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- कुपोषण में दक्षिण एशिया अट्बल

“We are now running out of time with respect to that approach. And so I discussed with President Medvedev the fact that we have to continue to maintain urgency.”

--
Mr. Obama.



“Government was doing whatever it could to implement reforms, pledging that the Afghan forces would be able to take control of security in the next five years.”

--
Mr. Karazi



“The threat to our environment is not a new concern but it is now a global challenge which will continue to affect the security and stability of millions for years to come.”

--
Elizabeth II



Current Affairs | ICC Awards | Sport News | Hot Topics

Volume : 09
December - 2009

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Taste the TEST, sour or sweet...

Hello!

As many of you are going to fill the application form for IAS examination in coming Days; You have literally invited the war. Now you are going to 'Taste' the most complicated and unpredictable test. This first step is a resemblance of your courage. With courage you will dare to take risks, have the strength to be compassionate, and the wisdom to be humble. Courage is the foundation of integrity.

No doubt courage is very important, but only courage can't win you the battle. Now you must weave a good strategy and follow it with hard work and honesty. To make meaning of your strategy you need support of Gurus and Institutions. You should choose them very carefully. On this critical juncture, we will provide all support online and at the same time make you competent enough to choose other ammunition tactfully.

With coming issues we are going to target 2010 Exams and put our promise into reality. We will do our best to provide you study materials, encouragements and inspirations; But ultimately you have to face the actual battle and You should also give your level best and make yourself free from the fear of result.

In this issue we are providing some special articles and hot topics as APEC Summit: Dropped a Target to Cut Greenhouse Emissions in Half, Presidential Election in Afghanistan: Winner with Blot, Hindi articles on "Arthik Mandi" & "Kuposhan Mein Dakshin Asia Avval" (UNICEF Report) and Hot Topic Commonwealth Summit: Multi Billion Dollar Fund to Help Developing Nations. we are aware about our responsibilities to provide you day-to-day facts, so there are CURRENT AFFAIRS, SPORTS & AWARDS are included under regular column.

With this I conclude. Best wishes and hopeful future meet in next issue.

Ram Kumar Pandey
And
UPSCPORTAL Team.

APEC Summit

Dropped a Target to Cut Greenhouse Emissions in Half

BY: Dr. Sachchidanand



Asia-Pacific leaders ended their summit in Singapore on 14-15 November 2009 with a final statement that pledged a conclusion of the Doha Round of global trade talks in 2010, but removed targets for carbon emissions cuts. The 21-member Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit dropped a target to cut greenhouse gas emissions in half by 2050, despite declaring climate change one of the biggest global challenges.

The APEC leaders also rejected all forms of protectionism and said they would commit to concluding the Doha Round of trade talks next year. The talks have been deadlocked over disagreements between developing and developed nations on cutting farm subsidies and tariffs. The declaration also said the 21 member economies will maintain stimulus policies until a durable global economic recovery has clearly taken hold.

Lower Expectations for Climate Change Agreement

Leaders of Pacific Rim economies say a legally binding climate change agreement is not likely in Copenhagen, but that they should still work for a political deal. Climate change is one of the topics being discussed during the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in Singapore.

APEC leaders, including U.S. President Barack Obama, lowered expectations for a deal on climate change before December meetings in Copenhagen.

Meeting in Singapore, Pacific Rim leaders agreed there is not enough time for a legally binding agreement on reducing global emissions of greenhouse

gases.

The Pacific Rim leaders agreed that a political framework that they can build on later is more realistic.

// We are now running out of time with respect to that approach. And so I discussed with President Medvedev the fact that we have to continue to maintain urgency, //

--
Mr. Obama.



The meeting on climate change was attended by leaders from 19 of APEC's 21 economies, as well as the Danish prime minister. APEC leaders meeting this weekend in Singapore had planned to endorse a goal of cutting their greenhouse gas emissions to half of 1990 levels by 2050.

Lomborg says the focus of negotiations on capping and paying for emission reductions is too costly. He said a smarter and cheaper approach to tackling climate change would be to invest everything in clean energy technology. APEC leaders have expressed concerns about signs of rising protectionism, particularly in the United States, and the need for freer trade, investment, and a new path for global growth.

President Obama gave a speech to APEC leaders emphasizing U.S. ties to the Asia Pacific, urging balanced and sustainable growth and resisting protectionism.

Obama Meets Medvedev

U.S. President Barack Obama meets with Russian President Dmitri Medvedev on the sidelines of the APEC forum. The two plan to discuss Iran's nuclear program and Afghanistan.

Mr. Obama also announced that his native U.S. state, Hawaii, will host the APEC summit in 2011. President Obama's schedule Sunday includes meeting with the leaders of the Association of South-east Asian Nations, with Burma among the key topics.

US Accused of Protectionism

APEC leaders called for more cooperation on global economic recovery efforts and took aim at signs of U.S. trade protectionism. Chinese President Hu Jintao said promoting openness in international trade and curbing protectionism would help revive the world economy.

Mexican President Felipe Calderon singled out Washington for "going in the opposite sense of free trade." Russian President Medvedev made the same point.

In a speech in Tokyo, President Obama called on Asian countries to break their dependence on exports to the United States, and to pursue "balanced" and sustainable economic growth.

Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation leaders have called for more cooperation on global economic recovery efforts, and have warned against withdrawing economic stimulus measures too early.

Russian President Dmitri Medvedev on 14 November 2009 called for broad international cooperation to overcome the global crisis and achieve sustainable growth.

Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd proposed creating an Asia-Pacific Community, styled after the European Union.

Chinese President Hu Jintao said promoting openness in international trade and curbing protectionism would help revive the world economy.

Mexican President Felipe Calderon singled out Washington for "going in the opposite sense of free trade." Russian President Dmitri Medvedev made the same point.

Obama Discusses Climate Change

He began with an unexpected meeting on climate change called by the leaders of Mexico and Australia.

The prime minister of Denmark urged the group to back a different approach to save the upcoming international climate conference in Copenhagen.

With negotiations on a new global climate agreement in trouble, there was consensus behind an alternative: adopt a political framework in Copenhagen and fill in the details later.

Nuclear Issues

There was also an effort to push forward talks on arms control, with President Obama and Russian President Dmitri Medvedev meeting to talk about a successor to the soon-to-expire 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty.

Mr. Obama said he still believes they can get an agreement by the end of the year. The president said, "I am confident if we work hard, and with a sense of urgency about it that we should be able to get that done and I very much feel as if both sides are trying to work through some difficult technical issues but are doing so in good faith."

They also talked about Iran's nuclear program. President Obama urged Iran once again agree to a deal to ship its uranium out of the country for processing. "We are now running out of time with respect to that approach. And so I discussed with

President Medvedev the fact that we have to continue to maintain urgency," said Mr. Obama. President Medvedev said he still hopes to convince Iran to accept the nuclear deal. The Russian leader said, "We are prepared to work further and I hope that our joint work will yield positive results."

Obama Discusses Burma

A short time later, Mr. Obama became the first American president to meet with all 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asia nations - including Burma.

He called for political reform in Burma and the release of democracy advocate Aug San Suu Kyi, saying, "I reaffirmed the policy I put forward in Tokyo with regard to Burma."

Mr. Obama's last meeting before leaving Singapore was with Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. President Obama spent a good bit of his childhood in Indonesia, and has referred to himself as America's first Pacific president.

In 2011, he will host the annual meeting of Pacific Rim leaders. And the president announced in Singapore that he plans to host the gathering in his native state, Hawaii.

Leaders' Declaration

"The post-crisis landscape will be different," said APEC Leaders. "We need a new growth paradigm. We need a fresh model of economic integration." In a statement, Leaders of 21 economies throughout the Asia-Pacific endorse the goals of the G20 Framework for Strong, Sustainable and Balanced Growth and declare their intent to "ensure a durable recovery that will create jobs and benefit our people."

Balanced growth

"Strong and sustained economic growth will require structural reforms to gradually unwind glo-

bal imbalances and raise the potential output of our economies." "We will ensure that our fiscal monetary, trade and structural policies are consistent with a more sustainable and balanced trajectory of growth, both within and across our economies."

"We will develop our financial markets to better serve the real economy."

Inclusive growth

"To achieve inclusive growth, we must broaden access to economic opportunities and build the resilience of the most vulnerable against economic shocks."

"We will help small and medium enterprises and women entrepreneurs gain better access to global markets and finance."

"We will facilitate worker retraining, skills upgrading, and domestic labour mobility."

"We will design social safety nets that provide short-term support but avoid long-term dependency."

Sustainable growth

"Future growth must be compatible with global efforts to mitigate climate change. At the same time, efforts to address climate change must be consistent with keeping trade and investment free and open."

"We will rationalise and phase out over the medium-term fossil fuel subsidies while providing those in need with essential energy services."

Connected Asia-Pacific

"We launched a pathfinder initiative led by Australia, Canada, Korea, New Zealand, Singapore and the United States to practice self-certification of origin so that businesses can better take advantage of free trade agreements in the region."

"We will strive to achieve by 2015 a collective 25 percent reduction in the cost, time, and number of procedures that our businesses face when starting a business, getting credit, enforcing contracts, dealing with permits, and trading across borders."

What is Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation

Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, or APEC, is the premier forum for facilitating economic growth, cooperation, trade and investment in the Asia-Pacific region .

APEC is the only inter governmental grouping in the world operating on the basis of non-binding commitments, open dialogue and equal respect for the views of all participants. Unlike the WTO or other multilateral trade bodies, APEC has no treaty obligations required of its participants. Decisions made within APEC are reached by consensus and commitments are undertaken on a voluntary basis.

APEC has 21 members - referred to as "Member Economies" - which account for approximately 40.5% of the world's population, approximately 54.2% of world GDP and about 43.7% of world trade.

APEC's 21 Member Economies are Australia; Brunei Darussalam; Canada; Chile; People's Republic of China; Hong Kong, China; Indonesia; Japan; Republic of Korea; Malaysia; Mexico; New Zealand; Papua New Guinea; Peru; The Republic of the Philippines; The Russian Federation; Singapore; Chinese Taipei; Thailand; United States of America; Viet Nam.

Purpose and Goals

APEC was established in 1989 to further enhance economic growth and prosperity for the region and to strengthen the Asia-Pacific community. Since its inception, APEC has worked to reduce tariffs and other trade barriers across the Asia-Pacific region, creating efficient domestic economies and

dramatically increasing exports. Key to achieving APEC's vision are what are referred to as the 'Bogor Goals' of free and open trade and investment in the Asia-Pacific by 2010 for industrialised economies and 2020 for developing economies. These goals were adopted by Leaders at their 1994 meeting in Bogor, Indonesia.

Free and open trade and investment helps economies to grow, creates jobs and provides greater opportunities for international trade and investment. In contrast, protectionism keeps prices high and fosters inefficiencies in certain industries. Free and open trade helps to lower the costs of production and thus reduces the prices of goods and services - a direct benefit to all.

APEC also works to create an environment for the safe and efficient movement of goods, services and people across borders in the region through policy alignment and economic and technical cooperation.

APEC Secretariat

The APEC Secretariat is based in Singapore and operates as the core support mechanism for the APEC process. It provides coordination, technical and advisory support as well as information management, communications and public outreach services.

The APEC Secretariat performs a central project management role, assisting APEC Member Economies and APEC fora with overseeing more than 250 APEC-funded projects. APEC's annual budget is also administered by the APEC Secretariat.

Staffing

The APEC Secretariat is headed by an Executive Director, currently, Ambassador Michael Tay from Singapore. 2009 marks the last year when the position will be held on an annually rotating basis by an officer of Ambassadorial rank from the host economy. From 2010 the appointment will be made on a fixed-term basis (3 years) and is open to professional candidates from any of APEC's 21 member economies.

The APEC Secretariat is staffed by a small team of program directors, seconded from APEC Member Economies. In addition, professional staff fulfill specialist and support functions at the APEC Secretariat.

ISO Certification

In 2002, the APEC Secretariat obtained ISO 9001 Quality Management Certification. This recognises the continuous efforts made by the APEC Secretariat to provide improved administrative and support activities. The APEC Secretariat is the first multilateral trade-related secretariat to attain ISO certification.

Scope of Work

Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) works in three broad areas to meet the Bogor Goals of free and open trade and investment in the Asia-Pacific by 2010 for developed economies and 2020 for developing economies.

Known as APEC's 'Three Pillars', APEC focuses on three key areas:

- » Trade and Investment Liberalisation
- » Business Facilitation
- » Economic and Technical Cooperation

The outcomes of these three areas enable APEC Member Economies to strengthen their economies by pooling resources within the region and achieving efficiencies. Tangible benefits are also delivered to consumers in the APEC region through increased training and employment opportunities, greater choices in the marketplace, cheaper goods and services and improved access to international markets.

Trade and Investment Liberalisation

Trade and Investment Liberalisation reduces and eventually eliminates tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade and investment. Protectionism is expensive because it raises prices for goods and services.

Thus, Trade and Investment Liberation focuses on opening markets to increase trade and investment among economies, resulting in economic growth for APEC Member Economies and increased standards of living for all. This goal is also now furthered by APEC's Regional Economic Integration agenda, which includes work on model measures for bilateral and regional trade agreements and an examination of the prospects for a Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific.

Business Facilitation

Business Facilitation focuses on reducing the costs of business transactions, improving access to trade information and aligning policy and business strategies to facilitate growth, and free and open trade. Essentially, Business Facilitation helps importers and exporters in Asia Pacific meet and conduct business more efficiently, thus reducing costs of production and leading to increased trade, cheaper goods and services and more employment opportunities due to an expanded economy. APEC's Structural Reform agenda addresses this area: it focuses on reforming domestic policies and institutions that adversely affect the operation of markets, and the capacity of businesses to access markets and to operate efficiently.

Economic and Technical Cooperation (ECOTECH)

ECOTECH is dedicated to providing training and cooperation to build capacities in all APEC Member Economies to take advantage of global trade. This area builds capacity at the institutional and personal level to assist APEC Member Economies and its people gain the necessary skills to meet their economic potential.

Achievements and Benefits

The Asia-Pacific region has consistently been the most economically dynamic region in the world. Since APEC's inception in 1989, APEC's total trade has grown 395%, significantly outpacing the rest of the world. In the same period, GDP (in pur-

chasing power parity terms) in the APEC region has tripled, while GDP in the rest of the world has less than doubled.

APEC's work under its three main pillars of activity, Trade and Investment Liberalisation, Business Facilitation and Economic and Technical Cooperation, has helped drive this economic growth and improve employment opportunities and standards of living for the citizens of the region.

Trade and Investment Liberalisation

APEC is the premier forum for trade and investment liberalisation in the Asia-Pacific and has set targets dates for "free and open trade": no later than the year 2010 for industrialised economies, and 2020 for developing economies (the Bogor Goals). When APEC was established in 1989 average trade barriers in the region stood at 16.9%; by 2004 barriers had been reduced by approximately 70% to 5.5%.³

As a consequence, intra-APEC merchandise trade (exports and imports) has grown from US\$1.7 trillion in 1989 to US\$8.44 trillion in 2007 - an average increase of 8.5% per year; and merchandise trade within the region accounted for 67% of APEC's total merchandise trade in 2007.⁴

Similarly, trade with the rest of the world has increased from US\$3 trillion in 1989 to US\$15 trillion in 2007, an average increase of 8.3% per year. Trade in the rest of the world has increased at 7.6% over the same period.

Over 30 bilateral free trade agreements (FTAs) have been concluded between APEC Member Economies.

APEC is also pursuing trade and investment liberalisation through its Regional Economic Integration agenda. Progress to date includes:

Investigating the prospects of and options for a Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific.
The development of 15 model measures for RTAs/

FTAs that serve as a reference for APEC members to achieve comprehensive and high-quality agreements.

APEC has also acted as a catalyst in the advancement of World Trade Organisation multilateral trade negotiations over the past 20 years.

Business Facilitation

As a result of the APEC Trade Facilitation Action Plan (TFAP I) the cost of business transactions across the region was reduced by 5% between 2002 and 2006.

A second trade facilitation action plan (TFAP II), aims to reduce transaction costs by a further 5% between 2007 and 2010.

APEC initiatives that help facilitate trade include: The introduction of electronic/paperless systems by all member economies, covering the payment of duties, and customs and trade-related document processing.

The Single Window Strategic Plan, adopted in 2007, provides a framework for the development of Single Window systems which will allow importers and exporters to submit information to government once, instead of to multiple government agencies, through a single entry point.

Providing business with a concise one-stop repository of customs and trade facilitation related information for all APEC economies through the APEC Customs and Trade Facilitation Handbook The APEC Tariff Database provides users with easy access to APEC member economies' tariff schedules, concessions, prohibitions and other information.

In 2008, a groundbreaking Investment Facilitation Action Plan was endorsed; it aims to improve the investment environment in Member Economies. The APEC Privacy Framework provides guidance and direction to both APEC Member Economies and businesses on implementing information privacy protection policies and procedures. By facili-

tating information flows it will facilitate trade and e-commerce.

The APEC Business Travel Card (ABTC) provides substantial time and cost savings to business people and facilitates their travel in the region, by allowing visa free travel and express lane transit at airports in participating economies.

APEC is also removing behind-the-border barriers to trade through its Structural Reform agenda, which focuses on reforming domestic policies and institutions that adversely affect the operation of markets, and the capacity of businesses to access markets and to operate efficiently.

Economic and Technical Cooperation

APEC's Economic and Technical Cooperation (ECOTECH) activities are designed to build capacity and skills in APEC Member Economies at both the individual and institutional level, to enable them to participate more fully in the regional economy and the liberalisation process.

Since APEC first began to undertake capacity building work in 1993, more than 1200 projects have been initiated; and in 2008, APEC was implementing a total of 212 capacity building projects with a total value of US\$13.5m.

A particular focus has been reducing the digital divide between developed and developing economies:

In 2000, APEC set a goal of tripling internet usage in the region and that goal has now been achieved, as recognised by the 2008 APEC Ministerial Meeting on the Telecommunications and Information Industry. APEC's new goal is to achieve universal access to broadband by 2015.

A network of 41 APEC Digital Opportunity Centers (ADOC) now operate in seven Member Economies. ADOC's objective is to transform the digital divide into digital opportunities and the centres act as local information and communication technology (ICT) resource centres, providing citizens

and businesses of the region with access to ICT technologies, education and training.

APEC is also developing a Digital Prosperity Checklist that outlines specific steps economies can take to enable them to utilise ICT as catalysts for growth and development.

Other Achievements

APEC has also been able to evolve its agenda to include pressing regional priorities. Examples include: counter-terrorism (The Shanghai Statement in 2001, and the Counter-Terrorism Task Force); human security (Health Working Group); emergency preparedness (Task Force for Emergency Preparedness); climate change, energy security and clean development (The Sydney Declaration in 2007); and the global financial crisis (The Lima Statement in 2008).

History

The idea of APEC was firstly publicly broached by former Prime Minister of Australia, Mr Bob Hawke, during a speech in Seoul, Korea in January 1989. Later that year, 12 Asia-Pacific economies met in Canberra, Australia to establish APEC. The founding members were: Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and the United States.

China, Hong Kong, China and Chinese Taipei joined in 1991. Mexico and Papua New Guinea followed in 1993. Chile acceded in 1994. And in 1998, Peru, Russia and Viet Nam joined, taking the full membership to 21.

Between 1989 and 1992, APEC met as an informal senior official and Ministerial level dialogue. In 1993, former United States President, Mr Bill Clinton, established the practice of an annual APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting.

A moratorium on new membership stands until the end of 2010, at which point APEC member economies will consider whether or not to lift the moratorium.

Key APEC Milestones

2008 - Lima, Peru : APEC focused on the social dimensions of trade and on reducing the gap between developing and developed members, in accordance with the 2008 theme, "A New Commitment to Asia-Pacific Development". Leaders also addressed the global financial crisis in the Lima APEC Leaders' Statement on the Global Economy. They committed to take all necessary economic and financial measures to restore stability and growth, to reject protectionism and to intensify efforts to advance WTO Doha Development Agenda negotiations.

2007 - Sydney, Australia: For the first time, APEC Member Economies issue a Declaration on Climate Change, Energy Security and Clean Development outlining future action in support of a new international climate change arrangement and announcing a forward program of practical, cooperative actions and initiatives. Leaders also adopted a major report on closer Regional Economic Integration, including structural reform initiatives, and welcomed the new APEC Trade Facilitation Action Plan which will reduce trade transaction costs by a further five per cent by 2010.

2006 - Ha Noi, Viet Nam : APEC Economic Leaders endorsed the Ha Noi Action Plan which identifies specific actions and milestones to implement the Bogor Goals and support capacity-building measures to help APEC economies. They also issued a statement on the WTO Doha Development Agenda calling for ambitious and balanced outcomes. To prioritize its agenda, APEC takes a strategic approach to reform working groups and strengthen the Secretariat.

2005 - Busan, Korea : APEC adopts the Busan Roadmap, completes the Mid-Term Stocktake which has found that APEC is well on its way to meeting the Bogor Goals, and the APEC Privacy Framework. Leaders issue a stand-alone statement in support of a successful conclusion to the WTO's 6th Ministerial Meeting in Hong Kong, China and agree to confront pandemic health threats and continue to fight against terrorism which could cause deep economic insecurity for the region.

2004 - Santiago, Chile : APEC issues a strong statement of support for progress in the WTO Doha Development Agenda and sets a target date for achieving a breakthrough in negotiations: December 2005, the convening of the Sixth WTO Ministerial Conference. APEC adopts Best Practices for RTAs and FTAs, the Santiago Initiative for Expanded Trade and a Data Privacy Framework. APEC reiterates its "unmistakable resolve" to confront the threat of terrorism, and takes further action in this regard by identifying key elements of effective export control systems; establishing guidelines on the control of man-portable air defense systems (MANPADS), and continuing to implement the STAR initiative. APEC makes a political commitment to fight corruption and ensure transparency, and endorses a specific Course of Action towards this end.

2003 - Bangkok, Thailand : APEC agrees to re-energize the WTO Doha Development Agenda negotiations and stresses the complementary aims of bilateral and regional trade agreements, the Bogor Goals and the multilateral trading system under the WTO. APEC dedicates itself not only to promoting the prosperity of member economies, but also to improving the security of the peoples of the Asia-Pacific region. APEC pledges to take specific actions to dismantle terrorist groups, eliminate the danger of weapons of mass destruction and confront other security threats. Members sign up to the APEC Action Plan on SARS and the Health Security Initiative to further protect personal security. APEC also strengthens its efforts to build knowledge-based economies, promote sound and efficient financial systems and accelerate regional structural reform.

2002 - Los Cabos, Mexico : APEC adopts a Trade Facilitation Action Plan, Policies on Trade and the Digital Economy and Transparency Standards. APEC's second Counter-Terrorism Statement is delivered, along with the adoption of the Secure Trade in the APEC Region (STAR) Initiative.

2001 - Shanghai, People's Republic of China : APEC adopts the Shanghai Accord, which focuses on Broadening the APEC Vision, Clarifying the Roadmap to Bogor and Strengthening the Implementation Mechanism. The e-APEC Strategy is

adopted, which sets out an agenda to strengthen market structures and institutions, facilitate infrastructure investment and technology for on-line transactions and promote entrepreneurship and human capacity building. APEC's first Counter-Terrorism Statement is issued.

2000 - Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam: APEC establishes an electronic Individual Action Plan (e-IAP) system, providing IAPs online and commits to the Action Plan for the New Economy, which, amongst other objectives, aims to triple Internet access throughout APEC region by 2005.

1999 - Auckland, New Zealand : APEC commits to paperless trading by 2005 in developed economies and 2010 in developing economies. APEC Business Travel Card scheme is approved and a Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Electrical Equipment and a Framework for the Integration of Women in APEC is endorsed.

1998 - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia : APEC agrees on the first nine sectors for EVSL and seeks an EVSL agreement with non-APEC members at the World Trade Organization.

1997 - Vancouver, Canada : APEC endorses a proposal for Early Voluntary Sectoral Liberalization (EVSL) in 15 sectors and decides that Individual Action Plans should be updated annually.

1996 - Manila, The Philippines : The Manila Action Plan for APEC (MAPA) is adopted, outlining the trade and investment liberalisation and facilitation measures to reach the Bogor Goals and the first Collective and Individual Action Plans are compiled, outlining how economies will achieve the free trade goals.

1995 - Osaka, Japan : APEC adopts the Osaka Action Agenda (OAA) which provides a framework for meeting the Bogor Goals through trade and investment liberalisation, business facilitation and sectoral activities, underpinned by policy dialogues, economic and technical cooperation.

1994 - Bogor, Indonesia : APEC sets the Bogor Goals of, "free and open trade and investment in the Asia-Pacific by 2010 for developed economies and 2020 for developing economies."

1993 - Blake Island, United States : APEC Economic Leaders meet for the first time and outline APEC's vision, "stability, security and prosperity for our peoples."

1989 - Canberra, Australia : APEC begins as an informal Ministerial-level dialogue group with 12 members.



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Presidential Election in Afghanistan

Winner with Blot

BY: Sant Prasad Gupta

کمیسیون مستقل انتخابات
دولت جمهوری اسلامی افغانستان



د ټاکنو خپلواک کمیسیون
د افغانستان اسلامی جمهوریت

// Government was doing whatever it could to implement reforms, pledging that the Afghan forces would be able to take control of security in the next five years. //

--

Mr. Karazi



Hamid Karzai was sworn in as Afghanistan's president for a second term on November 19, 2009, nearly three months after winning a controversial election. He was declared the winner of

the August 20 presidential election after his main rival Abdullah Abdullah quit a run-off and investigators threw out a third of Karzai's original votes for fraud. US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari were among 300 foreign dignitaries attending the ceremony. Speaking during his inauguration ceremony, Karzai vowed to prosecute corrupt government officials. He said his government was doing whatever it could to implement reforms, pledging that the Afghan forces would be able to take control of security in the next five years. The President added that he firmly believed the problem of international terrorism in his country would be overcome.

Hamid Karzai was installed by the US and its Afghan allies in 2001. He won a full five-year term

in the country's first democratic presidential election in 2004.

While Karzai had been expected to win anyway, the extent of the fraud in his favor severely damaged his credibility at home and among Western countries.

Abdullah withdrawal

On November 1, 2009, Abdullah Abdullah announced that he was withdrawing from the run-off vote, saying "I will not participate in the November 7 election," because his demands for changes in the electoral commission had not been met, and a "transparent election is not possible." Hamid Karzai had rejected Abdullah's demand that the head of the IEC resign.

Abdullah also said the Afghan people should not accept results of an election from the current election commission, and stated that Karzai's government had not been legitimate since its mandate expired in May 2009. Speculation immediately followed that the run-off election would be cancelled,

Run-off cancelled and winner declared

The next day, on November 2, officials from the Independent Election Commission announced the cancellation of the November 7 run-off and declared Hamid Karzai the winner by default.

Abdullah said the appointment had no legal basis and Afghans deserved a better government. He stated that A government that is appointed by an

illegitimate commission, a commission that has tainted its own legitimacy, cannot bring the rule of law to the country, it cannot fight the corruption.

U.S. interference

The United States is widely seen to have an enormous stake riding on the outcome of the election in Afghanistan. While U.S. officials have taken great pains to repeatedly assert neutrality, there are many perceptions and allegations of U.S. interference and manipulation in Afghanistan. Many in Afghanistan perceive the U.S. to be favouring Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah over Hamid Karzai.

Four prominent Afghan politicians, including Ghani and Abdullah, were in attendance at U.S. President Obama's inauguration in January. Karzai, however, was not. Media reports began appearing that suggested that the U.S. was eager for a change at the top in Afghanistan. Hamid Karzai was also angered when the U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan, Karl W. Eikenberry, appeared beside Ghani and Abdullah at news conferences in June, ahead of the election, though Eikenberry stressed impartiality in his remarks. After Karzai did not show up at the first televised debate – against Abdullah and Ghani the U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan published an op-ed in The Washington Post calling for "serious debate among the candidates" in Afghanistan.

All these developments were viewed by many in Afghanistan as a message about which candidates the U.S. now preferred to have in power in Afghanistan.

As the first installments of vote counting results were being released, about a week after election day, Ramazan Bashardost, who ran third in exit polls, contended that the U.S. was playing a role in manipulating the outcome, in order to use a contested situation for its plans to broker a deal among the leading candidates. Others have made the same contention.

A Time article that came out just after the election did suggest that a contested election outcome could suit the U.S. purpose.

Some support for Bashardost's allegation may be seen in the U.S.-funded pre-election polls, one conducted by what Gary Langer, director of polling at ABC News, described as "an outfit called Glevum Associates, which appears from its website to be a military contractor engaged in producing psychological operations data as part of a U.S. Army counterinsurgency program, the Human Terrain System," and the other by the International Republican Institute, a "pro-democracy group affiliated with the Republican Party and financed by the American government."

In their May 3–16, 2009 poll, the International Republican Institute found that Bashardost placed higher than Abdullah Abdullah and Ashraf Ghani in favorability amongst Afghans, and that Bashardost and Ghani both came in at the very same level of support, 3%, when Afghans were asked who they would vote for president in an open-ended question.

New chief executive position

U.S. officials have also made clear, even before the election, that – regardless of who won the Afghan election – Washington planned to use the leverage of the military force and financial resources at its command to extensively reorganize the Afghan government according to U.S. plans. The U.S. would push for a new non-elected "Chief Executive" position to be inserted under the President, with the appointee taking over all the day-to-day operations of the country.

Ashraf Ghani has widely been characterized as the U.S. favourite for appointment to that position. (Another mention was Zalmay Khalilzad.) Ghani has had discussions with U.S. officials, including both the U.S. special envoy to Afghanistan, Richard Holbrooke, and the U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan, Karl Eikenberry, and has denied turning down the job offer. He told reporters a few days before the election: "I've been approached repeatedly; the offer is on the table. I have not ac-

cepted it." Other plans by the U.S. Defense and State departments also call for the installation of American "mentors" and liaisons inside Afghan government ministries in Kabul, a policy that was heavily used in the early years of the U.S. military occupation of Iraq.

The powerful, non-elected "chief executive" position envisaged for insertion into the Afghan government was characterized by a senior White House official as "a prime minister, except not prime minister because he wouldn't be responsible to a parliamentary system."

The day after the election, a tense meeting took place between the U.S. special envoy to Afghanistan, Richard Holbrooke, and Afghan president Hamid Karzai, with sources describing the meeting as "a dramatic bust up" and "explosive". According to the *The Times*, Holbrooke was already raising the possibility of a run-off, causing Karzai to accuse the U.S. special envoy of trying to force a second round "against the interests of Afghanistan".

The U.S. special envoy also met with Karzai's rival, Abdullah Abdullah, after the election. The discussion between Holbrooke and Karzai was said to have been noticeably briefer than Holbrooke's meeting with Abdullah.

On August 29, it was announced that the envoys from the United States, Britain, France, and Germany would meet in Paris to discuss the Afghan elections. According to *The Times*, a French official said that Holbrooke wanted a run-off in order to chasten Karzai and show him his power was limited.

On September 3, 2009, envoys from the United States, Britain, France, Germany, and other Western countries met in Paris to discuss the Afghan elections and how to rescue their costly efforts. The Paris meeting was seen as an effort to garner support for the U.S. response to the election and pressure Afghan President Hamid Karzai. The Western envoys to Afghanistan said to expect a run-off in the Afghan election, suggesting that one could occur if enough votes are invalidated.

The U.S., European, and NATO leaders also declared in their Paris meeting that their Western military troops were staying in Afghanistan.

In an interview with *Le Figaro* released on September 7, 2009, Hamid Karzai accused the United States of trying to undermine him in order to make him more malleable.

On September 15, 2009, the top U.S. diplomat to the United Nations mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), Peter Galbraith, was reportedly ordered out of the country by the head of the mission, U.N. Special Representative to Afghanistan Kai Eide, following a heated disagreement over the American diplomat's demands for a wholesale recount that would virtually ensure a run-off. According to diplomatic sources, Galbraith – a close friend of the U.S. special envoy Richard Holbrooke – wanted the Independent Election Commission (IEC) to annul results from 1,000 of the nationwide total of about 6,500 polling centres and to recount results from another 5,000. Eide, on the other hand had been seeking only a recount of some 1,000 polling centres. UN officials suggested that Mr. Galbraith's position was representative of the U.S. stance, while Mr. Eide's echoed those of the European missions in Kabul.

According to *The Times*, the IEC were preparing on September 8 to announce results for the last 15% of ballots, mostly from the controversial areas of the south and Badghis province in the north that were expected to return big majorities for Karzai, when Galbraith stepped in and forced them not to announce those results.

At a meeting with IEC officials on September 13, Galbraith "laid into the commissioners, in front of the donors and observers" and demanded to know why they had not yet started printing ballot papers in preparation for a run-off.

In October 2009, numerous news articles, such as one by the *New York Times* and another by the *Associate Press*, described the extraordinary American efforts, in concert with allies, over multiple days to pressure Hamid Karzai into acceding to run-off vote. On October 20, caving in to the

relentless U.S. arm-twisting, he reluctantly acquiesced.

Power-Sharing deal

On September 13, 2009, the Sunday Telegraph reported that American officials were making frantic efforts to force President Hamid Karzai into a power-sharing deal against his wishes, stating that "US officials have made little secret of their wish to see his wings clipped". In what one official in Kabul described as "turmoil" behind the scenes, Western diplomats were attempting to convert the election crisis into an opportunity for their purposes by forcing Karzai to share power in government with Dr. Abdullah Abdullah and "reformist ministers", and accept a diminished role for the presidency.

Intense Western diplomatic pressure was also being exerted on Abdullah Abdullah to cut a deal. According to the Telegraph, the fear is that if Karzai defies Washington and appoints his own choice of allies to key ministerial roles, he would be more "difficult for the West to influence".

On September 27, 2009, it was reported that the United States and other NATO countries with military forces in Afghanistan had indicated to Hamid Karzai's government that they expected he would remain in office for another five-year term. The U.S. Secretary of State and foreign ministers of the countries, meeting in New York on September 25, 2009, with U.N. Special Representative Kai Eide and Afghan Foreign Minister Rangin Spanta, reached "consensus" in Spanta's presence that Hamid Karzai would probably "continue to be president" of Afghanistan, whether by winning a run-off or as a result of having won more than 50% of the ballots in the disputed August 20 elections. The electoral fraud investigations by the Electoral Complaints Commission had not yet been completed.

On October 15, 2009, Zalmay Khalilzad, the former U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan under George W. Bush, arrived in Kabul from Washington D.C. A spokesperson for the U.S. Embassy in Kabul said Khalilzad was there as a "private citizen" and that

he was not representing the United States government. Earlier in the year Khalilzad was widely discussed as an American favorite to assume a powerful, unelected "CEO" position that U.S. officials hoped to create inside the Afghan government. A Western official said Khalilzad had come on the invitation of Mr. Karzai, but a spokesman for Karzai's campaign denied that.

On October 17, 2009, the U.N.-backed Electoral Complaints Commission, which had widely been expected to release its findings from the statistics-based audit, delayed the announcement again as U.S. and ally envoys pressured Karzai and Abdullah to state their acceptance of the findings before the ECC announcement and to work out a power-sharing deal. A senior American official made the point of stating that Karzai and Abdullah together won more than 70% of the votes in the first round, ensuring the credibility of a government in which they shared power. A Karzai spokesman indicated that both foreign and Afghan officials were proffering formulas for power sharing, but the Karzai had rejected them and would not discuss power sharing until after a winner is declared. Abdullah also reiterated that he would consider negotiating after the results were announced.

On October 18, 2009, the Telegraph reported that the ECC results were being "delayed as the West asked the men to reach an agreement that would avoid another round of voting." In veiled criticism of Hamid Karzai, White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel made clear that the U.S. would not send more troops to Afghanistan until there is a 'true partner' to work with in Kabul. An expert familiar with the U.S. administration's thinking suggested there was no longer any stomach for an election run-off after the "organisational headaches and risks to American troops" brought by the August 20 ballot, and stated: "There is a clear preference for a deal."

French foreign minister Bernard Kouchner stated that Karzai and Abdullah were ready to "work together" to find a settlement. A Western diplomat in Kabul said: "The idea now is to reach an agreement in which Karzai's victory at the first round is accepted ..."

Following the flurry of last-minute phone calls, visits, and statements that U.S. and other Western officials made to Karzai, on October 19, 2009, the New York Times reported an unnamed Western official saying: "In the last 72 hours, I think even Karzai got the message."

Demonstrations supporting Karzai took place in Kandahar, in the south of Afghanistan and in Ghazni province in the center of the country. In the district of Spin Boldak, around 3,000 demonstrators gathered in a market, shouting: "We don't want foreigners to interfere in our election."

Ali Shah Khan, a tribal leader from the area, said the protesters believed that foreigners were deliberately delaying the election results, and stated: "The foreign countries want a weak leader for Afghanistan. After that they can do whatever they want."

On October 19, 2009, the ECC communicated its fraud investigation result to the IEC, with its unofficially released findings stripping approximately a million votes from Karzai – and bringing his vote share slightly below the critical 50% threshold required to win without a run-off. The continued concerns that Karzai and the IEC, whose members he appointed, might reject the ECC's findings, resulted in continuation of the intense American and ally efforts to pressure Karzai into accepting a power-sharing deal or face a run-off vote.

According to the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, Senator John Kerry made an unplanned stop in Kabul to meet Karzai in the presidential palace "to continue his discussions and consultations". Meanwhile, according to White House spokesperson Robert Gibbs, the U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan, former U.S. army general Karl Eikenberry who commanded U.S. and ally forces in Afghanistan in 2005–2007, was also engaged in "delicate but extremely important" efforts to persuade Karzai to accept the U.N. panel's ruling.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, stating that she had spoken with Karzai a number of times in recent days, announced that Karzai would be making an announcement the next day,

saying "He is going to announce his intentions ... I am very hopeful that we will see a resolution in line with the constitutional order in the next several days. But I don't want to pre-empt in any way President Karzai's statement, which will set the stage for how we go forward in the next stage of this." A diplomatic source told The Times that Karzai would make a nationwide address flanked by U.S. Senator John Kerry and U.N. Special Representative to Afghanistan Kai Eide, claiming that Karzai was prepared to make concessions, such as agreeing to a run-off or forming a power-sharing coalition.

On the other hand, The Times reported that one of Karzai's senior cabinet ministers, Ismail Khan, who had met with Karzai, said he had been told that a formal challenge will be issued: "He said he will complain against the ECC decision, and demand an investigation into why they cut his votes."

According to one analysis on October 20, 2009, "Why a weakened President remains the least worst option" by Tom Coghlan in The Times, the U.S. did not want a run-off to take place, but, rather, was trying to push Karzai into entering a power-sharing deal with his rival, in order to keep him in office but with a "weakened mandate".

On October 20, 2009, after Karzai caved in to intense U.S. and ally pressure that a senior U.S. administration official described as a "full court press", and acceded to a run-off, diplomats said the efforts to get the two men to join forces would now intensify.

On October 21, 2009, U.S. officials, including a U.S. defence official, emphasized that a power-sharing agreement remained a strong possibility as a way of resolving the crisis without going through with the run-off that had just been announced the day before.

On October 25, 2009, Karzai and Abdullah, responding to questions in separate interviews on U.S. television, both rejected a power-sharing deal before the run-off vote. Karzai, responding to questions in a CNN interview, stated that such a deal would be "an insult to democracy". Abdullah, re-

sponding to questions on Fox News, ruled out a deal ahead of the run-off, and, in an another interview on CNN, stated he had "absolutely no interest" in joining the government if Karzai won, saying that he would not be "part of the same deteriorating situation". The New York Times wrote that such a coalition would provide the U.S. and NATO with political cover for the continued presence of their military forces "because they would be backing a government that had the support of a vast majority of Afghans."

Accusations of Foreign Interference from within the ECC

On October 12, 2009, one of the two Afghan members of the Western-dominated Electoral Complaints Commission resigned over "foreign interference".

Maulavi Mustafa Barakzai, appointed to the panel by the Afghan Supreme Court, stated that his resignation was due to the fact that the three UN-appointed Western officials on the panel – an American, a Canadian, and a Dutch – were "making all the decisions on their own".

Barakzai's resignation leaves the Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC) with only one Afghan member and three officials from countries with foreign military troops in Afghanistan. The ECC is led by one of the three foreign officials, chairman Grant Kippen.

Accusations of a United Nations cover-up

U.S. diplomat Peter Galbraith, fired from his UN post by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon on September 30, 2009, after accusing his former boss, UN special envoy Kai Eide, of helping cover up electoral fraud and being biased in favor of Hamid Karzai, further accused the United Nations of fabricating the reason for his dismissal and of helping to cover up massive electoral fraud committed by Afghan President Hamid Karzai.

In his statements on October 4, 2009, the American diplomat characterized the Afghan election as a "train wreck", and claimed: "As many as 30% of Karzai's votes were fraudulent, and lesser fraud was committed on behalf of other candidates."

On October 11, 2009, Kai Eide referred to Galbraith's allegations as "personal attacks" against his integrity, adding they have "affected the whole election process."

Frauds and Corruptions

Karzai retained incumbent second Vice President Karim Khalili, who is from the Hazara ethnic group but exchanged the first Vice President Ahmad Zia Massood for Mohammad Qasim Fahim, a Tajik former warlord blamed by human rights groups for mass civilian deaths during the Afghan Civil War.

According to human rights groups, at least 70 candidates with links to "illegal armed groups" were on the ballot list in the election.

While the electoral law disallowed candidates with links to "illegal armed groups", and the Karzai-appointed Independent Election Commission had barred 56 other candidates that it identified as being commanders or members of illegal militias, many of the bigger warlords, including current parliamentarians and provincial council members elected in 2004 and 2005, simply bypassed this by registering their militias as private security companies or by having the right political connections.

Both of Hamid Karzai's vice-presidential candidates and many of his key allies in the election are alleged to have committed widespread human rights violations and war crimes. Human Rights Watch has called for Vice President Karim Khalili and key ally, former army chief of staff General Abdul Rashid Dostum, to face trial before a special court for alleged war crimes. Khalili is alleged to have been responsible in the killing of thousands of innocent people.

Karzai's other vice-presidential candidate and former senior security advisor Mohammad Qasim Fahim, along with Karzai backer and former energy minister Ismail Khan, have also been listed by the human rights group as among the "worst perpetrators." Better known as Marshal Fahim, the vice-presidential candidate is accused of having been a former Communist secret police chief, murdering prisoners of war during the 1990s, running private armed militias, and involvement in kidnapping and other crimes after 2001. Fahim, a key U.S. ally in the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, had also previously served as Karzai's First Vice President and Minister of Defense, appointed to those positions in the interim and transitional governments installed after the 2001 invasion. Karzai is also being advised by Abdul Rasul Sayyaf who is said to have first invited Osama bin Laden to Afghanistan and has lobbied for an amnesty for warlords.

Most prominently covered has been the dramatic return, three days before the election, of General Abdul Rashid Dostum from exile in Turkey as part of a deal to help bring President Karzai to victory. After allegedly kidnapping and beating up a political rival, he was removed as Karzai's army chief of staff in late 2008 and disappeared into exile in Turkey. A key U.S. ally during the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, General Dostum is arguably the most notorious of Afghanistan's warlords, accused of massive human rights abuses, including the Dasht-i-Leili massacre of up to 2,000 Taliban who were suffocated in cargo containers in late 2001. He is also alleged to have crushed one of his own soldiers to death by tying him to the tracks of a tank.

Many Afghans hate these powerbrokers in the Afghan government, angered that they evaded accountability for their human rights abuses in the nineties and regained power and land through private militias funded by the millions of dollars they were paid by the CIA in the 2001 U.S. invasion.

Analysts have suggested that part of Karzai's strategy was to make deals with warlord allies to deliver large blocs of votes in return for key positions and influence in his new government or other significant promises.

In the immediate aftermath of the election, analysts and diplomats suggested that Karzai's alliances with strongmen like General Dostum had paid off, delivering him large numbers of votes in the north. Fahim delivered Tajik votes for Karzai, Khalili brought Hazara support, and Dostum delivered Uzbek votes.

Involvement of drug traffickers

Karzai's vice-presidential candidate, Marshal Muhammad Qasim Fahim, is also alleged to have long ties to drug trafficking, according to CIA reports from as early as 2002.

A crucial U.S. ally as the military commander of the Northern Alliance, he worked closely with the CIA in the 2001 U.S. invasion of Afghanistan and was rewarded with millions of dollars in cash. He was then appointed First Vice President and Minister of Defense in the interim and transitional governments installed after the invasion, handling more millions of dollars sent by the U.S. in military aid to raise and arm a new Afghan army. CIA intelligence reports in 2002 showed that Fahim had a history of narcotics trafficking before the U.S. invasion, and that he was still actively involved after being installed as defense minister, trafficking heroin via cargo plane flights north through Russia, with aides in the Afghan Defense Ministry also involved.

Hamid Karzai's election campaign manager for the south, and half-brother, Ahmed Wali Karzai – himself a candidate for re-election as the head of the Kandahar provincial council – has also long been alleged to have prominent drug trafficking ties, and thought to control a significant proportion of Afghan heroin production. Numerous reports link him to the Afghan drug trade, according to officials from the White House, the State Department and the United States Embassy in Afghanistan. Officials at the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence have alleged that the White House favored a hands-off approach with Ahmed Wali Karzai because of his political position. Only a week before the election he denied a report from Ger-

man news magazine Stern that said that British special forces had found several tons of opium on his land. He claimed that this was being done just before the election to hurt Hamid Karzai's chance of re-election.

According to current and former U.S. officials, Ahmed Wali Karzai was also being paid by CIA, and had been for the past eight years, the New York Times reported on October 27, 2009, stating: "The C.I.A.'s practices also suggest that the United States is not doing everything in its power to stamp out the lucrative Afghan drug trade." Also alleged to have orchestrated much of the fraud in favour of his brother in the presidential election, Ahmed Wali Karzai was himself re-elected to the Kandahar provincial council in the August 20 vote.

Campaign

The Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), said insecurity had "severely limited freedom of movement and constrained freedom of expression for candidates". Security concerns prevented presidential candidates from campaigning in most of the provinces, and candidates running for provincial councils were under constant threat wherever they went. Widespread cultural opposition to women in public life, further compounded by the lack of security, made campaigning by women candidates very difficult or impossible in many parts of the country, according to EU observers.

A UN election monitoring report said in early August that there was mounting evidence that the government was using state resources to favour Karzai. An election commission report in July noted that state-run Radio Television Afghanistan had dedicated 71% of prime-time news coverage to the president.

Issues at the forefront in the election campaign were the insurgency and lack of security, the conduct of foreign troops in Afghanistan and civilian casualties, corruption, and poverty. Topics concerning women's rights were virtually never featured in news coverage of the electoral campaign, and

women received almost no coverage in news reporting during the election, according to a European Union observation mission report.

Mr. Karzai announced that he would invite the Taliban to a Loya Jirga (a grand tribal council) to try and restart stalled peace talks. A May pre-election poll reported that over two-thirds, 68%, of Afghans thought their government should hold talks and reconcile with the Taliban, and 18% did not know or refused to answer. Only 14% did not support government talks and reconciliation with the Taliban. Karzai also said the country was growing in stature and would be able to prevent "foreigners" from jailing Afghans, referring to the foreign military forces operating in their country.

According to Ramazan Bashardost, the insurgency was motivated by the presence of foreign military forces in their country, by the presence of warlords and human rights abusers in the Western-backed regime, by the corruption in that government, and by poverty. Bashardost vowed that he would not allow foreign troops to stay in Afghanistan if elected.

Abdul Salam Rocketi, a former Mujahideen "freedom fighter" – whose name came from using rocket-propelled grenades to shoot down Soviet helicopters – and former Taliban commander, said he would announce an amnesty for all the insurgents if he won the election.

The Election Commission accredited 160,000 observers for the election. The Afghan Free and Fair Elections Foundation, the largest local monitoring group, said that it would have observers at 70 per cent of polling stations but couldn't observe the remainder because of security concerns.

Debates

Two candidate debates took place before the August 20 election. The first debate was held on July 23 and was broadcast on Tolo TV. It was supposed to feature Karzai, Abdullah, and Ghani, though Karzai later declined to take part, with his campaign blaming Tolo TV for being biased against

him. A second debate took place on August 16 on RTA TV (the state broadcaster) and Radio Free Afghanistan involving Karzai, Ghani, and Bashardost, with Abdullah not participating.

November 7 run-off election

On October 23, election authorities, with UN assistance, began delivering ballots for the November 7 run-off. UN planes flew ballots and voting kits to provincial capitals from where they would be delivered to thousands of polling stations by helicopter, truck, and donkey.

Because of insecurity and fraud concerns, 7,000 polling stations – nearly 30% of the 24,000 polling stations that had been set up for the August 20 vote – were cut for the run-off vote.

There were also concerns that voter turnout for the run-off could be even lower than the "anemic" turnout of 30–33% in the first round on August 20.

According to Gilles Dorronsoro, a visiting scholar at the Carnegie Endowment and an expert on Afghanistan and South Asia: "This time around, the weather will be worse, and the plain fact is, most Afghans don't like their options enough to vote."

The UN told the IEC that 200 of its 380 district election chiefs in the first round had ignored procedures or been complicit in fraud and must not be hired again. The run-off campaign period formally opened on October 24. Abdullah's campaign called for the dismissal of the three top officials of the Independent Election Commission (IEC), accusing them of having allowed widespread fraud in the first round of the election.

Both run-off candidates were reported to be frantically wooing Ramazan Bashardost, the presidential candidate that had placed third in the August 20 first round vote.

Bashardost, who had campaigned against the corruption and greed of Kabul politicians and against

the poverty of Afghans, said he had not decided who to support between the two – if anyone – saying the choice was between "the worst, and worse than the worst."

The Taliban reiterated their call for Afghans to boycott the election, denouncing it as a foreign-orchestrated sham.

On October 26, Abdullah called again for the sacking of Azizullah Lodin, the head of the Independent Election Commission, saying that he had "no credibility". Karzai rejected the call by Abdullah, stating "the changes would not be helpful to the elections and the country".

"According to Article 156 of the constitution of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Independent Election Commission (IEC) has the authority and responsibility to administrate and supervise all kind of elections; as well as refer to general public opinion of the people, in accordance the provision of the law. The IEC consists of nine members, including a chairperson and a deputy chairperson, appointed by Presidential Decree No.21, dated 19 Jan 2005.

The IEC Secretariat is the executive body of the Commission. Professional electoral staff of the Secretariat are implementing decisions, regulations and procedures adopted by IEC. As an interim measure during the transitional period, 2004 Presidential and 2005 Wolesi Jirga and Provincial Council elections were conducted and supervised by Joint Electoral Management Body (JEMB), which was a joint institution of Afghan government and United Nations. After completion of its responsibilities the JEMB was dissolved by Presidential Decree No.110, Dated 18.12.2005 and all its responsibilities was transferred to the IEC."

Election Method

In Afghanistan, the President is the head of the executive branch. The President serves as the head of state and the Command-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Afghanistan. He or she is elected by receiving more than 50% of the votes cast through free, general, secret, and direct voting. If none of the candidates for President receive more than 50% of the votes in the first round, a run-off election is held within two weeks. In this round, only two candidates with the highest number of votes are allowed to participate. In the run-off, the candidate who gets the majority of the votes will be elected as the President. The President serves a 5-year term. The executive branch also includes two Vice Presidents and members of the cabinet. Cabinet Ministers are appointed by the President and approved by the National Assembly.

Voter Registration: An update to Afghanistan's voter registry was conducted in four phases in all provinces across the country between October 2008 and February 2009. According to the Afghan Independent Election Commission (IEC), as of March 2009, more than 4 million Afghans registered, of which more than 38% are female registrants. Almost 550,000 Afghans registered in the south, of which more than 300,000 are in Kandahar alone.

These registrants join the approximately 12 million registrants already in the existing national voter registry (2005), although some overlap may occur for individuals with lost registration cards, who have reached the legal age to vote, etc. **Candidate Registration:** As part of Canada's fifth priority to help strengthen and promote democratic development and national institutions in Afghanistan, one of Canada's targets for 2011 is the establishment of an Independent Electoral Complaints Commission. This target was achieved by the establishment of the ECC through UNDP ELECT, supported in part by Canada. 44 Presidential Candidates registered with the IEC, including two women. One candidate dropped out of the race and, as per its mandate, following the vetting process and the ECC's recommendations, the IEC excluded

2 candidates. 3324 Provincial Council candidates registered with the IEC, including 342 women. 90 candidates dropped out of the race and, as per its mandate, following the vetting process and the ECC's recommendations, the IEC excluded 54 candidates.

Elections Timeline

Election Day was preceded by important dates and deadlines that, all together, constituted the Electoral Calendar.

May 25 April – 8: Presidential candidates nominate themselves at the headquarters of the Independent Election Commission.

May 16 – 21: A preliminary list of candidates was displayed at all offices of the Independent Election Commission.

May 16 – June 8: Registered voters could challenge the eligibility of candidates with the Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC). The ECC adjudicates challenges and responses, and relays its feedback to the Independent Election Commission.

June 12: The Independent Election Commission displayed the final list of candidates.

June 16 - August 18: Candidates mounted their official campaigns prior to polling day. Campaigning concluded 48 hours prior to August 20, the polling day.

August 20: Voters went to the polls in approximately 27,000 polling stations around the country. Domestic and international observer groups observe polling and counting. Political rights monitoring is conducted jointly by the UN Assistance Mission to Afghanistan and the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission. After polling closes, ballots are counted and the Independent Election Commission announces preliminary results. After adjudication of complaints, the Commission announces the final results.

If no presidential candidate receives 50% +1 of votes cast, a presidential run-off is held between the two candidates who receive the highest number of votes.

October 20 : Afghanistan's Independent Election Commission releases official certified results of the Presidential election. The IEC announces President Hamid Karzai will face his rival Abdullah Abdullah in a second round after the U.N.-backed election watchdog tossed out hundreds of thousands of votes.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon pledges the full support of the UN to ensure that Afghanistan's presidential election run-off is as credible as possible and welcomed President Hamid Karzai's acceptance of a second round of voting.

Prime Minister Harper acknowledges the final results released by the IEC and is encouraged that both candidates recognize the need for a run-off in the best interests of Afghan democracy.

22 October 2009: Afghan Ministers of Defense, Interior announce preparations for holding run-off election. Run-off electoral materials to be brought to all 34 provinces across the country.

November 7: Date of Presidential run-off

Presidential Contender

Second time winner Karzai was main contender in the presidential election. He filed his candidacy on May 4, 2009. The United National Front announced on April 16, 2009 that they would nominate former foreign minister Dr. Abdullah Abdullah as their presidential candidate. Abdullah was foreign minister of the Northern Alliance from 1998 onwards, and was a dominant figure in the Alliance. He was appointed foreign minister in the interim government that was installed after the U.S. invasion. The first person to have declared his intention to run, Dr. Ramazan Bashardost formally registered for the presidential election on May 7, 2009, with vice-presidential candidates Mr. Mohammad Mosa Barezai, a professor at the Kabul Agricultural Institute and Ms. Afifa Maroof, a member of the Af-

ghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, and with a dove, a symbol of peace and liberty, as their campaign symbol. Bashardost has openly criticized the government and accused ministers of corruption. Dr. Ashraf Ghani, a senior fellow in foreign policy at the Brookings Institute in Washington D.C., and former finance minister, registered as a presidential candidate on May 7, 2009. Mirwais Yasini, the First Deputy Speaker of the Afghan House of the People joined the race in March 2009. Shahla Atta, a liberal female MP and war widow has female candidate. Other presidential contenders included the leader of the Justice and Development Party of Afghanistan Zabihullah Ghazi Nuristani; former attorney general Abdul Jabbar Sabit; former defence minister Shah Nawaz Tanai; Uzbek leader Akbar Bai; economy expert and current senior minister Hedayat Arsala; economist Mohammad Hashem Taufiqui; Sarwar Ahmedzai.

Key Facts

Voter registration: During voter registration eligible citizens are provided with the documents they need to cast a ballot, namely the voter registration card. In order to qualify for a card, citizens must meet a number of criteria under Article 13 of the Electoral Law. Citizens qualified to vote must present themselves at a voter registration location and provide the identification required. They are given a photo identification which can be used to vote. Individuals with a voter registration card may vote in the presidential election at any polling station in the country. In order to vote in the provincial council election, though, they must vote at a polling station in the same province where they are resident. For example, a voter resident in Kandahar can only vote for the Kandahar Provincial Council.

Candidate Nomination: Individuals wishing to candidate themselves for elections must meet criteria as laid out in both the 2004 Constitution and 2005 Electoral Law. Criteria include, for example, age and citizenship. Candidates must also pay a fee and demonstrate a minimum amount of support by presenting a certain number of signatures. Criteria

differ between candidates for president, provincial, parliamentary, and district council elections.

All voters can challenge the candidacy of an individual by filing a complaint with the Electoral Complaints Commission. When all complaints have been adjudicated, a final candidate list is published. **Campaign Period:** The campaign period provides time for candidates to explain themselves to the voters. As part of their campaigns they might hold public events, hang posters, speak with media, or engage in debates with other candidates. During this period, voters may report any inappropriate behavior to the Electoral Complaints Commission and the Electoral Media Commission. Inappropriate behavior could include interfering with electoral officials, violating codes of conduct for political parties or candidates, or urging others to commit an electoral offense. Activities that constitute violations are laid out in the 2005 Electoral Law.

Polling: On polling day, voters have the opportunity to cast their vote for their preferred candidates. All voting takes place at polling centers located around the country.

Tallying the Votes & Certification of Results: Counting takes place at the polling stations while tallying happens at the tally center in Kabul. Because millions of ballots must be counted and tallied, results are not made final until the IEC is confident they are accurate. This can take several weeks. The final results is certified and announced by the IEC.

Voting Process

All registered Afghans (who is at least 18 years of age, has Afghan citizenship, has not been deprived from his/her civil or political rights by a court of competent jurisdiction) with valid voter ID card will have the right to vote for Presidential and Provincial Council Elections.

Individuals with voter registration cards issued in 2003-05 and 2008-09 are allowed to vote on 20 August 2009. Polling station staff check for ink (to

ensure individuals have not already voted), for eligibility, and for identity.

Registered voters can vote in the province where they are resident. However if a voter is not resident of that province, he/she is allowed to vote only for the Presidential elections.

Polling centers are open on 20 August 2009, from 7am until 4pm. Starting at 4 pm, no additional voters are permitted to join the queue.

At the polling center. Within a polling centre, there are male and female polling stations. In some centers there are also stations for Kuchis. In some provinces, the IEC establishes specific polling centers for Kuchis.

Not more than 600 voters are allowed to vote in any given polling station.

Polling staff, under the supervision of the District Field Coordinators, are the officials responsible for running centers/stations and processing voters. Observers, media, candidate/party agents who are accredited by the IEC may also be present in the polling center.

Each voter must vote in person. Voting on behalf of another person is not permitted. Each voter must mark his/her ballots in secret behind the voting screen provided for this purpose. Family or group voting, where more than one person is behind the voting screen at a time, is not permitted. The elderly, people with disabilities, nursing and pregnant women are given preference in the polling center. Finally, once a voter has cast a ballot he or she must leave the polling station.

Special Voting Cases: The IEC recognizes the need to facilitate access to polling for voters with special needs, these include: the Afghan National Army, police, internally displaced persons, prisoners (who have not been deprived from their civil and political rights by a court of law), people that are hospitalized, and those at the Presidential Palace.

In order to facilitate access to polling for those people, the IEC added 82 polling stations to existing polling centers.

India-Afghanistan

Afghanistan holds strategic importance for India as New Delhi seeks friendly allies in the neighborhood, and because it is a gateway to energy-rich Central Asian states such as Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan. India is looking to ensure that other countries in the region favor or at least are neutral on its conflict with Pakistan. Both countries historically have shared close cultural and political ties, and the complexity of their diplomatic history reflects this fact. India supported successive governments in Kabul until the rise of the Taliban in the 1990s, and was among the first non-Communist states to recognize the government installed by the Soviet Union after its 1989 invasion. But like most countries, India never recognized the Taliban's assumption of power in 1996. During this turbulent period, India supported the efforts of Northern Alliance to defeat the Taliban.

The terrorist attacks on the USA in 2001 once again turned the tide in relations. With the overthrowing of the Taliban by the NATO and the emergence of democratic forces in Afghanistan, India sought to revive the ties, restored full diplomatic relations, and provided hundreds of millions of dollars in aid for Afghanistan's reconstruction and development.

Instead of military involvement, India is the second largest contributor after the US and has spent almost \$2 billion on humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan so far. In January 2009, India completed construction of the Zaranj-Delaram highway in southwest Afghanistan near the Iranian border; it is building Afghanistan's new parliament building set for completion by 2011; it is constructing the Salma Dam power project in Herat Province; it has trained Afghan police officers, diplomats and civil servants; and it has provided support in the areas of health, education, transportation, power, and telecommunications.

In spite of the significant humanitarian assistance being provided by India, Pakistan views India's growing influence in Afghanistan as a threat to its own interests in the region. It has frequently raised doubts about the real motive for Indian presence in Afghanistan. Experts fear for Afghanistan's stability as India and Pakistan compete for influence in the war-torn country. The result is that India's attempt to leverage its 'soft power' in Afghanistan is becoming increasingly risky. So far, there is a general consensus in India that it should not send troops to Afghanistan. Yet beyond this there is little agreement about what policy options it has if greater turbulence in the Af-Pak region spills over into India. The traditional Indian stance is while it is happy to help the Afghan government in its reconstruction efforts, it will not be directly engaged in security operations, but this is increasingly becoming harder to sustain. A debate therefore is emerging as to whether India should start supporting its humanitarian endeavors in Afghanistan with a stronger military presence.

If Afghanistan is the most important frontier in combating terrorism targeted against India, then how long can India continue with its present policy trajectory whereby its civilians are getting killed in pursuit of its developmental objectives?

India has much to consider. The return of the Taliban to Afghanistan would pose a major threat to its borders. In the end, the brunt of escalating terrorism will be borne by India, which already has been described as 'the sponge that protects' the West. Indian strategists warn that a hurried US withdrawal with the Taliban still posing a threat to Afghanistan will have serious implications for India, not the least of which would be to see Pakistan, its eternal rival, step in more aggressively.

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बाल कुपोषण : यूनिसेफ रिपोर्ट

कुपोषण में दक्षिण एशिया अटवल

By: Dr. Divya



- यूनिसेफ ने हाल ही में कुपोषण पर एक रिपोर्ट जारी किया है जिसके अनुसार दुनिया के अधिकतर कुपोषित बच्चे दक्षिण एशियाई देशों में हैं।
 - रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक दक्षिण एशिया में पाँच वर्ष से कम उम्र वाले इन कुपोषित बच्चों की तादाद आठ करोड़, 30 लाख के करीब है।
 - भारत के लिए चिंताजनक यह है कि ऐसे कुपोषित बच्चों का प्रतिशत भारत में पाकिस्तान और बांग्लादेश से भी ज़्यादा है। केवल भारत में इन बच्चों की तादाद 6.1 करोड़ के आसपास है।
 - आंकड़ों के मुताबिक भारत में पाँच वर्ष से कम आयु वाले बच्चों की कुल तादाद में कुपोषित बच्चों की तादाद 48 प्रतिशत है। पाकिस्तान में यह 42 प्रतिशत और बांग्लादेश में यह 43 प्रतिशत है।
 - भारत से ज़्यादा कुपोषित बच्चों की प्रतिशत आबादी वाले देश हैं अफ़ग़ानिस्तान और नेपाल। अफ़ग़ानिस्तान में पाँच वर्ष से कम उम्र के बच्चों में कुपोषितों की संख्या 59 प्रतिशत है और नेपाल में यह तादाद 49 प्रतिशत है, पर संख्या के हिसाब से यह आकड़ा में भारत में सबसे ज़्यादा है।
- रिपोर्ट में बताया गया है कि दुनिया के कुल कुपोषित बच्चों की तादाद का अधिकांश हिस्सा 24 देशों में पाया गया है। इनमें पाँच देश ऐसे हैं जहाँ कुपोषित बच्चों की तादाद 40 प्रतिशत से अधिक है।
- दक्षिण एशिया के लिए यह रिपोर्ट किसी खतरे की घंटी से कम नहीं है क्योंकि सबसे ज़्यादा कुपोषित बच्चों वाले पाँचों देश दक्षिण एशिया के हैं।
 - इन देशों में 8.3 करोड़ बच्चे कुपोषित हैं जबकि दुनिया के बाकी सारे देशों में इन बच्चों की कुल तादाद 7.2 करोड़ है।
 - इन 8.3 करोड़ बच्चों में से 6.1 करोड़ तो अकेले भारत में ही हैं।

बाल कुपोषण के कारण



बाल कुपोषण को आमतौर पर बड़े बच्चों की एक समस्या माना जाता है और इसके समाधान के लिए सामान्यतः तीन साल से अधिक उम्र के बच्चों को लक्षित किया जाता है। भारत सरकार ने हाल ही में तीन साल से कम उम्र के बच्चों के बारे में सोचना शुरू किया है। जब हम तीन साल से ऊपर के बच्चों की बात करते हैं तो यह मूल रूप से भुखमरी और भोजन के अभाव की समस्या होती है। लेकिन, गर्भवती होने के दौरान और जीवन के पहले साल में बाल कुपोषण की शुरुआत हो जाती है। जीवन के पहले छह महीनों के दौरान कम वजनी बच्चों का प्रतिशत 16 से बढ़कर 30 हो चुका है। पहले दो साल के दौरान मौत के मुख्य कारण अपर्याप्त स्तनपान से भूख, नवजात शिशुओं में संक्रमण, डायरिया (अतिसार) और न्यूमोनिया होते हैं। इन तीनों समस्याओं के समाधान के लिए सबसे जरूरी पर्याप्त स्तनपान (ऑप्टिमल ब्रेस्टफीडिंग) है।

कहना न होगा कि देश के बच्चों में कुपोषण आज भी एक बड़ी समस्या बनी हुई है। अनाधिकारिक आंकड़े तो यहां तक कहते हैं कि हर साल कुपोषण की वजह से देश में हजार से ज्यादा बच्चे काल की गाल में समा जाते हैं। सरकारी आंकड़ों को देखते हुए इस बात पर शक करने की गुंजाइश भी नहीं बचती। राष्ट्रीय परिवार स्वास्थ्य सर्वेक्षण के मुताबिक भारत में तीन साल से कम उम्र के 46 फीसद बच्चे कुपोषण के शिकार हैं। वैज्ञानिक अध्ययन बताते हैं कि ऐसे बच्चों को बचपन की बीमारियों से जान गंवाने का खतरा सामान्य बच्चों की तुलना में आठ गुना अधिक होता है। उल्लेखनीय है कि 1998-99 के अंत में कुपोषण के शिकार बच्चों की संख्या 47 फीसद थी। यानि बीते दस सालों में कुपोषण के स्तर में महज एक फीसद की कमी आई है।

सबसे पहले तो यह कहा जा सकता है कि आर्थिक तंगी बच्चों के कुपोषण की बड़ी वजह है। व्यावहारिक धरातल पर इस तर्क की सत्यता चाहे जो भी हो लेकिन आंकड़े इससे मेल नहीं खा रहे हैं। भारत में गरीबी रेखा से नीचे जीवन यापन करने वालों की संख्या 26 फीसद है। कुपोषित बच्चों की संख्या इसके आसपास न होकर 46 फीसद है। एक बात और कि इस रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक गुजरात और उत्तर प्रदेश में तय मानक से कम वजन के 47 फीसद बच्चे हैं। गौरतलब है कि गुजरात की प्रति व्यक्ति आय और उत्तर प्रदेश के प्रति व्यक्ति आय में बहुत फर्क है। पर दोनों राज्यों में बच्चों की हालत कम से कम कुपोषण के मामले में समान है।

कुपोषण के लिए सबसे ज्यादा जिम्मेवार अगर कोई कारण है तो वो यह कि गर्भवती महिलाओं को आवश्यक भोजन और सुविधाएं नहीं मिल पा रही हैं। जब मां ही कुपोषण का शिकार हो जा रही है तो फिर वह जिस बच्चे को जनेगी वह भला स्वस्थ कैसा हो सकता है। इसलिए सबसे पहले गर्भवती महिलाओं को आवश्यक भोजन और चिकित्सा मुहैया करवाया जाना चाहिए। तब ही कुपोषण के जड़ पर चोट हो पाएगा और समस्या के समाधान की

दिशा में आगे बढ़ा जा सकेगा। गर्भवती महिलाओं की खराब स्वास्थ्य की वजह से ही कम वजन वाले बच्चे पैदा होते हैं। एक अनुमान के मुताबिक भारत में पैदा होने वाले बच्चों में से तकरीबन तीस फीसद बच्चे जन्म के वक्त तय मानक से कम वजन वाले होते हैं।

बच्चों के कुपोषण के पीछे दूसरी बड़ी वजह स्वास्थ्य सुविधाओं की कमी है। आवश्यक टीके भी अपेक्षाकृत कम बच्चों को ही मुहैया हो पा रहे हैं। इस समस्या को गहराने के लिए लोगों में जागरूकता का अभाव भी काफी हद तक जिम्मेवार है। इसके अलावा सरकारी उदासीनता भी इस समस्या को बढ़ाने में कम जिम्मेदार नहीं है। राष्ट्रीय परिवार स्वास्थ्य सर्वेक्षण के आंकड़ों के मुताबिक आधा से ज्यादा बच्चों का जन्म आज भी बगैर किसी चिकित्सीय देखरेख के हो रहा है। बजाहिर, जब ऐसा होगा तो कई खतरों का सामना इन बच्चों को स्वभाविक तौर पर करना पड़ेगा।

बच्चों को मां का दूध नहीं मिल पाना भी कुपोषण की बड़ी वजह है। जानकारों के मुताबिक चार से छह माह के बच्चों को मां के दूध के अतिरिक्त भी कुछ दिया जाना चाहिए। एक अनुमान के मुताबिक छह से नौ माह के मात्र 56 फीसदी बच्चों को ही मां के दूध के अतिरिक्त कुछ खाद्य पदार्थ मिल पा रहा है। इसलिए छह माह से आठ माह के उम्र में ही ज्यादातर बच्चे कुपोषण के शिकार हो रहे हैं। क्योंकि यही वह दौर होता है जब मां का दूध घटने लगता है। जिससे बच्चे को मिलने वाले पोषक तत्वों में भी कमी आती है।

इस समस्या से पार पाने के लिए कई राज्य सरकार फूड पैकेट का बंदोबस्त कर रही हैं। जिस फूड पैकेट का बंदोबस्त किया जा रहा है, वह बहुत महंगा है और उसे किसी विदेशी कंपनी से खरीदा जा रहा है। अब ऐसे सरकारों का क्या किया जाए जो अपने यहां होने वाले अनाज और दूध कुपोषण की मार झेल रहे बच्चों तक पहुंचाने के बजाए विदेशों से आयातित फूड पैकेट पहुंचाने का उपक्रम कर रही हों। जाहिर है कि इस फूड पैकेट की योजना से कई लोगों का बैंक बैलेंस बढ़ रहा होगा, इसीलिए देसी खाद्य पदार्थों की जगह पर इसे अपनाया जा रहा है।

बहरहाल, गर्भवती महिलाओं का शैक्षणिक स्तर भी बच्चों के कुपोषण को दूर करने में आड़े आ रहा है। राष्ट्रीय परिवार स्वास्थ्य सर्वेक्षण के मुताबिक कम से कम दस साल की स्कूली शिक्षा ग्रहण गर्भवती महिलाओं के बच्चों में 26 फीसद कुपोषण के शिकार हैं। जबकि अशिक्षित महिलाओं के बच्चों में से पचपन फीसद कुपोषण की मार झेल रहे हैं। इसलिए महिलाओं तक स्वास्थ्य संबंधित जानकारीयां पहुंचाना बेहद जरूरी है। हालांकि, सरकार की तरफ से जागरूकता के बहुत बड़े-बड़े दावे किए जाते हैं लेकिन आंकड़े इस बात के प्रमाण हैं कि ये दावे सिर्फ कागजों तक ही सीमित हैं।

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माजिद हुसैन

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भूगोल के 3000 पद एवं अवधारणायें भूगोल से संबंधित विभिन्न पदों एवं अवधारणाओं का एक विशाल संग्रह है, जिनमें सभी का व्याख्यात्मक वर्णन किया गया है। प्रत्येक पद एवं अवधारणा को अंग्रेजी वर्णमाला के अनुसार क्रमबद्ध रूप से प्रस्तुत किया गया है। यह पुस्तक विषय के लब्धप्रतिष्ठित विद्वान द्वारा लिखी गयी है, जिनका नाम इस विषय का पर्याय बन चुका है। यह पुस्तक सिविल सेवा के परीक्षार्थियों के लिये अत्यंत उपयोगी है।

प्रमुख विशेषतायें

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लेखक के विषय में

माजिद हुसैन : डा. हुसैन केन्द्रीय विश्वविद्यालय जामिया मिलिया इस्लामिया, नई दिल्ली के सेवानिवृत्त प्रोफेसर और भूगोल विभाग के विभागाध्यक्ष हैं। अध्यापन व शोध के प्रति गहरी प्रतिबद्धता के साथ डा. हुसैन भूगोल की कठिन अवधारणाओं के अति सरल एवं सुस्पष्ट विश्लेषण के लिए भी प्रसिद्ध हैं। डा. हुसैन द्वारा अब तक 50 से भी अधिक पुस्तकों का लेखन एवं 100 से भी अधिक शोध पत्रों का प्रकाशन किया जा चुका है। टाटा मैकग्रॉ-हिल द्वारा प्रकाशित इनकी हाल की पुस्तकें 'ज्योग्राफी ऑफ इंडिया', 'भारत का भूगोल', 'भौगोलिक मॉडल्स' तथा 'कन्साइज्ड ज्योग्राफी' काफी सफल एवं लोकप्रिय रहीं हैं।



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आर्थिक मन्दी

खत्म होने का मिलता संकेत

By: Ram Kumar Pandey



बढ़ते औद्योगिक उत्पाद और सरकारी मदद की बढ़ौलत भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था ने पिछले एक साल की सबसे बेहतर वृद्धि दर दर्ज की है. जुलाई से सितंबर यानि वित्तीय वर्ष की दूसरी तिमाही में भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था 7.9 प्रतिशत की दर से बढ़ी. ये दर अबतक घोषित 6.3 प्रतिशत सालाना वृद्धि के अनुमान से कहीं ज़्यादा है. गौरतलब है कि ये वृद्धि दर पिछले चार दशकों के सबसे खराब मॉनसून और कमज़ोर कृषि क्षेत्र के बावजूद है. माना जा रहा है कि इस तिमाही में इतने बेहतर प्रदर्शन की वजह है उत्पाद क्षेत्र में 9.2 प्रतिशत की वृद्धि और सामाजिक क्षेत्र में सरकार की ओर से किए जानेवाले खर्च में 12.7 प्रतिशत की बढ़ोतरी. इस खर्च की वजह से भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था अंतरराष्ट्रीय मंदी के प्रकोप से बची रही. भारत पर वैसे भी अंतरराष्ट्रीय मंदी की मार कम रही क्योंकि घरेलू मांग में कमी नहीं आई. साल की पहली तिमाई में वृद्धि दर 6.1 थी. दरअसल पूरे एशियाई क्षेत्र में आर्थिक मंदी से उबरने के लक्षण नज़र आए और चीन की अर्थव्यवस्था 8.9 प्रतिशत की दर से बढ़ी.

पिछले दिनों में कई आर्थिक संगठनों का विश्लेषण रहा है कि दुनिया को आर्थिक मंदी से उबारने में भारत और चीन जैसी उभरती अर्थव्यवस्थाओं की अहम भूमिका रहेगी.

भारत और चीन जैसे विकासशील देश

दुनिया को आर्थिक मंदी से उबारने में अग्रणी

एशियन डेवलपमेंट बैंक ने कहा है कि भारत और चीन जैसे विकासशील एशियाई देश दुनिया को आर्थिक मंदी से उबारने में अग्रणी रहेंगे. मनीला स्थित बैंक ने ये भी कहा है कि अभी सुधार के लक्षण उतने भी मज़बूत नहीं हैं कि ये सरकारें अपनी अर्थव्यवस्थाओं को उबारने के लिए जारी राहत कार्यक्रमों को रोक दें. बैंक ने मार्च में आकलन किया था कि एशियाई सकल घरेलू उत्पाद या जीडीपी 3.4 प्रतिशत की दर से बढ़ेगा. इस ताज़ा आकलन में इसे बढ़ाकर 3.9

प्रतिशत कर दिया गया है। इस रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है कि इन देशों और उनके केंद्रीय बैंकों की तरफ से उठाए गए ठोस कदम, मंदी से पहले उनके वित्तीय तंत्र की बेहतर सेहत और निर्यात पर कम निर्भर अर्थव्यवस्थाओं का जल्द संभलना, ये कारण बने हैं इस नए आकलन के पीछे बैंक ने भारत के बारे में आकलन किया है कि 2009 में उसकी अर्थव्यवस्था 6.0 प्रतिशत की रफ्तार से बढ़ेगी। पहले ये आकलन 5.0 प्रतिशत का था। अगले साल ये रफ्तार 7.0 तक पहुंच जाएगी। कमजोर निर्यात और कृषि क्षेत्र में खराब प्रदर्शन की आशंका के बावजूद भारत के कुशल आर्थिक प्रबंधन ने उस पर वैश्विक आर्थिक मंदी का उतना ज्यादा प्रभाव नहीं होने दिया है। चीन के बारे में कहा गया है कि उसकी अर्थव्यवस्था इस साल 8.2 प्रतिशत की रफ्तार से बढ़ेगी। ये पहले किए आकलन के मुकाबले 1.2 प्रतिशत ज्यादा है। इसकी एक वजह है कि चीन ने अपनी अर्थव्यवस्था में 585 अरब डॉलर के राहत पैकेज का समावेश किया। बैंक ने ये भी कहा है कि इस बेहतर आर्थिक आकलन की झलक इन क्षेत्रों के शेयर बाजारों में भी नज़र आने लगी है।

आर्थिक मंदी की शुरुआत के दौरान अमरीकी अर्थशास्त्रियों ने भी कहा था कि अगर भारत और चीन की अर्थव्यवस्थाएं इसी रफ्तार से बढ़ती रहें तो मंदी से उबरने में ज्यादा वक्त नहीं लगेगा। लेकिन भारत और चीन से भी जब मंदी की खबर आने लगी तो चिंता के बादल और गहरे हो गए थे। एशियन डेवलपमेंट बैंक का आकलन ये भी है कि निर्यात पर निर्भर दक्षिण कोरिया, हॉंगकॉंग, सिंगापुर, ताइवान जैसे देशों की अर्थव्यवस्थाओं में सुधार के आसार नहीं हैं क्योंकि उनके वस्तुओं की मांग फिलहाल कमजोर है।

संकट से क्यों बचे रहे हम

वैसे तो भारतीय अर्थशास्त्रियों ने विश्व आर्थिक मंदी का भारत पर कम असर होने के कई कारण दिए हैं। कहा गया है कि भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था अभी भी दुनिया की मुख्यधारा से बची हुई है, निर्यात पर निर्भरता कम है, बैंकों पर अभी भी काफी नियंत्रण है, और आमतौर पर पश्चिमी देशों की तरह कर्ज लेकर खर्च करने की आदत नहीं है। लेकिन विशेषज्ञ इस बात पर लगभग एकमत हैं कि भारत को इस संकट से बचाने में ग्रामीण या गैर-शहरी अर्थव्यवस्था की अहम भूमिका रही और आगे भी इसकी सक्रिय भूमिका रहेगी।

वाल स्ट्रीट जर्नल ने हाल ही में एक रिपोर्ट प्रकाशित की थी जिसके अनुसार ग्रामीण आय 2004-2005 के 220 अरब डॉलर से बढ़कर 2010-2011 में 425 अरब डॉलर तक पहुंच जाएगी। पिछले कुछ सालों की अच्छी मॉनसून और फसलों की अच्छी कीमत से ग्रामीण भारत की क्रयशक्ति में काफी बढ़ोतरी हुई और अर्थव्यवस्था की रफ्तार में ज्यादा कमी नहीं आई। इसमें थोड़ी किस्मत और सरकार की तरफ से ग्रामीण क्षेत्र में हुए निवेश दोनों ही की मिलीजुली भूमिका थी। नरेगा जैसे कार्यक्रमों से भी फायदा हुआ क्योंकि उससे ग्रामीण क्षेत्र के उन लोगों को भी नौकरियां मिल पाईं जो कृषि पर निर्भर नहीं थे। ग्रामीण भारत अब हर उस सुविधा को हासिल करना चाहता है जो शहर में उपलब्ध है। भारत की एक अरब की आबादी में से सत्तर प्रतिशत ग्रामीण या गैर-शहरी इलाकों में रहती है और सकल घरेलू उत्पाद में इनका योगदान छब्बीस प्रतिशत है। अंदाज़ा है कि ये योगदान जितना बढ़ेगा अर्थव्यवस्था उतनी ही तेज़ी से बढ़ेगी।

पानी की भले ही कमी हो लेकिन शैंपू से मोबाईल तक सबकुछ बिक रहा है गांवों में. गांव-गांव तक टेलिविज़न के पहुंचने और विज्ञापनों से हर तरह के प्रसाधनों की चाहत बढ़ी है और कॉरपोरेट जगत अपने सामान को इस बाज़ार की मांग और जेब के अनुरूप ढाल रहा है. तो दस रूपए में आप मोबाईल को टॉप अप करवा सकते हैं, पचास पैसे में शैंपू और दूधपेस्ट के पाउच खरीद सकते हैं, सस्ते रीबॉक के जूते पहन सकते हैं, सस्ती वाशिंग मशीन और गैस स्टोव खरीद सकते हैं. गाड़ियों की बात करें, या प्रसाधनों की बात करें, पचास प्रतिशत से ज्यादा मांग गैर-शहरी और ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों से आ रही है. इस क्षेत्र के बाज़ारों पर मंदी के दौरान भी कोई असर नहीं हुआ क्योंकि लोगों की आय पर कोई असर नहीं हुआ बल्कि तेज़ी ही आई.

मन्दी क्या है

एक निरंतर अवधि के दौरान सामान्य आर्थिक गतिविधि में कमी आने या व्यापार चक्र में संकुचन को अर्थशास्त्र में व्यापारिक मंदी कहा जाता है. मंदी के दौरान कई व्यापक-आर्थिक संकेतक समान रूप से परिवर्तित होते हैं. सकल घरेलू उत्पाद (जीडीपी) द्वारा मापा जाने वाला उत्पादन, रोजगार, निवेश, क्षमता उपयोग, घरेलू आय और व्यवसायिक लाभ, इन सभी में मंदी के दौरान घटोत्तरी होती है. सरकारें आमतौर पर मंदी का सामना विस्तारी व्यापक-आर्थिक नीतियों को अपना कर करती हैं, जैसे कि धन आपूर्ति में वृद्धि, सरकारी खर्च में बढ़ोत्तरी और कर में घटोत्तरी.

1975 में आर्थिक सांख्यिकीविद जूलियस शिस्किन ने मंदी की पहचान के लिए कई सामान्य नियमों का सुझाव दिया था, जिनमें से एक था जीडीपी की दो तिमाहियों में संकुचन. समय के साथ, अन्य सामान्य नियमों को भुला दिया गया, और मंदी को अब अक्सर बस एक ऐसी अवधि के रूप में परिभाषित किया जाता है जब कम से कम दो तिमाहियों में जीडीपी में घटोत्तरी (वास्तविक आर्थिक विकास में संकुचन) हुई हो. कुछ अर्थशास्त्रियों की पसंद एक अन्य परिभाषा है बारह महीने के भीतर बेरोजगारी में एक 1.5% वृद्धि.

लक्षण

एक मंदी के कई लक्षण हैं जो एक ही समय पर प्रकट हो सकते हैं जैसे कि , रोजगार, निवेश और कारोबारी मुनाफे में एक ही समय में कमी. एक गंभीर (सकल घरेलू उत्पाद में 10% की घटोत्तरी)या लंबे समय तक (तीन या चार वर्ष) चलने वाली मंदी को आर्थिक विषाद कहा जाता है, हालाँकि कुछ का मानना है कि इनके कारक और प्रतिकार अलग अलग हैं.

अधिकांश मुख्य धारा अर्थशास्त्रियों का विश्वास है कि मंदी का कारण अर्थव्यवस्था में अपर्याप्त कुल मांग है. एक अर्थव्यवस्था को मंदी से बाहर निकालने के लिए अपनाई जाने वाली रणनीतियां इस बात पर निर्भर करती हैं कि नीति निर्माता अर्थशास्त्र के किस विभाग का अनुसरण करते हैं. मुद्रावादी विस्तारी मुद्रा नीति के उपयोग के पक्षधर हैं जबकि केयनेसियन अर्थशास्त्री आर्थिक विकास को गति प्रदान करने हेतु सरकारी खर्च में वृद्धि करने की वकालत कर सकते हैं. आपूर्ति-परक अर्थशास्त्री व्यापार पूंजी निवेश को बढ़ावा देने के लिए कर(टैक्स) में कटौती का सुझाव दे सकते हैं. अहस्तक्षेप के पक्षधर अर्थशास्त्री यह सुझाव दे सकते हैं कि सरकार प्राकृतिक बाजार बलों के साथ हस्तक्षेप न करे.

भारत एक मजबूत अर्थव्यवस्था

1991 से भारत में बहुत तेज आर्थिक प्रगति हुई है जब से उदारीकरण और आर्थिक सुधार की नीति लागू की गयी है और भारत विश्व की एक आर्थिक महाशक्ति के रूप में उभरकर आया है। सुधारों से पूर्व मुख्य रूप से भारतीय उद्योगों और व्यापार पर सरकारी नियंत्रण का बोलबाला था और सुधार लागू करने से पूर्व इसका जोरदार विरोध भी हुआ परंतु आर्थिक सुधारों के अच्छे परिणाम सामने आने से विरोध काफी हद तक कम हुआ है। हालांकि मूलभूत ढाँचे में तेज प्रगति न होने से एक बड़ा तबका अब भी नाखुश है और एक बड़ा हिस्सा इन सुधारों से अभी भी लाभान्वित नहीं हुये हैं।

लगभग 568 बिलियन के सकल घरेलू उत्पाद के साथ इस समय भारत विश्व अर्थव्यवस्था में 12 वें स्थान पर है। लेकिन प्रति व्यक्ति आय कम होने की वजह से इस प्रगति के कोई मायने नहीं रहते। क्रय शक्ति समानता के लिहाज से, भारत विश्व में चौथी सबसे बड़ी अर्थव्यवस्था है तथा अर्थशास्त्रियों का अनुमान है कि वर्ष 2030 तक इसका तीसरा स्थान हो जाएगा (चीन और संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका के बाद)।

भारत बहुत से उत्पादों के सबसे बड़े उत्पादकों में से है। इनमें प्राथमिक और विनिर्मित दोनों ही आते हैं। भारत दूध का सबसे बड़ा उत्पादक है और गेह, चावल, चाय, चीनी, और मसालों के उत्पादन में अग्रणियों में से एक है यह लौह अयस्क, वाक्सईट, कोयला और टाईटेनियम के समृद्ध भंडार हैं। यहाँ प्रतिभाशाली जनशक्ति का सबसे बड़ा पूल है। लगभग 2 करोड़ भारतीय विदेश में काम कर रहे हैं। और वे विश्व अर्थव्यवस्था में योगदान दे रहे हैं। भारत विश्व में साफ्टवेयर इंजीनियरों के सबसे बड़े आपूर्ति कर्ताओं में से एक है और सिलिकॉन वैली में संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका में लगभग 30 % उद्यमी पूंजीपति भारतीय मूल के हैं। भारत में सूचीबद्ध कंपनियों की संख्या अमेरिका के पश्चात दूसरे नम्बर पर है। लघु पैमाने का उद्योग क्षेत्र, जोकि प्रसार शील भारतीय उद्योग की रीढ़ की हड्डी है, के अन्तर्गत लगभग 95% औद्योगिक इकाईयां आती हैं। विनिर्माण क्षेत्र के उत्पादन का 40% और निर्यात का 36% बत्तीस्लाख पंजीकृत लघु उद्योग इकाईयों में लगभग एक करोड़ 80 लाख लोगों को सीधे रोजगार प्रदान करता है।

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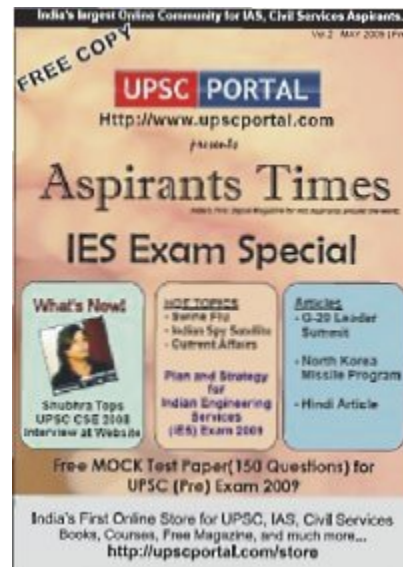
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Commonwealth Summit

Multi Billion Dollar Fund to Help Developing Nations



// The threat to our environment is not a new concern but it is now a global challenge which will continue to affect the security and stability of millions for years to come. //

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Elizabeth II



The leaders of 53 countries just concluded a climate change summit a mere few days before Copenhagen. Hosted in Trinidad and Tobago on 27-29 November, 2009, the Commonwealth Summit aimed to make progress on the negotiations that will come to a head in Copenhagen beginning December 7. One key outcome is a figure for a proposed "Copenhagen Launch Fund," of \$10 billion a year, described by President Nasheed of the Maldives as recognizing in part the plight of island nations in coping with climate change.

The Commonwealth countries assembled are comprised of many former British colonies, and the vast majority of these countries are severely threatened by climate change. These are countries like the Gambia, Cameroon (pictured in this photo), Guyana, and Kiribati. The countries represented in Trinidad make up one third of the world's population. In Copenhagen, people around the world are calling for progress that meets the scale of the climate challenge that faces the entire planet. Many of these same countries are vocal supporters of an agreement in Copenhagen that calls for reaching 350 ppm; many of these leaders have frequently spoken out about climate impacts already felt by the people in their countries. You can count on the fingers of one hand how many Commonwealth

countries have not backed such ambitious positions; yet they appeared to hold the day in Trinidad. This is yet another indication that we must stand in solidarity with those people whose lives are at stake, and those countries that, even despite bold leadership and commitments to take serious action, are not being heard.

Climate fund to help poor nations

UK PM Gordon Brown and French President Nicolas Sarkozy have proposed a multi-billion-dollar fund to help developing nations deal with climate change.

Mr Brown said the \$10bn (£6bn) fund should also be used to help developing nations cut greenhouse gas emissions.

Both spoke at the Commonwealth summit in Trinidad, the last major world forum before the global summit on climate change in Copenhagen on 7 December.

Many Commonwealth members are island states threatened by rising sea levels.

Mr Sarkozy, with UN chief Ban Ki-moon and Danish Prime Minister Prime Lars Loekke Rasmussen, is there to give weight to any climate change statement.

The topic was the only issue on the Commonwealth summit's agenda for the first day.

Opening the Trinidad meeting, Queen Elizabeth II said the Commonwealth had an opportunity to lead once more on climate change.

"The threat to our environment is not a new concern but it is now a global challenge which will continue to affect the security and stability of millions for years to come," she said.

Mr Brown said half of the \$10bn fund should go towards helping developing nations reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and the other half towards helping them adapt to climate change.

The first cash would be made available next year, he said, before any emissions deal could take effect.

He is offering \$800m from the UK over three years, money that has already been budgeted for.

Mr Sarkozy proposed a funding programme of \$10bn a year in the years 2010-12, and an "ambitious mechanism" for payments beyond those years. He did not indicate how much France was prepared to contribute.

The two leaders said the move could encourage developing nations concerned about the economic consequences of reducing emissions to sign up to a climate treaty.

Insistence on India

The Commonwealth's 53 nations comprise nearly two billion people, a third of the planet's population. India has admitted that China's decision to unveil emissions targets two weeks before the Copenhagen summit has put it under pressure. Indian Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh said China's decision was a "wake-up call to India".

Mr Ban said new and positive commitments from several countries over recent days were very heartening.

But in another Commonwealth country, Australia, the government's plans to enact a law for an emissions trading scheme have been thrown into chaos by a revolt within the opposition Liberal Party, whose support is required to pass the bill. The issue is likely to be controversial. The nation's entry bid has received strong backing from some member states.

However, some rights activists are angry that entry would reward a nation they say is guilty of abuses dating back to the 1994 genocide.

Meanwhile the UK has indicated it will try to block Sri Lanka's bid to host the next Commonwealth summit over its handling of the recent war.

A UK government source said Mr Brown had "real concerns about Sri Lanka's bid".

It's a highly unorthodox summit, which may be just what the Commonwealth needed to counter charges it is an irrelevant relic of Britain's imperial past. This time, key leaders from outside the Commonwealth were invited to the first day - given over entirely to the dominant world issue: climate change.

The UN secretary-general, the French president, and Denmark's prime minister seized the chance of the last major political gathering before December's crucial global negotiations to urge the heads of more than 50 nations here to lead by example and ease deadlocks between the developed and developing world.

If the Commonwealth is a microcosm of the wider world, spanning giant India, rich Britain, Australia and Canada, as well as some of the smallest and most vulnerable island states like the Maldives, then where better to argue that all leaders should prepare to make bold concessions to achieve a better outcome in Copenhagen?

Judging whether or not this Summit really makes a difference may be impossible, but it has certainly raised the Commonwealth's profile, and reminded the world beyond the Commonwealth that, at the very least, huge amounts of political effort are being expended to try to maximise success in Copenhagen.

What is Commonwealth

The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of 53 independent sovereign states consulting and co-operating in the common interests of their peoples and in the promotion of international understanding and world peace.

Today's Commonwealth is a world away from the handful of British Dominions, which were the first Commonwealth members. From Africa to Asia,

from Pacific shores to the Caribbean, the Commonwealth's 1.7 billion people make up 30% of the world's population.

The modern Commonwealth gradually evolved out of United Kingdom's imperial past, mainly through decolonisation, the effects of two world wars and changing patterns of international relations. Today it helps to advance democracy, human rights, sustainable economic and social development within its member countries and beyond. Armed with a common working language and similar systems of law, public administration and education, the Commonwealth has built on its shared history to become a vibrant and growing association of states in tune with the modern world. All of the member states, except for Mozambique, have experienced direct or indirect British rule, or have been linked administratively to another Commonwealth country.

At the 1997 summit in Edinburgh, Heads of Government considered the criteria for Commonwealth membership and agreed that in order to become a member of the Commonwealth, an applicant country should, as a rule, have had a constitutional association with an existing Commonwealth member state; that it should comply with Commonwealth values, principles and priorities as set out in the Harare Declaration; and that it should accept Commonwealth norms and conventions.

The association has no constitution or charter, but members commit themselves to the statements of beliefs set out by Heads of Government. The basis of these is the Declaration of Commonwealth Principles, agreed at Singapore in 1971, and reaffirmed in the Harare Declaration of 1991. The fundamental political values underpinning the Commonwealth include democracy and good governance, respect for human rights and gender equality, the rule of law, and sustainable economic and social development.

HM Queen Elizabeth II is the Head of the Commonwealth and is recognised as the 'symbol of their free association' by members of the association. Among other things, Her Majesty attends the bi-

ennial Commonwealth summits or CHOGMs, and the Commonwealth Games, which are held every four years. At the Edinburgh summit in 1997, for the first time, she addressed the opening ceremony. On every Commonwealth Day a special message from the Queen is broadcast in all member countries.

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News and Current Affairs



» Asia-Pacific leaders ended their summit in Singapore on Nov 15 with a final statement that pledged a conclusion of the

Doha Round of global trade talks in 2010, but removed targets for carbon emissions cuts.

The 21-member Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit dropped a target to cut greenhouse gas emissions in half by 2050, despite declaring climate change one of the biggest global challenges.

The APEC leaders also rejected all forms of protectionism and said they would commit to concluding the Doha Round of trade talks next year. The talks have been deadlocked over disagreements between developing and developed nations on cutting farm subsidies and tariffs.

The declaration also said the 21 member economies will maintain stimulus policies until a durable global economic recovery has clearly taken hold. U.S. President Barack Obama meets with Russian President Dmitri Medvedev on the sidelines of the APEC forum. The two plan to discuss Iran's nuclear program and Afghanistan. Mr. Obama also announced that his native U.S. state, Hawaii, will host the APEC summit in 2011.



» Indian-Americans won one of their highest-ever appointments in the US government when President Obama in november nominated Dr Rajiv Shah as ad-

ministrator of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Dr Shah, who currently serves as Under Secretary for Research, Education and Economics and Chief

Scientist at the US Department of Agriculture, will take his new job after he is confirmed by the Senate, a step that is expected to happen quickly. With a budget of over \$40 billion and nearly 2000 employees, USAID is an independent federal agency that is responsible for most US non-military foreign aid, virtually the developmental face of Uncle Sam.

Shah, a graduate of University of Michigan, earned his M.D. from the University of Pennsylvania Medical School and his Master of Science in health economics at the Wharton School of Business. He also attended the London School of Economics before becoming a policy wonk, variously working at the World Health Organisation, advising the Gore 2000 presidential campaign on health care policy, and most recently, before joining the Obama administration, serving as Director for Agricultural Development at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

At USDA, he managed the Agricultural Research Service, the Economic Research Service, the National Agricultural Statistical Service and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, and was responsible for overseeing more than 10,000 staff worldwide including 2,200 federal scientists and a budget of more than \$2.6 billion. He also launched the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) - a new scientific institute created to elevate and enhance the capacity of agricultural research to address sustainable food production, climate change, bioenergy and human nutrition.

But the job as USAID administrator is a major promotion, elevating him to a crucial job that involves advancing US foreign policy objectives by supporting economic growth, agriculture and trade; health; democracy, conflict prevention, and humanitarian



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assistance abroad. Although its predecessor agency International Cooperation Administration dates back to World War II and the Marshall Plan, USAID was formally constituted in 1961 and is considered a crucial foreign policy arm of the US government.

The agency typically receives foreign policy guidance from the Secretary of State, and expectedly, Hillary Clinton warmly welcomed the Shah's appointment, describing him as a "leader in the development community, an innovative and results-oriented manager, and someone who understands the importance of providing people around the world with the tools they need to lift themselves out of poverty and chart their own destinies."

Shah will have his hands full once he is confirmed by the State since the USAID administrator's post has been vacant for several months with an acting administrator holding the fort after Obama came to office. In fact, the vacancy at the top of USAID had attracted the ire of Congress, whose members noted that it was the "only major agency in the government without a captain at a time when American leadership in development around the world is more needed than ever."

In a September 18 letter to Obama urging him to expeditiously appoint a USAID administrator, Senators John Kerry and Richard Lugar complained that USAID has been shut out of the interagency processes related to US policy in places such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq.

Iraq, Afghanistan, Egypt and Israel are among the biggest recipients of USAID dollars and Pakistan is soon expected to join the top ranks since much of the US non-military assistance to Islamabad is expected to be sent through USAID. As of September 2009, the USAID said it had contributed more than \$ 170 million in assistance to conflict-affected population in Pakistan. India, which at one time got around \$ 160 million in USAID funds (a pit-

tance in per capita terms), has gradually weaned itself off US dole, preferring trade and business opportunities.

» Recognising India's excellence in education, Australia has invited 'elite Indian institutions' to set up campuses there and help Adelaide become a 'University City'. Some of them are already on the table.



There are over 500,000 international students in Australia pursuing university education and vocational studies, of which 94,000 are Indians -- the second highest group after the Chinese. Thousands of Indians are enrolled in vocational courses in government and private Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institutes.

In recent years Australia's education industry has boomed to become the country's third-largest foreign currency earner after coal and iron ore, generating about \$12 billion in revenue in 2008. Indian students in Australia alone contribute \$3.5 billion a year to the economy.

Dozens of Indian students have been attacked in Australia throughout this year, making India react strongly. Even Prime Minister Manmohan Singh took up the issue with his Australian counterpart. The soaring sentiment in India forced many Australian authorities, including its prime minister, to tour India, to assure parents about the safety of their wards.



» Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh on Dec 4 said that all the 2,50,000 Gram Panchayats in the country will be provided high speed broadband connectivity by 2012 to remove asymmetry of information and opportunities to the rural population.

The Prime Minister was speaking at the closing ceremony of 'India Telecom- 2009' in the national capital. Assuring the auction of 3G spectrum, Singh said that this spectrum will be allocated at a market determined price rather than an administered one.

While, lauding the setting up of seven telecom centers of excellence by DOT in public private partnership mode, he said that sustained competitiveness requires a strong research and development efforts.

The Prime Minister also expressing concern on the slow growth of the telecom manufacturing sector, and called for using various fiscal incentives provided by the Government to attract potential investors.

Speaking on the occasion, Union Communications and Information Technology Minister A. Raja said that telecom sector is recognized as one of the major drivers of the growth of Indian economy as it is contributing about 5.6 per cent in GDP.

'Indian economy registered 11per cent rise in FDI, despite the global recession and liquidity crunch,' he added.

The Minister further said that it also attracted 2558 million dollar FDI in 2008-09 as compared to 1261 million dollar in 2007-08, which is about 10 per cent of the total FDI inflow in the country during 2008-09.

Enlisting the achievements of the telecom department, the Minister said that target of 500 million of telephone connections was scaled in September 2009, much ahead of the scheduled time of December 2010.



» The Wolf Hall novel has been written by British author Hilary Mantel, winner of the Booker Prize 2009. Set in the 1520s, the novel tells the story of English statesman Thomas Cromwell's rise to prominence through political

intrigues in Henry VIII's court.

» Indian government, in collaboration with the UNDESA, organised the 'High-Level Conference on Climate Change: Technology Development and Transfer' on October 22 and 23, 2009 at New Delhi.

The conference was a step forward in the process of the international policy dialogue on technologies needed to address climate change.

The outcomes of the conference will support the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process.



» Google Wave is the latest buzz to hit the internet shores. The Web search giant—it has already sent out 1,00,000 select invites for a limited preview—has announced what it claims to be the future of all internet conversations.

What Wave does is to integrate e-mail, instant messaging (IM), collaboration, Google maps as well as search. It actually empowers your browser to handle all your communication needs. The Wave, however, requires a Chrome Frame plug-in to function on the ubiquitous Internet Explorer as of now. The preferred browsers seem to be Chrome, open source Firefox and Apple's Safari.

» Romanian-born German writer Herta Mueller has won the 2009 Nobel Prize in literature. The 56-year-old author, who emigrated to Germany from then-communist Romania in 1987, made her debut in 1982 with a collection of short stories titled *Niederungen*, or *Lowlands* in English, which was promptly censored by her government.

In 1984 an uncensored version was smuggled to Germany where it was published and her work depicting life in a small, German-speaking village in Romania was devoured by readers there. That work was followed by *Oppressive Tango* in Romania.

» With domain names in Hindi, Arabic and Chinese set to become a reality on the Web, the pun-dits in this science hub, where the internet was

arguably invented, claim the next giant leap towards internationalisation will be the grid. The grid, which is made of thousands of desktops, laptops, supercomputers, data vaults, mobile phones, meteorological sensors and telescopes will start work when protons beams collide with each other in the world's biggest experiment ever, deep in a tunnel on the French-Swiss border.



» The United States blasted the surface of the moon on October 9, 2009 with two rockets on a mission to look for water below the

lunar surface that could be used by astronauts on future space missions. At 1130 GMT the LCROSS satellite crashed into the Cabeus crater floor near the moon's south pole, at around 9,000 kilometers per hour, followed four minutes later by a shepherding spacecraft equipped with cameras to record the impact.

The LCROSS cost 79 million dollars and was launched in June 2009, along with another probe—the Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter, which is tasked with producing a detailed map of the moon.

NASA scientists looked into the 350 tonnes of debris ejected from the cold, dark Cabeus crater, and after thorough analysis confirmed presence of water. The crater is 100 km across and between 2.5 to four km deep.

The mission came just two weeks after India hailed the discovery of water on the moon with its Chandrayaan-1 satellite mission in partnership with NASA.

Finding water on Earth's natural satellite is a major breakthrough in space exploration and will pave the way toward future lunar bases for drinking water or fuel, or even man living on another planet.

» Scientists are mulling to use German-built robots for clearing rogue satellites from Earth's orbit or pushing them into the outer space. Robots that rescue failing satellites and push "dead" ones into outer space should be ready in four years, British newspaper 'The Observer' reported.

Experts have described the development by German scientists as a crucial step in preventing a disaster in the Earth's crowded orbit. In 2008 it was reported that critical levels of debris circling the Earth were threatening astronauts' lives and future of the multi-billion-dollar satellite communications industry.

» Alarmed over the sharp drop in the number of freshwater dolphins surviving in river systems across the country, the Union government, acting on a proposal made by Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, has declared dolphin as a national aquatic animal. The animal has been declared as a 'highly endangered' under the ICUN and Schedule I of Wildlife Protection Act (1972), Government of India.

The Ganga River Dolphin is a flag-ship specie, meaning that their strength in river system would indicate its health. The freshwater dolphin, a blind species, is mainly found in the Ganga and Brahmaputra river systems in India.

Construction of dams and barrages, increase in pollution-levels, indiscriminate fishing, the dreadful prospect of the mammal getting entangled in nets—all these factors have contributed to a reduction in their numbers in two river systems.

In the Ganga, the dolphin is found primarily in the Bijnore-Narora section in Uttar Pradesh and the Vikramshila sanctuary in Bihar. Thanks to greater involvement of the community and stakeholders and application of modern technology, WWF-India has been able to save these mammals from getting depleted.



» The world's largest cruise liner, Oasis of the Seas, began its maiden voyage to Florida on October 30, 2009, gliding out of a shipyard in Finland. With an amphitheatre, basketball courts and an ice rink on board, the 16-deck liner spans 1,200 feet from bow to stern. Its 2,700 cabins can accommodate 6,300 passengers and 2,100 crew. The ship cost \$1.5 bil-

lion and took two and a half years to build. It boasts of four swimming pools, volleyball and basketball courts, and a youth zone with theme parks and nurseries for children.



» India has signed agreements with the World Bank for \$4.2 billion (around Rs 20,000 crore) credit to support the country's infrastructure projects and also for recapitalising the public sector banks. State-run PowerGrid Corp of India, India Infrastructure Finance Company Ltd (IIFCL) signed pacts for \$1 billion and \$1.195 billion, respectively. The Centre signed the agreement for \$2 billion to recapitalise the state-run banks. The funding to IIFCL has two components, IBRD loan of \$1.195 billion long-term finance to infrastructure projects and a grant of \$5 million for capacity building of IIFCL, which finances infrastructure projects. The loan will be utilised for strengthening transmission systems for Sasan, Mundra and Krishnapatnam Ultra Mega Power Projects and South-West interconnection.

» The 150th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore will be celebrated internationally by the UNESCO in 2010 as a mark of respect to the Nobel Laureate whose literary work blends universal humanistic values and sympathy for the poor. The agency will also celebrate the 100th birth anniversary of Chilean poet Pablo Neruda and 100th birth anniversary of Afro-Martinican littérateur Aime Cesaire. The UNESCO will establish prizes and medals in the name of these literary giants. It will also organise a series of seminars and conferences across the world to spread awareness about their literary works.

» India has announced sites for setting up light water reactor-based nuclear plants in cooperation with the United States, France and Russia. Power plants would be set up in cooperation with the US at Chhayamithi Virdi in Gujarat and Kovvada in Andhra Pradesh, while Jaitapur in Maharashtra has been designated as the site for the plant to be set up with France's assistance. Kudankulam in Tamil Nadu and Haripur in West Bengal have been

chosen as the sites for power plants to be set up in cooperation with Russia.



» The Reserve Bank of India has acknowledged the resurgence of the feel good factor in the Indian economy but has said that growth and inflation continue to be a concern.

Maintaining a hawkish stance on inflation, the central bank has highlighted its concern over slow-down in credit off-take and surplus liquidity in the system, giving no clear indication on its rate stance. In its report on Macro and Monetary Developments in Q2 of 2009-10, the Reserve Bank has noted that "The combination of a weak recovery and elevated CPI (consumer price index) inflation has already magnified the complexity of policy challenges, notwithstanding the subdued nature of headline WPI inflation so far."

While premature reversal of the monetary policy stance entails the risk of stifling recovery, persistence of accommodative stance could adversely impact inflation expectations.

However, the results of its survey, based on "assessment for July- September 2009" and "expectations for October-December 2009", point to a strong momentum in industrial recovery. Both the indices remained above 100 for the second consecutive quarter (100 is the threshold that separates contraction from expansion). According to the RBI analysis, this suggests that the industrial recovery already seen up to August 2009 in terms of trends in IIP growth could gain further momentum.

The outlook for employment is also improving and firms are expected to increase their workforce on the back of expected increase in demand.

Among the positive pointers to the economic recovery include improved financial conditions as reflected in return of capital flows, significant recovery in the stock markets, and better transmission from low policy rates to declining lending rates. The RBI has also said that there should not be any concerns about private credit getting

crowded out since over 80.4% of the government borrowing programme has been completed so far as there is adequate liquidity in the system.

But RBI is concerned about the deceleration in private consumption and investment demand that it says needs to be reversed from the low levels seen in the first quarter of 2009-10 for ensuring a sustainable recovery.

Indian economy seen cruising at 6.5% in 2010 . A key economic think-tank has made the most optimistic official projection yet for growth in the fiscal to March 2010, flagged rising food prices as a major concern, and suggested that tighter monetary and fiscal policies are unlikely in the coming months.

The Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council, headed by former RBI governor C. Rangarajan, said it sees the gross domestic product (GDP) expanding by 6.5% in 2009-10.

In its July 2009 forecast, the RBI had forecast that India's economy in 2009-10 would grow by 6%, with an upward bias, and the Planning Commission had said in early September that it sees GDP growth at 6.3%. India's economy expanded by 6.7% in 2008-09 after growing at over 9% for three years.

The improving trend is unlikely to prompt any immediate withdrawal of stimulus measures or a tightening of monetary policy, even though the panel made clear its concern about inflation and fiscal deterioration. It expects the consolidated fiscal deficit of the Centre and States at 10.09% for 2009-10 and sees inflation, imported and local food inflation, as a significant risk for the Indian economy.



» Directors of the prestigious Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) and members of their boards will eventually be appointed through an independent collegium of industrialists and academics.

Also, IIMs can set up campuses abroad, provided they come up with "workable proposals and preferably function together instead of individually".

"We want to globalise the IIM brand," said HRD Minister Kapil Sibal. In another major move, the government agreed that a collegium, as mooted for the appointment of vice-chancellors of central universities, would also apply to IIMs, where majority appointments so far are cleared by the HRD ministry, which advertises the positions before short-listing and selecting candidates.

But that is set to change to advance the cause of transparency in appointments to top institutes. IIM boards are also proposed to be restricted in size, with HRD ministry describing them as "unwieldy and huge". The membership will be limited to 13 (currently over 20 or so).

The boards are proposed to be reconstituted post January 2010, the deadline which the government has given to IIM directors to present their views on the constitution of the collegium, which will be empowered to recommend names of board members and directors to the government for final selection.

For the institutes to beat competition, autonomy is the key, feel the directors. Sibal agrees, but with a rider: "We are for IIM autonomy, for letting go, but let's not forget that the primary responsibility of all education systems is national."

» Twenty two years and Rs 960 crore later, the government plans to spend another Rs 15,000 crore over the next 10 years to make the Ganga river pollution free. This decision was taken at the meeting of the first National Ganga River Basin Authority, chaired by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, on October 5, 2009.

It has been decided to take up the cleaning of the Ganga river on a mission mode. Mission Clean Ganga will ensure that by 2020 no untreated municipal sewage and industrial effluents flows into Ganga. At present, the sewage treatment capacity is about 1,000 mld, against 3,000 mld sewage being generated in the towns along Ganga. Nearly 75% of the pollution in the Ganga is on account of municipal waste.

The costs will be borne by both the Centre and the States. There were disagreements over the sharing, with States asking for 100% central funding. An alternate funding pattern of 70% by the Centre and 30% by the States has been suggested. A final decision on the sharing ratio will be worked out by the Planning Commission, in consultation with the States and Central government.

In the meantime, the World Bank has offered a loan of \$1 billion for the mission.



» India has notified its separation plan in the IAEA, which formally separates India's civilian and military nuclear establishments. The plan, which was announced in March 2006, has passed muster at IAEA and India's safeguards agreement is now officially operational.

This is likely to help in the negotiations for the reprocessing agreement that is currently under way between India and US. But more than that, this will silence many non-proliferation critics in the new Obama-led US administration who had been looking at the delay in notifying the safeguards agreement as an example of Indian dithering.

» Pakistan has succeeded in its efforts to compel the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) to appoint a special envoy for Jammu and Kashmir. At its meeting in New York earlier in first week of October 2009, the OIC also stated that it supported people of Jammu and Kashmir in realisation of their legitimate right to self-determination in accordance with relevant UN resolutions and aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

A fuming India reacted sharply to the OIC action, dubbing it as interference in the internal affairs of this country. "Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India and it is our firm position that the OIC has no locus standi in matters concerning India's internal affairs," the External Affairs Ministry said in a statement.

Condemning the OIC move, New Delhi said inherent in its statements and actions on the issue of Jammu and Kashmir was a complete inability to understand India's position.



» On October 14, 2009, India signed an agreement for civil nuclear cooperation with Argentina, making it the seventh nation to ink such an accord with this country after New Delhi secured a waiver from the nuclear suppliers' group (NSG) to undertake nuclear commerce.

The agreement for cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy was among the 10 accords signed by the two countries following wide-ranging talks between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and visiting Argentine President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner, during which they desired to establish strategic partnership between their two nations. The two leaders discussed a wide range of bilateral, regional and global issues of mutual interest.

A joint statement issued by India and Argentina after the visiting dignitary concluded her talks with Indian leaders said the two sides shared the view that civil nuclear energy could play an important role as a safe, sustainable and non-polluting source of energy in meeting rising global demands for energy.

The other nine accords signed between the two sides include: exchange of letters for business visa providing for five years multiple entry gratis visa for a single stay of 90 days; programme of cooperation in science and technology for 2009-11; MOU between ONGC Videsh Limited and ENARSA; MOU on sports cooperation; MoU on cooperation in the field of trade promotion and technology transfer in international trade; and agreement on outer space.

The two sides also agreed on the need to give a new impulse to multilateral negotiations in the area of disarmament, especially weapons of mass destruction.



» Without getting into the recent spat over Arunachal Pradesh, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao talked peace and harmony on October 24, 2009, in a meeting on the sidelines of the India-ASEAN summit in Thailand.

The visit of the Dalai Lama to Arunachal also did not figure in the discussions between the two leaders who instead focused on the positives in the relationship and agreed that "differences" should not impede cooperation between the two countries.

In an effort to ameliorate the recent strain on the bilateral relationship, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh even proposed that the two countries observe the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties in a "fitting manner". He also put stress on the trade and economic relations, calling it a "vital pillar" in the bilateral relationship.

This exchange at the highest political level came after an escalation in the rhetoric between the two sides over the border issue. China had objected to Mr Singh's trip to Arunachal Pradesh for the Assembly elections. This had elicited a strong reaction from New Delhi which had reminded Beijing that Arunachal remained an integral part of the country. New Delhi had further pointed out that in the democratic system leaders visited States where elections are taking place. This was further followed by India protesting against China's involvement in projects in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir, which New Delhi pointed out was also disputed territory. New Delhi had earlier also objected to Beijing's practice of issuing visas to people from Jammu and Kashmir on loose sheets.

Chinese Prime Minister Wen recalled Mr Singh's remark about both sides having enough space to develop and cooperate and added that there are sufficient areas in the world for India and China to enhance such cooperation. The Chinese premier further suggested that the Joint Economic Group should hold early consultations and that China would work with India to handle the matter of the growing trade deficit.

India also rejected China's objections to Dalai Lama's Arunachal visit in November while making it clear that the Tibetan spiritual leader was not allowed to indulge in political activities on the Indian soil. The issue figured when Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and his Chinese counterpart Wen Jiabao were seated next to each other at a gala dinner hosted by the Thailand Prime Minister for leaders attending the ASEAN and East Asia summits.



» Amidst tension over political issues, India and China have signed an agreement to cooperate on ways to fight climate change. Moving closer, at least on an issue concerning the entire world, the two neighbours announced setting up of a Joint Working Group (JWG) to exchange views concerning international negotiations on global warming. The memorandum of agreement (MoA) assumes significance in the run-up to the Copenhagen climate summit. Developed and developing countries are at loggerheads over who should reduce emissions of greenhouse gases that are causing climate change.

India and China are in the same bloc as the Group of 77 countries in climate negotiations.

The MOA acknowledges that climate change and its adverse effects are a common concern of mankind and need to be addressed through international co-operation. It emphasises that the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol were the most appropriate framework for addressing climate change.

The agreement also reaffirms the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, in particular that developed countries should take the lead in reducing their greenhouse gases and providing financial resources, technology transfer and capacity building support to developing countries.

» Egypt has invited India to build a 'India industrial zone' in the Suez development area for setting up joint ventures with Egyptian companies. Egypt's Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif, in his meeting with commerce and industry minister Anand

Sharma in Cairo, offered to designate an area for setting up of the zone exclusively for Indian companies.

India could gain significantly from the offer as it would give it easier entry to the European and African markets, since Egypt has preferential access to both.

The Suez development area, located on the north-west coast of the Gulf of Suez, has lower bureaucratic barriers to business formation and provides tax incentives. The law gives more incentives for priority areas, such as infrastructure, auto parts, software, oil field services, tourism and manufacturing. The terms and conditions of investing in the proposed India zones and the tax benefits to industry are to be worked out.

Indian companies have, till now, invested about \$750 million in 40 projects in Egypt. India has a significant presence in the IT and automobile sector with companies like Wipro, Satyam, Mahindra and Tatas having invested in the country.



» In a speech delivered at the inauguration of the Anantnag-Qazigund rail link in Anantnag, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh focused largely on ties with Pakistan and the earlier success of cross-LoC initiatives.

Targeting domestic audience and also sending out a message to Pakistan, Mr Singh prefixed his offer of peace with the rider that Islamabad must bring perpetrators of terror attacks to justice and destroy terror camps. "For a productive dialogue it is essential that terrorism must be brought under control," he said.

Mr Singh said India would put pressure on Pakistan to curb the activities of the elements engaged in terrorism against India. "If they are non-State actors, it is the solemn duty of the government of Pakistan to bring them to book, to destroy their camps and to eliminate their infrastructure. The perpetrators of the acts of terror must pay the heaviest penalty for their barbaric crimes against humanity," he said.

With Pakistan now being targeted by terrorism, Mr Singh said there could be no compromise with the ideology of terror. "It is a misplaced idea that one can reach a compromise with the ideology of the terrorists or that they can be used for one's own political purpose. Eventually, they turn against you and bring only death and destruction. The real face of the terrorists is clear for the people of Pakistan to see with their own eyes," he said.

He maintained that India was ready to discuss humanitarian issues whose "resolution requires the cooperation of Pakistan". "We are ready to discuss these and other issues with Pakistan. I hope that, as a result, things will be made easier for our traders, divided families, prisoners and travelers," he said.



» President Pratibha Patil visited UK and Cyprus from October 27 to 31, 2009. During her visit to UK she received the Baton of the Commonwealth Games from the Queen of England at a ceremony in the Buckingham Palace in London on October 29.

This was the third State visit by an Indian President to the UK. The first was by President S. Radhakrishnan in 1963 and the second by President R. Venkataraman in 1990. This was also the first State visit after the commencement of the strategic partnership between India and the UK in 2009.

During her visit, President Patil interacted with Queen Elizabeth of England as also met Prime Minister Gordon Brown, leader of the opposition David Cameron and leader of the Liberal Democratic Party Nick Clegg.

She also addressed in London a business meeting organised by the UK India Business Council.

» The President visited Cyprus on an invitation of the then President of Cyprus Papadopoulos who visited India in April 2006. The last time an Indian President visited Cyprus was 21 years ago, again R. Venkataraman, whereas all former Cyprian Presidents have visited India during their term of office.

Cyprus has always supported India on all crucial issues and expressed its understanding on our nuclear tests in 1998 and supported Indian position during Kargil war, too.

India is planning a major headway in generating energy through solar sources. It has approached Cyprus which has made considerable headway in that direction to develop solar power plants ranging between one MW and 50 MW. An MoU was signed in the presence of visiting Indian President Pratibha Patil for providing solar power to India.

The MoU states that NORASCO, UPTURN of DALCO company and CASE NEUBERG of the CASE group of companies will supply solar photovoltaic systems, kits and technology for solar energy projects in India. It also states that CASE will be Indian technology and engineering partners for setting up turnkey solar energy plants in India and NORASCO will provide project finance and investments of EURO 50 million in solar energy sector in India between 2010 and 2015. The Photovoltaic Technology Group of University of Cyprus (PVT Group) also signed an MoU with NORASCO whereby PVT Group will act as a technology consulting partner for developing solar energy projects and solar energy education in India.



» Jharkhand presents an example where lack of political stability was allegedly exploited by a group of legislators led by former Chief Minister Madhu Koda to fatten themselves. The Enforcement Directorate, on October 9, 2009, slapped charges under Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) on the former Jharkhand CM and three of his former Cabinet colleagues for allegedly amassing assets running into several hundred crores—between Rs 700 and 800 crore according to the preliminary estimate.

Koda, the first Independent to become Chief Minister and now a member of Lok Sabha supporting UPA government, has been charged with having business interests of diverse kinds—cement, steel, auto, power, agro and tourism. His alleged investments, estimated at Rs 300-400 crore, are just as

widely spread—from Singapore to Thailand to Dubai to Liberia.

The Centre's plans to take the battle to Naxalites hinge on a strategy that will see Central and State forces acting in concert to first wrest control of areas long considered "Red" zones and then facilitate expeditious restoration of civil administration.

» The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) has okayed a comprehensive approach to Maoist extremism with a "clear and hold" doctrine at the centre of the anti-Naxal "action plan". Moving from the current largely reactive stance which saw occasional jabs into Maoist hinterland, forces will proactively engage the ultras.

The view in government is that the offensive cannot be delayed much further. With alarming signs of an emboldened Maoist leadership targeting urban areas beyond their known forest hideouts—arrested politburo member Kobad Gandhi was incharge of operations in cities like Delhi, Mumbai and Pune—the government is gearing for action and bracing for casualties.

The strategy for acting on intelligence tip-offs and hitting at naxal bases deep in Red "liberated" zones was put to trial in September 2009 in Chhattisgarh's Dantewada. The Maoists were routed but the hazardous forests and complete lack of infrastructure underlined how difficult it would be for a force to operate "behind the lines". It is felt that the surge in Central and State forces after the Assembly elections in Haryana, Arunachal Pradesh and Maharashtra can be sustained if the local population is convinced that Maoists can be defeated and that the forces will not leave in a hurry. This would strengthen intelligence collection and provide the administration with valuable allies as even fence sitters opt for the winning side.

The Centre plans to deploy 70,000 paramilitary personnel—drawn from CRPF, ITBP, BSF, SSB, CoBRA and Nagaland Armed Police—in States like Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Bengal, Bihar, Maharashtra and Andhra.

» On October 3, 2009, Irish voters strongly endorsed the European Union's Lisbon Treaty-16 months after their first vote rejecting it plunged EU reforms into deadlock.

About 67% voted "Yes". Irish Prime Minister Brian Cowen hailed a "clear and resounding" endorsement. Political leaders across the EU have also welcomed the result. The President of the European Commission, Jose Manuel Barroso, said it was a great day for Europe. He urged the leaders of Poland and the Czech Republic-the only other countries yet to ratify Lisbon Treaty-to sign the treaty as soon as possible.

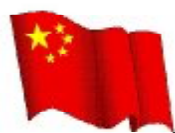
The treaty-which is aimed at streamlining decision-making in the 27-nation bloc-cannot take effect until all 27 member States ratify it.

Ireland was the only EU member State to hold a referendum on Lisbon Treaty, though there have been calls for referendums in several countries.

Irish opinion is thought to have swung behind the "Yes" vote this time because of the severity of the economic downturn, as well as the legal "guarantees" on Irish sovereignty that the EU pledged after the first referendum.

The legally binding "guarantees" state that Lisbon Treaty will not affect key areas of Irish sovereignty, such as taxation, military neutrality and family matters such as abortion-significant issues in 2008's campaign in Ireland. But they have not yet been attached to the treaty.

The treaty is intended to make EU institutions better suited to the enlarged bloc of 27. But opponents see it as part of a federalist agenda that threatens national sovereignty.



» While China figures among the only five countries across the world that improved their Human Development Index (HDI) rankings, 2009, by three or more points, India continues to cut a sorry figure, slipping six points (from the last compilation) in the latest UNDP Human Develop-

ment Index. Overall, however, India made progress on HDI, improving its value from 0.556 in 2000 to 0.612 in 2007.

As against a standing of 128 in the 2008 UN Human Development Report, India has been ranked 134th among the 182 nations surveyed. The slip represents poor progress on some indicators of people's well-being, including life expectancy, literacy, school enrolment and GDP per capita.

In China (ranked 92), along with Colombia, France, Peru and Venezuela, which improved their rankings by at least three points, the fillip has been attributed to increase in incomes and life expectancy. China, Colombia and Venezuela's progress has also been driven by improvement in education. The report concludes that disparities in life expectancy in the world can range up to 30 years. Despite progress in the last 25 years, disparities in people's well-being in rich and poor countries continue to be unacceptably wide.

2009 report represents the most extensive coverage ever of 182 countries. As for rankings, the top three ranked countries in the HDI are: Norway, Australia and Iceland. France rejoined the top 10 countries after dropping down for one year, while Luxembourg fell from the top 10.

» As the Bangkok round of talks on climate change in October 2009 came to an end, the rift between the developed and developing countries appeared to have deepened and widened. The developed countries would like to abandon the Kyoto Protocol, in favour of a new agreement, while the developing countries would like an extension of the Protocol. There has been virtually no progress on the issue of finance and mid-term emission reduction targets for industrialised countries.

Developing countries have opposed scrapping the Kyoto Protocol as it clearly places an obligation on developed world to deepen emission cuts and to provide finance to help developing countries to adapt to and mitigate climate change. The United States and Australia were among the 42 countries that sought to junk the Protocol. They argued that

the world had changed since the 1990s, and keeping in mind the ground realities a new agreement needs to be crafted. This agreement would require all countries to take on emission cuts. This move was resisted at Bangkok, with the developing countries under the G-77 umbrella argued that such a proposal would violate the Kyoto Protocol and the Bali Action Plan.

The bright spot in Bangkok was the unveiling of an aggressive emission reduction plan by Norway. The Scandinavian country had previously committed unconditionally to slashing emissions 30 per cent below 1990 levels by 2020. Its new pledge is to cut greenhouse gas output by 40 per cent if an international agreement is reached in Copenhagen in December 2009.



» Global terrorism with special focus on Afghanistan dominated the ninth trilateral meeting of the foreign ministers of Russia, India and China (RIC) that concluded in Bangalore on October 27, 2009.

The ministers emphasised the need for the three countries to assist Afghanistan in fighting terrorism, ensuring security, restoring peace and stability and building a democratic and pluralistic Afghanistan.

The meeting was held in the backdrop of two significant bilateral issues—meeting between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and China's Premier Wen Jiabao at Hua Hin, Thailand and trade, economy, scientific and climate meeting with Russia in Moscow on October 21—and resolved to jointly fight terrorism and narcotic trafficking with mention also being made on diplomatic settlement of Iran nuclear issue and denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

The demand for a greater role for India in the United Nation affairs has gained momentum once again. Russia and China made a strong bid for India's status in international affairs be accorded importance.



» Trade Ministers from SAARC countries have decided to fast-track negotiations on liberalising the services market within the region, a move that will enable freer movement of people within the region and give a boost to investments in areas like tourism, financial services and telecom.

Services could be incorporated into the South Asia Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) soon.

SAARC Ministers, who met in Kathmandu in October 2009, also decided to work on reducing the negative list of items that are not covered under SAFTA to make the free trade agreement more "meaningful". SAFTA is an agreement for elimination of tariffs on goods traded within the SAARC region, and was signed in January 2004.

» The leaders of 53 countries just concluded a climate change summit a mere few days before Copenhagen. Hosted in Trinidad and Tobago on 27-29 November, 2009, the Commonwealth Summit aimed to make progress on the negotiations that will come to a head in Copenhagen beginning December 7. One key outcome is a figure for a proposed "Copenhagen Launch Fund," of \$10 billion a year, described by President Nasheed of the Maldives as recognizing in part the plight of island nations in coping with climate change.

The Commonwealth countries assembled are comprised of many former British colonies, and the vast majority of these countries are severely threatened by climate change. These are countries like the Gambia, Cameroon (pictured in this photo), Guyana, and Kiribati. The countries represented in Trinidad make up one third of the world's population.

» Indian companies are way ahead in the region in disclosing their carbon emissions and setting performance targets for mitigation of green house gases (GHG) emissions, according to a latest survey of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

The total GHG emissions reported by the respondents of carbon disclosure project (CDP) 2009 stands at 68.9 million metric tones (MT), which is almost double the GHG emissions reported in the last two years.

As many as 68 per cent of the respondents to CDP 2009 have reduction plans in place for slashing either their energy or GHG emissions as compared to 61 per cent last year while 84 per cent of the companies do not consider existing regulatory mechanisms as a risk but see it as an opportunity for triggering long term investment in energy efficient technologies. However, these companies do acknowledge that in future, the regulations may affect their businesses.

The report says 82 per cent of the companies acknowledge physical risks such as damage, disruption and displacement due to climate change as some of the major challenges that could result in financial losses.

This year a larger number of companies have not only started disclosing information on their GHG emissions, but they are also adopting more accurate methodologies for doing so and are providing categorical break-downs of their GHG emissions.

Close to 63 per cent of the companies disclosed their GHG emissions in CDP 2009, which is almost double as compared to only 33 per cent in CDP 2008.

This is the third edition of the CDP India report since it was first published in 2007 and is based on the top 200 companies in India based on market capitalisation.

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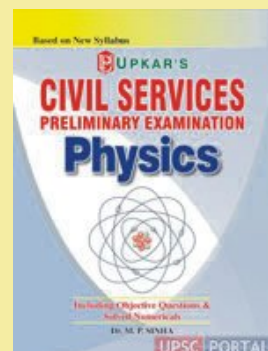
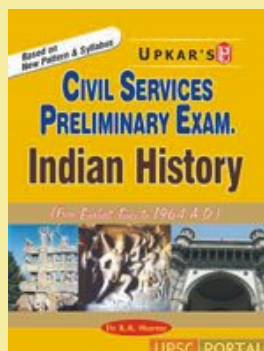
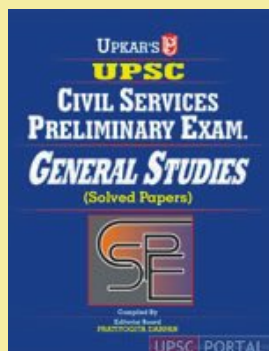
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SPORTS



» Two more Australia legends, Clarrie Grimmett and Greg Chappell, were formally inducted into the ICC Cricket Hall of Fame during the tea interval on the second day of the second Test between Australia and West Indies at the Adelaide Oval.

ICC President David Morgan presented commemorative cap to Grimmett's son Victor while Cricket Australia Chairman and ICC Director Jack Clarke presented the cap to Greg Chappell who was then driven around the outfield in a motorcade to allow the crowds to show their appreciation.

The Hall of Fame, run in association with the Federation of International Cricketers' Associations (FICA), recognises some of the truly great players from cricket's long and illustrious history.



The late Grimmett was one of Australia's greatest spin bowlers and took 216 wickets in 37 Tests, including five wickets in an innings 21 times and 10 wickets in a match on seven occasions.

Born on Christmas Day 1891 in Dunedin, New Zealand, Grimmett went to Australia on a short working holiday in 1914 and ended up spending the next 66 years of his life in the country and playing cricket for it. Grimmett holds the record for reaching the fast 200 Test wickets. He claimed his 200th wicket in his 36th Test. The next quickest to reach the milestone of 200 Test wickets, is fellow Hall of Famer Dennis Lillee who accomplished the feat in his 38th Test.

Making his debut for Australia at the age of 33, Grimmett is only the second bowler (the other being India's Dilip Doshi) to have made his Test debut after the age of 30 and still end up with 100 or more Test wickets. Doshi took 113 wickets in 33 Tests.

Also inducted into the ICC Cricket Hall of Fame today was Greg Chappell whose elder brother Ian was inducted into the ICC Cricket Hall of Fame during the Ashes series in England in July.

Born in August 1948, Chappell appeared in 87 Tests for Australia, scoring 7,110 runs with 24 centuries and 31 half-centuries. He captained Australia in 48 Tests, winning 21 Tests.



Chappell is one of the four batsmen to have scored centuries in his first and last Tests. He scored 108 on his debut against Australia in Perth in 1970 and signed off on his illustrious career by hitting 182 against Pakistan in Sydney in 1984. The other three batsmen to have achieved the rare distinction are Mohammad Azharuddin of India, Reginald Duff and William Ponsford (both Australia).

In 74 ODIs, Chappell made 2,331 runs at an average of 40.18 while in 321 first-class matches he scored 24,535 runs, including 74 centuries. He was named Wisden Cricketer of the Year in 1973.



» Opening batsman Gautam Gambhir was given the International cricketer and International batsman award 2009. While his partner and Delhi mate was awarded the best One Day International batsman. Gambhir, the winner of CEAT International cricketer and International batsman award also received a cash prize of Rupees 5,00,000. India's Erapalli Prasanna was given the lifetime achievement award for his contribution to the game.

Sri Lankan batsman Thilan Samaraweera, who was injured severely in the Lahore terror attack, was given the Spirit of Cricket award, while his teammate Ajantha Mendis was named the ODI bowler of the year.

Team Australia won the CEAT International cricket team award and a cash prize of Rs 10,00,000. Australian fast bowler Mitchel Johnson was awarded the International test bowler award.



» Former under-10 world champion Sahaj Grover has become India's youngest International Master, winning the final round game against the higher-rated Nicolas Clery to finish fifth in the International Open Chess meet, held in France. Sahaj played in a strong field comprising seven Grandmasters and eight International Masters.

(ICC Awards)

- » Cricketer of the Year: Mitchell Johnson (Australia).
- » Test Player of the Year: Gautam Gambhir (India).
- » One-Day Player of the Year: Mahendra Singh Dhoni (India).
- » Twenty 20 International Performance of the Year: Tillekratne Dilshan (Sri Lanka).
- » Umpire of the Year: Aleem Dar (Pakistan).
- » Spirit of Team Award: New Zealand.
- » Emerging Player of Year: Peter Siddle (Australia).
- » Associate and Affiliate Player of Year Award: William Porterfield (Ireland).
- » Women Cricketer of Year: Claire Taylor (England).

- » The ICC World ODI Team of the Year is (in batting order): Virender Sehwag (Ind), Chris Gayle (WI), Kevin Pietersen (Eng), Tillakaratne Dilshan (SL), Yuvraj Singh (Ind), Martin Gupthill (NZ), MS Dhoni (Ind, captain, wk), Andrew Flintoff (Eng), Nuwan Kulasekara (SL), Ajantha Mendis (SL), Umar Gul (Pak). 12th men: Thilan Thushara (SL).

- » The ICC World Test Team of the Year: M.S. Dhoni (Ind, captain, WK), Gautam Gambhir (Ind), Andrew Strauss (Eng), AB de Villiers (SA), Sachin Tendulkar (Ind), Thilan Samaraweera (SL), Michael Clarke (Aus), Shakib Al Hasan (Ban), Mitchell Johnson (Aus), Stuart Broad (Eng), Dale Steyn (SA), 12th man: Harbhajan Singh (Ind).

Though just 2288 as per ELO ratings of September 2009, Sahaj gained the required points to scale his rating well past the 2400 mark. The youngster had made his maiden Grandmaster norm in.

» Australia were crowned the 2009 ICC Champions Trophy winner after Shane Watson's unbeaten century guided the defending champions to a six-wicket victory over a depleted New Zealand in the low-scoring final match played at Centurion, South Africa.

» New South Wales Blues from Australia, already the most successful domestic outfit in cricketing history, added another feather in its cap by pulling off a 41-run victory over Trinidad and Tobago. The final was played at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium, Hyderabad. The Blues clinically hemmed in the West Indians, and in forcing them to hit out of trouble, ensured they were bundled out for 118 chasing 160. The victory made the Blues richer by \$2.3 million while T&T pocketed \$1.5 million.



» Munaf Patel and Sudeep Tyagi wreaked havoc with seven scalps between them as India Red won the Trophy, steamrolling Mahendra Singh Dhoni and his India Blue teammates by seven wickets in an extremely lop-sided final played at Nagpur.

» Rest of India clinched their fourth successive Irani Cup, defeating Mumbai on the basis of first innings lead, after the fifth and final day of the match was called off due to wet ground conditions.

» In India-Australia One Day series Praveen Kumar and Harbhajan Singh's batting heroics took India agonisingly close to a sensational win before the hosts slumped to a four-run defeat against Australia in the first match, played at Vadodra. Chasing 292, India scored 288 for 8 in the allotted 50 overs.

Captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni struck a breathtaking 124 as India put up an all-round display to

crush Australia by 99 runs in the second one-dayer to level the seven-match series 1-1, at Nagpur. Dhoni smashed a 107-ball 124 to guide India to a record 354 for seven, the highest against Australia.

Yuvraj Singh and captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni dealt the Australian bowling attack with a mixture of caution and aggression to power India to a six-wicket victory to go 2-1 up in series at the Ferozeshah Kotla, New Delhi.

The Queen's Baton Relay, one of the traditions of the Commonwealth Games, will travel 1,70,000 km and pass through 70 Commonwealth nations before reaching India for the Games starting on October 3, 2010.

It will take the Queen's Baton 240 days to complete the epic journey to all of the other 70 nations. On its 100-day tour in India, the baton will visit all the capital cities in India's 28 States and seven Union Territories and many other cities along the way, covering well over 20,000 km.

On arrival at the opening ceremony, the Baton will have travelled in excess of 190,000 km over a 340-day period. This will make the Queen's Baton Relay one of the longest relays in the history of the Commonwealth Games.

The Baton's run in India for the 2010 Delhi Games will be twice as long as the Manchester and Melbourne relays, which lasted for 50 days each.

Queen's Baton Relays have been the curtain raiser to every game since Cardiff, Wales, in 1958. The Queen's Baton for 2010 Delhi Games contains Queen Elizabeth II's 'message to the athletes.'

President Pratibha Patil joined Britain's Queen Elizabeth II to launch 2010 Commonwealth Games baton relay at a gala Indian ceremony in Buckingham Palace. The 51-year-old tradition took place on the last day of Patil's three-day State visit to Britain, with the Queen formally bidding farewell to Patil at the Palace's Grand Entrance.

The Queen's Baton for the 2010 Commonwealth Games is a delicate mix of aesthetics and technol-

ogy with an in-built location tracking system and a camera capable of sending images to the Games website.

Built with Aluminium and Gold, this piece of art has Queen Elizabeth's message engraved on a miniature 18-carat gold leaf that is symbolic of the ancient Indian palm leaf 'patras', using laser technology. Designed by Michael Foley of Foley design, along with Titan Industries and Bharat Electronics, it has an embedded system to receive SMSes sent by enthusiasts from across the world. These SMSes can be viewed when baton is docked on its special stands or on the website of the Commonwealth Games.



» In Singapore Open Amateur Golf Championship Rashid Khan, India's top-ranked amateur, walked away with the title. He shot a last round of two-under 70 to take the title ahead of overnight leader Thai Vasin Sripattranusorn and Singapore's Jerome Ng.

» Jeev Milkha Singh has added yet another feather to his well-adorned cap. The Indian golf pro has become the first Indian to tee up at the 16-man Volvo World Match-play Championships in Casares (Spain). The Championship was held in Spain for the first time in its history, moving from Wentworth Club to the magnificent 7,439-yard course at Finca Cortesin. The total prize money for the event was \$ 3,250,000.

» India rounded off their impressive tour of Canada with a 3-2 victory over the home side in their final game to win the seven-match hockey Test series 6-0, at Tamanawis Park.

» World champion Manavjit Singh Sandhu shone at the 2009 Asian clay shooting championship. He bagged the gold medal in the trap event in Almaty, Kazakhstan. He shot 121/125 in the qualification round and in the finals he came up with a score of 19/25 to claim the top position.

Mansher Singh won the bronze in the event with a score of 113+21. The team consisting of Manavjit (121), Mansher (113) and Anwer Sultan (109) took the silver with a total score of 343/375. The team gold was won by Kuwait with a score of 346.

Indian shooters finished the event with four gold medals, two silver and a bronze. Three gold were won in individual category by Ronjon Sodhi (double trap), Sangram Dahiya (double trap junior) besides Manavjit.



» Competing in the backdrop of a series of dope flunks, Indian weightlifters began their Commonwealth Senior and Junior Championship campaign in Penang, Malaysia, with a bang by winning six gold and four silver medals.

Out of the six gold, three were won by the senior lifters while the remaining were pocketed by the juniors.

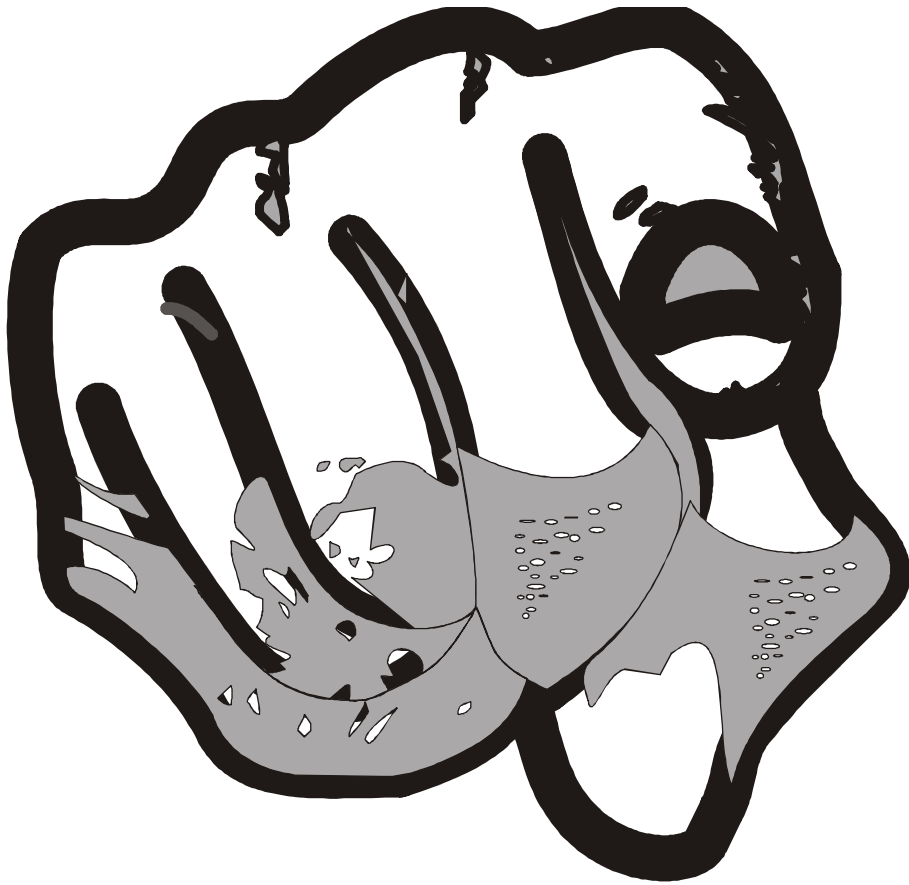
Indians won both gold and silver in senior men's 56 kg and 62 kg. In 56 kg, V.S. Rao clinched the yellow metal while V. Vinoth Kumar came second.

In senior men's 62 kg, Rustam Sarang won gold while Omkar Otari pocketed the silver.

In senior women's 48 kg, Soniya Chanu won gold. Bangaru Usha bagged gold in junior women's 48 kg, while compatriot Deeksha Gaikwad won silver in the same event.

In junior men's 56 kg, Sukhen Dey, who created history by becoming the first Indian male lifter to win a medal at the global level by winning bronze in World Junior Championships in Romania, bagged the gold, while Swapnil Ghagare won the silver.

K. Ramesh Kumar finished first in junior men's 62 kg to complete the tally of six gold and four silver for Indians.



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AWARDS



» British author Hilary Mantel has won the Booker Prize, 2009 for her novel *Wolf Hall*, which has been hailed by the judges as an 'extra-ordinary piece of storytelling'. She took 20 years to decide whether to write it. Her other well-known books include a memoir *Giving up the Ghost* (2003), and *Beyond Black* (2005).

» The Indira Gandhi Award for National Integration for the year 2008 has given to an eminent journalist of Jammu & Kashmir, Mr. Balraj Puri for his yeoman work in promoting National Integration in the country on the 31st of October, the Martyrdom day of Mrs. Indira Gandhi. The award which is given for upholding National Integration and Understanding consists of five lakh rupees in cash and a citation.



» Mining Journal magazine presented Lifetime Achievement Award 2009 to Mr Anil Agarwal chairman of Vedanta Group on December 2nd 2009. The Mining Journal announced their Outstanding Achievement Awards for 2009. Mr Anil Agarwal was given this award for his contribution in the mining industry.

Vedanta group is the first Indian group that has obtained a primary listing on the London Stock Exchange, in 2003, and within a short period of time moved into the select band of FTSE 100 Metals & Mining Majors, signifying the well crafted and visionary approach of Mr. Anil Agarwal. In no time, Vedanta Group's market capitalization increased from USD 1.9 Billion to USD 11 Billion.



» India's music genius and Oscar award winner A.R. Rahman has been nominated in two categories at the 2010 Grammy Awards for his *Slumdog Millionaire* soundtrack. The *Mozart of Madras* has been nominated in the best soundtrack for motion pictures and in the best song for motion picture for 'Jai Ho'.

The 52th edition of the Annual Grammy Awards will be held at the Staples Center in Los Angeles on January 31, 2010. This is the first time that the 44-year-old music director has been nominated for the Grammys.

Written by lyricist Gulzar, 'Jai Ho' was sung by Sukhvinder Singh, Tanvi Shah, Mahalaxmi Iyer, Vijay Prakash and Rahman himself. Rahman won two Oscars for *Slumdog Millionaire* and the best original score award at the 2009 Golden Globe Award.

Meanwhile, Sarod maestro Ustad Amjad Ali Khan also got a Grammy nomination in the best traditional world music album category. Khan has been nominated for the album "Ancient Sounds", a joint-venture with Iraqi oud soloist Rahim Alhaj.

» Leading NRI entrepreneur Maneck Dalal, who has played a major role in promoting Indian art and culture in the UK, has been awarded the Asian Leadership Award for his contribution towards heritage.

Dalal, who has been chairman of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan UK for the last 36 years, was presented the award by British lawmaker Keith Vaz in London.

Surinder Mongia, a leading NRI entrepreneur specialising in consultancy and design services for

aviation projects with offices in Canada, UK, Finland and India, won the Asian of the Year Award 2009.

Vijay Goel, partner at Singhania & Co, one of the largest Indian law firms here, received the Asian Leadership in Europe award for his "significant role in promoting Indo-European business relations. Dalal was educated at Cambridge University and called to the bar in London in 1945. At 29, he started Air India in the UK in 1948 and became the airline's first Regional Director. In 1973 he became the Indian government's Adviser for Tourism and Civil Aviation. In 1997, Dalal was conferred the Order of the British Empire by The Queen.

Other recipients of the awards included Alpesh B Patel, who was awarded the Asian Leadership in Indo-UK Business Relations, and Indya Aujla, who received the Asian Leadership in Harmony award among others.

Patel is the founder of Praefinium, an international asset management company and has been appointed by the UK government as a 'Dealmaker' responsible for India.

Ravi Gidar, who bought his first pharmacy at the age of 23, and is now managing director of Gold Care Homes, was awarded the Asian leadership in Community Health Care award.

Nina Amin, a chartered accountant and Tax Partner with KPMG, one of the "Big four" professional services firms in the world, was awarded the Asian leadership in Diversity for her contribution to share valuations for tax purposes.



» India's most beautiful and enigmatic voice from Bollywood is indeed that of Lata Mangeshkar. She is often addressed as India's Nightingale due to the flawless rhythm in her melodious voice. This magical owner of the outstanding voice box has been honoured with the French Award 'Legion D honneur.' The honour was bestowed in Mumbai on the 3rd of December 2009.

She is the second Indian to be given this prestigious award by France. The first Bollywood star to be given this honour was none other than Amitabh Bachchan.

Lata Mangeshkar has been lending her voice to the Indian screen goddesses since she was a teenager. Her undulating voice has been heard for more than 60 years in various languages ranging from Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Tamil, Telegu, and Gujarati etc. She is one figure which shall go down in the history of Indian Cinema as one of the greatest legends to have been born.



» Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is the recipient of the prestigious Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development for 2009 for her contribution to the promotion of democracy and pluralism. Sheikh Hasina embarked on her "Vision 2021", aimed at transforming Bangladesh into a middle-income country by eliminating poverty and inequity, after being elected as prime minister last year.



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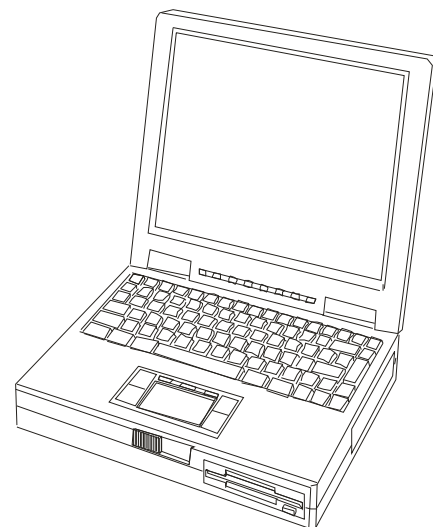
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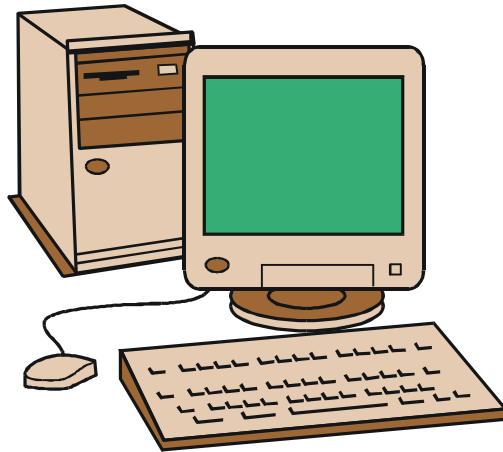


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