

Editorial

Dear Reader,

On the 25th of September 2015, Prime Minister Modi is expected to address the United Nations summit on the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda. As the world transitions from the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), it is a matter of great concern that the decision to sign and agree to the SDGs has seen virtually no debate in India. Our lead story this week is an attempt to rectify this in part and we hope it will set off an informed discussion on the ambitious agenda that will have far reaching implications on the most voice-less people of our country.

The MDG helped India and the world, focus and move forward on a number of development related issues, but they were criticized for the poor consultative process that was followed in defining them. As a result of which we saw a process that included wide stakeholder participation (at the governmental level) and a move from the 18 MDG targets to 17 SDG Goals and 169 targets. These SDG goals cover an entire gamut of development and environmental goals (the latter included for the very first time) that member countries will focus on for the next 15 years. While the addition of environmental issues to the existing targets focusing on poverty, health, and education must be celebrated as a recognition of the seriousness of the underlying concerns on climate change etc., leading voices in development planning like, Bjorn Lomborg, director of Copenhagen Consensus Center, believe that this “laundry list” approach to goals and targets will mitigate against the SDG’s success, as international development aid and national budgets will be spread too thin to make any real progress in all these areas.

Our lead story also identifies the issues that will be crucial for SDG’s to be effective in India, including implementation through the active participation of various public, private and non-profit agencies, and the need to avoid contradictions between principles and implementation strategies. The latter becomes especially important as India’s contradictory stands on universal energy access, and Education for All vs. proposed changes to the Child Labour Act, seem to indicate that there is a lack of cogent thinking at the policy level. Considering the deep ramifications of the SDGs, especially on the most marginalized sections of our society, this debate, and decisions, cannot be left to the government and the rarefied portals of international aid agencies alone – it’s time to mainstream the discussion so that India decides to spend its money to achieve the SDG goals in the most just, equitable and efficient manner.

The last week also saw some interesting developments at the national policy level. The Environment Ministry seems to have decided to bypass the Supreme Court and the expert committee on cutting trees in eco-sensitive zones around 650 wildlife areas – a sign that the government is in a rush to please corporate-India as they turn up the volume on the “nothing has changed on the ground” narrative?

A similar disdain, if you will, for institutions, was seen in the government’s recent moves on the revised draft of the Indian Financial Code (IFC). The Ministry of Finance’s proposal that monetary policy decisions should be taken by the majority in a seven-member committee in which the RBI Governor will not have veto power was received so poorly that the government had to back down on this issue. As we go to print there are reports that the RBI Dy Governor has also raised his concern on government “attempting to define the financial regulator’s responsibilities, (via) the revised draft Indian Financial Code (IFC) leaves various issues unaddressed”. These frequent run-in’s with the regulator have left the financial sector and investors with a sense of unease...surely not a good sign for a country that wants to become the manufacturing engine of the world!

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Articulating the Indian policy on Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which are due to be signed in September 2015 inaugurate the onset of a new and potentially more ambitious policy framework in the international development discourse. Building on the broad success of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which expire in 2015, the SDGs were negotiated at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) in 2012. Resulting in an outcome document appropriately titled the ‘The Future We Want’¹, the SDGs focus on international developmental outcomes hinging on three pillars viz. economic, social and environmental². They balance three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental.

They have identified five areas as being “of critical importance for humanity and the planet”³ over the next 15 years viz. **people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership.**

These broad areas are encapsulated within **17 Goals and 169 targets**, which will come into effect from January 2016. Some of the key goals include⁴:

- Eradicating poverty in all its forms, including extreme poverty, and end hunger.
- Inclusive education at all levels.
- Universal health coverage and access to quality healthcare.
- Sustainable economic growth.
- Sustainable production and consumption.
- Remove harmful unilateral trade-related action by countries, not in keeping with international law.
- Dealing with climate change through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.
- Protecting the commons and biodiversity.
- Regulating the fallouts of urban development.
- Ensuring international peace and security in conformity with international law.
- Protecting the dignity and well-being of international migrants.

The success of these goals will largely depend on the extent to which we have been able to learn lessons from more than a decade of MDGs, at both the global and national levels.

Evaluating the MDGs:

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were signed in 2000 after the failures of the exclusion of social development from economic goals became evident. Highlighting the need of inclusion and participation cutting across boundaries of states and populations⁵, the MDGs were a set of eight core goals relating to poverty, education, gender equity, child mortality, maternal health, health, environmental sustainability and global partnership for development.

After more than 15 years of MDGs, it is being argued that they have set a successful foundation for adopting the SDGs. However, this is not entirely true. The success of MDGs has been limited to some areas only, as the graph below shows:

¹ United Nations n.d.

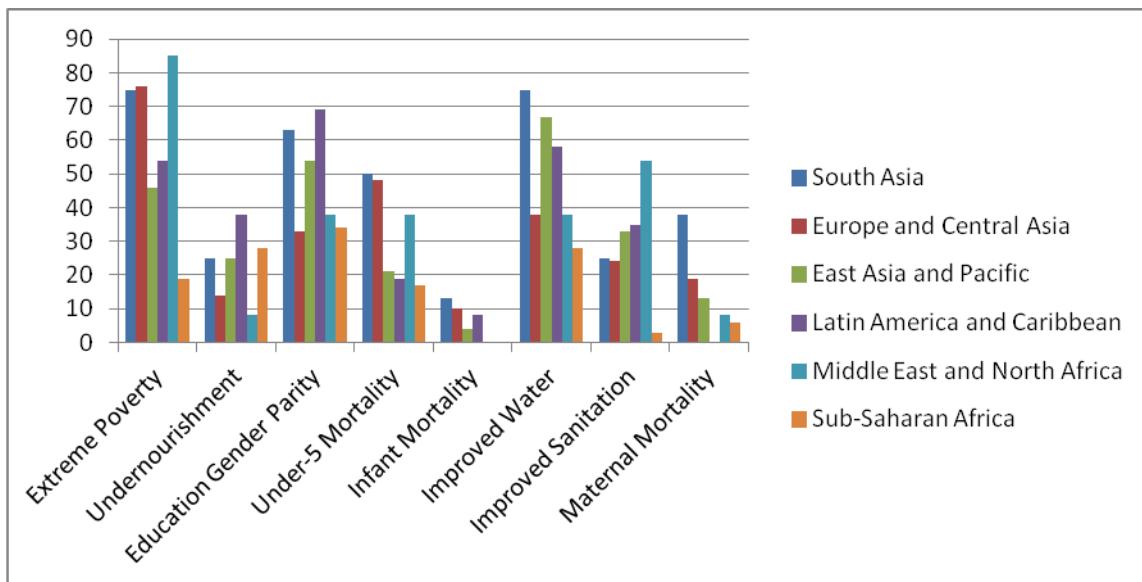
² Bakshi and Kumar 2013.

³ United Nations 2015.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Kaul, Grunberg and Stern 1999.

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Source: Information taken from the World Bank Data. Graph compiled by the author.

The data above shows that while the targets for the reduction in extreme poverty, education gender parity, access to water and, to a lesser extent, improved sanitation, have largely been met by various regions of the world to varying degrees, the same cannot be said of critical social indicators like access to food and mortality rates especially for infants.

Implementing the SDGs: A leap forward?

- **Potential for realization:** In sharp contrast to the MDGs which consisted of 8 goals and 18 targets, the SDGs consist of 17 goals and 169 targets. The scale of the task not only puts a question mark on the difficulty of the political will needed to be summoned to achieve the targets, but also makes the economics of it, all the more ambiguous. Many economists from the organization, **Copenhagen Consensus**, have expressed scepticism at the feasibility of several of the SDGs. The big question that they raise is around the effective utilisation of the 2.5 trillion USD international assistance and its optimal utilisation for the achievement of SDG targets⁶.
- **Ignoring the neo-liberal malaise:** Another weakness of the current UN policy lies in that it advocates superficial solutions to deep-rooted issues. In a context where we are overshooting⁷ the earth's capacity by 50% every year, solutions like resource efficiency and sustainable business practices really amounts to implicitly supporting neo-liberal extraction and accumulation by the corporates. This will have adverse effects in many areas:
 - **Poverty-eradication:** Growth by accumulation has not helped in poverty reduction⁸ –between 1999 and 2008, the poorest 60% of world's population received only 5% of the income generated through global GDP growth. Moreover, the \$1.25 per day poverty line⁹ of World Bank doesn't account for developing country realities. In India, even children living just above this poverty line have a 60% chance of being malnourished. So even if we accept the current poverty line and achieve our target by 2030, it will be at the cost of excluding nearly half the humanity.

⁶ The Economist 2015.

⁷ Hickel 2015.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

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- Food scarcity: Neo-liberalization of food commodity markets has encouraged financial speculation in these markets since 2007, pushing millions into hunger. Yet the SDGs only call for their better regulation instead of reform or overhaul.
- Weak financial market regulation: Despite the fact that the Global Financial Crisis of 2008 still continues, the SDGs do not call for strict regulation of banks. They do not address issues like tax evasion and debt restructuring which drain, respectively, nearly 1.7 trillion USD and 700 billion USD each year.

Implementing SDGs in India:

The Indian position¹⁰ on the SDGs can be analysed through three themes:

- Nature of development priorities: India's SDG priorities emphasize overarching focus on eradication of poverty and hunger¹¹; focus on economic goals emphasizing economic growth, full employment, creation of infrastructure, and industrialization; inclusion of the goal of Sustainable Consumption Patterns achieved with great difficulty¹². Thus, **emphasis on economic growth forms the core of India's policy vis-a-vis the SDGs**. It, in fact, anchors the rest of the goals in the social and ecological domains. **Such a position is unfortunate, since, it is based on an implicit assumption that realization of one set of targets would be preferred over another, equally important, set.** It is also ironical, since, the SDGs are premised on a commitment to the goals of sustainability, and, in that sense, are closely linked to environmental and natural resource governance¹³.
- Nature of discharge of negotiated commitments: In line with the position of common but differentiated responsibilities, India insisted on prioritization of the closely related imperative of 'universal access' with respect to critical issues like removal of poverty and access to energy. For instance, India has insisted on the removal of the reference to 'extreme poverty' in the Preamble and Declaration to the SDGs¹⁴ – the rationale being that the term 'extreme' in speaking about poverty would, quantitatively, refer only to poverty in Least developed and developing countries, thereby masking the many injustices of simply 'poverty' prevailing in the developed countries, and limiting the 'universality' of the agenda.
- Nature of implementation mechanisms agreed upon: Here India has a clear position, which is in line with its historical position, wherein it expects the developed countries to contribute, in the form of aid and global public goods additionality, to help the developing countries in the national implementation of the development goals. This position comes out clearly in the Indian policy position insisting upon the centrality of the Goal Number 17 viz. 'Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development'.

Thus, for India, there are two broad policy priorities that elucidate its current position on the SDGs:

- Political will to adopt the SDGs as a central feature of the new Post-2015 Development Agenda.
- Transfer of financial and technical assistance to the developing countries.

However, in order to have a stronger position on the SDGs, India needs to go beyond its current stand and overcome the contradictions that may potentially undermine its own international and domestic legitimacy and harm the domestic implementation of the SDGs.

¹⁰ United Nations 2015.

¹¹ Emphasis on eradication of poverty and hunger is considered the 'single biggest takeaway' for India from the SDG negotiations (Dasgupta 2015).

¹² Dasgupta 2015.

¹³ United Nations Environment Programme 2015.

¹⁴ United Nations 2015.

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Way Forward:

- **Responsibility structure:** There are two aspects that are crucial here:
First, the SDGs –in continuity with the normative structure of the MDGs – need to be implemented through the active participation of various public, private and non-profit actors¹⁵.

Second, India also should not shy away from being held accountable at the international level. During the SDGs negotiations, India took the unfortunate stand that, “We suggest deleting the term ‘mutual accountability’”¹⁶, from the ‘follow-up and review’ process of the SDGs. This removal of accountability is unfortunate. Thus, instead of insisting that ‘mutual accountability’ be deleted altogether, India needs to insist on the principle of differentiated accountability.
- **Stronger emphasis on the principle of equity:** In order to translate its international policy commitments into domestic policy action, India not only needs to sustain its consistent emphasis on the principle of equity in the international negotiations, but also needs to back up this rhetoric through substantive international action. Key international institutions, responsible for the operationalization of resources for implementation of development programmes, continue to be full of deep inequalities in representation. “Bodies of activities engaged in operational activities for development is almost 25% as compared to their share in UN membership of 15%.”¹⁷ Lack of representation here translates into lack of political power.
- **Avoid self-defeating and contradictory positions:** An unfortunate feature of India’s policy position on the SDGs is there are contradictions between principles and implementation strategies. For e.g., universal energy access is not a purely economic aim, but a developmental one. If India continues to insist that the economic pillar of SDGs be mainstreamed as a ‘pre-condition’ to negotiating others, then its argument on ensuring universal energy access through the differentiated responsibilities of the developed countries becomes considerably weakened.

In this context, another major contradiction in the Indian policy stand comes from its ambiguous approach towards progress and education of children. On the one hand, India is being lauded at major United Nations forums for progressing in terms of achieving the goal of ‘Education for All’. On the other hand, the government plans to amend the Child Labour Act of 1986 in order to allow children below the age of 14 to work in households or ‘non-hazardous’ family enterprises, including fields, forests and home-based work.¹⁸ This contradictory stand will hit children from low-income households and poor educational backgrounds the most viz. the Dalits, OBCs, Muslims and girls, besides being contradictory to the government’s Beti Bachao Andolan.¹⁹

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¹⁵ McArthur 2013.

¹⁶ United Nations 2015.

¹⁷ United Nations 2015.

¹⁸ Chauhan, *Hindustan Times* 2015.

¹⁹ *Hindustan Times* 2015.

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Headlines

Prime Minister Announces Rs 1.25 Lakh Crore Package for Poll-Bound Bihar, Targets Nitish Kumar

(Outlook, August 18, 2015)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a stupendous Rs 1.25 lakh crore economic package for poll-bound Bihar, raising the stakes in the high-pitched electoral battle, a must-win for BJP after its Delhi decimation. Conveying a sense of urgency, Modi addressed gatherings at two events in the key Hindi heartland state, barely hours after his arrival from a two-day visit to the UAE, and unleashed a scathing attack on Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, contending that he lowered Bihar's prestige by pleading with the previous UPA governments for a package of a measly Rs 12,000 crore. The high point of the Prime Minister's speech was the announcement of the much-awaited economic package of a whopping Rs 1.25 lakh crore, a contentious issue over which he was repeatedly targeted by Kumar ever since he made the promise during last year's Lok Sabha elections. He said the package, whose details he did not disclose, will be in addition to the ongoing development projects worth over Rs 40,000 crore already being funded by the Centre.

Read More: <http://www.outlookindia.com/news/article/pm-announces-rs-125-lakh-crore-package-for-pollbound-bihar-targets-nitish/910240>

Date Accessed: 19.08.2015

Environment Ministry Seeks to Bypass SC on Wildlife Projects

(Chetan Chauhan, Hindustan Times, August 18, 2015)

“The environment ministry has decided to independently allow the cutting of trees for development projects in eco-sensitive zones around 650 wildlife areas “without waiting” for the approval of the Supreme Court and the government’s expert wildlife committee, a decision that signals a confrontation with the judiciary.”

Read more: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/environment-ministry-seeks-to-bypass-sc-on-wildlife-projects/article1-1381207.aspx>

Date Accessed: 21.8.2015

Economy

Table 1: General Inflation Rates in Indian States: July 2015 (%)

States	Rural	Urban	General
All India	5.00	3.51	4.16
Northern Region			
Jammu & Kashmir	8.27	2.44	5.88
Himachal Pradesh	10.18	2.87	8.28
Punjab	7.21	5.35	6.23
Chandigarh	14.61	-1.22	0.29
Uttarakhand	4.62	3.67	3.94
Haryana	5.50	5.16	4.99
Delhi	6.68	5.02	5.89
Uttar Pradesh	3.61	3.16	3.15
Western Region			
Rajasthan	5.28	6.14	5.37
Gujarat	3.44	4.15	3.86
Maharashtra	6.25	3.09	4.28
Goa	8.03	6.88	6.73
Lakshadweep	12.72	5.14	8.87
Daman & Diu	20.25	8.88	15.23
Dadra Nagar & Haveli	19.08	5.25	12.95
Central Region			
Madhya Pradesh	4.17	4.96	4.38
Chattishgarh	9.28	2.70	6.34
Southern Region			
Andhra Pradesh	8.63	4.05	6.61
Karnakata	7.17	2.47	4.75
Kerala	4.67	1.09	3.17
Tamil Nadu	3.98	3.57	3.89
Puducherry	14.49	7.83	10.02
Andaman & Nicobar Island	12.87	2.87	7.74
Northeastern Region			
Arunachal Pradesh	5.22		
Assam	3.87	2.88	3.11
Manipur	20.85	5.71	14.99
Meghalaya	-3.51	6.89	-2.17
Mizoram	7.31	3.33	4.67
Nagaland	10.66	5.41	8.19
Tripura	6.96	4.52	5.83
Sikkim	10.24	1.22	8.71
Eastern Region			
Bihar	4.42	2.50	3.61
Jharkhand	5.77	2.45	4.18
West Bengal	0.09	2.69	1.08
Odisha	6.94	1.24	4.96

- Source: State-wise monthly inflation rates are estimated from year on year Consumer Price Index (CPI) data of MOSPI.
- There is one month time lag in CPI data (From the month February 2015 onwards the New Series is introduced with base 2012=100) provided by MOSPI, Government of India.
- The 2014 July data at state-level with base 2010 is here converted to new base 2012 with linking factors of MOSPI 1.22, 1.20 and 1.21 for rural, urban and combined respectively.

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Centre Notifies Tax Rebate for 21 Backward Districts

(*Business Standard*, August 19, 2015)

21 districts of Bihar including its capital 'Patna' have been put under 32 and 32 AD of the IT Act for the period April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2020. Now, these 21 districts are notified as "backward areas" and for the respective period entrepreneurs will pay 15 per cent less income tax on investments in buildings, new plants and machinery.

Read more: http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/centre-notifies-tax-rebate-for-21-backward-districts-115081900036_1.html

Date Accessed: 19.8.2015

PM Modi to Bet \$1.5 Billion on Palm Oil Plan

(*NDTV*, August 18, 2015)

India plans to spend \$1.5 billion in the next three years to help farmers grow oil palm trees, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi pushing to make the nation self-sufficient in edible oils this decade. PM Modi is targeting India's \$10 billion import bill for edible oils, its third-highest overseas spend after oil and gold. Mr. Modi has already been considering buying oilseeds directly from farmers and boosting government support for growing rapeseed, soybeans and peanuts.

Read more: <http://food.ndtv.com/food-drinks/modi-to-bet-1-5-billion-on-palm-oil-plan-as-imports-surge-1208487>

Date accessed: 18.08.15

Coffee Stocks up as Govt weighs FDI in its Plantation

(*The Financial Express*, August 18, 2015)

Coffee stocks today surged up to 12 per cent as the government considers allowing foreign direct investment (FDI) in the commodity's plantation sector. A proposal to this effect is under consultation of the Commerce and Industry Ministry, sources said. Currently, 100 per cent foreign investment is permitted through the government approval route in the tea plantation sector. However, FDI is not allowed in any other plantation sector or activity.

Read more: <http://www.financialexpress.com/article/markets/indian-markets/coffee-stocks-up-as-govt-weighs-fdi-in-its-plantation/121255/>

Date accessed: 18.08.15

The Reserve Bank and the Government

(*Economic & Political Weekly*, August 15, 2015)

The proposal of the revised draft of the Indian Financial Code (IFC), put out last month by the Ministry of Finance, that any decision on monetary policy should be taken by the majority in a seven-member committee in which the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor will not have any veto power, is undeniably an attempt to curtail the autonomy of the central bank. The government, when faced with immediate and widespread criticism, was quick to disown the revised draft. The finance secretary denied ownership of the document by the ministry, and very disingenuously claimed that as the revised draft IFC was a compilation of public responses, "the people of India owned the draft." However, there was no compilation in the revised draft; there was one specific proposal. A well-laid out process for preparing the IFC was overturned by the finance ministry and the initial draft which morphed into the revised draft had the clear imprint of the ministry. The difference of opinion regarding the conduct of monetary policy between the RBI and the finance ministry may have come out in the open with the preparation of the revised draft code, but this conflict is an age-old dilemma of when to move from a tightening to an easing rate cycle in monetary policy. The clamour for central bank autonomy in a democracy comes from the desire to have a credible institutional framework for the conduct of monetary policy. There will always be a difference of opinion. What is new is the slow but steady unmasking of the current government's objective to intervene in policymaking at all levels and in all institutions. It is from this angle that the recent developments in the Film and Television Institute of India, Indian Council of Historical Research and the RBI can all be

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seen as part of a larger design to subvert institutions. Pliable institutions which are hand-maidens of the executive may make the life of a government easy but may not enhance national welfare.

Read More: <http://www.epw.in/editorials/reserve-bank-and-government.html>

Date Accessed: 18.08.2015

Governance and Development

POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE

IT Companies Contribute to CSR Activities in a Major Way

(*Governance Now*, August 14, 2015)

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) rules were put in place in 2013. Four of the top IT services firms—Tata Consultancy Services Ltd (TCS), Wipro Ltd, Infosys Ltd and Tech Mahindra Ltd—spent Rs.642.7 crore in fiscal year 2014-15, the first year of implementation. Most companies carry out their CSR activities through non-profit foundations. However, one of the challenges for the companies is to find NGOs that have the capacity to be able to accept the funds from corporate entities.

Read more: <http://www.governancenow.com/news/csr/it-companies-contribute-csr-activities-in-a-major-way>

Date Accessed: 14.8.2015

GOVERNMENT

Special Cell Formed in Odisha to Expedite Investment Approvals

(*Jayajit Dash, Business Standard*, August 17, 2015)

The Odisha government has set up new entity christened state level facilitation cell (SLFC) to fast track approvals for investment projects. Under the new arrangement, SLFC has categorised companies as green and non-green. They will provide clearances to green category projects within 15 days while for others it will be 30 days.

Read more: http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/special-cell-fomed-in-odisha-to-expedite-investment-approvals-115081700785_1.html

Date Accessed: 19.8.2015

EDUCATION

Government keen on 'Exporting' Higher Education

(*Deccan Herald*, August 21, 2015)

"The Ministry of Commerce, which is holding an inter-ministerial consultation, has sought Human Resource Development Ministry's view on how degree courses can be offered to students abroad online under a regulatory mechanism."

Read more: <http://www.deccanherald.com/content/496416/govt-keen-exporting-higher-education.html>

Date Accessed: 21.8.2015

Striking FTII Students Seek Prime Minister's Intervention

(*Huffington Post*, August 20, 2015)

Striking FTII students today called for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's intervention in resolving the 71-day-old crisis in the premier institute over the appointment of TV actor and BJP member Gajendra Chauhan as its chairman. Five students were arrested on charges of rioting after the institute's director Prashant Pathrabe was confined to his chamber, following which the government formed a team of senior I&B department officials to resolve the impasse. The students were released on bail by a Pune court yesterday. "Prime Minister should visit FTII to resolve the issues. All students in the country are feeling threatened by the government's insensitivity towards the problems being faced by them. The students should strike hard and strong if this continues", representative of the FTII Students' Association (FSA) Vikas Urs told reporters here. Academic activity in FTII came to a grinding halt after students went on a flash strike on June 12 against Chauhan's appointment boycotting classes.

Read more: http://www.huffingtonpost.in/2015/08/20/ftii-students_n_8013680.html?utm_hp_ref=india

Date Accessed: 20.08.2015

Governance and Development

HEALTH

Politics of Immunisation

(*Economic and Political Weekly*, August 15, 2015)

The union health ministry has asked the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (NTAGI) to examine the feasibility of introducing the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine in the country's universal immunisation programme. However, a large number of public health have written to the union health minister flagging issues about its safety and capability.

Read more: <http://www.epw.in/editorials/politics-immunisation.html>

Accessed on August 20, 2015

Sacks of Unread Letters Hold up India's Fight against Tobacco

(Aditya Kalra, *Reuters*, August 19, 2015)

Bulging sacks of letters gathering dust at India's health ministry are the latest obstacle to a push for tougher laws to curb smoking, as more than 100,000 unread messages from members of the public overwhelm officials and stall legislation. The government wants to raise the minimum smoking age to 21 from 18 and ban the sale of single cigarettes, which make up 70 percent of overall sales. Before taking its proposals to parliament, the government in January asked for public suggestions. The result was unprecedented – 45,000 e-mails and more than 100,000 letters delivered by mail, in white and brown sacks stacked up in the health ministry, beside the desks of officials working on computers. Analysing and collating public responses is crucial for the legislative process to move forward. The sheer volume has left officials stumped, with some fearing that it could take as much as five months to sift through the letters. Some health officials suspect the letter-writing campaign was orchestrated by the tobacco industry to hold up the process.

Read more: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/08/19/india-health-tobacco-idUSKCN0QO08220150819>

Date Accessed: 19.08.2015

ENVIRONMENT

World's First Entirely Solar-Powered Airport Unveiled in Kochi

(Alissa Greenberg, *Time*, August 18, 2015)

Cochin International Airport in the southern Indian state of Kerala became the world's first entirely solar-powered airport on Tuesday, unveiling a new system that will make the airport "absolutely power neutral," according to a statement released by the parent company. The airport's solar power plant, which is comprised of more than 46,000 solar panels arrayed across 45 acres of land, will produce 48,000 units of energy per day. Over the next 25 years, Cochin International's solar power station is expected to save 300,000 tons worth of carbon emissions, which is the equivalent of planting three million trees or not driving 750 million miles.

Read more: <http://time.com/4002630/solar-power-india-airport-flight-green-technology-renewable-energy-environment/>

Date Accessed: 18.08.2015

LAW AND JUSTICE

The Problem Drug Patents pose for Developing Countries

(The South African Institute of International Affairs, August 6, 2015)

India is one of the key providers of generics to developing states. It supplies 20% of the global market for generic medicines and accounts for more than 80% of the world's anti-retroviral purchases annually. Indian generic drug manufacturing capabilities,

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which have brought down the price of certain medicines, benefited from a [lack of patent barriers](#). But global patent laws imposed in the last decade, including one in [India in 2005](#), mean that certain drugs cannot be manufactured by the generic industry.

Read more: <http://www.saiia.org.za/opinion-analysis/the-problem-drug-patents-pose-for-developing-countries>

Date Accessed: 13.8.2015

HC Asks Govt Servants, Ministers to Send Their Kids to Govt Schools in UP

(*Indian Awaaz*, August 19, 2015)

In a revolutionary ruling, the Allahabad High Court has asked the Uttar Pradesh Chief Secretary to ensure those government servants, elected representatives and members of judiciary, and all the other persons who get any benefit or salary from state exchequer or public fund to send their children to primary schools run by the state board for secondary education. Passing the Judgement, Justice Sudhir Agarwal also ruled that penal provisions be laid down for those who violated the order.

Read more: <http://theindianawaaz.com/top-awaaz/hc-asks-govt-servants-ministers-to-send-their-kids-to-govt-schools-in-up/>

Date Accessed: 19.08.2015

Society

GENDER

Let's Expose the Gender Pay Gap

(*The New York Times*, August 14, 2015)

The Securities and Exchange Commission took a shot at it last week, approving a rule that would require companies to disclose their C.E.O. pay gap — comparing how much chief executive officers take home compared with ordinary employees. Here's a better idea: require companies to publish their *gender* pay gap. Calling out top executives for making too much money will at most embarrass a few suits. But calling out companies for paying women too little will help millions — and perhaps crack one of the most intractable problems of our time.

Read more: http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/13/opinion/lets-expose-the-gender-pay-gap.html?emc=edit_ty_20150813&nl=opinion&nlid=71538857&r=0

Date Accessed: 14.8.2015

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Learning in 'Urdish'

(*The Nation*, August 16, 2015)

You know our education system might be in for more trouble when the government announces that there will be a uniform curriculum in 'Urdish'. Recently, the ILM Pakistan Movement has been launched by the government, with the objective to improve students' academic achievements and 'attitudes towards civic responsibility, respect for diversity and tolerance'. One of the reforms is new a curriculum- a combination of both Urdu and English. The technical terms will be from English and the description will be in Urdu, so the students may not face any problem to understand terminologies.

Read more: <http://nation.com.pk/editorials/16-Aug-2015/learning-in-urdish>

Date Accessed: 17.8.2015

India and World

INDIA IN THE WORLD

Modi in the Gulf

(*The Carnegie Endowment Organisation, August 11, 2015*)

Few parts of the world are more important for India than the Gulf. That Narendra Modi's two-day trip to the UAE this weekend is the first prime ministerial visit since 1981 underlines the story of New Delhi's neglect of a country and region that is so proximate in all senses of the term. The oil-rich Gulf remains the main source of India's growing hydrocarbon imports. It is home to more than six million Indian expatriate workers. They send remittances worth nearly \$50 billion every year. With its large foreign currency reserves, the Gulf kingdoms are also potentially a big source of investment in India's infrastructure.

Read more: <http://carnegieendowment.org/2015/08/11/modi-in-gulf/ieiw>

Date Accessed: 13.8.2015

Russia Supports India's Entry Into UN Security Council

(Dipanjan Roy Chaudhary, *ET Bureau, August 18, 2015*)

In a sudden U-turn, Russia has said it backs the applications of both India and Brazil for permanent membership in the UN Security Council, less than a week after opposing Delhi's entry into the powerful five-nation grouping.

"We think that developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America are under-represented in the UN Security Council. That is why we support the applications of India and Brazil for permanent membership in the Security Council," Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov told news agency.

Read more at: <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/in-u-turn-russia-supports-indias-entry-into-un-security-council/articleshow/48520495.cms>

Date Accessed: 19.08.2015

India at Rank 75 on the Cato Human Freedom Index

(Cato Institute, August 2015)

Through a measure that encompasses personal, civil and economic freedom, and places emphasis on the dignity of individuals, the Cato Human Freedom Index that covers 152 countries has ranked India 75, behind other democracies like Chile (rank 18), USA (rank 20) and South Africa (rank 70). Countries like Brazil, Russia and China have been ranked 82, 111 and 132 respectively.

Read More: <http://www.cato.org/human-freedom-index>

Date Accessed: August 20, 2015

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Those Who Compare the Iran Deal to Munich Are Right – But Not in the Way They Think

(James Fallows, *The Atlantic, August 18, 2015*)

Regarding the Iran nuclear deal, the tried-and-true analogy for people opposed to it is the Munich agreement of 1938. The comparison works because it suggests that the enemy is implacably evil: Nazi Germany then, Iran now. And it works because it also suggests that people who consider themselves peacemakers are dupes: Chamberlain then, Kerry and Obama now. While this analogy is debatable, there are some who do see parallels, however not in the manner commonly understood. In historian AJP Taylor's 1961 book, 'The Origins of the Second World War', he raises the point that European powers were grappling with an unchangeable reality: that Germany was bound, after WWI, once again to become the leading power in Europe, simply due to

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economics and demographics, whether or not Hitler had come on the scene. Their failure to deal with the aftermath of the war and the Versailles Treaty, and their failure to choose between appeasement and resistance in dealing with Hitler, was what led to the outbreak of war in 1939 – which, of course, was not the war which it became after Hitler invaded Russia and Japan attacked the US. Those who have compared the deal to Munich, while wrong, do have one point: the situation is indeed rather similar to Europe in the first half of the 20th century, and the problem is unsolvable in the same way. Israel's fundamental problem, in terms of Iran, is that Iran is inevitably the regional hegemon, once freed of the sanctions regime. But, if Iran gives up pursuit of nuclear weapons, it is free from sanctions. So Israel either has an Iran with nukes or an Iran that is powerful regionally in every other way. Bismarck might have been able to thread that needle; Benjamin Netanyahu certainly can't.

Read More: <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/08/iran-deal-munich-nazis/401402/>

Date Accessed: 18.08.2015

OPINIONS/BOOKS

OPINIONS

Silver Linings

(*The Economist*, August, 12, 2015)

Immigration from crisis-struck Europe and welfare cuts have increased Britain's labour supply, keeping wages down and encouraging employers to hire more workers and invest less in machinery and other forms of capital. But with unemployment now nearing its post-2000 average again, labour shortages are pushing up wages, cooling hiring.

Read more: <http://www.economist.com/blogs/freeexchange/2015/08/jobs-market>

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