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DEPARTMENT OF TELECOM to finalise auctioneer on 10th July for spectrum auction

The Department of Telecom will finalise by 10th July the agency that will conduct the e-auction of spectrum in 22 telecom service areas, a delay of 15 days compared to the previous schedule.

This means a tight schedule for the DoT which has to complete the spectrum auction before 31st August as per a Supreme Court order.

With the new date for selection of auctioneer, the DoT will be left with roughly 45 days to finish the auction, according to a senior official.

The spectrum auction is vital for companies like Sistema Shyam Teleservices, Uninor and Videocon whose telecom licences have been cancelled by the apex court but they are still looking to continue their services with fresh permits.

The Supreme Court has given these companies permission to operate till 7th September, after which it is a must for them to get spectrum through auction process.



For 3G and wireless broadband (BWA) spectrum in 2010, DoT had selected global consultancy firm NM Rothschild and Sons.

The auction for 3G spectrum was completed in 34 days after completion of 183 rounds of bidding and BWA spectrum auction took 16 days to end after 117 rounds of bidding.

After finalising auctioneer, the DoT will need time to finalise various terms of the auction and give time to telecom companies to seek clarification and legal opinion on clauses of auction among others, the official said.

The DoT had earlier sought more than four and a half months time between the date of finalising auctioneer and start of bids for spectrum.

The department will hold pre-bid conference with prospective auctioneer on 12th June.

Panetta visit to boost India-US defence ties

India and the US will look to broaden defence ties during a visit this week by defence secretary Leon Panetta, officials said on June 3, 2012. Panetta, a former chief of the US Central Intelligence Agency who took over as defence secretary from Robert Gates last year, is on his first visit to India in his current capacity.

During his two-day stay on 5 and 6 June in New Delhi, Panetta is expected to meet Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, besides holding talks with his counterpart A.K. Antony. Panetta will also address the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses think tank. "The secretary has been eager to visit India since assuming his post last summer," an unnamed US official was quoted as saying last week in a post on the US department of defence website.

"We're trying to have a relationship with India that is broad, strategic and continual. With India, we are getting to a place where this type of interaction is just part of the norm of the relationship, where we engage on a whole range of issues—strategic issues, cooperative issues and a whole range of cooperative issues," the official said.

Once mired in mutual suspicions, India-US defence ties have undergone a sea change from the days of the Cold War, when India was seen on the side of the former Soviet Union, and the US, with its military and other support to India's arch-rival Pakistan, was seen as unsympathetic to India's security concerns.

In the 1990s, both sides moved towards greater contacts with the setting up of the defence policy group, institutionalizing a dialogue between the US defence department and India's defence ministry. But India's nuclear tests in 1998 and the subsequent sanctions soured the relationship, and it was only the removal of the strictures a decade ago that led to a resumption of civilian defence and military contacts in the form of joint exercises and dialogues.

Panetta's stopover in New Delhi after Singapore and Vietnam is unlikely to yield a far-reaching pact like the one clinched in 2005 when India and the US signed the landmark new framework in the India-US defence relationship that set the contours of their partnership for a decade. But his trip will be keenly watched as he could expand on what role the US would like India to play as Washington implements President Barack Obama's "pivot towards the Asia-Pacific" strategy—underlining the US as a Pacific power despite planned cuts of about \$500 billion in defence spending.

"The core of what we're trying to do in this swing through Asia is give a comprehensive account to everyone in the region about what the rebalance to the Asia-Pacific (region) will mean in practice," the US official cited earlier said.

In his speech at the Shangri-La Dialogue forum in Singapore over the weekend, Panetta reiterated the importance of the high-growth Asia-Pacific region to the US—naming China, India and Indonesia as examples of high-growth economies. Noting that the region has some of the world's largest populations and the largest militaries, Panetta said, "While the US military will remain a global force for security and stability, we will of necessity rebalance towards the Asia-Pacific region," according to a text of his speech posted on the website of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, which organized the Shangri-La Dialogue. The assurance comes against the backdrop of concerns among many countries in the region about the rise of China, its military modernization and the disputes over islands in the South China Sea that China claims as its territorial waters in its entirety.

CABINET CLEARS NEW TELECOM POLICY

The Cabinet on May 31, 2012 approved a new telecom policy that proposes to abolish roaming charges on mobile phones and allow users to retain the same number across the country. The Cabinet approved the National Telecom Policy (NTP) 2012, a senior minister told reporters after the meeting of the Cabinet.

The NTP 2012 aims to provide free roaming to telecom users and allow them to retain the mobile number even outside their circles without having to pay any extra charge.

currently, users have to pay extra when they receive or make a call in a circle outside their home network, called roaming charges. Also mobile number portability is not permitted outside circle. **"Target is one nation full mobile number portability and work towards one nation free roaming,"** Telecom Minister Kapil Sibal told reporters after the Cabinet gave approval to NTP.

The Department of Telecom (DoT) will now start process to implement full mobile number portability allowing users to retain their existing number at the time of changing their service providers across any state in the country.

However, consumers will have to wait for some time before roaming charges are abolished and one-number-one-nation concept implement as DoT will first work out modalities of the new scheme before it is brought into force.

The **NTP 2012 envisages increasing penetration of telecom services in rural area from current level of around 39 to 70% by 2017 and 100% by the year 2020.** Under the new policy broadband speed has been increased to minimum of 2 megabit per second (mbps). This change will come into force with immediate effect.

With the new policy getting approved, telecom licences have been delinked from spectrum which was earlier bundled with the licences.

The NTP 2012 will allow operators to provide services based on any technology by using airwaves and will not restrict them to use it for particular service using any specific frequency band. At present, there are frequencies which are specifically used for providing GSM or CDMA services as per the permit given to the companies.

The Cabinet has also cleared the point that pertains to encouraging domestic manufacturing of telecom equipment.

"Making India a global hub for manufacturing. Till the time we will not set up industry here...India will not be able to become become global. It is very important because along with this prices of device will also come down," he said.

The major details of the manufacturing telecom equipments are part of National Policy of Electronics, which Sibal said is expected to be approved within a month.

"Electronics manufacturing policy is hopefully going to be decided this month.. it will go to Cabinet soon," he said.

The Cabinet has approved NTP 2012 with five changes related to revenue generation objective, Spectrum Act and TRAI Act. The government has deleted Spectrum Act, which was proposed in the policy.

"Spectrum Act has been deleted as a policy matter we don't intend to have a spectrum act any more," Sibal said.

On giving more powers to Trai, the Cabinet has added that policy making function would remain with government and not the sectoral regulator.

"We just want to add that policy making function would, however, continue to remain with government, means TRAI will not make policy," Sibal said.

Experts Analysis

The New Telecom Policy, which was approved by the Cabinet today, will be a boon for consumers as they would be able to retain the number even when they migrate from one telecom circle to other, says consulting firm Deloitte.

The NTP 2012, which replaces more than a decade-old rules aims to ultimately abolish roaming charges, besides bringing in transparency and growth in the Indian telecom sector.

In the short-term, however, the NTP may impact telecom operators negatively as they would lose out on the roaming revenue. "However, in the long run as usage would increase with no roaming charges might offset the revenue loss caused to the operators," Deloitte Haskins & Sells Partner Hemant Joshi said.

He said the government's plan to make roadmap for availability of spectrum every 5 years would result in appropriate allocation of spectrum. It would also help operators design their network/technology adoption keeping in view the availability of spectrum, he added.

"NTP also envisages license and technology neutral spectrum allocation, which is step in right direction considering evolving efficient technologies," Joshi said.

"The NTP 2012 projects a bold vision for telecom sector with emphasis on spectrum management, broadband on demand, domestic manufacturing, rural coverage and infrastructure status, which would spur growth of the telecom sector and in turn Indian economy as telecom can play role of catalyst in the GDP growth," Joshi said.

He added that the approval has come at the right time as country's GDP growth is falling. The country's GDP growth has slowed down to 5.3 per cent in January-March quarter, 2011-12, compared to 9.2 per cent in the same period in 2010-11. As per world bank estimate, a 10 per cent increase in telecom penetration results in 0.81 per cent growth in GDP in a developing country.

The new policy broadband speed also mandates increasing broadband speed to minimum of 2 megabit per second (Mbps), with the change coming into force immediately.

Nokia Siemens Networks (NSN) Region Head India Sandeep Girotra also welcomed the NTP, saying the focus on providing broadband for all, local manufacturing and security were steps in the right direction.

However, Rajeev Chandrasekhar, Member of Parliament, expressed disappointment at the National Telecom Policy.

"The Cabinet approval of NTP 2012 and the unified licensing regime is welcome only because it ends the one-year delay that this policy has faced. Regrettably, neither the policy nor the unified licensing regime will resolve any of the crises that currently stalk the telecom sector," he said.

UGC TO ALLOW ONLY TOP 500 FOREIGN UNIVERSITIES TO ENTER INDIA

Foreign universities entering into agreement with their Indian counterparts for offering twinning programmes will have to be among the **global top 500**. The Indian varsities on the other hand, should have received the highest accreditation grade, according to the new set of guidelines approved by University Grants Commission (UGC) on Saturday. "The underlining objective is to ensure that only quality institutes

are permitted for offering the twinning programmes to protect the interest of the students," a source said after a meeting which cleared the regulations on twinning programmes. They said foreign varsities entering into tie-ups with Indian partners should be ranked among the top 500 by the Times Higher Education World University Ranking or by Shanghai Jiaotong University of the top 500 universities. Besides, the degrees will be awarded only by the Indian universities for their acceptability in Indian market.

Institutes failing to abide by the guidelines would be penalised including stoppage of grants.

The set of guidelines comes in the backdrop of growing concerns over the quality of foreign institutions that domestic colleges are collaborating with for twinning programmes.

Twinning courses have become sought after for Indian students in recent times, even though they are exposed to several risk factors owing to absence of some regulatory framework so far.

Foreign educators prefer adopting twinning mode to operate in India because they have least stakes and maximum income. Indian students, on the other hand prefer twinning because the total cost is less in exchange for a foreign degree and international exposure.



Current Events

Putin stands firm on Syria crisis

Russia's President Vladimir Putin has resisted diplomatic pressure from Western nations to support tougher action against Syria's government. Mr Putin, an ally of Syria, called for more time to be given to the peace plan of envoy Kofi Annan. The United States and Britain have called on Moscow to strengthen its condemnation of the Syrian regime since last week's massacre in Houla, where 108 died. Earlier, Moscow opposed a UN Human Rights Council resolution on Syria. In an emergency session yesterday, the council condemned Syria over the Houla massacre and called for an investigation. But Russia voted against the US-backed resolution, arguing that it was unbalanced.

Mubarak jailed for life for ordering killing of protesters

Egypt's ousted President Hosni Mubarak was on Saturday sentenced to life in prison after a court in Cairo found him guilty of complicity in the killing of protesters during a popular uprising against his 30-year rule, capping months of legal proceedings against the first Arab leader to be tried in person.

84-year-old ailing former dictator, who was wheeled into the courtroom on a stretcher after being flown here from a military-run hospital, got life imprisonment -25 years in jail along with his former Interior Minister Habib al-Adly, who was convicted for the same charge.

The verdict against Mubarak, the only dictator toppled in the Arab Spring to be tried in person, came ahead of the June 16-17 presidential runoff between his last Prime Minister Ahmed Shafiq and Muslim Brotherhood's Mohammed Morsi.

Six former police commanders -Maj Gen Ahmed Mohamed Ramzy Abdel Rashid; Maj Gen Adly Mostafa Fayed; Maj Gen Hassan Abdel Rahman; Maj Gen Ismael al-Shaer; Maj Gen Osama al-Marassy; and Maj General Omar al-Farmawy were acquitted by the court, which also dropped separate corruption charges against Mubarak's two sons Alaa and Gamal.

Mubarak and his sons were acquitted of all financial crime charges because 10 years have passed since the alleged crimes were committed.

Clad in a beige track-suit, the former President, who was wearing dark sunglasses, showed no emotion when Chief Judge Ahmed Refaat read out the verdict, but his sons appeared close to tears.

The Prosecutor General ordered Mubarak to be transferred to Tora prison to spend his sentence, amid reports that the former President's lawyers will file an appeal against the verdict.

Eyewitnesses were quoted as saying that a tearful Mubarak resisted stepping out of the helicopter that flew him to the prison after the verdict was announced.

Over 800 protesters had been killed during the 18-day revolt following

which Mubarak was ousted on February 11, 2011.

Handing down the sentence to Mubarak and al-Adly, Judge Refaat said that the 10-month trial had been a fair one.

He said Egyptian people had suffered 30 years of darkness under Mubarak's rule.

The Interior Ministry had taken special measures to secure the premises of the court, where the trial had taken place.

The wall around the police academy in New Cairo, a satellite city around the capital, had been raised to four metres in addition to another metre of barbed wire.

The court had also refused to issue any new permits to cover the trial and kept the coverage exclusive for state-owned TV.

After the verdict was announced, scuffles between rival groups erupted in the court.

Lawyers representing the families of those killed in last year's uprising exploded in protest inside the courtroom, as al-Adly's six deputies had escaped conviction.

They chanted, "The people demand the purging of the judiciary!" and "illegitimate!" as scuffles broke in the courtroom.

Bob Dylan awarded highest US civilian honour

Legendary singer Bob Dylan was conferred with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honour given in the US.

The 71-year-old vocalist was among the 13 recipients of America's highest civilian honour at the White House and President Barack Obama, who presented the award, said he is a big fan of the musician.

"By the time he was 23, Bob's voice, with its weight, its unique, gravelly power was redefining not just what music sounded like, but the message it carried and how it made people feel.

Today, everybody from Bruce Springsteen to U2 owes Bob a debt of gratitude. There is not a bigger giant in the history of American music. "I have to say that I am a really big fan. I remember, you know, in college listening to Bob Dylan and my world opening up because he captured something about this country that was so vital," Obama said.

The president chooses the recipients of the medal, which is awarded to people who have made major contributions to the security of the United States, world peace or culture, or have undertaken other significant public or private endeavours.

HC suspends Spl CBI Judge Pattabhi Rama Rao on graft charge

A CBI special judge T Pattabhiramaa Rao, who gave bail to high-profile accused and mining baron G Janardhana Reddy, has been suspended by Andhra Pradesh High Court after the agency claimed that nearly Rs 1.80 crore was recovered from a bank locker allegedly of his son.

The suspension of Rao on corruption

and bribery charges will remain till the conclusion of the disciplinary proceedings proposed to be initiated against the judge.

CBI sources claimed on Friday that nearly Rs 1.80 crore in cash was recovered from a bank locker in Hyderabad, the keys of which were allegedly in the possession of the son of Rao.

It had carried the search of the locker based on a source based input that a deal was allegedly struck between Rao and Reddy, a former Karnataka Minister, for granting bail to the latter in the illegal mining case, the sources said. First Additional Special Judge for CBI cases Pattabhirama Rao has been placed under suspension after the High Court considered the information it received against the judge in "public interest", the High Court Registrar said in a release.

Incidentally, the judge had granted bail to Reddy in the OMC illegal mining case last month while he had rejected bail to IAS officer Y Srilakshmi, another accused in the OMC scam.

However, following an appeal by the CBI, the High Court had kept under suspension till June 5 the orders on granting bail to Reddy.

Registrar General (Vigilance), who issued the order in this regard Thursday night, said after considering the information received against the judge, the High Court decided that it was necessary to place him under suspension in public interest, with immediate effect.

Before proceeding with the search, the CBI officials took Chief Justice of Andhra Pradesh High Court into confidence and apprised him about the input received by them, CBI sources said.

After getting a green signal from the Chief Justice, a CBI team got the locker opened and recovered nearly Rs 1.80 crore from it which the agency suspects belonged to Reddy and was allegedly given as illegal gratification, they said.

Myanmar has stopped nuclear research: Defence Chief Singapore

Myanmar government has halted fledgling research on the peaceful use of nuclear power, the country's defence minister said on Saturday. Lieutenant General Hla Min told in an Asia security conference in Singapore that the academic research had not progressed much because of what he called practical constraints.

"In this new government, we have already given up all activities of nuclear issues. We have no future plans to extend on this," he said through an interpreter.

Hla Min acknowledged that Myanmar's previous government, dominated by the military, had started academic studies on the peaceful use of nuclear power.

"In the case of the nuclear issue, we have already said very clearly that it is not for defence, it is not for weapons," he said at the summit, the Shangri-La Dialogue, which gathers mostly Asian defence officials.

"It's just research in the past. We have not progressed much due to our constraints," he said. He added Myanmar had no "practical ways and

means" to achieve its objectives, apparently suggesting the previous government lacked the funds to pursue the nuclear project.

A 2010 United Nations report accused Pyongyang of supplying banned nuclear and ballistic equipment to Myanmar, Iran and Syria. But in an interview with Singapore's Straits Times published in January, Myanmar President Thein Sein denied his country was trying to obtain nuclear weapons from North Korea, and called the allegations "unfounded".

In a landmark visit to Myanmar in December, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton called on the country to sever "illicit ties" with Pyongyang to foster better relations with Washington. The defence minister on Saturday said Myanmar's links with North Korea resembled normal ties between any two countries. But Hla Min pledged that "in the future, we will be open and transparent on this relationship, we will endeavour to do that".

He also dismissed a suggestion from the audience that Myanmar allow inspectors from the UN nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency, into the country. "We have nothing to check and nothing to see so it is irrelevant," he said.

Over the past year, Thein Sein, an ex-general, has taken steps to address criticism about the country's poor human rights record and suppression of political dissent.

Economic growth dips to 5.3% in Q4; lowest in 9 yrs

India's economic growth rate slipped to 5.3 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2011-12, lowest in nearly 9 years due to poor performance of the manufacturing and farm sectors.

The Gross domestic product (GDP) growth in the January- March quarter of 2010-11 was 9.2 per cent, according to the government data released on May 31, 2012.

GDP in 2011-12 also moderated to 6.5 per cent from 8.4 per cent in the 2010-11.

During the quarter ending March 31, growth in the manufacturing sector contracted to 0.3 per cent, from 7.3 per cent in the corresponding period of 2010-11.

Farm output also exhibited a similar trend and expanded by just 1.7 per cent during the quarter, compared to 7.5 per cent in the Q4, 2010-11.

However, mining and quarrying production growth stood at 4.3 cent during the quarter under review, as against a growth of meagre 0.6 per cent in Q4 of in 2010-11.

Growth in the construction sector slowed to 4.8 per cent during the January-March quarter of 2011-12, from 8.9 per cent in the year-ago period.

The trade, hotels, transport and communications segment grew by 7 per cent during in the quarter under review, as against 11.6 per cent expansion in the year-ago period.

However, electricity, gas and water supply grew by 4.9 per cent in the January-March period, compared to 5.1 per cent growth in the corresponding period last fiscal.

The growth of the services sector, including insurance and real estate remained unchanged at 10 per cent in the fourth quarter ended March.

Rupee hits new record low of 56.50 against dollar

The rupee on May 31, 2012 tumbled by 26 paise to trade at a new all-time low of Rs 56.50 against the US dollar in early trade on increased capital outflows and strong demand from importers for the American currency. Traders said apart from capital outflows by foreign funds, strengthening of dollar against the euro, which plunged to a two-year low on continued euro-zone worries and strong month-end demand from importers, particularly oil refiners, mainly put pressure on the rupee.

On May 30, 2012, the rupee had lost 57 paise to close at record low of 56.24 despite RBI's efforts to prop it up. Meanwhile, the BSE benchmark Sensex plunged over 148 points, or

Vishwanathan Anand retains World Chess Championship

Indian Grandmaster Viswanathan Anand has won the World Championship crown for the fifth time and fourth in a row in Moscow yesterday. Showing immense resilience, the Indian Grandmaster defeated challenger Boris Gelfand of Israel in a tense rapid tie-breaker. Anand won the second game and drew the other three to win the title at the State Tretyakov Gallery. Luck played a major part in the final game,favouring the Indian chess wizard when it mattered the most. After a6-6 deadlock in the 12 Classical games, the rapid finale ended 2.5-1.5 in Anand's favour making him the world chess champion five times in all and four times in a row since 2007. The victory also meant that the 'King of Chess' will keep the crown till 2014, when the next World Championship will be held.



After clinching the fifth World Championship title, Defending champion Viswanathan Anand, said he is really relieved to achieve the milestone after an incredibly tense battle with Challenger Boris Gelfand of Israel.Sports Minister Ajay Maken congratulated the Indian Grandmaster on his triumph. He said Anand is without a doubt the country's best sportsperson. Mr. Maken said, Viswanathan Anand has brought laurels to the country and I thank him for that. He is the best sportsperson the country has.Vice President Mohammed Hamid Ansari, Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh and Congress President Sonia Gandhi have also congratulated Anand for winning the World Chess championship.

0.91 per cent, to 16,164.00 in early trade on May 31, 2012.

Sunil's 69th minute goal earns India 2-1 victory over Pakistan

India relied on a penultimate-minute goal by striker S V Sunil as they beat arch rivals Pakistan 2-1 in a thrilling match of the Azlan Shah Cup hockey tournament in Ipoh on Thursday. Sunil made a diving effort to push the ball into the goal in the 69th minute to clinch the issue for India and keep themselves in the hunt for a podium finish. Sardar Singh created the opening with his defence-splitting pass to the right and Sunil capitalised on the chance.

India, who are already out of contention for a final berth, had earlier opened the scoring in the 30th minute through Sandeep Singh's penalty corner conversion while Pakistan equalised through a penalty corner goal by skipper Sohail Abbas in the 59th minute.

The victory gave India a chance to stay in the hunt for the bronze medal match. India collected nine points from their six round-robin league matches and now await the other results to know who would be their opponent in the play-offs for final positions.

In a match devoid of many openings for field goals, Pakistan had the first look at the Indian goal in the 13th minute when unmarked Shafqat Rasool received a cross from right on top of circle, but failed to beat goal-keeper Bharat Chetri with his reverse hit. Pakistan then forced two penalty corners in the next minute, but the Indian defence stood firm.

Not many goal-bearing moves were produced by either team and then Indian strikers finally exerted pressure to earn a penalty corner that was converted by Sandeep, who sent a rising drag-flick into the net to put India ahead in the half-hour mark.

A minute later, Shivendra failed to trap Tushar Khandekar's defence-splitting cross from left.

National Conference on Sanitation and Drinking Water

A Conference of State Ministers of Rural Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation will be held here tomorrow to review the progress made in the

implementation of the two flagship programmes of the Ministry namely National Rural Drinking Water Programme and Total Sanitation Campaign. The conference will be inaugurated by the Minister of Rural Development and Minister for Drinking Water and Sanitation Shri Jairam Ramesh. The aim of the Conference is to up-scale achievements and share innovative best practices and models, both in terms of programme implementation and technology. A senior official in the Ministry said that the concerted action is taken in strengthening the programmes to achieve provision of safe drinking water supply and sustainable sanitation facilities in all rural areas.

Addressing the meeting of the State Secretaries today, the Secretary, Drinking Water and Sanitation, Vilasini Ramachandran said that there is need for taking up the sanitation issues on a mission mode fashion. She underlined that the role of women self help groups is very important both in terms of creating awareness and achieving the target of total sanitation. She also laid stress on the IEC(Information, Education and Communication)campaign to create real demands for individual household latrines.

Compulsory Education

The reform process initiated in 2010-11, after enactment and implementation of Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, was continued during the year 2011-12. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) framework of implementation and norms for planning interventions were revised to correspond with the provisions of the RTE Act. New interventions were approved under SSA for providing uniforms, transportation and residential facilities.

Further, the fund sharing pattern between the Centre and States was revised to provide for higher central shares in the SSA outlays for States. Grants under the 13th Finance Commission became available specifically for elementary education. Government also notified the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) as the academic authority for laying down teacher qualifications. NCTE notified the minimum teacher qualifications in the Official Gazette and also issued guidelines for conducting Teacher Eligibility Tests. New buildings were sanctioned for 28,197 primary and 6,742 upper primary schools during the period 2010-12; 39,502 primary and 11,952 upper primary schools were opened ; 4, 97, 992 additional class rooms, 2,48,605 toilets and 24,924 drinking water facilities were provided.

PANEL SET UP TO IMPLEMENT DHARMADHIKARI REPORT : GOVT

Government announced the setting up of a panel to implement the Dharmadhikari Committee Report on issues relating integration of erstwhile Air India and Indian Airlines employees including pay, allowances and career progression structure. Civil Aviation Minister Ajit Singh made it clear that the demands of striking Air India pilots will be looked into after they give up their 26-day "illegal" agitation unconditionally.

"Their strike is illegal as no notice was served... Employees should take their strike back unconditionally and then all their demands will be looked into," Singh told reporters.

He said the implementation committee will give its report within 45 days on how to implement the Dharmadhikari Report. The committee will also do a 'level mapping' of employees of Air India and erstwhile Indian Airlines. Singh said performance-linked incentives will be abolished and there will be a unified cadre and uniform policy with regard to working of all cadres.

"The salaries of the present employees will be protected. As far as allowances are concerned, as far as the senior staff is concerned, management staff is concerned, that will be allowed according to the DPE guidelinesAnd other allowances of non-management staff will be according to the industry norms," the Minister said.

The Dharmadhikari report on integration of about 27,000 employees of unified Air India, including pilots, cabin crew and engineers, was submitted in January this year almost five years after the merger of two state-run airlines.

AIDS Control

Adult HIV prevalence at national level has declined from 0.41% in 2000 to 0.31% in 2009. The estimated annual number of new HIV infections has declined by 56% from 2.7 lakh new infections in 2000 to 1.2 lakh in 2009. 2.2.5 Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy Services (AYUSH) In 2011-12, financial assistance was provided to States/UTs as recurring grants for co-located AYUSH facilities at 4090-Primary Health Centres (PHCs), 350-Community Health Centre (CHCs), 136-District Hospitals (DHs) and as Non-recurring grants for three PHCs, two CHCs and one District Hospital. Financial assistance was also provided to 15,680-AYUSH Dispensaries and 155 -AYUSH Hospitals for supply of essential drugs. Six proposals for setting up 50-bedded Integrated AYUSH Hospital and five proposals for setting up 10-bedded Integrated AYUSH Hospital have been supported under the Scheme in the North-Eastern and Other Hilly States of Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

National Programme for Prevention and Control of Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke

The coverage of the programme extends to 100 districts covering 21 States. The programme envisages health promotion and health education advocacy, early detection of persons with high level of risk factors through opportunistic screening and strengthening of health systems to tackle non-communicable diseases. Under the programme about 58 lakh people have been screened for diabetes and hypertension in 20 States.

Transplantation of Human Organs (Amendment) Act 2011

The Transplantation of Human Organs (Amendment) Act 2011 has been enacted incorporating the inclusion of grandparents and grandchildren in the definition of near relatives, recognition of retrieval centres and approval of paired donor exchanges, making it mandatory for the treating staff to request relatives of brain-dead patients for organ donation. **Clinical Establishments (Registration and Regulation) Act, 2010** The Clinical Establishments (Registration and Regulation) Act, 2010 has been notified to come into effect from 1.3.2012 in the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Sikkim and the Union Territories. The Act seeks to create a regulatory framework for the largely unregulated health sector and to prescribe mandatory minimum standards for clinical establishments.

Health Research

During the year 2011-12, a scheme was initiated to promote human resource development in cutting edge areas and aspects related to translation & implementation viz., Toxicology, Genomics, Proteomics, Geriatrics, Stem Cell Research, Clinical Trials, etc. 22 institutions have been funded to provide training to researchers as well as students in these important identified areas.

Child Development and Child Rights

The Prime Minister's National Council on Nutrition, in its meeting on 24 November 2010 took a number of decisions to tackle the multi-faceted problem of malnutrition in the country. As a follow up, a proposal to

strengthen and restructure the ICDS Scheme is being formulated. The framework to adopt multi-sectoral approach and action to address maternal and child malnutrition in selected 200 high burdened districts has been prepared. Universalization of ICDS As part of ongoing universalization, 186 new Projects and 42,033 new Ananganwadi Centres have been operationalized. With this, 11 a cumulative of 6908 Projects and 13.04 lakh Anganwadi Centres have become operational. There is an increase of 13.02 lakh beneficiaries over 2010-11 taking the total to 972.49 lakh beneficiaries during 2011-12. ICDS expenditure has increased to ` 14272 crore in 2011-12 over ` 9763 crore in 2010-11.

Innovation Council for improving Child Sex Ratio

The Ministry of Women and Child Development has set up a Sectoral Innovation Council with wide ranging representation, on Child Sex Ratio (CSR), with a view to identifying interventions and innovative strategies, approaches and methods to address the decline in CSR in a time bound and effective manner.

Integrated Child Protection Scheme

The Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS), a comprehensive Centrally Sponsored Scheme, is being implemented since 2009-10 for providing care and protection to children. The ICPS has helped build a perspective and an environment for discussion, on child protection, both in the Government as well as voluntary organizations. 548 Child Welfare Committees and 561 Juvenile Justice Boards have now been established. In 2011-12, 196 Specialised Adoption Agencies have been provided assistance. Childline (1098), which is a 24-hour toll free emergency outreach telephone service for children in distress, has been extended to 78 new locations taking the total to 204 cities and towns.

Food & Public Distribution

The National Food Security Bill was introduced in the Parliament to provide for food and nutritional security, by ensuring access to adequate quantity of quality food at affordable prices. being created under the Private Entrepreneur's Guarantee Scheme.

Empowerment of Women

A High Level Committee (HLC) on the status of women has been constituted which shall undertake a comprehensive study to understand the status of women since 1989. The HLC will prepare a report on the current socio-economic, political and legal status of women in India, and evolve appropriate policy interventions based on a contemporary assessment of women's needs.

Swadhar Greh

A new scheme of Swadhar Greh has been put in place in 2011, by merging the two on-going schemes of Swadhar and Short Stay Homes with better financial norms. The scheme is intended to help marginalised women/girls. Under the scheme, women will get emotional support and counselling so that they could become self-reliant and get rehabilitated socially and economically through education, skill upgradation and vocational training.

National Mission for Empowerment of Women

National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW) began a unique

“One MP - One Idea” Scheme

The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation has announced a new scheme “One MP – One Idea” under the Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS). Announcing this in New Delhi today, the Minister of State (Independent Charge), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation Shri Srikant Kumar Jena has said that in order to foster, a grass-root bottom-up approach to innovation and development and to arrive at solutions for local problems which are sustainable and scalable, there is a need for seeking out and campaigning for ideas that have the potential to solve challenges. Accordingly, based on the innovative ideas received from the local people regarding developmental projects, an ‘One MP – One Idea’ Competition may be held in each Lok Sabha constituency annually to select the three best innovations for cash awards on the specific request of an MP to promote such a scheme in his/her constituency. Shri Jena stated that applications will be invited for providing innovative solutions pertaining to social issues, especially in the area of education & skills, health, water & sanitation, housing & infrastructure, agriculture, energy, environment, community and social service etc. These innovative solutions will be evaluated in a transparent manner by a selection committee headed by the DC/DM of the Nodal District and consisting of six members from Engineering, Finance, Health & Sanitation, Academia, Industry and Banking & Financial Institutions. Member Parliament shall award Certificate of honour along with cash award of Rs. 2.5 lakhs, Rs. 1.5 lakhs and Rs. 1 lakh to the first, second and third best innovative solutions respectively through their MPLAD funds in a Public function. In addition, a Certificate of appreciation will be given to the next 5 best innovations. He added that the above scheme shall inspire people to find innovative solutions to social and developmental problems.

initiative in 2011 - a new model of 'convergence centres' for women, called 'Poorna Shakti Kendras' dedicated to helping women access the benefits made available to them through various government programmes, in select to strengthen the public distribution system, modernization and end-to-end computerization has been accorded top priority. States/UTs have taken several measures towards digitization of beneficiary database, fair price shop automation, computerization of supply chain, and creation of grievance redress mechanism. Steps have been taken to create additional storage capacity in the country for food grains. 2 million tonnes of storage capacity will be created in the form of modern silos. Nearly 15 million tonnes capacity is 16 to raise the eligible income ceiling from 44,500 to ` 1 lakh per annum, rationalize the grouping of courses and increase maintenance and other allowances by three fourths. During the year, central assistance of 528 crore rupee was released to states under the post-matric scholarship scheme to benefit approximately 17 lakh students belonging to the Other Backward Classes. The Top Class Education scheme for Scheduled Caste students has been revised to raise the annual family income ceiling from 2 lakh to ` 4.5 lakh with effect from the academic year 2012-13. 24 new institutions have been added to the list of notified premier institutions under the scheme thus increasing the number of institutions covered under the scheme to 205. During the year, scholarships of more than 21 crore were given to 1,674 Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students. An amount of over 100 crore was released to the University Grants Commission for new fellowships and renewal of ongoing fellowships for 2000 Scheduled Caste students to

pursue courses leading to M. Phil, Ph.D and equivalent degrees under the Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship Scheme.

Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana

More than 2.85 crore families are being provided health insurance cover under the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana, out of which 52 lakh families have been issued smart cards. The scheme has been extended to cover construction workers, street vendors, domestic workers, beedi workers and Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee workers (who have worked for more than 15 days during the preceding financial year). It is proposed to further extend this scheme to other occupational groups in the unorganized sector in a phased manner.

Rural Electrification

In 2011-12, under the Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidyutikaran Yojana, electrification of 7,934 villages have been completed and 34.44 lakh BPL connections provided. Cumulatively, intensive electrification in 2.48 lakh already electrified villages and works in 26 more than one lakh un-electrified villages have been completed. Moreover, free electricity connections have been provided to 194.25 lakh rural BPL households. Rural telecommunication & IT Out of a total of 62,302 villages not having access to public telephones, 62,088 villages have been provided with Village Public Telephones (VPTs). In all, 5,80,556 villages, out of a total of 5,93,601 inhabited villages have been provided with VPTs. Out of 2.5 lakh targeted

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village Panchayats, 1.47 lakh have been connected through broadband.

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme

In 2011-12, the scheme provided employment to more than 4.4 crore households. More than 161 crore person-days of employment have been generated at a total expenditure of more than 27,000 crore. The average wage rate per day has increased from 65 in 2006-07 to 116 in 2011-12. For protecting the workers against inflation, the wage rates notified under the scheme have been indexed to the Consumer Price Index-27 sustainable basis. In 2011-12, more than 15.65 lakh Swarozgaris were assisted.

Panchayati Raj

Backward Regions Grant Fund During 2011-12, `3917 crore was released under the Backward Regions Grant Fund which is being implemented through panchayats and urban local bodies.

e-Governance for Panchayati Raj Institutions To make panchayats more transparent, accountable and effective, a wide range of web based applications have been rolled out under e-Panchayat - an e-Governance project for panchayati raj institutions. More such applications are scheduled to be launched soon. Over 65,000 panchayats are using PRIASoft, a web-based accounting software and over 75,000 plans of different urban local bodies and line departments are available online on the PlanPlus application. 3917 crore GRANTED FOR BACKWARD REGIONAL BODIES GION Transforming Cities We need to facilitate an integrated and holistic approach towards regional development in the next stage of JNNURM. We should look to create enabling conditions for investment in urban India and livelihood creation in manufacturing and value-added service sectors. We should give special focus to energy-efficient public transport. Much of this has to be at the state government level. In all these areas, we have to show political will and a lot of imagination.

Russia launches U.S. satellite from floating pad

Russia has put a U.S. communications satellite into space from a sea-based launch pad, the Federal Space Agency Roscosmos said. The Zenit-2SL carrier rocket, carrying the U.S. Intelsat 19 telecoms satellite, blasted off from the equatorial Odyssey Launch Platform in the Pacific Ocean at 9:23 a.m. Moscow time (0523 GMT), the mission control center said. The 5,600-kg satellite, launched by the Sea Launch corporation, was separated from the booster rocket at 10:23 a.m. (0623 GMT), Russian Space Rocket Corporation Energia said. Live broadcast from Roscosmos website and Energia control center showed that experts were working onboard a Sea Launch Commander ship near the launch pad. The satellite carries C-band and Ku-band transponders to provide telecoms services to the Pacific region, including Southeast Asia, Australia, New Zealand and U.S. West Coast, local media reported. Intelsat 19 is based on Space System/Loral platform with a designed life span of over 15 years. Founded in 1955, the Sea Launch consortium was made up by four companies from Norway, Russia, Ukraine and the United States. Compared with land-based system, sea-based launch system means the rocket can be launched from the optimum position on the earth's surface, which offers the most direct and cost-effective route to geostationary orbit for commercial communications satellites. A joint business plan released earlier by Energia and Roscosmos showed

that 3-4 successful launches per year would be required to keep the project profitable.

According to Energia, the operator of Sea Launch, Friday's launch is the first of its three launches scheduled this year.

Russia-China relations at "unprecedented high": Russian FM

Relations between Russia and China have reached unprecedented high levels, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov says in an interview ahead of President Vladimir Putin's upcoming visit to China. Top leaders of the two countries are expected to discuss the expansion of bilateral cooperation in various fields during Putin's state visit to China on June 5-7, Lavrov said. Since Russia and China signed the Treaty on Good-Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation in 2001, the two countries have witnessed many breakthroughs in the development of their relations, Lavrov told. He listed some of the achievements, including an overall settlement of the border issues, a record high of 80 billion U.S. dollars in bilateral trade in 2011, the strategic cooperation in the energy sector, the launches of reciprocal National Years and Years of Languages, and close coordination in international affairs. "During Putin's visit, officials from both Russia and China are going to sign a joint communique on relations and their entrepreneurs will sign a number of agreements," Lavrov said. The two countries will also explore ways of further promoting their trade and economic relations, including how to optimize their bilateral trade structure, ensure rational use and protection of cross-border water resources, and conducting joint border inspections, he added. Since the leaders of the two countries decided to upgrade their relationship to a comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination based on equality, mutual trust and support, common prosperity and lasting friendship, the countries have made concerted efforts to further their relations, Lavrov said. On the political front, the two sides have agreed to continue enhancing mutual trust, promoting high-level exchanges and providing mutual support in efforts to safeguard their own sovereignty, state unity, and territorial integrity; On the economic front, the two countries have set a goal for bilateral trade to reach 100 billion U.S. dollars in 2015 and 200 billion dollars in 2020, Lavrov said. Besides, both Russia and China have strived to boost people-to-people and cultural exchanges and deepen their military cooperation, he said. Meanwhile, Moscow and Beijing have carried out close cooperation in global and regional organizations, such as the United Nations, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Group of 20 (G20) and the BRICS, he said. The two sides have also actively coordinated with each other on the world's hot-spots, including the situation in West Asia and North Africa and the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula, he added. "Russia-China cooperation at all levels in international affairs has set a good example for other countries to harmonize their positions and solve the most complicated global problems," Lavrov said. Sharing similar positions on many international issues, the two countries have conducted close coordination in response to the fundamental changes of global geopolitics and economy, the Russian foreign minister said. "Russia and China have common core interests. They hold similar stances on the ongoing profound changes in the world and similar approaches to new challenges," Lavrov said. "Russia and China support building a multi-polar world, establishing a more just and democratic global political and economic system, and enhancing the UN's central role in coordinating and resolving hot international issues," he said. Russia-China cooperation on the international arena has "facilitated global peace and stability," he said. With regard to the upcoming 12th Meeting of the Council of Heads of Member States of the SCO which Putin will attend, Lavrov said the meeting is

of great significance to consolidating cooperation among SCO member states.

According to Lavrov, the leaders are expected to endorse a number of documents during their meeting and review the proposal to accept Afghanistan as an observer state and Turkey as a dialogue partner. Only through joint efforts can countries counter the threats to regional security, Lavrov said, adding that the SCO is becoming a key factor in safeguarding regional security and stability. The expansion of the SCO "would strengthen the organization's potential and raise its international prestige. New blood would bring extra energy to the SCO," he said. Established on 15 June, 2001 in Shanghai, the SCO is an intergovernmental international organization which groups Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Its observer states include India, Iran, Mongolia and Pakistan, while its dialogue partners are Belarus and Sri Lanka. The 12th Meeting of the Council of Heads of Member States of the SCO will be held in Beijing on June 6-7.

Desperate Housewives actress Kathryn Joosten dies

Housewives star has lung cancer US TV actress Kathryn Joosten, best known for her roles in Desperate Housewives and The West Wing, has died.



Joosten, who was 72, died in California of lung cancer, 11 years after she was first diagnosed with the disease. The actress won two Emmy Awards for playing nousey neighbour Karen McCluskey in suburban drama Desperate Housewives. She had previously portrayed Delores Landingham, the secretary to fictional US President Josiah Bartlet, played by Martin Sheen, on The West Wing. Joosten's family said in a statement that the actress was "surrounded by love and humour 'til the end", adding: "We are laughing through our tears." Joosten did not begin her acting career until the age of 42, having worked as a psychiatric nurse at a medium security hospital unit in Chicago. But after getting divorced and hearing her mother's deathbed regrets at not having pursued her dreams, Joosten decided to revisit her childhood passion for acting and became involved with her local community theatre. She then worked as a street performer at Disney World in Florida before moving to Hollywood in the mid-1990s and winning small roles in shows including Murphy Brown, Frasier and The Drew Carey Show. The West Wing brought wider recognition. "Some people in Hollywood think of me as a model for dramatic mid-life transitions - from suburban housewife to Emmy-winning actress," she said. "But I never plotted out a master plan for following my dreams." Her other roles included one of the recurring Gods in Joan of Arcadia and Claire in Dharma and Greg. Her part in Desperate Housewives earned her the Primetime Emmy Awards for outstanding guest actress in a comedy series in 2005 and 2008, and she was nominated again in 2010. She encouraged the show's creator Marc Cherry to give her character lung cancer in order to raise awareness. The show ended in the US just three weeks ago after eight years on air.

The silent, deadly KILLER of 60 lakh people!

Tobacco is the single most preventable cause of death in the world today. Yet it kills nearly sixty lakh people each year, which includes some six lakh non-smokers who die due to exposure to second-hand smoke.

In 2004, children accounted for 31 per cent of these deaths. Almost half of the world's children (through no fault of theirs) regularly breathe air polluted by tobacco smoke which is said to carry more than 4,000 chemicals, of which at least 250 are known to be harmful, and more than 50 are known to cause cancer. Tobacco is one of the greatest risk factors for non communicable diseases, which are responsible for 63 per cent of all deaths globally. Also 50 per cent of all deaths from lung disease are linked to tobacco. Civil society activists along with The International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Health (the Union), are happy to note that 174 countries, representing 87.4 per cent of the world's population, are now parties to the world's first public health treaty -- the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control treaty, and are legally obligated to pass, implement and enforce tobacco control legislation. As a result 59 countries are now monitoring tobacco use; 42 countries mandate pictorial health warnings; and 27 countries have raised tobacco taxes to more than 75 per cent of the retail price. Yet, a lot more needs to be done in the high burden low/middle income countries to curb the epidemic of tobacco. India is the second largest producer as well as consumer of tobacco. Every year, 10 lakh deaths occur in our country due to tobacco related diseases, where 34.6 per cent adults are tobacco users. Although only 14 per cent adults are smokers as compared to 26 per cent smokeless tobacco users, the number of cigarettes sold in the country is increasing.

According to the latest available data, domestic consumption of cigarettes in 2011-12 has increased by 4.19 per cent over the previous year. It is no surprise that almost 40 per cent of tuberculosis deaths in the country are associated with smoking. Moreover, flavoured, scented forms of chewing tobacco are very popular across all segments of society and take a heavy toll by way of oral cancer and other diseases of the mouth. Despite good anti-tobacco laws in place, their implementation still remains a problem. According to the Global Adult Tobacco Survey 2010, China holds the dubious distinction of having the maximum number of male smokers at 52.9 per cent, it being as high as 63 per cent in the 45-64 year age group.

CBI starts Reddy's interrogation in disproportionate assets case

The CBI on Sunday began interrogation of Kadapa Lok Sabha Member Jaganmohan Reddy who was given 5-day CBI custody in connection with the disproportionate Assets case against him. A team of CBI officials began questioning Jaganmohan Reddy after taking him into custody in the morning. The interrogation was held at the office of the DGP prisons office. The Central Investigating Agency has begun questioning the Kadapa MP Jaganmohan Reddy following the High Court granted five-day custody. A team of CBI officials have questioned on Sunday the first day from 10-30 in the morning till 5 pm in the presence of two advocates. Due to security reasons, the questioning has been done this time at the office of the DGP prisons near the Chanchalguda central jail where the Kadapa MP was lodged. The CBI has questioned the Kadapa MP for three days before his arrest on 27th of last month. He had been ordered for judicial remand by a CBI special Court till 11th of this month while rejecting his bail plea. The High Court also dismissed his interim bail petition while granting 5 day custody to the CBI. The CBI is now reportedly questioning him about the investments into his companies by various firms including some foreign companies. The Jaganmohan Reddy has been facing charges of conspiring with his father Y S. Rajasekhara Reddy when he was the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh to get investments into his companies by doling out favors to various companies.

National Action Plan on Climate Change

The National Action Plan advocates a strategy that promotes, firstly, the adaptation to climate change and secondly, further enhancement of the ecological sustainability of India's development path. The eight missions under the PM's Council on Climate Change are the Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission, the National Water Mission, the National Missions on Enhanced Energy Efficiency, Sustainable Habitat, and Strategic Knowledge for Climate Change, and the National Missions for Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem, a Green India and Sustainable Agriculture.

Forest Conservation

An amount of Rs. 848 crore was released to State Level Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management & Planning Authorities to carry out protection, conservation and regeneration of natural forests in addition to compensatory afforestation. National Green Tribunal The National Green Tribunal (NGT) was established in October, 2010 for effective and expeditious disposal of cases relating to environmental protection and conservation of forests and other natural resources including enforcement of any legal right relating to environment and giving relief and compensation for damages to persons and property. Delhi, Bhopal, Pune, Kolkata and Chennai are the five place of sitting of the NGT.

Mission Clean Ganga

Projects worth nearly Rs. 2,600 crore have been sanctioned by the National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA). These include projects for development of sewer networks, sewage treatment plants and sewage pumping stations, electric crematoria, community toilets and development of river fronts. Several innovations have been introduced for improved implementation of projects sanctioned by the NGRBA. These include Tripartite Memoranda of Agreements, project appraisal by independent institutions, Third Party Inspection, etc. State River Conservation Authorities have been constituted in the five Ganga basin States to facilitate better coordination and implementation of conservation activities at the State level. The Central Government has secured World Bank assistance of US\$ 1 billion for the NGRBA Programme. The World Bank project will support NGRBA's immediate objective of Mission Clean Ganga.

Tiger Conservation

A detailed report on the country level status of tigers, co-predators and prey in India was released in July, 2011. This was the second round of country level snapshot assessment. The earlier estimation made in 2006 indicated that there were 1411 tigers in the country; the current estimates show that this number has increased by about 20% to 1706.

Centre sets up high-level Board to boost manufacturing sector

The government set up a high-level board to boost the manufacturing sector. The panel will be headed by Commerce and Industry Minister Anand Sharma. The decision to set up the board comes within days of Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh set up the Investment Tracking System to give a push to mega projects of over 1,000 crore rupees in the backdrop of economic growth sliding to nine-year low of 6.5 per cent in 2011-12. The 13-member Manufacturing Industry promotion Board (MIPB), would periodically review the overall situation of the manufacturing sector, which contracted to 0.3 per cent during the quarter ending March 31, from 7.3 per cent in the corresponding period of 2010-11. The MIPB, set up to give a big push to operationalise the National manufacturing Policy (NMP), would also coordinate among central ministries and state governments. The government has formed three more panels for the proper implementation of the NMP. The policy seeks to raise share of the manufacturing sector in the GDP to 25 per cent from the present 15-16 per cent in the next decade.

Team Anna attacking only ruling UPA, says Congress

The Congress Party on Sunday charged Team Anna and Ramdev for not naming the opposition BJP for its involvement in corrupt practices despite glaring graft charges against number of their leaders. Party Spokesman, Rashid Alvi said in New Delhi Sunday evening that they have been attacking only the ruling UPA and this has exposed their mind set.

Current political, economic situation main agenda of CWC meeting

The current political and economic situation in the country will be main agenda of discussion in the Congress

Working Committee, CWC, meeting in New Delhi on Monday. The meeting will be presided over by party president Sonia Gandhi. The Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and other top leaders will also attend the meet. The meeting could also see the passage of a resolution calling for effective steps to provide relief to common man facing rise in the prices of essential commodities. Fallout of the recent hike in petrol prices may also figure. Talking to reporters in New Delhi on Sunday, party general secretary, Janardan Dwivedi said the state congress chiefs and leaders of legislative Assemblies will attend the meeting. This will be the first meeting of the CWC after the party's debacle in Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Goa.

Suicide bomb attack kills 12 in Nigerian city Bauchi

At least 12 people have been killed in a suicide car bomb attack near a church in the northern Nigerian city of Bauchi, witnesses say. Red Cross says many are reported to have been injured in the blast. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack. It comes amid a wave of violence by the radical Islamic sect Boko Haram. According to Bauchi residents, a man tried to drive a car through a fence outside the Harvest Field Pentecostal church on Sunday. The vehicle did not break through the fence and the bomb was detonated. Some of those killed by the blast were inside the church and others were standing outside.

UN Chief Ban seeks broad international talks on Syrian crisis

UN chief Ban Ki-moon on Sunday called on for broad international talks on the rising Syrian crisis. He urged Security Council members to consider Arab League demands for stronger UN action in the strife-torn country. Ban said in Jeddah that he had taken note of Arab League calls for more peace monitors on the ground in Syria and setting a certain time limit for implementing international envoy Kofi Annan's six-point Syria peace plan. Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim Al-Thani, who heads the Arab League Syria committee said yesterday that it was unacceptable that massacres and bloodshed continue while (Annan's) mission is ongoing indefinitely.

OPINION - EDITORIALS

IS RUSSIA AT A DEAD END ON SYRIA?

D.S. Rajput

Russia is sticking to its position on Syria, although its objective is unclear. Agreement within the United Nations Security Council seems impossible to broker, but diplomatic wrangling continues. No harder sanctions against Bashar al-Assad's regime and certainly no military intervention in Syria: Instead, negotiate until a political solution has been found. Russian President Vladimir Putin did not want to back down from this position during talks with German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Francois Hollande.

"Not by a millimeter," said UN expert Jeff Laurenti of the re-elected Russian president's talks in Europe with Merkel and Hollande. "The divide is bigger than ever."

Merkel tried hard not to criticize the Russian leader openly during his visit to Berlin. After a warm welcome, both Merkel and Putin expressed concern about the danger of a civil war in Syria, agreeing that the UN peace plan must be pursued. Merkel made just one stray remark to the effect of their being a variety of ways in which the peace plan could be implemented. People gather at a mass burial for the victims of the Houla massacre. Hollande took a more direct approach during Putin's visit in France, stressing that there could not be a solution to the Syrian conflict without Assad stepping down. Putin responded by saying that Russia neither supports nor opposes Assad's presidency. That position contrasts with the recent stance taken by Russia's Foreign Ministry, in which officials called last week's massacre in Houla "a well-planned action plotted by militants to hinder a political settlement to the crisis in Syria." That characterization squares with the Assad regime's own.

No open support for Assad, but none for the rebels either - for months, Russia has been maneuvering back and forth, trying unsuccessfully to broker a solution in Damascus while blocking all of the UN Security Council's attempts at sanctions. "I have the impression that the Russians have become very stubborn, and



they're getting backed into a dead end," Stefan Meister, an expert on Russia with the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP), said. There are many ways to explain Russia's hard-line stance on Syria. There are economic interests at stake, for example. Russian energy firms produce oil and gas in Syria. But the arms industry benefits in particular with Syria being its third most important export market.

Moscow sees Syria under Assad as its sole ally in the region

When the topic of arms was brought up in Berlin, Putin answered that his country does not deliver any weapons to Syria that could be used in a civil war - an empty diplomatic flourish, Meister said: "If you're selling weapons systems in Syria, then no one in the Russian military or the Russian president can be sure they won't be used against the rebels. I would even go so far as to say that they will definitely be used against them," Meister said. Margarete Klein of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs says that Moscow's geostrategic interests inform its approach far more than its economic interests. Syria is Moscow's last ally in

the Middle East. In the Arab world, that means the country is "a clear counter-balance to American dominance in the region," Klein said. Syria's port city Tartus is also the location of Russia's only naval base outside the former Soviet Union.

The wrong priorities?

If Assad's regime is overthrown, Russia's interests could be thrown into question in a number of ways, and that, says Stefan Meister, is Moscow's big dilemma.

"They have supported the Assad regime too long. The question is whether it's not too late now for Russia to back out," he said, noting that he doubts Russia will adopt the West's position on the Syria question. For him, one thing is clear, "Russia is betting on the wrong horse. It's only a question of time for Assad, and Russia will lose this partner at least in the middle term." There are signs, however, that Russia is changing its tune.

"In Russia, the view is gradually taking hold that Assad perhaps cannot survive politically," Margarete Klein observed. She believes that Russia has recently shown less commitment to the person of Assad, instead backing up its stance on Syria by appealing to inter-

national law.

"Russia is out for a national solution that hasn't been brokered from abroad or imposed by way of military force," Klein said.

In other words, Russia is arguing that Syrians must determine their own fate. An uncertain future: Russia's marine base in Syrian port city of Tartus. Hope for the EU-Russia summit. How can the diplomatic knots get untied? Laurenti sees a glimmer of hope in the most recent proposal by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay. She has argued in favor of letting the International Court of Justice in The Hague handle the recent case of the massacre in Houla. Letting a non-partisan observer decide the case could be a possibility for putting pressure on Assad without sharpening sanctions or threatening to overthrow his government, Pillay said. But it is questionable that Russia would support her proposal, particularly since Russia, like the USA and China, rejects the International Court of Justice.

The next opportunity for trying to find a way out of the dead end on the Syrian crisis will come on Sunday (June 3) at the EU-Russia joint summit in Saint Petersburg.

●●●

Britain celebrates 60 years reign of Queen Elizabeth II

C.S. Rajput

Queen Elizabeth II on Sunday provided a temporary lift to Britain's economic gloom by leading a 1000- strong flotilla on River Thames as hundreds of thousands gathered along the historic river and on streets across the country to celebrate 60 years of her reign. The Diamond Jubilee pageant along the river that has played a pivotal role in Britain's history generated a wave of patriotism among large sections of the population, while some republicans protested against the monarchy, calling for an elected head of state. Britain's famously fickle weather was evident as rains and dank grey weather gripped London and other parts of the country, but that did not deter royal enthusiasts camping overnight along the Thames to occupy vantage points for today's pageant to celebrate 86-year-old Queen's rule. Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall made a surprise appearance at a street party in Piccadilly, where nearly 1000 people had gathered to celebrate the occasion and sang the national anthem. Many members of the royal family joined the pageantry celebrations, including Prince William and the Duchess of Cambridge, as they were cheered by thousands of flag-waving people along the river. As the Queen celebrates 60 years on the throne, she remains popular to the vast majority of the British public. But others say that a head of state who inherits the office doesn't belong in a modern democracy. Support for the monarchy is at its highest level for more than a decade - just 21 percent of Britons would like to see the monarchy abolished, and over half think the country is better off with the royal family. That's according to an

ICM poll of just over 2,000 people conducted last month. Remarkable continuity The monarchy went through a dip in popularity in the mid-1990s, after a series of high-profile divorces, including that of Prince Charles and Princess Diana. When the "people's princess" was killed in a car crash in 1997, the royal family was criticized for its response to the tragedy. But the Queen's personal popularity rebounded after she laid flowers and spoke to mourners outside Buckingham Palace a few days after Diana's death, and has remained high ever since. Last year's royal wedding and this year's Diamond Jubilee celebrations have endeared the monarchy still more to the British people - not least because an extra public holiday was set aside for each occasion. It's ironic that the country is still willing to get behind such public displays of pageantry, despite the current gloomy forecasts about the economy and concerns over the state of eurozone. It seems that the British public sees the royals as a symbol of continuity and stability in the midst of a wave of social and economic change. Oliver Lane, chairman of the British Monarchist League, a group that seeks to defend the integrity of the crown, put the popularity of the Queen down to the fact that she is set apart from day-to-day politics. "We are very fortunate in this country that the constitutional monarchy is extremely stable, and it brings that stability to public life," Lane told DW. "Because the Queen is a constitutional figurehead, she doesn't have to make the hard and unpopular decisions that politicians do, so it's easier for her to



retain that sort of popularity."

Elizabeth II is the second-longest serving monarch in British history, after Queen Victoria, who reigned for 63 years and seven months. Elizabeth's popularity has been remarkably consistent. Her coronation in 1953 also took place in hard times - the extravagant spectacle provided a distraction in a country struggling to emerge from the war. Today, the jubilee parties provide a similar "feel-good factor."

"One of the reasons the monarchy is popular in this country, and is ever successful, is that the monarchy is something that can change with the times," Lane explained. "Because there's no specific written document, no written constitution in the UK that fixes their role, they can change with the requirements and needs of the time." Republicans find hope in the fact that support for the monarchy is highest among people over 65. The ICM survey showed that 28 percent of 18-24 year-olds said Britain would be better off without the monarchy, seven

percentage points higher than the average.

"A symbol like the royal family, which celebrates the idea of unearned privilege, unearned wealth ... really doesn't have any place in a modern society," Andrew Child, a spokesperson for the campaign group "Republic" as well as a republican blogger and journalist, told DW. Child and others like him want to see an end to hereditary power. "It's just completely arcane; it has no place in the modern world," he said. "It means you concentrate power in the hands of an elite family, rather than giving power to the people." Child disputes the idea that people are genuinely enthusiastic about the Diamond Jubilee. He said most Britons are just looking forward to the extra time off. "People get an extra public holiday, but do they use it to celebrate? No, they don't. Most people are going on holiday. They're having a long weekend. This weekend is going to have nothing to do with celebrating the royals at all," he said.

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EDITORIAL

DEVELOP INDIA

English Weekly Newspaper
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RISING SEA LEVEL THREATENS INDIA'S COASTAL AREAS

The tranquil stretches of emerald green backwaters in Mumbai and Kerala are among several locales in the western and eastern coasts facing threat from the rising sea level due to climate change.

Deltas of the Ganga, Krishna, Godavari, Cauvery and Mahanadi on the east coast may also be threatened along with irrigated land and adjoining settlements, according to a Government report.

"It is estimated that sea level rise by 3.5 to 34.6 inches between 1990 and 2100 would result in saline coastal groundwater, endangering wetlands and inundating valuable land and coastal communities. The most vulnerable stretches along the western Indian coast are Khambhat and Kutch in Gujarat, Mumbai and parts of the Konkan coast and south Kerala," says the report submitted to the UN.

The report -- India's Second National Communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change-- was prepared by multi-disciplinary teams and other stakeholders comprising more than 220 scientists belonging to over 120 institutions.



"The loss of these important economic and cultural regions could have a considerable impact in some states," it says.

The experts who prepared the report visited some vulnerable areas, including the 2004 tsunami-hit Nagapattinam in Tamil Nadu, backwaters surrounding Kochi in Kerala and Paradip in Odisha, in order to make a detailed impact study of the rise in sea level.

The study, using digital elevation model data (90m resolution), digital image processing and GIS software, showed that estimated inundation areas are 4.2 sq km and 42.5 sq km in case where the sea level rise is 1.0 m and 2.0 m respectively in the region surrounding Nagapattinam.

"But for the same sea level conditions, 169 sq km and 599 sq km will be inundated in the coastal region surrounding Kochi," says the report. Kochi region is directly connected to the backwaters; a lot of inland areas are far from the coast, but adjacent to the tidal creeks, backwaters and lakes. "This causes considerable increase in the total area of inundation," the report says.

In Paradip, the variations in topography are not smooth and low-lying areas are large and connected to tidal creeks and river inlets.

According to the report, this area seems to be the most vulnerable as about 1128 sq km falls

under inundation zones for a 2 m rise in sea level.

Also, 478 sq km may be inundated in Paradip coastal region for a 1 m sea level rise. All the creeks, estuaries and low lands adjacent to the shoreline increase the risk of inundation and the extent of probable inundation zone goes up to approximately 40 km landward.

Thus, Kochi region is vulnerable even in the interior land areas. The study also showed that all the three regions considered for impact studies are highly vulnerable to sea level rise.

The impact assessment will provide useful information for different sectors such as ports and infrastructure development near the coast and for planners and policy-makers to develop long-term adaptation measures.



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New Zealand clinches 21st Azlan Shah Cup

New Zealand on Sunday clinched the title of 21st Azlan Shah Cup hockey tournament in their maiden final appearance, defeating Argentina 1-0 in the summit clash at Ipoh, Malaysia. New Zealand's match-winner came from Andy Hayward, who converted their first penalty corner by beating Argentine goalkeeper Juan Vivaldi with a low shot.

Azlan Shah Hockey: Indian team beats Great Britain; Wins bronze

Five-time champions India on Monday defeated Great Britain 3-1 and clinch the bronze medal in the Sultan Azlan Shah Cup hockey tournament at Ipoh, Malaysia.

In the beginning, India squandered several scoring opportunities to concede the lead to pre-tournament favourites Great Britain but, it staged a spirited comeback in the second session. After Ashley Jackson scored in the 35th minute on behalf of Great Britain putting his team ahead at the stroke of half time, for India, Shivendra Singh scored the first goal in 42nd minute.

He was followed by Sandeep Singh who scored the second goal in 52nd minute and Tushar Khandekar the third goal in 69th minute.

Earlier, India defeated arch-rival Pakistan 2-1 but had tasted a defeat against Argentina and New Zealand. Argentina will meet New Zealand in the final to be played later on Sunday. Both the teams finished at the top of the table with 12 points each after their league engagements.

Japan, Britain agree to work jointly on defense cooperation

Japan and Britain have agreed to work on joint development of defense equipment and pursue other areas of bilateral defense cooperation. Japan's Senior Vice Defense Minister Shu Watanabe and Britain's armed forces minister Nick Harvey exchanged a memorandum in Singapore on Sunday. They met on the sidelines of an annual Asian security conference. The memorandum also says the two governments will exchange classified information on their defense policy and properly safeguard it. Watanabe told Harvey that Japan hopes to deepen exchanges in such fields as outer space and cyberspace.

World Economic Forum meeting to begin in Istanbul

The World Economic Forum meeting on West Asia, North Africa and Eurasia begins in Istanbul on Monday. The theme of the forum is "Roadmaps for Reform, Pathways to Inclusive Growth". Afghan foreign ministry sources said that Foreign Minister Dr. Zalmi Rassoul left for Turkey today to attend the meeting. More than 1,000 leaders of governments, business, media and non-governmental organizations are scheduled to participate in the event.

Soon after the Istanbul conference China is hosting Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit on the 6th and 7th of this month. Russia, China, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are members of the organization, founded on June 15, 2001.

Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Iran and Mongolia are observers while Turkmenistan is attending SCO gatherings as guest nation. Afghan foreign ministry sources said President Hamid Karzai would participate in the summit.

Remarkable development in J&K during last 3 years

In Jammu and Kashmir, remarkable

achievement has been registered on development front during last 3 years with State government taking all possible steps to make it a model state of the country.

Focused attention is being paid to upgrade infrastructure under core sectors for the benefit of common masses especially living in remote and far flung areas of the State.

The Government led by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah is keen to ensure all round development of the State and is eager to bridge the gap in terms of development and progress in rural and urban areas.

The focused attention of the Government is to improve all the basic amenities.

Rupee gains 54 paise against dollar

Moving up for the second straight day, the rupee today gained a whopping 54 paise to end at 55.54 against the dollar on persistent dollar-selling by exporters.

In volatile trade, the rupee resumed lower at 56.25, as against yesterday's close of 56.08 at the Interbank Foreign Exchange (Forex) Market and hovered between 55.53-56.28 per dollar before settling the day at 55.54 per dollar. Yesterday, it recorded a low of 56.52 against the dollar.

As a measure to contain dollar demand and help support the rupee, the Reserve bank today hinted at opening a separate dollar window for oil companies

Navy creates new post for network-centric operations

Against the backdrop of increasing role of satellites in modern warfare, the Navy has created a new post of Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Communications, Space and Network Centric Operations) at its headquarters in New Delhi.

"On June 1, Rear Admiral Kishan K Pandey took over as the first incumbent of the newly created post of ACNS (CSNCO) at the Integrated Headquarters of Ministry of Defence (Navy)," it said in a release.

The creation of the new post is a step in the process to migrate from a "platform-centric Navy" to a "network-enabled Navy", the release said. It said the step is in tandem with the Navy's plans to seamlessly integrate all combat platforms and terrestrial nodes through state-of-the art communications and space systems towards network-centric operations.

In addition to making platforms and infrastructure for network centrality, the Navy has also made organisational changes to create and efficiently manage the transition to seamless network-centric capabilities.

For nearly five years, Rear Admiral Pandey has been spearheading various prestigious projects at the Directorate of Naval Signals related to building the critical network-centric capabilities such as communications including space-based communications, networks and electronic warfare.

FIH considering 5-a-side format to promote hockey among youth

A five-a-side format to promote hockey among young players is under the International Hockey Federation's consideration, FIH president Leandro Negre has said.

Addressing the media at the Azlan Shah Cup at Ipoh in Malaysia on Sunday, Negre said the FIH was mainly concentrating on its two main properties the traditional outdoor game with 11 players on each side and the indoor version that is very popular in Europe.

"Out sports is about these two versions. But with an eye on promoting hockey among youth, we are thinking about the 5-a-side concept," Negre said.

"This also involves the question of linking hockey to the Youth Games," said the FIH president.

Negre said no big changes in hockey rules would take place for some time. "Hockey has had so many changes inside a few years, that we need to stop somewhere," he said.

China, Japan begin directly trading currencies

China's efforts to turn promote the yuan as an international currency have been boosted as direct trading with Japan's yen has begun. The move ditches the US dollar as an intermediary currency.

Direct trading between the two countries' currencies was introduced to boost bilateral trade and investment, reduce financial transaction costs and balance foreign-exchange risks for financial institutions, the Japanese government said in a statement released Friday.

China's Japan's largest trading partner with bilateral trade valued at \$345 billion (279 billion euros) in 2011.

Market participants can now directly swap Japanese yen for Chinese yuan, avoiding the use of the US dollar as an intermediary currency, thus saving the two countries an estimated \$3 billion per year.

The move came as China - the world's second largest economy just ahead of Japan - is gradually making its currency freely convertible in attempts to establish the yuan as a globally important reserve currency.

In addition, it is designed to ease tensions with the United States, which has accused China of keeping its currency artificially low against the dollar to boost foreign trade.

Just last month, Beijing broadened the band in which the yuan is allowed to fluctuate against the US currency to 1.0 percent on both sides of a government-stipulated mid-point, compared with a previous 0.5 percent fluctuation range.

Growing importance

The yuan was allowed to fluctuate within a 3.0 percent band above or below a central parity rate, media reports said, although the Chinese government had not officially announced a trading range.

On Friday, Beijing set the daily mid-point at 8.0686 yuan to 100 yen, as direct market trading saw the Chinese currency opening at 8.1074, according to data released by the China Foreign Exchange Trade System - the operator of the country's national forex market.

In early trading in Japan, one yuan stood at 12.335 yen with traders in Tokyo telling the AFP news agency that rates in the two markets could be different at the outset, but were likely to "converge quickly."

"It's impossible to make money through price gaps between the two markets," Akira Hoshino, the head of foreign exchange trading at the Bank of Tokyo, told AFP.

British bank HSBC, which is one of the newly appointed market makers in China, told the same news agency that the launch of direct trading was a "significant step forward" in making the Chinese currency more international. "This is supporting the growing demand for yuan payment and settlement globally," David Liao, managing director of global markets for HSBC, said in a statement.

Cyber crime is Europe's 'big challenge'

Hackers and cyber criminals are seen as a growing threat to Europe's internet security. The EU has announced plans of a new cyber crime center, but experts say it's not enough. Digital malware, like viruses, trojans and worms, can spread quickly and pose a danger to the nervous system of modern society - the Internet. And the more important the Internet becomes for people and the economy, the more professional, cyber attacks become. The time when viruses were programmed by students and computer nerds looking for a simple thrill is over.

Now, cyber crime is the realm of mafia-like gangs, which international cyber crime as more lucrative than other more traditional, risky forms of crime. They fish for online banking IDs and passwords, they hack into computers and smartphones, or hack profiles on social networks, like Facebook or Twitter.

Malmström says fear is stopping us from enjoying a digital life

The international crime police organization, Interpol, says cyber crime causes about 750 billion euros (\$929 billion) damage every year in Europe alone. The European Union estimates that one million of the bloc's citizens fall victim to cyber crime every day. And it's not just the increasing economic loss that is causing concern, but also the social consequences. EU Commissioner for Home Affairs, Cecilia Malmström, says the biggest danger is a feeling of insecurity that's limiting digital life out of a "fear of shopping online, a fear of joining social networks and our everyday internet usage."

Figures from the EU suggest that 73 percent of all EU households had internet access at the beginning of 2011. And 80 percent of young Europeans keep in touch via social networks.

The number of attacks has risen - even since the EU adopted its first guidelines on "attacks against information systems" in February 2005. The EU Commission is unsatisfied and has now announced plans for a "European Cybercrime Centre" in The Hague. A total of 55 investigators from the commission and member states will join forces to try to stop cyber criminal activity. The center will have an annual budget of 3.6 billion euros. It will be part of the EU's criminal intelligence unit, Europol, and start operations in early 2013.

Internet expert, Jan Philipp Albrecht, says it's an important first step. Albrecht says the Cyber crime Center will need more investigators But Albrecht, who is a Greens party member and European Parliament representative, wants more investigators on site.

"Primarily, we need training at police stations in the member states of the European Union. And personnel - not just centralized at The Hague, but everywhere in Europe," said Albrecht. Individual EU member states have authorities fighting cyber crime, but they differ in terms of budget and personnel. Often, they are unable to stop cross-border crime due to a lack of resources.



EU-wide coordination needed

Udo Helmbrecht, executive director of ENISA, the European Network and Information Security Agency, says there's demand for EU-wide coordination. "It's certainly a challenge for Europe," says Helmbrecht. If something happens on the ground, such as credit card or data theft, then you need to react locally. But in order to proceed internationally, you need to coordinate." Initial steps toward collaboration have been made.

In June 2011, with ENISA's support, IT security experts formed the Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-EU). It helps to fight new viruses and warn of security lapses. In addition, ENISA is working on a new internet strategy for the EU Commission and performs internet security drills in Europe in a joint effort with American authorities.

"What's lacking is the link between the professional-technical and the political level," Helmbrecht says.

Helmbrecht says cyber crime is Europe's big challenge EU parliamentarian Jan Philipp Albrecht agrees there needs to be greater ties between the authorities. But he warns that it won't be enough if authorities simply discuss new investigative measures and make "flamboyant announcements" or create "a centralized, bloated machinery." The pressure to act - and act well - looks set to mount if developments in the US are anything to go by. Robert Mueller, director of the US Federal Bureau of Investigation recently predicted that cyber attacks would soon overtake international terrorism as the world's biggest security threat.

New German telescope will illuminate the sun

A new German-built telescope called Gregor will help researchers observe the sun better than before, and will

Tiananmen anniversary: Police beat, detain political activists in China

Police in China have beaten and detained political activists marking the 23rd anniversary of the brutal crackdown of the Tiananmen democracy protests on Sunday. Rights campaigners said officers used violence against rights defenders in the southeast Fujian province and detained them. In Beijing, police detained at least 30 activists from eastern China's Zhejiang province at a Beijing railway station Saturday and put them on a bus to their hometown.



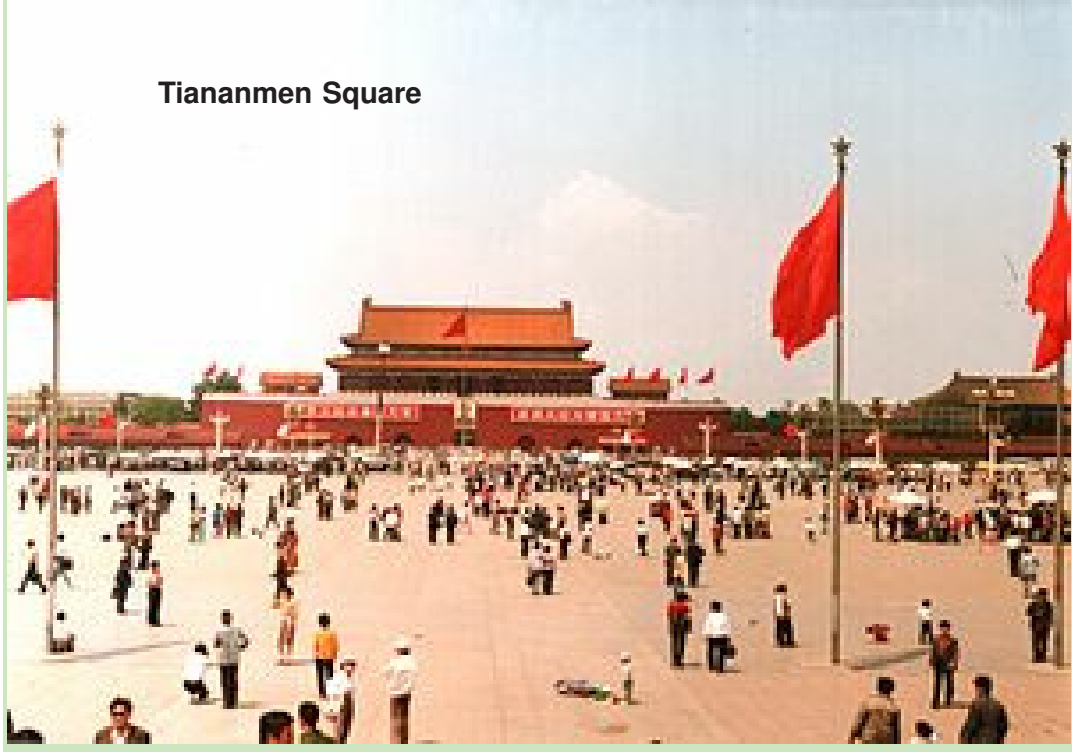
The wife of a rights activist told AFP news agency by phone that police in Fuzhou, capital of Fujian province said they were going to beat her husband to death. Police in Fuzhou, when contacted by AFP, denied anyone had been detained. It may be recalled that on June 3-4, 1989, People's Liberation Army soldiers stormed into central Beijing, firing upon unarmed demonstrators and citizens, killing hundreds as they ended six weeks of democracy protests at Tiananmen Square.

Over two decades later, Beijing still considers the incident a counter-revolutionary rebellion and has refused to acknowledge any wrongdoing or consider compensation for those killed. Any mention of the 1989 protests is banned in state media. The Tiananmen Mothers, a group of victims' relatives of the 1989 crackdown, issued an annual open letter to the government last week calling for the end of communist rule and a reassessment of the official verdict on the protests.

The group has documented the deaths of 203 people killed by soldiers during the crackdown. Thousands were arrested and served time in prison.

Tiananmen Square

Tiananmen Square is a large city square in the center of Beijing, China, named after the Tiananmen Gate (Gate of Heavenly Peace) located to its North, separating it from the Forbidden City. Tiananmen Square is the third largest city square in the world (440,000 m² - 880m by 500m or 109 acres - 960 by 550 yd). It has great cultural significance as it was the site of several important events in Chinese history. Outside China, the square is best known in recent memory as the focal point of the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989, a pro-democracy movement which ended on 4 June 1989 with the declaration of martial law in Beijing by the government and the death of several hundred civilians.



deliver images of the solar core. It's just been unveiled on Tenerife. After 10 years of planning, Europe's largest telescope is now operational on Tenerife, off the coast of Spain. It will allow researchers to observe the sun in ways they were unable to with older, conventional telescopes.



Using conventional telescopes, it was impossible to observe the solar core. The telescope mirrors tended to overheat and fail in the glare, producing warm air that hampered vision. It's hoped the new mega-telescope, Gregor, will change that and deliver images of unprecedented quality and resolution.



The telescope, which is made of the lithium aluminosilicate glass-ceramic, Zerodur, will be constantly cooled. And

sea breezes on Tenerife, one of the Canary Islands, will blow away any haze that could otherwise interfere with visibility.

Gregor will also be operated at night to seek out and study other stars in the universe that resemble our sun.

Understanding the sun

Astronomers say the new telescope will allow them to investigate even small-scale physical processes on the sun - up to a depth of 70 Kilometers. The powerful telescope will measure the magnetic field of the sun and its effect on the Earth.

The telescope facility, which cost about 10 million euros (\$12.8 million), rests upon the Pico de Teide, Spain's highest peak.

Conditions on the Pico de Teide are

ideal for observing the sun

The main mirror has a diameter of 1.5 meters, making the telescope Europe's largest. It is the third-largest telescope in the world.

Several German firms are tasked with running the facility, including the Kiepenheuer Institute for Solar Physics in Freiburg, the Leibniz Institute for Astrophysics in Potsdam, the Institute for Astrophysics in Göttingen and the Max Planck Institute for Solar System Research in Katlenburg-Lindau. Its project leader, Reiner Volkmer, says the sun is the "prototype of all stars." "When we understand the sun, we'll understand other stars as well," Volkmer said.

Scientists trial lasers to replace pesticides

Researchers in Germany are working on an alternative to poisonous herbicides. They're aiming lasers at weeds. A team of scientists at Leibniz University and a laser center in Hanover are developing an alternative to herbicides that would use robots or flying drones to zap weeds with laser beams. Chickweed, dandelion and shepherd's purse are typical pests that have beleaguered farmers in central Europe since the arrival of agriculture. Today these weeds compete with sprouting corn, rapeseed or turnips for sunlight, water and soil nutrients.



Until now, conventional farms have battled these pests with expensive herbicides that are often poisonous and can spread to land and water beyond the target plant. "Our goal is to develop a more environmentally-friendly way of getting rid of weeds. The use of herbicides is associated with risks", said Christian Marx, a researcher with the Laser Zentrum Hannover. The laser weed control project is headed by Thomas Rath and Heinz Haferkamp at the Leibniz University Hanover. In Germany, some 16 million liters of herbicides are used every year, he said. In organic farming, the weeds are yanked out by hand or scorched away. Although this is more environmentally friendly than herbicides, it is labor intensive and not practical for large-scale conventional agriculture. The main challenge for the laser project, which is being supported by the German Research Foundation, is to develop sensors that could distinguish the correct species of plant and be able to direct the laser at just the right point.



"It would be no good if it would kill anything green," Marx said. The use of herbicides is a standard procedure in agriculture. The beams focus their potency on the weed's growth center, killing it. They also have to be just the right intensity to kill the plant. Previous research suggests beams that are too weak actually promote plant growth. "A field doesn't need to be perfectly free from weeds. It's important to give crops an advantage of two to four weeks and kill unwanted weeds in that period," Marx said. "After that crops like sugar beet have branched out enough to suppress the weeds on its own." Various applications. The robots or drones have cameras that record accurate images of the crops, which are then processed by special software that recognizes the plant and optimally positions the laser beam. The agricultural industry has shown interest in the project, which is currently being tested in a greenhouse. "A laser works only where it's supposed to. Compare it to destroying weeds with a gas burner: This technique heats up its environment and is difficult to handle when there's wind. A laser works on point," Marx said. The researchers think the laser tool is best suited for use in greenhouses or tree nurseries. Large fields would present a challenge for the laser robots, which could not be mounted on a tractor since the shaking motion would prevent accuracy. Another possibility is drones, or small robotic planes that would fly over the fields. These could also fight weeds near protected waters, where herbicides are not allowed to be used. According to Marx, the German railway service has expressed interest in the

project as well. "30 percent of the railway tracks are in water protection areas where you can't use herbicides anyway." The researchers are planning further trials outdoors but say it will take at least five more years before the laser is ready to market.

Tunisia still struggling after the revolution

Tunisia's uprising is not over. On a regular basis, demonstrators rally in Sidi Bouzid, where the Tunisian revolution started. The protesters are frustrated with the slow pace of economic change in the country. In Sidi Bouzid, protesters often meet to rally in front of the town hall. In December 2010, the young street vendor Mohammed Bouazizi burned himself to death at this very spot. His death sparked mass protests across Tunisia, the ouster of the country's longtime dictator President Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali and eventually, uprisings throughout the Arab world. Today, the protesters at Sidi Bouzid city hall are demanding jobs, which was a key issue that sparked the original demonstrations. "We're just struggling in the same situation," said protestor Alawi Tahrir. "I have a master's degree in English language, and I have still been unemployed for five years." Economic tensions. The demonstrators' chants merge with the muezzin's call to noon prayer in this hardscrabble, agricultural city. Islam has deep roots here, and it's reflected in the politics. This sculpture was erected in Sidi Bouzid in Bouzizi's memory. The Islamist Ennahda Party has benefitted from the fall of the old regime. It won the most seats in last October's election to the constituent assembly - tasked with writing the country's new constitution. Mohammed Sukry, a local Ennahda leader, said he blames the current economic instability on anti-government agitators. "Leftists and the old ruling party instigate these demonstrations," Sukry said. "They will support any social movement against the government." He added they were just a small number of people, representing those parties that lost the elections. But they did not represent the majority of the population. Yet economist and banker Chedly Ayari said the economic discontent is widespread and real, particularly among recent college graduates. "Two-thirds of these strikers are young people who were promised during the campaign for the constituent assembly that they would get jobs," Ayari said. "They never got jobs." Tunisian unemployment is estimated to be at some 19 percent. Ennahda has only been in power since January, and its leaders say they need more time to repair the economy. Said Ferjani is a member of the Ennahda political bureau in Tunis. The government, he said, is beset by ultra-conservative Islamists on the one side and leftist unions on the other. "We have to restructure an economy that has failed the country for more than half a century," Ferjani said. "We cannot do it in 100 days. We need more time and we need some kind of stability. Some of the people don't want stability because they don't want the government to succeed." He said his government is encouraging foreign investment to generate jobs and has recently accepted financial aid from the US to reduce its budget deficit. "We have to diversify our relationships," Ferjani said. "We must strengthen our relations with the US in particular, with the EU, and the West. We are proud of this relationship with the US. We disagree on a few issues, about Israel and Palestine. We said let's agree to disagree." Mhenni's blog "A Tunisian Girl" gained worldwide fame during the revolution. Sitting at a Tunis café, Lina Ben Mhenni, strongly disagreed. She criticized Tunisia's growing alliance with the US. The activist blogger and university lecturer said the US opportunistically supports Tunisia's new government, after years of supporting the brutal dictatorship of Ben Ali. "The US doesn't care about Tunisians, doesn't care about people or human rights," Ben Mhenni said. "They were aware of the situation in which we were living. They closed their eyes because they had economic and other interests with Ben Ali. Now they are doing the

same with the Ennahda Party." Serious challenges ahead. Ben Mhenni criticized Ennahda for trying to shift the debate away from economic questions to issues of Islamic identity. For example, the government has supported recent court decisions that jailed bloggers for posting cartoons with critical portrayals of the Prophet Muhammad. The government has also put a TV station owner on trial for airing the animated film "Persepolis" which allegedly violated Tunisian sacred values.



Radical Islamists in Tunisia protested against the film "Persepolis" "They deflect the discussion to fake debates, about identity, about religion," she said. "I don't see any willingness to change the situation or improve it. They say that we have to give them time. But they didn't even offer plans or programs." Tunisia faces serious economic challenges in the years ahead. Protestor Alawi Tahrir said the Tunisian revolution isn't over yet. "The same system of Ben Ali is still running in the veins of this government," he said. "We want new blood. We want a new system." Tunisia has scheduled parliamentary and presidential elections for the spring of 2013. Until then, analysts said, political turmoil and economic instability may well continue.

Thai journalist convicted of insulting royalty

A Bangkok court has found a journalist guilty of lese majesty for not removing insulting remarks to the royal family from her newspaper's website. The EU has voiced its "deep concern." A Thai journalist has been convicted of lese majesty for failing to remove anonymous comments from a website quickly enough. Chiranuch Premchaiporn, of the independent online newspaper "Prachatai," was accused of not removing remarks about the king and queen from the paper's online forum in 2009. Premchaiporn, 44, who had faced a possible 20-year jail sentence under controversial computer and royal insult legislation, was given an eight-month suspended sentence and a \$630 fine by a Bangkok court Wednesday. The European Union Thursday expressed "deep concern" over the sentence, saying said the guilty verdict would have "damaging effects". Thailand has a strict lese-majesty law, a law that prohibits any slander against the royal family. The Thai law punishes the offence more harshly than murder. Yet, since the coup in 2006, the government has used the lese majesty rules more often to crack down on critical voices, particularly on the internet. More than 600,000 websites are currently blocked, most because of the suspicion of insulting the monarchy. Chiranuch Premchaiporn works for the online Thai newspaper "Prachatai" Premchaiporn didn't post the comments herself, but she is alleged to have left the comments on her newspaper's website too long. The court found that her failure to protect the king from criticism was a serious crime, almost as grave as slandering him. But, Premchaiporn said, "The law doesn't give any rules or regulations for what constitutes 'too long', neither are there any practical examples, nor is there any existing jurisprudence." The American activist CJ Hinke founded the NGO Freedom against Censorship Thailand. He's been reporting every day about the hearing on his blog. Hinke thinks the comments were mild. "They referred to the king as 'the blind father' because he is nearly blind in one eye from a childhood auto accident. The queen was referred to as 'mama blue' because of course, she is the mother of the nation and her royal color is blue. Are these insulting?" Is slander worse than murder? Thailand has been a constitutional monarchy since 1932. The king is the most important authority in the country.

Golden-framed pictures of the monarch hang in every public space and even in private homes. The highest duty of every Thai citizen is to honor the king. The so-called lese majesty law states that anyone who defames, insults, or threatens the king, the queen, or their heirs will be sentenced to 15 years imprisonment. Yet the law does not give a concrete definition of what constitutes an "offense". The court had been expected to issue Chiranuch Premchaiporn a verdict on April 30th, but then postponed a ruling until May 30th. Her case is highly symbolic because it's the first of its kind to deal with third party reliability. The ruling has set a precedent. In the future, other people might also be sued for not stopping slander against the royal family. Even posting a link to an article or "liking" something on Facebook that criticizes the king would be punishable by law. "Liking" the wrong comment on Facebook could mean jail time. Anyone can file a lese-majesty with the police, which then goes to the office of the prosecution. Benjamin Zawacki from Amnesty International explained that once a person is charged, the chances of being acquitted are slim. "Anyone essentially can be prosecuted for this law," Zawacki said. "The conviction rate is well over 90%, so essentially once you are accused, it's virtually as if you are guilty until proven innocent." The accused generally make a confession quickly in the hope that the king will at least pardon them. Human rights groups say that politicians abuse the law in order to increase their own power.

Ever since the coup d'etat in 2006, the law has been used 16 times the rate than before, especially against the opposition and journalists. About 500 cases are taken to court every year. Shawn Crispin of the New York non-profit organization Committee to Protect Journalists sees a link between the Thai government's agenda and high-profile cases like Premchaiporn's. "They are trying to send a message to all journalists: this is an area you are not allowed to go to, this is still taboo. And if you dare tread into this space you run the risk of similar charges," Crispin said. Reporters Without Borders views the lese-majesty law as a threat to freedom of the press. Strong censorship has been limiting freedom of opinion primarily on the internet since Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra took office in June 2011. Reporters without Borders maintains that politicians are abusing the law. The new government has intensified internet surveillance, blocking nearly 700 additional sites daily. A public debate about changing the law wasn't possible for many years. No politician would dare bring up the topic. The danger of being reported to the police would be too great. But despite this problem, critical voices have been growing for about two years. A call for reform. Independent groups organize protests, hunger strikes, and marches on a regular basis in order to increase pressure on the government. Members of the "Red Shirts" have been giving a lot of support to these groups. They too have been calling for a reform of the lese-majesty law. **Red Shirt protesters** at a rally in Bangkok, Thailand in 2011. The UN, the EU, some Thai celebrities, and even eight members of the royal family have been calling for clear reduction of sentences, and other changes.



Protesters, like 68-year-old Red Shirt member Prichan, are using unusually critical words these days. "The monarchy is not the god," he said, adding that the royal family should treat people as equals instead of looking down on them. "He is a simple man. So listen to us, talk with us, so we can both go together. But the monarchy and the people surround, will not accept this idea, they are trying to beat us. That's why they think the people is only the tiny matter under their feet." King Bhumibol did claim in a speech in 2005 that people should be allowed to criticize him, but that hasn't changed anything so far. Wrestling over the

Azlan Shah: India beat Britain to bag bronze

Five-time champions India came from behind to stun Great Britain 3-1 and clinch the bronze medal in the Azlan Shah Cup hockey tournament in Ipoh on June 3, 2012. India dominated the match, but squandered several scoring opportunities to concede the lead to pre-tournament favourites Great Britain before staging a spirited comeback in the second session. Shivendra Singh (42nd minute), Sandeep Singh (52nd) and Tushar Khandekar (69th) scored for India after Ashley Jackson (35th) put Great Britain ahead at the stroke of half time. India had earlier lost 2-3 to Great Britain, world's fourth ranked side, in their round robin league encounter, but Michael Nobbs' boys played a composed game. India's domination began in the first minute when they made the first foray into the rival circle from the left flank through Sarvanjit Singh who sent a through pass for Shivendra, but the Indian striker failed to utilise the chance as he ran into a crowd of British defenders. In the seventh minute, Shivendra was slow in having a crack at the goal from close range after SV Sunil pushed in from the right. India were soon awarded their first penalty corner when Rupinder Pal Singh was obstructed on top of the circle by Dan Fox, but the opportunity was wasted as Danish Mujtaba could not stop the push. Shivendra again had a good look at the goal in the 15th minute when he had only the goalkeeper to beat, but his shot lacked power and was easily palmed away. Four minutes later SK Uthappa was unable to deflect in a diagonal ball from Shivendra. After a series of misses, the Indians were guilty of conceding the lead to Great Britain in the final minute of the opening half when Jackson converted the European team's first penalty corner with a rising flick into the net. Soon after the change of ends, Great Britain forced another penalty corner, but this time Jackson's shot was deflected out by the Indian defenders. India finally managed to draw parity in the 42nd minute when Shivendra pushed in a square-pass from Uthappa, who set up the goal with an impressive run from the right. Continuing to dominate, India forced their second penalty corner 10 minutes later, and this time Sandeep scored with a fierce drag flick high into the goal for a 2-1 lead. The Indian strikers created two more scoring opportunities, but failed to shoot past British goalkeeper James Fair. Trailing 1-2, Great Britain made a desperate move and pulled its custodian Fair out of the field in the 68th minute to add another player in search of the equaliser. The move backfired as it created the opening for India's third goal in the penultimate minute. Sandeep sent the ball to an unmarked Khandekar inside the rival circle, which the latter just had to get control of the ball and push into an open goal, and he duly accomplished the task to seal India's victory. Earlier, South Korea secured the fifth position when they defeated hosts Malaysia 3-2 in the fifth-sixth position playoff match.

highly sensitive law might become a long process despite the ever-increasing public pressure to reform it. Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra has already announced that she will not permit any changes to the law, so as not to appear disloyal to the king. A parliamentary committee is currently working on this issue. Meanwhile, critics fear the consequences of Premchaiporn's verdict for future censorship cases.

Emissions trading hit by price collapse

Trading emission certificates were once the flagship of EU climate policy, but prices have taken a dive. Now, countries like China want to introduce CO² trading, which could stem the price decline. Since 2005, air in the European Union is no longer free. Any business or industry that emits so-called greenhouse gases into the atmosphere has to pay for them in the form of emission certificates which, in turn, are traded on energy exchanges. Basically, it is a clean solution, says climate expert Stefan Krug from Greenpeace. In practice, however, the price per ton of CO² is currently 6.50 euros, or roughly \$8.12, and unfortunately the European Union had expected the price to be around 20 euros. "That means all the planning doesn't work right now," said Krug. The price is so low, in fact, that the Bavarian exchange stopped trading emission certificates at the end of May. "The volume traded on European exchanges in recent months has dropped drastically to nearly zero," the Munich-based bourse said in a statement. The idea behind certificates is to regulate CO² emissions. The EU hopes to reduce emissions by 80 percent from 1990 levels by the year 2050. To achieve that goal, the EU introduced emission certificates in 2005. The concept gives industry and the energy utilities a certain number of pollution rights, quantified in tons. If a company emits more than the basic amount, it can buy certificates. By contrast, a company that sharply reduces its emissions – for example, by switching to more climate-friendly production methods – is rewarded with the possibility of selling its excess and unused emission ceiling for a profit.

If, however, the price of certificates drops, businesses have less incentive to cut their emissions because they can't earn enough from selling certificates to offset investments in renewable energies or climate-friendly production. The price has dropped, for the most part, due to certificate giveaways by the government, says Krug, adding that half of all certificates have been distributed free of charge. "This has led to a huge mountain of certificates that companies can't get rid of," he notes, "and accordingly, the incentive to save CO² is low." **Resistance in the EU** EU Climate Commissioner Connie Hedegaard has announced that she will present proposals by the end of the year on reforming emissions trading. But even within the EU there is opposition to cutting back on the number of certificates to breathe life into the market. In particular, Poland, which generates 80 percent of its electricity with coal-fired power plants, is strongly against any such measure. Energy intensive industries share the Poles' view. Hans-Jürgen Kerkhoff, president of the German steel manufacturers' association WV Stahl, wrote recently in the Frankfurt Allgemeine newspaper that emissions trading would "lead to deindustrialization." He warned that Europeans were not competitive because they were the only ones paying for their CO² emissions. **China plans to join** That could change, however. China has said that it is planning to introduce a national CO² emissions trading scheme next year. Initially, certificates would go on sale in five cities and two provinces in a test phase. Industries in the cities of Beijing, Shanghai, Chongqing, Shenzhen and Tianjin, and the provinces of Guangdong and Hubei, would have to buy pollution rights. Some 250 million people live and work in these economic zones. If the test-run works well, emissions trading would be introduced nationwide in China in 2015.



Australia, South Korea, the US state of California and the Canadian province

of Quebec have also announced their intentions to start emissions trading. But mostly China, which for a long time resisted binding climate rules, could bring a turnaround to the international CO₂ market. Experts hope that such a broad market would then drive investments in climate-friendly technologies. Certificates instead of taxes.



The climate could already benefit from emissions markets in China, Australia, South Korea, California and Quebec. More than 40 percent of global emissions would be regulated by CO₂ trading with these areas. EU emissions account for about 14 percent of total greenhouse gases. For such a market mechanism to function properly, however, the CO₂ price would have to be high enough. The alternative, says Stefan Krug of Greenpeace, would be a CO₂ tax. But that would be more difficult, he admits, because tax issues are regulated at the national level. Besides, with taxes there is no guarantee that the money would actually be used for climate-friendly projects.

Ex-Japanese PM blames state for Fukushima

Former Japanese Prime Minister Naoto Kan has apologized for last year's nuclear disaster and said the government bore responsibility for the human and environmental consequences. Testifying before a special parliamentary committee investigating the circumstances of the Fukushima nuclear crisis, former Japanese Prime Minister Naoto Kan said on Monday that the "nuclear accident was caused by a nuclear plant which operated as national policy." Kan, who, since the March 12, 2011 earthquake and tsunami accident, has become a strong opponent of nuclear energy, told the panel he believed "the biggest portion of blame lies with the state."

"As a person who was in charge of the country at the time of the accident, I sincerely apologize for my failure to stop it," he said. Kan stepped down as premier six months after the accident. "I was thinking it was a battle against an invisible enemy. I thought, if the situation called for it, we might have to risk lives to contain it," he added. The former prime minister led the disaster management team at the height of the crisis and was praised by an earlier private inquiry investigating the accident for his aggressive involvement in relief efforts, which that panel said had averted a worse crisis. The private inquiry said that as the situation on Japan's tsunami-wrecked coast deteriorated, Fukushima operator, Tokyo Electric Power (TEPCO), had wanted to abandon the plant and evacuate its workers, but Kan ordered the utility, which refused to cooperate with the investigation, to keep men on site.

During his testimony on Monday, Kan sharply criticized TEPCO for its failure to keep the government informed of the rapidly changing developments. Experts have testified that if the premier had not stuck to his guns, Fukushima would have spiraled out of control, with even more disastrous consequences.

Minister denies misleading public Japan's Trade and Industry Minister Yukio Edano, who testified on Sunday, told the parliamentary committee that the government had not fully understood the extent of the damage at the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power plant. Edano, who was the chief government spokesman at the time of the accident, has been accused of failing to fully disclose the nature of the crisis and of downplaying the health hazard. He denied that there had been any cover-up and said he repeatedly used the phrases "no immediate risk" and "just to be safe" in his press briefings because that was what officials believed at the time.

After some time, the government acknowledged that there were melt-downs at three reactors in the worst nuclear accident since Chernobyl. The parliamentary panel is the only

public inquiry into the accident and has so far questioned top nuclear regulators and officials from Fukushima operator, TEPCO.

Local rice crop contaminated Tens of thousands of people were evacuated from the area around the plant after it began spewing radiation. The residents have not been allowed to return to their homes and it is believed that some areas will remain uninhabitable for decades to come. To make matters worse, last year's rice crop from the region sits in silos unsafe to eat because it is contaminated with radiation. Several thousand farmers have had their livelihoods wiped out. Only a few have been allowed to return and have been testing methods to reduce radiation contamination as part of a special government program. They have been asked to sprinkle zeolite, a pebble-like substance that traps radioactive cesium, and spread fertilizer with potassium to help block radiation absorption. Just how effective these measures will be remains to be seen.



So far this year, Tokyo has allocated the equivalent of \$1.3 billion (1.1 billion euros) for decontamination efforts.

India looks at the US to check fake currency notes

India is planning to seek technological cooperation of the US to check the flow of fake Indian currency notes the way Washington does to put a stop of circulation of counterfeit USD. Impressed by the American technology, which has a database of each counterfeit US dollar - photograph, from where it originated, its route of travel and people behind its circulation - India is all set to ask the US to help it curb the menace, mostly originating from Pakistan.



A formal request is expected to be placed during the Indo-US Strategic Dialogue to be held in Washington later in June. Union Home Secretary RK Singh, besides others, will also attend the crucial meeting. New Delhi will seek American technology to check the smuggling and circulation of fake Indian currency notes and build its own database of such counterfeit notes. The move came after Home Minister P Chidambaram vowed to stamp down heavily on those who carry fake Indian currency note and indulge in smuggling of drugs from across the border.

Government has the courage to take tough economic decisions: Dr C Rangarajan

The Prime Minister's Chief Economic Advisor Dr C Rangarajan has admitted that a hike in diesel and LPG prices is imminent despite a steep hike in petrol prices last week.



While speaking to Karan Thapar on 'Devil's Advocate', Dr Rangarajan said the government can soften the blow but fuel price hike is the need of the hour to contain the fiscal deficit.

Kolkata Knight Riders win IPL 2012

The final between the defending two-time champions Chennai Super Kings and the first-time finalists Kolkata Knight Riders was held at the M. A. Chidambaram Stadium, Chennai on May 27, 2012. While the Super Kings retained their team from the Qualifier, a hamstring injury to Knight Riders medium-pace bowler Lakshmiopathy Balaji resulted the inclusion of Australian Brett Lee and this inclusion of another foreign player required the Knight Riders to leave out their former captain and wicket-keeper batsman Brendon McCullum of New Zealand to maintain the cap of 4 foreign players. Wicket-keeper batsman Manvinder Bisla was brought in to replace Brendon McCullum.

After Super Kings captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni won the toss and elected to bat first, openers Murali Vijay and Mike Hussey put on an opening partnership of 87 until Vijay was dismissed for 42 (from 32 balls) in the 11th over. Mike Hussey was joined by IPL's leading run scorer Suresh Raina and they scored at a brisk rate to reach 160 when Hussey was dismissed in the eighteenth over for 54 (from 43 balls). Suresh Raina who had scored an imposing 73 (from 38 balls) with five sixes was dismissed off the last ball as Chennai reached a formidable total of 190. In reply, the Knight Riders lost their captain Gautam Gambhir cheaply for 2 in the first over. However, they recovered as Manvinder Bisla (89 from 48 balls) and Jacques Kallis (69 from 49 balls) added 136 for the second wicket. Soon after Bisla's dismissal in the 15th over, the Knight Riders lost wickets at regular intervals and after Kallis was caught out by Ravindra Jadeja off the bowling of Ben Hilfenhaus at 18.5 overs, the Knight Riders required 16 runs from the last 7 balls. Shakib Al Hasan appeared to have been caught by Murali Vijay off the very next delivery from Hilfenhaus but it happened to be a no-ball and amid the celebrations, Shakib Al Hasan had completed two runs and retained the strike and hit a four the very next ball. Needing 9 runs to win from the last over, Manoj Tiwary hit consecutive fours to secure victory for the Knight Riders. Manvinder Bisla was declared Man of the Match for his 89 from 48 balls which included five sixes and eight fours.

It was the final match of this season Indian Premier League, Chennai Super Kings were the favorite to win and they were right on track for first half of the match but they were not the IPL winner. Standing between the win and CSK were Bisla (who has not performed this well in his IPL career) and Legendary Jacques Kallis. The tension was so much that KKR captain Gambhir till the time they won looked as if he was bombarded. But Manoj Tiwary hit two consecutive balls for four in the last over and celebration started, Shahrukh Khan (owner of KKR) was ecstatic as were the team players. For living in shadows for 4 IPL season they emerged in front of the stage and what a rising it was. Throughout the tournament KKR played superbly and fixed their spot in playoff just behind Delhi Daredevils. They defeated Delhi in the first Qualifier and went straight to IPL.

Earlier CSK heroics continued as there not in form batsmen raised their batting (just like the previous two matches) and put a mammoth score of 190 in front of KKR. Raina who was a flop show in this season IPL hit 73 runs in 38 balls, Hussey made 54 and Murali Vijay made 42. Balaji was left out because of Hamstring and Brett Lee was brought in. All bowlers were hit for runs and even mysterious Narine had his worst IPL 2012 bowling stats.

KKR lost their Wall, Gambhir in the very first over and heart of fans of KKR sank. But in came Kallis and Bisla who took the opposition on roll. Bisla hit Morkel for 4 fours in the fourth over and destruction started. He was well supported by Kallis who rotated the strike well and when Bisla was out he took charge hitting classy fours showing his standard.

KKR had their nervous moments when Kallis got out but a no ball by Hilfenhaus followed by and another full toss that was hit for four by Shakib left 9 runs for the last over. Manoj Tiwary was the new batsman. Two singles came in first two balls but then Tiwary hit a slower ball by bravo over Cover leg for four and followed it with another four over square leg.

McCullum had to sit out so that Lee can get in, this left batting line up weak so Bisla came in as a replacement for Balaji.

IPL 5 - Winner is Kolkata Knight Riders

Award Money – 10 Crore

1st Runner-up team is Chennai Super Kings

Award Money – Rs 7 crores and 50 lakhs

Bisla was awarded for man of the match.

Orange cap went to *Chris Gayle* for the highest run scorer.

Morne Morkel received the **Purple Cap** as highest wicket taker.

Sunil Narine was awarded **Man of the Series.**

Fair-play Award - Rajasthan Royals

Golden Player of the tournament - Sunil Narine (Award Money – Rs. 10 lakhs)

Kolkata Knight Rider won the IPL final by 5 wickets over Chennai Super Kings. The match was played at M.A. Chidambaram stadium of Chennai.

IPL 2012 Points Table | IPL Points Table

Team	Played	Won	Lost	N/R	Tie	Points	Net R/R
Delhi Daredevils	16	11	5	0	0	22	+0.617
Kolkata Knight Riders	16	10	5	0	1	21	+0.561
Mumbai Indians	16	10	6	0	0	20	-0.100
Chennai Super Kings	16	8	7	0	1	17	+0.100
Royal Challengers Bangalore	16	8	7	0	1	17	-0.022
Kings XI Punjab	16	8	8	0	0	16	-0.216
Rajasthan Royals	16	7	9	0	0	14	+0.201
Deccan Chargers	16	4	11	0	1	9	-0.509
Pune Warriors	16	4	12	0	0	8	-0.551

The 2012 Indian Premier League season, abbreviated as IPL 5 or the IPL 2012 or the DLF IPL 2012 (owing to title sponsorship reasons), was the fifth season of the Indian Premier League, initiated by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) in 2007 with the first season played in 2008. The tournament began on 4 April and ended on 27 May 2012. Kolkata Knight Riders were the winning team, beating defending champions Chennai Super Kings by five wickets in the final. This season the number of teams in the league went from ten to nine with the termination of Kochi Tuskers Kerala.

Upon progression, the season was criticized for its decreased television viewership compared to the previous seasons. This edition of the IPL has been the most competitive with 19 matches in which team won in the last over and 6 matches in which team won by a margin of less than 10 runs. Near the end of the season, the season faced various hurdles including a spot fixing case, which allegedly included 5 players caught on a sting operation carried on by a local news channel. The top three teams of the tournament (Kolkata Knight Riders, Chennai Super Kings and Delhi Daredevils) will represent India in the 2012 Champions League Twenty20. The Fair Play Award was won by Rajasthan Royals, while Kings XI Punjab batsman Mandeep Singh was named the tournament's "Rising Star" and Kolkata Knight Riders bowler Sunil Narine was Player of the Season.

The opening ceremony dubbed was held in Chennai at the YMCA Ground. The ceremony included some performances by Amitabh Bachchan, Priyanka Chopra, Kareena Kapoor, Salman Khan, Prabhu Deva, Colonial Cousins, and Katy Perry. The opening game was held in the M. A. Chidambaram Stadium, Chennai, the home venue of the reigning champions Chennai Super Kings. The closing ceremony will also be held at the same venue.

Statistics of IPL 2012

Overall, 22453 runs were scored at an average of 26.2 with an overall run rate of 7.82. 857 wickets fell wickets fell in the whole of the tournament. Both the amount of runs and the amount of wickets are the most that has occurred in one tournament out of all five IPL tournaments. During the course of this tournament, pace bowlers took 531 wickets with an average of 27.20 and average run rate of 7.81 whereas spinners took 241 wickets at an average of 31.35 and average run rate of 7.41. Overall, 6 centuries were scored. IPL 2008 and IPL 2011 also had the same amount of centuries. In this tournament, 96 fifties were scored, which was the most in any edition of the IPL. This edition also saw 1911 fours, 2 fours less than previous edition of 2011 Indian Premier League. 731 sixes were also scored, which was another record for a season. On the other hand, this edition had only 2 instances in which a single bowler took 5 wicket haul within his quota of 4 overs as per the rules of Twenty20 cricket.

Most runs

Player	Team	Inns	Runs	Ave	SR	HS	100	50	4s	6s
Chris Gayle	Royal C. Bangalore	14	733	61.08	160.74	128*	1	7	46	59
Gautam Gambhir	Kolkata Knight Riders	17	590	36.87	143.55	93	0	6	64	17
Shikhar Dhawan	Deccan Chargers	15	569	40.64	129.61	84	0	5	58	18
Ajinkya Rahane	Rajasthan Royals	16	560	40.00	129.33	103*	1	3	73	10

Most wickets

Player	Team	Inns	Wkts	Ave	Econ	BBI	SR	4WI	5WI
Morné Morkel	Delhi Daredevils	16	25	18.12	7.19	4/20	15.1	1	0
Sunil Narine	Kolkata Knight Riders	15	24	13.5	5.47	5/19	14.7	1	1
Lasith Malinga	Mumbai Indians	14	22	15.90	6.30	4/16	15.1	1	0
Umesh Yadav	Delhi Daredevils	17	19	23.84	7.42	3/19	19.2	0	0
Vinay Kumar	Royal C. Bangalore	14	19	25.26	8.59	3/22	17.6	0	0

Controversies

The first matches of the season had recorded an average Television Viewership Rating (TVR) of 3.76, 18.7% less than the previous season. The viewership was also reportedly low for the opening ceremony with a rating of 1.3 TVR. The decline was attributed to the number of matches being played, as the count stands at 76 among 9 teams. The rating continued to fall as the cumulative number of people who tuned in to watch the first 16 games also declined from 127.40 million in 2011 to 122.44 million. The 12th match played between Mumbai Indians and Rajasthan Royals drew the highest rating of the season with a rating of 5.2, as of 20 April.

On 14 May 2012, an Indian news channel India TV aired a sting operation that accused five players involved in spot fixing.

Reacting to the news, Chief manager of Indian Premier League Rajiv Shukla immediately suspended all five: Mohnish

Mishra, Shalabh Srivastava, TP Sudhindra, Amit Yadav, and Abhinav Bali (none of whom had played international cricket).

Mohnish Mishra who was part of Pune Warriors India team for the season, admitted to have said that franchises pay black

money, in a sting operation. Mishra was caught on tape saying that franchisees paid them black money and that he had

received 1.5 crore (US\$299,250) from the later, among which 1.2 crore (US\$239,400) was black money. He was also sus-

sended from his team.



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