

CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR I.A.S. (PRE.) 2011

Political News & Various Reports

Mayawati sets up special force for guarding monuments of Dalit icons

- Not waiting for Governor B.L. Joshi's approval for the Special Zone Protection Force (SZPF) Bill and an ordinance by the same name meant for constituting a force for guarding monuments of Dalit icons, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Mayawati decided to constitute a special force of ex-servicemen with immediate effect.
- The SZPF proposal envisages the constitution of a battalion comprising about 1,200 security personnel, and would be headed by an ex-Army officer of colonel rank. The recruitment process and the service rules would be the same as applicable elsewhere in the country. About Rs.8 to 9 crore would be spent on constituting the force in the first year and it is likely to be set up.

NMR trial run on April 14

- The Nilgiri Mountain Railway (NMR) will be operated soon. Service on the narrow gauge track was stopped after landslides triggered by heavy rains hit the Mettupalayam-Coonoor sector on November 8, 2009. It is a World Heritage site, declared by UNESCO in 2005. ([Locate In Atlas](#))

Indus-like inscription on South Indian pottery from Thailand

- A fragmentary pottery inscription was found during excavations conducted by the Thai Fine Arts at Phu Khao Thong in Thailand about three years ago. The discovery of a Tamil-Brahmi pottery inscription of about the second century CE at the same site was reported earlier. The two characters incised on the pottery now reported are not in the Brahmi script. They appear to be graffiti symbols of the type seen on the South Indian megalithic pottery of the Iron Age-Early Historical Period (second century BCE to third century CE).
- What makes the discovery exciting is that the two symbols on the pottery resemble the Indus script, and even the sequence of the pair can be found in the Indus texts, especially those from Harappa.

- The symbol looking vaguely like an 'N' appears to be the same as the Indus signs 47 or 48. The symbol on the Thai pottery resembles a diamond. It occurs in the Indus script in diamond or oval forms. Signs 261 and 373. ([Locate In Atlas](#))

Pharma company clarifies on effects of Gardasil vaccine

- MSD Pharmaceuticals Private Limited, the company that markets Gardasil in India, has said that the vaccine can help prevent cervical, vulvar and vaginal cancers and genital warts caused by the HPV (human papilloma virus) types 6, 11, 16 and 18, as also some protection against 10 additional cervical cancers.

Centre appeals for lifting stay on Lafarge mining

- The Centre pleaded for lifting the stay on mining operations imposed by the Supreme Court on the Lafarge Umiam Mining company in Meghalaya, as there was nothing adverse in the Task Force's environment impact assessment report. ([Locate In Atlas](#))

Obulapuram: 'No major encroachment in first mine'

- The Survey of India (SoI) informed the Supreme Court that there was no major encroachment or illegal mining in so far as the first mine spread over an area of 68.5 hectares was concerned in the Obulapuram mines owned by Karnataka Minister G. Janardhan Reddy and his brothers in Bellary area.
- During the last hearing, the court had ordered fresh survey of all the three mining fields and till then stayed mining activities and lifting of extracted raw material. ([Locate In Atlas](#))

Maheshwar dam oustees start indefinite protest

- About 800 people affected by the Maheshwar hydel dam project have launched an indefinite protest in the capital, demanding that the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests put a halt on the project until the rehabilitation and resettlement (R&R) of villagers catches up with the construction of the dam.

MCI president remanded to five-day police custody

- Ketan Desai, president of the Medical Council of India, and three others arrested by the CBI in a Rs.2-crore bribery case.
- Dr. Desai was arrested by the CBI in New Delhi for allegedly granting permission to start admission in the medical college in violation of MCI rules "in lieu of heavy monetary considerations," CBI officials said

Kerala tops in devolving powers

- Kerala has been adjudged the best State in the country in devolving powers to local self-government institutions.
- Kerala received an aggregate of 74.74 points. Karnataka with 69.45 points and Tamil Nadu with 67.06 points came second and third respectively.

Government relieved as cut motions fail

- Thanks mainly to the support provided by Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati, the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government survived a trial of strength in the Lok Sabha as the cut motions moved by the Opposition parties were defeated.
- With this, the hope of a grand alliance of all Opposition parties against the government's economic policies, especially those resulting in price rise, suffered a setback when the political Right and the Left together registered a total of 201 votes for their cut motions against 289 by the government.

Daimary sent to 12-day police custody

- National Democratic Front of Boroland (NDFB) founder-chief Ransagra Nabla Daimary (alias D.R. Nabla or Ranjan Daimary) was remanded to 12 days in police custody by the Court of the Chief Judicial Magistrate in Guwahati.
- He had been arrested and handed over to the Border Security Force (BSF) by Bangladesh at the Dawki sector of India-Bangladesh border in Meghalaya. The Assam police later took him into their custody.

Kasab pronounced guilty of waging war against India

- After a 271-day trial, a special sessions court pronounced Mohammad Ajmal Amir Kasab, the lone surviving gunman of the November 26, 2008 Mumbai terror attacks, guilty of waging war against India.

- The 1,522-page judgment convicted Kasab of conspiring to wage war, along with nine other terrorists and 20 co-conspirators in Pakistan, and of murder and abetment to murder, among other offences. Among the 20 wanted accused indicted by the court are Lashkar operatives Hafeez Saeed, Zaki-Ur-Rehman Lakhvi, Zarar Shah and Abu Hamza.

At NGOs' instance, Muivah puts off visit to ancestral village

- National Socialist Council of Nagaland leader T. Muivah, put off his visit to his ancestral village in Manipur.
- Mr. Muivah, who arrived at Viswema village from the NSCN (Isak-Muivah) headquarters near Dimapur, said he responded to a request by four non-governmental organisations to postpone his visit to Somdal village in Manipur's Ukhrul district to facilitate proper arrangements.
- The Manipur government is opposing his visit on the ground that it will disturb communal amity. But a defiant Muivah said he would visit his village.
- The NSCN(IM) has been demanding the formation of a 'greater Nagaland' by merging Naga-populated areas of adjoining States, but the plea has been rejected by the Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh governments.

CCI clears Paradip Port proposal, highway projects

- The Union Cabinet's Committee on Infrastructure (CCI) cleared a proposal to develop a multi-purpose berth at Paradip Port at an estimated cost of Rs.387 crore. The project envisages the construction of facilities for handling containers and 'clean cargo,' totalling five million tonnes per year, with a view to decongesting the port and reducing the turn-around time for vessels. It is scheduled to be completed within three years.
- Chaired by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, the panel also gave the green signal for a host of highway development projects, including the six-laning of the Hosur-Krishnagiri section of National Highway 7 at a cost of Rs.535 crore and the two-laning of the Dindigul-Theni section of NH-45 (extension) and the Theni-Kumli section of NH-220 in Tamil Nadu at an estimated cost of Rs.501 crore. (*Locate In Atlas*)

CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR I.A.S. (PRE.) 2011

Conditional clearance for crest gates at Narmada Dam

- The Union government said that the environment sub-group under the Narmada Control Authority (NCA) had only “conditionally” allowed installation of (17 mt-high) crest gates (to be kept in raised position) at the Narmada Dam, under construction in Gujarat.
- The NCA, chaired by the Union Water Resources Secretary, gave instructions in 2008 that the next stage of construction at the dam would first be considered in the Environment and Rehabilitation and Resettlement sub-groups, after consultation with the Grievances Redressal Authorities set up in Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh.
- the Supreme Court said in 2000 that the NCA would give permission to raise the height of the dam from time to time “after” it obtains “clearances” from the Rehabilitation and Resettlement sub-group (including consultation with the three Grievance Redressal Authorities of Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra) and the environment sub-group. This sets at rest the controversy with regard to the permission for raising the height of the dam. (Locate In Atlas)

Centre’s gas pricing policy will prevail, rules Supreme Court

- Holding that gas is a national asset and the Centre’s pricing policy will prevail over any private agreement, the Supreme Court has directed Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) of the Mukesh Ambani group to initiate renegotiations with Reliance Natural Resources Ltd. (RNRL) of the Anil Ambani group for fixing the price of gas to be supplied to RNRL.
- Disposing of a batch of appeals, a Bench of Chief Justice K.G. Balakrishnan and Justices B. Sudershan Reddy and P. Sathasivam rejected RNRL’s claim that it was entitled to get 28 mscmd of gas from the KG Basin at \$2.34 mBtu in terms of a 2005 Memorandum of Understanding between Anil and Mukesh without any price approval by the government.

AADHAR not mandatory, says Nilekani

- Unique Identification Authority of India Chairman Nandan Nilekani ruled out making AADHAR, the unique identity number of each individual, mandatory for all citizens, and said it would be optional.

- The proposed law seeking to grant statutory status to the UIDAI would seek to put in place a frame work to protect the data across the country from being misused, Mr. Nilekani said. He underlined the need for checks and balances to protect the data from both private and government users.

Bill Gates signs agreement with Bihar to boost health standards

- In a move to bolster Bihar’s public health standards, the State government signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.
- The Bihar government and the Foundation anticipate the programmes and activities governed by the memorandum to have a five-year duration, from 2010 to 2015.
- According to the MoC, the Foundation will provide technical, management and program design support via NGOs in the areas of maternal, neonatal and child health; maternal and child nutrition; vaccine-preventable diseases, tuberculosis, pneumonia and Kala-azar, among others.

Four Chola inscriptions found near Kancheepuram

- Four inscriptions, two of Raja Raja Chola (regnal years 985-1014 A.D.) and two of the earlier Chola period of 10th Century A.D., have been discovered at Siru Karumbur village, near Kaveripakkam, 20 km from Kancheepuram in Tamil Nadu on the initiative of Sri Vijayendra Saraswati of the Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam. They throw light on the artistic and temple-building activities in the northern region (Tondaimandalam) of the Tamil country during the Chola period and Raja Raja Chola’s firm grip on the region.
- Kaveripakkam was an important township and army camp from the time of the Pallavas. It was originally called “Kavidhipakkam” — Kavidhi is the title conferred on an army commander. An inscription of the Pallava king Nandivarman of 8th Century A.D. mentioned Kavidhipakkam and another Pallava king, Nandivarman III, established a Brahmin settlement, Avani Narana Chaturvedimangalam, there. When the Cholas captured Tondaimandalam, the Pallava heartland, they stationed an army at Kavidhipakkam to protect the region’s northern boundaries. When Parantaka Chola (regnal years 907–955 A.D.) stationed his son Rajaditya at Kavidhipakkam to guard the Chola territory, Rashtrakuta king Krishna III invaded the region and Rajaditya was

killed circa 949 A.D. in a battle at nearby Takkolam. So the Cholas lost their hold on Tondaimandalam. (*Locate In Atlas*)

Assam to initiate talks process with ULFA

- The Assam Cabinet decided to initiate the process of talks with the insurgent United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA), even without Paresh Barua, the self-styled commander-in-chief of the outfit.
- Of the 15 central committee members of ULFA, six are currently in jails. These include ULFA chairman Arabinda Rajkhowa, self-styled foreign secretary Sasha Choudhury, finance secretary Chitran Hazarika, cultural secretary Pranati Deka, ideologue Bhimkanta Buragohain. Vice-chairman Pradip Gogoi and central publicity secretary Mithinga Daimary are on bail, while general-secretary Anup Chetia is lodged in a Bangladesh jail.
- Three ULFA central committee members have remained untraceable since the crackdown against the insurgent outfit by the Royal Bhutan Army in 2003, while another member, Robin Handique, passed away.

Deemed universities unhappy with the new UGC guidelines

- As per the new UGC (Institutions Deemed-to-be Universities) Regulations 2010, notified on May 21, the chancellor of a deemed university, appointed by the sponsoring society or trust, will have to be an eminent educationalist or a distinguished public figure other than the president of the sponsoring society or his/her relative. The chancellor can be a member of neither the society nor the trust.
- The new guidelines were issued with a view to plugging deficiencies detected in the recent review of deemed universities, which indicated that such institutions functioned as family 'fiefdoms.'
- These institutions will not be granted the deemed university status under the fresh guidelines, while the position of pro-chancellors has been abolished.
- The proposed deemed-to-be university will have to be registered either as a non-profit society under the Societies Registration Act or as a non-profit trust under the Public Trust Act. The new guidelines also make it mandatory for an institution to be in existence for at least 15 years before seeking deemed university status, against the earlier 10 years, except under the category of 'De-novo Institutions' or Innovative Universities.

India granted access to Headley: Jones

- India has been given access to David Coleman Headley, Pakistani-American Lashar-e-Taiba operative, who has confessed to his role in the Mumbai attacks, United States National Security Adviser James Jones said.

Keshub Mahindra, 6 others get 2-year jail for Bhopal tragedy

- A court in Bhopal convicted all the seven accused, including the former chairman of Union Carbide, Keshub Mahindra, in the Bhopal gas tragedy case and awarded them a maximum of two years' imprisonment.
- The verdict came 26 years after the tragedy on the night of December 2-3, 1984 ravaged the city, killing over 3,000 people immediately and thousands more in the following months.
- Dozens of tonnes of poisonous methylisocyanate gas leaked out from the Union Carbide India Limited (UCIL) plant and over 35,000 people were killed in the aftermath of the leak, according to rights activists.
- Warren Anderson, chairman of the U.S.-based Union Carbide group, who was named an 'accused' in the tragedy, was absconding throughout the trial period. Interestingly, the court did not mention his name.
- The accused were convicted under Sections 304-A (causing death by negligence), 304(II) (culpable homicide not amounting to murder), 336, 337 and 338 (gross negligence) of the IPC.

Sawai Man Singh Medical College signs MoU with US college

- The Rajasthan Government's Sawai Man Singh Medical College has signed a memorandum of understanding with the prestigious Weill Cornell Medical College of Cornell University, New York, U.S., for a student exchange programme and collaboration in medical education and research.

Cyclone Phet floods Rajasthan

- Most parts of north India received moderate to heavy rainfall, causing the mercury to dip sharply as flash floods triggered by Cyclone Phet inundated low-level areas of Rajasthan.
- Nearly 300 people in Lathi village in Jaisalmer district were evacuated while rail and road traffic continued to be affected due to heavy rains that lashed the desert State for the last two days. (*Locate In Atlas*)

CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR I.A.S. (PRE.) 2011**India among least peaceful places in world**

- India is among the least peaceful of major countries in the world and is getting even less peaceful year on year. This was the major finding of the Global Peace Index Report (GPI), an annual publication by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), a think tank focussed on researching the relationship between economics, business and peace.
- According to the 2010 report, which considered a range of peace-related variables among 149 countries, India's rank was 128, six ranks lower than its 2009 position.
- Some of India's key neighbours in South Asia ranked in the bottom 20 per cent along with India — Sri Lanka was ranked 133rd, Pakistan 145th and Afghanistan 147th. However, Nepal did much better, ranked in 82nd place and Bangladesh in 87th. Bhutan, ranked at 36th, narrowly missed being in the top 20 per cent of nations.
- While most developed countries including those of Western Europe and Canada, ranked in the top 20 per cent of peaceful nations, the United States was an anomaly, ranking at 85th, outranked by countries such as Rwanda, Indonesia, the United Arab Emirates and Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- India also ranked 19th out of 25 countries in the Asia-Pacific region. The leader in the region, New Zealand, was also the most peaceful nation globally. Close on its heels were Iceland and Japan. Iraq was estimated to be the least peaceful, accompanied at the bottom of the table by Somalia, Afghanistan and Sudan.
- The identification and weighting of indicators in the GPI, which is compiled by the Economist Intelligence Unit, was undertaken by an international panel of experts in the study of peace. (*Locate In Atlas*)

Rajasthan to have tribunals for senior citizens

- Rajasthan will have more stringent laws to tackle the instances of neglect of elderly by their children. The State also proposes to set up tribunals at sub-divisional levels with the Sub Divisional Officer presiding over it to monitor the status of the senior citizens in the area and book the erring wards.

Villagers protest against proposed atomic plant

- Government officials who came to carry out soil testing for a proposed atomic power plant in Gujarat's Bhavnagar district had to go back due to resistance and demonstrations by local villagers.

- The proposed 8,000 MW capacity plant, a joint venture of the Central and State governments with the support of the United States, is to be set up close to the Alang ship-breaking yard in coastal Saurashtra.
- The people of five villages are protesting as they fear they will lose their land if the project comes up.
- Government claimed that most of the land coming under the power project was government wasteland and not much of land acquisition would be required from private sources. But the people in the region were against an atomic plant to in the area, apprehending serious health hazards.

Omar inaugurates Sindhu Darshan festival

- In an attempt to promote the Indus river as an icon of communal harmony, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah inaugurated the three-day long Sindhu Darshan festival in Ladakh's Leh region.
- The Sindhu Darshan, first organised in 1997, is celebrated on the full moon day (Guru Poornima) in June every year.

'Nirmalgram Puraskar' to 1,720 villages in Maharashtra

- Maharashtra Governor K. Sankaranarayanan presented the 'Nirmalgram Puraskar' to 1,720 villages, in recognition of their achievement of full sanitation, at a function.
- The Nirmalgram Puraskar is a form of encouragement given to villagers under the Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC).
- TSC is a programme to ensure sanitation facilities in rural areas with the broader goal of eradicating the practice of open defecation.
- The Nirmalgram Puraskar has encouraged a healthy competition among villages. It is because of these efforts and general awareness that the sanitation coverage in rural areas has registered an impressive growth from 22% in 2001 to close to 60 per cent now.

P.C. Thomas, ex-MP, gets 3-year poll ban

- President Pratibha Patil, as per the "opinion" of the Election Commission, has disqualified the former MP, P.C. Thomas, from contesting elections for three years from May 19, 2010 for corrupt practices during election.

- He has been disqualified under sub-section (1) of the Section 8A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951. The charge against him was that he used his religious background to woo voters.

Chief Electoral Officers told to check 'paid news'

- The Election Commission (EC) has directed the Chief Electoral Officers (CEOs) to observe maximum vigil, by enforcing existing provisions of law, to check 'paid news' or surrogate advertisements in the print and electronic media during elections.
- The Commission said the recent phenomenon of 'paid news,' which "is assuming an alarming proportion as a serious electoral malpractice," was causing concern to it. The 'paid news' had to be seen as an attempt to circumvent the provisions of Sections 77 and 123 (6) of the Representation of the People Act (RPA), 1951, which prescribes accounting and ceiling of election expenses, and makes exceeding the prescribed limits a corrupt practice.
- The provisions of Section 127A of the RPA make it mandatory for the publisher of an election advertisement and pamphlet to print his/her name and address as well as that of the printer, and failure to do so attracts imprisonment up to two years and/or a fine of Rs.2,000. Section 171 H of the IPC prohibits expenditure on advertisement without the authority of the candidate.
- For the purpose of Section 127A (1) of the RPA, "election pamphlet or poster" means any printed pamphlet, handbills or other document distributed for promoting or prejudicing the election of a candidate or group of candidates Thus, 'paid news' would also fall in the category of 'other document' liable to be included in 'election pamphlet and poster,' the directive said.

We'll move CBI to probe Mahanta in Veterinary scam, says Gogoi

- The Assam government will move the Central Bureau of Investigation to reopen the Rs. 400-crore Letter-of-Credit scam in the Veterinary Department and investigate the "prima-facie case" against the former Chief Minister and Asom Gana Parishad leader, Prafulla Kumar Mahanta. This was stated by Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi.
- The CBI had named several politicians including Mr. Mahanta in the scam. But the then Governor, Lt. Gen.

(retd) S.K. Sinha, on February 6, 1998 declined the CBI sanction for prosecuting Mr. Mahanta on the ground that there was no prima facie charge against him.

- "Mr. Mahanta has claimed that the case against him has already been settled. It has not been settled. We will write to the CBI to investigate the prima facie case against him," Mr Gogoi said speaking at a seminar organised by the State unit of the National Students' Union of India as part of the birthday celebrations of AICC general secretary Rahul Gandhi.
- Mr. Gogoi was reacting to the charge made by Mr. Mahanta and other AGP leaders that his government was involved in a financial scam in the North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council. This case is now being handled by the CBI.
- On December 29, 2006, a CBI court special judge sentenced Rajen Bora, kingpin in the scam, and three others to five-year rigorous imprisonment in one of the 15 cases, the trial of which began in 1996.

Manipur truckers still keep off NH 39, landslips disrupt the other lifeline

- Despite the All-Naga Students' Association, Manipur, and the Naga Students' Federation (NSF) suspending their blockade of National Highways 39 and 53, normal road transport to Manipur is yet to resume. For, the Transporters and Drivers Council of Manipur (TDC) is sticking to its decision not to ply on NH 39, between Imhal and Dimapur, and a large number of trucks bound for Imphal through NH 53 are stranded owing to heavy landslips.
- The TDC is insisting on an assurance from the Nagaland government and the Centre of compensation for the damage caused to vehicles during the prolonged economic blockade. They also want an undertaking from authorities that illegal taxes allegedly being collected by underground groups and other organisations in Nagaland from vehicles plying on NH 39 will be stopped.
- Manipur government spokesman and Cabinet Minister N. Biren told that overall the supply situation had not improved despite the suspension of the blockade. The government would continue to persuade the TDC to allow vehicles to ply on NH 39 so that the acute scarcity of food grains, medicines, fuel and fertilizers, caused by the 67-day siege, could be overcome. (*Locate In Atlas*)

CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR I.A.S. (PRE.) 2011

Coimbatore all decked up for grand Tamil meet

- A sense of excitement, tinged with Tamil pride, has gripped the city of Coimbatore on the eve of the World Classical Tamil Conference beginning on June 23.
- There was a celebratory atmosphere in the CODISSIA Trade Fair Complex, the venue of the WCTC. Aesthetically fashioned structures to hold the inaugural event, academic sessions, seminars, exhibitions and cultural events attracted wide attention.

Sonia lays foundation of Rohtang tunnel near Manali

- UPA Chairperson Sonia Gandhi, who is also heading the National Advisory Council, laid the foundation of the 8.8-km-long Rohtang tunnel at Dhundi near the famous tourist resort of Manali.
- While addressing a public gathering at Solang Nallah later, Ms. Gandhi said the idea of the tunnel was conceived by late Rajiv Gandhi and even the former Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, during his regime, inaugurated the approach road to the tunnel site from the South Portal.
- Praising the efforts of Border Roads Organisation in constructing the tunnel, she said the tunnel would provide all-weather connectivity for the civilians and armed forces personnel and an alternative link to the residents living on the border areas of Himachal Pradesh and Jammu Kashmir.
- The idea of constructing a tunnel beneath the Rohtang Pass at 13,000 feet was envisaged in 1983 and its construction received an impetus after the Kargil conflict.
- It was to be made as an all-weather alternative strategic route to Ladakh from Manali in Himachal Pradesh.
- Avalanche protection
- On May 26, 2002, after the detailed feasibility study in 1987, Mr. Vajpayee laid the foundation of the access road to the tunnel costing Rs.180 crore and the access road to south portal tunnel site was completed in 2005.
- About 18 avalanche protection structures have been erected on it.
- The Cabinet Committee on Security cleared the tunnel project in September 2009 at a cost of about Rs.1,495 crore.

- The tunnelling would be completed in 2015 and that would reduce the distance between Manali and Keylong by at least 48 km, said the BRO sources.

- High altitude

- More than six to seven feet of snow is reported from the high altitude (13,044 ft.) Rohtang Pass during winter and it remains closed for six to eight months.

- Another tunnel

- The BRO is also studying the feasibility of constructing a tunnel beneath the Shinkula Pass (15,920 ft.).
- It has to conduct a feasibility study for construction of a tunnel beneath this pass that would reduce the present distance of 470 km between Manali and Leh by 100 km, they said. (Locate In Atlas)

Karnataka's conditional offer of water

- The Karnataka government has offered to release water from Alamatti dam for crops and other purposes in Andhra Pradesh "in time", that is after the kharif season begins, if Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra allow it to increase the dam height to 524 metres.
- Karnataka made its proposal before the Brijesh Kumar Tribunal on the Krishna Waters in New Delhi through its counsel with intimation to Andhra Pradesh's counsel P. Sudharshan Reddy, according to Shailender Kumar Joshi, Secretary, Irrigation.
- Karnataka government had taken this stand in compliance with a consensus arrived at the all-party meeting convened by its Chief Minister with leaders of Opposition parties on Alamatti recently. (The Supreme Court, disposing of the Alamatti, had restricted the height to 519.66 metres. It said any further increase in height by Karnataka would be at its cost and risk.)
- The offer came in response to the complaints by Andhra Pradesh that the kharif season for the established ayacuts in the State, including that of Krishna delta (over 14 lakh acres) and that under Nagarjunasagar (nearly 25 lakh acres) was getting postponed by three months every year. (Locate In Atlas)

Aviation sector can absorb up to \$120 billion investment by 2020'

- Prime Minister Manmohan Singh described the aviation sector as vital to India's sustained economic growth and said it played a major role in generating

tourist flow, accelerating industrial development, creating new jobs and integrating the country.

- Inaugurating the new, world-class Terminal 3 of the Indira Gandhi International Airport Dr. Singh said it was estimated that India's aviation sector could absorb up to \$120 billion of investment by 2020.
- Analysts predicted that domestic traffic could reach 160-180 million, and international traffic in excess of 50 million by 2020. "In a few years, India has become the ninth largest aviation market in the world. We now have 10 scheduled airlines operating in our country, compared with two in 1990. In the same period, the scheduled aircraft deployed by the Indian carriers has gone up four times, from 100 to about 400," Dr. Singh said.

Congress' 125th anniversary fete in Kolkata

- The celebrations for the 125th anniversary of the Indian National Congress will be held in the city of Kolkata from September 22 to 26.

Maharashtra panel to check printing of book on Shivaji

- With the Supreme Court lifting the ban on James Laine's controversial book on Maratha king Shivaji, Maharashtra government set up a three-member committee to explore options to stop its printing and circulation in the State.

India chapter formed to campaign against Israel

- The India chapter of the international movement to campaign for academic and cultural boycott of Israel has been formed by a group of intellectuals.
- "Just as it was in the case of the international call against South Africa in the apartheid years, we are confident that this boycott will be effective in contributing to international pressure on Israel to abandon its oppression and expulsion of the indigenous population based on military aggression, legal discrimination and persecution and economic stranglehold," said an appeal made by the 'Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel.'

Babli: parties arrive at consensus

- Ahead of their meeting with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in New Delhi on July 26, political parties in the State of Andhra Pradesh arrived at a consensus during an all-party meeting to fight unitedly against construction of Babli and 13 other projects across the Godavari by Maharashtra.

- By a resolution supported by leaders of all the parties who attended, the meeting demanded immediate stoppage of construction of Babli project. It requested the Prime Minister to intervene and provide a "permanent solution" to the issue of construction of projects across the Godavari and the Krishna by the upper riparian States without Central clearances. (Locate In Atlas)

A first for women

- Women constables of the Border Security Force take part in the 'Beating Retreat Ceremony' at the India-Pakistan Attari-Wagah border near Amritsar. For the first time in over four decades women BSF personnel have been made part of the routine ceremony. Women constables were appointed last year to perform duty on the International Border, but their role was confined to routine patrolling and managing crowds.

ISO certification for Rashtrapati Bhavan

- On a day when President Pratibha Patil completed three years in office, Rashtrapati Bhavan was presented with an International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) 14001:2004 Certificate for having emerged as the country's first urban habitat with excellent environmental management systems.
- A year after she assumed office, Ms. Patil initiated a project, "Roshni Programme," which was aimed at making the President's Estate a plastic-free zone and pushed for introduction of energy-efficient practices.
- The ISO certificate from the Bureau Veritas India (BVI) that was presented to the President's Secretary, Christy Fernandez, is in recognition of the practices adopted by the President's office and the residents of the estate in switching over to energy-efficient and best practices including water harvesting, solar energy and solid waste management.

Nariman: action against deemed varsities irrational

- Even as the Supreme Court has decided to examine the validity of the Tandon Committee constituted by the Human Resource Development Ministry, senior counsel Fali Nariman argued that the Centre's threatened action of withdrawal of recognition to 44 deemed universities, on the recommendations of the panel, is invalid in law.
- The Professor Tandon Committee had recommended de-recognition as these institutions failed to meet prescribed standards, and said they

CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR I.A.S. (PRE.) 2011

would be affiliated to the respective State universities. Its report has been questioned by the universities concerned. A Bench of Justices Bhandari and Deepak Verma has been hearing petitions relating to the deemed universities.

Madrasas will be kept out of RTE Act

- Union Minister for Human Resource Development Kapil Sibal held out the categorical assurance that madrasas would be kept out of the purview of the Right to Education (RTE) Act.
- Mr. Sibal said the Muslim fear that the Act would endanger madrasa education was unfounded in the context of the constitutional guarantees available to the community to establish and run their own educational institutions.

115 killed in Leh flash floods

- At least 115 people were killed and over 370 injured, and many more are missing as flash floods caused by torrential rain hit Leh town and adjoining villages. Several buildings were washed away.
- A cloudburst that occurred between 0030 and 0100 hours triggered torrential rain, mudslides and flash floods. Rescue operations have been taken up on a war-footing.

Dispute-free Village Scheme to get United Nations recognition

- The United Nations has decided to recognise the Mahatma Gandhi Tanta Mukti Gaon Mohim (Dispute-free Village Scheme) of the Maharashtra government. The scheme was introduced as a way to get rid of small disputes in the village and thus bring about harmony. It was also seen as a measure to reduce the work pressure on policemen.
- Pune Rural SP Pratap Dighavkar will present the model to the U.N. at their New York headquarters on August 11.

DD, AIR can't implement TRAI proposal by 2013

- With Prasar Bharati setting 2017 as the deadline for itself to shift completely to the digital mode, it might not be possible to implement the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India's recommendation to phase out analogue television by 2013, Information and Broadcasting Minister Ambika Soni, said.

- "Doordarshan is actively converting to digital," Ms. Soni said. The Centre sanctioned over Rs. 1,500 crore to digitalise both Doordarshan and All India Radio under the 11th Five Year Plan. However, since this involved a timetable lasting till 2017, she felt the TRAI recommendations may not be immediately viable.

Serious deficiencies in three freight corridor project contracts: CVC

- The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) has found serious deficiencies in three multi-crore contracts awarded by the Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India Limited (DFCCIL).
- The three contracts that came under the CVC scanner are: construction of 54 major bridges on the Surat-Mumbai corridor at a cost of Rs. 419 crores; construction of a new rail line of about 105 km on the Mughal sarai-Sone Nagar section in which the consultant's estimate was revised from Rs.568 crore to Rs. 665 crore and which was awarded at Rs.781 crore without quantifying assessment for reasonableness of rates; and the Rs. 133 crore contract for general consultancy services for the Bhaupr-Mandrak section of about 300 route km for electrification, signalling and telecom system.
- The manner of functioning of the DFCCIL had caused concern to the Planning Commission Deputy Chairman Montek Singh Ahluwalia in March and he wrote to Railway Minister Mamata Banerjee. "Given the exceptionally large financial implications [about Rs. 80,000 crore] of this project on the Railways' budget, it would be desirable to have the Financial Commissioner on its [DFCCIL] Board. It would also be useful to appoint some independent directors to lend greater quality to the deliberations of the Board," Mr. Ahluwalia had suggested.

Hoverport in Chennai soon

- The Coast Guard will establish a hoverport in Chennai, its headquarters for the Eastern region, to house hovercraft patrolling waters off the city once the State government hands over the required land.

Dissatisfied with 300% pay rise, MPs hold up Lok Sabha

- Hours after the Union Cabinet cleared a 300 per cent salary hike, from Rs. 16,000 to Rs. 50,000, for members of Parliament and doubled their perks, they appeared to be a dissatisfied lot and stalled the Lok Sabha proceedings thrice during the day, demanding more money.

- Though the Cabinet, which met under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, approved the Bill seeking a three-fold increase in the basic salary of MPs, it fell short of the Rs. 80,001 recommended by a joint parliamentary committee, which stated that an MP should get at least Re. 1 more than the top Central government bureaucrats.
- Besides salary, an MP gets an allowance of Rs.1,000 for each day the Parliament is in session or for taking part in House committee meetings. This has been doubled. A member is also entitled to a constituency allowance of Rs.20,000 a month and an office expense allowance of Rs.20,000 a month. These perks have also been doubled.
- The increase will be given with retrospective effect from May 2009, when the 15th Lok Sabha was constituted. However, the increase will be implemented when the Bill seeking amendment to the Salaries and Allowances of Members of Parliament Act, 1954, is brought in Parliament and passed by both the Houses.

Polavaram: government hails Orissa's stand

- The Andhra Pradesh government has hailed the statement reportedly made by Orissa Chief Minister Navin Patnaik during his meeting with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh at Delhi that Polavaram project would not cause any submergence in Orissa.
- The agreement signed by Orissa, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh providing for construction of Polavaram with the condition that if Andhra Pradesh would have to build flood banks to prevent submergence in Orissa and Maharashtra or pay monetary compensation.
- While formulating Polavaram project, the Andhra Pradesh government included a budget of Rs. 600-crore for the construction of flood banks. (Locate In Atlas)

Gegong Apang arrested in Rs. 1,000-crore PDS scam

- Former Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister and senior Congress leader Gegong Apang was arrested by sleuths of a Special Investigation Cell (SIC) probing the Rs. 1000-crore scam in Public Distribution System (PDS) in Arunachal Pradesh.
- Mr. Apang, who is credited to be second longest serving Chief Minister after former West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu, pleaded innocence and alleged that it was "a political conspiracy to tarnish" his "good image."

My work as your 'sepoy' has just begun, Rahul tells tribals

- All-India Congress Committee general secretary Rahul Gandhi told the Dongria Kondh tribals living in and around the Niyamgiri hills in Orissa that his work as their "sepoy" in New Delhi had just begun.
- He congratulated the tribals on emerging successful in their fight against the proposed mining of the Niyamgiri hills by Vedanta.

Assam, Arunachal move to end tension

- Assam and Arunachal Pradesh resolved to undertake confidence building measures to end tension along the border between them.
- A high level meeting in Dispur to discuss the situation in the tense areas bordering Sivasagar district in Assam and Tirap district in Arunachal Pradesh decided that Arunachal Pradesh would remove the bunkers set up between Charaipung and the Teok river. The area will now be jointly patrolled by police from both States.

\$220-million World Bank credit for Bihar

- The World Bank approved a \$220-million credit for Bihar to support its rebuilding efforts in areas affected by the 2008 Kosi floods.

Asia-Pacific region needs greater attention, says Manmohan Singh

- Prime Minister Manmohan Singh underscored the gradual shift of economic and political power to Asia and asserted that greater attention would have to be paid to the entire Asia-Pacific region.
- "The Asia-Pacific region, including South-East Asia, needs much more attention by us, and this must seep into our defence and foreign policy planning as never before. There is a palpable desire on the part of the countries of this region to enhance cooperation with us, which we must reciprocate," Dr. Singh told the Annual Combined Commanders conference.
- Defence Minister A.K. Antony said New Delhi could not lose sight of the fact that Beijing was improving its military and physical infrastructure.
- Both Dr. Singh and Mr. Antony mentioned the Maoist problem among other internal security challenges that needed focussed attention. Dr. Singh reiterated that Naxalism was a serious challenge to internal security.



IAS PRE 2011 - Current Affairs

Medium: English

Price: Rs. 190/-

Pages: 446

Author: S.A. Majid

ORDER ONLINE



<http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-form/Current-Affairs-Book-For-IAS-Pre-2011>

Search More Books @ : <http://upscportal.com/civilservices/order-books>