companies, and Executive Director, TranSmart, is a fourth generation entrepreneur. Shankar Vanavarayar has taken over as National Vice Chairman of Yi.

» Actor Aamir Khan withdrew his resignation from the copyright committee, set up by Minister for Human Resource Development Kapil Sibal to bridge differences between film producers and creative personnel over the proposed amendments to the copyright law.

In his communication to Mr. Sibal, Mr. Khan said he would return to the committee in view of the Minister's intervention and the reiteration of faith in him by other committee members.



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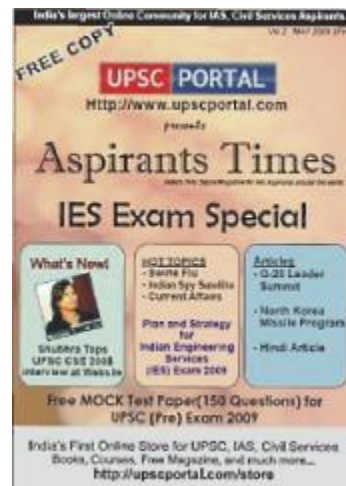
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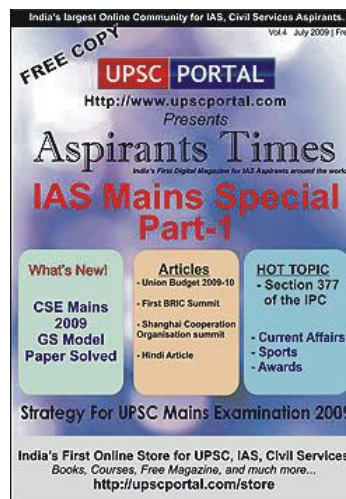
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Sports



» India started their campaign in the Commonwealth Shooting Championships with two golds, a silver and bronze on Feb 19.

The first gold came in the 10-metre air rifle pairs men with Gagan Narang and P.T. Raghunath shooting a total of 1193. Narang aggregated 599 while Raghunath shot 594. In the finals, Narang (55) and Raghunath (47) shot a total of 102 to bag the first medal of the tournament.

The silver went to the English pair of James Huckle (593) and Ken Parr jnr (592) while Bangladesh duo Asif Hossain Khan (594) and Shovon Chowdhury (588) bagged the bronze.

The second gold came in the women's 25-metre pistol pairs event where the Indian duo of Annisa Sayyed (582) and Annuraj Singh (565) shot a total of 1147.

Australian pair of Linda Ryan (574) and Elena Galiabovitch (564) bagged the silver with the total of 1138 while the bronze went to the English pair of Georgina Geikie (571) and Julia Lydall (558) with a total of 1129.

In the men's 50-metre free pistol pairs, Indian pair of Bapu Vanjare (536) and Viraj Singh (523) won the silver with a tally of 1059 while the gold was clinched by England duo Michael Gault (545) and Nick Baxter (537) for a total of 1082.

Australia won the bronze with shooters Alfio (523) and Janek Janski (507) shooting a total of 1030.

Indian's women rifle shooters ended the day by winning the bronze in the 50-metre 3 position pairs events. Lajja Goswami (prone 196, standing 187 and kneeling 188) and Tejaswini Sawant (prone 195, standing 180, kneeling 189) aggregated 1135 for the bronze.

The gold went to Scottish team of Jennifer McIntosh (prone 196, standing 185, kneeling 192) and Kay Copland (prone 198, standing 178, kneeling 187) for a total of 1136. Welsh team of Jennifer Corish (prone 195, standing 186, kneeling 189) and Sian Corish (prone 196, standing 185, kneeling 184) for a total of 1135.

Both the Indian and the Welsh teams were tied after the qualifiers but in the final, the wales duo shot 41 while the hosts were one point behind.

» Noted authors Keki N. Daruwalla and Amit Chaudhuri are among the four Indians nominated for the Commonwealth Writers' Prize 2010. Besides Daruwalla's "For Pepper and Christ" and Chaudhuri's "The Immortals", authors Rana Dasgupta and Chandrabhas Chowdhury have also been nominated for their books "Solo" and "Arzee the Dwarf", respectively.

While "Solo" and "Arzee The Dwarf" have been published by HarperCollins-India, "For Pepper and Christ" has been published by Penguin-Books India and "The Immortals" has been published by Picador-India.

"For Pepper and Christ" is a historic tale of sailors voyaging during the time of Vasco Da Gama that weaves itself around the legend of Prestor John and spice trade.

"The Immortals" is the story of two families in Mumbai of the 'eighties bound by music.

"Solo" by England-born Dasgupta is an epic tale of the 20th and 21st centuries told from the perspective of a one hundred-year-old Bulgarian man. Having achieved little in his 20th-century life, he settles into a long and prophetic daydream of the 21st century, where all the ideological experiments of the old century are over, and a collection of startling characters - demons and angels - live a life beyond utopia.

"Arzee The Dwarf", the debut novel of Chandrahas, a young author, is the story of Mumbai told through the life and voice of a dwarf Arzee -- the head projectionist of Noor, a Mumbai cinema. Arzee's personal joys, sorrows and an unusual cast of friends encapsulate the spirit of Mumbai and the chaotic world that he lives in.

Other nominees for best book in Europe and South Asia include "The Beijing of Possibilities" by Jonathan Tel (Britian), "Heartland" by Anthony Catwright (Britain) and "Another Gulmohar Tree" by Aamer Hussain (Pakistan), a communique issued by HarperCollins said Friday.

Besides Chandrahas' "Arzee the Dwarf", the nominations for the best debut books include "The Hungry Ghosts" by Anne Berry (Britain), "In Other Rooms, Other Wonders" by Daniyal Mueenuddin (Pakistan), "Among Thieves" by Mez Packer (Britain), "An Equal Stillness" by Francesca Kay (Britain) and "Tail of the Blue Birds" by Nii Parkes (Britain).

In 2009, Christos Tsiolkas from Australia won the Commonwealth Prize for the best book, while Mohammed Hanif of Pakistan won the best debut book award for "The Case of Exploding Mangoes". The year before Canadian author Lawrence Hill

won the award for best book, while Tahmima Anam of Bangladesh was honoured for her first book "Golden Age".



» Vitali Klitschko retained his BOXING WBC World Heavy-weight title, winning a unanimous points decision against American challenger Kevin Johnson. The 38-year-old Ukrainian spent the entire fight on the offensive against previously unbeaten Johnson but could not find his customary knockout as his opponent opted for survival.



» Asian champion Suranjyot Singh has become the first Indian boxer to clinch a gold medal at the inter-continental President's Cup. He out-punched Frenchman Nordine Oubaali 8-1 in the flyweight (51kg) final, in Baku, Azerbaijan. The 22-year-old Manipuri's triumph also fetched him US \$3,000 at the prestigious season-ending event, where confederations from Asia, America, Africa, Europe and Oceania are pitted against each other.

» India-A men's team overwhelmed Sri Lanka to annex the gold in the Tata Steel Asian Team Chess Championship which concluded at Kolkata. Vietnam took the silver while Iran had to be content with the bronze. In the women's section, Vietnam crushed Nepal 4-0 to total 11 points and win the gold.

» Baskaran Adhiban won the title with a round to spare in match against Abhijeet Gupta of PSPB. Adhiban also bagged his first Grandmaster norm in the process, something which he had narrowly missed thrice in the last two years.

» Australia survived a tense final session to force a draw against the West Indies in an absorbing second Test at the Adelaide Oval between Australia-West Indies Test series.

Australia triumphed over a never-say-die West Indies inside four overs on the final day to win the third and final Test by 35 runs, and win the three-Test series 2-0. The West Indies came into the final day requiring 51 more runs for the unlikely of victories with Nos. 10 and 11 at the crease, but were eventually dismissed for 323.

» Last man Graham Onions played out a tense final over from Makhaya Ntini as England escaped with a draw on the fifth and final day of the first Test against South Africa at Centurion.

Graeme Swann took five for 54 as England wrapped up victory by an innings and 98 runs on the fifth day of the second Test against South Africa at Kingsmead.



» In Australia-Pakistan Test Series Chasing a mammoth total of 422 runs, Pakistan had a daunting task of surviving the penultimate day of the first Test match at Melbourne, and Australian off-spinner Nathan Hauritz

made the task impossible with his maiden five wicket haul. Riding on Hauritz's splendid spell (5-101) Australia defeated Pakistan by 171 runs. For Aussie captain, Ricky Ponting, the win was more special, as he has now captained the most Test victories (42) than any other player in the world, and played in more wins (93).

» In India-Sri Lanka Test Series India became the number one team in Test rankings after they spanked Sri Lanka by an innings and 24 runs in the third and final cricket Test, played in Mumbai, to clinch the three-match series 2-0.



» In India-Sri Lanka ODI series the first match at Rajkot saw a flurry of 4s and 6s resulting in both teams together scoring 825

runs in 100 overs, at a strike rate of 8.25 per over.

In the end India just managed to scrape through with a three-run victory. Batting first, India amassed 414 runs in 5 overs. It was the highest ODI total ever recorded on Indian soil. Lankans finished at 411 for 8 in 50 overs, becoming first team ever to score 400-plus while chasing and still lose.

Tillakaratne Dilshan's power-packed century provided the perfect platform for the visitors as Sri Lanka defeated India by three wickets in the second match at Nagpur to level the series 1-1.

Gautam Gambhir hit 150 not out and Virat Kohli his first ODI ton as India beat Sri Lanka by 7 wickets at Eden Gardens, Kolkata, taking an unbeatable 3-1 lead in the five-match series.

The fifth and final match had to be abandoned because of the 'dangerous' pitch at Feroze Shah Kotla ground in New Delhi. The controversy forced the DDCA to apologise and the BCCI to disband the pitch committee headed by Daljit Singh.

» In India-Sri Lanka T20 series Yuvraj Singh belted a whirlwind 60 and bagged three wickets to fashion a six-wicket win for India in the second T20 International against Sri Lanka at Mohali. The win enabled India to level the two-match series. Sri Lanka had defeated India by 29-run loss in the first match in Nagpur.

» On December 6, 2009 millions of Indians were united in celebration as their team ascended to the top of the ICC Test rankings after defeating Sri Lanka in the third and final Test at Mumbai. Fittingly, the win that made it possible was marked by stand-out performances from the men who have played a crucial role in India's ascent. Virender Sehwag has scored more runs than any other Indian batsman over the last 25 Tests—played over a two-year period starting November 2007. His rollicking 293—at a pace that left the bowlers ample time to finish the demolition job—proved pivotal as India fulfilled its tryst with the top slot.

Harbhajan Singh and Zaheer Khan have been India's highest wicket-takers during this period. Both picked up six wickets apiece for the match, with Zaheer coming up with a five-wicket haul to polish off the tail and take India to a comfortable win by an innings and 24 runs.



» Virender Sehwag has become the first Indian to post two double centuries against Sri Lanka. He is also the first Indian batsman to rake-up 200 runs through boundaries (202 runs in 40 fours and seven sixes). Only John Edrich (238 runs in 1965), Mathew Hayden (218 runs in 2003) and Inzamam-ul-Haq (206 runs in 2002) have recorded more runs through boundaries than Sehwag. He has also become the first Indian batsman to share six double century stands for the first wicket in Tests.

» Argentine and Barcelona football star Lionel Messi has been named World Player of the Year for FIFA World Player of Year, while Portuguese and Real Madrid icon Cristiano Ronaldo has secured the Puskas Goal of the Year gong.

» India avenged their last edition title loss as they prevailed over Maldives 3-1 via penalty shoot-out in the SAFF Championships summit clash to claim their fifth crown. The championship was held in Dhaka, Bangladesh. After the match failed to produce any goal in the regulation and extra times, the match was decided in a penalty shoot-out.



» In Champions Trophy, 2009 Australia clinched the ABN AMRO Hockey Champions Trophy title in stunning fashion beating Germany 5-3. Australia clinched the title for the second year in a row and had won the title nine times earlier. The championship was held in Melbourne.

» Gagan Narang shot an individual gold and also helped India bag the team gold in the Asian Air Gun Championships in Doha. The team comprising Narang, P.T. Raghunath and Sanjeev Rajput won the gold with a score of 1782. The silver was won by China (1779) while Iran (1764) bagged the bronze.

In the junior men's air rifle, Chain Singh won the bronze. In the youth category, Navdeep Singh Rathore shot 585 to qualify for the inaugural edition of the Youth Olympics in 2010.



» Spain won its fourth Davis Cup title when Fernando Verdasco and Feliciano Lopez took the doubles to give the team an unassailable 3-0 lead over the Czech Republic. Spain also becomes the first country since Sweden in 1998 to retain the Davis Cup, after triumphing in 2008 in Argentina.

» Indian women wrestlers put up a good show by winning three gold, four silver and five bronze medals followed closely by Canada and Cameroon during the Commonwealth Free-style championship held at Jalandhar. Among Indian wrestlers Babita, Geeta and Alka Tomar won gold in the 51, 55 and 59 Kg free-style wrestling.

Indian men grapplers put their opponents on the mat and put up a splendid show by winning 14 medals. Hosts India won seven golds, three silver and four bronze in the free style competition and clinched the team championship trophy.



» India's gold count in the Commonwealth Shooting Championship increased with Gagan Narang winning the men's 10 metre air rifle singles event and Navy man Sanjeev Rajput bagging the silver at the Karni Singh Shooting Range on Feb 20. Narang shot a total of 699.5 (595 qualification,

» The Commonwealth Games Organising Committee on Feb 17 launched an ecological Code for 2010 Games in an attempt to host the first ever 'green' Commonwealth Games. Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit, formally released the code that draws the environmental vision of the organising committee.

The code outlines targets set by the organisers to cut down the levels of carbon emissions during the forthcoming multinational, multi-sport event.

Among the measures outlined in the code, a massive plantation drive of saplings and the introduction of hybrid vehicles are planned by the organizing committee to minimize the carbon footprints at the games.

The code also define the impact of the games on land, energy, water, waste and air, besides defining measures taken to control the level of carbon emissions during the sporting event.



» Hero Honda Motors Ltd (HHML), the title sponsor of the 'Hero Honda FIH World Cup Hockey' launched its multi-media campaign 'Phir Dil Do Hockey Ko', to popularize the game in the country.

Unveiling Hero Honda's Hockey initiatives, Pawan Munjal, MD and CEO of the company said, "Hockey is our national game, and we have a cherished history in the game. As a company committed to promoting sports in the country, hockey features high on our priority list.

Not only is Hero Honda going to be associated with the FIH World Cup Hockey, the company is also investing massively in an extensive campaign to rejuvenate and rekindle the interest and the passion of people for the game." Hero Honda is also undertaking several other initiatives to rebuild the past magic of hockey in India. The company has organized an inter-school hockey tournament for school kids across 19 cities, where 4000 kids from

more than 275 schools will participate in the tournament and enjoy the electrifying sport.

» Bhullar, who won his maiden Asian Tour title last year, began the day six shots behind and produced one of the best come-from-behind victories on the Tour. It was his second title of the career.

Bhullar, who won the President Invitational last year, is only the sixth Indian player - after Ali Sher, Jeev Milkha Singh, Jyoti Randhawa, Arjun Atwal and Gaurav Ghei - to win more than once on Asian Tour. When Ali Sher won the Indian Open in 1991 and 1993, the Indian Open was part of the old Asian Circuit and the Asian Tour was not formed.

Realising that he needed the round of his life to land the title, the 21-year-old Bhullar sank an eagle and six birdies for an error-free card and edged out Korea's Hwang Inn-choon, who signed for a 69 for second place in the USD 300,000 event.



» Abhinav Bindra shoots 2nd Gold in InterShoot 2010. In the qualification round, Bindra started the day with a series of 98 and then shot three consecutive series of perfect 100, 100, 100 followed by 98 and 99 to register a score of 595. Later in the final Bindra shot 103.7 to clinch the title with a total score of 698.7.

The silver was won by Tinu Mohaupt of Germany with a score of 697.2 (592+105.2) while bronze was won by Peter Hellentrand of Netherlands with a score of 695.7 (593 + 102.7).

Bindra had shot 700.1 (596 + 104.1) to claim the Gold in the first match of the triple competition. Earlier, Bindra had equalled his Gold medal winning Beijing Olympics qualification score of 596 at the RIAC Cup in Luxembourg in December 2009 and at the IWK Grand Prix in Munich.



» England successfully chased Pakistan's modest total of 129 for eight to win the first of two Twenty20 Internationals between the teams by seven wickets at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium on Feb 19. England appeared to be in trouble when it lost three wickets in quick succession, but Kevin Pietersen and Eoin Morgan came together for the highest England fourth-wicket partnership in a Twenty20 match.



Pakistan: I. Nazir c Denly b Broad 21, Farhat (run out) 14, K. Latif c Prior b Wright 4, U. Akmal c Broad b Swann 13, S. Malik c Collingwood b Swann 33, F. Alam c Prior b Broad 23, A. Razzaq c Broad b Bresnan 22, S. Ahmed c Broad b Bresnan 5, Y. Arafat (not out) 9, U. Gul (not out) 1; Extras (lb-1, w-1, nb-1) 3; Total (for eight wickets; 20 overs) 129.

Fall of wickets: 1-9, 2-20, 3-26, 4-39, 5-86, 6-106, 7-115, 8-119.

England bowling: Sidebottom 4-0-21-0, Bresnan 4-0-30-2, Broad 4-0-23-2, Wright 4-0-27-1, Swann 3-0-18-2, Collingwood 1-0-9-0.

England: J. Trott b Razzaq 4, J. Denly c Farhat b Arafat 1, K. Pietersen (not out) 43, P. Collingwood (run out) 0, E. Morgan (not out) 67; Extras (lb-5, nb-1, w-9) 15; Total (for three wickets in 18.3 overs) 130.

Fall of wickets: 1-7, 2-10, 3-18,

Pakistan bowling: Razzaq 4-0-24-1, Arafat 4-0-18-1, Malik 3-0-28-1, Ajmal 4-0-18-0, Gul 3.3-0-36-0.



» Australia comprehensively defeated West Indies by 125 runs in the fifth and final One-Day International cricket match in Melbourne on Feb 19.

After half-centuries by Shane Watson, Ricky Ponting and James Hopes took the host to 324 for five, the side had no trouble dismissing the West Indies for 199. Earlier, Australia helped itself to a big score after Hopes's heroics down the order took the side past 300. Hopes smashed an unbeaten 26-ball 57 with 10 fours. Watson (51) and Ponting (61) made valuable contributions at the top. The win ensured Australia remained unbeaten this summer in all three formats. Two Twenty20 games remain against West Indies.

Scoreboard

Australia: S. Watson c Smith b Sammy 51, B. Haddin b Pollard 32, R. Ponting c Ramdin b Pollard 61, M. Clarke c Deonarine b Rampaul 47, C. White c Ramdin b Rampaul 22, A. Voges (not out) 45, J. Hopes (not out) 57; Extras (lb-4, w-4, nb-1): 9. Total (for five wkts in 50 overs): 324.

Fall of wickets: 1-81, 2-88, 3-192, 4-206, 5-242.

West Indies bowling: Rampaul 10-0-68-2, Smith 8-0-55-0, Miller 8-0-60-0, Sammy 10-0-51-1, Pollard 9-0-5s9-2, Gayle 3-0-17-0, N. Deonarine 2-0-10-0.

West Indies: C. Gayle c Clarke b Bollinger 14, T. Dowlin lbw b Bollinger 0, N. Deonarine b Harris 4, K. Pollard c Smith b Hopes 45, W. Hinds c Smith b Harris 5, L. Simmons c Clarke b Bollinger 29, D. Smith (run out) 21, D. Ramdin lbw b Smith 3, D. Sammy (not out) 47, N. Miller c Clarke b McKay 22, R. Rampaul st. Haddin b Smith 4; Extras (w-5): 5. Total (in 36.5 overs): 199.

Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-17, 3-19, 4-39, 5-80, 6-118, 7-124, 8-135, 9-190.

Australia bowling: Bollinger 7-1-33-3, Harris 7-2-26-2, McKay 7-1-35-1, Hopes 6-0-27-1, Smith 9.5-0-78-2.

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Awards



» N. Ram, Editor-in-Chief of the Hindu newspaper, has received the prestigious Lokmanya Tilak National Journalist Award, 2010, which is conferred for excellence in journalism on a personality making

important contribution to the field of journalism at national level. Vir Sanghvi of Hindustan Times was the recipient of the Tilak Award in 2009.



» Mridula Koshy's *If It is Sweet*, a collection of short stories, has bagged the Shakti Bhatt First Book Prize, 2009 award. The New Delhi-based author will get Rs 1 lakh and a citation.

In 2008, Pakistani author Mohammed Hanif's *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* had won the award.

The Shakti Bhatt Foundation is a non-profit trust set up by the late writer/editor's family to keep her memory alive.



» Ten young scientists have won this year's NASI Scopus Awards instituted by the National Academy of Sciences, India, and Elsevier, a leading research publisher of scientific, technical and

medical information products and services.

The winners include Kaviyarani R. Prasad, Siddhartha Gadgil and Vijay B. Shenoy of the Bangalore-based Indian Institute of Science; Tanmay Basak of IIT-Madras, and Suresh Babu of the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, Thiruvananthapuram. The other winners are Vinay Nandicoori of the National Institute of Immunology, Ellora Sen of the National Brain Re-

search Centre, Siddharth Pandey of IIT-Delhi, S.N.Tripathi of IIT-Kanpur, and Pratap Ray Chaudhuri of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai.

Science and Technology Minister Prithiviraj Chavan presented the awards here on Friday. Each award carries a plaque, a citation and Rs.50,000 in cash.

Kok Keng Lim, managing director, Elsevier (Science and Technology), Asia Pacific (Academic and Government), and A. Surolia, vice-president, NASI Council, appreciated the efforts of the award winners to take science to newer heights.



» Renowned Hindi poet Kailash Vajpeyi has been honoured with the Sahitya Akademi award, 2009 for his work, *Hawa mein hastakshar* (Signature in the wind).

The other poets honoured with Sahitya Akademi award are: Praduman Singh Jindrahia (Dogri), Jess Fernandes (Konkani), Raghu Leishangthem (Manipuri), Vasant Abaji Dahake (Marathi), Phani Mohanty (Oriya), Damayanti Beshra (Santhali) and Puviarasu (Tamil).

Those who won awards for collections of short stories include Vaidehi (Kannada), late Manmohan Jha (Maithili), Samiran Chhetri 'Priyadarshi' (Nepali), Major Ratan Jangid (Rajasthani), Prashasya Mitra Shastri (Sanskrit) and Anand Khemani (Sindhi).

Well-known novelists Dhrubajyoti Bora (Assamese), late Manoranjan Lahary (Bodo), U.A. Khadar (Malayalam) and Yarlagaadda Laxmi Prasad (Telugu) were also honoured with the 2009 awards.

India's 56th National Film Awards 2010

Best Actor Award went to: Upendra Limaye for his role in Jogva a Marathi film

Best Actress Award was given: to Priyanka Chopra for Fashion.

Best Supporting Actor was awarded to: Arjun Rampal for his role in 'Rock On'

Best Supporting Actress was awarded to: Kangna Ranaut for Fashion

Best Feature Film was awarded to: Antaheen (Bengali)

Best Male Playback Singer went to: Hariharan for his song Jeev Dangla Gungla Rangla from the movie Jogva

Best Female Playback Singer went to: Shreya Ghoshal for Phenrari Mon and Jeev DanglaGungla Rangla.

Best Cinematography was awarded to: Avik Mukhopadhyay for his work in Antaheen.

Best Screenplay was won by: Sachin Kundalkar for Ganha a Marathi film.

Best Choreography went to: Chinmi Prakash and Rekash for Jodha Akbar's song 'Azeem-o-Shaan Shahesha'

People's Choice Awards 2010

Winner of Favorite Female Artist is: Taylor Swift. Taylor has been a favorite in awards in 2009 and it seems she is still on top in 2010.



Winner of Favorite Pop Artist is: Lady Gaga. Lady Gaga also won the Favorite Breakout Music Artist. Eminem/Keith Urban received the award for Favorite Male Artist. Favorite Rock Band was awarded to Paramore.

Carrie Underwood won the Favorite Country Artist award. For Favorite Music Collaboration was to awarded Run This Town.



Mariah Carey received the Favorite R&B Artist where she gave her memorable tipsy speech.

In the Movie section for the night Sandra Bullock received the Favorite Movie Actress and the The Proposal won the Favorite Comedy Movie, which Sandra played the lead.



Taylor Lautner won Favorite Breakout Movie Actor for his role in Twilight, The Twilight Saga, which also won the Favorite Movie award plus the Favorite Franchise award. The Twilight Saga also received the award for the Favorite On Screen Team making them the biggest winners of the night.

No Surprise in Favorite Movie Actor award goes to Johnny Depp with Hugh Jackman receiving the Favorite Action Star award.



Jim Carrey won the Favorite Comedic Star award.



Miley Cyrus received the award for Favorite Breakout Movie Actress.

The Favorite Family Movie award went to Pixars animated movie Up. While Inglorious Basterds received the award for Favorite Independent Movie.



Ashton Kutcher had a whole section all to himself as the Favorite Web Celeb.

For the Small Screen there where plenty of awards and winners.

Favorite Talk Show was awarded to The Ellen DeGeneres Show. The Big Bang Theory won the Favorite TV comedy award. American Idol was given the Favorite TV Competition show and True Blood won the Favorite TV Obsession. Favorite TV Drama winner was House and the Favorite Animal Show went to Dog Whisperer, Favorite Sci-Fi Fantasy Show went to Supernatural.



The two Newcomer Awards was The Vampire Diaries as Favorite New TV Drama and Favorite New TV Comedy was Glee.

TV actors deserve the same respect as movie stars seeing as they work continually. Here are the favorites on the small screen.

Katherine Heigl was awarded the Favorite TV Drama Actress Award and Hugh Laurie won the Favorite TV Drama Actor award.

Steve Carrell was chosen as the Favorite TV Comedy Actor and Alyson Hannigan is the Favorite TV Comedy Actress.



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Polity & Constitution

Constitution of India is the supreme law of India. It lays down the framework defining fundamental political principles, establishing the structure, procedures, powers and duties, of the government and spells out the fundamental rights, directive principles and duties of citizens. Passed by the Constituent Assembly on 26 November 1949, it came into effect on 26 January 1950.

The date 26 January was chosen to commemorate the declaration of independence of 1930. It declares the Union of India to be a sovereign, democratic republic, assuring its citizens of justice, equality, and liberty and to promote among them all fraternity.

The words "socialist", "secular" and "integrity" and to promote among them all "Fraternity"; were added to the definition in 1976 by constitutional amendment. India celebrates the adoption of the constitution on 26 January each year as Republic Day.

It is the longest written constitution of any sovereign country in the world, containing 395 articles in 22 parts, 12 schedules and 94 amendments, for a total of 117,369 words in the English language version. Besides the English version, there is an official Hindi translation.

After coming into effect, the Constitution replaced the Government of India Act 1935 as the governing document of India. Being the supreme law of the country, every law enacted by the government must conform to the constitution. Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, as chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee, was the chief architect of the Indian Constitution.

The majority of the Indian subcontinent was under British colonial rule from 1858 to 1947. This period saw the gradual rise of the Indian national-

ist movement to gain independence from the foreign rule.

The movement culminated in the formation of the Dominion of India on 15 August 1947, along with the Dominion of Pakistan. The constitution of India was adopted on 26 January 1950, which proclaimed India to be a sovereign democratic republic.

It contained the founding principles of the law of the land which would govern India after its independence from British rule. On the day the constitution came into effect, India ceased to be a dominion of the British Crown.

Evolution of the Constitution (Acts of British Parliament before 1935)

After the Indian Rebellion of 1857, the British Parliament took over the reign of India from the British East India Company, and British India came under the direct rule of the Crown.

The British Parliament passed the Government of India Act of 1858 to this effect, which set up the structure of British government in India. It established in England the office of the Secretary of State for India through whom the Parliament would exercise its rule, along with a Council of India to aid him.

It also established the office Governor-General of India along with an Executive Council in India, which consisted of high officials of the British Government.

The Indian Councils Act of 1861 provided for a Legislative Council consisting of the members of the Executive council and non-official members.

The Indian Councils Act of 1892 established provincial legislatures and increased the powers of the Legislative Council.

These acts increased the representation of Indians in the government, but it was limited in its powers. The Government of India Acts of 1909 and 1919 further expanded the participation of Indians in the government.

(Government of India Act 1935)

The provisions of the Government of India Act of 1935, though never implemented fully, had a great impact on the constitution of India. Many key features of the constitution are directly taken from this Act.

The federal structure of government, provincial autonomy, bicameral legislature consisting of a federal assembly and a Council of States, separation of legislative powers between center and provinces are some of the provisions of the Act which are present in the Indian constitution.

The Cabinet Mission Plan

In 1946, at the initiative of British Prime Minister Clement Attlee, a cabinet mission to India was formulated to discuss and finalize plans for the transfer of power from the British Raj to Indian leadership and providing India with independence under Dominion status in the Commonwealth of Nations.

The Mission discussed the framework of the constitution and laid down in some detail the procedure to be followed by the constitution drafting body. Elections for the 296 seats assigned to the British Indian provinces were completed by August 1946. The Constituent Assembly first met and began work on 9 December 1946.

(Indian Independence Act 1947)

The Indian Independence Act, which came into force on 18 July 1947, divided the British Indian territory into two new states of India and Pakistan, which were to be dominions under the Com-

monwealth of Nations until their constitutions were in effect. The Constituent Assembly was divided into two for the separate states.

The Act relieved the British Parliament of any further rights or obligations towards India or Pakistan, and granted sovereignty over the lands to the respective Constituent Assemblies.

When the Constitution of India came into force on 26 January 1950, it overturned the Indian Independence Act. India ceased to be a dominion of the British Crown and became a sovereign democratic republic.

Constituent Assembly

The Constitution was drafted by the Constituent Assembly, which was elected by the elected members of the provincial assemblies. Jawaharlal Nehru, C. Rajagopalachari, Rajendra Prasad, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Shyama Prasad Mukherjee and Nalini Ranjan Ghosh were some important figures in the Assembly.

There were more than 30 members of the scheduled classes. Frank Anthony represented the Anglo-Indian community, and the Parsis were represented by H. P. Modi and R. K. Sidhwa.

The Chairman of the Minorities Committee was Harendra Coomarr Mookerjee, a distinguished Christian who represented all Christians other than Anglo-Indians.

Ari Bahadur Gurung represented the Gorkha Community. Prominent jurists like Alladi Krishnaswamy Iyer, B. R. Ambedkar, Benegal Narsing Rau and K. M. Munshi, Ganesh Mavlankar were also members of the Assembly. Sarojini Naidu, Hansa Mehta, Durgabai Deshmukh and Rajkumari Amrit Kaur were important women members.

The first president of the Constituent Assembly was Sachidanand Sinha later, Rajendra Prasad was

elected president of the Constituent Assembly. The members of the Constituent Assembly met for the first time in the year 1946 on 9 December.

Drafting

In the 14 August 1947 meeting of the Assembly, a proposal for forming various committees was presented. Such committees included a Committee on Fundamental Rights, the Union Powers Committee and Union Constitution Committee.

On 29 August 1947, the Drafting Committee was appointed, with Dr Ambedkar as the Chairman along with six other members. A Draft Constitution was prepared by the committee and submitted to the Assembly on 4 November 1947.

The Assembly met, in sessions open to the public, for 166 days, spread over a period of 2 years, 11 months and 18 days before adopting the Constitution. After many deliberations and some modifications, the 308 members of the Assembly signed two hand-written copies of the document (one each in Hindi and English) on 24 January 1950.

Two days later, the Constitution of India became the law of all the Indian lands. The Constitution of India has undergone 94 amendments in the less than 60 years since its enactment.

Structure

The Constitution, in its current form, consists of a preamble, 22 parts containing 448 articles, 12 schedules, 5 appendices and over 109 amendments to date. Although it is federal in nature with strong unitary bias, in case of emergencies it takes unitary structure.

Parts

Parts are the individual chapters in the Constitution, focused in single broad field of laws, containing articles that address the issues in question.

(Preamble)

- » Part I- Union and its Territory
- » Part II- Citizenship.
- » Part III - Fundamental Rights
- » Part IV - Directive Principles and Fundamental Duties.
- » Part V - The Union.
- » Part VI - The States.
- » Part VII - States in the B part of the First schedule (Repealed).
- » Part VIII - The Union Territories
- » Part IX - Panchayat system and Municipalities.
- » Part X - The scheduled and Tribal Areas
- » Part XI - Relations between the Union and the States.
- » Part XII - Finance, Property, Contracts and Suits
- » Part XIII - Trade and Commerce within the territory of India
- » Part XIV - Services Under the Union, the States and Tribunals
- » Part XV - Elections
- » Part XVI - Special Provisions Relating to certain Classes.
- » Part XVII - Languages
- » Part XVIII - Emergency Provisions
- » Part XIX - Miscellaneous
- » Part XX - Amendment of the Constitution
- » Part XXI - Temporary, Transitional and Special Provisions
- » Part XXII - Short title, date of commencement, Authoritative text in Hindi and Repeals
- » Part XXIII - Temporary, Transitional and Special Provisions
- » Part XXIV - Temporary, Transitional and Special Provisions

Schedules

Schedules are lists in the Constitution that categorizes and tabulates bureaucratic activity and policy of the Government.

First Schedule (Articles 1 and 4): States and Union Territories – This lists the states and territories on of India, lists any changes to their borders and the laws used to make that change.

Second Schedule (Articles 59, 65, 75, 97, 125, 148, 158, 164, 186 and 221) — Emoluments for High-Level Officials – This lists the salaries of officials holding public office, judges, and Comptroller and Auditor-General of India.

Third Schedule (Articles 75, 99, 124, 148, 164, 188 and 219) — Forms of Oaths – This lists the oaths of offices for elected officials and judges.

Fourth Schedule (Articles 4 and 80) – This details the allocation of seats in the Rajya Sabha (the upper house of Parliament) per State or Union Territory.

Fifth Schedule (Article 244) – This provides for the administration and control of Scheduled Areas[Note 1] and Scheduled Tribes[Note 2] (areas and tribes needing special protection due to disadvantageous conditions).

Sixth Schedule (Articles 244 and 275) — Provisions for the administration of tribal areas in Assam.
Seventh Schedule (Article 246) — The union (central government), state, and concurrent lists of responsibilities.

Eighth Schedule (Articles 344 and 351) — The official languages.

Ninth Schedule (Article 31-B) - This covers land and tenure reforms; the accession of Sikkim with India. It may be reviewed by the courts.

Tenth Schedule (Articles 102 and 191) — "Anti-defection" provisions for Members of Parliament and Members of the State Legislatures.

Eleventh Schedule (Article 243-G) — Panchayat Raj (rural development).

Twelfth Schedule (Article 243-W) — Municipalities (urban planning).

Federal Structure

The constitution provides for separation of powers between the Union and the States. It enumerates the powers of the Parliament and State Legislatures in three lists, namely Union list, State list and Concurrent list.

Subjects like national defense, foreign policy, issuance of currency are reserved to the Union list. Public order, local governments, certain taxes are examples of subjects of the State List, on which the Parliament has no power to enact laws in those regards, barring exceptional conditions.

Education, transportation, criminal law are a few subjects of the Concurrent list, where both the State Legislature as well as the Parliament have powers to enact laws. The residuary powers are vested with the Union.

The upper house of the Parliament, the Rajya Sabha, which consists of representatives of States, is also an example of the federal nature of the government.

Parliamentary Democracy

The President of India is elected by the Parliament and State Legislative Assemblies, and not directly by the people. The President is the Head of the State, and all the business of the Executive and Laws enacted by the Parliament are in his/her name.

However, these powers are only nominal, and the President must act only according to the advice of the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers.

The Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers enjoy their offices only as long as they enjoy a

majority support in the Lok Sabha, the lower house of the Parliament, which consists of members directly elected by the people.

The ministers are answerable to both the houses of the Parliament. Also, the Ministers must themselves be elected members of either house of the Parliament. Thus, the Parliament exercises control over the Executive.

A similar structure is present in States, where the directly elected Legislative Assembly enjoys control over the Chief Minister and the State Council of Ministers.

Independent Judiciary

The Judiciary of India is free of control from either the executive or the Parliament. The judiciary acts as an interpreter of the constitution, and an intermediary in case of disputes between two States, or between a State and the Union.

An act passed by the Parliament or a Legislative Assembly is subject to judicial review, and can be declared unconstitutional by the judiciary if it feels that the act violates some provision of the Constitution.

Constitutional remedy against any action of the government is available in a High Court or the Supreme Court, if the action violates any of the fundamental rights of an individual as enumerated in the Constitution.

Changing the constitution

Amendments to the constitution are made by Parliament. However they must be approved by a super-majority in each house, and certain amendments must also be ratified by the states.

The procedure is laid out in Article 368. Despite these rules there have been over ninety amendments to the constitution since it was enacted in 1950.

The Supreme Court has ruled, controversially, that not every constitutional amendment is permissible. An amendment must respect the "basic structure" of the constitution, which is immutable.

In 2000 the National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (NCRWC) was setup to look into updating the constitution of India.

Judicial review of laws

Judicial review is actually adopted in the Indian constitution from the constitution of the United States of America. In the Indian constitution, Judicial Review is dealt under Article 13. Judicial Review actually refers that the Constitution is the supreme power of the nation and all laws are under its supremacy. Article 13 deals that

All pre-constitutional laws, after the coming into force of constitution, if in conflict with it in all or some of its provisions then the provisions of constitution will prevail and the provisions of that pre-constitutional law will not be in force until an amendment of the constitution relating to the same matter. In such situation the provision of that law will again come into force, if it is compatible with the constitution as amended. This is called the Theory of Eclipse.

In a similar manner, laws made after adoption of the Constitution by the Constituent Assembly must be compatible with the constitution, otherwise the laws and amendments will be deemed to be void-ab-initio.

In such situations, the Supreme Court or High Court interprets the laws as if they are in conformity with the constitution. If such an interpretation is not possible because of inconsistency, and where a separation is possible, the provision that is inconsistent with constitution is considered to be void. In addition to article 13, articles 32, 124, 131, 219, 226 and 246 provide a constitutional bases to the Judicial review in India.

Politics of India

Politics of India take place in a framework of a federal parliamentary multi-party representative democratic republic modeled after the British Westminster System.

The Prime Minister of India is the head of government, while the President of India is the formal head of state and holds substantial reserve powers, placing him or her in approximately the same position as the British monarch.

Executive power is exercised by the government. Federal legislative power is vested in both the government and the two chambers of the Parliament of India. The judiciary is independent of the executive and the legislature.

According to its constitution, India is a "sovereign socialist secular democratic republic." India is the largest state by population with a democratically-elected government.

Like the United States, India has a federal form of government, however, the central government in India has greater power in relation to its states, and its central government is patterned after the British parliamentary system.

Regarding the former, "the Centre", the national government, can and has dismissed state governments if no majority party or coalition is able to form a government or under specific Constitutional clauses, and can impose direct federal rule known as President's rule. Locally, the Panchayati Raj system has several administrative functions.

For most of the years since independence, the federal government has been led by the Indian National Congress (INC), Politics in the states have been dominated by several national parties including the INC, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI(M)) and various regional parties.

From 1950 to 1990, barring two brief periods, the INC enjoyed a parliamentary majority. The INC was out of power between 1977 and 1980, when the Janata Party won the election owing to public discontent with the corruption of the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. In 1989, a Janata Dal-led National Front coalition in alliance with the Left Front coalition won the elections but managed to stay in power for only two years.

As the 1991 elections gave no political party a majority, the INC formed a minority government under Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao and was able to complete its five-year term. The years 1996–1998 were a period of turmoil in the federal government with several short-lived alliances holding sway.

The BJP formed a government briefly in 1996, followed by the United Front coalition that excluded both the BJP and the INC. In 1998, the BJP formed the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) with several other parties and became the first non-Congress government to complete a full five-year term.

In the 2004 Indian elections, the INC won the largest number of Lok Sabha seats and formed a government with a coalition called the United Progressive Alliance (UPA), supported by various parties. In the 2009 Lok Sabha Elections, it won again with a surprising majority, the INC itself winning more than 200 seats.

At the federal level, India is the most populous democracy in the world. While many neighboring countries witness frequent coups, Indian democracy has been suspended only once. Nevertheless, Indian politics is often described as chaotic. More than a fifth of parliament members face criminal charges.

Central and State Governments

The central government exercises its broad administrative powers in the name of the President, whose duties are largely ceremonial. The president and vice president are elected indirectly for 5-year

terms by a special electoral college. The vice president assumes the office of president in case of the death or resignation of the incumbent president.

The constitution designates the governance of India under two branches namely the executive branch and Real national executive power is centered in the Council of Ministers, led by the Prime Minister of India.

The President appoints the Prime Minister, who is designated by legislators of the political party or coalition commanding a parliamentary majority. The President then appoints subordinate ministers on the advice of the Prime Minister.

In reality, the President has no discretion on the question of whom to appoint as Prime Minister except when no political party or coalition of parties gains a majority in the Lok Sabha. Once the Prime Minister has been appointed, the President has no discretion on any other matter whatsoever, including the appointment of ministers. But all Central Government decisions are nominally taken in his/her name.

Legislative branch

The constitution designates the Parliament of India as the legislative branch to oversee the operation of the government. India's bicameral parliament consists of the Rajya Sabha (Council of States) and the Lok Sabha (House of the People). The Council of Ministers is held responsible to the Lok Sabha.

State Government

States in India have their own elected governments, whereas Union Territories are governed by an administrator appointed by the president. Some of the state legislatures are bicameral, patterned after the two houses of the national parliament. The states' chief ministers are responsible to the legislatures in the same way the prime minister is responsible to parliament.

Each state also has a presidentially appointed governor who may assume certain broad powers when directed by the central government. The central government exerts greater control over the union territories than over the States, although some territories have gained more power to administer their own affairs. Local state governments in India have less autonomy compared to their counterparts in the United States and Australia.

Judicial branch

India's independent judicial system began under the British, and its concepts and procedures resemble those of Anglo-Saxon countries. The constitution designates the Supreme Court, the High Courts and the lower courts as the authority to resolve disputes among the people as well as the disputes related to the people and the government. The constitution through its articles relating to the judicial system provides a way to question the laws of the government, if the common man finds the laws as unsuitable for any community in India..

Local governance

Panchayati Raj: The panchayat raj is a South Asian political system mainly in India, Pakistan, and Nepal. "Panchayat" literally means assembly (yat) of five (panch) wise and respected elders chosen and accepted by the village community.

Traditionally, these assemblies settled disputes between individuals and villages. Modern Indian government has decentralised several administrative functions to the village level, empowering elected gram panchayats. Gram panchayats are not to be confused with the unelected khap panchayats (or caste panchayats) found in some parts of India. The term 'panchayat raj' is relatively new, having originated during the British administration. 'Raj' literally means governance or government. Mahatma Gandhi advocated Panchayati Raj, a decentralized form of Government where each village is responsible for its own affairs, as the foundation of India's political system. His term for such a vision was "*Gram Swaraj*" (Village Self-governance).

It was adopted by state governments during the 1950s and 60s as laws were passed to establish Panchayats in various states. It also found backing in the Indian Constitution, with the 73rd amendment in 1992 to accommodate the idea. The Amendment Act of 1992 contains provision for devolution of powers and responsibilities to the panchayats to both for preparation of plans for economic development and social justice and for implementation in relation to twenty-nine subjects listed in the eleventh schedule of the constitution.

The panchayats receive funds from three sources : (i) local body grants, as recommended by the Central Finance Commission, (ii) funds for implementation of centrally-sponsored schemes, and (iii) funds released by the state governments on the recommendations of the State Finance Commissions.

In the history of Panchayati Raj in India, on 24 April 1993, the Constitutional (73rd Amendment) Act, 1992 came into force to provide constitutional status to the Panchayati Raj institutions. This Act was extended to Panchayats in the tribal areas of eight States, namely Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Rajasthan from 24 December 1996. Now panchayati raj system exists in all the states except Nagaland, Meghalaya and Mizoram. Also all the UTs except Delhi.

The Act aims to provide 3-tier system of Panchayati Raj for all States having population of over 2 million, to hold Panchayat elections regularly every 5 years, to provide reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Women, to appoint State Finance Commission to make recommendations as regards the financial powers of the Panchayats and to constitute District Planning Committee to prepare draft development plan for the district.

Powers and responsibilities are delegated to Panchayats at the appropriate level :-
Preparation of plan for economic development and social justice.

Implementation of schemes for economic development and social justice in relation to 29 subjects given in Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution.
To levy, collect and appropriate taxes, duties, tolls and fees.

Village Level Panchayat

Panchayati Raj is a system of governance in which gram panchayats are the basic units of administration. It has 3 levels: village, block and district. At the village level, it is called a Panchayat. It is a local body working for the good of the village. The number of members usually ranges from 7 to 31; occasionally, groups are larger, but they never have fewer than 7 members.

The block-level institution is called the Panchayat Samiti. The district-level institution is called the Zilla Parishad.

Gram Sabha

Gram sabha is constituted by all members of a village over the age of 18 years. The Gram Sabha elects the Gram Panchayat a council of elected members taking decisions on issues key to a village's social, cultural and economic life: thus, a Gram Panchayat is also a village's body of elected representatives. The council leader is named Sarpanch in Hindi, and each member is a Gram Panchayat Sadasya or Panch. The panchayat acts as a conduit between the local government and the people. Decisions are taken by a majority vote (Bahumat).

It is said that in such a system, each villager can voice his opinion in the governance of his village. Decisions are taken without lengthy legal procedures and the process remains for the most part transparent. Panchayat is an ancient Indian word that means means Five Persons. Since its inception, Panchayat has come a long way, it is currently included in the constitution of the Government of India.

Intermediate Level Panchayat

Panchayat samiti is a local government body at the tehsil or Taluka level in India. It works for the villages of the Tehsil or Taluka that together are called a Development Block.

The Panchayat Samiti is the link between the Gram Panchayat and the district administration. There are a number of variations of this institution in various states. It is known as Mandal Praja Parishad in Andhra Pradesh, Taluka panchayat in Gujarat, Mandal Panchayat in Karnataka, etc.

Functions

- » Implement schemes for the development of agriculture.
- » Establishment of primary health centres and primary schools.
- » Supply of drinking water, drainage, construction/repair of roads.
- » Development of cottage and small-scale industries and opening of cooperative societies.
- » Establishment of youth organisations.

Sources of income

The main source of income of the panchayat samiti are grants-in-aid and loans from the State Government.

District Level Panchayat

In the district level of the panchayati raj system you have the "zilla parishad". It looks after the administration of the rural area of the district and its office is located at the district headquarters.

The Hindi word Parishad means Council and Zilla Parishad translates to District Council. It is headed by the "district collector" or the "district magistrate" or the "deputy commissioner". It is the link between the state government and the panchayat samiti (local self government at the block level)

Constitution

Members of the Zilla Parishad are elected from the district on the basis of adult franchise for a term of five years. Zilla Parishad has minimum of 50 and maximum of 75 members. There are seats reserved for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, backward classes and women.

The Chairmen of all the Panchayat Samitis form the members of Zilla Parishad. The Parishad is headed by a President and a Vice-President.

Functions

Provide essential services and facilities to the rural population and the planning and execution of the development programmes for the district.

Supply improved seeds to farmers. Inform them of new techniques of training. Undertake construction of small-scale irrigation projects and percolation tanks. Maintain pastures and grazing lands. Set up and run schools in villages. Execute programmes for adult literacy. Run libraries. Start Primary Health Centers and hospitals in villages. Start mobile hospitals for hamlets, vaccination drives against epidemics and family welfare campaigns.

Construct Bridges and Roads

Execute plans for the development of the scheduled castes and tribes. Run ashramshalas for adivasi children. Set up free hostels for scheduled caste students.

Encourage entrepreneurs to start small-scale industries like cottage industries, handicraft, agriculture produce processing mills, dairy farms, etc. implement rural employment schemes.

They construct roads, schools, & public properties. And they take care of the public properties.

They even supply work for the poor people. (tribes, scheduled caste, lower caste)

Role of Political Parties

As like any other democracy, political parties represent different sections among the Indian society and regions, and their core values play a major role in the politics of India.

Both the executive branch and the legislative branch of the government are run by the representatives of the political parties who have been elected through the elections.

Through the electoral process, the people of India choose which majority in the lower house, a government can be formed by that party or the coalition.

India has a multi-party system, where there are a number of national as well as regional parties. A regional party may gain a majority and rule a particular state.

If a party represents more than 4 states then such parties are considered as national parties. In the 61 years since India's independence, India has been ruled by the Indian National Congress (INC) for 48 of those years.

The party enjoyed a parliamentary majority barring two brief periods during the 1970s and late 1980s. This rule was interrupted between 1977 to 1980, when the Janata Party coalition won the election owing to public discontent with the controversial state of emergency declared by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

The Janata Dal won elections in 1989, but its government managed to hold on to power for only two years. Between 1996 and 1998, there was a period of political flux with the government being formed first by the right-wing nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) followed by a left-leaning United Front coalition.

In 1998, the BJP formed the National Democratic Alliance with smaller regional parties, and became the first non-INC and coalition government to complete a full five-year term. The 2004 Indian elections saw the INC winning the largest number of seats to form a government leading the United Progressive Alliance, and supported by left-parties and those opposed to the BJP.

On 22 May 2004, Manmohan Singh was appointed the Prime Minister of India following the victory of the INC & the left front in the 2004 Lok Sabha election.

The UPA now rules India without the support of the left front. Previously, Atal Bihari Vajpayee had taken office in October 1999 after a general election in which a BJP-led coalition of 13 parties called the National Democratic Alliance emerged with a majority.

Formation of coalition governments reflects the transition in Indian politics away from the national parties toward smaller, more narrowly-based regional parties. Some regional parties, especially in South India, are deeply aligned to the ideologies of the region unlike the national parties and thus the relationship between the central government and the state government in various states has not always been free of rancor. Disparity between the ideologies of the political parties ruling the centre and the state leads to severely skewed allocation of resources between the states.

Parliament of India

The Parliament of India (or Sansad) is the federal and supreme legislative body of India. It consists of the office of President of India and two houses, the lower house, known as the Lok Sabha and the upper house, known as the Rajya Sabha.

It is located in New Delhi at Sansad Bhavan on Sansad Marg. Any bill can become an act only after it is passed by both the houses of the Parliament and assented by the President. The Central Hall of the Parliament is used for combined sittings of the lower and upper houses and is of historical significance.

Lok Sabha

The Lok Sabha (also titled the House of the People, by the Constitution) is the directly elected lower house of the Parliament of India. As of 2009 there have been fifteen Lok Sabhas elected by the people of India.

The Constitution limits the Lok Sabha to a maximum of 552 members, including no more than 20 members representing people from the Union Territories, and two members to represent the Anglo-Indian community (if the President feels that that community is not adequately represented). The current strength of the Lok Sabha has 545 members including the Speaker and two appointed members, if any.

Each Lok Sabha is formed for a five-year term, after which it is automatically dissolved, unless extended by a Proclamation of Emergency which may extend the term in one-year increments. The 15th Lok Sabha was formed in May 2009.

An exercise to redraw Lok Sabha constituencies' boundaries has been carried out by the Delimitation Commission based on the Indian census of 2001.

This exercise, which was supposed to be carried out after every census, was suspended in 1976 following a constitutional amendment to avoid adverse effects of the family planning program which was being implemented. Today, the Lok Sabha has its own TV channel, Lok Sabha TV, headquartered within the Parliament premises.

Membership Qualifications

Membership of the Lok Sabha requires that the person must be a citizen of India, aged 25 or over, mentally sound, should not be bankrupt and has no criminal procedures against him/her. For reserved seats one should be member of the scheduled castes and/or tribes.

The Lok Sabha shares legislative power with the Rajya Sabha, except in the area of Money Bills, in

which case the Lok Sabha has the ultimate authority. In the case of money bill it is only sent to the rajya sabha for recommendations and in the case of other related issues it is sent with a period of 14 working days.

If it is not returned in that span of time it is considered as passed. If conflicting legislation is enacted by the two Houses, a joint sitting is held to resolve the differences.

In such a session, the members of the Lok Sabha would generally prevail, since the Lok Sabha includes more than twice as many members as the Rajya Sabha.

Three sessions of Lok Sabha take place in a year
Budget session: February to May.

Monsoon session: July to September.

Winter session: November to December.

Powers, including the special powers of the Lok Sabha

The special powers of the Lok Sabha is the reason why the Lok Sabha is de facto and de jure more powerful than the Rajya Sabha.

Motions of no confidence against the government can only be introduced and passed in the Lok Sabha. If passed by a majority vote, the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers resigns collectively. The Rajya Sabha has no power over such a motion, and hence no real power over the executive. However, the Prime Minister may threaten the dissolution of the Lok Sabha and recommend this to the President, forcing an untimely general election.

The President normally accepts this recommendation unless otherwise convinced that the Lok Sabha might recommend a new Prime Minister by a majority vote. Thus, both the executive and the legislature in India have checks and balances over each other.

Money bills can only be introduced in the Lok Sabha, and upon being passed, are sent to the Rajya Sabha, where it can be deliberated on for up to 14 days. If not rejected by the Rajya Sabha, or 14 days

lapse from the introduction of the bill in the Rajya Sabha without any action by the House, or recommendations made by the Rajya Sabha are not accepted by the Lok Sabha, the bill is considered passed.

The budget is presented in the Lok Sabha by the Finance Minister in the name of the President of India. In matters pertaining to non-financial (ordinary) bills, after the bill has been passed by the House where it was originally tabled (Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha), it is sent to the other house, where it may be kept for a maximum period of 6 months. If the other House rejects the bill or a period of 6 months elapses without any action by that House, or the House that originally tabled the bill does not accept the recommendations made by the members of the other house, it results in a deadlock.

This is resolved by a joint session of both Houses, presided over by the Speaker of the Lok Sabha and decided by a simple majority. The will of the Lok Sabha normally prevails in these matters, as its strength is more than double that of the Rajya Sabha.

Equal Powers with the Rajya Sabha in initiating and passing any Bill for Constitutional Amendment (by a majority of the total membership of the House and at least two-thirds majority of the members present and voting).

Equal Powers with the Rajya Sabha in initiating and passing a motion for the impeachment of the President (by two-thirds of the membership of the House).

Equal Powers with the Rajya Sabha in initiating and passing a motion for the impeachment of the judges of the Supreme Court and the state High Courts (by a majority of the membership of the House and at least two-thirds majority of the members present and voting).

Equal Powers with the Rajya Sabha in initiating and passing a resolution declaring war or national

emergency (by two-thirds majority) or constitutional emergency (by simple majority) in a state. If the Lok Sabha is dissolved before or after the declaration of a National Emergency, the Rajya Sabha becomes the sole de facto and de jure Parliament. It cannot be dissolved. This is a limitation on the Lok Sabha.

Rajya Sabha

The Rajya Sabha (Council of States) is the upper house of the Parliament of India. Membership is limited to 250 members, 12 of whom are chosen by the President of India for their expertise in specific fields of art, literature, science, and social services. These members are known as nominated members.

The remainder of the body is elected by state and territorial legislatures. Terms of office are for six years, with one third of the members facing re-election every two years.

The Rajya Sabha meets in continuous session and, unlike the lower house of parliament, the Lok Sabha, is not subject to dissolution. The Rajya Sabha shares legislative powers with the Lok Sabha, except in the area of supply, where the Lok Sabha has overriding powers.

In the case of conflicting legislation, a joint sitting of the two houses is held. However, since the Lok Sabha has more than twice as many members than the Rajya Sabha, it holds de facto veto power in such joint sessions.

The Vice-President of India is the ex-officio Chairman of the Rajya Sabha. The Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, who is elected from amongst its members, takes care of the day-to-day matters of the house in the absence of the Chairman. The Rajya Sabha held its first sitting on 13 May 1952.

Qualifications Required to Become a Member

To become a member of the Rajya Sabha, a person must be a citizen of India, not less than 30 years of age. He or she should be mentally sound and should not be bankrupt. He or she must also declare in an affidavit to be free from criminal procedures. For reserved seats it is a requirement to be member of a scheduled caste or tribe, or both. One can also be appointed by the President of India.

Appointment

Members are elected by the Legislative Assembly of Each State. Like the Canadian Senate and German Bundesrat, seats in the Rajya Sabha take a middle course between proportional and equal representation: while large states have more seats than small states, small states still have disproportionately high representation.

Elections in within the state legislatures are held using single transferable votes with proportional representation.

Membership

Election: The members of the Rajya Sabha from each state are elected by the members of the Legislature (Legislative Assembly) or MPs of that state by means of proportional representation through the Single Transferable Vote System.

The representatives of the Union Territories are chosen in such manner as may be decided or prescribed by the Parliament from time to time.

Elected Members

There are 238 elected members, who represent the 28 states and 7 Union Territories, including the National Capital territory, New Delhi. Seats are allotted to them on the basis of their population. For example, Uttar Pradesh with a population of

nearly 200,000,000 is represented in the Rajya Sabha by 31 members, which is the largest.

However, representation in the Rajya Sabha still greatly favors the small states: although Goa, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura send only one member each to the Rajya Sabha, if Uttar Pradesh was represented in the Rajya Sabha at the same rate that the largest of these (Tripura), it would have 63 members, more than twice its current number.

Nominated Members

Under article 80 of the Constitution, out of the 250 members of the Council of States (Rajya Sabha), 12 are nominated by the President of India from amongst persons who have special knowledge or practical experience in the fields such as literature, science, art or social service.

Since its inception in 1952, 105 members have been nominated so far, for a term of 6-year each, and with an added provision that one-third of the members shall retire every two years.

President of India

The President of India or Rashtrapati is the head of state and first citizen of India, as well as the Supreme Commander of the Indian Armed Forces. The President is responsible for all the real work and from the courts' point of view, the President possesses all the power to get work done and keep busy.

In spite of Article 53 of Constitution even now stating the President can exercise his powers directly even then, with few exceptions, all of the authority vested in the President is in practice exercised by the Council of Ministers, headed by the Prime Minister.

The President is elected by the elected members of the Parliament of India (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha) as well as of the state legislatures (Vidhan Sabhas), and serves for a term of five years. In-

cumbents are permitted to stand for re-election. A formula is used to allocate votes so there is a balance between the population of each state and the number of votes assembly members from a state can cast, and to give an equal balance between State Assembly members and National Parliament members.

If no candidate receives a majority of votes there is a system by which losing candidates are eliminated from the contest and votes for them transferred to other candidates, until one gains a majority. The Vice-President is elected by a direct vote of all members (elected and nominated) of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.

The president of India resides in an estate in New Delhi known as the Rashtrapati Bhavan (which roughly translates as President's Abode). The presidential retreat is The Retreat in Chharabra, Shimla and Rashtrapati Nilayam (President's Place) in Hyderabad.

The 12th President of India is Her Excellency Pratibha Devisingh Patil, the first woman to serve in the office, who was sworn in on 25 July 2007. Qualifications required to become the President
A citizen of India who is of 35 years of age or above may be a Presidential candidate. The Presidential candidate should be qualified to become a member of the Lok Sabha and should not hold any office of profit under the government. Certain office-holders, however, are permitted to stand as Presidential candidates.

These are:

- » The current Vice President.
- » The Governor of any State.
- » A Minister of the Union or of any State.

In the event that the Vice President, a State Governor or a Minister is elected President, they are considered to have vacated their previous office on the date they begin serving as President.

Election of the President

Whenever the office becomes vacant, the new president is chosen by an electoral college consisting of the elected members of both houses of the Parliament and the elected members of the State Legislative Assemblies (Vidhan Sabha).

The election is held in accordance to the system of Proportional Representation by means of Single Transferable Vote method. The Voting takes place by secret ballot system. The manner of election of President is provided by Article 55.

Each elector casts a different number of votes. The general principle is that the total number of votes cast by Members of Parliament equals the total number of votes cast by State Legislators.

Also, legislators from larger states cast more votes than those from smaller states. Finally, the number of legislators in a state matters; if a state has few legislators, then each legislator has more votes; if a state has many legislators, then each legislator has fewer votes.

The actual calculation for votes cast by a particular state is calculated by dividing the state's population by 1000, which is divided again by the number of legislators from the State voting in the electoral college.

This number is the number of votes per legislator in a given state. For votes cast by those in Parliament, the total number of votes cast by all state legislators is divided by the number of members of both Houses of Parliament. This is the number of votes per member of either house of Parliament. In 2007, the President of India was elected indirectly by the members of the Indian Parliament and by the individual States' Legislative Assemblies.

Although Indian presidential elections involve actual voting by MPs and MLAs, they tend to vote for the candidate supported by their respective parties.

Hence the internal process for the election involved lobbying by parties for their respective candidates. UPA, the ruling coalition and NDA, the major opposition coalition hence hold the key to the nomination and support gathering.

Another key player in the final decision was the Left parties, which agreed to support the UPA candidate under certain conditions for nomination. Mayawati, the newly elected chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, the most populous state of India, was also said to be a significant factor in the final election.

Electoral College

The value of votes cast by elected members of the state legislative assemblies and both houses of parliament were decided as per the provisions of article 55(2) of the Constitution of India. The details of number of voters and votes for this presidential election are given below.

Presidential elections in India involve proportional representation from respective states. The number of votes assigned to a particular voter from a state assembly is decided as follows.

Total population of the state / Total number of elected members*1000

Total Members of Parliament- Lok Sabha (543) + Rajya Sabha (233) = 776

Value of each vote = $549474/776 = 708$

Total value of votes of Parliament = 549408

Total number of electors = MLAs + MPs = 4896

Total number of votes = 1098882

Constitutional Role

Constitutional role of the Indian Constitution states "There shall be a President of India". Article 53(1) vests in the President the executive powers of the Union, which are exercised either directly or through subordinate officers in accordance with the Constitution.

Although the Constitution explicitly says that the president is the executive head of the state, real executive power is exercised by the Council of Ministers, headed by the Prime Minister. This is inferred from Article 74 of the Indian Constitution, providing for a council of ministers to aid and advise the President who shall, in exercise of his functions, act in accordance with such advice". However, the Article 74(2) bars all courts completely from assuming even an existence of such an advice. Therefore from the courts' point of view, the real executive power lies with the President. As far as President's decision and action are concerned no one can challenge such decision or action on the ground that it is not in accordance with the advice tendered by the Ministers or that it is based on no advice.

The president of India shall, before entering upon his office, make and subscribe in the presence of the Chief Justice of India or, in his absence, the senior-most Judge of the Supreme Court available, an oath or affirmation that he/she shall protect, preserve and defend the Constitution (Article 60).

Executive Powers

The Constitution vests in the President of India all the executive powers of the Central Government. The President appoints the Prime Minister the person most likely to command the support of the majority in the Lok Sabha (usually the leader of the majority party or coalition). The President then appoints the other members of the Council of Ministers, distributing portfolios to them on the advice of the Prime Minister.

The Council of Ministers remains in power during the 'pleasure' of the President. In practice, however, the Council of Ministers must retain the support of the Lok Sabha.

If a President were to dismiss the Council of Ministers on his or her own initiative, it might trigger a constitutional crisis. Thus, in practice, the Council of Ministers cannot be dismissed as long as it commands the support of a majority in the Lok Sabha.

The President is responsible for making a wide variety of appointments.

These include:

(Governors of States)

The Chief Justice, other judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts of India.

» The Attorney General

» The Controller and Auditor General

» The Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners

» The Chairman and other Members of the Union Public Service Commission

» Ambassadors and High Commissioners to other countries.

» The President also receives the credentials of Ambassadors and High Commissioners from other countries.

Commander in Chief of The Indian Armed Forces

The President of India can grant a pardon to or reduce the sentence of a convicted person for one time, particularly in cases involving punishment of death.

The decisions involving pardoning and other rights by the president are independent of the opinion of the Prime Minister or the Lok Sabha majority. In most other cases, however, the President exercises his or her executive powers on the advice of the Prime Minister.

Financial powers

Money bills can be introduced in the Parliament only on the prior recommendation of the President. He/she also causes to be laid before the Parliament the annual financial statement which is the Union Budget.

Further no demand for grant shall be made except on his recommendation. He/She can also make ad-

vances out of the Contingency Fund of India to meet any unforeseen expenditure. Moreover, he/she constitutes the Finance Commission every 5 years to recommend the distribution of taxes between the States and the Centre.

Judicial Powers

The president appoints the Chief Justice of the Union Judiciary and other judges on the advice of the Chief Justice. In practice, these judges are actually selected by the Union cabinet. The President dismisses the judges if and only if the two Houses of the Parliament pass resolutions to that effect by two-thirds majority of the members present.

If they consider a question of law or a matter of public importance has arisen they can ask for the advisory opinion of the Supreme Court. They may or may not accept that opinion.

He has the right to grant pardon. He can suspend, remit or commute the death sentence of any person.

He enjoys the judicial immunity: 1.No criminal proceedings can be initiated against him/her during his term in office. 2.He is not answerable for the exercise of his duties.

Legislative Powers

The President summons both houses of the Parliament and prorogues them. He or she can even dissolve the Lok Sabha. These powers are formal, and by convention, the President uses these powers according to the advice of the Council of Ministers headed by the Prime Minister.

They inaugurate the Parliament by addressing it after the general elections and also at the beginning of the first session each year. Their address on these occasions is generally meant to outline the new policies of the government.

A bill that the Parliament has passed, can become a law only after the President gives his/her assent

to it. The President can return a bill to the Parliament, if it is not a money bill, for reconsideration. However, if the Parliament sends it back to them for the second time, the President is obliged to assent to it.

When the Parliament is not in session and the government considers it necessary to have a law, then the President can promulgate ordinances. These ordinances are submitted to the Parliament at its next session. They remain valid for no more than six weeks from the date the Parliament is convened unless approved by it earlier.

Diplomatic Powers

All international treaties and agreements are negotiated and concluded on behalf of the President. However, in practice, such negotiations are usually carried out by the Prime Minister along with his Cabinet (especially the Foreign Minister).

Also, such treaties are subject to the approval of the Parliament. The President represents India in international forums and affairs where such a function is chiefly ceremonial. The President may also send and receive diplomats like Ambassadors and High Commissioners.

Military Powers

The President is the supreme commander of the defence forces of India, in this capacity the president can appoint Army, Navy & Air Chiefs. The President can declare war or conclude peace, subject to the approval of parliament only under the decision of the Council of Ministers.

Emergency Powers

The President can declare three types of emergencies: national, state and financial.

National Emergency

National emergency is caused by war, external aggression or armed rebellion in the whole of India

or a part of its territory. Such an emergency was declared in India in 1962 (Indo-China war), 1971 (Indo-Pakistan war), 1975 to 1977 (declared by Indira Gandhi on account of "internal disturbance").

Under Article 352 of the India Constitution the President can declare such an emergency only on the basis of a written request by the Council of Ministers headed by the Prime Minister. Such a proclamation must be approved by the Parliament within one month.

Such an emergency can be imposed for six months. It can be extended by six months by repeated parliamentary approval, up to a maximum of 3 Years. In such an emergency, Fundamental Rights of Indian citizens can be suspended. The six freedoms under Right to Freedom are automatically suspended. However, the Right to Life and Personal Liberty cannot be suspended.

The Parliament can make laws on the 66 subjects of the State List (which contains subjects on which the state governments can make laws). Also, all money bills are referred to the Parliament for its approval. The term of the Lok Sabha can be extended by a period of up to one year, but not so as to extend the term of Parliament beyond six months after the end of the declared emergency.

State Emergency

State emergency, also known as President's rule, is declared due to breakdown of constitutional machinery in a state.

If the President is satisfied, on the basis of the report of the Governor of the concerned state or from other sources that the governance in a state cannot be carried out according to the provisions in the Constitution, he/she can declare a state of emergency in the state. Such an emergency must be approved by the Parliament within a period of six months.

Under Article 356 of the Indian Constitution, it can be imposed from six months to a maximum period of three years with repeated parliamentary approval

every six months. If the emergency needs to be extended for more than three years, this can be achieved by a constitutional amendment, as has happened in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir.

During such an emergency, the President can take over the entire work of the executive, and the Governor administers the state in the name of the President. The Legislative Assembly can be dissolved or may remain in suspended animation. The Parliament makes laws on the 66 subjects of the state list. All money bills have to be referred to the Parliament for approval.

On 19 January 2009, President's rule was imposed on the Indian State of Jharkhand making it the latest state where this kind of emergency has been imposed.

A State Emergency can be imposed via the following:

- » By Article 356:-If that state failed to run constitutionally i.e. constitutional machinery has failed
- » By Article 365:-If that state is not working according to the given direction of the Union Government.

This type of emergency needs the approval of the parliament within 2 months. This type of emergency can last up to a maximum of 3 years via extensions after each 6 month period. However, after one year it can be extended only if :

- » A state of National Emergency has been declared in the country or in the particular state.
- » The Election Commission finds it difficult to organize an election in that state.

Financial Emergency

If the President is satisfied that there is an economic situation in which the financial stability or credit of India is threatened, he/she can proclaim financial emergency as per the Constitutional Article 360. Such an emergency must be approved by the Parliament within two months.

It has never been declared. On a previous occasion, the financial stability or credit of India has indeed been threatened, but a financial emergency was avoided through the selling off of India's gold reserves.

A state of financial emergency remains in force indefinitely until revoked by the President.

In case of a financial emergency, the President can reduce the salaries of all government officials, including judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts.

All money bills are passed by the State legislatures are submitted to the President for his approval. They can direct the state to observe certain principles (economy measures) relating to financial matters.

Important Presidential Interventions

The President's role as defender of the Constitution, and their powers as Head of State, especially in relation to those exercised by the Prime Minister as leader of the government, have changed over time.

In particular, Presidents have made a number of interventions into government and lawmaking, which have established and challenged some conventions concerning Presidential intervention. Some of the more noteworthy are documented here.

In 1979, the then Prime Minister, Charan Singh, did not enjoy a Parliamentary majority. He responded to this by simply not advising the President to summon Parliament. Since then, Presidents have been more diligent in directing incoming Prime Ministers to convene Parliament and prove their majority within reasonable deadlines (2–3 weeks). In the interim period, the Prime Ministers are generally restrained from making policy decisions.

The constitution gives the President the power to return a bill unsigned but it circumscribes the power to send it back only once for reconsideration.

If the Parliament sends back the bill with or without changes, the President is duty bound to sign it. Since the nineties, Parliamentary elections have generally not resulted in a single party or group of parties having a distinct majority.

In such cases, Presidents have used their discretion and directed Prime Ministerial aspirants to establish their credentials before being invited to form the government. Typically, the aspirants have been asked to produce letters from various party leaders, with the signatures of all the MPs who are pledging support to their candidature.

This is in addition to the requirement that a Prime Minister prove he has the support of the Lok Sabha (by a vote on the floor of the House) within weeks of being sworn in to office.

In the late nineties, President Narayanan introduced the important practice of explaining to the nation (by means of Rashtrapati Bhavan communiqués) the thinking that led to the various decisions he took while exercising his discretionary powers; this has led to openness and transparency in the functioning of the President.

In mid-2006, President A. P. J. Abdul Kalam sent back a controversial bill regarding enlarging the scope of the offices of profit, which disqualify a person from being a member of parliament. The opposition combine, the NDA, hailed the move. The UPA chose to send the bill back to the president without any changes, and after 30 days Kalam gave the assent.

Removal of the President

The President may be removed before the expiry of his/her term through impeachment. A President can be removed for violation of the Constitution.

The process may start in either of the two houses of the Parliament. The house initiates the process by leveling the charges against the President. The charges are contained in a notice, which has to be signed by at least one quarter of the total members of that house. The notice is sent up to the President and 14 days later, it is taken up for consideration.

A resolution to impeach the President has to be passed by a two-third majority of the total members of the originating house. It is then sent to the other house. The other house investigates the charges that have been made.

During this process, the President has the right to defend himself/herself through an authorised counsel. If the second house also approves the charges made by two-third majority again, the President stands impeached and is deemed to have vacated his/her office from the date when such a resolution stands passed.

Other than impeachment, no other penalty can be given to the President for the violation of the Constitution. No President has faced impeachment proceedings. Hence, the above provisions have never been tested.

Succession

In the event of a vacancy created for the President's post due to death, resignation, removal, etc., Article 65 of the Indian Constitution says that the Vice President will have to discharge his duties. The Vice President reverts to his office when a new President is elected and enters upon his office.

When the President is unable to act owing to his absence, illness or any other cause, the Vice President discharges the President's functions for a temporary period until the President resumes his duties.

When the Vice President acts as, or discharges the functions of the President, he has all the powers

and immunities of the President and is entitled to the same emoluments as the President.

Parliament has by an enactment made provision for the discharge of the functions of the President when vacancies occur in the offices of the President and of the Vice President simultaneously, owing to removal, death, resignation of the incumbent or otherwise.

In such an eventuality, the Chief Justice, or in his absence, the senior most Judge of the Supreme Court of India available discharges the functions of the President until a newly elected President enters upon his office or a newly elected Vice President begins to act as President under Article 65 of the Constitution, whichever is the earlier.

Prime Minister of India

The Prime Minister of India is the head of government of the Republic of India, and head of the Council of Ministers, appointed by the President to assist the latter in the administration of the affairs of the executive in India.

The Prime Minister is responsible for bringing proposal of legislations. The Prime Minister is appointed by the President, and recognized as leader of the majority party in the two Houses of the Parliament of India.

Constitutional framework and position of Prime Minister: The Constitution envisages a scheme of affairs in which the President of India is the head of the executive in terms of Article 53 with office of the Prime Minister as heading the Council of Ministers to assist and advise the President in the discharge of the executive power. To quote, Article 53 and 74 provide as under;

The executive powers of the Union shall be vested in the President and shall be exercised either directly or through subordinate officers, in accordance with the Constitution.

Article 53 (1), Constitution of India: There shall be a Council of Ministers with the Prime Minister at the head to aid and advise the President who shall, in the exercise of his functions, act in accordance with such advice.

Article 74(1), Constitution of India: Unlike most parliamentary democracies where the Head of State's duties are only ceremonial, the Prime Minister of India is the head of government and has joint responsibility for executive power alongwith the President of India.

With India following a parliamentary system of government the Prime Minister is generally the leader of a party (or coalition of parties) that has a majority in the Lok Sabha, the lower house of the Parliament of India. The Prime Minister either has to be a current member of one of the houses of Parliament, or be elected within six months of being appointed.

Role of the Prime Minister

The Prime Minister, alongwith the President of India leads the functioning and exercise of authority of the Government of India. They are invited by the President as leader of the majority party in the Parliament of India to form a government at the federal level (known as Central or Union Government in India) and exercise its powers.

In practice the Prime Minister nominates the members of their Council of Ministers to the President. They also work upon to decide a core group of Ministers (known as the Cabinet) as in-charge of the important functions and ministries of the Government of India.

The Prime Minister is responsible for aiding and advising the President in distribution of work of the Government to various ministries and offices and in terms of the Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961.

The co-ordinating work is generally allocated to the Cabinet Secretariat which in turn acts as a nodal

agency for the functioning of the various Ministries. While generally the work of the Government is divided into various Ministries, the Prime Minister may retain certain portfolios.

The Prime Minister, in consultation with the Cabinet, schedules and attends the sessions of the Houses of Parliament and is required to answer the question from the Members of Parliament to them as the in-charge of the portfolios in the capacity as Prime Minister of India.

The Prime Minister is also the ex officio Chairman of the Planning Commission of India. They also appoint the Deputy Chairman of the Commission, who is responsible for the functioning of the Commission and reports to the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister represents the country in various delegations, high level meetings and international organizations that require the attendance of the highest government office and also addresses to the nation on various issues of national or other importance.

They also have exclusive jurisdiction over disposal of two national funds, (i) the PM's National Relief Fund, and (ii) the PM's National Defence Fund, which they use at their discretion attain the objectives behind the establishment of these funds.

Deputy Prime Minister of India

The Deputy Prime Minister of India is a member of the Indian cabinet in the Indian government. The post is not a constitutional post and seldom carries any specific powers. Generally a Deputy PM also holds other key portfolios like Home minister or Finance Minister.

Though the Indian Constitution does not specify the position and with the Prime Minister himself being treated as "first among equals" in the cabinet, the position of DPM is sometimes used by governments to bring political stability and strength by including a powerful individual, or in times of national emergency, when a proper chain of command is necessary.

The first Deputy Prime Minister was Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. The last person to hold this post was Lal Krishna Advani of the previous government. The current government does not have a Deputy Prime Minister.

The Deputy Prime Minister in reality has no power except chairing the Cabinet meetings in the absence of the PM. Only if the PM is taken ill seriously, incapacitated or in the event of his death, does the DPM take the same level of responsibility.

Supreme Court of India

The Supreme Court of India is the highest court of the land as established by Part V, Chapter IV of the Constitution of India. According to the Constitution of India, the role of the Supreme Court is that of a federal court, guardian of the Constitution and the highest court of appeal.

Articles 124 to 147 of the Constitution of India lay down the composition and jurisdiction of the Supreme Court of India. Primarily, it is an appellate court which takes up appeals against judgments of the High Courts of the states and territories.

But it also takes writ petitions in cases of serious human rights violations or if a case involves a serious issue that needs immediate resolution. The Supreme Court of India had its inaugural sitting on January 28, 1950, and since then has delivered more than 24,000 reported judgments.

Constitution of the Court

On January 28, 1950, two days after India became a sovereign democratic republic, the Supreme Court came into being. The inauguration took place in the Chamber of Princes in the Parliament building.

The Chamber of Princes had earlier been the seat of the Federal Court of India for 12 years, between 1937 and 1950, and was the seat of the Supreme

Court until the Supreme Court acquired its present premises in 1958.

After its inauguration on January 28, 1950, the Supreme Court commenced its sittings in the Chamber of Princes in the Parliament House. The Court moved into the present building in 1958. The Supreme Court Bar Association is the bar of the highest court. The current president of the SCBA is Mr. P.H. Parekh.

Composition

The original Constitution of India (1950) provided for a Supreme Court with a Chief Justice and 7 lower-ranking Judges leaving it to Parliament to increase this number. In the early years, a full bench of the Supreme Court sat together to hear the cases presented before them.

As the work of the Court increased and cases began to accumulate, Parliament increased the number of Judges from 8 in 1950 to 11 in 1956, 14 in 1960, 18 in 1978, 26 in 1986 and 31 in 2008.

As the number of the Judges has increased, they sit in smaller Benches of two and three (referred to as a Division Bench) coming together in larger Benches of 5 and more only when required (referred to as a Constitutional Bench) to do so or to settle a difference of opinion or controversy. Any bench may refer the case up to a larger bench if the need to do so arises.

The Supreme Court of India comprises the Chief Justice of India and not more than 30 other Judges appointed by the President of India. However, the President must appoint judges in consultation with the Supreme Court and appointments are generally made on the basis of seniority and not political preference.

Supreme Court Judges retire upon attaining the age of 65 years. In order to be appointed as a Judge of the Supreme Court, a person must be a citizen of India and must have been, for at least five years,

a Judge of a High Court or of two or more such Courts in succession, or an Advocate of a High Court or of two or more such Courts in succession for at least 10 years, or the person must be, in the opinion of the President, a distinguished jurist. Provisions exist for the appointment of a Judge of a High Court as an ad-hoc Judge of the Supreme Court and for retired Judges of the Supreme Court or High Courts to sit and act as Judges of that Court.

The Supreme Court has always maintained a wide regional representation. It also has had a good share of Judges belonging to religious and ethnic minorities. The first woman to be appointed to the Supreme Court was Justice Fatima Beevi in 1987. She was later followed by Justices Sujata Manohar and Ruma Pal.

Justice K. G. Balakrishnan in 2000 became the first judge from the dalit community. In 2007 he also became the first dalit Chief Justice of India. Justices B. P. Jeevan Reddy and A. R. Lakshmanan were appointed Chairmen of the Law Commission of India, unusually because neither of them served as Chief Justice.

Jurisdiction

The Supreme Court has original, appellate and advisory jurisdiction.

Original Jurisdiction

It has exclusive original jurisdiction over any dispute between the Government of India and one or more States or between the Government of India and any State or States on one side and one or more States on the other or between two or more States, if and insofar as the dispute involves any question (whether of law or of fact) on which the existence or extent of a legal right depends.

In addition, Article 32 of the Constitution grants an extensive original jurisdiction to the Supreme Court in regard to enforcement of Fundamental Rights. It is empowered to issue directions, orders or writs, including writs in the nature of habeas

corpus, mandamus, prohibition, quo warranto and certiorari to enforce them.

Appellate Jurisdiction

The appellate jurisdiction of the Supreme Court can be invoked by a certificate granted by the High Court concerned under Articles 132(1), 133(1) or 134 of the Constitution in respect of any judgement, decree or final order of a High Court in both civil and criminal cases, involving substantial questions of law as to the interpretation of the Constitution.

The Supreme Court can also grant special leave to appeal from a judgement or order of any non-military Indian court. Parliament has the power to enlarge the appellate jurisdiction of the Supreme Court and has exercised this power in case of criminal appeals by enacting the Supreme Court (Enlargement of Criminal Appellate Jurisdiction) Act, 1970.

Appeals also lie to the Supreme Court in civil matters if the High Court concerned certifies : (a) that the case involves a substantial question of law of general importance, and (b) that, in the opinion of the High Court, the said question needs to be decided by the Supreme Court.

In criminal cases, an appeal lies to the Supreme Court if the High Court (a) has on appeal reversed an order of acquittal of an accused person and sentenced him to death or to imprisonment for life or for a period of not less than 10 years, or (b) has withdrawn for trial before itself any case from any Court subordinate to its authority and has in such trial convicted the accused and sentenced him to death or to imprisonment for life or for a period of not less than 10 years, or (c) certified that the case is a fit one for appeal to the Supreme Court. Parliament is authorised to confer on the Supreme Court any further powers to entertain and hear appeals from any judgement, final order or sentence in a criminal proceeding of a High Court.

Advisory jurisdiction

The Supreme Court has special advisory jurisdiction in matters which may specifically be referred to it by the President of India under Article 143 of the Constitution.

Judicial independence

The Constitution seeks to ensure the independence of Supreme Court Judges in various ways. Judges are generally appointed on the basis of seniority and not on political preference. A Judge of the Supreme Court cannot be removed from office except by an order of the President passed after an address in each House of Parliament supported by a majority of the total membership of that House and by a majority of not less than two-thirds of members present and voting, and presented to the President in the same Session for such removal on the ground of proved misbehaviour or incapacity. The salary and allowances of a judge of the Supreme Court cannot be reduced after appointment. A person who has been a Judge of the Supreme Court is debarred from practising in any court of law or before any other authority in India.

Powers to Punish Contempt

Under Articles 129 and 142 of the Constitution the Supreme Court has been vested with power to punish anyone for contempt of any law court in India including itself.

The Supreme Court performed an unprecedented action when it directed a sitting Minister of the state of Maharashtra, Swaroop Singh Naik, to be jailed for 1 month on a charge of contempt of court on May 12 2006. This was the first time that a serving Minister was ever jailed.

Other Laws Deemed Unconstitutional

On February 1, 1970, the Supreme Court invalidated the government-sponsored Bank National-

ization Bill that had been passed by Parliament in August 1969.

The Supreme Court also rejected as unconstitutional a presidential order of September 7, 1970, that abolished the titles, privileges, and privy purses of the former rulers of India's old princely states.

Response From Parliament

In reaction to the decisions of the Supreme Court, in 1971 the Parliament of India passed an amendment empowering itself to amend any provision of the constitution, including the fundamental rights.

The Parliament of India passed the 25th Amendment, making legislative decisions concerning proper land compensation non-justiciable. The Parliament of India passed an amendment to the Constitution of India, which added a constitutional article abolishing princely privileges and privy purses.

Counter-Response from The Supreme Court

The Court ruled that the basic structure of the constitution cannot be altered for convenience. On April 24, 1973, the Supreme Court responded to the parliamentary offensive by ruling in *Kesavananda Bharati v. The State of Kerala* that although these amendments were constitutional, the court still reserved for itself the discretion to reject any constitutional amendments passed by Parliament by declaring that the amendments cannot change the constitution's "basic structure", a decision piloted through by Chief Justice Sikri.

Emergency and Government of India

The independence of judiciary was severely curtailed on account of powerful central government ruled by Indian National Congress. This was dur-

ing the Indian Emergency (1975-1977) of Indira Gandhi.

The constitutional rights of imprisoned persons were restricted under Preventive detention laws passed by the parliament. In the case of *Shiva Kant Shukla Additional District Magistrate of Jabalpur v. Shiv Kant Shukla*, popularly known as the Habeas Corpus case, a bench of five seniormost judges of Supreme court ruled in favour of state's right for unrestricted powers of detention during emergency. Justices A.N. Ray, P. N. Bhagwati, Y. V. Chandrachud, and M.H. Beg, stated in the majority decision:

(under the declaration of emergency) no person has any locus to move any writ petition under Art. 226 before a High Court for habeas corpus or any other writ or order or direction to challenge the legality of an order of detention.

The only dissenting opinion was from Justice H. R. Khanna, who stated: Detention without trial is an anathema to all those who love personal liberty... A dissent is an appeal to the brooding spirit of the law, to the intelligence of a future day, when a later decision may possible correct the error into which the dissenting Judge believes the court to have been betrayed.

It is believed that before delivering his dissenting opinion, Justice Khanna had mentioned to his sister: I have prepared my judgment, which is going to cost me the Chief Justice-ship of India."

When the central Government is to recommend one of Supreme court Judges for the post of Chief Justice in January 1977, Justice Khanna was superseded despite being the most senior judge at the time and thereby Government broke the convention of appointing only the senior most judge to the position of Chief Justice of India. In fact, it was felt that the other judges may have gone along for this very reason. Justice Khanna remains a legendary figure among the legal fraternity in India for this decision.

The New York Times, wrote of this opinion: "The submission of an independent judiciary to absolutist government is virtually the last step in the destruction of a democratic society; and the Indian Supreme Court's decision appears close to utter surrender."

During the emergency period, the government also passed the 39th amendment, which sought to limit judicial review for the election of the Prime Minister; only a body constituted by Parliament could review this election.

The court tamely agreed with this curtailment (1975), despite the earlier Keshavanand decision. Subsequently, the parliament, with most opposition members in jail during the emergency, passed the 42nd amendment which prevented any court from reviewing any amendment to the constitution with the exception of procedural issues concerning ratification.

A few years after the emergency, however, the Supreme court rejected the absoluteness of the 42nd amendment and reaffirmed its power of judicial review in the Minerva Mills case (1980). As a final act during the emergency, in what Justice V. R. Krishna Iyer has called "a stab on the independence of the High Court", judges were moved helter-skelter across the country, in concurrence with Chief Justice Beg.

Social Issues

(Corruption in India)

As with many developing nations, corruption is widespread in India. India is ranked 84 out of a 180 countries in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index, although its score has improved consistently from 2.7 in 2002 to 3.4 in 2008 (Although this may be due to the change in polling that the survey has undergone). Corruption has taken the role of a pervasive aspect of Indian politics and bureaucracy.

The economy of India was under socialist-inspired policies for an entire generation from the 1950s

until the 1980s. The economy was subject to extensive regulation, protectionism, and public ownership, leading to pervasive corruption and slow growth. License Raj was often at the core of corruption.

The Vohra Report was submitted by the former Indian Union Home Secretary, N.N. Vohra, in October 1993. It studied the problem of the criminalisation of politics and of the nexus among criminals, politicians and bureaucrats in India. The report contained several observations made by official agencies on the criminal network which was virtually running a parallel government. It also discussed criminal gangs who enjoyed the patronage of politicians, of all parties, and the protection of government functionaries.

It revealed that political leaders had become the leaders of gangs. They were connected to the military. Over the years criminals had been elected to local bodies, State Assemblies and Parliament. The unpublished annexures to the Vohra Report were believed to contain highly explosive material. According to Jitendra Singh, "in the bad old days, particularly pre-1991, when the License Raj held sway, and by design, all kinds of free market mechanisms were hobbled or stymied, and corruption emerged almost as an illegitimate price mechanism, a shadowy quasi-market, such that scarce resources could still be allocated within the economy, and decisions could get made.

These were largely distortions created by the politico-economic regime. While a sea change has occurred in the years following 1991, some of the distorted cultural norms that took hold during the earlier period are slowly being repaired by the sheer forces of competition.

The process will be long and slow, however. It will not change overnight." One of the major problems and obstacles to development that many developing countries face is corruption by greedy, power-hungry politicians, which is endemic in certain parts of the world.

(Corruption Across Various States of India)

As per Transparency International India, "India Corruption Study 2005", Kerala is the least corrupt State in India. Bihar, on the other hand, is the most corrupt State. Jammu & Kashmir ranks next to Bihar. Himachal Pradesh followed by Gujarat are ranked second and third respectively after Kerala.

This study was carried across eleven public services. Kerala was found least corrupt in all these services. Himachal Pradesh was found less corrupt. In Gujarat services such as education, judiciary and land administration was ranked as more corrupt compared to other states. However in other services, Gujarat ranked better.

Some people in India strongly believe that the root of corruption lies at the higher levels, and that the major conspirators have to be punished first.

Politics

Criminalization of Indian politics is a problem. In July 2008 The Washington Post reported that nearly a fourth of the 540 Indian Parliament members faced criminal charges, "including human trafficking, immigration rackets, embezzlement, rape and even murder". At state level, things are often worse. In Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections 2002, candidates with criminal records won the majority of seats.

Bureaucracy

A 2005 study done by Transparency International (TI) in India found that more than 50% of the people had firsthand experience of paying bribe or peddling influence to get a job done in a public office. Taxes and bribes are common between state borders; Transparency International estimates that truckers pay annually \$5 billion in bribes.

A 2009 survey of the leading economies of Asia, revealed Indian bureaucracy to be not just least

efficient out of Singapore, Hong Kong, Thailand, South Korea, Japan, Malaysia, Taiwan, Vietnam, China, Philippines and Indonesia; further it was also found that working with the India's civil servants was a "slow and painful" process.

Officials often steal state property. In Bihar, more than 80% of the subsidized food aid to poor is stolen.

In cities and villages throughout India, Mafia Raj consisting of municipal and other government officials, elected politicians, judicial officers, real estate developers and law enforcement officials, acquire, develop and sell land in illegal ways. Many state-funded construction activities in India, such as road building, are dominated by construction mafias, which are groupings of corrupt public works officials, materials suppliers, politicians and construction contractors. Shoddy construction and material substitution (e.g. mixing sand in cement while submitting expenses for cement) result in roads and highways being dangerous, and sometimes simply washed away when India's heavy monsoon season arrives.

In Government Hospitals, corruption is associated with non availability of medicines (or duplicate medicines), getting admission, consultations with doctors and availing diagnostic services.

Judiciary

Corruption is rampant in the judicial system of India. According to Transparency International, judicial corruption in India is attributable to factors such as "delays in the disposal of cases, shortage of judges and complex procedures, all of which are exacerbated by a preponderance of new laws".

Police

Despite state prohibitions against torture and custodial misconduct by the police, torture is widespread in police custody, which is a major reason behind deaths in custody. The police often torture

innocent people until a 'confession' is obtained to save influential and wealthy offenders. G.P. Joshi, the programme coordinator of the Indian branch of the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative in New Delhi comments that the main issue at hand concerning police violence is a lack of accountability of the police.

Religious Institutions

In India, the corruption has also crept into religious institutions. Some members of the Church are making money by selling Baptism certificates. A group of church leaders and activists has launched a campaign to combat the corruption within churches.

Among Indian Muslims, the recent "cash for fatwas scandal" was a major affair that exposed the Imams of the Islamic ulama accepting bribes for issuing random, often nonsensical fatwas.

The chief economic consequences of corruption are the loss to the , an unhealthy climate for investment and an increase in the cost of government-subsidised services.

The TI India study estimates the monetary value of petty corruption in 11 basic services provided by the government, like education, healthcare, judiciary, police, etc., to be around Rs.21,068 crores.

India still ranks in the bottom quartile of developing nations in terms of the ease of doing business, and compared to China and other lower developed Asian nations, the average time taken to secure the clearances for a startup or to invoke bankruptcy is much greater.

According to Transparency International, Bihar is the most corrupt state in India. Magazine said in 2004 that Bihar has become a byword for the worst of India, of widespread and inescapable poverty, of corrupt politicians indistinguishable from mafia-dons they patronize, caste-ridden social order that has retained the worst feudal cruelties.

Anti-corruption efforts (Right to information Act)

The Right to Information Act (2005) and equivalent acts in the states, that require government officials to furnish information requested by citizens or face punitive action, computerisation of services and various central and state government acts that established vigilance commissions have considerably reduced corruption or at least have opened up avenues to redress grievances. The 2006 report by Transparency International puts India at the 70th place and states that significant improvements were made by India in reducing corruption. Computerization

Bhoomi is a project jointly funded by the Government of India and the Government of Karnataka to digitize the paper land records and create a software mechanism to control changes to the land registry in Karnataka. The project was designed to eliminate the long-standing problem of inefficiency and corruption.

Socio-Economic issues in India

Since India's Independence in 1947, country has faced several social and economic issues.

Religious violence

Constitutionally India is a secular state, but large-scale violence have periodically occurred in India since independence. In recent decades, communal tensions and religion-based politics have become more prominent, coinciding with a rise in Islamic terrorism.

Although India is generally known for religious pluralism, the Hindutva ideology propagates that India belongs to the Hindus, and the Christians and the Muslims are "aliens", and many proponents of this ideology portray violence against Muslims and Christians as a form of "self-defence" against "invaders".

The Hindutva ideology is at the core of Sangh Parivar politics and its expression in violence against religious minority. Throughout the history of post-Independence India, both Muslim and Christian communities have faced repeated attacks from Hindu activists.

As the Hindutva ideology has grown more powerful over the years, many Hindutva activists have partaken in riots against minority communities. Over the last decade, religious violence in India has increasingly become what academics believe to be organized pogroms to eliminate minority communities.

Some state governments in India have been accused of not effectively prosecuting those who attack religious minorities. Major religious violent incidents include Ayodhya debate, Bombay Riots, 1993 Bombay bombings, 2002 Gujarat violence.

Although related, Hinduism and Hindutva are different. Hinduism is a religion while Hindutva is a political ideology. The Hindutva movement is not supported by majority of Hindus. Some tolerant or "secular" Hindus use the term "Hindu Taliban" to describe the supporters of the Hindutva movement. Fukuoka Asian Culture Prize-winning Indian sociologist and cultural and political critic Ashis Nandy argued "Hindutva will be the end of Hinduism."

In Jammu and Kashmir, Since March 1990, estimates of between 250,000 to 300,000 pandits have migrated outside Kashmir due to persecution by Islamic fundamentalists in the largest case of ethnic cleansing since the partition of India.

The proportion of Kashmiri Pandits in the Kashmir valley has declined from about 15% in 1947 to, by some estimates, less than 0.1% since the insurgency in Kashmir took on a religious and sectarian flavor. Many Kashmiri Pandits have been killed by Islamist terrorists in incidents such as the Wandhama massacre and the 2000 Amarnath pilgrimage massacre.

In recent years, there has been a sharp increase in violent attacks on Christians in India, often perpetrated by Hindu Nationalists. The acts of violence include arson of churches, re-conversion of Christians to Hinduism, distribution of threatening literature, burning of Bibles, raping of nuns, murder of Christian priests and destruction of Christian schools, colleges, and cemeteries. The Sangh Parivar and related organisations have stated that the violence is an expression of "spontaneous anger" of "vanvasis" against "forcible conversion" activities undertaken by missionaries, a claim described as "absurd" and rejected by scholars.

Between 1964 and 1996, thirty-eight incidents of violence against Christians were reported. In 1997, twenty-four such incidents were reported. In 2007 and 2008 there was a further flare up of tensions in Orissa, the first following the Christians' putting up a Pandhal in land traditionally used by Hindus and the second after the unprovoked murder of a Hindu Guru and four of his disciples while observing Janmashtami puja. This was followed by an attack on a 150-year-old church in Madhya Pradesh, and more attacks in Karnataka.

Naxalism

Naxalism is an informal name given to communist groups that were born out of the Sino-Soviet split in the Indian communist movement. Ideologically they belong to various trends of Maoism. Initially the movement had its centre in West Bengal.

In recent years, they have spread into less developed areas of rural central and eastern India, such as Chattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh through the activities of underground groups like the Communist Party of India (Maoist). The CPI (Maoist) and some other Naxal factions are considered terrorists by the Government of India and various state governments in India.

Caste related violence

Caste-related violence and hate crimes in India have occurred despite the gradual reduction of

casteism in the country. Independent India has witnessed considerable amount of violence and hate crimes motivated by caste.

Ranvir Sena, a caste-supremacist fringe paramilitary group based in Bihar, has committed violent acts against Dalits and other members of the scheduled caste community. Phoolan Devi, who belonged to Mallah lower-caste, was mistreated and raped by upper-caste Thakurs at a young age. She then became a bandit and carried out violent robberies against upper-caste people.

In 1981, her gang massacred twenty-two Thakurs, most of whom were not involved in her kidnapping or rape. Phoolan Devi went on to become a politician and Member of Parliament.

Over the years, various incidents of violence against Dalits, such as Kherlanji Massacre have been reported from many parts of India. At the same time, many violent protests by Dalits, such as the 2006 Dalit protests in Maharashtra, have been reported as well.

The Mandal Commission was established in 1979 to "identify the socially or educationally backward", and to consider the question of seat reservations and quotas for people to redress caste discrimination. In 1980, the commission's report affirmed the affirmative action practice under Indian law whereby members of lower castes were given exclusive access to a certain portion of government jobs and slots in public universities.

When V. P. Singh Government tried to implement the recommendations of Mandal Commission in 1989, massive protests were held in the country. Many alleged that the politicians were trying to cash in on caste-based reservations for purely pragmatic electoral purposes.

In 1990s, many parties Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), the Samajwadi Party and the Janata Dal started claiming that they are representing the backward castes. Many such parties, relying primarily on Backward Classes' support, often in alliance with Dalits and Muslims, rose to power in Indian states.

At the same time, many Dalit leaders and intellectuals started realizing that the main Dalit oppressors were so-called Other Backward Classes, and formed their own parties, such as the Indian Justice Party. The Congress (I) in Maharashtra long relied on OBCs' backing for its political success. Bharatiya Janata Party has also showcased its Dalit and OBC leaders to prove that it is not an upper-caste party.

Bangaru Laxman, the former BJP president (2001–2002) was a former Dalit. Sanyasin Uma Bharati, former CM of Madhya Pradesh, who belongs to OBC caste, was a former BJP leader. In 2006 Arjun Singh cabinet minister for MHRD of the UPA government was accused of playing caste politics when he introduced reservations for OBCs in educational institutions all around.

Press Freedom

According to the estimates of Reporters Without Borders, India ranks 120th worldwide in press freedom index (press freedom index for India is 39.33 for 2007).

The Indian Constitution, while not mentioning the word "press", provides for "the right to freedom of speech and expression" (Article 19(1) a). However this right is subject to restrictions under subclause (2), whereby this freedom can be restricted for reasons of "sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, preserving decency, preserving morality, in relation to contempt of court, defamation, or incitement to an offence".

Laws such as the Official Secrets Act and Prevention of Terrorism Act (PoTA) have been used to limit press freedom. Under PoTA, person could be detained for up to six months for being in contact with a terrorist or terrorist group. PoTA was repealed in 2006, but the Official Secrets Act 1923 continues.

LGBT Rights

Homosexuality is criminalised in India by interpretations of the ambiguous Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). The punishment ranges from ten years to lifelong imprisonment. The law has been used to harass HIV/AIDS prevention efforts, as well as sex workers, men who have sex with men, and other groups at risk of the disease. Scott Long, director of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Rights Program at Human Rights Watch sent a letter to Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh regarding the arrests of 4 men in 2006 in Lucknow and another 4 in 2001. However, in most areas of India, this law is very rarely enforced.

The People's Union for Civil Liberties has published two reports of the rights violations faced by sexual minorities and, in particular, transsexuals (hijras and kothis) in India. Indian state of Tamil Nadu has made significant effort in integrating transgenders into the mainstream society.

Overpopulation

India suffers from the problem of overpopulation. Though India ranks second in population, it ranks 33 in terms of population density below countries such as The Netherlands, South Korea and Japan. To cure this problem, Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, had implemented a forced sterilization programme in the early 1970s but failed. Officially, men with two children or more had to submit to sterilization, but many unmarried young men, political opponents and ignorant, poor men were also believed to have been sterilized.

This program is still remembered and criticized in India, and is blamed for creating a wrong public aversion to family planning, which hampered Government programmes for decades. It is believed that family planning was also hampered due to Indian people's infatuation for more and more children. Rather than having a small and happy family, people of almost all religions in India (regardless

of whether they are educated or not) try to produce more and more children, and this infatuation for children puts burden on them as well as the whole nation, financially as well as otherwise.

Poverty

One-third of India's population lives below the poverty line and India is home to one-third of the world's poor people.

Though the middle class has gained from recent positive economic developments, India suffers from substantial poverty. According to the new World Bank's estimates on poverty based on 2005 data, India has 456 million people, 41.6% of its population, living below the new international poverty line of \$1.25 (PPP) per day.

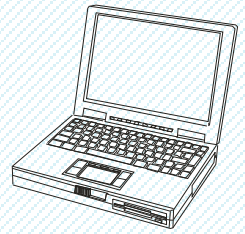
The World Bank further estimates that 33% of the global poor now reside in India. Moreover, India also has 828 million people, or 75.6% of the population living below \$2 a day, compared to 72.2% for Sub-Saharan Africa.

Wealth distribution in India is fairly uneven, with the top 10% of income groups earning 33% of the income. Despite significant economic progress, 1/4 of the nation's population earns less than the government-specified poverty threshold of \$0.40/day. Official figures estimate that 27.5% of Indians lived below the national poverty line in 2004-2005.

A 2007 report by the state-run National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector (NCEUS) found that 25% of Indians, or 236 million people, lived on less than 20 rupees per day with most working in "informal labour sector with no job or social security, living in abject poverty.

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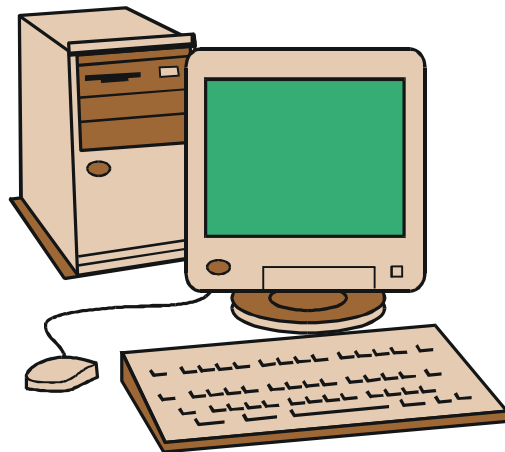
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