



**Weekly Roundup
of
News on Policy**

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Indians with Disability Facing Multiple Challenges

UNESCAP Delivers 2012 Report on Disability in Asia

UNESCAP's (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) "*Disability at a Glance 2012: Strengthening the Evidence Base in Asia and the Pacific*", presents the latest data on disability in the Asia Pacific Region, including India.

Variation in Country Data on Prevalence of Disability

The Report says that prevalence of disability in the Asia-Pacific region provides a contrasting picture, ranging from 1.0 per cent in the Lao People's Democratic Republic to 18.5 per cent in Australia. The average (mean) disability prevalence for the Asia-Pacific region is 4.6 per cent. This average rate stands in stark contrast to the global prevalence, estimated by World Health Organization (WHO) at 15 per

cent, and to what is being reported by, for example, OECD (14 per cent) and the European Union (17 per cent)."

The Report also says that "Sub regional disability prevalence also vary widely. The average disability prevalence ranges from 2.6 per cent in South-East Asia, to 17.0 per cent in the Pacific (Figure 2). The largest variation of disability prevalence is found in the Pacific: Samoa's prevalence is 1.2 per cent, New Zealand's is 16.6 per cent and Australia's is 18.5 per cent."

India's Disability Prevalence is estimated at 2.1% based on the 2001 census figures.

It is interesting that the prevalence in high income countries is far greater than in low income countries – 18.5 percent in

Australia and 6.1 per cent in China versus 2.1% in India and 1% in Lao PDR. This is because of differences in the understanding of disability and in the ability to report and measure it.

The Report says that "the substantial differences in reported disability prevalence data raise questions: are the differences due to variations in population characteristics, data collection purposes and methods, or other reasons?"

Defining Disability: Two Models

The Report says that "identifying disability is a complex and multi-faceted exercise". It says, "Over the years there has been a distinct shift in the way disability is understood and defined. Diverse

conceptual models and approaches have been developed, debated and assessed for their accuracy and efficacy. The following *two conceptual models have dominated this debate.*”

The Report describes the first model as the “*medical model*”. Says the Report: “Traditionally, disability was understood merely in terms of one’s limitations of physical, intellectual and psychosocial conditions. This model views disability as a deviation from the ‘normal’. Through the lens of the medical model, persons with disabilities are considered to be defective and less able than ‘normal’ human beings. This model has perpetuated narrow notions concerning human perfection, ignoring the reality of the extremely wide spectrum of what is ‘normal’ and ‘average’ in any society.” This model has given rise to the labeling of ‘the crippled’, ‘the handicapped’ and ‘the disabled’. The labeling centres attention on what is lacking, eroding the humanity of the person and disregarding the person’s rights, entitlements, abilities, potential and aspirations. Regarding persons with disabilities as objects of charity is a direct consequence of the negative stereotyping that results from this model.”

The alternate model is described in the Report as the “*social model*”. The Report says, “With the emergence of various civil rights movements which significantly influenced the participation of persons with disabilities in society, there has been a gradual shift towards a deeper and more holistic understanding of disability. The social model views disability as *the outcome of interaction between the person and the environment. Disability is primarily viewed as a created condition, since inadequate environmental and social arrangements limit persons with certain physical, intellectual, and psychosocial conditions from effectively participating in society*

on an equal basis with others. This model has contributed to removing negative notions attached to persons with disabilities, drawing attention to the disabling environment instead. Building on the social model, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) *describes disability as an evolving concept, which results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.*”

“**Disability** is therefore not defined as a standalone medical condition, but rather as the product of the interaction between the environment broadly defined and the health condition of particular persons.”

Article (1) of CRPD states therefore that, ‘Persons with disabilities include those who have long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory *impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others*’. (In contrast, India’s legislation follows the medical model and defines disability as “i. blindness; ii. low vision; iii. leprosy-cured; iv. hearing impairment; v. Loco motor disability; vi. Mental retardation; vii. Mental illness” (Section 2(i), The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995).

Rights of the Disabled

CRPD sets out a variety of rights for the disabled: Right to life, liberty and security of the person (articles 10 & 14)

- Equality before the law without discrimination (article 5)
- Equal recognition before the law and legal capacity (article 12)

- Freedom from torture (article 15)
- Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse (article 16)
- Right to respect physical and mental integrity (article 17)
- Freedom of movement and nationality (article 18)
- Right to live in the community (article 19)
- Freedom of expression and opinion (article 21)
- Respect for privacy (article 22)
- Respect for home and the family (article 23)
- Right to education (article 24)
- Right to health (article 25)
- Right to work (article 27)
- Right to adequate standard of living (article 28)
- Right to participate in political and public life (article 29)
- Right to participation in cultural life (article 30)

The India Story

According to India’s Census 2001, there were approximately 22 million persons with disabilities in India who constituted 2.13 percent of the total population. This includes persons with visual, hearing, speech, loco motor and mental disabilities. According to the World Bank approximately 6 percent of the Indian population has some form of disability. The World Health Organization figure is stated at 10 percent of the total population.

The 2001 Census of India defined five types of disabilities: (i) seeing, (ii) speech, (iii) hearing, (iv) movement, and (v) mental.

The 2011 census defines eight types: (i) seeing, (ii) speech, (iii) hearing, (iv) movement, (v) mental retardation, (vi) mental illness, (vii) any other, and (viii) multiple disability.

Factors Contributing to Disability

UNESCAP’s “Disability at a Glance 2012: Strengthening the Evidence Base in Asia and the Pacific” identifies important factors contributing to disability, of which the factors that are most relevant to India are:

1) Population Ageing

Ageing has a major influence on disability, as older persons become frailer and more vulnerable to physical and mental conditions. *Figure 1.3* shows the relationship between ageing and disability prevalence for selected Asia-Pacific countries. In general, older persons are disproportionately represented among populations of persons with disabilities. For example, China’s 2006 data indicate that those aged 60 years and older constituted 53.2 per cent of persons with disabilities, as compared with 10.9 per cent of the total population. *Figure 1.3* shows that India is currently doing better than China in the contribution of old to disabled population. India’s 2006 data shows that those aged 60 years and older constituted 17.6 per cent of persons with disabilities. But, as total population is expected to get older, percentage of disabled who are 60 years and older is also expected to rise. **It is projected to reach 27.0 percent by 2025 and 41.4 per cent by 2050.**

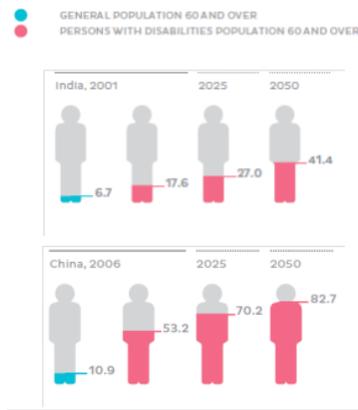


Figure: Older persons contribute a larger share of all persons with disabilities.

2) Road Traffic Injuries

Road traffic injuries are an emerging cause of disability in Asia and the Pacific, but the data linking road traffic crashes with long-term disabilities are scarce. At least 2 million people were injured in road crashes in the Asia-Pacific region in 2005, with some reports indicating up to 20 to 30 million injuries in the same year. The number of road crashes is expected to increase, as the number of vehicles increases rapidly. With a growing middle class, and hence more vehicles, this trend is set to continue in China and India, the two most populous countries in the world. In South Asia, pedestrians account for more than 50 per cent of road fatalities.

Persons with Disability and Livelihood Concerns

Participation in an economic activity is necessary for every human being, not only for sustenance, basic survival or supplementing the family income, but also to contribute to one’s self esteem and enhancing self-fulfilment. Empirical evidence shows that Persons with Disabilities are vulnerable communities that get marginalized in the competition

for access to assets and markets, having a huge negative impact on their social, emotional and economic well-being. PwDs are the majority group on the peripheries with no access to human, social and financial capital and having limited or negligible control and access to physical and political capital. The negative fallout of the same hampers their enjoyment and opportunity of economic livelihood.

Poor people are disproportionately disabled and people with disabilities are disproportionately poor.”

- In India, households are likely to spend a quarter of their annual income to access services for a disabled family member (Erb & Harriss-White, 2001)
- 1.45 percent of India’s total GNP was lost due to blindness alone (Shamanna et. al. 1998)

The World Bank considers that leaving people with disabilities outside the economy translates into a foregone GDP of about 5-7 percent”

Studies prove that the costs of economic exclusion outweigh the costs of full economic citizenship of PwDs. Hence, it is valuable to invest in the disabled peopled.

Work Participation by Persons with Disabilities

In India, it is a fair presumption that PwDs are not seen as a human resource who could contribute and participate in nation building. The education and employment rates for persons with disabilities are far lower than the non-disabled persons. The opportunities for PwDs, to earn are less than their expenses,

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resulting in them being one of the most impoverished communities in India.

Slow progress can be seen in the 11th plan period to achieve these targets Vis a Vis persons with disabilities and as a result the

inequality gap is steadily increasing.

A recent draft of the Social Assessment Report on National Rural Livelihood Project (NRLP) clearly mentions, 'some groups are more disadvantaged than

others. Analysis shows clearly that Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes, some religious minorities such as Muslims, women, and people with disabilities are

Table 1: Percentage Distributions of Disabled in Total Population by Sex and Residence in India, 2001

Residence	General Population			Disabled Population		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Total	39.3	51.9	25.7	2.1	2.4	1.9
Rural PwDs	42.0	52.4	31.0	2.2	2.5	1.9
Urban	32.2	50.9	11.6	1.9	2.1	1.7

Source: Census of India 2001:Table C23, India

Table 2: Percentage Distributions of Disabled by Sex and Residence in India, 2001

Residence	Total	Male	Female
Total	100	100	100
Rural	74.8	74.7	75
Urban	25.2	25.3	25

Source: Census of India 2001:Table C23, India

Table 3: Work Participation Rate: General Population

Total Workers	Number	Rate %
Persons	402,234,724	39.1
Males	275,014,476	51.7
Females	127,220,248	25.6
Main Workers		
Persons	313,004,983	30.4
Males	240,147,813	45.1
Females	72,857,170	14.7
Marginal Workers		
Persons	89,229,741	8.7
Males	34,866,663	6.6
Females	54,363,078	11

Table 4: Work Participation rates by type of disabilities, sex and residence in India, 2001

Disables persons	All disability	In seeing	In speed	In hearing	In movement	In mental
Total Persons	34.5	19.4	2.4	2.2	8.2	2.2
Males	25.8	24.5	3.0	2.8	11.6	3.0
Females	8.7	12.5	1.6	1.5	3.7	1.2
Rural Persons	36.2	20.0	2.6	5.5	8.6	3.0
Males	26.1	24.2	8.3	3.2	11.9	4.0
Females	10.1	14.3	1.9	7.7	4.1	0.9
Urban Persons	29.6	17.6	1.8	1.1	7.2	1.8
Males	24.8	25.2	2.5	1.6	10.2	2.7
Females	4.8	7.1	0.7	0.6	2.3	0.6

Source: Census of India 2001:Table C 23, India.

Table 5: Population in Working Age Group (in crores)

	Persons	Male	Female
Total	0.75	0.56	0.19
Rural	0.59	0.43	0.16
Urban	0.16	0.13	0.03

Source: Census 2001

amongst the poorest groups. It further accepts the fact that the disabled or physically/mentally challenged often have limited access to education, employment and public services. Some barriers to their inclusion are physical, such as the inaccessibility buildings or transport, others may be institutional (e.g. discriminatory practices), and still others attitudinal (e.g. the stigma attached to persons who are HIV+ and suffering from AIDS).

Unequal access to education and training programmes is a major challenge that needs to be resolved on a priority.

The results show that the percentage of total disabled population in India is 2.1 percent out of total 1.02 billion general populations – India has some 22 million people with disabilities, nearly 78% of who are sight or movement impaired. Out of these total disabled persons about 75% reside in rural areas while remaining 25 percent reside in urban areas.

Work participation rates for males and females are much higher for the general population as compared to the disabled population. As is evident the percentage of general population (males) participating in the work force stands at 51.7% and for females stands at 25.6% whereas the comparative work participation rates for the disabled population stands at a dismal 25.8 % for males (almost half that of

general population) and at 8.7 % for females.

The total work participation rate among the disabled is 34.5 percent, 25.8 and 8.7 percent among males and females respectively. The classification of disabilities in different categories by sex shows a higher rate of prevalence of disabilities among males as compared to females, and in the case of movement and mental disabilities, the proportion of males is much higher as compared to females.

As per the World Bank 2009 Report, there are approx. 28.4 million PwDs in the working age group - 18.8 million persons are males and 9.6 million persons are females.

Key Challenges for India

Key challenges for India include:

- Lack of a common definition to understanding Disability.
- The reporting formats do not demand that the government departments that deal with three percent reservations in the livelihood scheme collect category or gender wise segregated data.
- There is a lack of a detailed and centralized reporting system
- Lack of transparency and information sharing affects the availability of data and performance.
- There was an under-utilization of the quota for PwDs in schemes

including job reservations.

Key Recommendations Emerging from the Report

- Effective policy formulation is not possible without accurate data on persons with disabilities. Hence, the government and other stakeholders are encouraged to actively revisit and assess their disability data collection methods. ESCAP has promised to continue to support regional data collection initiatives.
- The terminology and definitions used for defining Disability should be standardized and uniform across departments, CSO's and policies.
- Incorporate the principle of Reasonable Accommodation / Adjustment as articulated in the UNCRPD. With the ratification of the UNCRPD, the Indian government is obliged to review all policies, legislations and programmes in the light and spirit of the UNCRPD.
- An adequate Management Information System needs to be established, which will ensure that the reporting formats of all the government schemes capture the category wise disaggregated data on PwDs.

- **Identification of jobs** continues to be a big hurdle, as many jobs remain 'unidentified' for PwDs. Therefore instead of identifying specific jobs, it would be beneficial to open up all jobs for PwDs. And in case any Department wants an exemption for a particular job it should apply for the same.
- A concerted effort should be made to **address the backlog of the vacancies in all the Ministries, Departments and PSUs at the Centre and State/UT levels for PwDs**

For further information read:

<http://www.unescap.org/sdd/publications/DG2012/SDD-Disability-Glance-2012.pdf>

<http://www.undp.org/content/dam/india/docs/pub-povertyreduction/livelihood-opportunities-for-persons-with-disabilities.pdf>

Comparing India's ICDS with its US Counterpart, WIC

(Poongothai Aladi Aruna, *The Hindu*, 30 November, 2012)

40 per cent of India's population earns less than \$1.25 a day and approximately 61 million children are undernourished, making India the world's largest contributor to malnutrition.

And although the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) was introduced in 1975, it has achieved only limited success till date. Rs.4 a day is spent for infants less than 72 months old, Rs.5 a day is spent for pregnant

mothers, and Rs.6 a day for three- to five-year olds.

There is an urgent need to increase the focus on pregnant women and children less than two years, as failure to improve nourishment during this critical period leaves children stunted.

The highest share of funding in ICDS is for supplementary nutrition. Studies suggest that nutrient powder given to pregnant mothers and infants as supplementary nutrition is ineffective in meeting nutritional needs.

Introduced in the same year as ICDS, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC program) in the U.S seeks to safeguard the health of low-income women and children under the age of four.

In contrast to ICDS, maximum usage is by infants less than two years.

Supplemental food coupons provided to the beneficiaries, enable them to buy food from government authorised vendors in the locality, thus increasing local business while also reducing infant mortality and undernutrition.

Though ICDS has managed to contain severe cases of malnutrition, it is equally important to educate women of long-term benefits of healthy food and help them access it.

It might therefore be better to provide conditional food coupons through ICDS, as done by the successful WIC program in the U.S. modified to suit Indian requirements.

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/serving-up-a-better-alternative-for-mother-and-child/article4147486.ece>

(Date Accessed: 03.12.2012)
(Amrutha Jose)

Food, Water and Livelihoods in Pacific Islands under Increasing Threat from Climate Change

(United Nations Environment Programme, 30 November, 2012)

A new report released by the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Doha says that the Island communities of the Pacific are facing severe economic and environmental challenges due to climate change. The Secretariat of Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) in partnership with UNEP and other organizations produced the "Pacific Environment and Climate Change Outlook" highlighting the issue. The environmental challenges faced are rising sea-levels, floods, droughts, tropical cyclones, unsustainable fishing practices at the coastal regions affecting approximately 10 million people. The major economic problem as a consequence of this environmental change would be a fall of GDP by 18% in the low-lying countries. The report recommends "efforts to create community-managed conservation areas, such as marine parks, which have used indigenous knowledge to improve recycling, energy efficiency and sustainable water use." It also recommends the enforcement of legislation, improvement in the availability of environmental data and strengthening environmental institutions so as to be able to meet the climate changes of the Pacific.

The report highlights the efforts that are underway to undertake environmental degradation. The current scale of action is not sufficient to meet these challenges. The report lays out suggestions to improve climate resilience in the Pacific region:

- Implement the promises made under the “multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), plans and strategies. Many countries have endorsed, but not yet implemented, agreements covering hazardous wastes, pollution, invasive species, and many other areas.”
- Involve the local communities for a successful implementation.
- Improved sharing and transfer of knowledge and skills
- Improve research and data collection on the environment of Pacific islands
- Increase awareness among the people about the environment.

UN Under-Secretary General and UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner said, “This report presents concrete evidence that food, freshwater and the livelihoods of Pacific islanders are under threat, and that the Pacific is at the forefront in humanity's efforts to combat and adapt to climate change.” He also added that enhancing local capacity by involving them directly in managing the changing environment is crucial to reduce climate risks and also to promote a low-carbon and “resource efficient green economy.”

<http://www.unep.org/newscentre/Default.aspx?DocumentID=2698&ArticleID=9340&l=en>

(Date Accessed: 5.12.2012)
(Ranjana Adhikari)

Why Do Children Run Away From Home?

(The Independent, *Manisha Sethia*, 3 December, 2012)

Research by NGOs has claimed that “every 30 seconds a child runs away from home”, however, gender disaggregated data or research on runaway girls is scant. The author wonders what could provoke young girls to run away from home. She cites anecdotal evidence to suggest that ‘home’, in opposition to ideas enshrined in society, may not be a “safe, caring, egalitarian and protective place of shelter, support and automatically affective familial ties.”

Reasons for running away may include being unloved and uncared for in a society that privileges boys, desire for economic independence, escape from violence, sexual abuse or incest, and sometimes it is because they are in love with another girl, or a boy, from another caste/ class/religion.

This perception of ‘home as a safe place’ becomes a problem when it becomes the “cornerstone of policy and the foundation for legislation.” According to the author, this was why the child sexual abuse legislation did not gather popular support. It challenged the idea of the sacred home and the family. This notion is reflective in the state’s response to runaways. Sending them to their own homes, ‘juvenile’ home, ‘remand’ home or ‘observation’ home ignores the fundamental cause of their running away, turning away from the impact of their return to this situation. In order to address runaways in a more nuanced and sensitive manner, we must think of children as “individuals in

their own right, with opinions and desires, including sexual desires, and re-imagine and re-model our own homes as open, diverse, equal and fair.” Otherwise, running away may continue to be the only solution young minds see in hurtful situations.

<http://blogs.independent.co.uk/2012/12/03/international-day-of-persons-with-disabilities-being-blind-in-a-remote-village-of-india/>

(Date Accessed: 05.12.12)

Karishma Mutreja

Tiger and Tourism

(Rakesh Shukla, *Frontline*, 01-14 December, 2012)

The recent tiger tourism ban and its subsequent lifting by the Supreme Court has sparked several debates on whether tourism should be allowed in core areas and if so, how much.

“The three main considerations that govern the entire issue are the fragility of the core areas, ecotourism conducted as intense business, and avenues of livelihood for local communities.” If tourism is banned completely:

- There would be no avenue to witness nature and wildlife.
- There would be a lack of awareness about species especially because it would exclude researchers who often prepare good literature on the wildlife which is beneficial for documenting.
- Relocating of native communities from core areas depriving them of their traditional rights.

On the other hand, heavy tourism is also detrimental as it often leads to crowding around tiger

sightings, which makes it unmanageable for the authorities and the tigers' behaviour is also sometimes affected.

It is important to conserve protected areas and not convert them into tourist zones. For this, there is a need to encourage light tourism in core areas "with smaller tourism zones." "Each tiger reserve has to be evaluated dispassionately and a consensus reached regarding reduction in the present tourism zone and in the number of vehicles to be allowed." Ecotourism needs to be enhanced and moulded in order to benefit both tourists and the wildlife.

<http://www.frontlineonnet.com/stories/20121214292405600.htm>

(Date Accessed: 05.12.2012)

(Anjora Sarangi)

[India Protests its Farmers' Interests at Climate Talks](#)

(Indrajit Bose, *Down To Earth*, 3 December 2012)

By successfully stalling the attempts of the developed countries' move to bring agriculture under mitigation efforts. India secured its farmers' interest at the Doha Climate talk. The developing countries have for long been opposing the introduction of 'the element of mitigation in agriculture' since any discussion on agriculture can only be debated under the realm of adaptation. According to the draft rules of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA), under which agriculture is being discussed, only a "clear recommendation secured by consensus of all parties will be sent up to the CoP

for a decision." But the SBSTA chairperson at Doha deviated from the norm and referred it to the CoP despite the lack of consensus on the issue of agriculture. On the objection of India along with Algeria, China, Cuba, Nicaragua, Ethiopia, Gambia, Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, and Venezuela, the chair finally decided to take up agriculture in the next SBSTA meeting since the countries could not arrive on a consensus.

<http://www.downtoearth.org.in/content/india-protects-its-farmers-interests-climate-talks>

(Date accessed: 6.12.2012)

(Simi Sunny)

Jobs Go Abegging As Unemployment Rises Globally

(Prashant K. Nanda and Elizabeth Roche, *Live Mint*, 05 December, 2012)

In India today, 75 million young people remain unemployed. According to the authors, one of the chief problems being faced by India as well as countries such as US and Germany is the education-to-employment challenge which translates into shortage of job seekers with critical skills and increasing unemployment. This leads to entry level jobs being left vacant. "The number is 56% in Turkey, 53% in India, 48% in Brazil and 45% in the US." The challenge is to get the youth through post secondary education enrolment to building the right set of skills and be placed in appropriate jobs. This trend highlights education-to-employment challenge which is the growing gap in the teaching curricula at the school and graduate level and vocational training which is unable to meet the skill requirement necessary for entry level jobs. This lack of skills "will push up the salary, cost of in-service training and have an impact on the economy." According to Mr. Mohandas Pai, it will take India 10-15 years to solve the problem because it doesn't have the right approach.

<http://www.livemint.com/Companies/jG9Nh3BxnARJnhHmn5EBN1/Jobs-go-abegging-as-unemployment-rises-globally.html>

(Date Accessed: 05.12.2012)
(Anjora Sarangi)

Why is the Investment Ratio Rising?

(Mahesh Vyas, *Centre for Monitoring of Indian Economy*, 1 December 2012)

The gross fixed capital formation as a percent of GDP finally rose to a respectable 33.8 percent in the quarter ending September 2012. The plunge of the ratio to a six-year-low of 30 percent in December 2011 had raised concerns that the "continuous and substantial fall in investments ratio would hurt future growth." Surprisingly, production of capital goods has been quite contrary to the growth in investment ratio. While capital goods production index fell between 7 to 20 percent during each of the three quarters, capital goods imports shrank by 11.2 percent since a year. Since neither capital goods production nor import has contributed to the steady rise in the investment ratio, the possible answer lies in the remarkable growth in coal production and software industry. The Central Statistical Organization's quarterly estimate of gross capital formation for construction industry has recorded an upward trend. This can only be credited to the substantial growth rate in coal production throughout the last three quarters since production of cement and consumption of steel has decreased seriously in September quarter. Interestingly the inclusion of software in capital formation also played a significant role in improving the investment growth estimates. Software industry has grown rapidly in recent years though

most of the software development goes in for export.

<http://www.cmie.com/kommon/bin/sr.php?kall=wclrdhtm&nvdt=20121201170139916&nvpc=099000000000&nvtype=INSIGHTS>

(Date accessed: 06.12.2012)
(Simi Sunny)

Post Crisis, Will India Be A Loser and China's Surge Continue Unabated?

(TT Ram Mohan, *Economic Times*, 22 November, 2012)

OECD has come out with its economic forecasts up to the year 2060 in its report "Looking at 2060: Long term global prospects." Some of the highlights of the report are:

- Global growth at 3.7 percent up to 2030 in terms of purchasing power parity
- Such optimistic growth rate at a time when the Euro zone is hit by recession and US is still reeling under the impact of the global crisis means that emerging economies will power global growth in the years to come
- The pattern of savings in the world will be skewed until 2030. India and China will together account for 50% of the global saving by 2030
- Global imbalances will begin to widen once the world economy recovers and will reach the pre-crisis (2007) peak by 2025-30
- Greater fiscal consolidation through the banking sector in the developed world is the

key to preventing another crisis

- China to overtake US by the middle of the decade (in PPP terms) while India has to wait till 2060
- Interestingly, while China will remain stagnant at 28 percent during the period 2030-60, India will grow from 11 to 18 percent. Thus by 2060 India and US together will overtake China, ending China's dominance.

The OECD growth forecasts have been accompanied by varied projections by different organizations and even individuals in the recent past.

We can compare the OECD numbers with India's former Chief Economic Advisor Arvind Virmani's predictions in one of his reports. According to him, India will follow China's steps and overtake US by 2037 (in PPP terms). Even Goldman Sachs' projections saw India overtaking US in GDP by 2050. It is difficult to know the right projection, but with an investment rate of 35 percent and a growth of 7 percent we can attempt to prove OECD wrong.

http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-11-22/news/35300670_1_oecd-global-growth-world-gdp

(Date accessed: 06.12.2012)

(Simi Sunny)

POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE

Cash Transfer: Relevance of the Brazilian Model

(Sruthisagar Yamunan, *The New Indian Express*, 3 December, 2012)

Referring to the direct cash transfer policy proposed by the UPA government, this article highlights the major structural deficiencies in India because of which this model won't work.

The most successful model of Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) in the world is Bolsa Familia in Brazil, which integrated all existing CCT schemes under one head. Under this scheme, only those low income families are paid in cash which fulfil certain conditionalities like 85% attendance of children in schools and regular health checkups. The state stops extending support if the family fails to fulfil those norms. Similar scheme in Mexico involves even greater conditions, including self care courses for women. But in India, as pointed out by CPI Secretary D Raja, such institutional support structures have not yet matured. People in rural India still travel long distances for quality healthcare. Therefore, if government imposes such conditions in India, their fulfilment cannot be ensured.

<http://www.samachar.com/No-point-aping-the-Brazilian-model-mmdjKjhbdcge.html>

(Date Accessed: 3.12.2012)
(Naina Bhardwaj)

PDS: Comparing Chhattisgarh and UP

(*The Economist*, 17 November, 2012)

“In India, state governments usually have more impact on the lives of poor people than does the national government. In theory, the country has an extensive system of social protection which, though people are rarely left to beg and starve, often fails the poorest.”

This article compares the functioning of the Public Distribution of System in the states of Chhattisgarh and Uttar Pradesh.

Bloomberg, a news agency, reports that \$14.5 billion worth of food has been ripped off from the PDS in Uttar Pradesh in the past ten years. This is because in Uttar Pradesh the private middlemen, who operate the PDS, pilfer the rations since they are not paid properly.

Chhattisgarh, on the other hand, nationalised the distribution system and handed over the charge to local institutions or self-help groups.

According to one survey, 97% of respondents in Chhattisgarh say they normally get their full entitlement of food, compared with only 77% in Uttar Pradesh.

Jean Drèze believes that PDS has reduced the number of people below the poverty line by 15% in Uttar Pradesh, and by 40% in Chhattisgarh.

Better focus on such schemes by the government and increasing the awareness of their rights among public will go a long way in strengthening the delivery of social safety schemes.

<http://www.economist.com/news/asia/21566699-rural-india-there-hope-worst-policies-can-be-improved-tale-two-villages>

(Date accessed: 05.12.2012)

B. Varun Kumar Reddy

PANCHAYATI RAJ

Despite Threats, Panchayat Members Turn-Out in Huge Numbers to Vote

(Riyaz Wani, *Tehelka.com*, 3 December, 2012)

Panches and Sarpanches turned out in huge numbers on 3 December in Kashmir to elect candidates for the four Legislative Council seats under the Panchayat quota after a time period of 38 years.

Given the recent instances by the leader of the Hizbul Mujahideen, Syed Salahaiddin asking for Panchayat members to resign, which triggered off a spate of resignations, and his further call to stop Block Development Council polls from being held in the near future, such an overwhelming participation of the Panchayat members in these polls revives confidence in their political vocation. “Our objective to participate in these polls was to assert our presence on the political scene of Valley,” says the sarpanch and convenor of J&K Panchayat Raj Movement Shahnawaz Sultan. The Panches want the government to empower them to marshal in development at the grassroots level.

http://www.tehelka.com/story_main54.asp?filename=Ws031212KASHMIR.asp

(Date Accessed: 4.12.2012)
Ranjana Adhikari

SECURITY

Two Assam Districts May Be Declared Maoist-Affected

(*Northeast Today*, 01 December, 2012)

According to Intelligence reports, two districts in Assam have reported increasing Maoist activities.

To this effect, the Ministry of Rural Development has moved a proposal to the Central Government to declare Dibrugarh and Tinsukia districts of Assam as “Maoist-affected.”

This will entitle the two districts for special benefits, under which it will be included in Planning Commission’s Integrated Action Plan (IAP) and will receive Rs.30 crore each annually for developmental activities. Moreover the “plan to reduce household density criteria of 500 to 250 for construction of roads in hilly and tribal areas of the north-eastern region” has been approved by the central cabinet.

Previously in April, State Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi appealed to the central government to include seven districts under IAP. Meanwhile to restrain the spread of Maoists, deputy commissioners of the seven districts have been asked by the state government to implement more developmental schemes.

<http://www.northeasttoday.in/our-states/assam/two-assam-districts-may-be-declared-maoist-affected/>

(Date accessed: 02.12.2012)
Junty Sharma Pathak

Bangladeshi MPs Blame India for Illegal Infiltration to Northeast

(*Times of India*, 01 December, 2012)

A visiting delegation of Bangladeshi parliamentarians said that Bangladesh would “never endorse illegal immigration” and held India responsible for not taking up the issue of illegal immigration to North-eastern states, particularly to Assam, with the Bangladesh Government.

The 12-member delegation also mentioned that Dhaka is willing to “examine” the issue of illegal immigration from Bangladesh if India approaches it, besides, suggesting “Common border management” as a means to settle the problem of migration. However the delegation also assured that the matter of illegal immigration will not harm bilateral relations and gave surety on not tolerating any north-eastern insurgents using the “Bangladeshi soil.”

http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-12-01/india/35529682_1_illegal-migration-illegal-immigration-illegal-infiltration

(Accessed on 04.12.2012)
Junty Sharma Pathak

HEALTH

Resistant Malaria Strain Could Cause A Public Health Catastrophe

(*Lisa Karpova, Pravda*, 03 November, 2012)

India records 40, 000 cases of malaria death each year, out of the 655, 000 cases worldwide. Overall, according to WHO data, more than 216 million cases (9.75 million cases in India) of malaria occur worldwide each year,

To add to this, a drug resistant strain of malaria has been detected in the Mekong region of Southeast Asia, in areas of Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar (Burma), Laos and Vietnam. WHO has cautioned:

"If (the strain of malaria) extends beyond its limits and reaches Africa, it could really become a public health catastrophe." This strain is resistant to “Artemisinin” (an extract from the sweet wormwood bush) which is used to treat malaria. Professor Dennis Shanks, who discovered this strain in 2009, has warned that current drugs may no longer be effective in the medium and short term. While the drug is still effective, but spread of this strain to other parts of the world could cause thousands of deaths.

http://english.pravda.ru/health/03-11-2012/122698-resistant_malaria-0/

(Date accessed: 05.12.2012)
(B. Varun Kumar Reddy)

People with HIV/AIDS Demand Insurance Cover

(Staff Reporter, *Hindu*, 01 December, 2012)

AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF) along with several other health activists has appealed to Union Health Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad to intervene and “help facilitate provision of insurance to improve the quality of life for those living with HIV/AIDS.” As numerous patients in the country are in dire need of “health insurance and life saving treatment”, AHF Asia-Pacific Bureau Chief Chhim Sarath hoped for a positive declaration from the Union Health Ministry.

The exclusion of HIV from all existing insurance policies in India is a violation of the National mandate of providing stigma-free care and support services said Dr. Nochiketa Mohanty, the AHF India Cares National Development manager. Arguing in strong support of the inclusion of HIV/AIDS under medical insurance policies he also stated that HIV/AIDS was previously considered as an ‘incurable disease’ but at this point it has emerged as a “manageable health concern.”

Presently, HIV medications throughout the country are provided at the government and non-government antiretroviral therapy centres but other health requirements, particularly surgical needs, are very costly. Therefore it is essential to have health insurance coverage.

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-newdelhi/people-with-hivaids->

[demand-insurance-cover/article4152855.ece](http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-newdelhi/people-with-hivaids-demand-insurance-cover/article4152855.ece)

(Accessed on 03.12.2012)

Junty Sharma Pathak

URBAN

Ten Techniques for Making Cities More Walkable

(Kaid Benfield, *Atlantic Cities*, 03 December, 2012)

Cities of today have turned hostile to pedestrians. Roads are built with cars and bikes in mind. Here are 10 ways to shift the emphasis back to walking:

1. Reduce emphasis on cars. Increasing road capacity will not decrease traffic. It will only encourage people to buy more cars.
2. Zoning should be in such a way that workplaces and housing should co – exist to encourage walking.
3. Stringent parking requirements and proper pricing will change public’s attitude towards driving.
4. Design public transit well. “While walkability benefits from good transit, good transit relies absolutely on walkability.”
5. Protect the pedestrians.
6. Encourage cycling.
7. Design the urban spaces to make pedestrians feel safe.
8. Planting trees will encourage walking in addition to other benefits.
9. “How far we will walk depends on what we

encounter along the way.” Hence designing friendly and unique building faces will increase walkability.

10. Concentrate on those areas where least investment will make the most difference.

<http://www.theatlanticcities.com/design/2012/12/10-techniques-making-cities-more-walkable/4047/>

(Date accessed: 05.12.2012)

(B. Varun Kumar Reddy)

ENERGY

India: Strategic Options to secure our Energy Supply

(Aresh Shirali, *Open*, 01 December, 2012)

India is in need of a well planned strategy to meet its energy needs. It is in such a scenario that an interesting report has come out. A report by the International Energy Agency (IEA) says that the US will surpass Saudi Arabia as the world’s largest oil producer by 2020. It is expected to produce around one million barrels more of crude oil a day than Arabia. If America remains fuel efficient, it may turn into a net oil exporter in a decade and achieve self-sufficiency. It is the newly introduced technique of fracking, which can penetrate deep and extract oil from unyielding reserves.

As Obama said, an implication of fracking is the end of America’s dependence on Middle East for energy. While it is true for imports, the extra US output will not compensate for extra Asian

consumption. Thus other countries will still have a link with the Middle East. Arabia's centralised control of oil wells and low cost of extraction helps it manage oil price which translates into high market power.

Yet, the report suggests that America might try to reshape its Middle East policy. In this complex scenario India might get the chance to procure low-cost gas from the South Pars field shared between Iran and Qatar. India should give this 'pipeline of peace' a chance.

<http://www.openthemagazine.com/article/business/let-us-give-this-peace-pipe-a-chance>

(Date Accessed: 03.12.2012)
(Amrutha Jose)

TECHNOLOGY

Infusing Morality into Robots

(Gary Marcus, *New Yorker*, 27 November, 2012)

It might be soon illegal for human beings to drive vehicles. Google's driverless cars have already become legal in 3 states in USA. In the next two to three decades machines will become much more advanced, safe and intelligent to the point that humans may be outlawed from doing routine tasks such as driving because when compared to machines humans may be unsafe drivers.

One argument made against robots is that it will be devoid of emotion and may cause lot of destruction. The question therefore is: How does one teach robots moral and ethical values? It will signal the beginning of "the era in which it will no longer be optional for machines to have

ethical systems."Secondly how can we prevent robots from becoming merely slaves? We need to have a sound way to teach machines to be ethical

[http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/newsdesk/2012/11/google-driverless-car-](http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/newsdesk/2012/11/google-driverless-car-morality.html#ixzz2EEYaug3S)

[morality.html#ixzz2EEYaug3S](http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/newsdesk/2012/11/google-driverless-car-morality.html#ixzz2EEYaug3S)

(Date accessed: 05.12.2012)

(B. Varun Kumar Reddy)

Internet Users Shouldn't Have to Pay the Price of This International Treaty

(Sally Shipman Wentworth, *Wired*, 03 December, 2012)

Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University and MIT have invested over \$60 million in online education platform edX, with the goal of educating 1 billion people.

Several other universities are following suit via platforms like Udacity, in a trend that promises to revolutionize education.

Around 190 governments will meet in Dubai under U.N. International Telecommunications Union (ITU) in the World Conference on International Telecommunications to negotiate and rewrite International Telecommunications Regulations (ITRs) treaty, which sets the regulatory framework for the exchange of telecommunications traffic between nations.

This will have a direct bearing on people the world over. Initiatives such as Aakash 2 tablet by India, self learning efforts by people, especially those from disadvantaged parts of the world will be hard hit.

Telecommunications companies may use WCIT to regain their dwindling revenues by pushing

for concepts such as "sending network pays" to the detriment of the larger society. "The decisions governments make in Dubai can and will have a very real impact on what the globally interoperable Internet looks like."

<http://www.wired.com/opinion/2012/12/internet-users-shouldnt-have-to-pay-the-price-of-an-international-treaty/>

(Date accessed: 05.12.2012)

(B. Varun Kumar Reddy)

ENVIRONMENT

Rag pickers to Waste Managers

(Nivedita KG, *Samachar*, 6 December, 2012)

While garbage segregation remains an unresolved problem, a private initiative by a small group of seven people in Domlur to form a Dry Waste Collection Centre (DWCC) may show the way for the BBMP in managing collection and segregation of waste.

This group is backed by Hasiru Dala, the City based waste pickers' association. These seven waste pickers have emerged as waste managers who collect and segregate 400 to 500 kg dry waste per day.

After segregating it, they hand it over to scrap dealers who take it to recycling plants. The cleanliness it projects makes one think it can be a role model for other wards in the city.

This group also conducts awareness programme where the members of the DWCC educate public about the segregation of the dry waste from other garbage. This practice reduces the amount of carbon released to the environment besides helping the waste pickers. Also, the DWCC members can now collect more than 10 tonnes of dry waste over a span of 160 working days.

<http://www.samachar.com/Ragpickers-to-waste-managers-mmgiKehjhhc.html>

(Date Accessed: 6.12.2012)

Naina Bhardwaj

Climate Change and Development Policy: Competing Aims?

(Yongfu Huang, United Nations university, 27 December, 2012)

The article questions whether the objectives of growth and environmental protection are inherently contradictory. Rapid growth in recent history can be held responsible for the surge in serious environmental challenges. However it is the developing countries because of their inability to adapt and their “disproportionate dependence” on natural resources that are most “vulnerable” to the fallouts of climate change and continue to suffer “a double injustice.” Arguing against the traditional “resource-intensive model of growth” the article tries to establish that “economic growth and environmental conservation are not necessarily conflicting goals, and can even be seen as complementary aims.” With thorough protection and management, natural resources can generate increasing economic benefits for the developing nations. Strongly recommending the path of “green growth” it argues that “strategic climate policies should not be framed as a choice between the environment and economic development, but rather as a choice between effective measures to achieve balance between the two dimensions.”

http://unu.edu/publications/article/s/climate-change-and-development-policy.html?utm_source=home&utm_medium=top&utm_term=article&utm_content=climate%2Bchange%2Bvs%2Bdevelopment%2Bpolicy&utm_campaign=unu-wider

(Date accessed: 04.12.2012)

Junty Sharma Pathak

New Finance Models to Address Climate Change

(United Nations Environment Programme, 28 November, 2012)

“Momentum for Change: Innovative Financing for Climate-friendly Investment” is an initiative launched by the World Economic Forum and United Nations Climate Change that showcases successful public-private financing methods and approaches to support climate change and mitigation activities. This initiative would be a global shift towards sustainable growth in the economical and environmental sectors of development. This initiative would be formally launched on 6th December during the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Doha. Executive Secretary of UNFCCC, Christina Figueres said that, “It is clear that the private sector needs to deliver significant investments to put the world on a path to a climate-secure future.” She also said that the current rate of investment is too low to be able to meet with the scale of investment that is necessary. Therefore the public sector can help release private finance that could be used to

support policy-framework initiatives for “climate-friendly investment.” Such an investment would usher in finances for private investment and private investors promoting private capital inflow thereby promoting a “climate-friendly development.”

<http://www.unep.org/newscentre/Default.aspx?DocumentID=2698&ArticleID=9339&I=en>

(Date Accessed: 5.12.2012)

Ranjana Adhikari

The Death Lottery: The Case against Capital Punishment

(Jatin Gandhi, Open, 05-11 December, 2012)

‘I can recall the punishment of detention. I can make reparation to the man upon whom I inflict corporal punishment. But once a man is killed, the punishment is beyond recall or reparation. God alone can take life, because He alone gives it’—MK Gandhi, Young India, October 1925

The SC in a very recent judgement (*Sangeet vs. Haryana, November 2012*) – pronounced the day before Kasab was hanged -- pointed out that the judicial system by admitting that sentencing has become a ‘judge-centric exercise’.

In 1996, a villager from Rajasthan named Ravji was hanged after a speedy trial, for murdering his family. The case finds a place in the history of Indian jurisprudence for miscarriage of justice as the Supreme Court, in awarding him death sentence, had deviated from the guiding principles of capital punishment laid down by a Constitution bench

in 1980. The ‘rarest of rare’ dictum of the guiding principles “entrenches the policy that life imprisonment is the rule and death punishment is an exception.”

It was only in 2009 that the SC accepted an error of judgement in Ravji case. But the case was cited as precedent in at least six cases in which death punishment was awarded.

Though a majority of countries in the world have abolished capital punishment, India is among the 39 that recently opposed a United Nations resolution to that effect.

From a victim’s perspective, awarding death to the perpetrator of a heinous crime might seem just. But the Indian justice system is designed in principle to be reformatory and not retributive. In order to be truly reformatory, India needs to do away with death penalty.

<http://www.openthemagazine.com/article/nation/the-death-lottery>

(Date Accessed: 03.12.2012)

Amrutha Jose

HUMAN RIGHTS

Human Trafficking: Dial-A-Maid, Get-A-Slave in Middle Class India

(Reuters, *Nita Bhalla*, 4 December, 2012)

Drawing from the writer’s personal experience on hiring a house-help/ maid from a placement agency, the article provides anecdotal evidence to point out how hiring domestic help complicitly (knowingly or unknowingly) involves indulging

in violation of human rights and bonded labour.

Domestic help, common amongst the upper middle class in India can be victims of human trafficking, a million dollar trade.

The genesis of human trafficking can be traced to “poverty-stricken villages of states like Bihar, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand where female traffickers convince vulnerable families to send their daughters and sons to the cities with the promise of good jobs.” On their arrival in cities, they may be exploited not just by the family they work for but also by the placement agency that employs them. Human rights violations against them are committed in the form of withholding of their income (which they often do not receive or only in part) by placement cell agencies, lack of freedom in physical accommodation and the constant guard and harassment which these young women are treated with. “In fact, some victims never return home.” This issue must be raised seriously by the modern society that employs these women, who live and work in their homes, and who are, effectively, part of such urban middle class families.

<http://blogs.reuters.com/the-human-impact/2012/12/04/dial-a-maid-get-a-slave-in-middle-class-india/>

(Date Accessed: 05.12.12)

Karishma Mutreja

CASTEISM

Continuing Grip of Dominant Castes in UP

(Jean Dreze, *Hindustan Times*,
28 November, 2012)

In order to portray the linkage between caste consciousness and the role of caste as an instrument of power, the author studies the share of the upper castes in the Positions of Power and Influence (POPIs) in Allahabad.

These POPIs include the press club, the university faculty, the bar association, and the commanding posts in trade unions, NGOs, media houses, among other public institutions.

Upper castes command a shocking 75 percent in the sample across the public institutions.

This is an overwhelming share if we compare it to their mere 20 percent share of the population in Uttar Pradesh. In total contrast, there is the disheartening data of the complete absence of Dalits in significant positions of power.

The data provides an outlook into the fact that the dominance of upper caste in these public institutions is bound to promote caste consciousness especially among the Dalits which in turn is “obstructing their struggle for equality.” There is high possibility of isolation of the lower caste in such surroundings and therefore the fight against caste system is crucial not only to maintain social balance but to promote diversity in these institutions.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/News-Feed/ColumnsOthers/The-quiet-grip-of-caste/Article1-965624.aspx>

(Date accessed: 6.12.2012)
(Simi Sunny)

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Adivasi Land: Not Your Land Anymore

(India Together, *Freny
Manecksha*, 29 November, 2012)

Many adivasis in the Thane belt of Maharashtra are facing land alienation and threats to their livelihood as land resources are converted into real estate, especially in villages that adjoin urban areas.

“To many in the region, their meagre holdings are the last link to a self-sustaining life.”

Land alienation has severe consequences in the form of distress migration, lower levels of food security and health in a belt where malnutrition is common.

Despite laws to protect them, adivasis have to face official as well as illegal efforts to separate them from their lands. “Section 36(A) of the Maharashtra Land Revenue Code specifically prohibits transfers of property owned by tribals to non tribals, unless requisite permission is given.” However, evidence brought out by ‘The Kashtakari Saghatan’ points out that “hundreds of applications for such legal transfers are pending with the Collector, and that large-scale approval vitiates the spirit of the law.” The article also states that “the provision under the Panchayat Extension to the Scheduled Areas Act (PESA), which makes it incumbent on the Collector and concerned panchayats to send applications

for sale/purchase of adivasi lands to the gram sabhas, is being flouted.” Problems seem to be compounded due to unrecorded tenancies and anomalies such as land being recorded only in the name of the eldest son even though others have been in possession of the land. Further lands that come under the Forest Right Act are facing the possibility of land displacement due to the building of a proposed dam on the Susari River to provide water for a Mumbai suburb. Such problems are being faced in the state of Maharashtra which is home to the second largest population of tribal people in India.

<http://indiatgether.com/2012/nov/soc-adilands.htm>

(Date Accessed: 05.12.12)
Karishma Mutreja

INDIA IN THE WORLD

India is among Top Five Terror-Hit Nations

(*India Today*, 05 December, 2012)

The Global Terrorism Index (GTI) prepared by the Institute for Economics & Peace, an Australian think tank reveals that “India, Pakistan, Afghanistan were among the nations most impacted by terrorism in 2011.”

The data shows that there were 529 incidents of terrorism in India in 2011. From 2002 to 2009, “Pakistan, India and Afghanistan accounted for 12 per cent, 11 per cent and 10 per cent of global terrorist incidents respectively.”

The list is topped by Iraq, with India ranking at 4th and Pakistan at 2nd. “Overall, there were 7,473 fatalities in 2011 due to terrorism, which is 25 per cent less than in 2007.” The index indicates that there has been a rise in terrorism since the escalation of the Iraq war. The impact of terrorism across countries has been devastating. Out of the 159 countries that were ranked, only 31 have been free of terror attacks since 2001.

<http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/terror-hit-nations-india-pakistan-global-terrorism-index-terrorism/1/236086.html>

(Date Accessed: 05.12.2012)

Anjora Sarangi

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

On Edge of Pullout, US, NATO Laud Pak Role

(*The Nation*, 4 December, 2012)

A Pakistani delegation consisting of Army Chief General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani and Foreign Minister, Hina Rabbani Khar met European Union and NATO officials in the Belgian capital to stress on the importance of ties with Pakistan and to fight against terrorism.

The meeting comes in the backdrop of the withdrawal of western military allies from Afghanistan in 2014.

General Kayani reiterated “Pakistan’s support to an Afghan-led reconciliation process, while highlighting Islamabad’s perspective on regional challenges and his nation’s sacrifices in the war on terror.”

Both sides discussed the benefits of this alliance in combating this plague. Furthermore, the NATO head highlighted the important role of Pakistan in ensuring a positive engagement to achieve long-term peace and stability in Afghanistan. This meeting also involved discussions between Hina Rabbani Khar and Hillary Clinton about the future of Afghanistan and the US-Pakistan bilateral relationship. Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton in her meeting with Hina Rabbai Khar and General Kayani suggested improving economic and security relations especially with Pakistan and Afghanistan.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/national/04-Dec-2012/on-edge-of-pullout-us-nato-laud-pak-role>

(Date Accessed: 4.12.2012)

Ranjana Adhikari

EAST & SOUTH EAST ASIA

Myanmar’s Census a Crucial Democracy Test

(*Sonu Trivedi, The Hindu*, 27 November, 2012)

Myanmar will have its first census in three decades in 2014.

The last three were in 1983, 1931 and 1891. The Myanmar born after 1983 have not yet been counted. The 2014 census is expected to play a key role in reforms as it will give an accurate count of population and an estimate of economic indicators such as GDP, per capita income and other socio-economic data required to plan national development. It would be crucial to several key policies relating to education, health care, employment, housing, sanitation etc. The biggest challenge that faces reforms is the ethnic issue.

There are apprehensions that the census exercise will marginalise ethnic nationalities. The Rohingya Muslims, approximately one million in number, are not counted among national races.

They do not fit into any of the three categories of citizens created by Myanmar’s 1982 Citizenship Law, namely full citizens, associate citizens and naturalised citizens. Around 2 lakh stateless Rohingya’s have fled Myanmar.

Apart from them, around 1 lakh Chin, several hill tribes and a large number of native born but non-indigenous people, such as Indians are yet to be counted.

To ensure that the census is universal, Myanmar may need to review the 1982 Citizenship Law to bring it in conformity with international conventions such as the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons.

Conducted in the right spirit, Myanmar's census would have a major role to play in ensuring democracy and making sure that the transformation from procedural to substantive democracy is inclusive.

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/myanmars-census-a-crucial-democracy-test/article4137474.ece>

Date Accessed: 03.12.2012
(Amrutha Jose)

China Mulls Changes in One-Child Policy

(*Al Jazeera*, 28 November, 2012)

The world's most populous nation with a 1.34bn population is considering revising its strict one child policy (formulated in 1979) in the face of a rapidly ageing society. The one child policy has had several implications: increased social tensions, forced abortions causing a gender imbalance, created a situation of 4-2-1 where one child has to look after 4 grandparents and 2 parents. In the future it will affect the competitiveness of the economy. "By 2050, it is predicted that a third of the population - some 450 million people will be aged 60-plus." "Proposed changes would allow for urban couples to have a second child, even if one of the parents is themselves not an only

child." The National Population and Family Planning Commission and others have sent policy recommendations to the government which will be implemented in a gradual process and will be region specific.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia-pacific/2012/11/2012112873021849335.html>

(Date Accessed: 05.12.2012)

Anjora Sarangi

Bad News for Balancing in East Asia

(*Stephen M Walt, Foreign Policy*, 3 December, 2012)

The balance of power and the balance of threats have been two very powerful tendencies of international politics.

For sixty years, East Asia has enjoyed the "security umbrella" of the United States. But the rise of China in the region has destabilized the national security policy of East Asian countries especially in Japan and South Korea.

While Japan and China are fighting over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, Japan is also involved in a spat with South Korea over Takeshima/Dokdo Islands. It is a crucial moment in diplomacy as they struggle to maintain a favourable balance of power without excessive deference towards China which has become a power potential in the world with its rapid economic growth.

Keeping in mind the long term security challenge from China, the best strategy for the East Asian countries is to mend its relations with other countries and most importantly each other. Such an alliance can provide the essential breakthrough in case of opposition by China. And the ideal role for United States in this

scenario would be to 'help lubricate the balancing process'.

http://walt.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/12/03/bad_news_for_balancing_in_east_asia

Date accessed: 6.12.2012

(Simi Sunny)

MIDDLE-EAST

The Next Stop for Palestinians could be Global Courts

(*Joseph Schuman, Ma'an News Agency*, 1 December 2012)

After a significant diplomatic victory at the UN General Assembly, Palestine will now seek to apply for membership at the Hague-based International Criminal Court. Though the recent elevation to non-membership statehood would not prospectively result in greater influence in international politics, it has cleared the way for the long-sought membership at the international court. This would give Palestine the power to refer for investigation alleged war crime and crimes against humanity. Such a possibility has already alarmed the Israeli civilian and military leaders since Palestine's 2009 request to ICC for prosecution of Israel's actions in the 2008-2009 Gaza war with Hamas was turned down because of its non-recognition as a state. ICC rulings, even when they can't be enforced, can help Palestine shift the 'geopolitical weight' in their favour but ICC being a political organization there is also an imminent danger of "geopolitical consideration trumping a strictly legal case."

<http://maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=543564>

(Date Accessed: 05.12.12)

Karishma Mutreja

AFRICA

Congo Needs Our Help

(Susannah Sirkin, *CNN*, 30 November, 2012)

The author discloses that some of the “bravest people” she knew in Eastern Congo today are cringing in fear “wondering where their supporters are.” While a leading hospital in the war ravaged country has been sending desperate emails all over the world for medical help, international agencies are centring on safe evacuation of their staff. In fact UN largest peacekeeping force also stood “virtually impotent” as rebels occupied the city of Goma. This shows “how ill-prepared the international community has been for this latest round of violence in Africa.”

Congo has been rightly labelled as the "rape capital of the world," for the last 16 years armed groups supplied by Rwanda, Uganda and the Congolese army in the provinces of North and South Kivu, have been “marauding, pillaging, killing, abducting children to be soldiers and gang-raping women and men.” At the same time valuable minerals continue to be extracted and exported while the people have suffered in absence of basic necessities.

Despite government failing to establish international rule of law “military magistrates are prosecuting rapes and pillaging by their own government's troops as they defend the rule of law despite

the chaos” and say “It's our country, and we will defend justice here until it's no longer safe.”

The author concludes saying that the valour and dedication with which the Congolese people are trying to uphold values of justice and human rights are an “incredible inspiration” and commands “our reciprocal commitment to respond with equal political courage” and in whatever others ways we can contribute.

http://edition.cnn.com/2012/11/30/opinion/sirkin-congo-violence/index.html?hpt=hp_c1

(Accessed on 03.12.2012)

Junty Sharma Pathak

ASEAN: Unleashing Africa's Investment Potential

(Mohammed Salah, *Daily News Egypt*, 3 December, 2012)

The African Stock Exchange Association (ASEA) held its 16th annual General Assembly and a flagship conference in Cairo under the slogan “Unleashing Africa's Investment Potential.”

Mohammed Omran, Chairman of the Egyptian Stock Exchange addressed the current challenges faced by the Egyptian economy.

According to the chairman, with the growing purchasing power, the growth rate for Egypt is expected to rise by 5% in the coming years, with resilience towards global crises which would create a “new Africa.”

The president of ASEA, Sunil Benimadhu said that the “image of Africa” has transformed since the past decade, from “the

hopeless continent” to a more positive one. He also predicted that by 2050, the top 10 economies would have two African countries (Nigeria in the sixth place, and Egypt in the tenth place) while India would replace the United States followed by China as the leading economic powers in the world. He also highlighted that to increase Africa's GDP, it must focus on the “implementation of inclusive growth the enhancement of democratic principles and the substantial improvement in infrastructure.” Prime Minister Hesham Qandil also discussed preliminary agreement with the International Monetary Fund that would pave the way to provide necessary financing to build the Egyptian economy.

<http://dailynewsegypt.com/2012/12/03/asea-unleashing-africas-investment-potential/>

(Date Accessed: 5.12.2012)

Ranjana Adhikari

AMERICAS

The Financial Crisis and the Bank Deregulation Myth

(John A. Allison, *Cato Institute*, December, 2012)

As against worldwide claims that the recent infamous financial crisis and the failed recovery were caused by banking deregulation and greed on Wall Street, this article calls this a myth.

The causes of the crisis, argues the author, are incompetent government policy and altruism,

as against greed.

The banking industry was never deregulated. Instead, there was a massive increase in regulation under the Bush Administration, including the Privacy Act, the Patriot Act and Sarbanes-Oxley and these policies misdirected banking risk management.

The crisis has rather been a result of overregulation combined with mistakes made by the Federal Reserve and government housing policy.

In 2000s, the Fed printed money to create negative interest rate and therefore there was a huge increase in borrowing and consumption simultaneously. This consumption migrated towards residential real estate market and the debt spilt over.

<http://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/financial-crisis-bank-deregulation-myth>

(Date Accessed: 3.12.2012)

Naina Bhardwaj

OECD Suggests Stricter Accreditation for Chilean Universities

(Emily Green, *The Santiago Times*, 29 November, 2012)

“The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has recommended that Chile tighten its accreditation process, an area of particular scrutiny lately, in order to improve its higher education system.”

More rigorous licensing requirements for universities, continuous monitoring of university standards and

restructured leadership have been proposed.

A report submitted by the OECD to the Education Ministry in November suggests that accreditation be made mandatory and should be called “institutional review” with periodical reviews rather than a onetime qualification.

If the standards are not met then there should be a review and the universities should be sent to the first stage of licensing.

It also proposed a change in the licensing system through which it can attain autonomy which takes very long at present. “As a collective solution, the OECD suggested better alignment between the licensing and accreditation processes, allowing them to work together and ensure that universities are operating in line with their initial license.”

“Chile needs a short-term solution to a long-term problem,” the report read.

<http://www.santiagotimes.cl/chile/education/25461-oecd-suggests-strictier-accreditation-for-chilean-universities>

(Date Accessed: 06.12.2012)

Anjora Sarangi