
PANORAMA...

CURRENT EVENT ANALYSIS

July 22-29, 2014

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ENVIRONMENT

June 2014: Hottest Month

The US government's climate agency, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reported that:

June 2014 global temperatures were the hottest since record keeping began in 1880.

The average temperature for land and ocean surfaces around the world was 16.2 degrees Celsius compared with the average of 15.5 degrees over the past century.

It was also the 352nd consecutive month with a global temperature above the 20th-century average.

Record warmth was registered in:

- ✓ Greenland
- ✓ Parts of northern South America
- ✓ Areas in eastern and central Africa
- ✓ Parts of southern and south-eastern Asia

The report supported warnings by climate scientists that the world faces temperature increases of 4 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels by the end of this century, if no preventative action is taken.

The only way to avoid drastic rises in sea levels and lethal drought is to keep that increase to 2 degrees or less

Global average temperatures have already risen by 0.85 degrees since 1880.

To keep below the 2-degree-Celsius increase, the world would have to lower global greenhouse gas emissions like carbon dioxide by 40 to 70 per cent compared with 2010 - and do it by 2050.

Meat: climate changing factor

According to research in US meat contributes to climate change. Following are findings:

- ✓ Meat production contributes to climate change due to greenhouse gasses emitted by livestock
- ✓ Carbon dioxide is the most-prevalent gas when it comes to climate change. But methane and nitrous oxide are also greenhouse gasses and account for approximately 28 per cent of global warming activity.
- ✓ Methane and nitrous oxide are released, in part, by livestock. Animals release methane as a result of microorganisms that are involved in their digestive processes and nitrous oxide from decomposing manure.
- ✓ These two gasses are responsible for a quarter of these non-carbon dioxide gas emissions and 9 per cent of total greenhouse gas emissions overall.
- ✓ Beef cattle are responsible for far more greenhouse gas emissions than other types of animals.

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- ✓ The research team estimated the greenhouse gas emissions related to livestock in 237 countries over a nearly half a century and found that livestock emissions increased by 51 per cent over this period.
- ✓ This is expected to increase further going forward, as demand for meat, dairy products, and eggs is predicted by some scientists to double by 2050.
- ✓ Cows, goats, sheep and several other animals belong to a class of animals called ruminants. Ruminants have four stomachs and digest their food in their stomachs instead of in their intestines, as humans do. Ruminants eat food, regurgitate it as cud and eat it again. The stomachs are filled with bacteria that aid in digestion, but also produce methane.

Biodiversity Loss leading to Mass Extinction?

Scientists from Stanford University warned that the persistent loss and decline of biodiversity is leading humanity to early days of the planet's sixth mass biological extinction event.

According to them:

- ✓ Since 1500, more than 320 terrestrial vertebrates have become extinct.
- ✓ Populations of the remaining species show a 25 per cent average decline in abundance.
- ✓ The situation is similarly dire for invertebrate animal life.
- ✓ While previous extinctions have been driven by natural planetary transformations or catastrophic asteroid strikes, the current die-off can be associated with human activity, leading to an era of 'Anthropocene defaunation'
- ✓ Across vertebrates, 16-33 per cent of all species are estimated to be globally threatened or endangered.
- ✓ Large animals described as megafauna and including elephants, rhinoceroses, polar bears and countless other species worldwide face the highest rate of decline
- ✓ This trend according to scientists matches previous extinction events.
- ✓ This leads to doubling of rodents and abundance of disease-causing ectoparasites that they harbour.
- ✓ Where human density is high, you get high rates of defaunation, high incidence of rodents and thus high levels of pathogens, which increases the risks of disease transmission
- ✓ Human population has doubled in the past 35 years; in the same period, the number of invertebrate animals such as beetles, butterflies, spiders and worms has decreased by 45 per cent.
- ✓ The loss is driven primarily by loss of habitat and global climate disruption, and could have trickle-up effects in our everyday lives.
- ✓ Immediately reducing rates of habitat change and overexploitation would help but these approaches need to be tailored to individual regions and situations.
- ✓ We tend to think about extinction as loss of a species from the face of Earth but there is a loss of critical ecosystem functioning in which animals play a central role that we need to pay attention to as well.

Anthropocene Defaunation

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Defaunation is a process in an ecosystem, during which top predators and herbivores are declining due to anthropogenic pressures, resulting in a lack of agents that control the components of the ecosystem's vegetation. Herbivores are important for maintaining the biodiversity of a forest by controlling the abundance of plant species and seed dispersal. Defaunation is a significant environmental change and conservation issue.

We live amid a global wave of anthropogenically driven biodiversity loss: species and population extirpations and, critically, declines in local species abundance. Particularly, human impacts on animal biodiversity are an under-recognized form of global environmental change. Among terrestrial vertebrates, 322 species have become extinct since 1500, and populations of the remaining species show 25% average decline in abundance. Invertebrate patterns are equally dire: 67% of monitored populations show 45% mean abundance decline. Such animal declines will cascade onto ecosystem functioning and human well-being.

Much remains unknown about this Anthropocene defaunation; these knowledge gaps hinder our capacity to predict and limit defaunation impacts. Clearly, however, defaunation is both a pervasive component of the planet's sixth mass extinction and also a major driver of global ecological change.

Science Express Biodiversity Special

India with 2.5 per cent of the earth's land mass and 17 per cent of the world's population, had eight per cent of the world's biodiversity. Thus India is rich in biodiversity. So we need to pass this knowledge and awareness to next generation, which is crucial for sustainable development. To achieve this this initiative was started.

Union Minister of State for Environment flagged off the third phase of the Science Express Biodiversity Special (SEBS).

A flagship venture of the:

- ✓ Ministry of Environment and Forests
- ✓ Ministry of Science and Technology
- ✓ Ministry of Railways

The exhibition on wheels has been playing a role in creating awareness about India's biodiversity

There is need to sustain India's biodiversity in the present times

About 30 lakh students are expected to view it in 20 States. It will travel for 194 days and stop at 57 places before ending its journey on February 4 in Gandhinagar.

The statement said the train was the brand ambassador of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity in Hyderabad in 2012 and it was stationed there to showcase India's natural riches.

It is perhaps the world's most visited train exhibition.

Of the 16 coaches, eight are dedicated to showcasing bio-geographical zones of India through a variety of interactive exhibits, short films and videos.

The remaining coaches have exhibits on climate change, energy and water conservation and other issues.

POLITY – GOVERNANCE

MyGov

MyGov is a technology-driven platform that would provide people with the opportunity of contributing towards good governance.

Prime Minister pointed out there was a widespread belief in the country that after a government is elected, a gap develops between the people and the executive. Democracy could not succeed without people's participation.

To bridge this gap MyGov will play major role.

online platform www.mygov.nic.in to engage citizens in the task of "good governance" (surajya)

Groups and corners are an important part of MyGov. The platform has been divided into various groups namely:

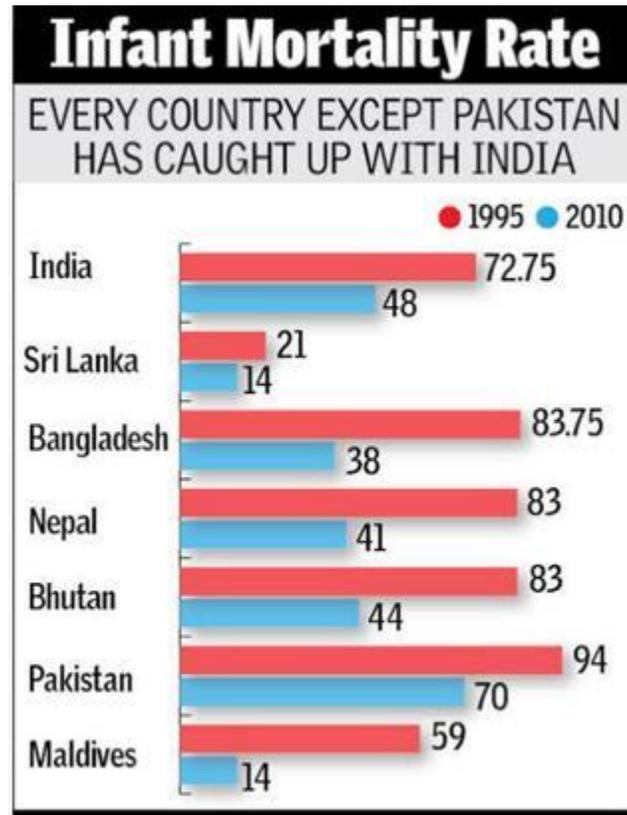
- ✓ Clean Ganga
- ✓ Girl Child Education
- ✓ Clean India
- ✓ Skilled India
- ✓ Digital India
- ✓ Job Creation

Each group allows for online and on-ground tasks to be undertaken by contributors.

Human development indicators: India Vs Neighbours

- ✓ The 2014 Human Development Report - Sustaining Human Progress: Reducing Vulnerabilities and Building Resilience - provides a fresh perspective on vulnerability and proposes ways to strengthen resilience.
- ✓ First rank – Norway
- ✓ Bottom, 187th rank – Niger
- ✓ Countries are grouped into four based on their HDI
 1. Very high human development
 2. High human development
 3. Medium human development
 4. Low human development
- ✓ India with a rank of 135 belongs to third group

Though India ranks marginally higher than many of its South Asian neighbours in the 2014 UNDP Human Development Report the country has fallen behind most of its immediate neighbours on key health and quality of life indicators, an analysis of health indices from nearly two decades of HDI numbers reveal.



**lower numbers mean lesser deaths*

India also has the worst gender inequality in the region

Since the early 1990s countries like Nepal and Bangladesh have improved their human development indicators at a faster clip than India.

In 1995, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Pakistan were languishing far behind India in infant mortality. However, by 2010, all of them except Pakistan had caught up and surpassed India's figure of 48 deaths per 1,000 live births.

Every other country in the region (except Pakistan) also spends a higher proportion of its national income on public health care.

After Bangladesh surpassed India on a range of health indicators in 2003, India's public expenditure on health actually fell.

The government kept health allocation at or less than one per cent of the GDP for the next five years.

In the meantime, private expenditure on healthcare shot up.

Out of pocket expenditure on health in India is close to 78 per cent — in stark contrast with the Maldives (14%), Bhutan (29), and Sri Lanka (53%).

Among the seven SAARC nations (data for Afghanistan is unavailable), an average Indian is least likely to be vaccinated as a child, most likely to suffer from malnutrition (nearly half of those under 5), and has the lowest life expectancy.

India also has the worst gender inequality in the region (sharing the 127th place with Pakistan).

The gulf between workforce participation of men and women is one of the widest in India among the seven countries.

Human development reports show in essence is India's failure to properly utilise the wealth created by its expanding economy, which doubled twice in the last two decades.

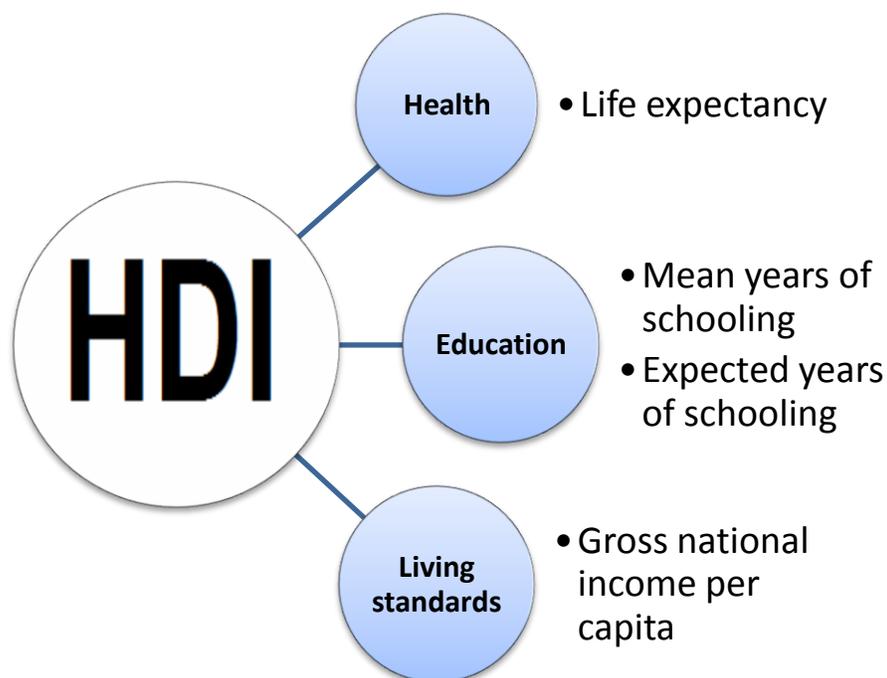
Among SAARC nations Indians are least satisfied with the standard of living (only 47% are satisfied).

However, their trust in the national government is quite healthy (with 54% answering yes).

HDI

The Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite statistic of life expectancy, education, and income indices used to rank countries into four tiers of human development. It was created by the Pakistani economist Mahbub ul Haq and the Indian economist Amartya Sen in 1990 and was published by the United Nations Development Programme.

The first Human Development Report introduced a new way of measuring development by combining indicators of life expectancy, educational attainment and income into a composite human development index, the HDI. The breakthrough for the HDI was the creation of a single statistic which was to serve as a frame of reference for both social and economic development. The HDI sets a minimum and a maximum for each dimension, called goalposts, and then shows where each country stands in relation to these goalposts, expressed as a value between 0 and 1. Components of HDI – It has three dimensions and four indicators as illustrated below:



e-service record system

Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) has launched an e-service record book portal for government employees.

Objectives are:

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- ✓ To promote a paperless regime
- ✓ Better human resource management

Under the personnel information management system of e-office, the DoPT has extended the facility to its employees to view their service book online. All the other ministries have been advised to extend the facility to the civilian employees working under them.

Service record provides information on various portfolios and posts held by a particular government employee.

System would also prove to be of great assistance in an efficient management of human resource. The system can facilitate work allocation based on the skills and experiences of the employees under consideration for a particular post or department

DoPT has also launched a Basic Leadership Skills Module for Central Secretariat Services officers at the Institute of Secretariat Training and Management. The module is expected to equip civil servants with the skills that help them function efficiently in a complex and challenging environment.

All levels of civil service need to be trained in leadership skills so that they impart their duties effectively. The Department plans to introduce similar modules for mid-level and advanced leadership skill development.

A Learning Resource Centre has also been set up with a mandate to identify and adopt the leading national and international practices in the field of training techniques and technologies to strengthen the Trainers Development Programme, to develop a cadre of high quality trainers.

This would reduce the financial burden otherwise incurred on foreign trips often undertaken by government functionaries for skill training.

Both the training activities have been supported by the UNDP, under the Strengthening the Human Resource Management for Civil Services Project.

Protection of northeast people

- ✓ M P Bezbaruah committee was constituted in February
- ✓ Was set up after increased attacks on citizens from the region.

Mandate: to look into the various concerns of persons hailing from the northeastern States who are living in different parts of the country, especially the metropolitan areas, and to suggest suitable remedial measures which could be taken by the government.

The Terms of Reference of the committee were:

- ✓ To examine the various kinds of concerns, including those regarding security of people hailing from the northeast
- ✓ To examine the causes behind the attacks/violence and discrimination against them
- ✓ To suggest measures to be taken by the government to address these concerns
- ✓ To suggest legal remedies to address these concerns

Recommendations:

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- ✓ A separate law with specific provisions to protect people from the northeast living in different parts of the country
- ✓ Based on an observation by Delhi High Court which said one person from a State must not be discriminated in another State.
- ✓ Such a law would help immediately address issues faced by northeast people, particularly over their safety and security
- ✓ Amendment of sections of IPC
- ✓ strict implementation of laws

Committee submitted its report to Home Ministry

Background

Bezbaruah Committee was set up after the death of Nido Tania, 20, following an altercation with shopkeepers and others at the Lajpat Nagar in south Delhi in January. Last week, another youth from Manipur, Akha Salouni (29), was killed after he was allegedly beaten by a group of five men in a suspected case of road rage in Kotla Mubarakpur in South Delhi. Also in Pune there were incidences against North East Students.

Committee made no suggestion for enactment of an anti-racial law but strengthening and proper implementation of existing laws.

Contribution to Political Parties by the Companies

Contributions to political parties are governed by Section 182 of the Companies Act, 2013.

Following are the provisions:

- ✓ A company should not be a Government company
- ✓ Company is in existence for at least last three financial years
- ✓ It may contribute up to 7.5% of its average net profits during the last three years to a political party/parties
- ✓ Party shall be registered under representation of Peoples Act, 1951.
- ✓ This is subject to further elaborations and restrictions in the said section.
- ✓ Following permission to establish Electoral Trust companies under the Income Tax Act, a company can also make contributions within the above limits and restrictions to 'Electoral Trust Companies' and reflect these contributions in their books of accounts
- ✓ The Electoral Trust Companies are, however, required to indicate the amounts passed on to them by companies and contributed by them to a political party or parties in the manner laid down in section 182(3) of the Companies Act, 2013.

SOCIAL ISSUES

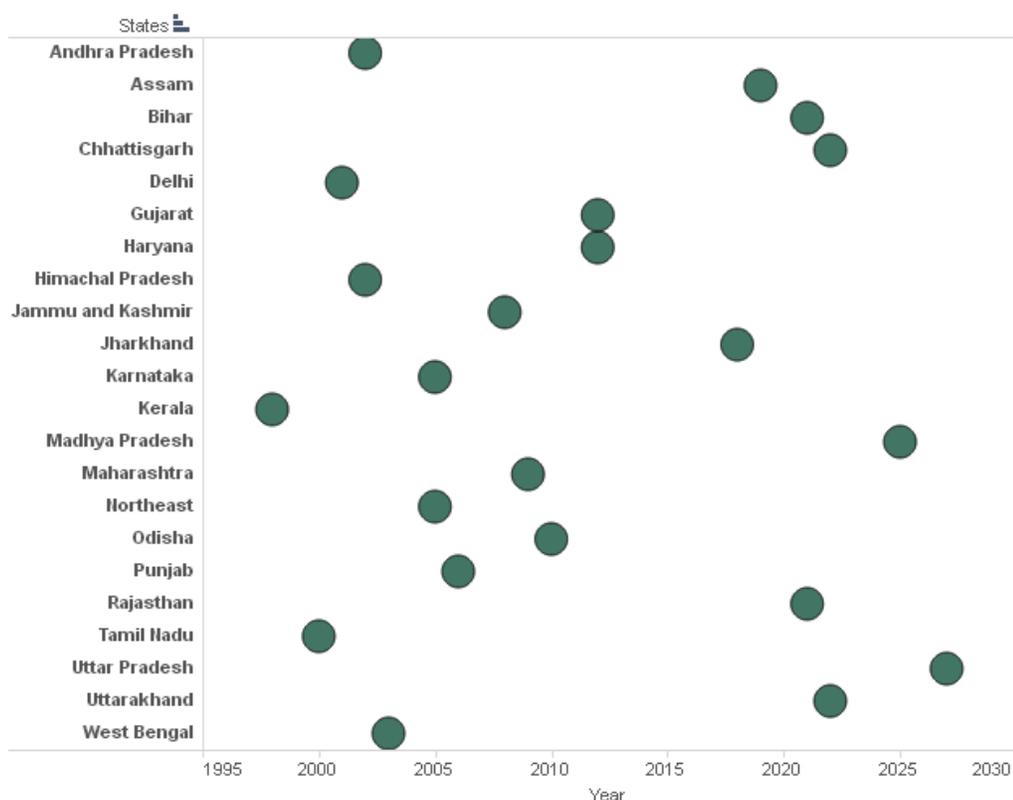
Total Fertility Rate

TFR: The average number of children any given woman in a country's population is expected to have during her lifetime is known as the Total Fertility Rate (TFR).

Demographers are in agreement that as TFR of 2.1 is the "replacement level", i.e. the number of kids women in a population need to have so that the population will just maintain itself, neither grow nor shrink (the 0.1 takes care of the likelihood of unnatural deaths).

2.1 is a magic number, one that for years looked unimaginable for India

Year by which projected TFR will be 2.1 in different states in India (Registrar General in India)



- ✓ In 1960, India's TFR was 6, and our population ever declining must have seemed too far off to imagine.
- ✓ As of 2010, India's TFR according to the UN is 2.5, and many states have already reached replacement levels.

Paradox:

Kerala hit 2.1 in 1998 and is now already down to European levels of low fertility

Uttar Pradesh will reach this milestone a full 30 years later, in 2027

So as one half of the country prepares for the challenge of educating and training its growing young workforce, the other must increasingly think of pensions and how to support the elderly.

HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria in World

A report published in The Lancet (medical journal) has following findings:

The global burden and mortality from HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria across the world have dropped significantly since 2000.

The main reason for these reductions is the increased focus on the three diseases across the world brought about by the Millennium Declaration in 2000 through the formulation of Millennium Development Goal 6 (MDG 6).

If MDG 4 aimed at reducing child mortality and MDG 5 targeted maternal mortality reduction, the formulation of MDG 6 focussed on stopping the spread of the three diseases by 2015.

In the developing countries in particular burden decreased significantly.

HIV epidemic appears smaller than previously estimated, while in the case of malaria, the global burden is far higher than the WHO estimates.

HIV

Reductions have been significant in the case of the global incidence of HIV, and child mortality from malaria in sub-Saharan Africa during the period 2000-2013.

Globally HIV incidence dropped by one-third from its peak

Child mortality from malaria in sub-Saharan Africa declined by 31.5 per cent

In 2013, HIV incidence stood at 1.8 million compared with 2.8 million in 1997 when the incidence had peaked.

Mortality from HIV/AIDS in 2013 was 1.3 million compared with 1.7 million in 2005, which was the year when the epidemic was at its peak.

Tuberculosis

Globally, concerted efforts to stem the HIV/AIDS epidemic have benefited TB control during the period 2000-2013.

Globally the prevalence of TB in people who are not infected with HIV was 160.2 for 100,000.

Globally, in 2013, there were 7.5 million new TB cases, and the disease caused 1.4 million deaths. The mortality figure in 2000 was 1.6 million.

Despite TB prevalence rates reducing since 2000, the number of people living with TB worldwide increased from around 8.5 million in 1990 to about 12 million in 2013.

In South Asia, where half of global TB deaths take place, mortality rate reduction per year was 4.2 per cent. In East Asia, death rates fell annually by 7.5 per cent.

Malaria

In the case of malaria, the epidemic peaked in the early 2000s — with 232 million cases in 2003 and 1.2 million deaths in 2004. Last year, 164.9 million malaria cases and 854,568 deaths due to malaria were reported from across the world. The Lancet study reveals that malaria is killing more people than previously estimated.

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Though sub-Saharan Africa has higher malaria burden, about 50 per cent of global deaths from malaria last year were in just three countries — India, Nigeria and Democratic Republic of Congo. The mortality rate in India was 11 deaths per 100,000. Countries neighbouring India had death rates between 1 and 2 per 100,000.

India's Performance

India has had the most success battling HIV/AIDS.

Since 2000, the annual rate of reduction in new cases was more than four times that of the worldwide rate a decrease of 16.3 per cent per year compared with the global drop of 3.9 per cent.

In 2013, nearly 79,000 Indian died of HIV/AIDS and the number of new HIV infections was about 31,000.

But the TB scenario in India is grim. The prevalence of TB in people who are not infected with HIV was 275.3 per 100,000 people in India.

In India, success at reducing the prevalence of TB has fallen behind global progress, despite significant gains against HIV/AIDS.

India has halved the number of malaria deaths per 100,000 during the period 1990-2013.

Malaria still remains a tremendous health burden for Indians. About 61 million cases were reported last year and it killed more than 116,000 people.

The other three countries where over five million new cases are seen every year are:

- ✓ Nigeria (30 million)
- ✓ Democratic Republic of Congo (six million)
- ✓ Mozambique (six million)

Encephalitis in East and North East India

Encephalitis is a brain inflammation, mostly caused by a viral infection and often transmitted through mosquito bites. Its symptoms include vomiting and high fever, and it can lead to death or long-term disabilities like paralysis and mental problems. There is rise in encephalitis cases over the past few weeks in East Indian states such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa, Assam, Meghalaya etc.

Japanese encephalitis is a disease caused by the mosquito-borne Japanese encephalitis virus. The Japanese encephalitis virus is a virus from the family Flaviviridae. Domestic pigs and wild birds (herons) are reservoirs of the virus; transmission to humans may cause severe symptoms. Amongst the most important vectors of this disease are the mosquitoes *Culex tritaeniorhynchus* and *Culex vishnui*. This disease is most prevalent in Southeast Asia and East Asia.

More than 17 States are reporting cases of Japanese Encephalitis (JE) and Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) which has high mortality and morbidity rates. Since the virus attacks the brain of the child, the chances of the child becoming mentally retarded are high.

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Uttar Pradesh reports 500-600 JE deaths every year while just last month, over 100 children died of the disease in Bihar. The World Health Organisation put the JE toll at over 1,000 in 2013. Hundreds of people, mostly children, die each year from the mosquito-borne virus. 67 people in West Bengal and 43 in Assam are died till date. Lower Assam districts of Barpeta, Kamrup (Rural), Darrang and Nalbari districts have been worst affected by the disease.

India has launched a major war against Japanese encephalitis

There is need to immunise children against JE in the affected areas by carrying out a drive on the lines of the Pulse Polio campaign.

To ensure full vaccine coverage involvement of all stakeholders voluntary sector, Indian Medical Association, religious organisations doing social work, even school children, to ensure that all children are brought to the immunisation centres.

The ultimate objective shall be to prevent the disease occurrence by early diagnosis, implementation of effective control measures, and high vaccine coverage along with active surveillance, he said while promising to dedicate resources for the purpose.

Child brides in India: UNICEF Report

UNICEF report titled “Ending Child Marriage — Progress and prospects”

Following are the observations:

About 27 per cent of women aged 20 to 49 years were married before age 15 in India

- ✓ India has the sixth highest prevalence of child marriages in the world, with one in every three child bride living in India
- ✓ Child marriage among girls is most common in South Asia and sub—Saharan Africa
- ✓ India is among the top 10 countries with the highest rates of child marriage
- ✓ South Asia is home to almost half (42 per cent) of all child brides worldwide; India alone accounts for one third of the global total
- ✓ Worldwide, more than 700 million women alive today were married as children or before their 18th birthday.
- ✓ More than one in three, about 250 million entered into union before age 15

The 10 countries with the highest rates of child marriage are:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Niger | 6. India |
| 2. Bangladesh | 7. Guinea |
| 3. Chad | 8. Ethiopia |
| 4. Mali | 9. Burkina Faso |
| 5. Central African Republic | 10. Nepal |
- ✓ About 31 per cent of women in that age group were married after age 15 but before they turned 18.
 - ✓ In India, the median age at first marriage is 19.7 years for women in the richest quintile (one fifth) compared to 15.4 for the poorest women.

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- ✓ In the Dominican Republic and India, the wealthiest women marry about four years later than the poorest women.
- ✓ UNICEF said that Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and child marriage are the two practices that affect millions of girls across the globe.
- ✓ While prevalence has decreased slightly over the past three decades, rates of progress need to be scaled up dramatically to offset population growth in the countries where the practices are most common.
- ✓ Female genital mutilation and child marriage profoundly and permanently harm girls, denying them their right to make their own decisions and to reach their full potential.
- ✓ They are detriments to the girls themselves, their families, and their societies.

Fire safety in Mumbai

Last week's fire in a highrise in the Lotus commercial compound in suburban Mumbai brought to light serious lacunae in the fire department.

Residents of highrises are doing very little to prevent catastrophes in their buildings.

According to the municipal corporation:

- ✓ As many as 95 per cent of buildings in the city have not undergone safety audits as mandated under the Maharashtra Fire Prevention and Life Safety Measures Rules, 2009, since they came into existence.
- ✓ Only three highrises have submitted their safety audit reports to the fire department.
- ✓ It took time for people to become aware of the law and the rules under it.
- ✓ It also took long for the Director of Fire Services to form a panel of experts to carry out these audits.
- ✓ The demand of the audits and the experts is not proportional
- ✓ The law makes it mandatory for residents and building owners to undergo half-yearly safety audits and submit a report to the fire department.
- ✓ Only if residents submit a report Fire Office can recommend safety measures or take action against erring societies.
- ✓ The Maharashtra Fire Prevention and Life Safety Measures Rules, 2009 are among the most stringent safety laws. It empowers the fire department to disconnect a building's water and power supply, and even evict occupants if they are found to be neglecting fire safety.
- ✓ However, until March 31, the fire department had carried out 3,469 inspections and issued notices to 1,357 structures. But only four society members have so far been prosecuted with fines.
- ✓ Conducting audits for highrises is extremely crucial given that most highrises in the city are over 100 metres and the fire brigade's tallest ladder is 68 metres.

Undertrials in Indian Jails

Following are the observations by National Crime Records Bureau, Amnesty International and other agencies regarding under trials:

- ✓ India is among world's 10 worst in terms of undertrial proportion.

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- ✓ No less than 65 per cent of prisoners in India are undertrials
- ✓ India's prisons have 2.5 lakh undertrials and many of them are detained indefinitely because the prison system fails to comply with laws that mandate their release after a specified period, based on their offence.
- ✓ The prison system often violates the Code of Criminal Procedure (Section 436A), which states that undertrials must be released if they have served half the maximum period of imprisonment that their offence warrants unless their crimes attract a death sentence.
- ✓ The burgeoning number of undertrials is also overcrowding prisons.
- ✓ Several lapses contribute to the extended detention of undertrials.
- ✓ Several prisons are not aware of undertrials' rights prescribed in section 436A. Karnataka's prisons had 8,940 undertrials in December 2012, constituting 68 per cent of its prisoners, according to NCRB. Of these, 51 have been detained in prison for over five years.
- ✓ Undertrials were also trapped by a lack of legal aid.
- ✓ There were also delays in producing undertrials in court owing to the lack of police escorts and ineffective videoconferencing facilities.
- ✓ Undertrial Review Committee in different districts is non-functional, despite a November 2013 notification from the Ministry of Home Affairs.

UN Crime Trends Survey

Following are the observations:

India is third in rape cases, second in murder in the world

India figures third among the top 10 countries where highest number of rapes has taken place in 2010 while in cases of murder, the country comes second in 2012

In 2010, rape cases:

1. U.S. recorded 85,593 cases
2. Brazil recorded 41,180 cases
3. India recorded 22,172 cases

In US, 27.3 rape cases were reported per lakh population

In Brazil, 21.09 were reported per lakh population

In India, 1.8 cases of rape per lakh population.

The United Kingdom has reported 15,892 cases of rape in 2010 (28.8 cases of rape in per lakh population) and in Mexico, there were 14,993 cases of rape (13.2 cases of rape in per lakh population).

Among the murder cases according to Global Study on Homicide, UNODC 2013, the highest number of murder had taken place in Brazil (50,108) in 2012, followed by India (43,335).

Nirbhaya Centres

Women and Child Development has announced Nirbhaya Centres or One-Stop Crisis Centres (OSCC) will be set up in all districts.

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OSCC in each police district was one of the recommendations of the Usha Mehra Commission set up after protests in Delhi against rape in December 2012. The model is based on such centres set up in Malaysia in 1996, which were replicated in Bangladesh and Thailand.

To provide restorative justice and rehabilitation to women victims of rape and sexual assault

Each will have:

- ✓ Paramedical staff
- ✓ Ambulance service
- ✓ A retired police officer to help lodge the FIR
- ✓ Counsellors and lawyers
- ✓ Short-stay shelter with food and clothing
- ✓ Video conferencing facility

Criticisms

Maharashtra government: According to Maharashtra government, in case of trauma, or sexual violence, it is the state which should reach out the victim, who may find it cumbersome to access district centres. Maharashtra instead training local thana staff and some district hospitals staff as the District Trauma Team. When an incident is reported, it is the trained staff that will reach the victim. Starting from half or two third, gradually, all staff will be trained.

Lawyer and women's rights activist Flavia Agnes: says the government's proposal was hasty and did not spell out details. Following are objections raised by her:

- ✓ Why will the complainant travel all the way to a district centre in case she is based in a village?
- ✓ Why will district centre register a FIR if the thana will not?
- ✓ How will a retired police officer be equipped to do this?
- ✓ Also protection Officers appointed in each districts under Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005 do not function in several states.
- ✓ The scheme makes no reference to children's needs despite an overwhelming number of cases of sexual assault, over 70 per cent, concern children

Existing centres

Bhoomika centres were set up in hospitals in Kerala in 2010 so only trained personnel handle cases of gender-based violence.

Dilaasa In Mumbai is run out of public hospitals with support from NGO CEHAT.

Gauravi for gender-based violence in a government hospital in Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh. The centre is being run with support from NGO Action Aid.

Some Cases

"We have been housed in a large one-bed room in the hospital close to the Emergency Ward. A family of three women from Hoshangabad, 70 km away, stayed with us a few days after their

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village tried to target them as witches; a 13-year old minor who is nine months pregnant stayed with us four weeks and is now admitted to the hospital,” said Sarika Sinha, MP Coordinator Action Aid. National Rural Health Mission official Faiz A Kidwai said the state government now planned to replicate the centres to all district centres in MP.

“Ultimately, the local thana and local health centre must be trained to respond sensitively. But OSSC centres in districts can work well too if information on them is publicised and there is scrutiny on them for accountability. Travel assistance could be provided to victims located in remote parts of the district,” said Sandeep Chachra of Action Aid.

Paradox of India’s Youth

India's demographic dividend, the numbers indicate, should be paying off right now.

India is one of the youngest major countries in the world right now.

China hit its peak youth population in 1985 after which it has been steadily greying, while the process began earlier still in Europe and North America.

India's youth population - aged 15-24 - now stands at around 230 million, the largest it has ever been. However, the youth bulge has already hit its peak; the proportion of young people in the population is now in decline in India too, which means that India has not a lot of time left to do well by its young people.

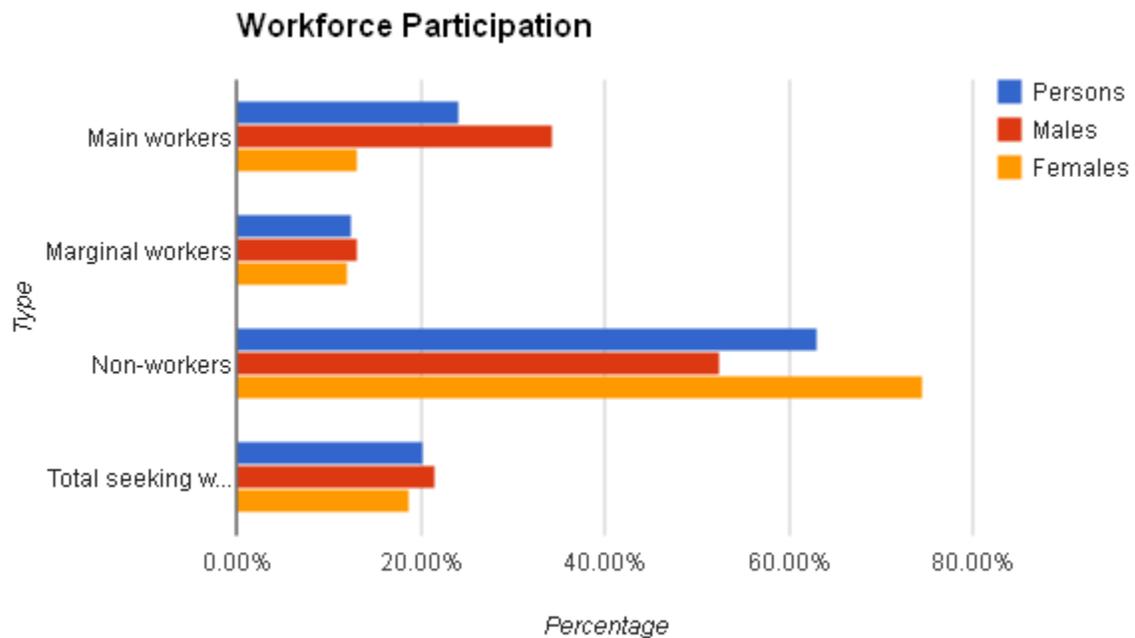
And how is it doing on that?

India has made significant strides on education: from less than 20% of 15-24 year-old rural females being literate in 1961, more than 85% of rural young women were literate in 2001 and more than 90% of both urban men and women.

As education enrolment has grown, participation in the workforce has fallen for both men and women.

Over 20% of young men and 18% of young women are seeking work, a worrying statistic for a country that has already hit its demographic peak.

Below figure details the workforce participation:



Operation Jonk

Hindi TV channel, News Nation, aired a programme titled Operation Jonk which sought to expose the secret deals struck between some dishonest medical practitioners and the managements of pathological laboratories and diagnostic centres in the national capital of Delhi.

The ease with which some doctors are suggested as collecting 30-50 percent commissions on magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), CT Scans, ultra sound, routine pathological tests, etc. was captured.

The three most important revelations of the programme are:

1. The racket is suggestive of an all pervasive
2. Commissions are paid through the issuance of monthly or weekly cheques.
3. A kind of cartelisation has resulted insofar as this aspect of the medical economy of Delhi is concerned. All the private laboratories and diagnostic centres charge roughly the same amounts for pathological tests and clinical examinations. Patients have no option but to pay up the exorbitant fees. They are also subjected to unnecessary tests by the doctors who are guided by the lucre of commissions. This exacerbates their physical and mental agony.

The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India, accepts that the patient/consumer of the medical economy needs protection from such nefarious practices that have come to thrive under conditions created by lack of implementation of existing laws/rules/codes and insufficient governmental oversight.

The President of Medical Council of India, an autonomous body under the Ministry, has been asked to summon an emergency meeting of its Ethics Committee.

It is time to check the retrogressive tendencies that have crept into sectors of the medical economy, thereby leading to the thriving of corrupt clusters and affecting the image of the

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community. For this, it is necessary to bring under some degree of oversight the trade practices employed by pathological laboratories/diagnostic centres.

The laissez faire spirit that dominates this business in India works to the disadvantage of the consumer and needs correction. (Laissez-faire is an economic environment in which transactions between private parties are free from intrusive government restrictions, tariffs, and subsidies, with only enough regulations to protect property rights)

It is acknowledged that extant civil laws governing medical negligence do not explicitly cover the aforementioned practices. The patient/consumer's right to transparent and rational prescriptions, including referral to justified clinical/diagnostic examinations need to be codified in new legislation/s.

Rise in Smoking among Women

As per the findings of the Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS), conducted by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (2010), 20.3% of females in the age group of 15 years and above consume tobacco in some form or other.

The use of smokeless forms of tobacco is more prevalent (18.4%) among females than smoking forms (2.9%).

A number of steps have been taken by the Government to discourage tobacco use both among males and females, which include the following:

- ✓ The Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibitions of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act," (**COTPA**), was enacted in 2003 to regulate consumption, production, supply and distribution of tobacco products, by imposing restrictions on advertisement, promotion and sponsorship of tobacco products; prohibiting smoking in public places; prohibiting sale to and by minors, prohibiting sale within a radius of 100 yards of educational institutions and through mandatory depiction of specified pictorial health warnings on all tobacco product packs.
- ✓ Government of India launched the National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP) in the year 2007-08, with the aim to (i) create awareness about the harmful effects of tobacco consumption, (ii) reduce the production and supply of tobacco products, (iii) ensure effective implementation of the provisions under "The Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 2003" (COTPA) and (iv) help the people quit tobacco use through Tobacco Cessation Centres.
- ✓ The coverage of **National Tobacco Control Programme** (NTCP) has been up-scaled from existing 42 districts of 21 states to 53 districts of 29 states in 2013-2014 under the umbrella of National Health Mission (NHM).
- ✓ National Level Public Awareness campaign is a key activity under National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP) which is aimed at educating people about the adverse health effects of tobacco use including second hand smoke and on pregnant women. A variety of media like electronic (Government and private Channels and FM/radio), outdoor billboards, bus panels,

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- exterior train wrap-up, news-paper advertisement etc. have been used to reach a wide set of audience.
- ✓ Health spots relating to harmful effects of tobacco use are displayed by films and TV Programmes displaying tobacco products or their use, as per the Rules notified under COTPA, 2003.
 - ✓ Gutkha and other similar food products containing nicotine and tobacco have been prohibited under the Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restrictions on Sales) Regulations, 2011 dated 1st August 2011, issued under the **Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006**.
 - ✓ The Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare has written to all the Chief Ministers to consider adopting a '**Comprehensive Taxation Policy**' for all tobacco products so that they are taxed at similar rates and incentive to shift to relatively cheaper tobacco products is minimized. It has also been emphasized that under the policy, the tax rate should be linked to both inflation and changes in household income, so that any tax increase leads to an effective and 'real increase' in the price of tobacco products, making them less affordable over time and thereby reducing consumption & prevalence.
 - ✓ Further, Secretary, Department of Health & Family Welfare has vide letter dated 26th June, 2014 written to Secretary (Revenue) to adopt a 'Comprehensive Tax Policy' for tobacco products in the broader public health interest and with a view to protecting youth and children from getting addicted to tobacco use

Multi-Sectoral Development Programme for Minorities

Following initiatives for the welfare and upliftment of the minority communities:-

USTAAD - The Scheme aims at upgrading Skills and Training in preservation of traditional Ancestral Arts/Crafts of minorities.

Hamari Darohar The Scheme aims to preserve rich heritage of minority communities in context of Indian culture.

Khwaza Garib Nawaz Senior Secondary School will be established at Ajmer by Maulana Azad Education Foundation (MAEF) to give a fillip to minority education.

Nai Manzil A bridge course to bridge the academic and skill development gaps of the deeni Madrasa passouts with their mainstream counterparts.

Strengthening of State Wakf Boards The scheme envisages to provide assistance for meeting the training and administrative cost of State Wakf Boards, removal of encroachment from Waqf Properties and also strengthening of Zonal/Regional offices of Waqf Boards.

Seekho aur Kamao Under the scheme, about 63% minority youths were from Muslim community during last year.

Nai Roshni Under the scheme more than 80% women trainees were from Muslim Community in the last two years of the 12th Plan.

Under the lending programmes of National Minorities Development Finance Corporation (NMDFC), about 77.6% beneficiaries were from Muslim community in the last two years of the 12th Plan.

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During the 12th Five Year Plan, 1,60,45,808 scholarships were awarded to minority candidates under Pre-Matric, Post Matric and Merit-cum-Means based Scholarship Schemes, out of which 1,27,83,285 beneficiaries are from the Muslim community.

Further, Multi-Sectoral Development Programme is an area development programme under which infrastructure development and assets creation are done in the Minority Concentration Areas taking into consideration that tangible and intangible benefits reach the minority population of that area including Muslims.

INDIA AND WORLD

China -Maldives maritime Cooperation

China has offered to train maritime personnel and expand maritime cooperation with Maldives
 Also offered to boost its involvement in infrastructure projects
 Beijing moves forward with plans to deepen its economic links with the region through its new

Maritime Silk Road initiative

Current government under President Abdulla Yameen is trying to diversify its economy and attract foreign investments from countries including China.

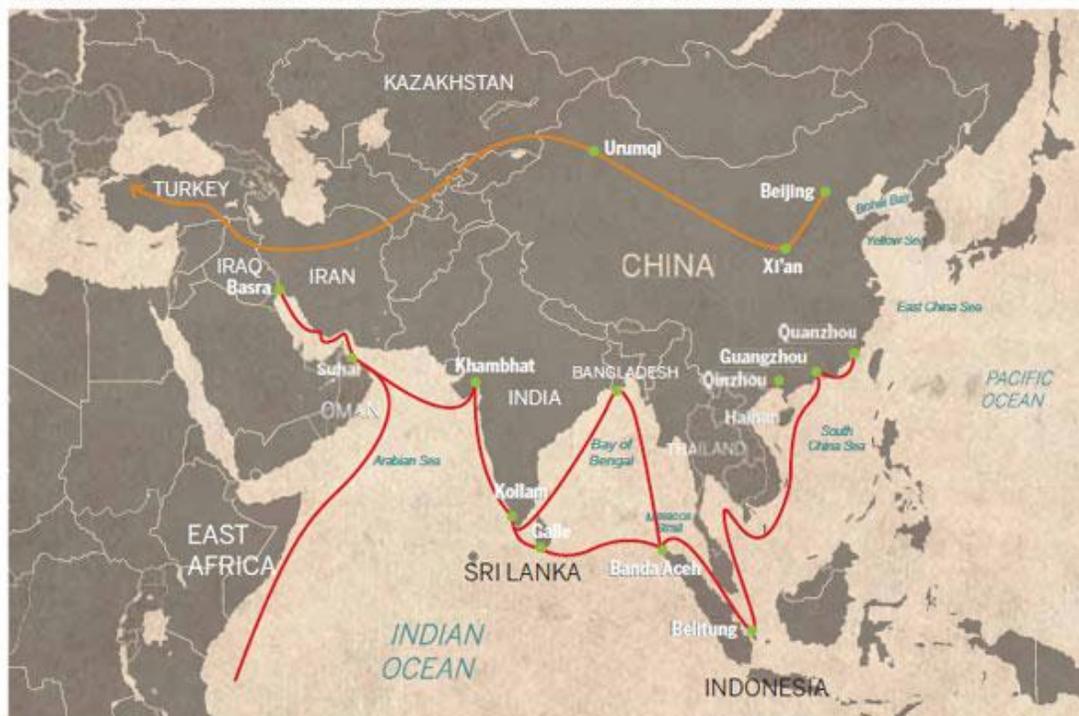
China could consider investing in mega projects that the Maldives government has offered up for foreign investment, including:

- ✓ Special economic zones
- ✓ the Male International Airport (a project initially awarded to India's GMR before the contract was later terminated)
- ✓ Expansion of the Male harbour
- ✓ Oil exploration
- ✓ Strengthen cooperation on marine research, fisheries and other areas

Maldives has traditionally enjoyed close and dependent links with India.

About maritime silk road

SILK ROAD ECONOMIC BELT AND 21ST CENTURY MARITIME SILK ROAD



Source: Xinhua News Agency

FENG XIUXIA / CHINA DAILY

New Chinese leadership last year unveiling plans to build a “maritime silk road” to link Indian Ocean littoral countries and Southeast Asia and deepen China’s economic presence in the region.

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India, Sri Lanka, Maldives and a number of ASEAN countries have objected the plan for route. Maritime Silk Road initiative will involve taking forward Chinese investments in ports and maritime-related infrastructure in littoral countries, as well as proposals to build Special Economic Zones in port cities to drive trade.

Since the Maldives is located in the heart of the Indian Ocean, it is an ideal hub for trade between East and the West and that every year a large number of cargo ships pass through the Maldivian territorial waters.

China is important to Maldivian economy, especially tourism. In 2010, China became the biggest source of tourist arrivals, while more than 3.3 lakh Chinese tourists visited Maldives last year.

Humanitarian Aid in Palestine

The UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) assisting Palestinian refugees has said that over 100,000 internally displaced people are seeking safety in its facilities amid deteriorating security conditions in the Gaza Strip

It appealed for \$ 60 million for urgent humanitarian needs.

The agency has opened nearly 70 shelters.

It issued the emergency appeal for funds to respond to the urgent humanitarian needs of the people of Gaza, including tens of thousands who have fled their homes in the wake of the Israeli military offensive that has killed more than 550 Palestinians and wounded over 3,500.

The number of people seeking refuge with UNRWA is more than double in the 2009 Gaza conflict.

There is a huge wave of accelerated displacement because of the Israeli ground offensive.

As the number of casualties and injured civilians rises in the Gaza Strip, aid agencies have geared up for the emergency response and mobilised relief supplies from the International Humanitarian City (IHC) in Dubai. The supplies have been donated to UNRWA for thousands of vulnerable displaced families in Gaza.

A special airlift in support of displaced families in Gaza began on Sunday from Dubai, where a 747 cargo took off carrying 115 metric tons of aid, containing 45,000 mattresses, 10,000 blankets and 220 hygiene kits.

In the coming days, more airlifts are scheduled to arrive in Amman, from where UNRWA will truck the aid into Gaza for distribution.

UNRWA plans to expand the scope of the donations to include emergency food parcels as stocks of food and other essential goods dwindle.

Main priority for humanitarian agencies continues to be the provision of food, water, mattresses and hygiene items, as well as fuel for essential water, health and sewage facilities.

The World Food Programme continues to provide daily food rations, together with UNRWA, and more than 50,000 people have received emergency assistance in the last few days.

About UNRWA

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) is funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions from UN Member States. UNRWA also receives some funding

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from the Regular Budget of the United Nations, which is used mostly for international staffing costs.

The Agency's services encompass education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, microfinance and emergency assistance, including in times of armed conflict.

Establishment

Following the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict, UNRWA was established by United Nations General Assembly resolution 302 (IV) of 8 December 1949 to carry out direct relief and works programmes for Palestine refugees. The Agency began operations on 1 May 1950.

In the absence of a solution to the Palestine refugee problem, the General Assembly has repeatedly renewed UNRWA's mandate, most recently extending it until 30 June 2017.

Palestine refugees

UNRWA is unique in terms of its long-standing commitment to one group of refugees. It has contributed to the welfare and human development of four generations of Palestine refugees, defined as "persons whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948, and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict." The descendants of Palestine refugee males, including legally adopted children, are also eligible for registration.

UNRWA services are available to all those living in its areas of operations who meet this definition, who are registered with the Agency and who need assistance. When the Agency began operations in 1950, it was responding to the needs of about 750,000 Palestine refugees. Today, some 5 million Palestine refugees are eligible for UNRWA services.

About International Humanitarian City

The IHC is a non-profit, independent free zone authority mandated by the Government of Dubai to facilitate international humanitarian aid by:

- ✓ Supplying leading humanitarian actors with world-class logistics infrastructure, value-added services and administrative support
- ✓ Providing a platform for UN, NPO and regional staff to strengthen aid responses
- ✓ Facilitating coordination and collaboration among all aid providers

Established in 2003 International Humanitarian City (IHC) has grown to become the world's largest and busiest logistics hub for humanitarian aid with nine UN agencies and nearly 50 NGOs and commercial entities as members.

The IHC puts Dubai's expertise in transport and logistics to work for aid agencies as they reach out to help the victims of crises and families whose lives are scarred by hunger and poverty.

The IHC's capabilities and strategic location — within eight hours by air to two-thirds of the world's population — have helped deliver assistance in some of the worst humanitarian crises of the past decade, including:

- ✓ 2004 tsunami in Southeast Asia

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- ✓ recurring drought in the Horn of Africa
- ✓ civil unrest in Afghanistan and Darfur
- ✓ 2010 earthquake in Haiti.
- ✓ emergency responses to Syria and Philippines
- ✓ Palestine and Israel Conflict

2014 UNDP Human Development Report

The Human Development Index is a composite index that measures income, education (average years of education completed by adults, and expected years of education for children entering school) and health (life expectancy). Since 1990, the UNDP has calculated an HDI for every country in the world and ranked them.

With one year to go before the Millennium Development Goals lapse, the UNDP report argues that while progress has been made, it is on shaky ground on account of economic crises, social unrest, conflict and climate change.

According to 2014 UNDP Human Development Report:

- ✓ India's human development index has improved very slightly but remains among the median countries in terms of human development just seven places above Bangladesh
- ✓ With an HDI value of 0.586 out of a maximum possible 1, India is 135th
- ✓ India's human development index improved slower in 2000s than it did in the 1980s despite much faster economic growth. However the improvement in the 2000s was better than in the 1990s.
- ✓ India's human development indicators are also substantially different for men and women; the HDI for men alone is much higher at 0.627, while the HDI for Indian women alone is just 0.519.
- ✓ The report also includes estimates for a newer Multi-dimensional Poverty Index, but since India has not collected new health statistics since 2005, the Index too could not be updated, the researchers said.
- ✓ India lags far behind all other BRICS nations on the HDI.
- ✓ The report makes a strong push for universal social protections, noting that countries like Costa Rica, Ghana and South Korea as well as Scandinavian nations enacted social security legislation at lower levels of income per capita than India is at right now.
- ✓ Moreover, the report cites ILO estimates that a basic social floor - universal basic old age and disability pensions, basic childcare benefits, universal access to essential health care, social assistance and a 100-day employment scheme would cost India less than 4 per cent of its GDP. At this stage, universal schemes make more sense for India than targeted ones
- ✓ Evidence from around the world shows that universal delivery mechanisms are the most efficient, pragmatic way of providing social services. Targeting can also be effective, but really only makes sense when there are systems in place that are advanced and performing optimally.

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- ✓ The UNDP's push for universalism applies to jobs too; it is advocating for countries to return to the goal of "full employment", a goal that it notes has disappeared from the global agenda since the 1970s.

Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)

The Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) was developed in 2010 by Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative and the United Nations Development Programme and uses different factors to determine poverty beyond income-based lists. It replaced the previous Human Poverty Index.

The MPI is an index of acute multidimensional poverty. It shows the number of people who are multidimensionally poor (suffering deprivations in 33.33% of weighted indicators) and the number of deprivations with which poor households typically contend. It reflects deprivations in very rudimentary services and core human functioning for people across 104 countries. Although deeply constrained by data limitations, MPI reveals a different pattern of poverty than income poverty, as it illuminates a different set of deprivations.

The index uses the same three dimensions as the Human Development Index: health, education, and standard of living. These are measured using ten indicators.

- ✓ Health
 - a) Child Mortality
 - b) Nutrition
- ✓ Education
 - a) Years of school
 - b) Children enrolled
- ✓ Living Standards
 - a) Cooking fuel
 - b) Toilet
 - c) Water
 - d) Electricity
 - e) Floor
 - f) Assets

Each dimension and each indicator within a dimension is equally weighted.

UNHRC resolution on Gaza

India along with BRICS countries voted in support of a UN Human Rights Council resolution to launch a probe into Israel's offensive on Gaza.

Palestinian-drafted resolution on "Ensuring Respect for international law in The Occupied Palestinian Territories, including East Jerusalem"

In the 47-member council, 29 countries voted in support of the resolution while 17 nations abstained.

The U.S. was the only nation to vote against the resolution. European countries abstained.

The voting came as bloodbath in the Gaza Strip continued unabated with Israel and Hamas refusing to back down in the 16-day conflict that has killed over 680 Palestinians and 31 Israelis.

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Earlier, India asked Israel and Palestine to demonstrate political will to agree to a ceasefire and return to the negotiating table.

Dialogue only viable option: India

India expressed “deep concern” over the escalation of conflict between Israel and Palestine, even as United Nations high Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay said war crimes might have been committed in Gaza

In a statement made at the 21st special session of the UNHRC — on the human rights situation in occupied Palestinian territory — India urged for an immediate ceasefire and called on both sides to resume dialogue

The solution to the Palestine issue, should be based on relevant U.N. resolutions, the Arab Peace Plan and the Quartet Roadmap resulting in a sovereign, independent, viable and united State of Palestine within secure and recognised borders side-by-side at peace with Israel and with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Chinese rail lines up to India

- ✓ China is planning the construction of two railway lines in Tibet that will extend up to the border with India
- ✓ Are expected to be completed by 2020

The railway lines will run from the town of Shigatse, which next month will be connected to the Qinghai-Tibet railway line that extends to Lhasa.

Traffic on the 254 km Lhasa-Shigatse line, which began to be built in 2010, will commence next month.

Railway line will be further extended during the 13th five year plan period (2016-2020), running to two regions near the border with India: Yatung, a trade centre close to Sikkim and Bhutan, and to Nyingchi in the east, near the Arunachal Pradesh border.

A third railway line will be build to Gyirong, where there is a trade and border checkpoint connecting Tibet’s Yatung county and Nepal.

The projects will have both economic and strategic dimensions and will have an impact on the boundary dispute with India.

Interview with UN Peacekeeping chief, Hervé Ladsous

About Peacekeeping

Peacekeeping is a partnership, between the UN Security Council, the contributing countries, and Under-secretary general, so we need to have dialogue. I am glad that the commitment of these countries is solid, and we have about 120,000 peacekeepers this year. I have been working towards one issue in the past few years, though, and that is that 95 per cent of the peacekeepers are from the (global) South, and the North (Europe, U.S., etc) only contribute 5 per cent to the UNPKF.

That is not sustainable and I have been telling NATO, EU countries, in 2014, when you leave Afghanistan, you must come back in a more significant way to the UNPKF.

About Indian Troops in Peacekeeping Mission

The big concern for India is the changing nature of mission that Indian troops are sent into — it is no longer about guarding a ceasefire line, it is more and more about taking on groups... we have lost troops.

After Bangladesh, India is the largest contributor of soldiers and police personnel to the UN peacekeeping forces. According to officials, those troops are being increasingly pushed into conflicts of active or “robust” fighting, rather than monitoring peace.

In December 2013, five Indian soldiers were killed fighting rebels in South Sudan.

Yes, I remember how Indian soldiers were killed in South Sudan last year. But as you said the nature of the missions has changed. What used to be monitoring, observing missions are now multi-dimensional. In other words what has happened is unacceptable and people are massacred right next to our blue helmets.

One of the answers is the concept of robustness, mobility, and the use of certain technologies. The UAVs (drones) that we fly in the Congo, for example, are having a huge impact. We need more helicopters to move our troops. The UN has after a long time agreed to raise the allowances for them, which is a good step.

Has the UNPKF become a symbol of global inequality?

Well yes, I was shocked by the inequality, but I think it is changing. Money is one thing, blood is another. It is not a good distinction to have. Smaller countries also pay, and it's not fair.

Peacekeeping is an act of generosity, and living up to the charter of the UN. The US and European countries make the point that they do contribute troops outside of the UN, for e.g. Afghanistan's ISAF, and Mali, and the hope I have is that they will now look to contribute those troops to the UNPKF now.

The UN Undersecretary-General said he found such situations “unacceptable”, and also criticised the “global north” (US and Europe) for not contributing enough to the forces. “Ninety-five per cent of the peacekeepers are from the (global) South,” Mr. Ladsous explained, “And the North (Europe, U.S. among others) only contributes five per cent to the UNPKF. That is not sustainable and I have been telling NATO, EU countries, when you pull out of Afghanistan this year, you must come back in a more significant way to the UNPKF.”

And your expectations from India... do you need more troops?

Well that keeps changing, on a real time basis, so we keep discussing them.

About UNMOGIP

The government has said that the UNMOGIP has outlasted its utility, and said it should wind up the mission.

I have seen that statement. It is their prerogative to explain their views, but the mandate of UNMOGIP was established by the UN Security Council 60 odd years ago, and only the Security Council can undo that decision, look at the mandate again and decide. So it isn't my decision, and I can't comment further.

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But do you think it's unfair to keep those troops at the Line of Control without them serving any purpose? India has not lodged any reports or complaints since 1971.

Its purpose is simply to observe what is happening and to report that, and I think their very presence on that line, to a certain degree, contributes to confidence. So one should never lose that from your sight.

India shall go to Security Council for the same.

UNMOGIP was established in 1948 after the first war over Kashmir.

United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP)

The United Nations has played an important role in maintaining peace and order in Jammu and Kashmir since the transfer of Power to India and independence to Pakistan in 1947. Immediately after the freedom a dispute erupted between India and the successor nation-state of Pakistan on the question of the very basis of accession of Jammu and Kashmir by the ruler. New Delhi took this matter to the United Nation and the Security Council passed resolution 39 (1948) and established the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) to investigate and mediate the issues.

After Indo-Pakistani War of 1971 the two countries signed the Simla Agreement in 1972 to define the Line of Control in Kashmir. India and Pakistan disagree on UNMOGIP's mandate in Kashmir because India argued that the mandate of UNMOGIP has lapsed after Simla agreement because it was specifically established to observe ceasefire according to Karachi Agreement.

However, The Secretary General of the United Nations maintained that the UNMOGIP should continue to function because no resolution has been passed to terminate it. The military authorities of Pakistan have continued to lodge complaints with UNMOGIP about ceasefire violations. The military authorities of India have lodged no complaints since January 1972 and have restricted the activities of the UN observers on the Indian side of the Line of Control.

International Religious Freedom report

Released by U.S. State Department

Report criticized India's religious laws

Indian authorities implemented restrictive laws and did not always efficiently or effectively prosecute those who attacked religious minorities especially in the context of anti-conversion laws. Citing a long list of notable incidents where religious rights were curbed, the report said that although the Indian government generally respected religious freedom, some laws and policies restricted this freedom and officials invoked several sections of the Indian Penal Code that resulted in minorities' freedom of speech being curtailed on Internet sites.

Unlike India some nations were however categorised as countries that have engaged in or tolerated particularly severe violations of religious freedom in order to designate countries of particular concern.

Government Inaction: The report alluded to the Gujarat government again extending, on July 3, the term of the Nanavati-Mehta Commission, which was appointed in 2002 to investigate the riots in the state that claimed more than 1,200 lives, the majority of whom were Muslims.

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It said that while the report was due at the end of the year, civil society activists continued to express concern about the Gujarat government's failure to arrest those responsible for the violence.

Criticising India's overall level of societal respect, for religious freedom, the State Department's report listed the August 2013 incident of the Madhya Pradesh government withdrawing a notification requiring chapters of the Bhagwad Gita to be part of the school curriculum for the 2013-14 academic year.

The report went on to cite the case of last September's public interest law suit in Madhya Pradesh High Court charging Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Member of the Legislative Assembly Kamal Patel and his son Sandeep with inciting communal violence in which a Hindu crowd burned 30 houses and injured many following reports of the killing of a cow on a Muslim-owned farm.

The IRF Commission also hit out at the case in Mumbai last October involving a real estate broker who posted online advertisements for flats in Mumbai and Thane that stated, "Muslims not allowed."

Russia violated missile treaty: U.S.

U.S. President Barack Obama to his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in a letter said that Russia had violated a 1987 arms control treaty when it allegedly ground-launched a cruise missile.

Described as the most serious allegation of an arms control treaty violation, made to date

Russia began testing cruise missiles as far back as 2008 and last May.

Washington believes that a violation of the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty had occurred.

Obligations under the INF treaty are not to possess, produce or flight test a ground-launched cruise missile (GLCM) with a range capability of 500 kilometres to 5,500 kilometres or to possess or produce launchers of such missiles.

Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty

The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) is a 1987 agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union. Signed by Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev.

The treaty eliminated nuclear and conventional ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles with intermediate ranges, defined as between 500-5,500 km (300-3,400 miles).

Was considered to be an agreement that would limit the risk of strikes against Europe.

This risk increased after the Soviet Union achieved rough strategic parity with the U.S. in the mid-1970s and then began replacing older intermediate-range SS-4 and SS-5 missiles with a new intermediate-range missile, the SS-20

Bringing about what was perceived as a qualitative and quantitative change in the European security situation.

Specific missiles destroyed were:

United States: Pershing Ib and Pershing II, BGM-109G Gryphon

Soviet Union: SS-4 'Sandal', SS-5 'Skean', SS-12 'Scaleboard', SS-23 'Spider', SS-20 'Saber', SSC-X-4

ECONOMY

New airline operations

The Civil Aviation Ministry has issued No Objection Certificates (NOCs) to six entities are:

1. Air One (national)
2. Premier Air (national)
3. Zexus Air (national)
4. Turbo Megha (regional)
5. Air Carnival (regional)
6. Zav Airways (regional)

These are in addition to the Tata-Singapore Airlines joint venture that is likely to start operations by this year-end.

Another new airline, AirAsia India, commenced domestic operations last month.

Air Pegasus is also likely to get Air Operators Permit, the final nod to start operations, soon.

Air One, which is now into air charter business.

At present, India has eight airlines:

1. Air India
2. Jet Airways
3. Jet Lite
4. IndiGo
5. SpiceJet
6. Go Air
7. Air Costa
8. AirAsia India

In 2005 three new airlines — Kingfisher Airlines, Go Air and SpiceJet (re-launched) — commenced operations. In 2006, IndiGo joined them offering low fares.

Why New Airlines?

The current cartelisation of incumbent airlines need to break, and it can only be possible with the entry of new players. During peak season, airlines are charging up to Rs.50,000 for a return ticket to a prime domestic destination. Consumers are being exploited. With the entry of new players, fares will come down by 20-25 per cent.

Having so many new airlines is excellent from passenger point of view. More airlines and more aircraft will drive growth. There is opportunity and competition will drive growth

In the last two years, air fares have gone up by 20-25 per cent, and this has resulted in a stagnated growth. With the new players, we hope fares will see a correction of 20-25 per cent, which will help the market to revive.

Rashtriya Gokul Mission

Need:

Cattle's rearing has been a traditional livelihood in India and is closely linked to agricultural economy. India with 199 million cattle has 14.5% of the world cattle population. Of this, 83% i.e. 166 million are indigenous. Most of the indigenous cattle (about 80%) are non-descript and only 20% belong to breeds recognised by National Bureau of Genetic Resources. The cattle genetic resource of India is represented by 37 well-recognized indigenous breeds and there are 13 recognised buffalo breeds. Indigenous cattle, in India, are robust and resilient and are particularly suited to the climate and environment of their respective breeding tracts. They are endowed with qualities of heat tolerance, resistance to diseases and the ability to thrive under extreme climatic stress and less than optimal nutrition.

There is lots of potential to enhance the productivity of the indigenous breeds of India through professional farm management and superior nutrition is immense

for this it is essential to promote conservation and development of indigenous breeds

About Mission

- ✓ Rashtriya Gokul Mission aims to conserve and develop indigenous breeds in a focused and scientific manner.

Rashtriya Gokul Mission is a focused project under National Programme for Bovine Breeding and Dairy Development, with an outlay of Rs 500 crore during the 12th Five Year Plan. During 2014-15 Rs 150.00 crores will be allocated for development, preservation and conservation of indigenous breeds.

Mission will be implemented with the objectives to:

- ✓ development and conservation of indigenous breeds
- ✓ undertake breed improvement programme for indigenous cattle breeds so as to improve the genetic makeup and increase the stock
- ✓ enhance milk production and productivity
- ✓ upgrade non-descript cattle using elite indigenous breeds like Gir, Sahiwal, Rathi, Deoni, Tharparkar, Red Sindhi
- ✓ distribute disease-free high genetic merit bulls for natural service
- ✓ Rashtriya Gokul Mission will be implemented through the State Implementing Agency (SIA viz Livestock Development Boards).
- ✓ State Gauseva Ayogs will be given the mandate to sponsor proposals to the SIA's (LDB's) and monitor implementation of the sponsored proposal.
- ✓ All Agencies having a role in indigenous cattle development will be the "Participating Agencies" like CFSPTI, CCBFs, Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Universities, Colleges, NGO's, Cooperative Societies and Gaushalas with best germplasm.

Tasks

Funds under the scheme will be allocated for:

- ✓ establishment of Integrated Indigenous Cattle Centres viz “Gokul Gram”
- ✓ strengthening of bull mother farms to conserve high genetic merit Indigenous Breeds
- ✓ establishment of Field Performance Recording (FPR) in the breeding tract
- ✓ assistance to Institutions/Institutes which are repositories of best germplasm
- ✓ implementation of Pedigree Selection Programme for the Indigenous Breeds with large population
- ✓ Establishment of Breeder’s Societies: Gopalan Sangh
- ✓ incentive to farmers maintaining elite animals of indigenous breeds
- ✓ award to Farmers (“Gopal Ratna”) and Breeders’ Societies (“Kamadhenu”)
- ✓ organization of Milk Yield Competitions for indigenous breeds
- ✓ organization of Training Programme for personnel working at Institute/Institutions engaged in indigenous cattle development.

Gokul Gram:

Under this component it is proposed to establish Integrated Indigenous Cattle Centres or Gokul Grams in the breeding tracts of indigenous breeds.

Gokul Grams will be established in:

- ✓ the native breeding tracts
- ✓ near metropolitan cities for housing the urban cattle

Gokul Gram will act as Centres for development of Indigenous Breeds and a dependable source for supply of high genetic breeding stock to the farmers in the breeding tract.

The Gokul Gram will be self sustaining and will generate economic resources from sale of milk, organic manure, vermi-composting, urine distillates, and production of electricity from bio gas for in house consumption and sale of animal products. The Gokul Gram will also function as state of the art in situ training centre for Farmers, Breeders and MAITRI’s.

Each Gokul Gram will be set up by the EIA and function under the auspices of the SIA/ EIA or in a PPP mode. The Gokul Gram will maintain milch and unproductive animals in the ratio of 60:40 and will have the capacity to maintain about 1000 animals.

Nutritional requirements of the animals will be provided in the Gokul Gram through in house fodder production.

Disease free status of Gokul Gram will be maintained through regular screening of animals for important diseases like brucellosis, TB and JD.

An inbuilt dispensary and AI centre will be an integral part of the Gokul Gram. Gokul Gram will also be set up near to metropolitan cities for managing urban cattle. Metropolitan Gokul Gram will focus on genetic upgradation of urban cattle.

Economic perspective of the Rashtriya Gokul Mission

Gokul Gram will be an institute that will generate economic resources through sale of

- Milk
- Organic manure
- Vermi-composting
- Urine distillates
- Production of electricity from bio gas for in house consumption
- Sale of animal products

These activities will make Gokul Grams as a self sustaining organisation.

TRAI's plan for Andaman and Nicobar, Lakshadweep

Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) to create a conducive environment for the business and improve connectivity recommended a Rs.2,400-crore project to connect India's two major outlying island chains

- ✓ Andaman & Nicobar Islands
- ✓ Lakshadweep

It proposed stable and strong cable-based networks to replace the satellite mode of transmission. The move is expected to encourage more operators to run services in these island chains. The regulator has recommended the retention of the satellite option.

While bulk of the investment will be for Andaman & Nicobar Islands, the telecom regulator estimates an outgo of Rs.504.96 crore for Lakshadweep.

TRAI

Panorama

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) is the independent regulator of the telecommunications business in India.

History

The entry of private service providers brought with it the inevitable need for independent regulation. The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) was, thus, established with effect from 20 February 1997 by an Act of Parliament, called the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act, 1997, to regulate telecom services, including fixation/revision of tariffs for telecom services which were earlier vested in the Central Government.

TRAI's mission is to create and nurture conditions for growth of telecommunications in the country in a manner and at a pace which will enable India to play a leading role in emerging global information society. One of the main objectives of TRAI is to provide a fair and transparent policy environment which promotes a level playing field and facilitates fair competition.

In pursuance of above objective TRAI has issued from time to time a large number of regulations, orders and directives to deal with issues coming before it and provided the required direction to the evolution of Indian telecom market from a Government owned monopoly to a multi operator multi service open competitive market. The directions, orders and regulations issued cover a wide range of subjects including tariff, interconnection and quality of service as well as governance of the Authority.

The TRAI Act was amended by an ordinance, effective from 24 January 2000, establishing a Telecommunications Dispute Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT) to take over the adjudicatory and disputes functions from TRAI. TDSAT was set up to adjudicate any dispute between a licensor and a licensee, between two or more service providers, between a service provider and a group of consumers, and to hear and dispose of appeals against any direction, decision or order of TRAI. The mission of TRAI is to create and nurture an environment which will enable the quick growth of the telecommunication sector in the country. One of the major objectives of TRAI is to provide a transparent policy environment. TRAI has regularly issued orders and directions on various subjects like tariff, interconnections, Direct To Home (DTH) services and mobile number portability.

In 2000, the Telecom Disputes Settlement Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT) was constituted through an amendment of the 1997 act, through an ordinance. The primary objective of TDSAT's establishment was to release TRAI from adjudicatory and dispute settlement functions in order to strengthen the regulatory framework. Any dispute involving parties like licensor, licensee, service provider and consumers are resolved by TDSAT. Also, any direction, order or decision of TRAI can be challenged by appealing in TDSAT.

Panorama

EPF Act

The government is considering a proposal to reduce threshold limit for coverage of firms under the EPF Act to 10 persons.

At present, all those firms employing 20 or more workers are covered by Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) for providing a social security net.

Under the Employees' Provident Funds & Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952 is included in the comprehensive amendments to the Act

EPFO has no plan to bring unorganised workers under the provident fund scheme.

EPFO runs social security schemes for the organised sector workers at present, includes:

- ✓ Employees' Provident Fund Scheme 1952
- ✓ Employees' Pension Scheme 1995
- ✓ Employees Deposit Linked Insurance Scheme 1976

India's demand for pulses

IMPORTS TO REMAIN HIGH

AGRICULTURE EXPERTS ARE NOT HOPEFUL OF THE HARVEST OF PULSES MATCHING THE 6 MILLION TONNES REPORTED LAST YEAR

<p>Area under pulses cultivation in India: 26 million hectares</p> <p>Average yield per hectare: 650 to 700 kgs</p>	<p>Estimated yield for crop year 2013-14: 19.57 million tonnes (Kharif: 6.12 million tonnes, Rabi: 13.45 million tonnes)</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Average yield in advanced countries: 1,800 kgs</p> </td> <td style="width: 33%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Quantity of pulses imported every year: 3 to 3.5 million tonnes</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>Average yield in advanced countries: 1,800 kgs</p>	<p>Quantity of pulses imported every year: 3 to 3.5 million tonnes</p>
<p>Average yield in advanced countries: 1,800 kgs</p>	<p>Quantity of pulses imported every year: 3 to 3.5 million tonnes</p>		



Source: Indian Pulses and Grains Association

India continues to be one of biggest markets for pulses

Monsoon playing posing a question mark on the yield of pulses in the kharif season

Canada is positioning itself to meet India's growing demand for lentils (masoor) and yellow peas (pili matar) grown in abundance in its Saskatchewan province.

Even though the actual yield of kharif crop will be known only by September-end, agriculture experts are not hopeful of matching the 6 million tonnes of pulses harvested last year.

According to Indian Pulses and Grains Association, the country produced around 7.50 lakh tonnes of lentils last year, but imported 4 lakh tonnes. Similarly, almost the entire requirement of 1.5 million tonnes of yellow peas was imported as indigenous production was negligible.

India, which is the world's largest producer and consumer of pulses, also imports about 3.5 million tonnes of pulses every year from:

1. U.S.
2. Australia
3. Myanmar
4. East Africa
5. Ukraine
6. Canada

About a quarter to a third of all pulses imported come from Canada.

Saskatchewan province in Canada has a population of little over one million and a cultivated farmland area of 18.2 million hectares, but accounts for 65 per cent of the world's lentil exports and 54 per cent of the world's pea exports.

Pulses traders from India, however, remained anxious over the inability of railways in Canada to transport the contracted produce to the port in Vancouver.

It takes anywhere between two months and four months for commodities to reach India from Vancouver port through ocean freight.

Top of the Pyramid

Report on Ultra High networth households/individuals

UHNs are those with wealth exceeding Rs. 25 crore

Report by Kotak Wealth Management

According to report:

India's economic recovery is well and truly under way if one were to track the growth of ultra high net worth households/individuals (UHNHs/UHNIs) in India.

The number of Indian UHNHs rose 16 per cent to around 117,000 in FY14

UHNIs number could triple in the next three years.

UHNHs net worth is projected to grow at CAGR of 34 per cent from an estimated Rs. 104 lakh crore in FY14 to Rs. 408 lakh crore in FY19.

HNI's were returning to equity markets compared to the lull for the last five years. Investors had earlier preferred fixed income investments but equity allocation rose from 35 per cent in 2012 to 38 per cent in 2013 while debt investments reduced to 24 per cent.

Spending on jewellery (16 per cent), apparel & accessories (15 per cent), followed by luxury travel (14 per cent), indicates family-orientation in expenditure planning.

MSME: a road map for executing budget announcements

(These are suggestion. Students can use these in answers)

This year's budget has announced specific steps that provide a positive direction to the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) sector for growth.

One such long-overdue step is the announcement of revision of the existing definition. The threshold limits of defining MSMEs were set way back in 2006 and, while global MSMEs are a lot larger than Indian MSMEs, the definition makes it difficult to create linkages between MSMEs in India and the MSMEs worldwide. Further, the present definition is based on investment in plant and machinery for the manufacturing sector and investment in equipment for the service sector. Inflation has increased the cost of investment under both categories, and this strengthens the case to expeditiously review the definition based on investment criteria. It would, therefore, be

desirable to take into account turnover or employment or a combination of both with an increase in investment threshold in the revised definition.

Second, the budget has announced an investment allowance at 15 per cent for three years to manufacturing companies that invest more than Rs.25 crore in plant and machinery. It would be more practical to make it cumulative for MSMEs for making an investment of Rs.25 crore within three years instead of one year. That way many more MSMEs would be able to meet the criteria and avail themselves of this allowance.

Third (Credit at low cost), access to finance remains a challenge for MSMEs. Setting up a committee to examine the financial architecture of MSMEs is welcome; however, what is required is concrete recommendations for faster availability of credit at low cost. For example, the committee could look at introducing rebated income tax for small start-up businesses. Tax benefits could be further defined for a specified rebate proportion and specific period to give the requisite impetus to the sector.

Fourth, issues related to service tax for MSMEs are yet to be resolved. For instance, an increase in the threshold limit for levy of service tax is desirable. The limit could be doubled to Rs.20 lakh. Besides, micro and small sectors could be exempted from the purview of service tax for rental for their office/factory/warehouse premises for their own use. This would give relief to the MSMEs and shore up their balance-sheets.

Fifth, entrepreneurship has received a fillip in the budget with the setting up of the start-up fund of Rs.200 crore for SC/ST and Rs.10,000 crore fund for equity and soft loans for SMEs as well as incubation programme that would boost entrepreneurship. However, how exactly the fund would be modelled needs to be seen and the criterion for disbursement needs to be set at the earliest.

Sixth, the proposed entrepreneurship-friendly Bankruptcy Law is a much needed breather for the industry, and will facilitate easy exit for loss-making units. The MSME Act, 2006 proposed to implement the exit policy for MSMEs within a year's time from the enactment of the Act. As a follow-up measure, the context was taken into consideration by the then Prime Minister's Task Force in 2010, which had proposed short-term and long-term measures to formulate the exit policy for the MSMEs. Execution of a time-bound policy to allow MSMEs to exit would help them consolidate their businesses and deploy scarce capital in other greenfield ventures.

Seventh, start-up entrepreneurial ventures need early stage investments from angel investors and often this is a stage when there is only an idea or just a business plan before venture capitalists comes in. Section 56, by taxing such investments, is preventing start-ups from getting funding and encourages them to migrate abroad. It is further discriminatory as foreign investors are exempt.

Eighth, adoption of latest technology is a challenge and an opportunity for the MSMEs. The sum of Rs.100 crore allocated to development of Technology Development Fund scheme would certainly contribute to technology adoption by MSMEs. However, effective implementation would depend on scale and speed of integration of departments and ministries at the Centre as well as State levels through e-platform.

The framework for the fund needs to be specified in detail and it is equally important to facilitate technology adoption that will enable MSMEs to align better with the global value chain through similar e-platforms.

Finally, the focus on SME development in the Northeast and Jammu & Kashmir, as announced in the budget, will lead to balanced regional development, especially through better rail connectivity in the Northeast. However, it is in this region that forward and backward linkages for clusters need to be strengthened. Capacity-building of MSMEs is imperative so that linkages between clusters and neighbouring countries in supply chain are strengthened efficiently. This would require closer co-ordination between private sector, specialised agencies and the government so that benefits trickle down to smallest units that can be scaled up and aligned with global value chains.

Differentiated banks: has their time come?

Article by C. R. L. Narasimhan

The Reserve Bank of India released two separate draft guidelines for licensing of two new categories of banks — Payment Banks and Small Banks.

Both Payments Banks and Small Banks are 'niche' or 'differentiated' banks with the common objective of furthering financial inclusion. Small banks will provide a whole range of banking products — deposits and loans — but in a limited area of operation.

Payments Banks will provide a limited range of products such as acceptance of demand deposits and remittances of funds, but will have a wide network of access points particularly in remote areas. It is expected that they will supplement their own network with business correspondents and even depend on network provided by others. Technology will be extensively used to add value.

Impetus to licence

The impetus to licence 'niche banks' arises out of the need to spread financial inclusion in the country. It is estimated that almost 40 per cent of the population do not have access to any form of formal banking. Spreading the banking habit, accompanied by financial literacy, is a priority. Launch of these niche banks is an important milestone in the journey towards inclusion. That anyway is the hope.

The issue of beefing up the institutional structure to spread financial inclusion has been engaging policymakers for a long time. In fact, the two-stage bank nationalisation that began in 1969 had as one of its key objectives the spread of the banking habit through opening branches in hitherto un-banked areas. Regional rural banks (RRBs) can be considered to be one form of niche banks, concentrating on agriculture in a narrow well defined area. They were invariably promoted by full-fledged commercial banks. For a variety of reasons, RRBs never really took off, but from their experience plenty of lessons relevant for today's niche banks can be drawn.

In January, the Nachiket Mor Committee mooted the idea of these differentiated banks as a means to further inclusion. It laid down an ambitious road map for attaining specific goals of inclusion. The RBI draft is partly derived from the committee's recommendations.

Viewed in another way, licensing these differentiated banks is a logical follow up of the licensing policy for new private banks announced in 2013. Two applicants made the grade and the RBI decided to licence banks at more frequent intervals. It is in that context that the idea of differentiated banks was mooted. The latest budget has carried the idea forward.

Common features

For both categories — Payments Banks and Small banks — the draft guidelines have some common features. The minimum paid-up capital is Rs.100 crore. Promoters' initial contribution will be at least 40 per cent to be locked in for five years. The draft guidelines have prescribed a timeframe to bring down the promoters' stake to 40 per cent within three years, 30 per cent within 10 years and to 26 per cent within 12 years from the date of commencement of the bank.

Obviously, the promoters of these banks will be 'fit and proper' and have a successful track record of at least five years in running their businesses.

Days after the guidelines were announced, the main point of interest has been on who would be the first to start these banks. According to the draft guidelines, entities eligible to start Payments Banks include non-bank prepaid instrument issuers, non-banking finance companies, corporate business correspondents, mobile telephone companies, supermarket chains and co-operatives. Those eligible to start Small Banks include individuals with ten years of experience in banking and finance societies, NBFCs, microfinance institutions and local area banks.

There can be no two opinions on the value of these differentiated banks to the Indian financial system. But the key question is how many serious promoters will finally emerge? The business model of Payments Banks may not be attractive enough. These banks can accept current and savings bank deposits but cannot undertake lending activities. After meeting the reserve requirements (CRR and SLR) like any commercial bank, they will have to invest in government securities. The returns in terms of the spread income may not be attractive enough. Although the guidelines do not say so, Payments Banks resemble 'narrow' banks entities, which were required to park their incremental deposits only in government securities. Such a model was prescribed in the early 1990s for the troubled government-owned Indian Bank, which was then reeling under loan losses. However, it was not found feasible.

Small Banks have an uncanny resemblance to the local area banks, which were launched with much fanfare in 1996. There were very few applicants in the first place, and by 2003, the RBI decided not to issue fresh local area bank licences.

Admittedly, what the RBI is thinking of are an entirely different breed of banks — with higher capital and greater access to technology. But will they be enough to kindle genuine interest among eligible promoters?

Flipkart: Largest Fund Raisers in Indian e-commerce space

India's leading e-commerce retailer

Flipkart has raised funds worth \$1 billion (over Rs.6,000 crore)

The largest-ever by an Indian Internet company

Panorama

Flipkart has been going aggressive on fund-raising, just having raised \$210 million as recently as May this year. The year 2014 is punctuated with milestones for the Bangalore-based e-tailer which crossed \$1 billion in gross merchandise value in March and then went on to acquire competitor Myntra.com in one of the biggest deals in the sector.

Co-founder Sachin Bansal said that the company hoped to become one of India's first \$100 billion company. He said that the company wanted to get there in the next five years or more; a task that was very tough but one that he felt confident of aiming for given the current level of funding.

Going ahead, co-founder Binny Bansal said the company would look at acquisitions and in deepening existing investments. Mobile commerce, payments and improving customer and seller experience would be key focus areas.

Both Bansals said that they believed the Indian Internet was at an inflection point, with Internet speeds on the increase, more users coming on board and mobile traffic moving upwards.

The comparison with China, inevitable as it is, shows the Indian e-commerce story up as a laggard by at least nine years. Alibaba, the first Chinese Internet company to raise \$1 billion from Yahoo Inc, did so in 2005.

The site has four million visits every day and 22 million registered users.

About Flipcart

Flipcart was founded by Sachin Bansal and Binny Bansal, counts Accel Partners, Dragoneer Investment Group, Morgan Stanley Investment Management, Sofina and Vulcan Capital among its other investors.

The home-grown e-retailer had acquired online fashion retailer Myntra in May in what is estimated to be a Rs 2,000 crore deal.

It had also announced an investment of \$100 million (around Rs 600 crore) in its fashion business over the next 12-18 months.

Issues in Mega Food Parks

During Eleventh Plan, Government approved taking up of 30 Mega Food Parks Projects in the country. All the 30 Mega Food Park projects have been approved by the Ministry of Food Processing Industries from the eligible proposals received against Expression of Interest for selection of projects.

The experience of the implementation of the scheme revealed that the following are the main issues being faced during implementation by the Mega Food Parks projects:

- ✓ Acquiring of minimum 50 acre land with Change of Land Use for the project
- ✓ obtaining State Government permission for subleasing the plots.
- ✓ Obtaining sanction of the term loan from the banks to fund the implementation of the project.
- ✓ Delays in getting necessary State Government clearances.
- ✓ Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) in the SPVs being unable to take a lead role
- ✓ Difficulty in finding participation of Food Processor
- ✓ Lack of cohesiveness amongst the promoters leading to legal disputes and delay

Vision Document – 2015

In order to promote food processing industries, increase level of processing and exploit the potential of domestic and international market for processed food products.

It envisaged trebling the size of investment in the processed food sector:

- ✓ by increasing the level of processing of perishables from 6% to 20%
- ✓ value addition from 20% to 35%
- ✓ share in global food trade from 1.5% to 3% by 2015.
- ✓ To achieve these targets, an investment of Rs. 100,000 crore was required by the year 2015. Out of which, the share of Government was Rs.10,000 crore.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Mobile Science Lab (MSL)

REACHING OUT

IDEA IS TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION AMONG SCHOOLS MEANT FOR MIDDLE AND LOWER INCOME CLASSES: M.A LATEEF, PROJECT MANAGER OF MSL.

Rs. 20 lakh

mobile lab is well equipped to carry out more than **350 experiments in physics, chemistry, biology, zoology, astronomy.**

Audio visual aids, computer and books are also provided to the students depending on the requirement of the experiment

<p>The mobile lab makes monthly visits to each school from June to March along with a coordinator and three instructors</p>	<p>It particularly focuses on the less privileged vernacular schools.</p>
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About **4,000 students in 18 government schools**, which till now had no lab facility, are benefiting from the programme



The Rs. 20 lakh mobile lab is well equipped to carry out more than 350 experiments in physics, chemistry, biology, zoology, astronomy. This apart audio visual aids, computer and books are also provided to the students depending on the requirement of the experiment. The idea is to improve the quality of education among schools meant for middle and lower income classes.

The mobile lab makes monthly visits to each school from June to March along with a coordinator and three instructors. It particularly focuses on the less privileged vernacular schools.

This facility is brought to them by the Indian Muslim Relief and Charities, US and Sahayata Trust in association with Tech Mahindra Foundations. About 4,000 students in 18 government schools, which till now had no lab facility, are benefiting from the programme.

The project is aimed at equipping students to develop scientific temper and to inculcate the habit of learning from experience and observation. There are some 6,000 private schools in the city but

Panorama

only few have a proper lab. The condition in government schools is pitiable with most of them having no lab or trained teachers.

“I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand” best sums up the response from the students.

Thanks to the Mobile Science Lab (MSL), they can now carry out experiments in physics, chemistry, biology and mathematics.

Kepler-421b Exoplanet

NASA's Kepler spacecraft researchers have discovered an exoplanet with the longest known year.

The exoplanet has 704-day-long year

It circles its star in 704 days.

It is the longest period of revolution known yet for a planet outside of our solar system.

The farther a planet is from its star, the less likely it is to transit the star from Earth's point of view.

Bio-science in India

Study on 'Innovation in Life Sciences in India - Current state and future imperatives', done by BioAsia-KPMG.

India will account for at least 20 to 25 per cent of the global market share in bio-similars over the next five years

The report that said the country was well-poised to be a key player as the world tried to answer the innovation challenge in the eco-system of existing life sciences research

It was imperative for India to be showcased better as an R&D destination. While the challenges continued in the form of focus on pure-play R&D, the situation was encouraging as innovation in life sciences was slowly taking root in India.

Following government supports in the form of are helping:

- ✓ seed-funding in the early stages
- ✓ creation of infrastructure and the eco-system to nurture innovations
- ✓ investor-friendly policies

For achieving the target apart from above we need:

- ✓ a single platform to address policy issues
- ✓ quality translational research from academia
- ✓ a time-bound plan to resolve clinical research issues
- ✓ incentivising Indians to re-locate from elsewhere to India
- ✓ channelising private funding towards R & D

Pirated software abets cybercrime: Report

According to CERT-In Director General Gulshan Rai use of pirated and counterfeit software products:

- ✓ Often exploited to spread malware at a massive scale
- ✓ Can cause substantial productivity and economic losses to manufacturers and businesses
- ✓ Posing serious security risks and threats to the critical infrastructure of country

Panorama

According to the study by independent forensic science lab Truth Labs, 65 per cent of the tested samples of DVDs and PCs with pre-installed software were found affected by one or more malware.

The study tested a total of 230 samples consisting of 174 samples on DVDs and 56 pre-installed products in laptops collected from 10 geographical locations across the country in collaboration with Microsoft India.

The majority of the malware identified in the samples enabled remote access and control by hackers followed by backdoors and keylogger which pose a threat to the privacy of the user.

As per the study, 90 per cent of the samples in the form of DVDs gave false positive results in anti-piracy check tests, thereby cheating the user to believe that the installed product was a genuine one.

Risk to Government

The study indicated that many laptops supplied to government agencies have pre-installed pirated software

Adding that malware as a tool of cyber terrorism can even compromise the country's critical infrastructure, apart from stealing data and denying service to users.

National Investigation Agency Additional Director General N.R. Wasan said the study was extremely important in creating public awareness. Stating that organised crime had the potential to bring the life to a standstill, Mr. Wasan said built-in malware codes in pirated/free software could compromise banking systems.

Indians glued to smartphones

According to a study by telecom equipment maker Ericsson. The study was conducted among 4,000 smartphone users across 18 urban cities in India

Following are the observations:

- ✓ Smartphone users in India are 'glued' to their smartphones, spending over three hours on an average on their devices
- ✓ Users here spend 3 hours and 18 minutes daily on an average
- ✓ Of which one-third time is spent on apps.
- ✓ Indian users check their phones 77 times daily on an average, with about 26 per cent doing so more than 100 times a day.
- ✓ India has higher smartphone usage compared to even the U.S., where the average is 132 minutes [2 hours 12 minutes].
- ✓ In some of the Asian countries, it ranges between 40 and 50 minutes
- ✓ Smartphone usage is now no longer limited to just social media and chat apps. People are using mobile apps like WhatsApp and WeChat for business purposes, while many working professionals said they shop online using smartphones even while at work.
- ✓ Video consumption on mobile devices is on the rise, with 40 per cent respondents saying they watched videos late at night in bed, 25 per cent while commuting, 23 per cent while having dinner and 20 per cent said they watched videos while shopping.

Panorama

- ✓ About 68 per cent of all mobile minutes on the smartphone are at home, the study said adding that half of all mobile broadband issues faced by users occurred while they are indoors.

Google mapping under CBI scrutiny

CBI has registered a preliminary enquiry (PE) against internet giant Google over Mapathon 2013 for allegedly violating laws by mapping sensitive areas and defence installations, prohibited by law.

Complaint was filed by Surveyor General of India's office to the Union Home Ministry in which Google was accused of had been indulging in activities of mapping several areas which were not included in the maps of the country.

The internet giant had not taken permission from Survey of India, country's official mapping agency, before organising Mapathon 2013, a mapping competition in February-March 2013 when they asked citizens to map their neighbourhoods, especially details related to hospitals and restaurants.

Alarmed by Mapathon, the Survey of India (Sol) asked the internet giant to share its details where they found that there were several coordinates having details of sensitive defence installations which are out of the public domain.

Sol said only it was mandated to undertake 'Restricted' category surveying and mapping, and no other government or private organisations or individual are authorised to do so.

As per the National Map Policy 2005, "the responsibility for producing, maintaining and disseminating the topographic map database of the whole country, which is the foundation of all spatial data, vests with the Survey of India".

After initial probe by Delhi police, the case was handed to CBI as investigations required access to places across the country and, if need be, questioning of some individuals with the help of FBI as Google is incorporated in the U.S.

It was alleged that Google India had launched a nationwide contest and people might have passed on maps and other key details of strategic installations located in other cities and states to the U.S. company.

For Sol, it was clarified that the company never took any permission before undertaking the mapping exercise, and from national security point of view, civil and military Vital Areas, Vital Points (VPs) cannot be shown in the map/data published in public domain.

Crop Residues into Biochar

Research on biochar at Central Research Institute for Dryland Agriculture (CRIDA), Hyderabad has indicated that biochar can be produced from stocks of cotton, redgram, maize, pigeon pea and castor.

Conversion of crop residues into biochar and its application in soil as soil amendment is a novel approach for sequestering atmospheric carbon into the soils, besides improving soil quality and productivity.

Panorama

The production of biochar and its application to soil may deliver immediate benefits through increase in soil water retention properties, saturated hydraulic conductivity and nutrients availability.

It has led to renewed interest of agricultural scientists in this field.

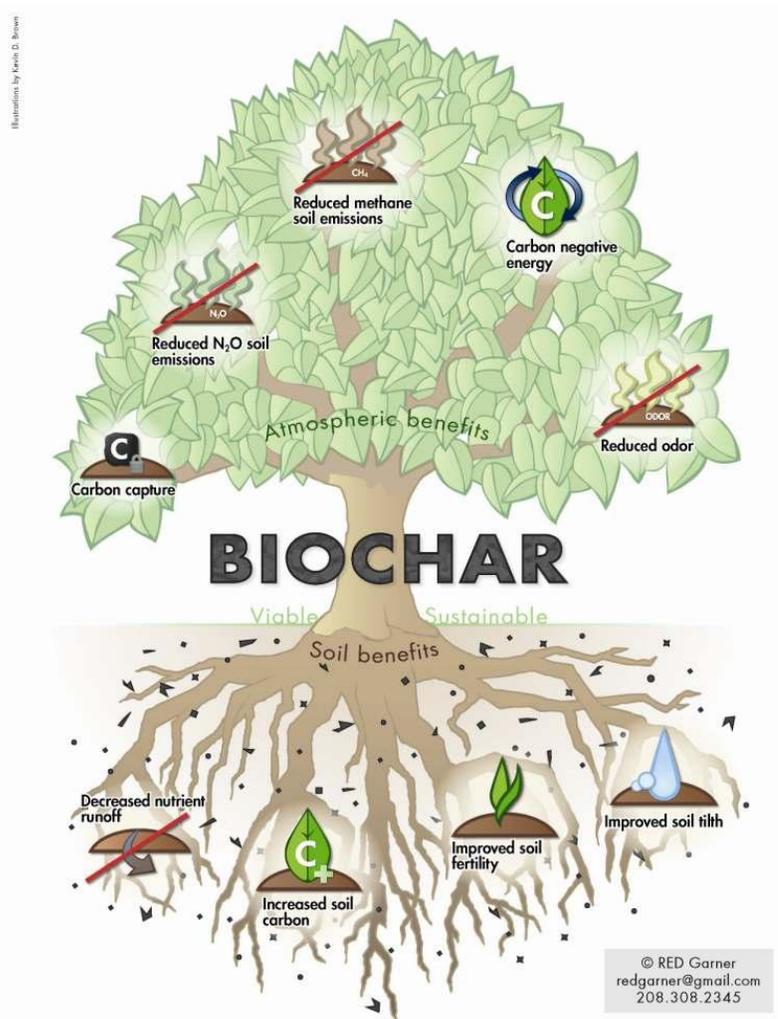
A low cost portable charring kiln has also been developed at CRIDA.

Research also carried out under National Initiatives on Climate Resilient Agriculture (NICRA) revealed the usefulness of application of biochar in red soils of Andhra Pradesh.

Indian Institute of Soil Science, Bhopal has initiated research to standardize optimum condition for preparation of Biochar from bio-mass of different origin and to study their effect on soil properties and crop growth.

Government is accordingly taking various steps to create adequate awareness among farmers and to educate them under:

- ✓ Sub-Mission on Agricultural Extension (SMAE) under National Mission on Agricultural Extension and Technology (NMAET) through initiatives such as Support to States Extension Programmes for Extension Reforms (ATMA Scheme)
- ✓ Mass Media Support to Agricultural Extension
- ✓ Setting up of Agri-Clinics and Agri-Business Centres and Kisan Call Centre Scheme
- ✓ Information is also provided to farmers through SMS Portal in the form of topical and seasonal advisories in their local language and as per their crop preferences.



Biochar is a solid material obtained from the carbonisation of biomass. Biochar may be added to soils with the intention to improve soil functions and to reduce emissions from biomass that would otherwise naturally degrade to greenhouse gases.

Biochar also has appreciable carbon sequestration value. These properties are measurable and verifiable in a characterisation scheme, or in a carbon emission offset protocol.

This 2,000 year-old practice converts agricultural waste into a soil enhancer that can hold carbon, boost food security, and increase soil biodiversity, and discourage deforestation. The process creates a fine-grained, highly porous charcoal that helps soils retain nutrients and water.

Biochar is found in soils around the world as a result of vegetation fires and historic soil management practices. Intensive study of biochar-rich dark earths in the Amazon (terra preta), has led to a wider appreciation of biochar's unique properties as a soil enhancer.

Biochar can be an important tool to increase food security and cropland diversity in areas with severely depleted soils, scarce organic resources, and inadequate water and chemical fertilizer supplies.

Biochar also improves water quality and quantity by increasing soil retention of nutrients and agrochemicals for plant and crop utilization. More nutrients stay in the soil instead of leaching into groundwater and causing pollution.

Biochar to Combat Climate Change

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The carbon in biochar resists degradation and can hold carbon in soils for hundreds to thousands of years. Biochar is produced through pyrolysis or gasification — processes that heat biomass in the absence (or under reduction) of oxygen.

In addition to creating a soil enhancer, sustainable biochar practices can produce oil and gas byproducts that can be used as fuel, providing clean, renewable energy. When the biochar is buried in the ground as a soil enhancer, the system can become "carbon negative."

Biochar and bioenergy co-production can help combat global climate change by displacing fossil fuel use and by sequestering carbon in stable soil carbon pools. It may also reduce emissions of nitrous oxide.

We can use this simple, yet powerful, technology to store 2.2 gigatons of carbon annually by 2050. It's one of the few technologies that is relatively inexpensive, widely applicable, and quickly scalable. We really can't afford not to pursue it.

Fukushima monkeys: Abnormalities due to radiation

The scientists compared 61 monkeys living 70 km from the Fukushima Daiichi plant with 31 monkeys from the Shimokita Peninsula, over 400km from Fukushima.

According to study that may help increase the understanding of radiation on human health:

- ✓ Wild monkeys in the Fukushima region of Japan have blood abnormalities linked to the radioactive fallout from the 2011 nuclear power plant disaster
- ✓ The Japanese macaques (*Macaca fuscata*) were found to have low white and red blood cell levels and low haemoglobin, which the researchers say could make them more prone to infectious diseases.
- ✓ But critics of the study say the link between the abnormal blood tests and the radiation exposure of the monkeys remains unproven and that the radiation doses may have been too small to cause the effect.
- ✓ This first data from non-human primates — the closest taxonomic relatives of humans — should make a notable contribution to future research on the health effects of radiation exposure in humans.

HISTORY AND CULTURE

Museum at Rashtrapathi Bhavan

President inaugurated a museum with fibre glass statues of former Presidents in Rashtrapati Bhavan

President: "I dedicate the Rashtrapati Bhavan Museum to the nation. I am sure this museum will enable the people of our nation obtain an inside view of Rashtrapati Bhavan, its art, architecture and vibrant community as well as educate them on the lives of various Presidents."

The museum has an interactive zone where visitors can learn more about former Presidents and see audio-video clippings related to them.

The President also inaugurated a knowledge hub within the Dr. Rajendra Prasad Sarvodaya Vidyalaya at Rashtrapati Bhavan. The knowledge hub will be a space for innovative teaching and

learning and use collaborative, interactive and pedagogical practices to help teachers connect to the world outside their classroom.

Iron Age rock arts at Kudumianmalai

Iron Age rock arts have been discovered at Kudumianmalai in Pudukottai district.

Rock arts of Iron Age (Megalithic period), believed to be 4,000 years old

Kudumianmalai and its surrounding areas are rich in Megalithic excavations. The Tamil Brahmi inscription of third century AD, rock beds of Jain monks, cave temple of the Pandyas, and the inscription of musical treatise of 9th century A.D, temples built by Cholas, Pandyas, Vijayanagar kings, Nayaks, Thondaimans, are some of the antiquarian remains at Kudumianmalai. The discovery of the ancient rock art attests further to the posterity of human activity in the area.

The paintings are found in a rock about 30 feet high, behind the Kudumianmalai temple.

The paintings in red, black, and yellow are found in about 20 spots throughout the length of the rock on its eastern face.

Man with a bow (in red), human figure, and an animal (in black), trees and creepers are a few of the legible paintings in the group. Since the paintings are drawn in the near vertical rock, most of them have been damaged because of vagaries of the weather and vandalism. However, the vestiges of these ancient paintings are evidence to the remote past of the place.

The paintings are executed with the natural colour pigments such as red and yellow ochre, hematite stone and charcoal, in water medium. The slow action of water on the siliceous rock fixes the pigments firmly on the rock rendering them immune to the solvent action of water.

The chronology of the rock art in South India is believed to be about 4,000 to 5,000 years old.

The paintings at Kudumianmalai resemble other paintings found at places such as Alampadi in Villupuram and Sirumalai in Dindigal.

SECURITY

India, China compete for naval arsenals

The competition for energy and other resources in the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea, which should not spill over into open conflict, has emerged as a major factor in the establishment of stable deterrents.

The battle for energy resources in South China Sea and Indian Ocean is persuading India and China to develop their naval arsenals that have a prominent nuclear dimension.

India

Focused on preserving its 'strategic autonomy,' India is validating its nuclear deterrent

India is promoting technological advancements of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

The gap in India's capacity to launch a retaliatory second strike, following a nuclear attack, is set to be bridged with the integration of a Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile (SLBM) on the hull of the domestically developed Arihant nuclear submarine.

China

As India builds its deterrent, China has fully developed its fourth-generation nuclear powered submarines, capable of targeting sea-going or land-based objects with torpedoes and missiles.

The Chinese seem to be responding with calibrated assertion, following the Pivot to Asia of the United States, which entails beefing up America's military profile in the Asia-Pacific, including the energy rich, South China Sea.

China deployed 80 ships, including seven warships, to protect its oil rig in the South China Sea, in an area that was hotly contested by Vietnam. On its part, naval sources said the Indian Navy aspires to broaden its footprint along the Indian Ocean, in an area that includes the resource rich East African coastline, and stretches as far as Antarctica.

MALABAR – 2014

Exercise Malabar is a complex, high-end operational exercise that has grown in scope and complexity over the years. Malabar 2014 is the latest in a continuing series of exercises conducted to enhance multinational maritime relationships and mutual security issues.

The exercise features both ashore and at-sea training. Whilst ashore at Port Sasebo, Japan from 24 to 26 Jul, the interactions will include subject matter expert and professional exchanges on Carrier Strike Group operations, maritime patrol and reconnaissance operations, anti piracy operations and Visit, Board, Search and Seizure (VBSS) operations.

Three ships of Indian Navy participated viz. INS Ranvijay (guided missile destroyer), INS Shivalik (stealth frigate) and INS Shakti (fleet tanker).

The sea phase of the exercise is scheduled from 27 to 30 Jul 14 and will be conducted in the Western Pacific Ocean.

Exercises planned during this phase include search and rescue exercises, helicopter cross-deck landings, underway replenishments, gunnery and anti-submarine warfare exercises, Visit, Board, Search and Seize operations (VBSS) and Liaison officer exchange and embarkation. Designed to

Panorama

enhance maritime cooperation among the navies of the participating nations, these exercises further hone individual capacity to conduct operations in a multi-national environment.

The Indian, Japanese and U.S. navies have a common understanding and knowledge of a shared working environment at sea. This exercise would further help advance the level of understanding among the navies.

Two destroyers along with a P3C Orion and a sea-plane (US-2) are participating from the Japanese Navy. From the US Navy one submarine (SSN), two destroyers, one tanker along with one MR aircraft would be participating. One US Carrier Strike group (CSG) is likely to join for the sea phase of the exercise.

MISCELLANEOUS

Commonwealth Games 2014

There is an air of excitement in Glasgow, the largest city in Scotland, as it plays host to the 20th Commonwealth Games. Organizers are eager to play down comparisons with London's hosting of the Olympic Games in 2012 and put on a world-class event of their own. This is the third time the Commonwealth Games are being held in Scotland, after 1970 and 1986 when the games were held in the capital Edinburgh. The games has united the 2.3 million strong residents of Glasgow, under the mascot Clyde, ever since they won the bid in 2007 beating the Nigerian city of Abuja. Glasgow gave an indication of things to come by putting out an impressive show at the closing ceremony of the 19th Commonwealth Games, four years ago in New Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium.

Opening Ceremony

The Opening Ceremony was held at Celtic Park, Glasgow. Queen Elizabeth II read out the message written on the Queen's Baton which has travelled to 71 nations and territories of the Commonwealth in a relay for 248 days, before declaring the Games open.

The opening ceremony featured a parade around Celtic Park by thousands of athletes taking part in the Games. India, as the previous host, led the parade, which ended with the current host, Scotland. The centrepiece of the opening ceremony a live show consisting of about 2,000 people. The Opening Ceremony also featured a near 100 metre wide and 11m high LED screen erected in front of the South Stand at Celtic Park to broadcast images of the night. In 2010 Delhi Commonwealth Games the Aerostat was the showpiece during the opening and closing ceremonies.

India's cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar was present but only through a video message during the ceremony in his capacity as the Global Goodwill Ambassador of the UNICEF, which has partnered with the Glasgow Commonwealth Games in a first-of-its-kind initiative to spread awareness about problems being faced by children all over the world.

British Prime Minister David Cameron and his cabinet colleagues, Scotland's First Minister Alex Salmond and his colleagues in the government and other dignitaries from Commonwealth nations also attended the inaugural ceremony.



The games

More than 6,500 athletes from 71 Commonwealth nations and independent states would contest in the 11 day sporting spectacle. There would be 261 medal events in 17 sports. There were 21 sports events in the previous edition of the games held in 2010.

Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt is the biggest name at the Glasgow games, but he will only compete in 4x100-metre relay. British long distance runner Mo Farah, who won both the 5,000 and 10,000 metres at the London Olympics in 2012, is scheduled to run in both events.

Hosts Scotland have made pretty good preparations to put up a solid show and better their medal tally. England too is optimistic and will vie for the top spot or the second. New Zealand will concentrate on Rugby, while India, the largest country in the Commonwealth, will be expecting a lion's share of medals from shooters, boxers, wrestlers and shuttles. Khumukcham Sanjita and Mirabai Saikhom, the Manipur girls gave India Gold and Silver on Day one Women's 48kg weight lifting event.

India in the Commonwealth Games

This time around India has a sizeable contingent of 224 athletes competing in 14 disciplines. The shooting team comprises an Olympic champion in Abhinav Bindra and two Olympic medallists in Gagan Narang and Vijay Kumar. In badminton, with defending champion Saina Nehwal skipping the event, India will be pinning its hopes on PV Sindhu, P Kashyap and the pair of Jwala Gutta and Ashwini Ponnappa to repeat their success.

India had a great outing in the track and field in 2010 with discus thrower Krishna Poonia winning the first gold medal in athletics for India in 52 years since Milkha Singh's triumph at the 1958 Cardiff Games. This time also the focus will be on Krishna and fellow discus thrower Vikas Gowda, who finished an impressive eighth in the London Games.

The men's hockey team will be looking to salvage some pride after their disappointing show at the World Cup. The men's squad settled for the silver in Delhi but also had to endure the Brazil type ignominy of a 0-8 loss against Australia in the final.

The Indian contingent had finished second in the 2010 Commonwealth Games in New Delhi. The 101 medals overall in that edition was a record that the country would hope to better. But it would be hard to replicate the unprecedented success achieved at home in this edition, especially after the scrapping of archery and tennis and the reduction in the number of medal events in shooting and wrestling. Therefore the most realistic target for India would be a third-place finish with the top spot expected to go either to Australia or England.

Whither Commonwealth Games

The Commonwealth Games have more history than most other games. Glasgow is hosting the 20th edition, after it was first staged in 1930 in Hamilton, Canada. It was called the British Empire Games until 1950, then the British Empire and Commonwealth Games, then the British Commonwealth Games and, since 1978, simply the Commonwealth Games.

Even as the Games press on into the 21st century, debate continues about their relevance. Whether it is worth the expense and trouble to carry on with the colonial legacy, when more geographically coherent forums like Asian Games, African Games have emerged.

As usual, the Commonwealth Games suffer from a lack of star power. The three nations who won the most medals at the last Summer Olympics, in 2012 in London - the United States, China and Russia - do not participate in the Commonwealth version.

Yet, the games continue, often providing a fine spring-board to higher altitudes for young athletes.

QUESTIONS

1. "India failed to properly utilise the wealth created by its expanding economy". Do you agree with respect to India's lower position in Human Development Index.
2. "As one half of the country prepares for the challenge of educating and training its growing young workforce, the other must increasingly think of pensions and how to support the elderly". Comment with respect to gap in Total Fertility Rate in different states in India.
3. "India's demographic dividend should be paying off right now." With respect to this statement do you think economic policies have failed Indian Youths and India as a whole?
4. Palestinians and Israelis deserve freedom — freedom from siege, rockets, missiles, artillery and airstrikes. They deserve a future of hope, peace and justice. Comment.
5. What is concept of basic social floor? Do you think India is able to provide the same to every Indian? Suggest measures for achieving the same.
6. "At this stage, universal schemes make more sense for India than targeted ones." Do you agree with this?
7. "United Nation's Peace Keeping Force has become a symbol of global inequality". Critically analyse.
8. "I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand". With respect to Mobile Science Lab critically analyse various advantages of Audio-Visio learning and practical methods.
9. "Girls have right to determine their destiny. When they do so, everyone benefits." In line with this viewpoint discuss the impacts of Child Marriage on girls and society in India.
10. Discuss ramifications of pirated software on an individual and national security. What measures do you suggest for the same?
11. Discuss the following:
 - a) Anthropocene Defaunation
 - b) MyGov
 - c) China's objection to Malabar 2014
 - d) Protection of North-East people
 - e) Biochar