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Current Affairs – April 2012

Contents

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April 2012

Pick of the Month.....	3	India Diary.....	51
International.....	6	World Diary.....	55
National.....	12	Practice Sets.....	61
Economy.....	16	Q n A.....	62
State.....	24	Current Affair Quizzes.....	66
Corporate.....	28	General Knowledge Quiz.....	81
Sports.....	32	Previous Year Question Papers.....	85
Environment & Ecology.....	35	Success Story.....	85
Science & Technology.....	37		
News Capsule.....	39		
One Liners.....	49		

Pick of the Month

India & Britain held Fifth Ministerial level India-UK Economic Financial Dialogue

India and Britain held the fifth ministerial level India-UK economic financial dialogue in New Delhi on 2 April 2012. Both nations discussed ways to strengthen their mutual cooperation and further boost trade and investment between them. Highlights of the dialogue are as following:

- Both nations agreed that while the global economy has stabilised in recent months, growth will remain subdued and at risk from a series of threats.
- India and Britain welcomed the exchange of ideas in financing infrastructure as part of the Dialogue, noting that both countries share a common aim of increasing the role of institutional investors in infrastructure financing.
- India and Britain also discussed the importance of developing deep and efficient capital markets to support infrastructure financing in India. Foreign capital can play an important part in this process.
- Both nations supported the progress on the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) roadmap for foreign banks in India.
- Both sides agreed that there was a clear benefit to sharing experiences on this and welcomed the ongoing technical collaboration to assist the FSLRC (Financial Sector Legislative Reforms Commission) in carrying out its mandate.
- Both sides welcomed the Cannes Action Plan for Growth and Jobs agreed at the November 2011 Cannes Summit.
- Both nations are committed to ensuring that the IMF is adequately resourced to play its systemic role in the international financial system in support of its entire membership and that the quota and governance reforms of the IMF are implemented within the agreed timelines.
- Both sides agreed to remain committed to pursuing the financial regulatory reform agenda according to the time table agreed in G-20 in an internationally consistent and non-discriminatory manner.
- Both sides recognized the need for countries to sign the Multilateral Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters and engage in automatic exchange of information
- Recognising the importance of open trade for the global economy, India and UK reaffirmed their commitment to refrain from protectionism.



- India and the UK welcomed the 40% year on year increase in the export of goods from the UK to India and the increase by 35.05% of exports from India to UK in 2011.

Indian Cabinet approved Signing of new Liberal Visa Regime with Pak

The Union Cabinet on 26 April 2012 in a meeting headed by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh approved the signing of a new liberal visa regime with Pakistan thereby paving way for easing travel restrictions and increasing people-to-people exchange. The Cabinet had given its approval to signing of the agreement that would allow common people from either country to visit at least three earmarked cities. India and Pakistan had decided to ease visa regulations during the meeting between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari in New Delhi on 8 April 2012.

As per the cabinet's directive, businessmen are likely to be issued multi-entry non-police reporting visas and given access to at least five cities instead of three at present. The credentials of the businessmen for qualifying for such a visa will however be endorsed by the nodal chambers of commerce on both sides. From India, it will be Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and from the Pakistani side, it will be Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI).



It was proposed under the new visa regime, that senior citizens would be exempt from police reporting on both sides. Pakistan decided to allow bigger trucks and containers to carry goods into its territory. Earlier, only 10 wheeler capacity trucks were allowed. Post the easing of terms the number was increased to 22-wheeler capacity trucks. Also, it decided to allow containers with the opening of the new integrated check post (ICP) facility on the Attari-Wagah border.

Rajya Sabha passed amendments to Central Educational Institutions Act

The Rajya Sabha on 27 April 2012 passed amendments to the Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Admissions) Act, 2006, exempting some central institutions from implementing the other backward castes (OBC) quota. The institutions where implementation of the Act exceeds the 50 percent reservation limit fixed by the Supreme Court will fall under the amendment.

The amendment says that if seats reserved for Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes in a central educational institution exceed 50 percent of the annual strength permitted, the institution need not make any reservation for OBCs. The move aims to balance between state and central reservation policies.

The institutions located in states like Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura and Assam's tribal areas need not to reduce the percentage of seats reserved for SC/ST candidates from the level obtaining on the date immediately preceding the date of the Act's commencement. If the institution is in any other area, the percentage of seats reserved for SC/ST candidates will be reduced to 50.

SC upheld Constitutional Validity of the RTE Act, 2009

The Supreme Court of India on 12 April 2012 upheld the constitutional validity of the Right to Education Act, 2009, which mandates 25 per cent free seats to the poor in government and private unaided schools across the

country. The apex court clarified that its judgment will come into force from 12 April 2012. However, the act will apply uniformly to government and unaided private schools except unaided private minority schools. A three-judge bench of Chief Justice S H Kapadia and justices K S Radhakrishnan and Swatanter Kumar gave the ruling.

The bench had reserved its verdict on 3 August 2012 on a bunch of petitions by private unaided institutions. The petitions had contended that the section 12 (1)(c) of RTE Act violates the rights of private educational institutions under Article 19(1) (g) which provided autonomy to private managements to run their institutions without governmental interference. Right to Education Act (RTE) was passed by the Indian parliament on 4 August 2009. The act came into force on 1 April 2010. It has the provision of free and compulsory education for children between 6 and 14 in India under Article 21A of the Indian Constitution.

Section 12(1)(c) of the RTE act says that every recognized school imparting elementary education is obliged to admit underprivileged children even if it is not aided by the government to meet its expenses. India became one of 135 countries to make education a fundamental right of every child.

Rajasthan State Assembly passed Resolution to set up Legislative Council in the State

Rajasthan State Assembly on 18 April 2012 passed a resolution to establish an upper house in the state. The resolution to create a Vidhan Parishad (legislative council) was moved in the state assembly under Article 169 (1) of the Indian Constitution. After being passed by two-third majority of the members present and voting in the state assembly, the resolution will now require the approval of both the houses of the Indian Parliament, followed by the final approval of Indian President.

The Vidhan Parishad (or Legislative Council) is the upper house in those states of India that have a bicameral legislature. As of 2011, six Indian states viz. Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Uttar Pradesh have a Legislative Council. The Legislative Council cannot have members more than one third of the state assembly. The number, however, also should not be less than 40.

Bicameral Legislature

Bicameral Legislature refers to those legislatures which consist of two legislative or parliamentary chambers.

Zee TV became the First Indian Channel to get Landing Right in China

Zee TV on 27 March 2012 became the first Indian channel to get a landing right in China. China's State Administration for Radio, Film and Television (SARFT) granted the landing rights to the Indian channel after a long six years of wait.

Zee TV had already been selling to Chinese television channels its popular Mandarin-dubbed Indian programmes which had garnered a considerable viewership in the country. Zee TV Asia Pacific inked a landing agreement with the CTV-STVP, only Chinese agent allowed to distribute foreign channels.

E-filing of Returns compulsory for Individuals with Income above Rs 10 lakh

The Union government on 11 April 2012 made it mandatory for individuals with income above Rs 10 lakh to file their tax returns 2011-12 onwards electronically. E-filing was made compulsory for the person who is an

individual, or a Hindu Undivided Family, if his or its total income, or the total income in respect of which he is or it is assessable under the Act during the previous year, exceeds Rs 10 lakh for assessment year 2012-13 onwards. E-filing for such individuals was optional till 2010-11. Currently business houses with receipts of Rs 60 lakh and professionals with income of Rs 15 lakh are mandatorily required to e-file their return with digital signature.

Geeta Kumari became the First Indian Woman Wrestler to Qualify for Olympics

Geeta Kumari, the woman wrestler, won a gold in 55kg category at the ongoing Asian qualifying tournament in Astana, Kazakhstan. Geeta with this victory also made a history, as she became the first Indian woman wrestler to have ever qualified for the Olympics.



The wrestler from Bhiwani in Haryana, overpowered Kyrgyzstan's Gulina in the first round. Then she went on to defeat Aiym Abdildina of Kazakhstan in the semifinal. In the final, the grappler thrashed her Korean challenger Ji-Eun Um to clinch the gold medal.

Women's wrestling was first introduced at the Olympics during the 2004 Athens Olympics.

International

US–Afghanistan inked Strategic Pact for US Involvement in Afghanistan

US and Afghanistan inked a long-awaited strategic pact on 22 April 2012. The pact aims at setting forth guidelines for US involvement in Afghanistan as forces are withdrawn from the trouble-torn nation. The pact provides a strong foundation for the security of Afghanistan, the region and the world. Both the countries took almost one year to reach on the mutual agreement. The agreement was expected to be inked before the NATO summit to be held in May 2012.

The agreement speaks for a smaller but longer-term US presence in Afghanistan as it would give western leaders a rationale for supporting Kabul after combat troops are withdrawn in 2014. It also aims to reassure Afghans that the West will not cut and run, and is critical to Afghanistan's financial stability. US army along with NATO troops has been present in Afghanistan from 2001, as the army is combating the radical Taliban militants in the country. The US forces in May 2011 had gunned down Osama Bin Laden in Abbottabad in Pakistan. The US president Barak Obama in an announcement made in 2010 said that the US army will hand over the internal security of Afghanistan to the Afghan security forces by 2014 as many innocent people were killed in the process.

WTO pegged World Trade Growth at 3.7 % for 2012

World Trade Organisation (WTO) on 11 April 2012 pegged world trade growth at 3.7 per cent for 2012 thereby projecting a further slowdown in world trade. World trade expanded by a mere 5 per cent in 2011 a sharp deceleration from the 2010 rebound of 13.8 per cent. The WTO expects trade to recover by 2013 and result in additional growth of 5.6 percent.

WORLD TRADE
ORGANIZATION



The dollar value of world merchandise trade in 2011 increased 19 percent to \$18.2 trillion there by surpassing 2008 peak of \$16.1 trillion. According to the WTO, the slowdown of the global economy due to a number of shocks including the European sovereign debt crisis resulted in the dip in the trade figures.

Multiple economic setbacks during 2011 further dampened growth and led to a stronger than anticipated easing in the fourth quarter.

Asia recorded the strongest growth in exports (6.6 percent), on account of a leap of 16.1 percent in India and 9.3 percent in China.

India recorded exports growth of 16 per cent in 2011, the fastest in the world in volume terms in 2011. China had the second-fastest export growth of many major economies at 9.3 per cent. India also emerged as the second-fastest importer after China growing at 6 per cent in 2011. In the report released by the WTO on 11 April 2012, developed countries actually exceeded export expectations with growth of 4.7 percent, driven by a 7.2 percent rise in exports from the United States. However, the 5.4 percent growth rate recorded among developing countries was lower than anticipated as they were hit by an interruption in oil supplies during the Libyan conflict and the Japanese earthquake disrupted supply chains.

India to Export Iron Ore to Japan & South Korea

India on 30 April 2012 announced its decision to export 2.1 million tonnes (mt) of iron ore to steel mills of Japan and South Korea under a long-term agreement due to be signed in May 2012. The iron ore will be supplied to leading steel mills of Japan and Korea, including Posco, Kobe and Nippon Steel. As approved by the cabinet in March 2012, the iron ore, having 64 per cent Fe content, or high grade lumps is to be sourced from NMDC's Chhattisgarh mines and will be exported through MMTC.

The supplies are slated to begin from July and the agreements are to be signed for three years. Prices are to be decided on a quarterly basis and the export quantity is to increase in the 2012-13 fiscal. MMTC's earlier contract to supply iron ore for five years to Japanese and Korean steel mills had expired on 31 March 2011. As a result of the expiry of the contract, NMDC had managed to export only 1.6 lakh tonnes in the 2011-12 fiscal, too, to the Chinese firms on an ad-hoc basis.

Pak SC convicted PM Yusuf Raja Gilani for Contempt of Court

The Supreme Court of Pakistan convicted Pakistan Prime Minister Yusuf Raja Gilani for contempt of court for refusing to reopen corruption cases against President Asif Ali Zardari. Gilani, who is the first Pakistan prime minister to be held guilty for contempt, could have been jailed for six months but was awarded just a symbolic punishment of about 30 seconds. Gilani, who was handpicked by Zardari in 2008 to be the Prime Minister of Pakistan, had declined to act on the court's order in the past to reopen corruption cases against Zardari, arguing that the president enjoys immunity under the Pakistani constitution.

Accused of corruption, Zardari had been granted immunity under the National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) in 2007 by then president Pervez Musharraf to facilitate his return home and, primarily that of his wife, former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. The NRO that granted immunity to politicians and bureaucrats in corruption cases was struck down by the Supreme Court as void in 2009. The apex court warned the government of action if its ruling on the NRO was not implemented by 10 January, 2012. It also ordered the government to write a letter to the Swiss authorities to reopen cases against Zardari. On 16 January 2012, the court issued Gilani a contempt notice for not acting against Zardari. Gilani was indicted for contempt of court on 13 February 2012.

Indian Union Cabinet approved Proposal by Oman to hike the Gas Price

The Union Cabinet of India on 28 April 2012 approved the proposal by Oman to hike the gas price for an Indian fertilizer plant in the Gulf nation to 1.5 per million dollar metric British thermal unit (mmBtu). The move aims to ensure uninterrupted supply of urea to the Indian market. The proposal was moved by the Fertilizer Ministry as it required Cabinet's approval for a change in the agreement between the two countries.

Oman, as per a contract signed between India and Oman in 2005, supplies gas to the Indian fertilizer plant Oman India Fertilizer Company (OMIFCO). Oman, according to the contract, was to provide gas to the Indian plant at 0.77 dollar per mmBtu for 15 years beginning 2005. The gulf nation, however, in the midway decided to increase gas rates to 3 dollar per mmBtu from 1 January 2012 giving global price hike as the reason.

Oman India Fertilizer Company (OMIFCO)

Oman India Fertilizer Company (OMIFCO), a joint venture of Oman's state-owned Oman Oil Co (OCC) and Indian co-operative firms KRIBHCO and IFFCO, produces about 2 million tonnes of urea a year at Sur for exports to India. IFFCO and KRIBHCO hold 25 per cent stake each in OMIFCO, while the balance is with Oman Oil Company.

Dutch PM Mark Rutte & Cabinet resigned Following Failure of Austerity Talks

The Netherlands' Prime Minister Mark Rutte and his Cabinet resigned on 23 April 2012 after failing to reach agreement on reducing the country's budget to meet European guidelines. Rutte tendered his resignation to Queen Beatrix, the head of state, at her palace in The Hague, which was accepted by her subsequently. The queen asked Rutte's conservative VVD Party and the Christian Democrats — to continue in the interest of the nation. The new elections are expected to take place before the end of June 2012.



In the 150-seat Parliament Rutte's VVD Party have 31 seats, while the coalition partners, the Christian Democrats and Wilders's Freedom Party have 21 and 23 seats respectively. The opposition Labor Party has 30, while the Socialists have 15. Rutte, an ally to Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany on fiscal matters and a vociferous supporter of austerity for other European countries has been unable to deliver on his promises of reducing the country's budget.

Pakistan Plane Crash killed more than 100 passengers

A passenger aero plane crash near Islamabad in Pakistan on 20 April 2012 left more than 100 people dead. The tragic incident occurred while the airliner was attempting to land during a thunderstorm. The Bhoja airliner had been flying from the southern seaport city of Karachi and burst into flames right before its landing in the Islamabad following a 3½-hour flight. The airline Boeing 737 was carrying 121 passengers, including 11 children, as well as six crew members. The crash occurred near the Chaklala airbase, a military site used by the country's air force, which is adjacent to the Benazir Bhutto International Airport in Islamabad.



The worst aviation tragedy in Pakistan came in July 2010 when an Airbus 321 passenger jet operated by the private airline Airblue crashed into hills overlooking Islamabad while coming in to land after a flight from Karachi. The deadly incident ended up with the death of 152 people. The 1992 civilian plane crash is also considered to be one of the deadliest as it claimed the life of 167 people.

Fourth BRICS Summit held in New Delhi

The Fourth BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) summit was held in New Delhi on 29 March 2012. The theme of the summit was BRICS partnership for *Global Stability, Security and Prosperity*. At the end of the summit, Delhi Declaration was issued. Development banks of BRICS signed two agreements- i) Master agreement on extending credit facility in local currency. ii) BRICS Multilateral letter of credit confirmation facility agreement. The five participating banks are Banco Nacional de Desenvolvimento Economico e Social-BNDES, Brazil; State Corporation Bank for Development and Foreign Economic Affairs-Vnesheconombank of Russia; Export-Import bank of India; China Development Bank Corporation, and Development Bank of Southern Africa.

These two agreements are expected to enhance cooperation among the BRICS development banks and to significantly promote intra-BRICS trade.

Highlights of Delhi Declaration

- BRICS nations agreed on the reform of IMF and World Bank.
- Brazil, India, China and South Africa congratulated the Russian Federation on its accession to the WTO.
- BRICS nation said they were committed to playing their part in the global fight against climate change and will contribute to the global effort in dealing with climate change issues.

Background of BRICS : The BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) idea was first conceived in 2001 by Goldman Sachs as part of an economic modeling exercise to forecast global economic trends over the next half

century; the acronym BRIC was first used in 2001 by Goldman Sachs in their Global Economics Paper No. 66, "The World Needs Better Economic BRICs".

India, UAE signed agreement to amend Double Taxation Avoidance Treaty

India and the UAE on 16 April 2012 signed an agreement in Abu Dhabi to amend the double taxation avoidance treaty, paving the way for greater sharing of tax related information between the two countries. They also agreed to set up a joint committee to look after consular issues.

The India-UAE agreement on avoidance of double taxation was updated to bring it at par with the internationally accepted standards. Now the banking information as well as any information without any domestic tax interest can be shared between the two nations. A Joint Committee will be set up to look into and address the concerns of Indian and Emirati nationals on consular issues including such as birth or death registration, quasi judicial matters like detention or arrest, travel documents like passport and visa etc.

Taliban attacked Kabul & Three Other Provinces of Afghanistan

Taliban militants on 15 April 2012, unleashed a string of attack in the high profile diplomatic pockets, NATO bases and Parliament of Kabul capital city of Afghanistan. The militants also hit three provinces—in Jalalabad, Logar and Paktia. The attack left 24 people injured and 7 militants killed. The attackers also fired rockets at the parliament building and at the Russian embassy

Across the border in Pakistan, Talibani militants also stormed neighbouring state Pakistan as they raided a jail at Bannu and released close to 400 of their cadres. In two separate incidents of attack the militants killed 12 people in Peshawar and injured 12 in a time bomb explosion in Lower Kurram.

The attack is considered to be the most severe ever since the NATO forces took control over the troubled nation in 2001. Considering the deadly

attacks that Taliban militants have unleashed over the last few months, the US' decision to withdraw its troops from the trouble torn nation seems to be a farfetched idea.

Syrian Government announced Ceasefire against Rebels

The Syrian government announced ceasefire against rebels on 12 April 2012. There would be no military operations against rebels. But the troops will remain on alert to thwart attack by armed groups against civilians and the security forces. The ceasefire will be effective throughout Syria.

However, the Syrian authorities reserved the right to respond to any attacks by armed terrorist groups against civilians, government forces and private property.

India-Russia Joint Working Group's Seventh Meeting held in New Delhi

The seventh meeting of the India-Russia Joint Working Group was held in New Delhi on 11 April 2012. India and Russia held comprehensive discussions on combating international terrorism and reaffirmed their commitment to consolidate bilateral interaction in the fight against this menace.

Both the nations underlined the role of international efforts in preventing and suppressing terrorism including consistent implementation of the UN Global Counter-terrorism Strategy and the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council.

India and Germany decided to cooperate in Urban Development

India and Germany on 10 April 2012 decided to promote bilateral cooperation in the field of sustainable urban development through exploration of solutions to problems of mutual concern. A joint declaration to this effect was signed at a meeting in

New Delhi between Urban Development Minister Kamal Nath and his German counterpart Peter Ramsauer.

The Joint Declaration envisages promoting discussion and strategies on integrated policies and principles for urban development and revitalization in the two nations.

India, Qatar signed six agreements India and Qatar on 9 April 2012 signed six agreements, including a pact on cooperation in oil and gas exploration. The agreements were signed in New Delhi during the visit of Qatar's Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al- Thani.

Both the leaders had discussions on a range of issues, including boosting trade and investment as well as energy ties between the two countries. Issues relating to the welfare of Indian workers in the Gulf country were also discussed.

India and Qatar signed a pact on establishing a cooperative framework to increase bilateral cooperation in oil and gas. It is likely to encourage and promote investment and cooperation between the two Ministries of oil and gas and through affiliated companies. A memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Reserve Bank of India and Qatar Central Bank.

USA and Afghanistan signed (MoU) on Night Raids

United States of America and Afghanistan on 8 April 2012 signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the controversial issue of conduct of night raids on Afghan homes. It empowered the Afghan security forces oversight over the raids led by the US troops. The agreement leads to a more comprehensive long-term strategic partnership agreement between the two nations after the

departure of all foreign troops from Afghanistan in 2014.

India's Atomic Energy Regulatory Board became 11th Member of MEDP

India's Atomic Energy Regulatory Board was designated as the 11th member of MEDP (Multinational Design Evaluation Programme) on 4 April 2012. The other members of this body are China, Finland, Japan, Korea, South Africa, USA, UK, Canada, France and Russia.

MDEP is a multinational initiative taken by national safety authorities to develop innovative approaches to leverage the resources and knowledge of the national regulatory authorities.

Launched in 2006 by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) of the United States and the French Nuclear Safety Authority MDEP regulate harmonisation efforts.

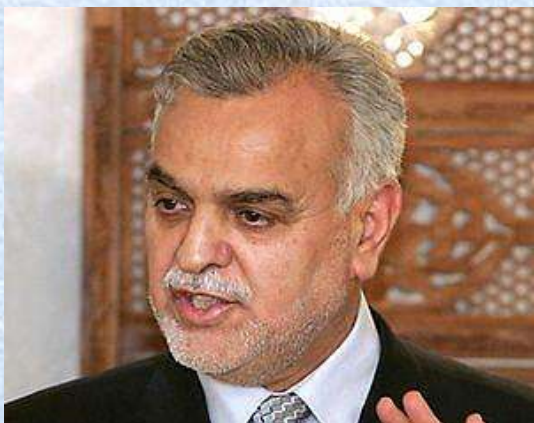
India, UAE signed agreement to ease Indian Contract Workers' entry in Emirates

India and UAE signed an agreement on 4 April 2012 to ease the entry of Indian contract workers in the Emirates. The agreement was signed in Abu Dhabi, UAE. It provides for an electronic contract registration and validation system to safeguard and protect the interests of migrant Indian workers.

The move would ensure a transparent, legal and less cumbersome migration of Indian workers to the Emirates. India is the first country with which the United Arab Emirates has entered into the landmark agreement to safeguard the interests of the migrant Indian workers to the Emirates.

Afghanistan had repeatedly described the night raids a violation of its sovereignty and called for stopping them immediately in contrary to US forces.

Qatar rejected Iraq's request to hand over Tareq Al Hashemi



Qatar on 3 April 2012 rejected Iraq's request to hand over the nation's fugitive Tareq Al Hashemi to face terror charges in Baghdad. Qatar stated that it would not extradite him since such a move would be contrary to diplomatic protocol. Qatar will not hand him over because there is no court verdict against him and because al-Hashemi is a foreign official with diplomatic immunity.

Iraq had asked Qatar to extradite the top Sunni leader Tareq Al-Hashemi against whom the Shiite Government issued an arrest warrant in December 2011 on charges of running death squads for killing of Government officials and opponents. The row is likely to further strain ties between Shiite-led Iraq and Sunni Gulf Arab states. Tariq al-Hashimi is a Sunni and was the general secretary of the Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP) until May 2009.

Along with Adil Abdul Mahdi, he was a Vice President of Iraq in the government formed after the December 2005 elections.

National

TRAI issued Tariff Order for TV Channels

The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) in its much-awaited tariff order issued on 30 April 2012, ordained the TV channels to carry a minimum of 100 free-to-air channels on their networks. As per the TRAI order, the basic service tier (BST) will comprise at least 5 channels of news and current affairs, infotainment, sports, kids, music, lifestyle, movies and general entertainment in Hindi, English and regional language of the concerned region.

While multi-system operators (MSO) have to offer the BST, it is not mandatory to subscribe to it. The subscriber is free to subscribe to his own package of a maximum of 100 FTA channels, but in either case, the MSO can't charge the subscriber more than 100 rupees a month. Besides having to carry a minimum of 500 channels from next year, TRAI have mandated that every MSO will have a minimum capacity to carry 200 channels from 1 July, 2012.

TRAI's order followed the I & B ministry's Cable Television Networks Rules 2012 notification issued on 29 April 2012. According to the Cable Television Networks Rules 2012, broadcasters shall not provide their channels to

MSOs who have channel carrying capacity of less than 200 channels immediately and less than 500 channels from 2013 onwards.

I&B Ministry notified Cable Television Networks Rules 2012

The information and broadcasting (I&B) ministry of India on 28 April 2012 notified the much awaited Cable Television Networks Rules, 2012, which paves the way for digitalisation of the sector. The I&B ministry has set 30 June 2012 as the date for digitalisation of the cable sector in the four metros. These cable rules would provide the framework on which the digitalised cable networks would provide services to the viewers.

As per the new rules, cable operators and multi-sector operators (MSOs) will now have to ensure that they have the capacity to carry minimum number of channels as specified by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI).

MSOs, under the new rules, will have to buy back set top boxes from subscribers in case they are leaving the area. A provision to surrender Set Top Box back has also been provided under the new rule.



50 Leaders from different Parties sworn in as member of Rajya Sabha

Fifty leaders from different political parties took the oath as the Rajya Sabha member on 24 April 2012. Leader of Opposition Arun Jaitley, BSP supremo Mayawati, Union ministers Vilasrao Deshmukh and Rajeev Shukla, Telugu superstar Chiranjeevi and actor Jaya Bachchan were among the leaders who took oath in Rajya Sabha.

The Rajya Sabha, which is also referred to as the Upper House of the Parliament, has at most 250 members, of which 238 are elected indirectly by the legislatures of each state and union territory. Seats are allotted in proportion to the population of each state or union territory. The other 12 members are nominated by the President of India.

Rajya Sabha passed Free and Compulsory Education (Amendment) Bill 2010

The Rajya Sabha, the upper house of Indian parliament, on 24 April 2012, passed the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Amendment) Bill 2010. The amendment seeks to provide the right to receive home-based education to children with severe disabilities. The amended bill gives school management committees an advisory role in minority schools, both aided and unaided, and keeps Madarsas and Vedic schools and other institutions providing primarily religious instruction out of the purview of the Act.

Do You Know?

Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Amendment) Bill 2010 is the first education bill to be passed in Parliament in two years. There are 13 pending education bills in Parliament.

SC dismissed Petition against Army Chief- Designate Lt-Gen Bikram Singh

The Supreme Court of India on 23 April 2012 dismissed a petition challenging the appointment of Lieutenant General Bikram Singh as the next Army Chief. Bikram Singh is slated to succeed General V.K. Singh as the army chief after the latter completes his tenure in the office on 31 May 2012. The apex court bench of Justice R M Lodha and Justice H L Gokhale, while dismissing the petition by Admiral Ramdas and six others, said: "We don't find any justifiable cause to invoke Article 32 of the Constitution. The written petition is accordingly dismissed."

In a petition filed on 4 April 2012, the army chief designate Singh was accused of being indulged in a fake encounter in the Kashmir Valley during a counter-insurgency operation. The PIL also accused Singh of inaction in the charges related to sexual harassment against Indian officers when he was heading a peacekeeping force in Congo.

SC upheld Election Commission's Poll Symbol Rules

Supreme Court of India on 18 April 2012 upheld Election commission's poll symbol rules. It entitled a political party the status of state party and common symbol for its candidates only if it secures not less than 6 percent of the total votes polled in a state and returns at least two members to the

assembly.

The court dismissed the petitions, which challenged the poll symbols order as discriminatory. The petitions had challenged the constitutional validity of Clause 6 B of Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order on the basis that although smaller political parties secured less than 6 percent votes, they were able to get two candidates elected to assembly.

Election commission of India amended the Election Symbols Order, 1968 in December 2000(inserting

clause 6 B) to set the benchmarks for a political party to get Election Commission's recognition as political party.

UC approved Bill seeking Amendment in Registration of Births and Deaths Act

The Union Cabinet on 12 April 2012 gave its approval to the introduction of a Bill seeking an amendment in the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969. The aim is to include registration of marriages as well, so that the existing administrative mechanisms will be able to carry out such registration of marriages in accordance with the specified procedures. It will also help to maintain necessary records and statistics for registration of marriages.

The Cabinet also approved introducing a Bill in Parliament to further amend the Anand Marriage Act, 1909 to provide for registration of marriages under the Act.



The proposed Bill is set to benefit the women from unnecessary harassment in matrimonial and maintenance cases. It also seeks to provide evidentiary value in the matters of custody of children, right of children born from the wedlock of the two persons whose marriage is registered and the age of the parties to the marriage.

Union Cabinet approved Public Procurement Bill

Union Cabinet on 12 April 2012 gave its nod to the Public Procurement Bill. The bill is aimed at bringing transparency in the bidding process for public procurement. The bill will regulate the government purchases of above 50 lakh rupees through a transparent bidding process.

At present there is no legislation exists governing public procurement by the central government and central public sector enterprises. The General Financial Rules, 2005, govern procurements made by the Centre.

The present bill provides for a jail term ranging from six months to five years for public servants found guilty of demanding and accepting bribes from bidders of government contracts. The legislation is largely based on the suggestions made

by Committee on Public Procurement headed by former bureaucrat Vinod Dhall which were accepted by a Group of Ministers headed by Pranab Mukherjee to tackle corruption on 22 February 2012.

Furnish Details of Mercy Petitions filed by Death Row Convicts: SC

The Supreme Court of India on 11 April 2012 directed seven states to furnish within 48 hours, details of mercy petitions filed by death row convicts pending with respective Governors. In case these states fail to do so, the Home Secretaries of the states concerned would have to appear before it. The states which reportedly failed to comply with the order are Punjab, Haryana, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Orissa and West Bengal.

A bench of Justices G S Singhvi and S J Mukhopadhyaya passed the direction. The court had passed earlier order in this regard which was brought to its notice by Additional Solicitor General Harin Raval.

Media should not Report on Movement of Troops: Allahabad HC

The Lucknow Bench of the Allahabad High Court on 10 April 2012 directed the Union government of India and the Uttar Pradesh government to ensure that there is no reporting on movement of troops by the print or electronic media. Acting on a PIL, a bench comprising justices Uma Nath Singh and Virendra Kumar Dixit ruled that the issue of movement of army troops does not require public discussion at the cost of defence secrecy and the security of the country.

The court, however, report by a national daily of 16 January 2012, the Supreme Court on the



dismissed the plea for a high-level probe into the alleging unusual movement of troops on the night day the Army Chief Gen VK Singh approached the issue of his date of Birth.

Economy

India's Growth Projection for 2012 lowered to 6.9% by IMF

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) on 27 April 2012 lowered India's growth projection to 6.9 per cent for 2012. The multilateral agency in January projected Indian economy to grow to by 7 per cent for 2012. The slashed growth projection is broadly attributed to the country's poor performance on the front of economic reforms and slowing investment.

The IMF's growth projection is an indication for the government to expedite the process of economic reforms which has long been victim of the country's internal political clutter. Many of the important reforms are still in the pipeline which needed to be approved as soon as possible. Government should make sure that it is taking adequate majors to boost up the sentiment of investors, who are increasingly getting disenchanted of the future prospects of Indian Economy.

Timeline for 2G Spectrum Auction extended till 31 August 2012

The Supreme Court of India on 24 April 2012 turned down the union government's plea to grant 400 days to complete fresh distribution of 2G spectrum licenses. The court, however, extended the deadline for the auction of licenses from 2 June 2012 to 31 August 2012 considering that technically it was not possible to analyse the auction by June 1. The court had on 2 February 2012 ruled that all the 122 licenses allocated to eight operators under the first come first serve policy in January 2008 during the A Raja regime be quashed early June and asked the government to recon duct the license distribution through an open bidding process.

A Supreme Court bench of Justices G S Singvhi and K S Radhakrishnan also held that existing licenses will remain operational till 7 September 2012. The bench maintained that its 2 February 2012 order cancelling 122 licenses allocated during the tenure of A Raja and would remain operational.

The bench was hearing the Union Government's application, seeking clarification of its direction in the 2 February 2012 judgement which had fixed 2 June 2012 as the deadline, when the 122 2G spectrum licenses, issued in 2008, would stand quashed.

The Union government had on 1 March 2012 moved the apex court stating it would impact over 69 million mobile users as the auction process for spectrum will take at least 400 days. The Centre had informed the court that the auction process has commenced but it would take around 400 days for it to be completed.

India registered Highest Ever Trade Deficit of \$184.9 billion in 2011-12

Commerce Secretary on 19 April 2012 announced that India surpassed the export target of \$300 billion for 2011-12. India was able to surpass the trade target of \$300 billion despite slowdown in demand in its traditional markets of the US and Europe. Exports increased by 21 per cent to \$303.7 billion in 2011-12 powered by a strong growth in petroleum, pharmaceuticals and engineering products.

However, imports surged by 32.1 per cent to \$488.6 billion thereby leaving the highest-ever trade deficit of \$184.9 billion. Other sectors which showed healthy performance with respect to export include drugs and

pharmaceuticals up 21.9 per cent at \$13.1 billion; leather (up 22.5 per cent) at \$4.2 billion; electronics (up 9.2 per cent) at \$9 billion; cotton yarn and fabric made-up (up 17.4 per cent) at \$7.2 billion, readymade garments yarns and fabrics (up 18 per cent) at \$13.7 billion and marine products (up 31.4 per cent) at \$3.4 billion.

Imports also registered a huge surge with petroleum, oil and lubricants moving up by a steep 46.9 per cent to \$155.6 billion largely due to increased prices in international markets. Imports of gold and silver jumped by 44.4 per cent to \$61.5 billion while that of coal surged by 80.3 per cent to \$17.6 billion.

Supreme Court dismissed the Review Petitions filed by Seven Telecom Companies

The Supreme Court of India on 4 April 2012 quashed the review petitions filed by seven telecom companies (Videocon Telecommunications, S Tel, Sistema Shyam Teleservices, Tata Teleservices, Unitech Wireless (Tamil Nadu), Etisalat DB Telecom and Idea Cellular), whose license was cancelled by the Supreme Court in its 2 February 2012 verdict.

The Supreme Court bench of Justices GS Singhvi and KS Radhakrishnan dismissed the petition as it found no merit in it. The Apex Court had voided all 122 2G licences allocated by A Raja in January 2009 on first come first serve policy. The court in its 2 February 2012 verdict had held the policy fundamentally flawed and unconstitutional. The court also dismissed the petition of A Raja, prime accused in the 2G spectrum scam. The Supreme Court, however, accepted the union government's petition to hear in open court the petition filed by the Union government seeking review of its ruling cancelling 122 licences for the 2G spectrum.

India's Exports grew by annual 4.2% in February 2012

India's exports grew by an annual 4.2% in February 2012 to USD 24.6 billion. The growth was the slowest in three months. The country is likely to miss the target of USD 300 billion for 2011-12 in the wake of difficult global environment. Export growth slipped to 44.25% in August 2011 from a peak of 82% in July. The export growth had stood at 36.36% in September, 10.8% in October and 3.8% in November 2011.

Exports showed some improvement when it grew by 6.7% in December 2011 and over 10% in January 2012. During the April-February period in 2011-12, exports aggregated to USD 267.4 billion, a year-on-year growth of 21.4% on account of the surge witnessed in the early months of 2011-12 fiscal. Imports on the other hand grew at a faster rate of 20.6% year-on-year to USD 39.7 billion in February 2012 resulting in a trade deficit of USD 15.1 billion. During the 11-month period (April 2011-February 2012), imports increased by 29.4% to USD 434.1 billion.

Jet Fuel Prices reduced by Rs 312 per kilolitre

State-owned oil companies for the second time in the month of April reduced jet fuel prices by a marginal Rs 312 per kilolitre or kl on 30 April 2012. The price of aviation turbine fuel (ATF), or jet fuel, in the reduction was announced in the wake of a Rs 169.3 per kl cut in rates effected from 16 April 2012.

The reductions are however overshadowed by the steep increases effected in March and early April 2012. ATF rates were increased by 3.2 per cent on 1 March 2012, Rs 1298.88 per kl on 16 March 2012 and by another 2.8 per cent on 1 April

2012. Prior to being increased thrice in the months of March and April, jet fuel was priced at Rs 62,557.12 per kl.



Delhi was reduced by Rs 311.74 per kl, or 0.46 per cent, to Rs 67319.71. In Mumbai, jet fuel is to cost Rs 68,306.21 per kl as against Rs 68630.93 per kl now. Jet fuel constitutes over 40 per cent of an airline's operating cost and the marginal reduction in prices introduced on 30 April 2012 is expected to take the burden off the cash-strapped airlines. The three fuel retailers — IOC, Hindustan Petroleum and Bharat Petroleum revise jet fuel prices on the 1st and 16th of every month, based on the average international price in the preceding fortnight.

SP's cut India's Credit Rating Outlook to Negative

Standard & Poor's downgraded credit rating outlook for India to negative from stable on 25 April 2012. The cut in credit rating is the reflection of India's widening fiscal and current account deficits. The negative outlook jeopardises India's long-term rating of BBB-, the lowest investment grade rating, and sent Indian bonds, stocks and the rupee lower.

India has no sovereign global bond issues, but a downgrade would increase borrowing costs for local companies and make it harder to refinance debt, and may have a further chilling effect on foreign investor confidence in the country in general. India's fiscal deficit widened to 5.9% of gross domestic product in the fiscal year 2011-12, starkly higher than the government's target of 4.6%. The country is performing equally bad on the front of foreign institutional investment as it witnessed a sharp decline in the FII over the past few months. India has drawn nearly 171.8 million dollar FII so far in April 2012 against more than 5 billion dollar in February 2012.

The credit rating downgrading indicates that the government will now have to contemplate seriously over the long-pending economic reforms and push them through as soon as possible.

RBI directed Banks to Print MICR and IFSC Code on Passbook

Apex Indian bank, the Reserve Bank of India on 21 April 2012 directed all commercial banks to print the MICR (Magnetic Ink Character Recognition) and IFSC (Indian Financial System Code) code on the passbook and statement of account of the customers. The bank made the printing of MICR and IFSC code compulsory for all the banks.

The banks, under their current practice, provide MICR code on the cheque leaf along with the IFSC code of the branch. Under the RBI guidelines, MICR code is mandatory for all electronic clearing services (credit and debit) transactions. IFSC code is a pre-requisite for national electronic funds transfer (NEFT) and real time gross settlement (RTGS) transactions.

MICR (Magnetic Ink Character Recognition) and IFSC (Indian Financial System Code)

Govt approved 22 FDI Proposals worth Rs.586.137 crore

The Union government on 20 April 2012 approved 22 foreign direct investment (FDI) proposals, amounting to Rs.586.137 crore (\$112.5 million). The proposals were cleared following recommendations made by the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) at its meeting on 30 March 2012.

The government cleared Shantha Biotechnics' proposal of Rs.514 crore to increase its foreign equity in Brownfield pharmaceutical sector in order to carry out the activities of research, development, manufacturing and marketing of bio-tech products and other bio-generics.

It also cleared Mahindra and Mahindra's Rs.25.99-crore proposal for setting up a joint venture company to develop, manufacture and provide service support for radar systems and various kinds of defence electronic systems. The government also allowed Springer Editorial Services' Rs 12.87-crore proposal to increase foreign equity up to 100 per cent.

TRAI approved Increase in Processing Fee for Mobile Recharge Coupons

Telecom regulator TRAI on 19 April 2012 approved increase in processing fee for all mobile recharge coupons (top-up vouchers) priced above Rs 20. The government however left the processing fee unchanged for the vouchers below Rs 20. The processing fee is included within the MRP of recharge coupon purchased. The regulator cleared the increase of 50 per cent in the charge through an amendment made to the Telecom Tariff Order (TTO).



It directed all telecom service providers to provide consumers with at least one top up voucher priced at Rs 10 when it noticed that top up vouchers priced below Rs 20 are not available with some service providers. The order was issued after telecom industry body COAI and AUSPI made written submission to the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India arguing that there have been inflationary pressures over the last three years ever since the ceiling of Rs 2 was prescribed by TRAI. It was also pointed out that COAI that the rising cost of providing services by way of hike in salaries and wages, increased transportation and diesel cost and so in support of raising the fee.

Union Government decided on 1 million Caps on ECB for Aviation Sector

The Union government on 19 April 2012 permitted companies engaged in the aviation sector to raise working capital resources through the external commercial borrowings (ECBs) route to the tune of \$1 billion. The limit for individual airline companies was set at \$300 million. This limit can be availed themselves of either in a lump sum or in tranches, depending on the utilisation of the limit during the one year when the facility is available. So far airlines were allowed to raise foreign capital only for import of capital equipment such as aircraft.

To increase access to ECBs, the RBI is likely to relax the average maturity period for ECBs above \$20 million from five to three years. The RBI is also expected to notify within a week guidelines for the proposal, which was part of the budget 2012-13. ECBs, a financial instrument used by the government to facilitate the access to foreign funds by Indian corporations and public sector undertakings totalled \$35.90 billion in 2011-12. They are easier and more attractive way to raise the loan than domestic borrowings. The government also allowed the airlines to directly import jet fuel as actual end users thereby enabling them to escape the state value added tax (VAT), which ranges from three to 33 percent.

Retail inflation shot up to 9.47% in March 2012

As per the government data released on 18 April 2012, retail inflation shot up to 9.47% in March 2012 because of higher prices of milk, vegetables, protein-based items and edible oil products. Retail inflation, based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) had recorded 8.83% in February 2012. The All-India CPI is prepared in addition to the three retail price indices for agricultural labourers, rural labourers and industrial workers prepared by the Ministry of Labour.

However inflation based on Wholesale Price Index showed only a marginal decline to 6.89% in March 2012. Wholesale price index (WPI)-based inflation fell to 6.89 per cent in March from 6.95 per cent in February 2012.

As per the index food inflation rose to a five-month high of 9.94 per cent, compared with 6.07 per cent in February 2012 and deflation in January 2012. Given that the food basket has more weight in the CPI than in the WPI, overall inflation numbers showed a rise in the case of the retail price index.

ECB Norms for Power Sector liberalised

The Union government on 18 April 2012 decided to liberalise the external commercial borrowing (ECB) norms for the power sector. The announcement was made in tune with the announcement made in this respect by the Finance Minister, Pranab Mukherjee while presenting the Union budget 2012-13. Power sector companies will now be able to use up to 40 per cent of ECB loans to refinance their rupee debt, provided the remaining 60% balance is utilised for investments in new projects. So far, power companies were permitted to use only 25 per cent of the ECB to refinance their domestic rupee-debt loan.



ECB, which totalled \$35.9 billion in 2011-12, are considered attractive as cost of raising the loan is lower than that of domestic borrowings. The proportion of ECBs having maturity between 5 to 7 years went up from about 47 per cent in 2007-08 to almost 70 per cent in 2010-11. ECBs for infrastructure sector moved up from 15.2 per cent in 2007-08 to 42.3 per cent in 2010-11.

RBI instructed Commercial Banks to reduce their Exposure to Gold Loan Companies to 7.5%

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on 17 April 2012 instructed commercial banks to reduce their exposure to gold loan companies to 7.5% of their capital funds from the existing 10%. The directive will impact the gold loan companies such as Muthoot Finance and Manappuram Finance as they will receive less funding. The central bank also set up a working group to suggest ways to deal with the issue.

Banks were directed to reduce their regulatory exposure ceiling in a single NBCFC, having gold loans to the extent of 50% or more of its total financial assets, from the existing 10% to 7.5% of bank's capital funds. The direction was given in the back of a situation when gold loans were growing rapidly and there was a concentration risk.

Banks barred from charging Prepayment Penalty on Floating Rate Home Loans

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on 17 April 2012 banned banks from charging a prepayment penalty on floating rate home loans. Banks were barred from charging any fee from a customer who wants to repay an outstanding loan and close the account.

Housing finance regulator National Housing Bank (NHB) had previously barred home finance companies from charging any prepayment penalty. Among banks, State Bank of India was the first to do away with the prepayment fee on both fixed and floating rate loans. Taking cue nearly 20 banks withdrew the penalty on floating rate loans. However, most lenders continue to charge the penalty on premature closure of fixed rate loans.

RBI also directed banks to minimise the wide variation in rates offered to retail and bulk depositors on deposits with very little difference in maturities. It also mandated that banks offer a basic savings and deposit account to all their customers. These accounts should have some minimum common facilities and not prescribe a minimum balance.

Reserve Bank of India cut the Repo Rate by 50 Basis Points

Reserve Bank of India, the apex Indian Bank, on 17 April 2012, cut the key policy rates for the first time in the past three years. While the repo rate (the rate at which the RBI lends money to banks) was cut down by 50 basis points from 8.50 per cent to 8.00 per cent, the reverse repo rate (normally fixed at a spread of 100 basis points below the repo rate) was reduced to 7.0 per cent.



The marginal standing facility rate, which has a spread of 100 basis points above the repo rate, now stands at 9.0 per cent. The RBI's move to cut down key policy rates came in the wake of slumping growth which was reduced to 6.1 per cent in the third quarter of fiscal year 2011-12. Headline WPI inflation had moderated to below 7 per cent by end March although there are fears that it will flare up again. The RBI has, therefore, played it safe by projecting an inflation target of 6.5 per cent by March 2013. Its GDP projection for this year is 7.3 per cent.

FDI Inflows into India's Services Sector up by 62% in April-January 2011-12

Foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows into the services sector in India went up by 62% during April-January period 2011-12 on account of unfavourable economic conditions of the western markets. The financial and nonfinancial services sector attracted FDI worth \$4.83 billion during the 10-month period of 2011-12 as compared to \$2.98 billion in the April-January period of 2010-11. The trend reflected confidence in India's growth story. It was observed that though the economic growth in India itself declined in 2011-12 to 6.9%, the economy was among the best performing in the world.

Despite taxation and policy issues, the country enjoys the investor confidence as is evident from a 53 per cent increase in total FDI inflows to \$26.19 billion during the 10-month period (April-January 2011-12). The sectors that attracted sizeable FDI inflows include drugs and pharmaceutical (\$3.20 billion), construction (\$2.23 billion), telecommunications (\$1.99 billion) and power (\$1.56 billion).

Union Cabinet approved a Proposal to set up SPV for GSTN

The Union Cabinet on 12 April 2012 approved a proposal to set up a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) for Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN) to help facilitate the smooth introduction of the new indirect tax regime. GSTN SPV is to be incorporated as Section 25 not-for-profit private limited company in which strategic control would be held by the Centre. It will provide IT infrastructure and services to various stakeholders including the Centre and states.

The SPV will have an equity capital of Rs 10 crore, with both the Centre and states having stakes of 24.5 per cent each. Non government institutions would hold 51 per cent equity.

Union Cabinet approved Extension of Funding for Swavalamban Scheme

The Union Cabinet on 12 April 2012 approved the extension of funding support for implementing the Swavalamban Scheme under the New Pension

System (NPS) from three years to five years for all subscribers enrolled during 2010-11, 2011-12 and 2012-13.

The exit norms of the scheme were also relaxed to enable subscribers under Swavalamban to exit at

age 50 instead of 60, or a minimum tenure of 20 years, whichever is later. The Cabinet decided to provide an additional funding support of Rs 2065 crore to the scheme till 2016-17. The cabinet's decision will benefit 70 lakh workers in the unorganised sector.

Cabinet approved Public Procurement Bill

The Union Cabinet on 12 April 2012 approved Public Procurement Bill, 2012 which aims at regulating public procurement of above Rs 50 lakh and provides fair treatment to bidders. The move is aimed at bringing transparency in State purchases.

Public Procurement Bill, 2012 aims at regulating public procurement by all ministries and departments of the Union government, Central public sector enterprises (CPSEs), autonomous and statutory bodies controlled by the Centre and other procuring entities. The Bill also proposes absence of price negotiations, except in circumstances that are prescribed, and for which reasons are to be recorded.

FII's permitted to invest 23% in Indian Commodity Exchanges without Government Approval

The updated Consolidated Foreign Direct Investment Policy Document released by the Commerce and Industry Ministry on 10 April 2012. The updated Consolidated Foreign Direct Investment Policy Document' changed the norms for both non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) and foreign institutional investors (FIIs). The ministry through the document declared that foreign institutional investors (FIIs) can invest up to 23 percent in Indian commodity exchanges without government approval. The updated Consolidated Foreign Direct Investment Policy Document also stated that import of second-hand capital goods will become tougher.

Composite foreign investment cap of 49 per cent (FDI limit of 26 per cent and FII ceiling of 23 per cent) in commodity exchanges which requires Government/Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) approval exists currently. However following the upgradation of Consolidated Foreign Direct Investment Policy Document, FIPB nod will be required only for the FDI component, not for FII investment.

ADB projected Moderate Increase in India's GDP to 7% in 2012-13

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) in its flagship annual publication Asian Development Outlook (ADO) released on 11 April 2012 projected moderate increase in growth rate for India to 7 percent in 2012-13. The ADB stated that strong economic performance would depend on the country's ability to push reforms agenda and address issues constraining investments. The government however estimated a growth rate of 7.6 per cent for 2012-13 fiscal.

CCEA approved Rs 30000 crore Bailout for Air India

The Union government on 12 April 2012 approved Rs 30000 crore bailout for Air India. It was decided that Rs 6750 crore would be infused immediately to meet the airline's working capital requirement and the total of bailout amount would be spread out over a period of 9 years. The Rs 30000 crore bailout package was approved in addition to the equity infusion of Rs 3200 crore already in place.

The government also decided on other issues with an objective of pulling out ailing Air India from its debt burden and enabling it to turn into a profit making venture.

The decisions of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) decided to hive off the engineering services and ground handling business, and go ahead with the induction of 27 new Boeing 787 Dreamliners.

Moderation in the growth of non-oil imports in 2012-13 and improved economic prospects in the advanced countries in 2013-14 is likely to help the current account deficit to improve to 3.3% in 2012-13 and further to 3% in 2013-14. ADB mentioned in its publication that number of bills and measures to improve India's investment environment introduced in Parliament are making little progress amidst in the back of insufficient consensus for immediate reforms. However the ADB mentioned the recent rise in the pace of road construction and clearances for power projects was a positive signal and would likely mark increase levels of investment.



Reporting Requirements of the Banks to Monitor Gold Import tightened

The Reserve Bank of India on 3 April 2012 tightened the reporting requirements of the banks. As per the directions issued, banks will have to submit a monthly statement informing the central bank about the quantity of gold imported and mode of payment adopted. The statement is to be filed with the foreign exchange department of the RBI and has to be submitted at the end of March and September.

The directive was issued amidst concerns of huge outflow of foreign exchange on import of gold which is believed to be putting pressure on the India's current account deficit (CAD). Banks were directed to file a half yearly statement on quantity and value of gold imported by nominated banks, agencies, export-oriented units (EOUs) and special economic zone (SEZs) in gem & jewellery sector, as well as mode of payment. Also they have to file monthly statement on the quantity and value of gold imports by the nominated agencies (other than the nominated banks), EOUs, SEZs as well as the cumulative position at the end of the reporting month. Earlier, banks were only required to submit a monthly statement on the number of transactions and value of gold imported by EOUs, units in SEZ/export processing zone and nominated agencies/banks. India is the world's largest importer and consumer of the precious metal.

RBI released September 2011 Quarterly Statistics on Deposits & Credit

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on 3 April 2012 released 'Quarterly Statistics on Deposits and Credit of Scheduled Commercial Banks, September 2011'. The release included data related to deposits and credit of scheduled commercial banks including regional rural banks (RRBs) as on 30 September 2011. The data included in the release were based on Basic Statistical Return (BSR)-7 received from all scheduled commercial banks (including RRBs).

Highlights of RBI's Quarterly Statistics on Deposits and Credit of Scheduled Commercial Banks

Number of banked centres

- The number of banked centres of Scheduled Commercial banks stood at 35,435. 27,913 of these centres were single office centres and 68 centres had 100 or more bank offices.

Deposits and Credit of top 100/200 centres

- The top hundred centres, arranged according to the size of deposits accounted for 69.6 per cent of the total deposits. Whereas the top hundred centres arranged according to the size of bank credit accounted for 78.5 per cent of total bank credit.
- In September 2010, the corresponding shares of top hundred centres in aggregate deposits and gross bank credit had stood at 68.8 per cent and 78.0 per cent.
- Aggregate deposits of top hundred centres increased by 23.5 per cent in September 2011 over September 2010.
- Annual growth rate of gross bank credit of top hundred centres at 24.3 per cent in September 2011 was higher than the 19.7% growth recorded in September 2010.
- The top 200 centres in terms of aggregate deposits covered 32.4 per cent of reporting offices and 74.5 per cent of aggregate deposits.

Uttar Pradesh Government scrapped the Post of Cabinet Secretary

The Uttar Pradesh government on 27 April 2012 decided to scrap the post of cabinet secretary of the state. The cabinet also decided to withdraw a proposed amendment Bill meant to give immunity to panchayat heads from no-confidence motion for two years. The decision to withdraw 'kshetra panchayat and district panchayat amendment Bill', 2011 was taken in a cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav.

The previous Mayavati government had created the post of cabinet secretary in the state in 2007. From now on, Chief Secretary of the state will also be the secretary of cabinet. In another move the state cabinet also decided to rename Manyawar Sri Kanshiram Forest, Environment conversation award scheme in the name of Veer Abdul Hameed award.

Airport Economic Regulatory Authority approved Hike for Delhi Airport Charges

The Airport Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA) on 24 April 2012 permitted GMR promoted DIAL (Delhi International Airport Limited) to increase airport charges for Delhi Airport by 345 per cent for next two years. The authority also approved the DIAL's demand to levy a user development fee (UDF) on all passengers including, for the first time, those who arrive at the airport.

Under the revised charges set to be effective from 15 May 2012, the passengers will have to shell out at least 1153 rupees just on account of the newly-introduced UDF and existing development fee for a Delhi-Mumbai round trip, and 3849 rupees on a Delhi-London return trip. This will be over and above the 10-15 per cent increase in fares that airlines are likely to effect to pass on the burden of airport charges — parking, landing and navigation — that too have been hiked.

The authority approved a 148 per cent hike in airport charges for 2012-13 and 334.36 per cent for 2013-14. It also approved a 16 per cent return on equity. The latest hike in the airport charges, have made Delhi Airport the most expensive airport in the world.

Delhi Government increased the Minimum Wages of Workers

The Delhi Government on 24 April 2012 increased the minimum wages of unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled workers in Delhi. While, the monthly minimum wages of unskilled workers was hiked from 6656 rupees to 7020 rupees, the wages for semi-skilled labour was revised upwards from 7358 to 7748 rupees. In the case of skilled labour the wage was increased from 8112 rupees to 8528 rupees.

The wages of clerical and non-technical supervisory staff in all scheduled employments was also revised upwards as, the minimum wages of non-matriculates was increased from 7358 rupees to 7748 rupees, in respect of matriculates but not graduates from 8112 rupees to 8528 rupees and in respect of graduates and above from 8814 rupees to 9282 rupees.

Last time the wage was revised in October 2011. The Delhi government increased the minimum wages after adjustment of the average consumer price index number on half yearly basis and adding the dearness allowances in to it.

Sikkim won the Best State Award for Strengthening the Panchayati Raj Institutions

Sikkim, on 24 April 2012, won the best state award for strengthening its panchayati raj institutions. The north-eastern state bagged the five prestigious national awards worth of 1.36 crore rupees, at a Panchayat Raj Day function held at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi. Union rural development minister Jairam Ramesh and Union minister of panchayati raj and tribal development V Kishore Chandra Deo presented the 2011-12 *Panchayat Empowerment & Accountability Incentive Scheme* (PEAIS) award to Sikkim's rural management and development minister CB Karki.

The Panchayat Empowerment & Accountability Incentive Scheme (PEAIS) is a Central Sector Plan Scheme which is being implemented by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj since 2005-06. The scheme had an allocation of 5 crore for 2005-06, which was raised to 10 crore rupees for the subsequent years.

Planning Commission approved Rs. 48935 Crore for Andhra Pradesh for 2012-13

The Planning Commission on 18 April 2012 approved a total plan outlay of 48935 crore rupees for Andhra Pradesh for the year 2012-13. The total outlay for the state for the current year witnessed an increase of 13.8 per cent against the previous figure of 43000 crore rupees in the fiscal year 2011-12. In percentage terms the agriculture and allied sector in the state had declined from 25.07 per cent in 2004-05 to 19.22 per cent in 2011-12. The share of secondary sector remains around 24- 26 per cent from 2004-05 to 2011-12.

Planning Commission approved the 14010 Crore Rupees Annual Plan Outlay for Kerala

The Planning Commission on 20 April 2012 approved the 14010 crore rupees annual plan outlay for Kerala. The plan panel outlay was approved at a meeting between Planning Commission Deputy Chairman Montek Singh Ahluwalia and Kerala Chief Minister Oommen Chandy.

The services sector accounted for 69.7 per cent of the Kerala's GDP, followed by industry sector 20.5 per cent and agriculture sector 9.8 per cent in 2011-12 .The total plan outlay will witness a substantial increase in the spending for social sector, including education and public healthcare.

Adarsh Judicial Commission: Land belonged to Government not the Army

The Judicial Commission set up by the Maharashtra government to probe into the Adarsh Housing Society scam, on 17 April 2012 held that the land on which the Adarsh building was constructed, belonged to the state government and not the Army. An interim report was prepared by the two-member Commission, was tabled and distributed in the Assembly.

The interim report of the judicial commission probing the Adarsh Society Scam said that the land was not reserved for war heroes and Kargil widows. The interim report held that the ministry of defence failed to establish their claim of title to the Adarsh Society land and the claim of government of Maharashtra stands established.

Adarsh Judicial Commission was set up by the Government under N N Kumbhar in January 2011 after the scam surfaced.

BJP won All Three Municipal Corporation Elections in Delhi

The BJP on 17 April 2012 claimed all the three new civic bodies carved out of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD). The party bagged 138 of the 272 wards while the Congress was voted to victory in 78 wards. This was the first municipal election after the MCD was divided.

In the 2007 elections to an undivided MCD, the BJP had won 144 wards against the Congress' 59 and the BSP's 12. Elections for all three corporation viz. East, South and North - were held on 15 April 2012. A total of 55% electorates turned out to vote in their respective wards. There are 104 wards each in the South and North corporations and 64 in the East. 138 seats out of total 276 seats were reserved for women. A total of 904 candidates contested the election from the south followed by North 885 and East 634.

The Congress' alleged indulgence in the cases of graft and the skyrocketing food prices have played a crucial role in people of Delhi deciding to vote BJP back at the helm of municipal corporations of Delhi. The MCD was trifurcated following the approval of a bill by the Delhi state cabinet on 7 April 2011. Professor Rajni Abbi is the current mayor of Delhi.

Himachal Pradesh celebrated 65 Years of its Foundation

Himachal Pradesh, the northern hilly state, completed 65 years of its foundation on 15 April 2012. Various Cultural programmes were held across the State to celebrate the 65th foundation day of the state. Himachal Pradesh came into being on 15 May 1948, when 31 former princely states and hill areas of the state of Punjab were amalgamated into it on 1 November 1966 and it attained Statehood on 25 January 1971.

Chief Minister of the state Prem Kumar Dhumal on the occasion announced to increase the cash prize under Parshuram award from 20000 to 50000 rupees. The minister also announced 10 lakh rupees cash reward for Priyanka, a member of the Indian Kabaddi team which recently won the World Kabbadi Championship.

Odisha Government decided to release 15 Members of Chasi Mulia Adivasi Sangh

The Odisha government on 4 April 2012 decided to release eight Left wing extremists and 15 members of the Chasi Mulia Adivasi Sangh for freeing Jhina Hikaka, BJD MLA and an Italian named Paolo Bosusco. The

Kerala imposed 10 Per Cent Power Cut on Industrial Consumers

The Kerala government on 4 April 2012 decided to impose a 10 per cent power cut on industrial consumers. A formal endorsement of its plea in this regard was conveyed to Kerala State Electricity Board by the State Electricity Regulatory Commission on 4 April 2012. But the prevailing cyclical 30-minute load-shedding during the evening hours would not be allowed to continue beyond 31 May 2012.

The Kerala State Electricity Board had requested that the schedule should last until June end.

members of the Chasi Moolya Adivasi Sangh and left wing extremists are now lodged in the jails of Koraput and Malkangiri districts. Hikaka was kidnapped by Maoists in Koraput district on 24 March 2012, Paolo Bosusco was abducted along with another Italian Claudio Colangelo while they were trekking in tribal Kandhamal district on 14 March 2012.

Supreme Court quashed the Cap on Rickshaws plying in Delhi

The Supreme Court of India on 3 April 2012, upheld the Delhi High Court ruling of quashing a cap on number of rickshaws plying in Delhi. The apex court's bench of Justices G S Singhvi and S J Mukhopadhaya in its ruling held that when there is no cap on number of motorised vehicles, equally there can be no cap on number of rickshaws plying in the city.

Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) had constricted the number of rickshaws plying in Delhi at 89000 and refused to give fresh licences. The MCD's move deemed the remaining 4.91 lakh rickshaw pullers as potential violators of law resulting in fine ranging from 5 rupees to 50 rupees a day.

The Supreme Court called the MCD move an attempt to elbow out the poor and make room for the rich man's car. The court pointedly asked if the Government would impound the licence of a drunken driver who mows down people and put him behind bars instead of depriving a poor man of his legitimate livelihood.

Tamil Nadu Government announced to Subsidize Power Tariff Increase

Tamil Nadu government on 3 April 2012 announced to subsidise part of power tariff increase for domestic consumers. The present step taken by the government will benefit 1.5 crore families. The state government announced an additional subsidy of 740 crore rupees to the Tamil Nadu Electricity Board taking the total subsidy allocation for the department in 2012 to 4294.16 crore rupees.

The domestic consumers consuming 100 units for two months will have to pay one rupee per unit as against 1.10 rupees announced in the revision.

ADB approved 43.84 Million Dollar Loan to promote Tourism in Tamil Nadu and Uttarakhand

The Union Government of India, Asian Development Bank, and State Governments of Tamil Nadu and Uttarakhand on 2 April 2012 inked a 43.84 million dollar loan agreement objected at promoting tourism in the states.

The loan, which is part of the 250 million dollar multi-tranche financial aid signed in 2010, aims at enhancing tourism infrastructure in Tamil Nadu and Uttarakhand so that the number of national and international tourists visiting the states receives a hike.

Punjab and Himachal Pradesh have already received 43.42 million dollar, as the first tranche. The loan agreement was signed by Venu Rajamony, Joint Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Narhari Rao, ADB, Deputy Country Director of India, VK Jeyakodi, Principal Secretary, Tourism and Culture Department, Tamil Nadu and S.S. Sandhu, Secretary, Tourism Department, Uttarakhand.

Corporate

ICICI Bank and P&B slashed Lending Rates by 25 Basis Points

Largest private sector lender ICICI Bank and Punjab National Bank (PNB) the second largest public sector bank on 19 April 2012 reduced lending rates by lowering their benchmark rates by 25 basis points. On 18 April 2012, the state owned IDBI bank had also cut down its lending and deposit rates by 25 basis points

The bank's move came in the backdrop of the RBI's decision to cut down the key policy rates. The RBI on 17 April 2012 had slashed the repo rate and reverse repo rate by 50 basis points.

James Murdoch stepped down as Chairman of British Sky Broadcasting

James Murdoch on 3 April 2012 resigned as the Chairman of satellite broadcaster British Sky Broadcasting, BSkyB. Murdoch was forced to step down given his alleged role in phone hacking at now closed The News of the World newspaper.

James Murdoch, the younger son of Rupert Murdoch, the founder of News Corporation will however continue as a non-executive director.

Chairman by a current director of the group Nicholas Ferguson.

Murdoch's role in the alleged phone hacking by The News of the World newspaper has been under scrutiny ever since the scandal broke out last year. Murdoch had stepped down as Chairman of News International, on 29 February 2012.

S Narsing Rao took over as Chairman of CIL

S Narsing Rao, former chairman of Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL), assumed charge as the Chairman and Managing Director of Coal India Limited (CIL) on 24 April 2012.

53-year-old Rao is a 1986-batch Indian Administrative Service Officer. He is the first non-CIL nominee to assume the top post of the company since July 1983. Rao was slated to assume the top-notch position after the Union Cabinet had approved his appointment for a five-year term on 3 April 2012.

The retirement of Partha S Bhattacharyya in February 2011 had left the CIL without any full time head for nearly 14 months. The period, however, saw NC Jha and Zohra Chatterjee taking over as the part-time CMD of the company.

Vodafone acquired Cable & Wireless Worldwide



Vodafone on 23 April 2012 acquired communication service provider Cable & Wireless Worldwide (CWW) in a deal just over 1 billion pound.

The deal is aimed at strengthening Vodafone's enterprise and international services, and will let the mobile operator offload increasing mobile traffic onto the Cable & Wireless Worldwide (CWW) fibre network in the UK.

South Korean Woori Bank opened Maiden Indian Branch in Chennai

South Korean lender Woori Bank on 18 April 2012 opened its maiden Indian branch in Chennai. The Seoul based bank slated Chennai as the first city to launch their operation in India given the fact that the southern metro city is home to more than 170 Korean companies, including big names such as Hyundai Motors, Lotte and Samsung.

The bank as per its strategy will first provide banking assistance to Korean companies located in Chennai and subsequently it will start focusing on local business, keeping in mind the needs of the India companies and customers. Woori Bank, the South African government –owned bank with the opening of its first branch in India aims at tapping the growing economic opportunities in India.

Maruti Suzuki India unveiled Multi Purpose Vehicle Ertiga

Maruti Suzuki India, country's largest car manufacturer on 12 April 2012 launched its compact multi purpose vehicle Ertiga at introductory price of up to 8.45 lakh rupees. The car launched in both petrol and diesel variants- is priced between 5.89 lakh and 8.45 lakh rupees. The petrol variant is priced between 5.89 lakh and 7.30 lakh rupees, while the diesel option will cost between 7.30 lakh and 8.45 lakh rupees.

While the petrol variant comes with a 1.4 litre engine, the diesel one provides for a 1.3 litre powertrain. The petrol variant, as per the company's statement, delivers a fuel economy of 16.02 kmpl and the diesel one gives 20.77 kmpl. With the launch of Ertiga the company looks to tap the fast growing utility vehicles segment in the country.



Trafigura picked up 24% Equity in Nagarjuna Oil

Trafigura Pvt. Ltd. picked up 24 percent equity in Nagarjuna Oil Corporation Ltd (NOCL) by investing around 650 crore rupees. Trafigura is a commodity trader in the global sphere.

NOCL is carrying out six million tone oil refinery project at Cuddalore in Tamil Nadu. The total estimate of the project is 7610 crore rupees. Trafigura has also planned to invest 600 crore rupees into the construction of storage facilities. This will be done through another joint venture between Trafigura and NOCL called Portoil Ltd.

Serco launched New Global Business Process Outsourcing Division

Serco, the international service company, on 12 April 2012, announced the launch of its new global business process outsourcing (BPO) division, Global Services. Serco had acquired Indian BPO Company Intelenet Global Services for 385 million pounds (around 2770 crore rupees) in 2011. The new division is one of four business divisions within Serco and is an amalgamation of the companies that deliver business process services globally within Serco, including Intelenet Global Services in India, The Listening Company in the UK and Excelior in Australia.

Audi signed Indian Motorsport Driver Aditya Patel for 3 Years

German luxury car manufacturer Audi on 13 April 2012 signed a 3 year contract with promising young motorsport driver Aditya Patel. Aditya was signed up by Audi for a team called Pro-Handicap e.V., in the challenging VLN endurance series in Germany. The series will provide Aditya with a much needed international exposure.



Aditya Patel began his motorsports career at 14 with the JK Tyre National Racing Championship in 2001. Consistent performance and dedicated support from long term sponsors like JK Tyre, MAS Holdings and Petra Energy saw him rise through the ranks and later into more advanced formats such as the VW Polo R Cup and the VW Scirocco R Cup in Germany, where he finished 5th overall, in 2011.

BSES Yamuna Power Limited (BYPL) won British Safety Award

BSES Yamuna Power limited (BPYL) won the prestigious 54th British International Safety Award. BYPL has been selected for this award given the steps taken by it for the safety of its over 11 lakh consumers and safety and health of its employees. The list of award winners was announced in London in the last week of March 2012. The award will be presented in May 2012. BPYL is the first Indian discom to be selected for this award.

BPYL distributes power to an area spread over 200 sq kms with a population density of 5953 per sq km. Its 11.9lakh customers are spread over 14 districts across Central and East areas of Delhi.

ONGC signed MoU with US Oil Major ConocoPhillips

State-owned ONGC (Oil and Natural Gas Corporation) on 5 April 2012 signed a memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the US oil major ConocoPhillips to conduct a joint study of shale gas potential in all domestic basins, as well as some global ones owned by ConocoPhillips. The MoU will increase the cooperation between two companies in the areas of gas exploration in India, USA and elsewhere in the world.

Do You Know?

ConocoPhillips is a major player in shale gas as well as deep-water exploration. The production at ONGC Videsh Ltd. is decreasing because of political situation in Syria and Sudan.

Star TV won the Broadcasting Rights of Indian Cricket Team

Star TV on 2 April 2012 won the rights to broadcast Indian cricket for next six years in a bid to the tune of 3851 crore rupees. Rupert Murdoch owned Star TV won the bid defeating Sony which had offered 150 crore rupees less than the winning bid.

The rights include TV, Internet and Mobile broadcasting. The agreement will remain effective for a period of six years starting from from July 2012 to March 2018. The agreement gives Star TV rights to cover all home international matches and domestic tournaments involving Indian Cricket team. The right will not be applicable for the Indian Premier League (IPL). Star TV will pay around 40 crore rupees for each international match, which is 8 crore more than what was being paid by previous broadcaster Nimbus.

The bid for the broadcasting rights was necessitated as the BCCI had abruptly terminated its broadcasting agreement with Nimbus in December 2011, three years before it was due to expires, over the issues related to payment.

Star Group ended Joint Venture with Indian Television

Rupert Murdoch led Star Group on 16 April 2012 decided to put an end over its joint venture with its Indian television news channel partner. The company cited the split on regulatory headaches as the reason behind the decision. Star's logo will stop to be broadcast on the three news channels run under the joint venture within four months.

The company held 26 percent stake in the joint venture with local partner the Ananda Bazaar Patrika Group. The JV came into being in 2003. In Media Content & Communications Services the maximum permissible level of investment under Indian regulations is 26 per cent.



Cyrus Mistry and OP Bhatt joined the Board of Directors of TCS

Tata Sons deputy chairman Cyrus Mistry and former SBI group chairman OP Bhatt joined the board of directors of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) on 1 April 2012. The TCS board now has 14 directors, which comprises seven independent directors.

Mistry was on 24 November 2011 appointed the Deputy Chairman and chairman designate of Tata Sons and all set to take over from Ratan Tata after his scheduled retirement in December 2012. Bhatt, a banking heavy-weight is well known for his stint as Chairman of the State Bank group between July 2006 and March 2011.

Union Bank of India appointed D Sarkar as Chairman & Managing Director

Public Sector Lender, Union Bank of India, on 1 April 2012 appointed D. Sarkar as its Chairman and Managing Director (CMD). The appointment is in effect from 1 April 2012. Sarkar replaced MV Nair, who was holding the top post of the bank over the past six years six years.

Prior to his appointment as the CMD of Union Bank of India, Sarkar was Executive Director of the Kolkata-based Allahabad Bank. He started his career with Bank of Baroda in 1982.



Jagran Prakashan acquired Hindi National Daily Nai Dunia

Jagran Prakashan Limited (JPL), the publisher of the India's largest read daily Dainik Jagran, on 2 April 2012 bought Suvi Info Management (Indore) Private Limited, the company that under its subsidiary Nai Dunia Media Limited publishes Hindi daily Nai Dunia in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.

Nai Dunia, which has a daily circulation of around 500000 copies, publishes several editions from Indore, Gwalior, Jabalpur and Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh and Raipur and Bilaspur in Chhattisgarh. Jagran Prakashan Limited had acquired English daily Mid Day in 2010 in a 175 crore rupees deal. The new acquisition will enable the company to grow inorganically through mergers and acquisitions.



Sports

China's Xiao Jia Chen defeated Saina Nehwal in the Asian Badminton Championship

China's Xiao Jia Chen defeated ace Indian shuttler Saina Nehwal in the second round of the Asian Badminton Championship on 20 April 2012. The 40th ranked Chen outplayed the Fifth seeded Nehwal in a closely contested match. Saina in the first round of the championship had defeated Kaori Imabeppu of Japan.

With regard to Olympic qualification, the significant loss was that of the mixed doubles pair of Jwala Gutta and V Diju. They lost to Korea's Sa Rang Kim and Hye In Choi. Jwala and Diju currently ranked No.16 in the world.

Shiva Thapa became the Youngest Indian Boxer to qualify for Olympics



The 18-year-old Shiva Thapa (56kg category) on 11 April 2012 became the youngest Indian boxer to qualify for the Olympics by beating Japan's Satoshi Shimizu 31-17 to enter the final of the Asian qualifiers in Astana, Kazakhstan.

India will have an unprecedented seven boxers in the Olympic Games after teen sensations Shiva Thapa (56kg) and Sumit Sangwan (81kg) booked their London Olympic births by advancing to the finals in the Asian Olympic Qualifiers in Astana, Kazakhstan.

Indian Boxer Vijender Singh qualified for the London Olympics

India's Vijender Singh on 8 April 2012 qualified for the London Olympics in the 75-kilogram category. He is the first Indian boxer to qualify for the Olympics for the third time in succession. In the Asian Olympic qualifier at Astana in Kazakhstan, Vijender reached the semifinals after defeating Chuluntumur Tumurkhuyag of Mongolia in the quarterfinals.

Remember: Vijender Singh is also the first Indian to win an Olympic and World Championships medal (bronze in both events)

Shon Wan Ho defeated Lee Chong Wei to win India Open Badminton

Shon Wan Ho of Korea defeated Chinese defending champion Lee Chong Wei in the final clash and clinch his maiden Super Series title, at the India Open badminton on 28 April 2012.

In the women's singles final at India Open badminton Championship, Li Xuerui of China defeated Juliane Schenk of Germany to lift the winner's trophy. In the men's doubles, the Thai pair of Bodin Issara and Manepong Jongjit outdid second seeds Sung Hyun Ko and Yeon Seong Yoo of to emerge victories.

Second seeded Indonesian pair of Tontowi Ahmad and Liliyana Natsir defeated fifth seeded Sudket Prapakamol and Saralee Thongthongkam of Thailand to lift the mixed doubles title.

Rafael Nadal defeated David Ferrer to clinch Barcelona Open Title

World's second ranked tennis player Rafael Nadal defeated sixth seeded David Ferrer to clinch the Barcelona Open Title on 29 April 2012. Nadal, following his Barcelona Open Title, became the first player in the Open Era to win two tournaments seven times. Before the Barcelona Open Title he had won the Monte Carlo Title for the eighth consecutive time.

The Barcelona Open victory was Nadal's 21st straight victory on clay court.

PHF called off Three-nation International Hockey Tournament

Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) on 4 April 2012 called off its planned three-nation international hockey

China's Chen Jin won the Asian Badminton Championship Men's Singles Title

The third seeded China's Chen Jin defeated fellow countryman and fifth seeded Du Pengyu in the men's finals of Asian Badminton Championship in China's eastern city of Qingdao on 22 April 2012.

Rafael Nadal defeated Novak Djokovic to clinch His Eighth Consecutive Monte Carlo Masters

Ace tennis player Rafael Nadal on 22 April 2012 clinched his eighth consecutive Monte Carlo Masters. The second seeded Nadal defeated Serbian Novak Djokovic in the final. The Monte Carlo Title is Nadal's first since French Open title in 2011 and the 47th of his ATP career. Prior to this the Monte Carlo Masters, top seeded Djokovic had defeated Nadal in seven title face-offs.

Croatia's Ivan Ljubicic announced Retirement from Tennis

Croatia's Ivan Ljubicic announced retirement from tennis on 15 April 2012 after he suffered a 6-0,6-3 defeat to Ivan Dodig at the Monte Carlo Masters. Ivan's career high ATP ranking was number 3. He won his first ATP singles title at Lyon in 2001. He entered professional tennis in 1998. He won two ATP titles and was the runner-up at 6 ATP events.

Top Seeded Novak Djokovic defeated Andy Murray to lift Miami Masters Trophy

World number one *Novak Djokovic* won the *Miami Masters title* on 1 April 2012 by defeating fourth seeded *Andy Murray* in the final. It was the third Miami Open Title win for Djokovic who had earlier won it in 2007 and 2011. Only six-time champion Andre Agassi had won more men's titles.

tournament after India pulled out of the event. India's pullout came after Malaysia, the third team in the proposed tournament, withdrew two days back. The PHF had scheduled the tournament from 9 April to 13 April 2012. India decided not to send the team to Pakistan due to security concerns.

Agnieszka Radwanska defeated Maria Sharapova to clinch Miami Masters Title

Fourth seeded Agnieszka Radwanska, on 31 March 2012, defeated Russian Tennis star Maria Sharapova to clinch Miami Masters women singles Title. Sharapova, a three-time Grand Slam champion, had been deprived of victory in four Miami Opens finals. She was also the runner-up in 2005, 2006 and 2011.

Indian Squash Player Saurav Ghosal won the \$120000 El Gouna International Open

Top Indian squash player Saurav Ghosal won a 3-2 victory over Robbie Temple of England at the \$120,000 El Gouna International Open in El Gouna, Egypt on 9 April 2012. Ghosal defeated Robbie 8-11, 9-11, 11-9, 11-7, 11-4 in a match that lasted 85 minutes. Ghosal had earlier lost to Willstrop at the Canary Wharf Classic tournament in March 2012.

The left-handed qualifier Englishman, Robbie had made headway in the opening games and sailed through the first two games easily. Ghosal however lifted his game and made a strong comeback in the third and the fourth game. He made an aggressive start to the fifth game and eventually took the final set with great ease.



Korean City of Changwon slated as the Venue for Shooting World Championship 2018

The shooting World Championship of 2018 was awarded to Korean city of Changwon on 17 April 2012. The decision regarding the venue of the championship was made at the General Assembly meeting of International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) in London. The Korean government, as per the reports, has earmarked 30 million dollar to enhance the amenities in the shooting complex and organize the world championship with six shotgun ranges, 100 targets each in 10 metres and 50 metres apart from 14 lay-outs in the 25-metre range. The last World Championship was held in Munich, Germany, in 2010 and the next championship will be held in Granada, Spain, in 2014.

Leander Paes and Radek Stepanek claimed the Doubles Title of Miami Masters

Seventh seeded, Indo-Czech pair of Leander Paes and Radek Stepanek claimed the doubles title of Miami Masters on 31 March 2012. Paes by winning the Miami Titles took the total number of his career titles to 50. Paes, who became the 24th player in ATP Tour history to complete 50 doubles titles, claimed 24270 dollars in prize money and 250 points.

Environment & Ecology

Diversity helped Mammals to Survive during Climate Change

A study published in the journal Public Library of Science One on 23 April 2012, described that the diversity is the mammal's best defense when it comes to adapting climatic changes. In one of the conclusions of the first study of how mammals in North America adapted to climate change the researchers found that diversity helped them to sustain in the changing climate.

The role of diversity in mammalian adaptation is specifically important given the fact that mammal species have been going extinct in record numbers for the past 400 years. In a 2008 report, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature predicted that one in four species of land mammals in the world faces extinction. As a result, the diversity of mammalian families is declining at a time when they need it the most to cope with a rapidly changing climate.

NTCA: 337 Tigers lost their lives in India in the Last Decade

NTCA (National Tiger Conservation Authority) said in a reply to the RTI Query that 337 Tigers lost their lives in India in the last decade. NTCA elaborated that 58 tigers were found dead in 2009 and 56 in 2011. While in 2008, the number was 36 and 28 each in 2007 and 2002. As per the DATA released By NTCA, as many as 68 tigers were killed due to poaching during the period. While others died of natural causes like old age, accidents, starvation.



According to NTCA's estimates, 14 tigers were the victim of poaching in 2010, 11 in 2011, 13 in 2009, six each in 2007 and 2008. NTCA is a statutory body under the ministry of environment and forests.

Study found Impact of Climate Change on Rainfall Cycle & Food Security

An Australian study published in the journal Science on 27 April 2012 revealed that climate change has accelerated the rainfall cycle. The study conducted by Australian and US scientists looked at ocean data from 1950 to 2000 and found that salinity levels had changed in oceans around the world over that time.

The researchers found that the changing pattern in rainfall cycle is likely to impact the food security globally. The researchers revealed that change in rainfall and evaporation meant the rich are getting richer with wet areas experiencing higher rainfall and drier areas even less.

Arctic Ocean- Significant Contributor of Methane in the Atmosphere

According to a study report published in the journal Nature Geoscience on 22 April 2012, the Arctic Ocean could be a significant contributor of methane, a powerful greenhouse gas.

Researchers carried out five flights in 2009 and 2010 to measure atmospheric methane in latitudes as high as 82 degrees north. They found concentrations of the gas close to the ocean surface, especially in areas where sea ice had cracked or broken up.

The scientists are now concerned over the fact that the new disturbing mechanism could accelerate global warming. Levels of methane in the atmosphere are relatively low, but the gas is 20 times more effective than carbon dioxide (CO₂) at trapping solar heat.

The scientists involved in the study opined that the surface waters of the Arctic Ocean represent a potentially important source of methane, which could prove sensitive to changes in sea-ice cover. Scientists have been struggling to understand the movements of the methane curve.

Use of Live Animals in Dissection & other Experiments banned

The Union ministry of environment and forests (MoEF) on 16 April 2012 banned the use of live animals in dissection and other experiments in educational and research institutions. The ban is based on the prevention of cruelty to Animals Act (1960). Ministry issued guidelines to ministry of health and family welfare, Pharmacy council of India and the Medical Council of India and the University Grants Commission asking colleges, hospitals, laboratories and research institutes to use alternatives like computer simulation.

The guidelines were framed based on the duties of the Committee for the Purpose of Control and Supervision of Experiments on Animals (CPCSEA). However, the ban won't be applicable on scientists conducting new molecular research.

Study found Himalayan Glaciers defying Global Melting Trend

A new study found that contrary to the global trend of melting glaciers a few glaciers in the Himalayas mountain range have gained a small amount of mass between 1999 and 2008. The study was published in the Nature Geoscience journal.

The study conducted by the France's University of Grenoble maintained that the Karakoram mountain range in the Himalayas has contributed less to the rising sea level. The study, reversed to the common perception, estimated that the Karakoram glaciers have gained around 0.11 to 0.22 metres (0.36 feet to 0.72 feet) per year between 1999 and 2008.

The Karakoram mountain range is spread across the borders between India, China and Pakistan and is covered by 19950 square kilometres (7702 square miles) of glaciers. The mountain range also houses the second highest mountain in the world, K2.

Scientists unearthed Fossilised Bones of a Foot in Ethiopia

Scientists in the first week of April 2012 unearthed fossilized bones of a foot in Ethiopia which they believe could be of a new species of human that roamed the planet some three million years ago and could offer insight into how man evolved to walk on two feet. The shape of the bones shows that the creature could walk upright at times.

By analysing their structure and dating the surrounding dirt, the team concluded the fragments came from the right forefoot of a human relative that lived 3.4 million years ago. While Lucy- the name of the skeleton which was first identified in the Afar in the 1970s- had humanlike feet, this creature was less advanced.

The ability to walk upright is an important feature that separates humans from other great apes. The new specimen's foot resembled that of Ardi, short for *Ardipithecus ramidus*, a species that lived a million years earlier than Lucy in what is now Ethiopia. Like Ardi, its big toe is set apart from the rest of its foot, allowing it to grip tree branches, and it had no arch.

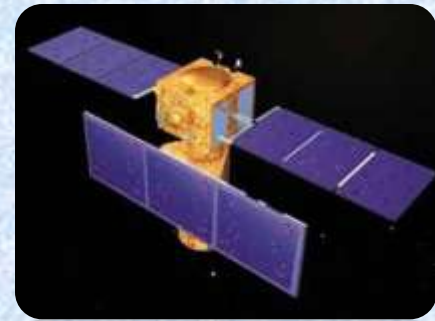
Science & Technology

India Successfully launched First Radar Imaging Satellite

India on 26 April 2012 launched its first indigenous all-weather Radar Imaging Satellite (RISAT-1). The satellite, whose images will facilitate agriculture and disaster management, was launched successfully on board the PSLV-C19 from Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh. Developed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), the satellite took ten years to be functional. The newly launched satellite can capture images of the earth during day and night as well as in cloudy conditions.

Besides use in the agriculture sector, RISAT-1 could also be used to keep round-the-clock vigil on the country's borders, but this satellite would not be used for defence applications as RISAT-2, primarily a spy spacecraft, is already doing that job.

RISAT-1 was launched using the state-of-the-art new Mission Control Centre for the first time after its inauguration by President Pratibha Patil in January 2012. ISRO used PSLV-XL, high-end version, only third such instance, for the launch of RISAT-1. The XL version was earlier used for Chandrayaan-1 and GSAT-12 missions. The RISAT – 1 Launch is the 20th successive successful flight of Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV). India in April 2009 had launched an imported Radar Imaging Satellite (RISAT-2) with all weather capability. The satellite was bought from Israel for 110 million dollar largely for surveillance purposes.



Supercomputer used to fight Alzheimer's Diseases

Scientists are building a human brain. For that they are using the world's most powerful supercomputer. It will stimulate the entire human mind to fight against Alzheimer's and other brain diseases.

The human brain thus designed will combine all the information and will replicate them down to the level of individual cells and molecules. The technology will help in understanding diseases like Parkinson's and Alzheimer's.

Combination of Proteins involved in Prostate Disorders discovered

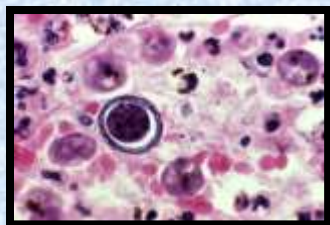
Scientists recently discovered a combination of proteins involved in prostate disorders. This could pave the way for effective and better treatments. In fact, scientists identified the G protein-coupled receptors, which enable cells to respond to neurotransmitters and hormones. G protein-coupled receptors are essential proteins on the outside of cells that enabled signals from hormones and neurotransmitters to be transferred into the cell.

Scientists found that that these receptors did not work in isolation, but in particular combinations, which they termed as heteromers. They suggested that a number of side effects from drugs may result from not fully understanding which combinations form and their side-effects.

Prostate disorders such as benign prostatic hyperplasia affect most of the men at some stage in his life. Better drugs with fewer side effects were required to reduce the need for surgical operation

Scientists found Diarrhoea Bug called Dientamoeba Fragilis in Pigs

Italian Scientists in the second week of April 2012 found an intestinal parasite in pigs called Dientamoeba Fragilis, which also causes diarrhoea in humans. This discovery will help scientists understand its transmission better and find effective treatment.



Scientists concluded that pig faeces were responsible for spreading parasite to humans. Dientamoeba fragilis is a single-celled parasite found in the gastrointestinal tract of some humans, pigs and gorillas. It causes gastrointestinal upset, traveller's diarrhoea, chronic diarrhoea and fatigue in some people.

Scientists identified Common Childhood Obesity Genes called OLFM4 and HOXB5

Scientists identified two genes called OLFM4 gene and HOXB5 that increase the risk of common

childhood obesity. The early Growth Genetics (EGG) Consortium made this finding. This finding will pave the way for preventive interventions and treatments for children based on their individual genomes. The scientists identified two novel loci, one near the OLFM4 gene on chromosome 13 and the other within the HOXB5 gene on chromosome 17. So far, Scientists knew little about genes implicated in regular childhood obesity. The researchers' study included 5500 obese kids.

Scientists identified a New Hormone to lower Blood Sugar Level

Scientists identified a new hormone that can lower a person's blood sugar level and can be used as an important alternative to insulin. It could pave the way for more effective diabetes treatment. It can send glucose out of the blood stream and into muscle in the same way insulin does.

The team of scientists used fat stem cells of mice for their research. They found that mice showed remarkably low blood sugar levels. Because of the abundance of glucose transporters at their surfaces, the muscles of mice were taking up glucose at two to four times the usual rate. Scientists revealed that the mouse muscles continued to absorb extra sugar when they were isolated in the lab and exposed to blood serum.

News Capsule

Hot Topics

Priti Mohanty took over as Controller General of Defence Accounts

Person Appointed-News Capsule

The 1977 batch Indian Defence Accounts Service Officer; Priti Mohanty took over as Controller General of Defence Accounts (CGDA) on 01 April 2012.

Prior to her appointment as CGDA, she has held various important assignments in the Defence Accounts Department as well as outside the Department, which includes Principal Integrated Financial Adviser (Army), Controller of Defence Accounts in Pension Office etc. Alumni of National Defence College, Mohanty has a sizable experience in Budgeting, Financial Management and Administrative Vigilance.

Yesteryear B'town actress Achla Sachdev died in Pune

News Capsule, Person Died

Yesteryear Bollywood actress Achla Sachdev died in Pune on 29 April 2012. Born in Peshawar, Sachdev made her film debut with Fashionable Wife (1938). Her most memorable role was as Balraj Sahani's wife in the 1965

blockbuster Waqt, where she was part of the legendary song Ae Meri Zohra Jabeen. She was also a part of films like Prem Pujari, Mera Naam Joker, Hare Rama Hare Krishna and Andaz. The actress, who worked in more than 100 films, was last seen in the Hrithik Roshan-Esha Deol starrer Na Tum Jaano Na Hum (2002). She played Kajol's grandmother in Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge and Amitabh Bachchan's mother in Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham.

She acted in English language films like the Mark Robson film Nine Hours to Rama (1963) and Merchant Ivory film, The Householder (1963). Achala Sachdev worked for All India Radio, Lahore prior to Indian partition and then at Delhi All India Radio.

She used to play the sitar and was a very good Bharatnatyam dancer as well. She had promoted people like famous ghazal singer Jagjit Singh in private concerts during the initial phase of his career.

Achla Sachdev was involved in numerous charitable works. The actress had helped hospitals and NGOs in their various charitable and social causes. She had donated Rs 20 lakh and gifted her sprawling two-bedroom apartment in Pune Camp to the Janaseva Foundation, an NGO run by Shah.

Abhishek Manu Singhvi resigned as Cong Spokesperson

News Capsule - Person Resigned

Abhishek Manu Singhvi, the spokesperson of the ruling Congress Party, tendered his resignation on 23 April 2012. Singhvi also resigned from a powerful parliamentary law committee that he headed. Singhvi, who is also an imminent advocate, was forced to resign following a CD allegedly showing him having sex with a lady went viral on the internet. In the video, Singhvi was allegedly shown promising the lady to help her in becoming the judge.

The Congress leader had earlier obtained a court order to prevent Indian print and television media from distributing the video

India successfully test-fired Agni-V

News Capsule, Defence | Security

India on 19 April 2012 successfully test-fired its maiden nuclear-tipped inter-continental ballistic missile (ICBM) Agni-V. The missile successfully struck its target ranging more than 5000 kms away from its launching point. It was test-fired from a mobile launcher at the Wheeler Island off the Orissa coast in the Bay of Bengal. The missile reached an altitude of 600 km and attained velocity of 7000m/second. With the successful launch of Agni-V, India has entered into an elite group of nations (USA, Russia, China, UK and France) which has such technology.

India now has acquired the capability to hit targets in China, including Beijing, Eastern Europe, east Africa and the Australian coast. Indigenously built Agni-V is 17.5m tall, solid-fuelled, surface to surface, three-stage missile with a launch weight of 50 tons, which includes a 1.5 tonne warhead. The DRDO (Defence Research and Development Organisation) Scientists began to work on the project of Agni-V three years ago. This was the first testing of the missile.

Important Information

Agni-V has multiple independently targeted re-entry (MIRV) capability. Its range is over 5000 Kms. A missile which has a range of 5500 Kms is termed as ICBM. MIRV enables a missile to hit several targets in an area.

NYT won two 2012 Pulitzer Prizes for Explanatory and International Reporting

Current Affairs Category: Awards | Honours

The 2012 Pulitzer Prize was announced on 16 April 2012. The Associated Press won a Pulitzer Prize for investigative reporting for documenting the New York Police Department's spying on Muslims. The Philadelphia Inquirer was on the other hand honoured in the public service category for its examination of violence in the city's schools. A second Pulitzer for investigative reporting was given to The Seattle Times for a series about accidental methadone overdoses among patients with chronic pain.

The New York Times won two Pulitzers, for explanatory and international reporting. The Huffington Post received its first Pulitzer, in national reporting, for its exploration of the challenges facing American veterans wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Patriot-News in Harrisburg, Pa., won for local reporting for breaking the Penn State sexual abuse scandal that eventually brought down legendary football coach Joe Paterno. The staff of The Tuscaloosa (Ala.) News won the Pulitzer for breaking news reporting for its coverage of a deadly tornado.

The judges declined to award a prize for editorial writing. The Pulitzer Prize board has failed to select a winner of the award for fiction for the first time in 35 years. The Pulitzers are given out annually by Columbia University on the recommendation of a board of journalists and others. Each award carries a \$10,000 prize except for the public service award, which is a gold medal.

Jim Yong Kim selected to head World Bank

News Capsule-Person in News

The World Bank on 16 April 2012 appointed Korean-born American health expert Jim Yong Kim as its new president. Kim who is president of Dartmouth College, will assume his new post on 1 July 2012. He succeeded Robert Zoellick as the head of World Bank. The decision by the World Bank's 25-member board was not unanimous. The emerging economies were found to be divided in their choice.

On 23 March 2012, President Barack Obama had announced that the United States would nominate Kim as the next president of the World Bank. His training and experience, including directing the World Health Organization's HIV/Aids department and developing treatments for a form of drug resistant tuberculosis, gave him immediate credentials as a campaigner on behalf of the poor.



Kim, a physician and anthropologist won the job over Nigeria's widely respected finance minister, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, with the support of Washington's allies in Western Europe, Japan and Canada, as well as some emerging economies. The US's grip on the job was thus retained. The selection process however frustrated several developing countries. Born in Seoul, South Korea in 1959, Jim Yong Kim moved with his family to the U.S. at the age of five and grew up in Muscatine, Iowa. He earned both his medical degree and his doctorate in anthropology at Harvard University, where he helped set up the Global Health Delivery Project.

Unlike his predecessors, Kim is not a politician, a banker or a career diplomat. He has worked to bring health care to the poor in developing countries, be it fighting tuberculosis in Haiti and Peru or tackling HIV/Aids in Russian prisons.

In March 2009, Kim became the first Asian American to assume the post of president at an Ivy League institution when he was named the 17th President of Dartmouth College. Jim Kim is also the first Asian American, first physician, and first development professional to lead the Bank since its founding in 1944.

Person Appointed

J&K High Court Chief Justice FM Ibrahim Kalifulla sworn in as SC Judge

Jammu & Kashmir High Court Chief Justice FM Ibrahim Kalifulla was sworn in as Supreme Court judge on 2 April 2012. Chief Justice SH Kapadia administered the oath of office to him in the presence of the Full Court and members of the Bar. He will remain a Supreme Court judge for a little over four years

Justice Kalifulla hails from Tamil Nadu and will be the second judge to represent the Madras High Court in the Supreme Court after Justice P Sathasivam.

Born on 23 July 1951, Justice Kalifulla, who hails from Karaikudi, Sivagangai District in Tamil Nadu, was enrolled as an advocate on 20 August 1975 and was an active labour law practitioner and also appeared for various public and private sector undertakings, nationalised and scheduled banks. He had joined the judiciary on 2 March 2000 when he was made a permanent judge of the Madras high court. He was later the standing counsel for the Tamil Nadu State Electricity Board.

Justice Kalifulla was transferred as Judge of the Jammu & Kashmir High Court in February 2011. He became its acting Chief Justice in April 2011 and regular Chief Justice in September 2011.

President Pratibha Patil re-appointed Goolam E. Vahanvati as Attorney-General

President Pratibha Patil on 30 April 2012 re-appointed Goolam E. Vahanvati Attorney-General for two more years with effect from 8 June 2012. Vahanvati was appointed to the post of Attorney-General in 2009 for three years. His term was due to end on 8 June 2012.

Goolam E. Vahanvati is the first Muslim to hold the top law officer's post in the past six decades. He represented the government in such important matters as B.P. Singhal (the scope of doctrine of pleasure with respect to removal of Governors); the appointment of the Central Vigilance Commissioner, Lafarge (illegal mining); illegal mining in Karnataka; Right to Education; and the row over the date of birth of the Chief of the Army Staff.

He was appointed Solicitor-General in June 2004 and he practised mainly in the Supreme Court and the High Courts, representing the Union of India in important matters, including constitutional and revenue cases. He was honoured with several prestigious awards including the Sahyog Foundation Award for excellence in the legal field in April 2002, and the National Law Day Award, 2005.

Justice Dalveer Bhandari elected to International Court of Justice

Justice Dalveer Bhandari, the judge of the Indian Supreme Court, was elected to the position of Judge of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the elections held in New York, United States on 27 April 2012. He secured 122 out of 197 votes in the General Assembly and 13 out of 15 votes in the Security Council.

Justice Dalveer Bhandari defeated the 84-year-old Justice Florentino Feliciano of the Philippines in the elections held to fill the casual vacancy following the resignation of Awn Shawkat Al-Khasawneh from Jordan in October 2011. He will have six-year tenure. He is eligible for re-election for a second term of nine years at the end of the present term. Justice Bhandari will be the third Asian representative in the 15-member ICJ. As per Article 8 of the ICJ statute the General Assembly and the Security Council elect a judge for the ICJ. Hisashi Owada from Japan, who is also the president and Xue Hanqin from China are two other Asians in the ICJ bench.

Justice Bhandari was unanimously elected as President of the India International Law Foundation in 2007. Due to retire in September 2012, he will have to step down as a judge of the Supreme Court to assume the new charge.

India appointed Amarendra Khatua as its special envoy to South Sudan & Sudan

India in the last week of March 2012 appointed Amarendra Khatua as its special envoy to South Sudan and Sudan to broker peace between the two countries. This was done with the objective of strengthening India's pursuit of oil and other hydrocarbon resources in Africa. Amarendra Khatua is the MEA additional secretary and handles the passport division.

India and China are competing with each other to tap energy resources in Africa. China sent its own special envoy to protect China's oil interests in Africa.

Former Haryana Chief Secy Urvashi Gulati sworn in as State Information Commissioner

Former Haryana chief secretary Urvashi Gulati was sworn in as Haryana state information commissioner (SIC) on 1 April 2012. She took oath as the SIC despite the protest of the RTI activists against the appointment of a retired bureaucrat on such important post.

Following the appointment of Urvashi Gulati as the SIC, Haryana Soochna Adhikar Manch, a body of 3500 RTI activists announced to send a memorandum to the governor, Jagannath Pahadia urging him to stop the practice of appointing retired bureaucrats as SIC. The 1975 batch IAS, Gulati who hails from Ambala city of Haryana retired from the post of chief secretary on 31 March 2012.

About Urvashi Gulati: After completing her MA, she worked as a lecturer in Panjab University. She appeared in the IAS examination and joined 1975 batch and was allotted to Haryana Cadre. Gulati started her career as Sub Divisional Officer at Palwal. She also served as the Additional Deputy Commissioner, Gurgaon. She worked for rural development and was deeply involved in poverty.

Lt- Gen Gautam Ravindranath appointed as Director General Medical Services (Army)

Lieutenant-General Gautam Ravindranath on 31 March 2012 took over as the Director General Medical Services (Army). Gautam Ravindranath who was commissioned in the Army Medical Corps as Captain on 16 January 1975, has held various important appointments such as Senior Adviser (Paediatric Surgery) at Army Hospital (R & R) and Deputy Commandant, Artificial Limb Centre in Pune.

An accomplished paediatric surgeon, he is also recognised as a teacher in the universities of Pune, Mumbai and Delhi. He is also an alumnus of Armed Forces Medical College, Pune. He was commanding the AMC centre and College, Lucknow prior to assuming his responsibility as Director General Medical Services (Army). He had actively participated during operation Pawan in Sri Lanka and was awarded Sena Medal in 2010, Vishisht Seva Medal in 1995 and Chief of the Army Staff Commendation in 1989.

Person Died

Veteran Litterateur, Freedom Fighter Nityananda Mohapatra died

Veteran litterateur, freedom fighter and former Minister Nityananda Mohapatra died on 17 April 2012 at the age of 100. Born in July 1912, he was eldest son of celebrated Odia poet Katakabi Laxmikanta Mohapatra. Nityananda was imprisoned three times by the British between 1930 and 1942 for nationalist activities. Post independence was elected thrice as MLA from Bhadrak, twice as an Independent and once as a Jana Congress

candidate. Mohapatra was the Minister for Cultural Affairs and Food and Civil Supplies in the Swatantra-Jana Congress coalition Government headed by RN Singh Deo during 1967-71.

He rose to literary prominence as editor of Odia magazine Dagara, and as a short-story writer after Independence. Mohapatra was the recipient of Kendriya Sahitya Academy and Odisha Sahitya Academy awards. His well-known books include Bhangahada, Gharadiha, Nahom Tistami Baikunthe, Kalagara Dharagara and Priya O Priyatama. He also wrote the famous flag-song for the State unit of the CPI "Ei lal patakara tale.

Former State secy of CPI (M), N Varadarajan died in Chennai

Former Tamil Nadu State secretary of the CPI (M) and three-time MLA, N Varadarajan, died in Chennai on 10 April 2012. Known as NV in party circles, Varadarajan was one of the 32 members of the united Communist Party of India (CPI) who quit the party in 1964 and formed the Communist Party of India (Marxist) in Tamil Nadu.

He had joined the Communist Party in 1943. He continued to work for his party by staying underground for a year when the party was banned in 1949. N Varadarajan was a veteran Communist leader and was the State secretary of the CPI (M) from 2002 to 2010. He was elected to the Tamil Nadu Assembly twice (1977 and 1980). He was elected to the Tamil Nadu Assembly from the Vendasandur constituency in 1967. He was then elected to the Tamil Nadu legislative assembly as a Communist Party of India (Marxist) candidate from Dindigul constituency in 1977 election, and as an Independent candidate in 1980 election.

He was instrumental in creating the Tamil Nadu Untouchability Eradication Front and he consistently fought for securing three per cent exclusive reservation for Arundathiyars, a Dalit sub-sect. After functioning as the party's Madurai district secretary and then as member of the State and State Secretariat committees, he was elected to the Central Committee in 1995. He was elected party secretary in Tamil Nadu in 2005 and again in 2008.

China's famous Dissidents & Astrophysicist, Fang Lizhi died in US

One of China's best-known dissidents and astrophysicist, Fang Lizhi died in exile in the US on 6 April 2012. He had become a force to reckon with prominent during the 1989 pro-democracy movement. He was compelled to spend 13 months hiding out in the US embassy after the tanks moved in to crack down on the student demonstrators on Tiananmen Square on 4 June 1989. He was known as China's Sakharov, a reference to the famous Soviet physicist and dissident, Andrei Sakharov.

Fang went to Beijing University in 1952 to study theoretical physics and nuclear physics. He became an important researcher in laser theory. He rose to political prominence during pro-democracy student demonstrations from 1986 to 1988, when he became China's most outspoken and eloquent proponent of democratic reform. During the pro-democracy movement the pro-government supporters burned effigies of him, prompting him and his wife to seek shelter in the US mission. His speeches to students at the University of Science and Technology where he was vice-president, incited unrest. Fang was expelled from the Communist Party and fired from his university post.

He eventually fled to Washington with his wife in June 1990 led to mark a key stage in the resumption of normal relations between Washington and Beijing. In exile, he went on to become a physics professor at the University of Arizona in Tucson.

Former BCCI President & Union Min NKP Salve no more



Former BCCI president and former Union Minister NKP Salve passed away on 1 April 2012 in New Delhi.

Salve was associated with cricket administration for several years. He was the president of the Vidarbha Cricket Association, one of the affiliates of the Board of Control for Cricket (BCCI) in India, from 1967 to 1977. Salve had succeeded Barrister S.K. Wankhede as BCCI president in 1982. NKP Salve had been the president of the BCCI when India won the World Cup in 1983. He is also credited with helping India and Pakistan win rights to hosting the 1987 World Cup. The Challenger Trophy, an annual one-day tournament organised by the BCCI, was named after him.

Born in Chhindwara in Madhya Pradesh on 18 March 1921, he was a chartered accountant, with an active practice from 1949 to 1982. He was considered an authority on direct taxes. He, however, gave up active practice after joining the central cabinet in 1982.

Person Resigned

Mali's President Amadou Toumani Toure resigned after Coup

The President of Mali, Amadou Toumani Toure resigned on 8 April 2012 following the agreement signed with the mediators. He was in hiding since the Army coup against him in March 2012. The speaker of the Malian parliament Diounounda Traore will be the interim president.

The northern part of Mali was captured by a mix of separatist Tuareg-led rebels and Islamist fighters recently and security of the nation was in danger. That is why a coup was staged against President Toure. The insurgent group is called National Movement for Liberation of Azawad. They have declared an independent state of Azawad. Amadou Toumani Toure was President of Mali from 2002 to 2012. He had overthrown former president Moussa Traore in a March 1991 military coup. After that he handed power to civilian authorities in June 1992 and entered politics as a civilian in 2002 and won the Presidential election.

Defence | Security

Indian Navy inducted INS Teg Frigate in its fleet

The Indian navy inducted newly-built INS Teg in its fleet at the Yantar shipyard in Russia's Kaliningrad on 27 April 2012. The warship was commissioned by the Southern Naval Command chief Vice Admiral K.N. Sushil at a ceremony in Kaliningrad. INS Teg is a modern and contemporary warship with advanced technologies incorporated in every facet of design to make her stable, stealthy, fast and formidable. The weapons suite of the 125-metre, 4,000-tonne warship includes the BrahMos surface-to-surface missile system, a surface-to-air missile system, 100 mm medium-range gun, close-in weapon system (CIWS), torpedo tubes, and anti-submarine rockets.

The warship with its advanced weapons suite and sensors fully integrated with its combat management system, is equipped to augment the Navy's net-centricity, and is well-suited to undertake a broad spectrum of maritime missions. It also embarks and operates an anti-submarine or an airborne early warning helicopter — a dominant force multiplier.



Commanded by Captain Rakesh Kumar Dahiya, a communications and electronic warfare specialist, Teg has a complement of 250 personnel, including as many as 25 officers. While Teg is slated to reach Indian shores by the latter half of June, the Indian Navy is slated to take delivery of the remaining ships of the Teg-class — Tarkash and Trikand — by September 2012 and mid-2013 respectively.

INS Teg is the first of the second batch of Talwar-Class warships to have completed. Teg was laid down on 27 July 2007, launched on 27 November 2009, and following post-construction work its sea trials began in the Baltic Sea on 1

September 2011.

Indian Navy inducted Russian-Origin Nuclear Submarine INS Chakra

Defence | Security- News Capsule

The Indian Navy on 4 April 2012 inducted a Russian-origin nuclear submarine, INS Chakra, into its flotilla. The nuclear submarine has placed India into the elite group of nations which operate nuclear vessel. The Akula-II class submarine K-152 Nerpa, renamed INS Chakra-II, is on a 10-year lease from Russia at a cost of nearly 1 billion dollar.

Defence minister AK Antony formally inducted the 8000-ton vessel as India is looking forward to strengthen its position in the Indian Ocean region. Apart from India the other nations which possess the capability to operate nuclear vessel includes US, Russia, France, the UK and China. The induction of INS Chakra in the Indian Navy is strategically very important given the fact that China over the last few years has been aggressively indulged in taking the Indian Ocean Region within its clout.



Accident | Incident

More than hundred people died in boat mishap in Assam

Two boats carrying nearly 350 people capsized in the Brahmaputra River in Assam's Dhubri and Jaleswar district on 30 April 2012. More than 100 people were killed in the deadly incident. The bodies of 103 victims, including women and children, were recovered by the BSF and the NDRF personnel near Jaleswar. As many as 120 people are missing and believed to have drowned while around 150 passengers swam to safety or were rescued by villagers living nearby

The incident is considered to be the worst boat tragedy in the recent history of the region. In other similar major boat tragedy in October 2010, at least 79 pilgrims were drowned when an overcrowded boat carrying 150 people sank in West Bengal. In March 2012 some 138 people died in neighbouring Bangladesh when an overloaded ferry carrying 200 people sank in the Meghna River, southeast of Dhaka.

Earthquake jolts Aceh in Indonesia, sparked Tsunami alert

Powerful earthquake of 8.7 magnitudes on the Richter scale hit Aceh province of Indonesia on 11 April 2012. The quake sparked a short-lived tsunami alert for much of the Indian Ocean. The earthquake's epicentre was at a depth of 33 km about 485 km from Indonesia's Banda Aceh, a region regularly hit by earthquakes.

The U.S. Geological Survey stated that the first earthquake had a magnitude of 8.6 and was quickly followed by an 8.2-magnitude aftershock. There was a tsunami, but the waves were just below 1 meter [3.3 feet] as against the December 2004 tsunami, when waves reached heights of nearly ten stories.

Earlier the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004 had killed 170000 people in Aceh. Indonesia had launched a \$130-million tsunami warning system in November 2008 in a bid to prevent a repeat of tragedies like the 2004 disaster.

ATR-72 Passenger Plane Crash: 31 people killed in Siberia

At least 31 people killed and several left injured in passenger plane crash in Siberia on 2 April 2012. The ATR-72, a French-Italian-made plane crashed shortly after taking off from Tyumen. Russia over the past few years has witnessed a string of deadly crashes. Most of these accidents have been due to the use of old Soviet-era aircraft. The industry experts, however, point to a variety of other reasons viz. poor crew training, crumbling airports, lax government controls and widespread neglect of safety in the pursuit of profits, responsible for crashes .

Pilot error and fog also were ruled the main causes of a crash in April 2010 that killed Poland's president and 95 other people as their plane was trying to land near Smolensk, in western Russia. The ATR-72 has been involved in several accidents in past years.

Person on Visit

UN Secy Gen Ban Ki Moon visited India

United Nations (UN) Secretary General Ban Ki Moon visited India from 26 April to 29 April 2012. The UN Secretary General was accompanied by his wife, Madam Ban Soon-taek and a high-level delegation. Ban during his three-day visit held talks with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and other senior leaders and also praised India's efforts made in the direction of human development. The two leaders discussed host of issues including global and regional.

Ban in the course of his visit also met business and social leaders to discuss ways and means to achieve the health-related UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). 67-year -old Ban also received an honorary Doctor of Letters from Jamia Millia Islamia University in Delhi. A South Korean by nationality, Ban Ki Moon started his diplomatic career from India in 1972. It was Ban's third visit to India ever since he assumes the charge of UN Secretary General in 2010.

Person in News

Mastercard CEO Ajay Banga elected as Chairman of USIBC

Mastercard CEO Ajay Banga was on 15 April 2012 elected next chairman of the US-India Business Council (USIBC). USIBC is a trade association made of 350 top American and Indian companies. Banga succeeded Terry McGraw III, president, chairman, and CEO of The McGraw-Hill Companies.

Banga had become the president and CEO of global payments and technology company, Mastercard in July. Banga currently serves on the board of Kraft Foods and is a member of

such prestigious groups as the Council on Foreign Relations, the Business Roundtable, and the Foreign Policy Association.

USIBC is a leading advocacy group for US and Indian business and trade ties set up at the behest of the two governments, and counts 350 leading companies as members. Trade between India and the US had stood at \$57.79 billion in 2011, growing manifold from the modest \$5.6 billion in 1990.

SP MLA, Mata Prasad Pandey elected as Speaker of 16 UP Assembly

Samajwadi Party MLA from Itwa in Sidhartnagar district Mata Prasad Pandey was unanimously elected Speaker of the 16th Uttar Pradesh Assembly on 13 April 2012. Pandey was elected to serve as Speaker for the second time. He first held the post when Mulayam Singh headed the SP government from 2003 to 2007.

Pandey has been elected six times to the Assembly six times. He succeeded BSP's Sukhdeo Rajbhar, who was the Speaker in the 15th Assembly. On the other hand Umar Ali Khan, son-in-law of the Shahi Imam of Delhi's Jama Masjid, Syed Ahmed Bukhari, filed his papers for the Vidhan Parishad (Legislative Council) elections scheduled to be held on 26 April 2012. He is the eighth SP candidate for the polls for 13 seats. The other SP candidates include Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav, Revenue Minister Ambika Chaudhary, Rajendra Chaudhary, Madhu Gupta, Ram Sakal Gujar, Naresh Uttam and Vijay Kumar Yadav.

Report | Survey

India accounted for 47 % of Measles Deaths in 2010

As per a recent World Health Organisation (WHO) study, Published in the British medical journal, The Lancet, on 23 April 2012, India accounted for about 47 percent of measles deaths in 2010, while Africa recorded 36 percent of deaths due to the same disease. The study revealed that the death rates from measles went down by 74 percent between 2000 and 2010, but it missed the WHO target of 90%.

The shortfall was largely attributed to deaths in India and Africa where the virus kills thousands a year. Africa and India two key regions of the world where a large number of cases related to Measles come into light significantly underperformed which led the WHO to miss its target. The Americas and Europe accounted for less than 1 percent each of the Measles cases. The WHO study described that even with 74 percent drop in cases of measles; it killed an estimated 139200 people across the world in 2010, down from just over 535000 in 2000.

Adarsh Judicial Commission set up by Maha Govt submitted Interim Report

The two-member Adarsh Judicial Commission set up by the Maharashtra Government to probe into the scam-tainted Adarsh Housing Society submitted its interim report to the state Government on 13 April 2012. The commission was formed under N N Kumbhar.

The interim report included the commission's findings on two issues — ownership of the land in south Mumbai where the 31-storey Adarsh building stands and whether the land was reserved for Kargil war widows and their relatives. The Maharashtra Government had earlier in April filed an application before the judicial panel seeking an interim report on two of the 13 issues being looked into by it. The commission accepting the application directed all the parties — the State Government, the Ministry of Defence and Adarsh Society to

argue on the two issues from 1 March 2012. The interim report was formed and submitted to the government after hearing out all the parties involved in the case.

The commission was set up by the Government in January 2011 after the scam surfaced. While the panel was to complete its probe within three months, was extended from time to time. The panel has now been asked to submit its report by May 2012.

Places in News

Arab League Summit held in Baghdad

The three-day Arab League summit was held in Baghdad from 27 March 2012 to 29 March 2012. The summit was hosted by Iraq for the first time since 1990 when its late dictator Saddam Hussein's forces invaded Kuwait. The leaders of the 22 Arab league states attended the summit. The Baghdad summit discussed the uprising in Syria and the Iraqi debts to its neighbours. The previous Arab league summit was held in Sirte. Syria didn't participate in the Summit. It was suspended in the midst of the uprising against the Assad regime.

One Liners for April 2012

- This Jammu & Kashmir High Court Chief Justice was sworn in as Supreme Court judge on 2 April 2012. - F. M. Ibrahim Kalifulla
- On 3 April 2012 Indian Navy formally inducted this nuclear-powered submarine into its fleet. - INS Chakra
- First Spices Park for processing of seed spices like cumin, coriander and fennel was commissioned in this state on 7 April 2012. - Rajasthan
- This Indian squash player won a 3-2 victory over Robbie Temple of England at the \$120000 El Gouna International Open in El Gouna, Egypt on 9 April 2012. - Saurav Ghosal
- Former Tamil Nadu State secretary of the CPI(M) and three-time MLA died in Chennai on 10 April 2012. - N. Varadarajan
- This international monetary body in its flagship annual publication Asian Development Outlook (ADO) projected moderate increase in growth rate for India to 7 percent in 2012-13. - Asian Development Bank
- Union government made it mandatory for individuals with income above this amount to file their tax returns 2011-12 onwards electronically. - Rs 10 lakh
- Union government approved Rs 30000 crore bailout for this national carrier. Air India

- Union Cabinet approved the extension of funding support for implementing the Swavalamban Scheme existing under this system from three years to five years. - New Pension System (NPS)
- This Samajwadi Party MLA from Itwa in Sidhartnagar district was unanimously elected Speaker of the 16th Uttar Pradesh Assembly. - Mata Prasad Pandey
- Powerful earthquake of 8.7 magnitude on the Richter scale on 11 April 2012 hit Aceh province of this South Asian country giving rise to tsunami scare. - Indonesia
- This Kannada poet was chosen for the Basavashree Award on 28 April 2012. - Chennaveera Kanavi
- This country announced to strengthen the defences of its Gulf allies along with the commencement of nuclear talks that could ease tensions with Tehran - United States of America
- National League for Democracy (NLD) led by this pro-democracy leader in Myanmar won 43 of the 45 seats in by-polls held on 1 April 2012 - Aung Saan Suu Kyi
- Recep Tayyip Erdogan who held talks with the leaders of western countries on Iran issue is the Prime Minister of this country - Turkey
- Bingu Mutharika the president of this African nation died after a heart attack - Malawi
- Israel barred this German author from entering the Jewish state, citing a poem in which he accuses Israel of plotting Iran's annihilation and threatening world peace - Gunter Grass
- More than 100 Pakistani soldiers died in an avalanche at this place - Siachen sector close to the border with India
- Asif Ali Zardari the President of this Asian nation visited India - Pakistan
- Bo Xilai, a high-ranking Communist Party official, was stripped of his most powerful posts. Bo Xilai was the high-ranking communist party leader of this country - China
- This American leader won the Republican Party candidature to challenge President Barack Obama in November elections - Mitt Romney
- The government of this Asian nation faced yet another rights abuse allegation as two senior members of a breakaway faction of the JVP accused the security forces of abducting them - Sri Lanka
- This Pakistani Foreign Service officer was appointed the High Commissioner to India - Salman Basheer
- This middle-east country deployed hundreds of police at its main airport to detain activists flying in to protest the country's occupation of Palestinian areas - Israel
- This country forgave Myanmar's 3.7-billion dollar debt and resumed development aid as a way to support the country's democratic and economic reforms - Japan
- Islamic radical groups attacked the church services in this African nation - Nigeria
- Afghanistan reached on an agreement with this country to define their relationship after most foreign troops leave Afghanistan at the end of 2014 - United States of America

India Diary

2 April 2012

- Jammu & Kashmir High Court Chief Justice F. M. Ibrahim Kalifulla was sworn in as Supreme Court judge.

3 April 2012

- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) released 'Quarterly Statistics on Deposits and Credit of Scheduled Commercial Banks, September 2011.
- RBI directed banks to submit a monthly statement informing the central bank about the quantity of gold imported and mode of payment adopted.

4 April 2012

- Indian Navy formally inducted the nuclear-powered submarine 'INS Chakra' into its fleet.
- UAE Ministry of Labour & India's Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs signed a protocol to streamline the admission of Indian contract workers by way of an electronic contract registration & validation system.

5 April 2012

- Jharkhand High Court directed election Commission to seek CBI probe into Jharkhand poll issue.

6 April 2012

- According to the United Nation's report, India will witness largest increase in urban population in the next four decades.

7 April 2012

- First Spices Park in Rajasthan for processing of seed spices like cumin, coriander and fennel commissioned.

8 April 2012

- Spice Board of India, the nodal organization of Ministry of Commerce, Govt. of India decided to establish 10 spice parks across the most strategic locations in the country by end of 2012 to promote exports of spices from India.

You can read compilation of all the important topics and events of the week. Update your Current Affairs Weekly with our India This Week.

9 April 2012

- Top Indian squash player Saurav Ghosal won a 3-2 victory over Robbie Temple of England at the \$120000 El Gouna International Open in El Gouna, Egypt
- NABARD declared its intent to double its concessional lending towards building new warehouses for food grain storage to Rs. 500 crore in Punjab

10 April 2012

- Consolidated Foreign Direct Investment Policy Document released by the Commerce and Industry Ministry changed the norms for both NBFCs and foreign institutional investors (FIIs)
- Former Tamil Nadu State secretary of the CPI(M) and three-time MLA, N. Varadarajan, died in Chennai

11 April 2012

- ADB in its flagship annual publication Asian Development Outlook (ADO) projected moderate increase in growth rate for India to 7 percent in 2012-13
- Union government made it mandatory for individuals with income above Rs 10 lakh to file their tax returns 2011-12 onwards electronically

12 April 2012

- Union government approved Rs 30000 crore bailout for Air India.
- Union Cabinet approved the extension of funding support for implementing the Swavalamban Scheme under the New Pension System (NPS) from three years to five years
- Union Cabinet approved Public Procurement Bill, 2012 which aims at regulating public procurement of above Rs 50 lakh and provides fair treatment to bidders

13 April 2012

- Two-member Adarsh Judicial Commission set up by the Maharashtra Government to probe into the scam-tainted Adarsh Housing Society submitted its interim report to the state Government
- Samajwadi Party MLA from Itwa in Sidhartnagar district Mata Prasad Pandey was unanimously elected Speaker of the 16th Uttar Pradesh Assembly

14 April 2012

- The Union Government of India sought its partnership in setting up the Bharat Rural Livelihood Foundation (BRLF)

15 April 2012

- The Rajasthan Government decided to provide electricity connections in remote desert areas through solar power plants

16 April

- Conference of CMs on Internal Security held in New Delhi

17 April

- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) banned banks from charging a prepayment penalty on floating rate home loans
- Defence Ministry decided to set up three new committees to accelerate procurements and border infrastructure projects
- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) instructed commercial banks to reduce their exposure to gold loan companies to 7.5% of their capital funds from the existing 10%
- Veteran litterateur, freedom fighter and former Minister Nityananda Mohapatra died

18 April

- Union government decided to liberalise the external commercial borrowing (ECB) norms for the power sector
- As per the government data released, retail inflation shot up to 9.47% in March 2012 because of higher prices of milk, vegetables, protein-based items and edible oil products
- President Pratibha Patil released a commemorative postage stamp to mark the birth centenary of President R. Venkataraman at Rashtrapati Bhavan
- Union government approved Cairn India's proposal to ramp up output at its Rajasthan block by 25000 barrels per day

19 April

- Commerce Secretary announced that India surpassed the export target of \$300 billion for 2011-12. However, imports surged by 32.1 per cent to \$488.6 billion thereby leaving the highest-ever trade deficit of \$184.9 billion.
- Union government permitted companies engaged in the aviation sector to raise working capital resources through the external commercial borrowings (ECBs) route to the tune of \$1 billion
- TRAI approved increase in processing fee for all mobile recharge coupons (top-up vouchers) priced above Rs 20

20 April

- TRAI issued a directive to all mobile phone operators in India making it mandatory for the operators to offer a per second billing option to customers

21 April

- The seventh Civil Services Day observed

23 April

- Abhishek Manu Singhvi resigned on Monday as Congress spokesperson and Chairperson of Parliament's Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances and Law and Justice
- The Norwegian District Court in Stavanger announced its verdict saying it had agreed to hand over custody of the children, who were placed in care on grounds of parental neglect, to the children's paternal uncle Arunabhas Bhattacharya
- Medical students at the five government medical colleges in Kerala called off their strike past following last- minute discussions with Health Minister V.S. Sivakumar and Health Secretary Rajeev Sadanandan

24 April

- The Supreme Court stayed the Karnataka High Court order that had quashed the appointment of Shankar Bidari as head of the Karnataka Police
- The Kerala State Higher Education Council constituted a committee to review the State policy on higher education
- The government introduced a Bill in the Lok Sabha that provides for recognising piracy as a crime and lays down norms for prosecution of pirates apprehended by the Indian authorities with punishment running up to life term

25 April

- Odisha legislator Jhina Hikaka walked free after more than a month in a Maoist captivity
- A moderate intensity tremor shook parts of Andaman and Nicobar Islands
- Standard & Poor's (S&P) scaled down India's credit rating outlook from 'stable' (BBB+) to 'negative' (BBB-) with a warning of a downgrade if there is no improvement in the fiscal situation and political climate

26 April

- Sachin Tendulkar, Rekha and industrialist Anu Aga nominated to Rajya Sabha
- The Supreme Court dismissed a writ petition filed by a law student challenging the nomination of Justice Dalveer Bhandari to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the ground that it would “severely” compromise the independence of the judiciary
- India's first indigenously built all-weather Radar Imaging Satellite, RISAT-1 was put in its orbit

27 April

- A Special CBI Court convicted the former BJP president, Bangaru Laxman, of the charge of accepting money, to facilitate government contracts
- After a gap of more than two decades, Justice Dalveer Bhandari of India was overwhelmingly elected as a judge of the International Court of Justice
- Indian Navy inducted INS Teg to its inventory

28 April

- The Union Information & Broadcasting Ministry notified the much-awaited Cable Television Networks Rules, 2012, paving the way for digitalisation of the sector in the four metros
- The former Special Protection Group (SPG) chief, B.V. Wanchoo, was appointed Goa Governor, and the former Madhya Pradesh Minister, Aziz Qureshi, Governor of Uttarakhand
- Kannada poet Chennaveera Kanavi was chosen for the Basavashree Award and playback singer Kasturi Shankar was chosen for the Vachana Sahitya Sri Award instituted by the Basava Vedike

29 April

- The portals of the famous Himalayan shrine of Badrinath were reopened
- The Congress' coordination committee cleared the names of candidates for 15 of the 18 Assembly constituencies where by-elections are scheduled on 12 June 2012. Tamilnadu was directed to release 100 cubic feet per second water to meet the drought situation in Palakkad district.

World Diary

2 April, 2012

- The United States announced to strengthen the defences of its Gulf allies along with the commencement of nuclear talks that could ease tensions with Tehran
- U S. congratulated the people of Myanmar for participating in the election process a first for many of them
- The British government proposes to acquire unprecedented powers to snoop on phone calls and online activity of ordinary people irrespective of whether they are suspected of any unlawful action
- Pakistani Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani urged China to boost its support for hydropower and civilian

nuclear projects in Pakistan

3 April, 2012

- Turkey's Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan talked to leaders of western countries on Iran issue
- Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) won at least 43 of the 45 seats in by-polls held on 1 April 2012
- Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden's three widows and children will be deported to their respective countries by mid-April after they complete their six-week sentences in Pakistan for illegally entering the country

4 April 2012

- US announced 10 million dollar bounty on Lashkar-e-Taiba founder Hafiz Saeed
- Thirteen suspected Islamists charged in France with "criminal conspiracy connected to a terrorist enterprise" and illegal possession and transportation of weapons
- Iran said Istanbul remains an acceptable location for talks with world powers over Tehran's nuclear programme, and proposed other venues such as Iraq or China for the negotiations scheduled to start next week

5 April 2012

- United States said it would ease restrictions on investment to Myanmar and move quickly to name an ambassador after landmark elections
- A rocket fired from Egypt's Sinai desert hit a southern Israeli resort city
- A suicide bomber on a motorcycle killed at least 10 people, including three American soldiers, at a park in a relatively peaceful area of northern Afghanistan
- Two Indians were among 16 people selected by the prestigious Yale University in 2012 as its World Fellows, bringing the total number of fellows from India to 11 since the programme started in 2002

6 April 2012

- United States described the Iranian Embassy in Kabul as having "a very active" program of anti-American provocation
- Scotland Yard suspended a total of eight police officers for being allegedly indulged in racism
- Malawi President Bingu Mutharika died after a heart attack

7 April 2012

- At least 80 people were killed across Syria 52 of them civilians, as regime forces pressed a protest crackdown three days ahead of a deadline to cease fire and pull back
- China froze assets of six absconding terrorists of a separatist outfit in Xinjiang, the native province of Muslim Uighurs

- Mali's Tuareg rebels, who have seized control of the country's north in the aftermath of a coup, declared independence on 6 April 2012
- An avalanche slammed into a Pakistan Army base in Siachen sector close to the border with India, burying over 100 soldiers

8 April 2012

- Pak President Asif Ali Zardari discussed Hafeez Saeed case with Prime Minister Yusuf Raja Gilani and Army Chief Ashfaq Parvez Kayani before India trip
- Japan deployed missile batteries in Tokyo and dispatched destroyers carrying interceptor missiles as it boosts its defences against a planned North Korean rocket launch this month
- Israel barred German author Gunter Grass from entering the Jewish state, citing a poem in which he accuses Israel of plotting Iran's annihilation and threatening world peace
- Chinese authorities ordered a leading pro-Maoist website shut down for one month because of critical essays posted on it.

9 April 2012

- Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari visited India. The president was on his private visit to the shrine of Khwaza Moinuddin Chishty in Ajmer
- Gunmen attack plane in Indonesia; journalist dead
- The United States offered a lucrative monetary offering to the Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) government for the budget 2012-13 in exchange for re-opening NATO supply routes that have been closed since the deadly November 26 airstrike
- Sri Lanka expressed concern over possible impact of radiation from India's nuclear power plants located in the southern region

10 April 2012

- Two Suicide bombers killed 11 in Afghanistan
- European Court cleared the extradition of UK radical cleric Abu Hamza to US
- 64 killed in clashes with al-Qaeda fighters in Yemen
- London was voted the most important city in the world, followed by New York

11 April 2012

- Bo Xilai, a high-ranking Communist Party official, was stripped of his most powerful posts
- The Nepal Army (NA) took control of the Maoist People's Liberation Army (PLA) cantonments, combatants and the weapons stored in containers inside the camps
- Russia urged Syria to implement a troop pullout plan more vigorously, and maintained that a full ceasefire is only possible after the deployment of international monitors

12 April 2012

- Mitt Romney won the Republican Party crown to challenge President Barack Obama in November elections, as chief rival Rick Santorum dropped his long-shot White House bid
- Two massive earthquakes jolted Indonesia, raising the threat of Tsunami in the country
- Sri Lanka faced yet another rights abuse allegation as two senior members of a breakaway faction of the JVP accused the security forces of abducting them

13 April 2012

- North Korea's five-day window to launch a rocket opened with no confirmed firing
- South Sudan's President said that the nation will not withdraw its troops that this week entered a disputed border region with Sudan
- Italian tour operator Bosusco Paolo was finally released by the Odisha State Organising Committee of the outlawed Communist Party of India (Maoist) in Kandhamal district

14 April 2012

- Russia, India and China opposed new sanctions on North Korea
- North Korea's heralded long-range rocket test failed
- External Affairs Minister S.M. Krishna and Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi discussed South China Sea issue on the sidelines of the Russia-India-China (RIC) trilateral conference
- Pakistan's Parliament gave an unanimous but conditional nod to reset up the ties with the U.S.

15 April 2012

- Crucial talks between Iran and the six global powers, which could lift the threat of another military conflict in the region and guarantee unimpeded energy flows from the oil rich Gulf countries resumed on a positive note
- Around 30 Afghans, half of them women, took to the streets of Kabul to protest against the recent killing of five Afghan women
- Pakistan's former Foreign Secretary, Salman Bashir, 60, was appointed High Commissioner to India

16 April 2012

- Taliban militants unleashed a wave of coordinated suicide and gun attacks in Afghanistan targeting the diplomatic area, NATO bases, and Parliament at seven locations in Kabul, and three other eastern cities
- Israel deployed hundreds of police at its main airport to detain activists flying in to protest the country's occupation of Palestinian areas in defiance of vigorous Israeli government efforts to block their arrival
- Iran and world powers agreed in nuclear talks to hold a more in-depth meeting in Baghdad on 23 May 2012 where, the EU's foreign policy chief warned Tehran, concrete results must be achieved

17 April 2012

- Spain's King Juan Carlos faced fire for a hunting trip in Botswana during which the monarch, patron of a wildlife charity, broke his hip and ended up in hospital
- Sudan brands South Sudan 'enemy', as both the country got indulged in bitter clash along the border
- Pope Benedict XVI celebrated a very Bavarian birthday marking his 85 years with his brother, German bishops and a musical band from his native land
- Anders Behring Breivik, a Right-wing fanatic admitted to a bomb-and-shooting massacre that killed 77 people in Norway

18 April 2012

- Jama'at-ud-Dawa chief Hafiz Saeed moved to court over the issue of 10-million dollar bounty announced by the State Department for information leading to his arrest and conviction
- The extreme-Right terrorist, Anders Behring Breivik quizzed over terrorists contact
- Pakistani Army Chief Ashfaq Parvez Kayani advocated peaceful coexistence with India, adding that the civil and military leaderships of the two countries should discuss ways to resolve the issue

19 April 2012

- Bombings in several Iraqi cities killed 30 people
- Sushma Swaraj handed over railway line to Sri Lanka
- Sun's Royal Editor Duncan held over bribes allegation
- Pakistan Prime Minister Yusuf Raja Gilani's son accused in drugs case

20 April 2012

- A private aeroplane with 127 people on board crashed near the federal capital just as it was approaching the Benazir Bhutto International Airport in Rawalpindi for landing
- Aung San Suu Kyi's opposition party planned to boycott Myanmar's Parliament next week in a row that threatens to overshadow the activist's landmark election to public office
- Protests flared up in Egypt, Bahrain

21 April 2012

- Japan forgave Myanmar's 3.7-billion dollar debt and resume development aid as a way to support the country's democratic and economic reforms
- Ten tonnes of explosives seized in Afghanistan
- One killed ahead of Bahrain Grand Prix, At least 50 people have died in the unrest since February 2011 in the longest-running street battles of the Arab Spring

- The Security Council unanimously approved a resolution expanding the number of U.N. ceasefire observers in Syria from 30 to 300

22 April 2012

- Afghanistan and the United States agreed the contents of a long-awaited deal to define their relationship after most foreign troops leave at the end of 2014
- Aung San Suu Kyi's party National League for Democracy (NLD) announced it would postpone its parliamentary debut, in the first sign of discord between Myanmar's newly-elected opposition and reformist government

23 April, 2012

- Afghanistan and the United States agreed the contents of a long-awaited deal to define their relationship after most foreign troops leave at the end of 2014
- Aung San Suu Kyi's party announced it would postpone its parliamentary debut, in the first sign of discord between Myanmar's newly-elected opposition and reformist government
- Charles Colson, a Watergate scandal conspirator who emerged from prison to become an evangelical Christian leader, died

24 April, 2012

- The leader of Iceland's government when the nation's banking system collapsed was convicted of one criminal charge, cleared on four others and faced no punishment
- U.S. President Barack Obama ordered new sanctions on Syria and Iran
- George Zimmerman (28), the Hispanic man who shot dead African-American Trayvon Martin (17) sparking off the year's biggest debate on racial tensions in the United States, was set free on bail
- A voracious virus attack hit computers running key parts of Iran's oil sector, forcing authorities to unplug its main oil export terminal from the Internet and to set up a cyber crisis team

25 April, 2012

- South Sudan's leader accused Sudan of declaring war as Khartoum's fighter jets bombed border regions in defiance of international calls for restraint
- A car bomb rocked central Damascus, a day after nearly 60 people were killed across Syria despite a hard-won ceasefire and the coming deployment of 300 U.N. peace monitors.
- A delegation of Indian MPs met Sri Lankan President Mahendra Rajapaksa
- At least two persons were killed and 25 injured in a bomb explosion inside the Lahore railway station

26 April, 2012

- The Maldivian Parliament ratified the appointment of the Vice-President and Cabinet Ministers
- A high-level group of Afghan, Pakistani and American officials met for the first time since September 2011 for talks on the peace and reconciliation process in Afghanistan
- US pressed criminal charges against BP engineer, Kurt Mix (51) for obstructing justice by deleting communications regarding the true size of the worst spill in the history of US

27 April, 2012

- Liberian ex-leader Charles Taylor was convicted of arming rebels during Sierra Leone's civil war in return for blood diamonds
- Rupert Murdoch admitted there was a “cover-up” at the News of the World over the scale of phone hacking by its journalists and said he wished he had closed it much earlier
- The war crimes tribunal of Bangladesh convicted the Editor of the mouthpiece of the fundamentalist Jamaat-e-Islami of contempt
- Pakistan made it clear that a new arrangement would have to be drawn up for the transit of supplies to the U.S.-led NATO troops in Afghanistan through Pakistani territory

28 April, 2012

- 25000 people staged Malaysia's one of the largest street protest in years
- The former IMF head Robert Strauss Kahn blamed Nicholas Sarkozy for fuelling the sex scandal against him
- Bangladesh Nationalist Party called for a two-day strike as their deadline for the rescue of their disappearing leader expired today

29 April, 2012

- Church services in Nigeria attacked, killing around 20 people
- Cambodian force exchanged fire with Thai forces along their border
- Laxmi Nivas Mittal topped the list of rich Britishers

Practice Sets

<http://www.jagranjosh.com/articles/practice-question-set-on-general-awareness-for-ibps-po-exam-2012-1329732696-1>

<http://www.jagranjosh.com/articles/general-intelligence-sample-questions-for-ssc-graduate-level-exam-2011-2-1316696740-1>

Q n A SSC and Bank Recruitment

Interview Schedule for Allahabad Bank PO Recruitment 2012

Q: Please tell me the exact date for the Interview scheduled by Allahabad Bank for the Recruitment of Probationary Officers (PO) 2012?

A: Allahabad Bank will conduct interview for recruitment of 1600 General Banking Officers (PO) from 16 April 2012. The interview will be conducted in phases at selected centres and end on 29 April 2012.

- **Selection Procedure of Specialist Officer in Indian Bank**

Q: What is the Selection process for recruitment of Specialist Officer in Indian Bank?

A: The Selection Procedure for recruitment of Specialist Officer in Indian Bank for the year 2012 will depend upon the number of the candidates applying for the post. The Bank may opt for

- Only Interview
- Written Test and/ or Group Discussion and/ or Interview
- Written Test and/or Interview
- Group Discussion and/ or Interview

The final selection would be on the basis of the aggregate marks obtained by the candidates in the written examination and/ or Interview and/or Group Discussion and strictly in the order of Merit.

- **Eligibility Criteria for IBPS CWE for PO/ MT Recruitment 2012**

Q: Is MBA necessary for applying for IBPS Probationary Officer Common Written Examination (CWE) 2012?

A: MBA is not necessary for entry level recruitments conducted by public sector banks. However, candidates are expected to be a graduate in any stream for recruitment as Probationary Officer/ Management Trainee in Bank.

The 19 public banks participating in IBPS recruitment includes Allahabad Bank, Andhra Bank, Bank of Baroda, Bank of India, Bank of Maharashtra, Canara Bank, Central Bank of India, Corporation Bank, Dena bank, Indian Bank, Indian Overseas Bank, Oriental Bank of Commerce, Punjab National Bank, Punjab & Sind Bank, Syndicate Bank, Union Bank of India, United Bank of India, UCO Bank, & Vijaya Bank

- **Right way to ask Queries during the Bank Group Discussion**

Q: What is the right way to put up question/queries during a GD?

A: First of all, listen to others carefully. Try not to interrupt in mid-way and it would be good if you raise your hand or any other decent way like raise your pen or pencil just to make others understand that you want to ask or to say something. You can also voice your opinion by saying "Excuse me, but I feel that what you are saying isn't universally true ..." or "I totally agree with you but I would like to ask or add upon it...", "I would beg to differ".. as polite as you can and as required.

- **Document required at the time of Syndicate Bank PO Interview**

Q: What are the documents which I need to carry at the time of interview for the post of Syndicate bank probationary Officer (PO)?

A: Candidates need to carry the following documents at the Syndicate Bank interview for post of Probationary Officer (PO):

1. Downloaded Interview call letter
2. Downloaded Application (submitted to IBPS)
3. Downloaded Application (submitted to Syndicate Bank)
4. IBPS score card
5. Caste/Tribe/Community/Disability Certificate – if applicable
6. SSLC or equivalent Certificate-Proof of date of birth
7. Higher Secondary School Examination Certificate or equivalent
8. Graduation Certificate & Mark card/ CGPA/OGPA - Year wise
9. Post Graduation Certificate & Mark card/ CGPA/OGPA - if applicable
10. Computer Course Certificate (not compulsory)
11. Original fee paid challan
12. Bio-data – duly filled (as downloaded from the Syndicate bank site)
13. Photo Id (Pan Card / Passport / Voters ID / Driving License / Bank Pass Book with attested Photo)

The candidates will not be permitted to attend the interview without submission of the documents

SSC QnA

- **Scheme of Examination for SSC Stenographer Grade C & D Examination 2012**

Q: I have just appeared for 12th CBSE Board Examination 2012 and keen to apply for the Staff Selection Commission (SSC) Stenographer Grade C & D Examination 2012. Can you please brief me the scheme of examination for the same?

A: Staff Selection Commission (SSC) will conduct Stenographer Grade C & D Examination for recruitment in various Government Offices on 29 July 2012. The minimum qualification needed for the same is 12th pass from a recognised Board.

The examination will consist of a **WRITTEN EXAMINATION** and **SKILL TEST** in stenography. The written examination will consist of one objective type paper only comprises of 3 sets; Part I, Part II and Part III and of 2 hours of duration (2 hours 40 minutes for VH category candidates).

The subjects for the respective sets are mentioned below:

- Part I: General Intelligence & Reasoning (50 questions)
- Part II: General Awareness (50 questions)
- Part III: English Language and Comprehension (100 questions)

NOTE: The Paper will consist of Objective Type- Multiple choice questions only. The questions except in Part III will be set both in English & Hindi

For Skill Test, the candidates will have to appear for the stenography test. The candidates will be given one dictation for 10 minutes in English/ Hindi at the speed of 100 w.p.m. for the post of Stenographer Grade 'C' and 80 w.p.m. for the post of Stenographer Grade 'D'.

The transcription time is as follows:

- For Stenographer Grade D: 50 minutes (English); 65 minutes (Hindi)
- For Stenographer Grade C: 40 minutes (English); 55 Minutes (Hindi)

• **SSC Southern Region 2012 Eligibility Criteria for Junior Technical Assistant**

Q: I have done my graduation from Commerce background through Distance Learning and my age is 28 years. Can I apply for the post of Junior Technical Assistant in SSC Southern Region?

A: The educational qualification for Junior Technical Assistant in SSC Southern Region is a Graduate Degree in Commerce or Economics or degree in Law from a recognised University.

However the Degree/ Diploma etc obtained by candidates from Open Universities/ Distance Education will not be accepted unless the same is accompanied by a certificate to the effect that the course is recognised by Distance Education Council in terms of Ministry of Human Resource Development Notification no. 44 published in Gazette of India dated 8 April 1995 for the relevant period when the candidate has acquired the relevant qualification

As for the age you are absolutely eligible as the maximum age for the same is 30 years.

• **Selection Procedure for SSC Sub-Inspector Examination**

Q: What is the Selection Procedure for recruitment of Sub-Inspector in CAPFs and Assistant Sub-Inspector in CISF through SSC examination?

A: The candidate's overall performance will be judged for final recruitment. The candidates will have to undergo the following recruitment tests.

Written Examination (200 marks, 200 questions, 10 am to 12 noon)

a) Part I

- Part A: General Intelligence & Reasoning (50 marks)
- Part B: General Knowledge & General Awareness (50 marks)
- Part C: Quantitative Aptitude (50 marks)

- Part D: English Comprehension (50 marks)
- b) Part II: English Language & Comprehension (200 marks, 200 questions, 10 am to 12 noon)**
- Physical Standard Test (PST)/ Physical Efficiency Test (PET)
 - Detailed Medical Examination (DME)
 - Interview/ Personality Test

Besides this, as part of training curriculum, finally selected candidates for the post of Sub-Inspector and Assistant Sub-Inspector will have to pass seven obstacle events as mentioned below, failing which they may not be retained in the Force:

- Jumping over the Vertical Board
- Holding the rope on jumping from the Board
- Tarzan Swing
- Jumping on the Horizontal Board
- Parallel Rope
- Monkey Crawl
- Vertical Rope
- **Documents to be taken for SSC CPT Module II and Module III Test**

Q: What all things do I need to carry at the time of SSC Computer Proficiency Test (CPT) - Module II & III?

A: The Staff Selection Commission will conduct Computer Proficiency Test (CPT) - Module II and Module III interview of 395 provisionally qualified candidates from Central Region on 18 February 2012 and 19 February 2012 at Devprayag Institute of Technical Studies, Phaphamau, Allahabad.

Candidates are advised to bring attested copies of the following certificates/ documents at the time of the CPT:

- Metric or equivalent certificate in support of date of birth
- Education certificate in support of educational qualification
- SC/ ST/ ExS/ OBC certificate in the prescribed format issued by the competent authority
- "No Objection" certificate if you are already in service
- A recent passport size photograph (to be pasted on the admission certificate)

• **Problem during the tie of marks in SSC exams**

Q: What if there is a tie on aggregate marks between two candidates in SSC Exam?

A: If there are candidates for a particular post/group of posts have the same aggregate marks in both Tier I and Tier II Examinations, including the marks for Interview wherever applicable, then the tie will be resolved by the Commission by referring to the total marks of Tier II examination ie a candidate having more marks in Tier-II will be given preference. If the tie still persists then the total marks in Tier I examination will be referred to ie a candidate having more marks in this Examination will be given preference. This procedure will be followed by Date of Birth, ie, the candidate older in age will get preference. Lastly, if the tie still persists, the tie will be finally resolved by referring to the alphabetical order of names, ie, a candidate whose name begins with the letter which comes first in the alphabetical order will get preference.

Quizzes



Current Affairs Quizzes

Who did the World Bank appoint as its new president on 16 April 2012?

- a. Jim Yong Kim
- b. Robert Zoellick
- c. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala
- d. Lumen Darcy

Answer: (a)

Anders Behring Breivik, who killed 74 people in July 2011, faced prosecution in the case. Breivik, a right wing fanatic belongs to which of the following nations?

- a. Sweden
- b. Switzerland
- c. Spain
- d. Norway

Answer: (d)

The European Union demanded the immediate release of former Malian prime minister Modibo Sidibe and several other prominent figures arrested overnight by a junta that seized power in March 2012. Which of the following statements regarding Sidibe is wrong ?

1. Sidibe was Prime Minister of Mali from September 2007 to April 2011
 2. He also served as the police chief
 3. He also held the position of Health Minister
 4. His father was also the prime minister of Mali
- a. Only 4
 - b. 1 and 3
 - c. Only 2
 - d. None of the above

Answer: (a)

Nearly 127 people killed in a crash of an airline in Pakistan on 21 April 2012. The accident took place at which of the following place of Pakistan?

- a. Rawalpindi
- b. Islamabad
- c. Lahore
- d. Karachi

Answer: (a)

Taking the Corporate Current Affairs Quiz will test as well as enhance your knowledge of major corporate events. The corporate quiz for April 2012 will make you better prepared to face competitive examinations like that of Bank PO, NABARD, RBI, LIC, Civil Services, MBA etc.

Consider the following statements and using the code given below identify the personality with whom these statements are associated

1. He is the Chairman of Hindustan Zinc Limited

2. He also heads MALCO, Sterlite Iron and Steel Company Ltd and Sterlite Infrastructure Pvt. Ltd

3. He is the son of Vedanta Group Chairman Anil Agarwal

4. He has recently picked up 60 per cent stake in Chennai-based nascent Primex Healthcare

- (a) Agnivesh Agarwal
- (b) Ramesh Agarwal
- (c) Brajesh Agarwal
- (d) Ajay Agarwal

Answer: (b)

Which of the following Indian companies has announced to supply Cholera vaccines to the African nation Haiti?

- (a) Ranbaxy
- (b) Pfizer
- (c) Glaxo
- (d) Shantha Biotechnics.

Answer: (d)

Samsung, which announced to launch its new version of the 7-inch tablet in Indian market in early May this year, is headquartered in _____.

- (a) South Korea
- (b) North Korea
- (c) Taiwan
- (d) Thailand

Answer: (a)

Which one of the following given statements is wrong?

- (a) IDBI is a public sector bank
- (b) It has recently launched a Swiss Franc (CHF) denominated bond for an amount of 620 crore Rupees

- (c) RM Malla is presently the CMD of the bank
- (d) The bank provides loan only to the government

Answer: (d)

Which one of the following personalities was appointed as the MD of Sun TV?

- (a) K Vijay Kumar
- (b) Dayanidhi Maran
- (c) Vinod Goenka
- (d) None of the above

Answer: (a)

Consider the following statements using the code given below identify the personality with whom these statements are associated

1. He has recently won a gold medal in the 66kg category at the World qualifying tournament in Taiyuan, China
2. He had won the bronze of the wrestling in the Beijing Olympics 2008
3. He is the only grappler to make it to the London Olympics
4. He had won gold in 2010 Moscow World Wrestling Championship

Code

- A. Vijender Kumar
- B. Akhil Kumar
- C. Sushil Kumar
- D. Rajinder Singh

Answer: C

2. Which one of the following statements is wrong

- A. Rafael Nadal won his seventh Barcelona Title on 29 April 2012

- B. He defeated Novak Djokovic in the final
- C. He is the first player in the open era to win two tournaments seven times
- D. Rafael Nadal has to his credit a total of 48 career title

Answer: B

3. Who among the following tennis players Monte Carlo Open Singles Title ?

- A. Rafael Nadal
- B. Roger Federer
- C. Novak Djokovic
- D. Andy Murray

Answer: A

4. The world number 17 Shon Wan Ho won the men's singles title of India Open Badminton Championship on 29 April 2012. Shon is a _____ player.

- A. Korean
- B. Thai
- C. Chinese
- D. None of the above

Answer: C

5. India's number one Snooker player Aditya Mehta won the Asian Snooker Championship. Which ONE of the following players Mehta defeated to clinch the title?

- A. Pankaj Advani
- B. Hossein Vafaei Ayouri
- C. Sharad Kamal
- D. Jeev Milkha Singh

Answer: A

Union government on 18 April 2012 decided to liberalise the external commercial borrowing (ECB)

norms for the power sector. Power sector companies will now be able to use up to what per cent of ECB loans to refinance their rupee debt?

- a. 35%
- b. 40%
- c. 53%
- d. 27%

Answer: (b)

As per the government data released on 18 April 2012, retail inflation shot up to what per cent in March 2012 because of higher prices of milk, vegetables, protein-based items and edible oil products?

- a. 9.47%
- b. 8%
- c. 7.6%
- d. 5%

Answer: (a)

International Monetary Fund (IMF) in its World Economic Outlook (WEO), released ahead of the IMF-World Bank Spring Meetings, marginally lowered India's economic growth forecast to what per cent in 2012?

- a. 4%
- b. 3.5%
- c. 6.9%
- d. 7.3%

Answer: (c)

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on 17 April 2012 instructed commercial banks to reduce their exposure to gold loan companies to what per cent of their capital funds from the existing 10%?

- a. 9%
- b. 8.3%

- c. 4.1%
- d. 7.5%

Answer: (d)

Commerce Secretary on 19 April 2012 announced that India surpassed the export target of \$300 billion for 2011-12. However due to surging imports India recorded the highest ever trade deficit. What was the trade deficit recorded for the 2011-12?

- a. \$184.9 billion
- b. \$150 billion
- c. 4167.4 billion
- d. \$142 billion

Answer: (a)

Union Government decided on 1 million Cap on External Commercial Borrowing for which of the following sectors?

- a. Handicraft & Small Industries sector
- b. Power sector
- c. Aviation sector
- d. Insurance sector

Answer: (c)

Scientists found diarrhea bug called Dientamoeba Fragilis in_.

- a) Pigs
- b) Rabbits
- c) Rats
- d) Cows

Answer: (a) Pigs

Scientists identified common childhood obesity genes called__ and__.

- a) OLFM4 and HOXB5

b) OLFM and HOX

c) OFM4 and HOXC5

d) OFFM and HOXC5

Answer: (a) OLFM4 and HOXB5

Assam registered a_ percent increase in last three years.

a) 14

b) 15

c) 16

d) 17

Answer: (a) 14

The Union Cabinet of India on 12 April 2012 approved India's Second National Communication to the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Consider the following statements:

i) India is party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCC).

ii) The Convention, in accordance with its Article 4.1 and 12.1, enjoins all Parties, both developed and developing country Parties, to furnish information, in the form of a National Communication (a national report).

a) Both i and ii are correct.

b) Only i is correct.

c) Only ii is correct.

d) Neither i nor ii is correct.

Answer: (a) Both i and ii are correct.

The Union ministry of environment and forests (MoEF) banned the use of live animals in dissection and other experiments in educational and research institutions. The ban is based on __.

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Answer: (a)

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c. Asian Development Bank

d. World Trade Organisation

Answer: (c)

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Which Indian chef visited the historic kitchen of the White House on, which prepares the food for US President Barack Obama, his family and the large number of guests invited to the resident of the first family every day?

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- b. Vinay Lahiri
- c. Sanjeev Kapoor
- d. Rajeev Kapoor

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- b. Maldives
- c. Myanmar
- d. Sri Lanka

Answer: (a)

The two-member Adarsh Judicial Commission set up to probe into the scam-tainted Adarsh Housing Society submitted its interim report to the state Government on 13 April 2012? By which of the following governments was the committee set up?

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- b. Union Government
- c. Gujarat Government
- d. Andhra Pradesh Government

Answer: (a)

Name the Samajwadi Party MLA from Itwa in Sidhartnagar district who was unanimously elected Speaker of the 16th Uttar Pradesh Assembly on 13 April 2012?

- a. Sukhdeo Rajbhar

- b. Mata Prasad Pandey
- c. Syed Ahmed Bukhari
- d. Naresh Uttam

Answer: (b)

MLA, N. Varadarajan, died in Chennai on 10 April 2012. Which of the following facts with regards to Varadarajan is not true?

1. N. Varadarajan was former Tamil Nadu State secretary of the CPI(M) and three-time MLA
2. He was elected to the Tamil Nadu Assembly twice (1977 and 1980)
3. He was elected to the Tamil Nadu Assembly from the Vedasandur constituency in 1983
4. He was elected party secretary in Tamil Nadu in 2005 and again in 2008

- a. Only 1
- b. 1 & 2
- c. Only 3
- d. Only 2

Answer: (c)

Who among the following leaders was re-elected General Secretary of CPI (M) for the third consecutive term at the party's 20th Congress, which took place at Kozhikode?

- a. Brinda Karat
- b. Prakash Karat
- c. Sitaram Yechury
- d. AB Bardhan

Answer: (b)

Name the Pakistani scientist who was granted bail by the Supreme Court of India on 9 April 2012.

- a. Khalil Chishty

- b. Ajmal Chishty
- c. Azam Khan
- d. Hafeez Saeed

Answer: (a)

Union government on 12 April 2012 approved bailout package for Air India. What was the bailout amount cleared by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs?

- a. Rs 30000 crore
- b. Rs 25000 crore
- c. Rs 43000 crore
- d. Rs 27000 crore

Answer: (a)

The Union Cabinet on 12 April 2012 approved the extension of funding support for implementing which of the following schemes under the New Pension System (NPS) from three years to five years for all subscribers?

- a. Trade related Entrepreneurship Assistance and Development (TREAD) Scheme
- b. Gold Credit Pass Book Scheme
- c. Swayamsidha (IWEP)
- d. Swavalamban Scheme

Answer: (d)

Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) on 12 April 2012 also approved an ad-valorem regime for calculating royalty for which of the following?

- a. Coal & Iron ore
- b. Coal & Lignite
- c. Lignite & Copper
- d. Lignite & Zinc

Answer: (b)

Factory output measured by the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) grew by what per cent in February on account of contraction in segments such as consumer durables and intermediate goods?

- a. 3.3%
- b. 2%
- c. 4.1%
- d. 5%

Answer: (c)

Credit rating agency Moody's Investors Service downgraded the local currency rating of which of the following?

- a. BHEL & IOC
- b. BHEL & GAIL
- c. ONGC & IOC
- d. ONGC & GAIL
- e. ONGC & BHEL

Answer: (d)

According to the data provided by the Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH) in April 2012, India's handicrafts exports increased by what per cent year on year to \$ 2.7 billion in the 2011-12 fiscal?

- a. 14.2%
- b. 17.5
- c. 15%
- d. 12.3%

Answer: (b)

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1. The data included in the release were based on Basic Statistical Return (BSR)-10 received from all scheduled commercial banks (excluding RRBs)
 2. The number of banked centres of Scheduled Commercial banks stood at 35,435. 27,913 of these centres were single office centres and 68 centres had 100 or more bank offices
 3. State Bank of India and its Associates accounted for 21.8 per cent of the aggregate deposits
 4. the credit-deposit (C-D) ratio of All Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs) at all India level as on 30 September 2011 stood at 74.4 per cent
- a. Only 1
 - b. 2 & 3
 - c. Only 4
 - d. 3 & 4

Answer: (a)

India's exports grew by what per cent in February 2012 to USD 24.6 billion marking the slowest growth in three months?

- a. 3%
- b. 4.2%
- c. 3.7%
- d. 5.1%

Answer: (b)

As per the Ernst & Young's quarterly Rapid Growth Markets Forecast (RGMF), India is likely to grow at what per cent in calendar year (CY) 2012?

- a. 7%
- b. 7.5%
- c. 6.1%
- d. 6.6%

Answer: (c)

Reserve Bank of India on 3 April 2012 tightened the reporting requirements of the banks to monitor gold import. Consider the statements given below and which of the following is true?

1. As per the directions issued, banks will have to submit a monthly statement informing the central bank about the quantity of gold imported as well as the mode of payment adopted
 2. The directive was issued amidst concerns of huge outflow of foreign exchange on import of gold which is believed to be putting pressure on the India's current account deficit (CAD).
- a. Only 1
 - b. Only 2
 - c. Both 1 & 2
 - d. None of the above

Answer: (c)

Which body on 31 March 2012 issued broad guidelines on Algorithmic Trading. Based on recommendations of technical advisory committee (TAC) and secondary market advisory committee (SMAC)?

- a. IRDA
- b. RBI
- c. ASSOCHAM
- d. SEBI

Answer: (d)

Who did the World Bank appoint as its new president on 16 April 2012?

- a. Jim Yong Kim
- b. Robert Zoellick
- c. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala
- d. Lumen Darcy

Answer: (a)

Anders Behring Breivik, who killed 74 people in July 2011, faced prosecution in the case. Breivik, a right wing fanatic belongs to which of the following nations?

- a. Sweden
- b. Switzerland
- c. Spain
- d. Norway

Answer: (d)

The European Union demanded the immediate release of former Malian prime minister Modibo Sidibe and several other prominent figures arrested overnight by a junta that seized power in March 2012. Which of the following statements regarding Sidibe is wrong ?

1. Sidibe was Prime Minister of Mali from September 2007 to April 2011
2. He also served as the police chief
3. He also held the position of Health Minister
4. His father was also the prime minister of Mali

- a. Only 4
- b. 1 and 3
- c. Only 2
- d. None of the above

Answer: (a)

Nearly 127 people killed in a crash of an airline in Pakistan on 21 April 2012. The accident took place at which of the following place of Pakistan?

- a. Rawalpindi
- b. Islamabad
- c. Lahore
- d. Karachi

Answer: (a)

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Two powerful earthquakes of 8.6 and 8.2 magnitude struck the coast of Sumatra on 12 April 2012. Sumatra is located in which of the following Asian country?

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Answer: (a)

Union government on 18 April 2012 decided to liberalise the external commercial borrowing (ECB) norms for the power sector. Power sector companies will now be able to use up to what per cent of ECB loans to refinance their rupee debt?

- a. 35%
- b. 40%
- c. 53%
- d. 27%

Answer: (b)

As per the government data released on 18 April 2012, retail inflation shot up to what per cent in March 2012 because of higher prices of milk, vegetables, protein-based items and edible oil products?

- a. 9.47%
- b. 8%
- c. 7.6%
- d. 5%

Answer: (a)

International Monetary Fund (IMF) in its World Economic Outlook (WEO), released ahead of the IMF-World Bank Spring Meetings, marginally lowered India's economic growth forecast to what per cent in 2012?

- a. 4%
- b. 3.5%
- c. 6.9%
- d. 7.3%

Answer: (c)

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on 17 April 2012 instructed commercial banks to reduce their exposure to gold loan companies to what per cent of their capital funds from the existing 10%?

- a. 9%
- b. 8.3%
- c. 4.1%
- d. 7.5%

Answer: (d)

Commerce Secretary on 19 April 2012 announced that India surpassed the export target of \$300 billion for 2011-12. However due to surging imports India recorded the highest ever trade deficit. What was the trade deficit recorded for the 2011-12?

- a. \$184.9 billion
- b. \$150 billion
- c. 4167.4 billion
- d. \$142 billion

Answer: (a)

Union Government decided on 1 million Cap on External Commercial Borrowing for which of the following sectors?

- a. Handicraft & Small Industries sector
- b. Power sector
- c. Aviation sector
- d. Insurance sector

Answer: (c)

Union government on 12 April 2012 approved bailout package for Air India. What was the bailout amount cleared by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs?

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Consider the following statements using the code given below identify the personality with whom these statements are associated.

- 2. He won Miami Opens on 1 April 2012
- 3. He defeated Andy Murray in the final
- 4. He holds number 1 rank in world tennis ranking
- 5. He is a Serbian National

- (a) Rafael Nadal
- (b) Roger Federer
- (c) Novak Djokovic
- (d) Letan Hewitt

Answer: (b)

Which one of the following statements is wrong?

- (a) Andy Murray is a British National
- (b) He was the runner-up in the Miami Opens
- (c) He is the number four of world tennis ranking
- (d) His highest career ranking is one

Answer: (d)

NKP Salve who passed away on 1 April 2012 was the president of BCCI, when the Indian cricket team won the cricket world cup in ____.

- (a) 1987
- (b) 1996
- (c) 2011
- (d) 1983

Answer: (d)

Geeta Poghat, who on 1 April 2012 qualified for London Olympics 2012 belongs to which of the following sports?

- (a) Wrestling

- (b) Boxing
- (c) Gymnastic
- (d) Weight-Lifting

Answer: (c)

Lender Paes clinched his 50 career title at Miami Opens, Paes won the doubles title with _____

- (a) Radek Stepanek
- (b) Max Mirnyi
- (c) Daniel Nestor
- (d) Mahesh Bhupati

Answer: (a)

Consider the following statements using the code given below identify the personality with whom these statements are associated

1. She is the chairman of Biotechnology company Biocon limited
2. She was awarded with the Economic Times Businesswoman of the Year award in 2004
3. Her company has announced a dividend of 5 rupees per share
4. She is also the founder of Biocon

Code

- A. Naina Lal Kidwai
- B. Sunita Narain
- C. Kiran Bedi
- D. Kiran Mazumdar Shaw

Answer D

Which one of the following statements is wrong

- A. NTPC has successfully completed the automation package for the Simhadri Stage-II

- B. It is NTPC's first coastal-based coal-fired thermal power project
- C. The super thermal power project located near Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh
- D. NTPC is a private energy company, based in China

Answer: D

Telecom giant Vodafone on 23 April 2012 inked pact to acquire which of the following company?

- A. Motorola
- B. Stel
- C. CWW
- D. Docomo

Answer: C

Food major Nestle acquired Pfizer's infant nutrition business for 11.85 billion dollar, Nestle is a _____ based company.

- A. USA
- B. Britain
- C. Switzerland
- D. Norway

Answer: C

S. Narsing Rao, former chairman of Singareni Collieries Company Ltd (SCCL), took charge as the Chairman and Managing Director of which of the following company ?

- A. Indian Oil
- B. Coal India Limited
- C. National Mineral Development Corporation
- D. Essar

Answer: B

General Knowledge Quiz

1. Which World Heritage-listed 25 million year-old lake is known as the oldest freshwater lake in the world?

- a) Lake Como, Italy
- b) Lake Geneva/Lac Léman, Switzerland/France
- c) Lake Baikal, Russian Federation
- d) Lake Titicaca, Peru/Bolivia

The correct answer is c) Lake Baikal, Russian Federation

2. Machu Picchu is located in what country?

- a) Argentina
- b) Ecuador
- c) Columbia
- d) Peru

The correct answer is d) Peru

3. One of the most famous temples in India is the one at Tirupathi. Who is the presiding deity at this temple?

- a) Krishna
- b) Saraswathi
- c) Ganesha
- d) Venkateshwara

The correct answer is d) Venkateshwara

4. By July 14 2015, the New Horizons spacecraft will arrive to study which celestial object?

- a) Pluto
- b) Sedna
- c) Eris
- d) Halley's comet

The correct answer is a) Pluto

5. If you found a dong in your pocket, in what country would you likely be?

- a) Vietnam
- b) Cambodia
- c) Laos
- d) Myanmar

The correct answer is a) Vietnam

6. Which of the following personalities has been appointed as the head of Tehelka Panel after the much in news resignation of its chief K.Venkataswamy?

- a)G.C. Saxena
- b)S.N. Variyawa
- c)S.N. Phukan

d)Kuldeep Singh

The correct answer is c)S.N. Phukan

7. Is European law always supreme over our domestic laws?

a) no

b) only in matters of trade

c) yes

d) only if we haven't voted against the measure as a country

The correct answer is c) yes

8. Which symbol can I use to show copyright?

a. The letter R in a circle ®

b. Letters TM TM

c. The letter C in a circle ©

The correct answer is c. The letter C in a circle ©

9. Apart from the Japanese script, what name is often found on stamps from Japan?

a) Japan

b) Empire of Japan

c) Nippon

d) Edo

The correct answer is c) Nippon

10. For the pedestrian, what is the name of the sneaker brand which means Victory?

a) Nike

b) Reebok

c) Adidas

d) Puma

The correct answer is a) Nike

11. In what year was the WTO (World Trade Organisation) created?

A 1995

B 1994

C 1993

D 1992

The correct answer is A) 1995

12. Acclaimed film maker Satyajit Ray's debut film "Pather Panchali" released in 1955 and was a great success. Which of these films did he NOT make?

a) Apur Sansar

b) Charulata

c) Mahanagar

d) Bawarchi

The correct answer is d) Bawarchi

13. Finger lickin good.

A. Popeye's

B. Mrs. Winters

C. Kentucky Fried Chicken

D. ChikFilA

The correct answer is C) Kentucky Fried Chicken

14. A rainbow (or any other color now) fruit with a bite taken out of it?

a) Macintosh Mowers

b) Musselman's

c) Apple

d) Chiquita

The correct answer is c) Apple

15. This was the Soviet Union's highest order and was presented with the star of a Hero of The Soviet Union:

- a) Order of the October Revolution
- b) Order of the Glory
- c) Order of Honour
- d) The Order of Lenin

The correct answer is d) The Order of Lenin

16. Which currency is used in Latvia?

- a) Lita
- b) Lati
- c) Drams
- d) Tenge

The correct answer is b) Lati

17. Which country experimented with the first mirror landing system?

- a) Japan
- b) USA
- c) England
- d) France

The correct answer is a) Japan

18. In the Spanish-American War, more U.S. troops died from this than from any other cause. What was it?

- a) battle wounds
- b) gangrene
- c) eating contaminated meat
- d) drinking bad water

The correct answer is c) eating contaminated meat

19. Which of the following human activities does NOT release carbon dioxide into the atmosphere?

- a) burning fossil fuels
- b) fishing
- c) deforestation
- d) driving

The correct answer is b) fishing

20. When a person publicly announces they cannot repay their loans it is called

- a) deposit
- b) bankruptcy
- c) mortgage

The correct answer is b) bankruptcy

21. Which of these animals is not represented by one of the fuwa which were the mascots for the 2008 Beijing Olympics?

- a) Panda
- b) Swift
- c) Fish
- d) Tiger

The correct answer is d) Tiger

22. Which monument was built to commemorate the visit of King George V and Queen Mary to Bombay?

- a) India Gate
- b) Gateway of India
- c) Victoria Terminus
- d) Elephanta Caves

The correct answer is b) Gateway of India

23. A generator. It normally creates direct current electricity.

- a) durain
- b) diode
- c) duramen
- d) dynamo

The correct answer is d) dynamo

24. What is defined as 'the study of sentence structure'?

- a) Morphology
- b) Semantics
- c) Phonology
- d) Syntax

The correct answer is d) Syntax

25. What environmental problem is the result of chemical reactions in the atmosphere that involve sulphur?

- a) Deforestation
- b) Acid rain
- c) Holes in the ozone layer
- d) Smog

The correct answer is b) Acid rain

26. The operational jet fighter was invented during this war.

- a) World War I
- b) World War II
- c) The Spanish Revolution
- d) The Korean War

The correct answer is b) World War II

27. The Filmfare Awards were initially referred to as

- a) The Hero Awards
- b) The Phalke Awards
- c) The Deon Awards
- d) The Clare Awards

The correct answer is d) The Clare Awards

28. Which region is often called "The Land of 5 Rivers"?

- a) Punjab (India and Pakistan)
- b) France
- c) Thailand
- d) Bangladesh

The correct answer is a) Punjab (India and Pakistan)

29. Margaret Mead became world famous in the field of ... ?

- a) Anthropology
- b) Sociology
- c) Geology
- d) Bioethics

The correct answer is a) Anthropology

30. How many people can share a Nobel Prize?

- a) Not more than 1
- b) Not more than 2
- c) Not more than 3
- d) Not more than 4

The correct answer is c) Not more than 3

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