



Weekly Roundup
of
News on Policy

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Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh meeting with Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao on the sidelines of the 21st ASEAN Summit in Cambodia, November, 2012. India's Prime Minister Singh congratulated the CPC on the successful completion of the 18th CPC National Congress, and expressed his desire that China and India take their relations to a new level. This was the 14th meeting between the two leaders in the last eight years.

China Sets Blue Print for Future Development: **Aims to Build a “Moderately Prosperous” Society,** **Based on “Socialism with Chinese Characteristics”** **China’s Vision and Approach Differ from India’s**

In a report presented to the 18th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party on November 8, 2012, outgoing President Hu Jintao took stock of the extraordinary economic success of China over the last three decades and laid out a comprehensive blue print for its future.

There are a number of sharp differences between the vision and approach of the Chinese Communist Party and that of India.

The most important difference is, of course, India's commitment to multi-party democracy, individual freedom and human rights safeguarded by an independent judicial system.

China is gradually realizing the importance of the safeguards that

have been in place in the Indian Constitution on freedom and democracy and is reforming its systems accordingly (see story below on judicial reforms in China to safeguard human rights).

Another striking difference is the difference in the approaches of the two nations towards “socialism” – a concept that is fundamental to the ideology of both nations.

China has engaged in a process of developing a new ideology (“socialism with Chinese characteristics”). India, on the other hand, has many parties that still cling on to old ideas of socialism, as well as other parties that reject the concept outright.

Notwithstanding these differences, the vision and ideology being developed and followed by China

merits close study and discussion by Indian political leaders and the public.

For this reason, we are highlighting here some of the main features of the latest blue print for China's development.

Achievements

The Organization of Economic Cooperation for Development (OECD) predicts that China is expected to become the world's largest economy in four years, by 2016, overtaking the US. OECD says China's gross domestic product will surpass that of the Eurozone this year.

Looking back over the last five years – when much of the world was struggling with the global economic crisis - President Hu

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listed several notable achievements:

- The Chinese economy “has developed steadily and rapidly. China’s overall national strength has grown considerably. The gross domestic product (GDP) reached 47.3 trillion yuan in 2011 (NOTE: this is equivalent to about Rs. 413 lakh crores -- some five times India’s Rs.78 lakh crore GDP] and government revenue increased by a wide margin.”
- Living standards of common people have been significantly improved.
- Efforts to improve the people’s wellbeing have been intensified;
- Urban and rural employment has continued to increase;
- Individual income has increased rapidly;
- Household assets have grown steadily;
- People’s need for daily necessities such as clothing, food, housing and transportation is better met;
- Subsistence allowances for both urban and rural residents and the rural poverty line have been raised by a big margin;
- Basic pensions for enterprise retirees have increased continually.
- Basic public services have improved markedly, and access to them has become much more equitable.
- Education has developed

rapidly, and free compulsory education is now available in all urban and rural areas.

- Marked progress has been made in developing the social security system; the basic old-age insurance system covering both the urban and rural population has been fully established, and a new type of social assistance system is taking shape.
- Fresh progress has been made in social development.
- The whole population is now basically covered by medical insurance;
- the basic urban and rural healthcare systems are taking shape.
- Construction of low-income housing has been accelerated.
- Strengthened and made innovations in social management and maintained social harmony and stability.
- New strides have been made in developing democracy and the legal system.
- Further progress has been made in reforming the political structure. Urban and rural deputies to people’s congresses are now elected on the basis of the same population ratio. Community - level democracy has steadily developed.
- The socialist system of laws with Chinese characteristics has been established, and notable achievements have been made in building a socialist country based on

the rule of law.

- The reform of the administrative system has deepened,
- Notable progress has been made in making China an innovative country
- Major breakthroughs have been made in manned spaceflights, the lunar exploration program, and in the development of a manned deep-sea submersible, supercomputers and high-speed railways.
- Solid steps have been taken to promote ecological progress, and comprehensive progress has been made in resource conservation and environmental protection.
- Further progress has been made in the reform of the judicial system and the work mechanisms of the judiciary.
- Development of the cultural sector has reached a new stage.
- Intensive efforts have been made to promote core socialist values; comprehensive progress has been made in the reform of the cultural system;
- Important headway has been made in providing public cultural services;
- The cultural industry has grown rapidly; cultural creation and production is flourishing; and people enjoy richer intellectual pursuits and cultural entertainment.
- New progress has been made in public fitness programs

No.	Economic or Social factor	Unit of measurement	China	India
HUMAN WELL BEING				
1.	Poverty line - numbers	%/Numbers in millions	10% (131million)	25% (273 million)
2.	Literacy Rate - Defined as age 15 and over	can read & write - % of Pop	91	60
3.	Life expectancy	Years	74	64
4.	Death Rate	Rate per 1,000 pop	6.97	8.18
5.	Median age	Number of years	33	25
6.	Infant mortality rate	Death Rate per 1,000	23	55
7.	People living with HIV/AIDS	2003	840,000	5,110,000
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC WELL BEING				
8.	Per Capita income	US\$ per year/person	1,498	658
9.	Unemployment rate	% of workforce	20	30
10.	Labour force	in millions	797	496
11.	Mobile/cellular phones	millions	400	100
12.	Internet users	millions	111	51
13.	Labour Composition	Agriculture %/Industry %/ Services %	49/22/29	60/17/23

and competitive sports.

Challenges

The President identified the major challenges facing China:

- **Unbalanced, uncoordinated and unsustainable development** remains a big problem.
- The **capacity for scientific and technological innovation** is weak.
- The **industrial structure is unbalanced.**
- **Agricultural infrastructure** remains weak.
- **Resource and environmental constraints** have become more serious.
- Many **systemic barriers** stand in the way of promoting development in a scientific way.
- The tasks of **deepening reform and opening up and changing the growth model remain arduous.**
- The **development gap** between urban and rural areas and between regions is still large, and so are **income disparities.**
- **Social problems have increased markedly.** There are many problems

affecting people's **immediate interests in education, employment, social security, healthcare, housing, the ecological environment, food and drug safety, workplace safety, public security, law enforcement and administration of justice.**

- Some people still **lead hard lives.**
- There is a **lack of ethics and integrity** in some fields of endeavor. Some officials are not competent to pursue development in a scientific way. Some community-level Party organizations are weak and lax. **A small number of Party members and officials waver in the Party's ideal and conviction and are not fully aware of its purpose. Going through formalities and bureaucratism as well as extravagance and waste are serious problems.**
- Some sectors are prone to **corruption and other misconduct**, and the fight against corruption remains a serious challenge for us.

Ideology and Vision: “Socialism with Chinese Characteristics”

Explaining the ideological vision behind China’s development strategy, Hu Jintao said, “Looking back at China's eventful modern history and looking to the promising future of the Chinese nation, we have drawn this definite conclusion: **We must unswervingly follow the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics in order to complete the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects, accelerate socialist modernization, and achieve the great renewal of the Chinese nation.**”

Mr. Hu explained, “Taking the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics means we must, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China and **basing ourselves on China's realities, take economic development as the central task and adhere to the Four Cardinal Principles and the policy of reform and opening up.** It means we must [1] release and develop the productive forces, [2] develop the socialist market economy, [3] socialist democracy, an advanced socialist culture and a harmonious socialist society, and [4] promote socialist ecological progress”.

Mr. Hu explained that “socialist system with Chinese

No.	Economic or Social factor	Unit of measurement	China	India
THE ECONOMY				
1.	Steel Production	million tons/year	280	45
2.	Food grain production	million tons/year	418	210
3.	Cement Production	million tons/year	650	150
4.	Crude Oil production	million tons/year	180	40
5.	Coal Production	million tons/year	1,300	300
6.	Electricity generated	Billions of Kilowatts	2,190	557
7.	Foreign trade (China+HongKong)	US\$ billions/year	1961	260
8.	Tourist Arrivals	millions/year	87	4
9.	FDI inflow (China + Hong Kong)	US\$ billions/year	106	8
10.	Forex Reserves (China+Hong Kong)	US\$ billions	1,139	175
11.	Investment	% of GDP	44	25
12.	Inflation Rate	%	1.9	4.6
13.	GDP (PPP)	US\$ billions	8,182	3,699
14.	GDP (PPP) per person	US\$ per person/year	6,300	3,400
15.	Public Debt	% of GDP	29	82
16.	Government budget Revenues/Expenditure	US\$ billions	392/424	111/126

characteristics includes the following: [1] **the fundamental political system** - the system of people's congresses; [2] **the basic political systems** - the system of multiparty cooperation and political consultation under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, [3] the **system of regional ethnic autonomy**, and the system of **community-level self-governance**; [4] **the socialist system of laws** with Chinese characteristics; [5] the **basic economic system in which public ownership is the mainstay and economic entities of diverse ownership develop together**; and [6] the specific economic, political, cultural, and social institutions based on these systems.

Mr. Hu said that, “**Socialism with Chinese characteristics both upholds the basic principles of scientific socialism and has distinctive Chinese features that reflect contemporary conditions. ... By integrating theory with practice, it has systematically addressed the fundamental questions of what kind of socialism we should build and how we should build it in China, a big country in the East with a huge population and a weak economy to start with. Socialism with Chinese characteristics has brought about fast development and rising living standards in China. This fully shows that socialism with Chinese characteristics is what we must pursue if we are to achieve development and make progress in contemporary China and that only socialism with Chinese characteristics can enable China to develop itself.**”

Mr. Hu said, “To achieve new victory for socialism with Chinese characteristics under new historical conditions, we must have **a firm grasp of the following basic requirements and make them shared convictions of the whole Party and the people of all ethnic groups in China.**

(1) **We must maintain the**

people's principal position in the country. Socialism with Chinese characteristics is a cause for the people in their hundreds of millions. We should ensure that the people are the masters of the country and we should uphold the rule of law as a fundamental principle by which the Party leads the people in running the country. We should mobilize and organize as many people as possible to manage state and social affairs as well as the economy and cultural programs in accordance with the law and to devote themselves to socialist modernization, and we should better protect the people's rights and interests and ensure that the people determine their own destiny.

(2) **We must continue to release and develop the productive forces.** This is the fundamental task of socialism with Chinese characteristics. We should take economic development as the central task and pursuing development in a scientific way as the underlying guideline, advance in an all-around way economic, political, cultural, social, and ecological progress and achieve in a scientific way development that puts people first and is comprehensive, balanced and sustainable.

(3) **We must persevere in reform and opening up. Reform and opening up are crucial to adhering to and developing socialism with Chinese characteristics. We should always apply the spirit of reform and innovation to all aspects of governance, keep improving the socialist market economy, adhere to the basic state policy of opening to the outside world, continue to make innovations in theory, in institutions, in science and technology, in culture and in other fields, and continuously promote the self-improvement and self-development of China's socialist system.**

(4) **We must safeguard social fairness and justice.** Fairness and justice are inherent requirements of socialism with Chinese

characteristics. We must, relying on the concerted efforts of all the Chinese people and based on economic and social development, step up efforts to develop institutions that are vital to ensuring social fairness and justice; **establish in due course a system for guaranteeing fairness in society featuring, among other things, equal rights, equal opportunities and fair rules for all; and foster a fair social environment and ensure people's equal right to participation in governance and to development.**

(5) **We must strive for common prosperity. This is the fundamental principle of socialism with Chinese characteristics. We should adhere to the basic socialist economic system and the socialist income distribution system.** We should adjust the pattern of national income distribution, tighten its regulation by secondary distribution and work hard to narrow income gaps **so that all the people can share in more fruits of development in a fair way and move steadily towards common prosperity.**

(6) **We must promote social harmony.** Social harmony is an inherent attribute of socialism with Chinese characteristics. **We should give higher priority to ensuring and improving the people's wellbeing, strengthen and conduct social management in an innovative way, strike a balance between reform, development and stability, rally all the forces that can be rallied, maximize factors conducive to harmony and increase the creative vitality of society. We should ensure that the people live and work in contentment, society is stable and orderly, and the country enjoys enduring peace and stability.**

(7) **We must pursue peaceful development.** Peaceful development is the sure choice of socialism with Chinese characteristics. We should pursue development through opening up

and cooperation to benefit all. We should develop ourselves by securing a peaceful international environment and uphold and promote world peace through our own development. We should expand common interests with all others and work to build a harmonious world of enduring peace and common prosperity.

(8) **We must uphold the leadership of the Party.** The Communist Party of China is the leadership core of the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics. We should uphold the principle **that the Party was founded for the public good and that it exercises state power for the people...**

Mr. Hu said, "The whole Party must more **purposefully take putting people first as the core requirement** for thoroughly applying the Scientific Outlook on Development. **We must always make realizing, safeguarding and developing the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the people, the starting point and goal of all the work of the Party and country. We must respect the people's creativity, protect their rights and interests, and make continued progress in enabling the people to share in the fruits of development and in promoting well-rounded development of the person.**"

Chinese Judicial Reform Seeks to Strengthen Protection of Rights

(Xinhua News Agency)

China has made the establishment of an **impartial, efficient and authoritative socialist judicial system as one of the fundamental objectives of its judicial reform,** a Chinese Government white paper said recently.

The paper, titled "Judicial Reform in China", said other objectives of the reform are to ensure courts and procuratorates (prosecuting agencies) exercise adjudicative power and procuratorial power fairly and independently, **and to provide solid and reliable judicial guarantee for safeguarding the legitimate rights and interests of the people, social equity and justice, as well as lasting national stability.**

The white paper was issued by the Information Office of the State Council.

Improving the protection of human rights is an important goal, the white paper says, adding that China's Criminal Procedure Law amended in 2012 included "respecting and protecting human rights."

In terms of protecting human rights, **effective measures are being taken to deter and prohibit the obtainment of confessions through torture, better protect the rights of criminal suspects and defendants and protect attorneys' rights to exercise their duties.**

Measures are also being taken to strictly control and prudently apply the death penalty.

China also revised laws to provide a legal guarantee for lawyers to meet with suspects or defendants, access case materials and obtain evidence through investigation.

China's systems of people's jurors and people's supervisors provide a significant guarantee for developing socialist democratic politics, and realizing the people's participation in the administration of state affairs in accordance with the law, said the white paper.

China has provided free legal assistance for more impoverished people to protect their legitimate rights, said the governmental white paper.

Inmates are required to work in China's prisons and get paid as the country is striving to build a just, clean, civilized and efficient prison system, a white paper said Tuesday.

Every week, inmates work for five days, receive classroom education for one day and rest for one day, said the white paper on judicial reform in China.

The litigation costs for parties before Chinese courts had been "markedly" reduced after recent judicial reforms, according to an official document.

In 2010, China's judicial organs issued regulations on building a case guidance system to standardize judicial acts, a white paper said on Tuesday. Different from the system of case judgment in the common law, China's case guidance system, under the statutory law, uses cases to give directions for the accurate understanding and appropriate application of the provisions of laws, said the white paper "Judicial Reform in China" issued by the State Council Information Office.

Plight of 1 Crore Impoverished Street Vendors of India: Need to Revise Draft Bill

(Harsh Mander, *The Hindu*, 3 November, 2012)

In this article in the HINDU, social activist and former bureaucrat Harsh Mander makes a case for improving the current draft central bill on street vending.

Street vending provides steady employment to impoverished people, acts as sales outlet to small producers, facilitates easy access of goods for consumers and adds to the cultural life of cities.

The article argues that in India, an estimated one crore people live by street vending.

The article says that a seven-city survey, conducted by Sharit Bhowmik with the National Alliance of Street Vendors of India, has found that, despite their contributions to city-life, street vendors have to work in abysmal conditions for more than ten hours a day, generally earning far below minimum wages.

They have no health services or social security and moneylenders charge high interests for credit.

But the greatest insecurity is created by a hostile state which has imposed an oppressive license regime.

An arbitrary, low ceiling is placed on the number of licenses thus illegalising majority of street vending activity.

In all cities, street vendors are forced to pay daily and weekly bribes to police and municipal authorities as well as huge fines.

The Government, in accordance with its official policy of freeing private business enterprise from the grab of license raj, has eased norms for setting up businesses in the organised sector.

But no such efforts have been made for poor people like street vendors and rickshaw pullers.

The draft law on street vendors, which is currently in front of the parliament, while promising to correct such unfairness, restricts itself to the registration and licensing system which remains confusing.

Even with the proposed changes, it is not clear how the situation of street vendors can change.

A change can happen only if vending zones and ceilings are decided through a transparent process with the involvement of vendors' representatives.

http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/columns/Harsh_Mander/reclaiming-the-city-for-street-vendors/article4058121.ece

(Date accessed: 06.11.2012)
(Amrutha Jose)

“Mumbai Completely Unprepared to Face a Storm Like Sandy”

(Neha Thirani, India Ink, The New York Times Blog on India, November 1, 2012)

Hurricane Sandy has generated a debate about the disaster preparedness of Mumbai to face natural calamities.

According to urban planners and architects, **“Mumbai is completely unequipped to deal with sudden flooding like the kind that accompanied Hurricane Sandy.”**



Seven years since the 26/7 deluge, the city still lacks any “physical planning in terms of land use or planning for emergencies and natural disasters.”

Extensive plans like the Brihanmumbai Storm Water Drain (Brimstowad) project and development of Mithi River to revamp the storm water-drainage system and create outlets of water remain incomplete.

According to a study by Mumbai Transformation Support Unit

Natural (MTSU), defence systems like mangroves, wetlands and waterways that surround Mumbai have reduced by 53 percent in the

last 40 years.

Rules and regulations meant to protect mangroves and shorelines have been violated due to real estate pressures.

Lack of planning aggravates the effect of natural calamities in urban areas.

Informal settlements like slums are outside the purview of building regulations. Since they are built edge to edge, in the event that some harm falls upon one of them, a domino effect may set in, spreading the harm rapidly to all the settlements.

Narrow lanes have been further narrowed by unregulated construction due to which fire or rescue operations are stymied.

Lack of proper planning is supplemented by a lack of comprehensive disaster plan, alarm systems, early detection systems, evacuation plans or emergency shelters.

Due to lack of proper governance and a systematic process to address such emergencies, a Hurricane Sandy like situation might have catastrophic consequences for Indian Cities.

Therefore, the need of the hour is to “institutionalize disaster management, so that proper infrastructure is put in place and periodic checks are carried out to see if it is operable.”

<http://india.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/11/01/what-if-mumbai-gets-hit-by-a-storm-like-sandy/>

(Date accessed: 6 Nov. 2012)
(Karishma)

Caste Discrimination In Higher Education

(Subhash Gatde, *Infochange*, October, 2012)

The UGC has recently formulated and enforced anti-caste bias regulations called UGC (Prevention of Caste-Based Discrimination/Harassment Victimisation and Promotion of Equality in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations 2012, to promote equality on campus.

These regulations were a response to a series of caste based discrimination cases at reputed institutions of higher education in recent times. One particular incident at Vardhaman Medical College, Delhi, reported the case of 35 Scheduled Caste students being failed repeatedly in a particular subject.

The Mungekar Committee report has said that the faculty ‘resorted to caste-based discrimination and neglected the duties assigned to them, not by omission but by commission’.

Similar cases have emerged from institutions like AIIMS and Chikitsa Vishvavidyalaya, Lucknow, where the Administration has either disregarded the report or refused to implement orders of the SC Commission.

Discrimination has also been reported in the form of under-utilization of seats reserved through quotas for reserved category students.

Discriminatory behaviour, arising from the ‘varna’ mindset has also been meted out to eligible candidates from socially oppressed classes that apply for teaching positions at institutes of higher education. Several posts sanctioned for SC/ST candidates (Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and Professor) lie vacant in central universities like Delhi

University, Aligarh Muslim University, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Benares Hindu University and University of Hyderabad.

In the light of these cases, the new regulations, for the first time, clearly define harassment and victimisation of SC/ST students at the hands of their teachers and peers.

It also identifies “overt and covert acts of casteism” such as biased evaluation of exam papers by professors by significantly undermarking SC/ST students; passing derogatory remarks (indicating caste as a reason for under-performance in class); keeping such students idle in the lab and not allowing them to work. The new regulation also makes it mandatory to “appoint an ‘anti-discriminatory officer’ from amongst the staff and to establish a grievance redressal committee.”

These regulations also empower the UGC to revoke recognition or even withdraw grants to public and private colleges and universities.

<http://infochangeindia.org/human-rights/analysis/dronacharyas-all-caste-discrimination-in-higher-education.html>

(Date accessed: 7.11.2012)
(Karishma)

The Truth behind Narendra Modi’s False Claims on the Development of Gujarat

(Ajay Umat, *The Times of India*, 4 November, 2012)

The Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi has been projected as the champion of economic growth (backed by the Gujarat growth model) and has received invitations from the British government for revived diplomatic engagement.

However, a closer analysis of the Gujarat story reveals a very different picture.

The claim that Gujarat is one of the fastest growing states is unchallenged but whether this growth has been “equitable, sustainable and broad based” is debatable.

A Planning Commission Report of 2011 states that the benefits of a high GDP in Gujarat has not trickled down to the marginalized sections, especially the SCs and STs.

Also a high agricultural growth rate, triggered by factors like good rains, the Sardar Sarovar project and BT cotton seeds, has contributed only 15.5% to Net State Domestic Product (NSDP).

Gujarat is one of the worst off in terms of hunger among high per capita income states, ranking 13 out of 17 major states on the hunger index. Economists state. Gujarat needs to formulate a clear land use plan.

Policies should also be made for education, health and skill development for the eastern tribal belt.

Also a majority of the population is employed in the informal sector with the quality of employment being extremely poor, with low purchasing power. There are problems with the functioning of major special schemes for nutrition too. Gujarat provides much less than the fixed 35 kg food grain to below poverty line families on the pretext that the number of BPL households was much more than what the Centre had estimated. The state is ranked almost at the bottom (18th among the major 20 states) in terms of improvement in HDI.

http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-11-04/special-report/34907617_1_gujarat-chief-minister-narendra-modi-indira-hirway

(Date Accessed: 5.11.2012)
(Naina Bhardwaj)

Liberalization of Service Sector as Engine for Inclusive Growth: Political Will Required

(Changyong Rhee, *The Japan Times*, 5 November, 2012)

An economic slowdown in People's Republic of China (PRC) and India has put an additional drag on the weakened global economic scenario.

So far, manufacturing, coupled with a strong external demand, has contributed to growth in the two giant Asian economies.

However, as global demand dwindles, the writer proposes that the two economies must look towards the service sector as a future source of growth.

He argues that developing the service sector can have positive spin off effects in the form of a diversified production base and improved productivity arising from a synergetic relationship with industry.

It is also expected to generate an increased capacity for employment generation, "particularly for women, thus supporting inclusive growth."

The service sector, which employs more than one third of the total labour force in developing Asia, accounted for nearly half of developing Asia's GDP in 2010.

Currently, traditional services like restaurants and taxi services dominate the service sector vis-a-vis modern services like IT or professional business services, which account for less than 10 percent of Asia's service economy.

Today's service sector is characterized by low productivity,

lack of infrastructure and a skill gap.

The need of the hour is to upgrade the service sector in areas like business processing, tourism, health care etc.

The author draws parallels from the positive effects of deregulation and competition in the manufacturing sector to make **a case for deregulation in the service sector as well.**

The upgradation of the service sector is identified as "low-hanging fruit for Asia", since large scale investments are not a necessity.

However, the author points out that service sector reforms cannot be achieved without a strong political will in the region.

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/eo20121105a1.html>

(Date accessed: 06.11.2012)
(Karishma)

Boost Free Trade Between Asia And Europe: 9th Asia-Europe Meeting

(*Bangkok Post*, 6 November, 2012)

Attributable to the entwined nature of the global economy, the leaders of Asia and Europe in the informal Asia-Europe Meeting (Asem) have decided to boost free trade and oppose protectionism as the finest way to ensure assistance to Europe and safeguard Asian future.

The European Union has also expressed interest in new trade agreements to boost trade between the two regions.

These agreements would be similar to the ones recently reached with South Korea, India,

Japan, Malaysia, Singapore and Vietnam.

The 16-year-old Asem grouping is a collective of 49 Asian and European countries comprising 60% of the world's trade.

However the 9th Asem saw regression because of the Euro zone crisis and the slow growth of Asian economies as demands from Europe, which otherwise accounted for at least 42% of Asian exports dropped.

"From this debate it emerged that in the modern world we all should row in the same direction." "We need each other." said the European Council President. Brussels will host the 10th Asem Meet in 2014.

<http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/asia/319850/free-trade-for-asia-and-europe>

(Date accessed: 07.11.2012)
(Junty Sharma Pathak)

DEVELOPMENT

ICDS: Leakages in Assistance

(*The Hindustan Times*, 4 November, 2012)

In a report released in October 2012, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) pointed out that economic growth alone cannot reduce hunger and malnutrition. To beat this twin menace, a country needs nutrition-sensitive agriculture, social protection and purposeful and decisive public policies.

Both these issues are valid for India. The country has been spending increasingly more to handle malnutrition and hunger along with strengthening the policies to force a change.

But one of the major reasons for such a dismal record is rampant corruption. The office of the commissioners to the Supreme Court has revealed that the Supplementary Nutrition Programme (SNP) under the Integrated Child Development Scheme, which receives a budget of Rs. 8000 crores every year has been facing a lot of irregularities and “a lion’s share of the fund is going to private food contractors.”

This is against the Court order since it had only allowed self-help mahila mandals to supply food in the plan.

The states recording the worst performance are Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Meghalaya.

The data is shocking, especially keeping in mind that India has 48 percent of children who are stunted.

The report also reveals a nexus between politicians, contractors and bureaucrats in the violations. Though there are plans to expand the budget for SNP by Rs. 4000 crores in the 12th Plan, it would not

be of much use for the children until such leaks are fixed.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/VideosEditorialSectionPage/Editorials/There-is-little-on-their-plates/Article1-954849.aspx>

(Date accessed: 7.11.12)
(Simi Sunny)

Centre Releases Rs370 Cr For Mizoram Flagship Project

(*Zodin Sanga, Seven Sisters Post*, 5 November, 2012)

The Planning Commission released Rs 370 crore for Mizoram’s flagship project “New Land Use Policy” (NLUP), merely three days after receiving the proposal sent by the Mizoram Government reflecting the Centre’s keen interest in the new economic project. Rs 2907.90 crores is the estimated total cost of the project for the five-year period “of which Rs 2526.98 crores is being contributed by the Centre and Rs 380.92 crores is beneficiary payment”, which will aspire to envelop 1,20,000 families. The released sum for this fiscal points to a 58.12 per cent increase from last fiscal’s Rs 234 crores. Based on the Centre’s recommendations, “five Centrally-sponsored programmes have been converged for NLUP.”

The land use pattern visualized under NLUP stands as “60 per cent fee as rain forest, 15 per cent for cultivation under NLUP, 10 per cent for community forest reserves for protection of catchment area of rivers and water supply sources, 10 per cent for firewood, timber and 5 per cent for habitation, industrial area, roads.”

<http://sevensisterspost.com/centre-releases-rs370-cr-for-mizoram-flagship-project/>

(Date accessed: 7.11.12)
(Junty Sharma Pathak)

Post-2015 Development Agenda: Goals, Targets and Indicators

(Barry Carin, Nicole Bates-Eamer, Min Ha Lee, and Wonhyuk Lim with Mukesh Kapila, *Centre for International Governance Innovation*, 19 October, 2012)

This article talks about the remarkable success of Millennium Development Goals launched in 2000, fixing explicit targets to be met by 2015. These MDGs acknowledged the high extent of deprivation among humans and also recognized the need for immediate policy attention towards



environmental degradation and set targets to reduce poverty, achieve basic education and health, and promote gender equality and environmental sustainability. Overall, these goals have been successful in mobilizing resources to address gaps in human development. But as we approach 2015, new targets need to be set by moving beyond basic human needs to promote dynamic, inclusive and sustainable development. The article states that the new goals should ensure essential human rights and create enabling conditions to help individuals realize their potential. They should aim at giving better living standards with more inclusion. They should promote civil and political rights along with security and gender equality. The potential new indicators for future

development, called “Bellagio Goals” are:

- inclusive growth for dignified livelihoods and adequate standards of living;
- sufficient food and water for active living;
- appropriate education and skills for productive participation in society;
- good health for the best possible physical and mental well-being;
- security for ensuring freedom from violence;
- gender equality, enabling men and women to participate and benefit equally in society;
- building resilient communities and nations for reduced disaster risk from natural and technological hazards;
- improving infrastructure for access to essential information, services and opportunities;
- empowering people to realize their civil and political rights;
- sustainable management of the biosphere, enabling people and the planet to thrive together; and
- global governance and equitable rules for realizing human potential.

http://www.cigionline.org/sites/default/files/MDG_Post_2015v3.pdf

(Date Accessed: 7.11.2012)
(Naina Bhardwaj)

UK firms up Plans to cut £280m aid to India

(Nicholas Watt, *The Guardian*, 4 November, 2012)

Towing the line of its austerity measures, Britain is planning to make substantial cuts in its aid budget to India.

Justine Greening, the International Development Secretary, is coordinating with the Indian Government to chart out a transition package that would mark a significant shift from aid- based to trade-based support.

The main criticism of aid to India remains that India doesn't need it. Then Indian Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee, had told Rajya Sabha: "We do not require the aid. It is a peanut in our total development exercises." Under these circumstances, the British Government finds it hard to justify spending £280m a year as aid to India.

While the concern of the British taxpayer might be understandable, however, it is argued by many that often those countries that need aid the least are the ones who can use it the best. The trouble with aid is that once a country becomes too dependent on it (too much, for too long), it stops supporting the process of development and starts to delay it. “It can undermine the accountability and ability of the state, because the state gets its funds, policy and legitimacy from elsewhere.”

But other thinkers feel that, even though aid has been irrelevant to India's GDP for many years, still it can play an effective role in poverty reduction, considering a very larger number of people in India, who live in abject poverty, are worse off than in sub-Saharan Africa.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development/2012/nov/04/uk-cut-aid-to-india?intcmp=239>

(Date accessed: 5.11.12)
(Hansa Kaul)

PANCHAYATI RAJ

Government to Implement Pilot Project To Reinforce Pani Panchayats In 11 Districts

(Bhubaneswar, *Pragativadi*, 7 November, 2012)

At a high-level review meeting chaired by Chief Minister Naveen

Patnaik, a decision was taken to make the pani panchayats self-reliant.

To this effect, a pilot project of the Government of Orissa is going to be undertaken in 11 districts and 452 pani panchayats over the next three years. An estimated cost of Rs 56 crores will be required for the project.

It was also decided to “undertake various programmes to convert these pani panchayats as multi-functional business organisations with facilities of information, production, marketing and financial assistance through the institutional framework.”

Additional efforts will be made for efficient utilization of big, medium and small irrigation projects.

A “pani panchayat development team” will be formed with an “efficient and capable farmer” appointed by the Government as a “community resources person.”

<http://www.pragativadi.com/071112/local4.htm>

(Date accessed: 7.11.12)
(Junty Sharma Pathak)

AGRICULTURE

Managing a Bumper Crop

(*Live Mint*, 5 November, 2012)

A bumper harvest of wheat, about 94 million tonnes, for 2013 has meant good news and bad news.

The challenge is to ensure that existing stocks are exhausted before the new crop harvest to prevent wastage and deterioration of produce.

To tackle this, firstly, free export of wheat should be allowed as this would benefit the Indian farmers. “Globally, there is a strong demand for wheat as the crop has been poor in many countries because of drought and some countries,

including Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan, have banned exports.”

Secondly, any increase in the minimum support price (MSP) for wheat would result in greater financial pressure on the government along with increase in carrying cost of wheat leading to higher economic cost, so this has to be avoided.

<http://www.livemint.com/Opinion/zOveFrZzybYcA1vtJuioxK/Managing-a-bumper-crop.html>

(Date Accessed: 06.11.2012)
(Anjora Sarangi)

Bananas Have Key Role In Food For The Warming World

(English translation: Lisa Karpova, Pravda.ru, 01 November, 2012)

A newly released report prepared by the Consultative Group of International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) says that climate change could make banana a crucial food source for millions of people.

They predict a decrease in the production of potatoes, rice and wheat due to climate change. Banana could possibly replace potato in temperate climates and high elevation.

Compulsions of commercial farming coupled with climate change may put increasing stress on wheat which is a major source of protein and calories.

This raises the concern of finding a replacement source for protein in our diets. Scientists say cowpea, known in sub-Saharan Africa as a "poor" meat is resistant to drought and is best suited to warm climates and therefore could be a good alternative to soy.

A shift to smaller livestock could also be expected in the future as is already happening in South Africa, where cattle are being replaced by

goat rearing. With climate change forcing major shifts in the agricultural trends, policy makers should respond quickly to prevent widespread hunger.

http://english.pravda.ru/science/earth/01-11-2012/122680-bananas_food-0/

(Date accessed: 07.11.2012)
(B. Varun Kumar Reddy)

HEALTH

Govt Readies Mega Plan to Make the End of Life Pain-Free

(Kounteya Sinha, Samachar, 5 November, 2012)

The Health ministry has finalized the 'National Programme on Palliative Care' to make end stage life of patients suffering from cancer and HIV as comfortable and painless as possible. It has set aside a sum of Rs 636 crores for the plan.

The Government has also decided to include the "number of bedridden patients per family" as one of the key pieces information in the National Family Health and District Family Health Survey.

Presently, 80% people dying from cancer and 50-80% dying from AIDS will need relief from moderate to severe pain on an average for 90 days.

But India has only 908 palliative care centres of which 841 are in Kerala alone. Therefore, a majority of the population remains deprived of quality palliative care services.

According to the ministry document, national palliative programme will be launched in one-third of districts per state or 10 districts per state whichever is higher and upto 200 districts are targeted to be covered by 2017.

In this program, "financial assistance would be provided for one physician and two nurses at 150 regional cancer centres and government medical colleges besides 200 district hospitals." Provision would also be made for one nurse at 700 community health centres.

The Centre would spend Rs 477 crore (75%) and the states Rs 159 crore (25%). Patients suffering from cancer, HIV/AIDS, congestive heart failure, cerebrovascular disease, neurodegenerative disorders and chronic respiratory diseases will be attended to in these centres.

The Health Ministry also wants the Medical Council of India, Nursing Council of India and the collegiums of universities to be more aware regarding the relevance of palliative care.

<http://www.samachar.com/Govt-readies-mega-plan-to-make-end-stage-life-painfree-mlfMLeicgi.html>

(Date Accessed: 5.11.2012)
(Naina Bhardwaj)

Routine Vaccination Reaching Four in Five Children but 22 million Still Miss Out

(World Health Organization, 1 November, 2012)

According to new data released in the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report and the WHO Weekly Epidemiological Record, four in five children received the DPT vaccine during infancy in 2011.

The data shows sustained progress though effective vaccination programmes in comparison to the early years' data. But the flipside is that despite such progress, 22 million children, especially belonging to the less-developed

countries are still missing out on the these three basic vaccinations.

A majority of the child population belongs to India, Indonesia and Nigeria, which have faced problems like vaccine supply and inaccessibility of vulnerable populations. An estimated 130 million infants are born each year, who need vaccination to keep them alive and healthy.

Strengthening such routine immunization services is therefore crucial to achieve the Millennium Development Goal 4 for reducing deaths among the children below five by two-thirds by 2015, as compared to 1990.

The Global Vaccine Action Plan endorsed by countries provides “a road-map to prevent millions of deaths by 2020 through more equitable access to existing vaccines.”

http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/notes/2012/vaccination_20121101/en/index.html#

(Date accessed: 7.11.12)
(Simi Sunny)

[Why Are So Many People Still Suffering From Leprosy?](#)

(Lindsay Abrams, *The Atlantic*, 31 October, 2012)

According to World Health Organization (WHO), leprosy cases worldwide have fallen from 5.4 million to 250,000 since 1985 due to multi drug therapy. Despite advances in the medical field, there is a knowledge gap on the transmission routes of leprosy.

Partly due to these challenges, leprosy is still prevalent in countries like India, Brazil and Indonesia.

It is the leading cause of people losing the use of their hands.

While most countries reported to the WHO that they have met its goal of restricting leprosy to less than 1 case per 10,000 persons by 2000, the data is suspect. **Political pressures in countries like India are leading to under reporting of leprosy cases.** The key to eradicate leprosy may not lie in drugs but in attitudes. The social stigma associated with it should be eliminated. The fight against leprosy is being strengthened by the Infectious Diseases Research Institute (IDRI) which is in the finalizing stages of two vaccines to fight leprosy.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2012/10/why-are-so-many-people-still-suffering-from-leprosy/264256/>

(Date accessed: 07.11.2012)
(B. Varun Kumar Reddy)

URBAN

[Reserve 35% Housing Projects for Weaker Sections: Maken](#)

(Sanjay Jog, *Business Standard*, 6 November, 2012)

Ajay Maken, the new Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation Minister has said that private builders would have to reserve “35 percent of their residential projects, or 15 percent of floor area ratio (FAR), whichever was higher,” for economically weaker sections (EWS) under the Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY).

In this regard, the government has launched the Credit Risk Guarantee Fund (CRGF) for low-income group (LIG) housing.

The fund intends to provide easy “collateral free finance upto Rs 5 lakh” to new borrowers under EWS/LIG categories.

Plans are also in the pipeline for prioritising “green housing across the country” by introducing various

incentives (tax incentives, transfer of development rights and floor space index) to builders.

<http://www.business-standard.com/india/news/reserve-35-housing-projects-forweaker-sections-maken/491906/>

(Date accessed: 07.11.2012)
(Sumit Chakraborty)

ENERGY

[India and Canada Finalise Conditions for Nuclear Deal](#)

(BBC News, 7 November, 2012)

India has concluded negotiations for a bilateral agreement with Canada for importing uranium fuel for its nuclear power plants, which would boost its nuclear capacity to meet growing energy demands.

As per the joint statement issued by Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and his Canadian counterpart Stephen Harper, Canada, with its large and high-quality reserves of uranium, could become an important supplier to India's nuclear power programme.

With India's increasing dependence on nuclear energy to meet its growing demand, it is planning to set up 30 reactors and generate one fourth of its electricity from nuclear energy by 2050. Thus, this agreement with Canada is an important opportunity for both India (in terms of increased capacity) and Canada, in terms of increased dividends for Canadian industry through jobs and growth.

India has also initiated talks on a civil nuclear co-operation agreement with Australia, which holds an estimated 40% of the world's uranium. In 2011, it had also signed a deal to import South Korean Nuclear Energy Technology to India.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-20213337>

(Date Accessed: 7.11. 2012)
(Naina Bhardwaj)

TECHNOLOGY

Turning Rural Indians Into

Water

Entrepreneurs

(Sarvajal, Fast Company)

Established in mid-2008 as a for-profit business entity, the company *Sarvajal* (meaning “Water for All”) seeks to find viable mass-market solutions to India’s water crisis. It has revolutionised water business in various parts of India by harnessing internet to monitor and control water supply remotely. The company now has 156 rural franchisees that supply clean water at very low rates.

An idea that came from a young Stanford graduate has resulted in the setting up of water ATM, “a solar-powered, off-grid tank, regulated by a smart card.”

India’s water business is structured such that one needs regulatory approval to sell “packaged water”/ bottled water. But *Sarvajal*, with its water ATMs, breaks away from this system by selling clean water that is not in a bottle, at the rate of 30 paise per litre. They make it possible by recruiting local entrepreneurs, who know their community well, to sell water. And by making it a for-profit company, they have introduced incentives to reduce cost of machinery and increase efficiency in water supply, which was missing in the philanthropic efforts by many.

“Becoming a water entrepreneur builds a lot of political capital, because of how much people see water as a problem”, says *Sarvajal* CEO Anand Shah. Water is a politically sensitive issue in India and making clean water accessible to all has always been on the

priority list for the Government. *Sarvajal*, is contributing to this cause by supplying water to at least the rural parts of North-west India.

<http://www.sarvajal.com/about/>
<http://www.fastcoexist.com/1680830/turning-rural-indians-into-water-entrepreneurs#1>

(Date accessed: 07.11.2012)
(Amrutha Jose)

ENVIRONMENT

Monsoon may Fail More Often Due

to Climate

Change: Study

(Reuters, 6 November, 2012)

A Study in the journal ‘Environmental Research Letters’ has projected the incidence of frequent monsoon failures in India during the coming 200 years – a potential result of global warming in the region. It forecasts the failure of Indian monsoon rains “about every fifth year between 2150 and 2200 with continued global warming, blamed mainly on human burning of fossil fuels, and related shifts in tropical air flows (also known as the Pacific Walker circulation).” The Study conducted by the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research and Potsdam University team envisages a drop between 40 and 70 percent in rainfall, compared with normal levels – an unprecedented phenomenon in the 140 years of measurements undertaken by the India Meteorological Department. Monsoon is an important prerequisite of India’s agricultural productivity and droughts triggered by future monsoon failures could have catastrophic consequences for the Indian population.

<http://in.reuters.com/article/2012/11/06/climate-change-monsoon-environment-idINDEE8A500720121106>

(Date accessed: 06.11.2012)
(Sumit Chakraborty & B. Varun Kumar Reddy)

Why you Can Never Find Garbage in Sweden

(The Times of India, 4 November, 2012)

Just when Indian states are fast turning into huge garbage dumps, finding it increasingly difficult to manage waste disposal, **Sweden has been 'importing' scrap from Norway to feed its waste-to-energy programme as it has run out of its own garbage stock.**

By burning this garbage, Sweden provides heat and electricity to thousands of households in the country with a population of 9.5 million. **In Sweden, only 4% of the waste ends up in landfills, rest is completely recycled.**

Looking at the model, Sweden adopted a holistic approach towards waste management in 1990s by engaging all stakeholders and developing effective systems to deal with waste.

Producers were held responsible for dealing with different categories of waste and by law, companies were required to collect the entire waste generating from their products. Along with providing economic incentives to these companies such as garbage collection fees, with easy access to recycling stations, landfill bans and taxes were also imposed.

Public awareness campaigns were also started. Resultantly, more than 90% of household waste is recycled and reused. Also, it is illegal to landfill organic waste in Sweden and instead, it is treated biologically to make compost, biogas and fertilizer. And most importantly, the bulk of the waste is converted into energy through environmentally clean and sustainable processes with the extent of damage being minimum.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/stoi/special-report/Why-you->

[can-never-find-garbage-in-Sweden/articleshow/17082878.cms](http://www.frontlineonnet.com/stories/20121116292213400.htm)

(Date Accessed: 4.11.2012)

(Naina Bhardwaj)

Garbage as Our Alter Ego

(Nissim Mannathukkaren, *The Hindu*, 3 November, 2012)

The writer talks of garbage as a characteristic modern human condition, a symptom that we keep refusing to acknowledge.

In India too, we have completely ignored the question of garbage in our debates on FDI in retail, while studies show that big-box stores increase consumption manifold, thus generating large amount of waste.

According to a report, from 1990 to 2010, when Walmart grew into a giant, the average distance a U.S household travelled for shopping increased by around 1000 miles and green house gas emissions shot up by 14% (from 2005 to 2010).

In Puente Hills, the largest landfill in the U.S, garbage has accumulated to a height of 500 feet and is a space capable of holding 15 million elephants.

Still, garbage is seen as a third world problem, and everybody forgets that Europe has for more than two decades been dumping waste in Somalia.

Garbage plants are invariably placed in locations where the most vulnerable sections of the society live. Now garbage has even become a political tool, with struggles taking place over garbage, as witnessed in Vilappilsala in Kerala where local people's opposition to the reopening of a garbage treatment plan has led to a political debate.

The topic is relevant to India's discussion of development, including FDI, since majority of garbage is constituted by industrial waste, and right now the burden is

more on the consumer than on the producer.

There are rare examples like Germany which has an efficient waste disposal system and recycles up to 70% of the waste. But Germany's action of illegally securing garbage from Italy to keep its waste treatment plant running shows the fragility of the economy of "zero waste."

On the other hand, there are developing countries like India, with almost non-existent waste disposal system, where the alter ego of garbage cannot be hidden under the carpet any longer.

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/garbage-as-our-alter-ego/article4059003.ece>

(Date accessed: 04.11.2012)

(Amrutha Jose)

Politics of Waste

(V. Venkatesan, *Frontline*, 3 - 16 November, 2012)

Delhi consists of 100,000 waste-pickers, many of whom depend on landfills as their primary source of livelihood, are facing the danger of losing their livelihood.

They "recover nearly 1,600 tonnes, or approximately 15-20 per cent, of the waste comprising usable materials." Further, they help prevent emission of 962,133 tonnes of greenhouse gases annually.

With the introduction of the waste-to-energy (WTE) incinerator to be constructed near landfills at three different locations in Delhi, waste disposal is likely to become more efficient and it will generate employment for residents of surrounding areas.

While electricity generation has not been possible due to quality of waste, WTE projects have secured official backing because they earn carbon credits from the Clean Development Mechanism of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Activists fear that employment generation will also be minimal and also would lead to a loss in the savings for the municipality.

<http://www.frontlineonnet.com/stories/20121116292213400.htm>

(Date Accessed: 06.11.2012)

(Anjora Sarangi)

Sea Levels Are Rising Faster Than Previously Feared

(Click *Green*, 01 November, 2012).

Citing the Inter Governmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) last official report from 2007, University of Colorado's Geologist Bill Hay argues that the projected sea level rise of 0.2 and 0.5 meters by 2100 will probably be exceeded by more than a meter.

He pointed out at the meeting of the Geological Society of America that the models used by the IPCC excluded "critical feedback that speed everything up."

These include the Arctic sea ice, the Greenland ice cap, soil moisture and groundwater mining.

Arguing that the accelerated melting of ice sheets from the sea alone does not speed up the rise in sea levels, he points out that these do release more fresh water from the Arctic that acts like a "big heat pump that brings heat to the Arctic", and pushes the entire region towards ice free waters that absorb sunlight rather than reflect it back.

Thus, "the more open water there is, the more heat is trapped" and this "plays a role in the overall warming of the Arctic, which leads to ice losses in nearby Greenland and Northern Canada."

Using new data on the ice in Greenland and Antarctica, he argues that the last inter-glacial period saw a sea level rise of more than ten meters, which occurred in

a few hundred years, without any anthropogenic causal effects.

Citing the record melting of sea ice from the summer of 2012, he opines that the same process will undoubtedly be accelerated because of the rise in CO₂ levels.

Finally, pointing to the fact that Earth's climate has stable states, between which the climate destabilizes drastically, he argues that "under human prodding, the system wants to go into a new climate state."

<http://www.clickgreen.org.uk/research/trends/123685-research-reveals-why-sea-levels-are-rising-faster-than-previously-feared.html>
(Date accessed: 06.11.2012)
(Pushparaj. V. Deshpande)

Field Trials On Trial

(Shonali Ghosal, *From Tehelka Magazine, Vol 9, Issue 45,10 November, 2012*)



The article highlights the protest of 200 farmers on 18 October, 2012 against crop trials (the genetically modified, GM, corn fields) run by the Regional Research Station at the Choudhary Charan Singh Haryana Agricultural University at Kurukshetra.

The president of Bhartiya Kisan Union, Gurnam Singh states that "There were field trials in Uchani (Karnal) and Hisar also, but their time-periods have lapsed. We will not allow GM trials in Haryana."

States such as Bihar, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, and Chattisgarh are beginning to ban free trials with the support of official committees.

A 10 year moratorium suggested by the Technical Expert Committee (TEC, set up by the Supreme Court) states that field trials of Bt transgenics in all food crops are controlled till certain sites for conducting the trial are certified by the monitoring system.

The TEC has suggested a panel of new scientists that would replace BRAI (Biotechnology Research Authority of India).

This regulatory body would be created under the Ministry of Science and Technology's Biotechnology department, excluding ministers of the environment and forests, agriculture and health departments from important decision making, despite the use of GM crops having health hazards.

To ensure biosafety from sub-chronic toxicity, the Committee would be first performing tests on animals. Union Agriculture Minister, Sharad Pawar in August 2012, in his letter to the CMs of all states asked them to give an opportunity to the "scientific efforts to develop GM crops".

Activists mention that the reason for biotechnology degrading is because "they push GM products when we have safer ways of increasing productivity."

http://www.tehelka.com/story_main54.asp?filename=Ne101112FIELD.asp

(Date Accessed: 4.11.12)
(Ranjana Adhikari)

Rights to Seed?

(Vandana Shiva, *The Asian Age, 29 October, 2012*)

Genetic engineering of seeds and crops entails the erosion of the natural and cultural heritage of farmer's breeding and the loss of "Seed Sovereignty."

It is argued that Genetic Engineering is basically "pirating" the traits that nature and farmers have evolved over centuries, in order to claim patents and collect royalties at the expense of the poor peasants.

'The GMO Emperor has no Clothes', a Navdanya report, has shown that contrary to the claims of companies like Monsanto, Bt Toxin, instead of reducing use of pesticides and herbicides ends up demanding higher use of these chemicals as they gradually lead to resistance, both in weeds and pests.

The danger of GMOs lies not only in their purported health and environmental implications but also in the means through which the big corporations promote the GMO propaganda. This includes influencing governments, spreading misinformation, silencing opposition and destroying alternatives to force their seeds on farmers.

Another strategy used is to "lock local companies into licensing arrangements" and to make "local seeds illegal through compulsory licensing and registration laws" which was also attempted in India through the Seed Act of 2004 that was eventually turned down.

Given the rich seed and crop diversity that exists in India, it becomes even more important for us to carefully examine the demerits of GMOs which is a direct threat to it, along with the latent risks it poses to farmer's right to seed.

<http://www.asianage.com/columnists/rights-seed-715>

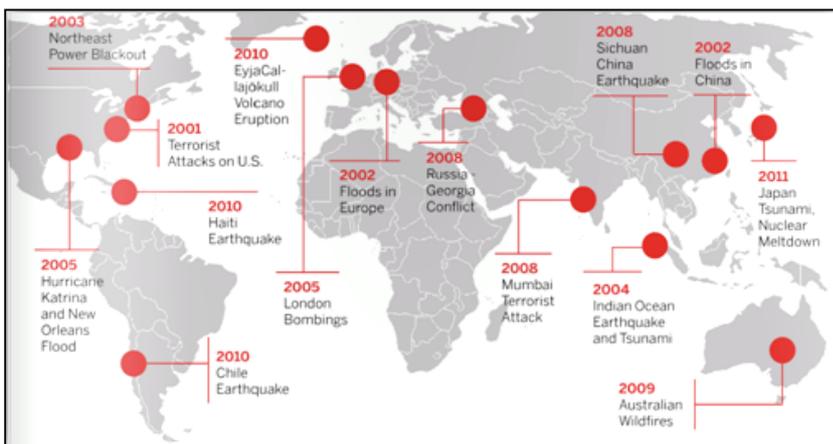
(Date accessed: 6.11.2012)
(Hansa Kaul)

DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Staying Connected in Times of Crisis

(Karl Frederick Rauscher and Stuart Goldman, *East West Institute*, October, 2012).

In March 2011, the earthquake, tsunami and consequent nuclear meltdown in Fukushima damaged under-sea cable connecting Japan to the rest of the world. This greatly hampered effective crisis response. Similarly, in July 2011, the bomb attacks in Mumbai created a network jam, which effectively cut off the Chief Minister from the Police forces, again reducing response capability. In the light of numerous such incidents, the East West Institute launched the Worldwide Cyber-security Initiative (WCI) in collaboration with governments and corporations worldwide in 2009, to make cyberspace “safer, more stable and more secure.” As part of the WCI agenda, a report titled “Priority International Communications: Staying Connected in Times of Crises” was released.



This report analyses the priority communications capabilities of various countries to gauge their response networks to deal with national crises such as natural disasters, terrorist attacks, technological failures etc. It reveals that apart from the USA, the UK, the Netherlands and Australia, no

country has such systems in place, which invariably exacerbates human losses and destruction of property. This is despite standards based systems already available, which are already compatible with existing hardware.

It scrutinises how typically during crises, the servers experience severe network congestion, either because of damages to the network architecture or because of heavy traffic. This impairs important communications critically, and delays effective response that could prevent or minimize losses. Further, instead of implementing systems that would alleviate the situation, most countries routinely accept a 90 percent “blocking rate for all communications on public networks during a time of crisis.” Instead, with the installation of the systems suggested by the WCI, like what happened in the USA during the 9/11 attack, “stakeholders... (can) experience a 90 percent completion rate for essential communications.”

To remedy this, the report recommends installing a Priority International Communications (PIC) capability that would ensure crucial cross border and intra country communication even in times of crises. This would also

ensure economic stability, transfer of international aid, and reduced hurdles in implementing priority schemes. It also suggests the steps that governments would need to take to implement the PIC at a low cost. Towards this end, it proposes four steps:

- 1 Governments and key industries should champion the effective implementation of a robust international communications system like the PIC, and pass appropriate legislation after dialogue between key stakeholders.
- 2 Due diligence for modern international crisis management: As part of this, Governments should identify and categorize in terms of importance public and private sector functions, and also identify and train key individuals who are essential for the “continued operation of government and critical infrastructure.” It should further ensure capacity development in the private sector so as to have alternative maintenance capacity.
- 3 Network provisioning of priority communications: Towards this end, network operations should provide leadership, and co-operate with governments to maintain PIC networks. The governments should aid them by funding them for capacity development and for providing software capabilities.
- 4 Technology deployment leadership: Network equipment suppliers should provide international standards based software within their existing network systems to complement the PIC.

The report ends by arguing that while disasters, natural or man-made cannot be predicted accurately, adequate systems can be put in place that would ensure that the responses are effective and quick, thus reducing human losses and destruction to property.

<http://issuu.com/ewipublications/docs/pic?mode=window&background-color=%23222222>

(Date accessed: 7.11.2012).
(Pushparaj. V. Deshpande)

GLOBALIZATION

The Future of Development: The St. Petersburg Developmental Principles

(Dirk Willem te Velde, *ODI*, 18 October, 2012)

Mexico will hand over the leadership of the G20 grouping of countries to Russia this December 2012.

There are several issues that still need immediate attention. The global economy is facing a crisis, growth forecasts for BRICS and the Euro Zone are grave, climate change is accelerating and food and energy prices are rising.

In the past, the G20 has been instrumental in mobilising \$1.1 trillion to tackle the financial crisis. It “has stimulated bigger quotas for lending to low-income countries (LICs)”, it has emphasised inclusive growth and has set up a panel for infrastructure investment.

The next agenda for development for the G20 is preparing an accountability report required for the upcoming summit along with a set of development principles.

The author of this article believes the G20 should move away from marginal or individual aid projects. G20 should focus on increasing accountability of its projects which will improve cooperation and trust among the G20 members and non-members.

<http://www.odi.org.uk/opinion/6865-g20-economic-growth-st-petersburg-development-principles>

(Date Accessed: 07.11.2012)
(Anjora Sarangi)

LAW AND JUSTICE

Protecting RTI

(Shailesh Gandhi, *The Economic and Political Weekly*, 3 October, 2012)

India’s Right to Information Act which has been rated by international agencies as the second best in the world needs evaluation as two events of the recent past have been disturbing.

The recent judgments of the Supreme Court including that in the *Namit Sharma vs Union of India* case, which reduces the number of benches that can hear appeals under the RTI Act, have been strongly criticised on the ground of inserting practical difficulties in a citizen- driven law.

Civil society organizations fear that the recent judicial intervention in form of these judgments might drain the Act of its real power which lied in its great accessibility to the “aam admi” and the simplicity of systems which characterises this law.

Excessive judicialisation of the Information Commissions will rob these institutions of their flexibility leading to delays and compulsion to hire lawyers resulting in loss of faith and interest of common man in RTI.

While the Prime Minister too has expressed concerns about increasing incidents of frivolous RTI applications and the time of officials being diverted from discharge of duties to answering RTI queries, and scrutiny over Public Private Partnerships discouraging private investments, narrowing the scope of the revolutionary Act to put it beyond the reach of ordinary citizens is not a solution.

<http://www.epw.in/commentary/protecting-indias-sunshine-law.html>

(Date accessed: 5.11.2012)
(Hansa Kaul)

India: Torture and Ill-Treatment Raises Bar to Extraditions

(*Human Rights Watch*, 27 September, 2012)

The recent case of alleged ill-treatment of Kulvir Singh Barapind, extradited from the US on assurances from India that he would not be tortured by the Punjab Police, sets a bad precedent for the country and may prevent future foreign extraditions to India.

The Convention against Torture states that its signatories while deciding to return any person, including criminal suspects “shall take into account..the existence in the State concerned of a consistent pattern of gross, flagrant or mass violations of human rights.”

“In two reports, ‘Broken System’, documenting the urgent need for police reforms, and ‘The Anti-Nationals’, on violations during India’s counter-terrorism operations”, there is evidence of widespread use of torture to extract confessions, identify criminals, and often to simply punish suspects in custody by assuming their guilt .

Though torture in police stations is admitted to be a routine matter, it is further exacerbated in situations of conflict.

Incidents of all forms of inhuman and degrading treatment, especially in Punjab, Manipur, and Jammu and Kashmir, by both the army and police are a cause for worry for the Indian State.

Human rights and civil society groups have urged the government to ratify the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and to enact the Prevention of Torture bill, which is currently awaiting cabinet approval before it is voted on by the Rajya Sabha.

<http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/09/27/india-punjab-case-shows-need-anti-torture-law>

(Date accessed: 3.11.2012)
(Hansa Kaul)

http://www.wired.com/opinion/2012/11/st_essay_convictionomics/

(Date accessed: 07.11.2012)
(B. Varun Kumar Reddy)

The New Economics Of Crime And Punishment

(David Wolman, *Wired.com*, 06 November, 2012)

With increasing incarceration rates and overcrowded jails, the criminal justice system in the USA is under stress.

In a forthcoming paper for the *Iowa Law Review*, David Abrams presents a cost-benefit analysis of possible modifications to incarceration policy. The author calls for a new approach:

“Convictionomics” which is a coldly rational economics-based approach to crime and punishment.

Based on his analysis, releasing just 1,000 prisoners 60 days early, the benefits would reduce the costs to the tune of \$5 million.

Benefits of such one-time release of prisoners will outweigh the fact that some of those criminals might commit more crimes.

While crime may not lend itself well to pricing we must recognize that money is integral to the criminal justice system.

While such an idea may be anathema to some people, what the critics miss is how convictionomics could reduce strain on the entire system while also delivering a more consistent approach to justice itself.

The study could have interesting observations which may be applicable to India, as we have similar problems in our criminal justice system.

Rightfully Hers

(Hema Swaminathan, Suchitra Yegnanarayan and Rahul Lahoti, *India Together*, 31 October, 2012).

In the context of the Marriage Laws (Amendment) Bill that is currently pending in the Parliament, the authors analyse some empirical data on the issue of property rights, a crucial point of debate in the Bill. It has been argued that the Bill will not make a substantial impact on rural areas. Concerns have also been raised about pairing the division of property with the liberalisation of divorce laws in light of the lack of clarity on “matrimonial property” and a woman’s right to such property.

Pointing out that national surveys only collect information on household assets, and do not record the division of ownership of those assets, the authors present some startling facts from the Karnataka Household Asset Survey (KHAS), 2010-11.

Revealing glaring disparities with regard to immovable property, the KHAS report highlights that only 13 percent of urban women own any immovable property, as opposed to 28 percent of men in urban Karnataka. In addition, women own only nine percent of agricultural land holdings, as opposed to 39 percent of men. The KHAS report also found that most of the properties bought were registered under the head of the household’s name, usually a male. Only a small portion of the total properties surveyed were jointly registered in both spouses’ names. Pointing to the disparities in succession ratio, the survey points out that 80 percent of plots owned by men were inherited from their natal homes, and less than 20 percent of plots were owned by women. Despite the amendments to inheritance laws in 1994 by Karnataka, and the Hindu Succession Amendment Act, 2005, the survey found that women generally waived off their

rights in favour of brothers, often under pressure and coercion.

The authors highlight the NSSO’s 2009-10 employment survey that marks the women’s labour force participation as the lowest since the last two decades.

Less than 25 percent of women in the 15-59 age group are paid workers, and most of them are concentrated in the low skill and hence low paying sectors of the economy.

This depresses their individual purchasing power with regard to property. In this context, barring a few reservations, the authors welcome the proposed amendments to the Marriage laws, which are in sync with India’s Constitutional commitment to gender equality. They argue in favour of “enabling equitable property entitlements within marriage”, which they feel is better than “dispensing justice on property divisions upon divorce.”

They further argue that secure property rights for women protect them from “spousal violence, encourage gender participation in household decision making, and improve the nutritional and educational status of children.”

Finally, they feel that the need of the hour is the creation of a national level database on property ownership of men and women, which would provide any future policy and legislation an empirical basis.

<http://www.indiatogether.org/2012/oct/law-womprop.htm>

(Date accessed: 06.11.2012)
(Pushparaj. V. Deshpande.)

Call for Gender Equity in Land Distribution

(*UN Habitat*, 12 April, 2011)

According to a UN- Habitat’s study, only 3 percent of land across the world is owned by women. A recent event called “Not about us without us: Grassroots participation in land” sought to address the issue of land ownership. Delegates from Brazil, India and Tanzania emphasised on equal access to land and property for women and participation of women in land administration and land management. Apart from this it was felt that women have to a prominent role in policy decision making rather than be mere beneficiaries. A Brazilian NGO aims to deliver equitable land titles to 9,000 families that live in the Santo Amaro slum in the center of Recife, capital of the state of Pernambuco. In India too, work is being done in 150 human settlements across 58 cities. The Rajiv Awas Yojana aims to end slums in the country.

<http://www.unhabitat.org/content.asp?cid=9796&catid=303&typeid=6&subMenuId=0>

(Date Accessed: 07.11.2012)
(Anjora Sarangi)

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

A Tale Of Two Asias

(Evan A. Feigenbaum & Robert Manning, *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 31 October, 2012)



The article discusses the existence of two colliding Asias - "Economic Asia" and "Security Asia."

"Economic Asia" conducts 53% of the trade within the region, contributing to a \$19 trillion global economic growth.

On the contrary the "Security Asia" is living in a conflict "prone to nationalism and irredentism."

The economic dependence on China for investment, trade and market has brought about a trend of regional economic integration that has been "reinforced by austerity in Europe" over the past four years and promoted a slow growth in the United States, thereby challenging the American role in the region.

The article briefly states the economic and political developments within Asia, especially in Japan, Seoul, China, and Vietnam. Through various such examples, the author has elaborated about countries that contributed to the economic integration of "Economic Asia" whereas a "Pan-Asian regionalism has failed to quell Asia's nationalist demons." The Centre for Strategic and International Studies produced a recent study clearly stating that \$224 billion have been spent in defence in China, Japan, India, South Korea

and Taiwan, so much so that it has doubled over the past decade. In terms of a "Security Asia" the article asks whether the U.S will be able to maintain its role as the security provider to Asia, since the economy of the region is becoming pan-Asian. The U.S. role in Asia as its security provider has been reinforced which would benefit the United States and "assuring its certainty." The author brings to light the receding economic involvement in Asia because of Asia's Pan-Economic development. Thereby, to prevent this, Washington will focus on security "rebalancing" and excluding "economic rebalancing."

<http://www.carnegieendowment.org/2012/10/31/tale-of-two-asias/easq>
(Date Accessed:4.11.2012)
(Ranjana Adhikari)

Seven Countries that Have Beaten the Global Economic Crisis (Joshua Keating, *The Foreign Policy*, November, 2012)

Moving away from the clichéd stories of India and China, the article lists the seven countries which survived the economic crisis of 2008.

The first country which emerged from the recession was South Korea which boosted government research and development spending from 3.5% to 5%. Innovation, generous subsidies and lower interest rates for export were the major players.

South Korea was followed by Poland whose smart monetary, fiscal policies and low debt levels made the economy grow by 15.8% between 2008 and 2011.

Surprisingly Canada survived by relying on fiscal easing and stimulus spending when the recession hit.

Fourth was Sweden which benefited from its prescient decision to not adopt euro.

The middle-class consumer market and foreign investment promoted the growth rate of Indonesia.

Turkey and Mexico should credit the liberalized investment rules and stricter regulations for protecting it from the effects of the financial crisis.

http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/10/08/these_7_countries?page=0.0
(Date accessed: 7.11.12)
(Simi Sunny)

Bilateral Donors in the Pacific: Is it more than Development? (Annmaree O' Keffe, *Lowy Institute for International Policy*, 6 July, 2012)

The article is an assessment of the development aid received by the Asia Pacific countries.

Australia is the largest provider of development aid in the region.

The international community has looked up to Australia "to support the development and security aspiration of the region's developing countries."

But the aid comes with its own interests of reducing the potential for instability and insecurity in its backyard.

The next biggest donor is USA though it is restricted to the Compact States. China has maintained secrecy around its foreign aid in the region given the possible criticism from the domestic audience.

New Zealand, France and Japan are some other players in the region. This data is an indication

of the competition for influence in the region.

The strategic increase of interest by mainly US and China altered the equation and there is an imminent danger of prioritizing quantitative inputs rather than qualitative development.

<http://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/bilateral-donors-pacific-it-more-development>

(Date accessed: 7.11.12)

(Simi Sunny)

Brazil in Africa: Just Another BRICS Country Seeking Resources?

(Christina Stolte, *Chatam House*, November, 2012).

In the context of China and India gradually increasing their economic presence in Africa, the article reflects on the emergence of Brazil as an active player in the region.

Following USA, China and Russia, Brazil has the most number of diplomatic representations in Africa.

The author points out that the increase in trade and economic partnership between Brazil and Africa from US\$ 4.2 billion to US\$ 27.6 billion in the last ten years is strong evidence of the strengthening of ties between the two.

Brazil has been cementing this notion with a number of political and cultural measures, including a large number of visits by its heads of state, as well as a number of multi-thematic and thematic events.

Further, Brazil waived African countries' debts of more than US\$ 1 billion despite receiving development assistance itself. Most importantly, more than half

of Brazil's technical co-operation of resources is directed towards Africa.

In this light, the author poses two questions:

- 1 "Is Brazil just 'another emerging power in the continent', disguising its economic interests by offering aid projects to its partner countries?"
- 2 "Or is the Brazilian engagement in Africa driven by a 'Southern solidarity', as Brazilian government officials and academics maintain?"

In answering these question, the author points out that "although Brazil has put great effort into extending commercial ties with African countries, the trade balance is still in favour of Africa", arguing further that Brazil's resource interests seem to account for most of the trade. Oil and other natural resources account for almost 90 percent of Brazil's imports, and Brazilian investment is mostly focused on Lusophone Africa. However, with the largest discovery of oil in the last two decades occurring in Brazil, and its subsequent investment in energy giant Petrobras, the author also argues that the dependence on African oil may decline.

While the share of other mineral and metallic raw materials such as steel, iron, cement etc. being imported from Africa could increase substantially, they would not increase Brazil's dependence on Africa but help in reducing it.

What could happen is that Africa could emerge as the biggest market for Brazilian products, especially processed ones.

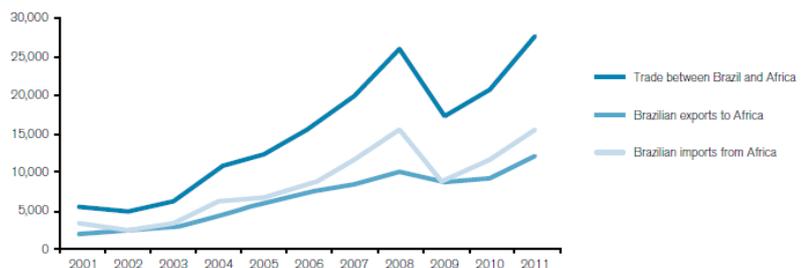
Brazil's exports to Africa include not only agricultural products (sugar, dairy, meat, cereals) but also manufactured and semi-manufactured goods like vehicles and vehicle parts.

While there is little data on the amount of Brazilian investment in Africa (and estimates range from anything from US\$ 10 billion and US\$ 20 billion), what is sure is that "as with other BRICS countries, Brazilian investment has so far been concentrated in the resource and construction sector."

Despite this focus, Brazilian business representatives maintain that Africa is primarily seen as a market, with an emphasis on machinery, technical equipment and construction materials, as well as food, beverages and agricultural products. Promising markets for Brazilian products are also seen for fashion, cosmetics and pharmaceuticals.

Despite this, the author points to a variety of factors that necessitate another look. Arguing that Brazil's engagement goes beyond the economic realm, the author highlights Brazil's pledge to assist partner African countries with development aid to fight hunger and poverty, providing health care and attaining energy security. She also argues that there is a basis for this engagement which also extends to "transferring.....experience and technical

Figure 1: Development of Brazil-Africa trade, 2001-11 (US\$bn)



Source: Ministério do Desenvolvimento, Indústria e Comércio Exterior, Secretaria de Comércio Exterior: Intercâmbio Comercial Brasileiro África (exclusive oriente médio), 06/08/2012. (Ministry of Development, Industry and Foreign Trade, Secretariat for Foreign Trade: Commercial Exchange Brazil-Africa (without Middle East), 6 August 2012.

know-how in the implementation of social promotion programmes.”

Brazil seeks to present itself as a world power, and through social and economic commitments such as these, it seeks to garner support for a seat at the United Nations Security Council. She ends by arguing that “(Brazil’s) involvement and growing presence in Africa reflects the country’s broader foreign policy ambition of being recognized among the key players in world politics. Gaining economic presence and conquering new markets has been only one element of this ‘grand strategy’ towards Africa.”

http://www.chathamhouse.org/site/default/files/public/Research/Africa/1112bp_brazilafrika.pdf
(Date accessed: 06.11.2012)
(Pushparaj. V. Deshpande)

Seoul Eyes UAE Support for Nuclear Deal with Turkey

(Umit Enginsoy, *Hurriyet Daily News*, 5 November, 2012)

This article reflects the keen interest of South Korea to win the \$20 million nuclear deal for Turkey’s second power plant.

A major impediment for South Korea is that Turkey is refusing to provide required guarantees for the investment. Seoul is involving UAE financing to secure this deal and remain in competition with China, Canada, and Japan in the nuclear power business. UAE financing would remove the need for Turkish guarantees, allowing South Korea to build the nuclear plant. UAE would, on its part, get its return on investment through the sale of safe nuclear energy to Turkey.

It is important for South Korea to stay ahead in the competition because China has the liquidity to finance this deal. Russia has

secured the Southern Turkey nuclear power deal (without a treasury loan) and Japan quit after the Fukushima disaster.

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/seoul-eyes-uae-support-in-turkish-nuclear-deal.aspx?pageID=238&nID=33938&NewsCatID=348>
(Date Accessed: 6.11.2012)
(Ranjana Adhikari)

SOUTH ASIA

Pak-China: Expanding Ties

(*The Nation*, 4 November, 2012)

This article discusses the recently concluded Pak-China dialogue in Beijing, about enhancing the multi-faceted cooperation between the two countries.

Pakistan Foreign Secretary Jalil Abbas Jilani stated that the importance of strategic cooperation between China and Pakistan was important to Pakistan’s foreign policy.

The Chinese Foreign Vice Minister, Fu Ying said that the interests and concerns of the two countries on a range of global and foreign issues are the similar.

The common interests of the two countries are in restoring peace stability in Afghanistan, settling the turmoil of the Middle East and “to effect reforms at the UN Security Council.”

Following the general elections, Pakistan’s new leadership would soon begin their task of empowering and strengthening ties.

The article ultimately conveys “the recently developed US-India nexus against China and the US designs for India to play a major post-withdrawal role in Afghanistan which would prove to be another potent reason for the two countries to come closer to each other.”

<http://www.nation.com/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/editorials/04-Nov-2012/pak-china-expanding-ties>
(Date Accessed: 7.11.2012)
(Ranjana Adhikari)

Bhutan: Where Is the Rural Prosperity Dream?

(Pema Tenzin, *Bhutan Observer*, 2 November, 2012)



This article describes Bhutan’s highly urban-centric model of development.

The constitution of Bhutan demands balanced socio-economic development but to the contrary, a rural-urban method of development is prevalent.

Development experts have said that if Bhutan continues to follow a region-specific model of development, consequences would be harsh.

The author cites an example of Bhutan’s education initiative for an “education city.” This idea of carrying out the ‘education city’ outside the capital would contribute in employment generation, and create business and job opportunities, with an overall balanced development.

This is what the country’s GNH (Gross National Happiness) proposes, happiness for all, as a result of equity and justice and a balanced socio-economic development. The article states that, according to the only study on poverty in Bhutan, 23% of the total population of Bhutan is

living under poverty and most poor people live in the rural areas. Therefore, poverty and rural-urban migration has caused social problems and problems of urban infrastructure, as mentioned in a UNDP report. The current dilemma in Bhutan is the large rural-urban migration resulting in a shortage of farm labour and the fallowing of farm-land. The 10th plan proposes to reduce poverty by 15% by the end of the planned period, though there are no adequate sources, but informal sources state that Bhutan has achieved their poverty reduction target. Observers have said that if big governments and corporate offices don't expand themselves to the countryside, achieving balanced development would become difficult. The article also suggests the distribution of public office at the district level thereby promoting development that would help achieve an equitable and balanced development. This would reduce the rural-urban migration which is currently at a rate of 6%, the highest in South Asia. The article also highlights the problem of the rising population, causing an inconvenience in the housing, and social services sector. The 11th plan aims are resolving these problems of "rural prosperity and urban-well-being" despite the conditions not being so favourable.

<http://www.bhutanobserver.bt/where-is-rural-prosperity-dream/>

(Date Accessed: 07.11.2012)
(Ranjana Adhikari)

EAST & SOUTH EAST ASIA

Myanmar: Unresolved Conflicts

(Andrea Gittleman, *Democratic Voice of Burma*, 19 October, 2012)

While there have been remarkable changes in the political scenario of Myanmar over the past two years, people still have had to witness crimes by the military, conflicts in Kachin state and ethnic clashes in Rakhine state.

Other countries (some that had supported democracy activists) in Burma for years, have shifted policies such that the internal balance is tipped towards those who want more reforms.

The writer feels that this scenario of shift from Burma's military dictatorship to future democracy is the right moment for global leaders like the U.S to ensure that their efforts help substantial reforms in Burma.

The Obama Administration has shaped policies, such as removal of sanctions regime and lift of investment ban, to press the Burmese Government for reforms.

While many will benefit from foreign investment, the Burmese ethnic minority communities might suffer. A recent Report from the "Physicians for Human Rights" has documented human rights violations in Karen state and found a link between investment projects and human rights abuse.

As per the report, "families living near a development project were eight times more likely to report a human rights violation." Hence representatives of the ethnic communities, which have already been abused a lot by the military,

are weary of new investments without proper safeguards.

While Burma should improve access to health care, education and stop crime, other countries should also enforce regulations on its companies investing in Burma.

<http://www.dvb.no/analysis/new-investments-and-unresolved-conflicts/24328>

(Date accessed: 06.11.2012)
(Amrutha Jose)

Myanmar Scores with Children's Football Program

(Dennis Aung Aung, *the Irrawaddy*, 25 October, 2012)

Myanmar has recently been selected by the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), football's world governing body, for the "FIFA 11 for Health" program. This programme is a health-related program aimed at the country's youth. It will be implemented in 2013 in Burmese schools in collaboration with the Burmese Ministries of Health, Education and Sport. The program is aimed at improving children's health. Acknowledging Burma's transition socially and economically, FIFA's chief medical officer, Dr. Jerry Dovark, said reiterated FIFA's commitment to ensure that the people of the country have access to the right opportunities.

"Football is an excellent platform due to its popularity and the fact that children can avoid unhealthy habits," said Dr. Jerry Dovark. He opined that without physical activities the people may become overweight with high rates of diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. As part of the programme, around 300 school teachers and doctors in Rangoon are currently undergoing training. The co-ordinators of the programme estimate that in the future, some 3,000 to 6,000 will participate, giving a significant

boost in alleviating numerous health problems faced by the children of Burma.

<http://www.irrawaddy.org/archives/17284>

(Date accessed: 07.11.2012)
(Pushparaj. V. Deshpande)

Chinese City Introduces Lottery to Limit New Cars

(CityMayors, 07 September, 2012)

Guangzhou began license plate lotteries and auction to restrict the number of new cars on the City's roads. 5,640 applicants got license plates through lottery and the average bid for a private car license plate was 22,822 yuan (US\$3,620) after the auction.

Supporters of the policy called it a "timely remedy for the city's traffic woes", while critics called it a temporary solution that does not address the "flawed road planning and inefficient transportation management" of the city. They fear that the policy might foster further inequality.

The city's traffic grew at an annual rate of 19 percent to a total of 2.4 million auto units in May, 2012. Deputy Mayor Chen said the city is targeting the goal of having 70 per cent of the city's residents choosing public transportation in the next 4 to 5 years and that they are planning to invest 270 billion yuan to this end.

http://www.citymayors.com/news/metronews_asia.html

(Date accessed: 08.11.2012)
(B. Varun Kumar Reddy)

Intolerance in Indonesia: The LSI Survey

(Amruta Karambelkar, IPCS, 31 October 2012)

The Indonesia Survey Circle (LSI) revealed that religious conflict between different communities in Indonesia is rising rapidly. Apart from Inter religious conflicts (between Muslims and Christians) intra religious conflicts and intolerance towards religious minorities is on the rise. Intolerance towards people of different faiths has risen by 6.9 % since 2005. The survey revealed an increased hatred for people of 'deviant' sects like Shias and Ahmadiya has also increased- 41.8 percent of respondents showed animosity to the Shia community, while 46.6 per cent were intolerant to the Ahmadiyahs. There is significant opposition to inter-religious marriages as well. The survey further states that 80 percent of the respondents displayed prejudice against homosexuals. Given a choice, they would rather have the Shias as neighbours rather than a homosexual. "Critics blame the state of governance for rising intolerance and non-acceptance of diversity in the country. They blame President Yuhoyono for not taking steps against radical groups". To solve these clashes, solutions have been proposed (such as law enforcement, the policy of unity in diversity) but they are "more concerned with addressing religious intolerance than homophobia."

<http://www.ipcs.org/article/south-east-asia/intolerance-in-indonesia-the-lsi-survey-3746.html>

(Date Accessed: 07.11.2012)
(Anjora Sarangi)

AFRICA

Valuable Lessons for Africa in EU's Integration

(Adekeye Adebajo, Center for Conflict Resolution, 22 October, 2012)

The article tries to explain how the African Union can learn some valuable lessons from the European Union. The economic integration of Europe has been the major accomplishment for the EU. It has been able to bring together 27 countries and create "the world's largest market and only organization with supranational powers." Though it was born as just a European Coal and Steel Community with six countries as its members, by the 1960s it was able to bring almost all the European countries to the table. The 80s saw the golden age with the creation of a single market and then the single currency in 1999 led to a web of interdependence among the countries. In contrast Africa remains the world's least economically integrated continent with less than 10 percent of trade is being conducted among its 55 states. The EU model can therefore be the way forward to better for the African Union with effective regional integration.

http://www.ccr.org.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=909:press-230&catid=40:press-articles&Itemid=105

(Date accessed: 7.11.12)
(Simi Sunny)

AMERICAS

Argentina Drops Its Voter Age To 16

(Guillermo Fontana, *CNN*,
1 November, 2012)

A new law for lowering the voting age to 16 has been approved by Argentina's Congress which will be effective from the crucial mid-term elections next year. The measure will see an addition of nearly 1.5 million Argentinians between 16 and 18 years old in voting rolls. Critics point to this change as an effort to acquire more votes by the President and her party whereas those in support view it as an opportunity for the young to contribute in politics. Youth related issues in Argentina have emerged as worst forms of social problems and the Government "discovered" that the youth of the nation increasingly wanted voting rights. However some still fear that the political campaigns could affect education.

http://edition.cnn.com/2012/10/31/world/americas/argentina-youth-vote/index.html?hpt=wo_c2

(Date accessed: 02.11.2012)

(Junty Sharma Pathak)

US Neutral On ICC Suspects, Say Officials

(Kevin J Kelley, *Daily Nation*, 6
November 2012)

US officials stated that United States will not take any position on the Kenyan politicians alleged by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for crimes against humanity. The US Under Secretary commented that they could not dictate whom the Kenyans could vote for. However the US Under secretary did imply that living in an increasingly interconnected world, the March presidential election verdict will have "international consequences,"

and thus appealed to the Kenyans to be "thoughtful about the impact their choices have on the world."

While confirming US support to Kenya's first election under its new Constitution, the US also insisted the Kenyan Government to cooperate with the ICC.

<http://www.nation.co.ke/News/politics/US+neutral+on+ICC+suspects+say+officials/-/1064/1613014/-/2neero/-/index.html>

(Date accessed: 07.11.2012)

(Junty Sharma Pathak)

Opinions

A Creative Tension

(Patrick Heller, *The Indian Express*, 07 November, 2012).

The author analyses the ramifications of the rising tension between the political establishment and civil society, in light of Arvind Kejriwal's allegations and the momentum generated by India Against Corruption (IAC), Salman Khurshid's impassioned rebuttal and Mamta Banerjee's counter attack against the media.

Conceding that these reflect an underlying tension in society about "pervasive institutional decay", the author argues that they have changed the character of the public sphere.

Together, all of these have, in conjunction with "an increasingly sensationalistic media", reduced the public sphere into "an arena for shouting matches, and not "a space of reasoned deliberation over pressing social issues."

The current conflict between political and civil society is inevitable given that the State and political class claim a monopoly of representation.

Given the drastic socio-economic changes in society, deficits of representative democracy have been brought to the fore, thus leading to a "re-balancing of the relationship between civil and political society."

Crucially, civil society can strengthen democratic life by "problematizing the unproblematized", thus giving voice to socio-economic and cultural concerns that do not "fit into the electoral calculations of parties or the bureaucratic logic of the state".

Secondly, by building local capacity (like the RTI campaign did), and developing new policy or

institutional designs, civil society also acts like an innovator.

As examples, the author points to Janaagraha's "I Paid a Bribe" website, Pratham's empirical analysis of the quality of rural education, and SEWA's successes in creating new forms of informal workers' organisation, something the State could not have done.

Instead of focusing on the decay of the democratic system, as the current intellectual and popular debates have done, the author argues that these experiments are helping create "new spaces of citizen engagement and new practical solutions to governance problems", which would ultimately lead to the deepening of democracy in India.

Even though civil society is not democratic or universalising, their movements lead to the demand for increasing accountability.

They thus help in realigning the focus on governance, since political parties are often driven by short term electoral compulsions, patronage and populism.

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/a-creative-tension/1027758/0>

(Date accessed: 07.11.2012)

(Pushparaj. V. Deshpande)

Happiness is Equality

(Robert Skidelsky, *The Straits Times*, 23 October, 2012)

In a scenario where economic growth is proving elusive, the king of Bhutan says that Governments should maximise their people's Gross National Happiness rather than their Gross National Product(GNP).

In this context, the writer discusses how GNP is not an adequate tool for measurement of equality and quality of life.

The first factor promoting this change in attitude towards GNP is the concern about sustainability of

growth. "As the Stern Review of 2006 emphasized, we must sacrifice some growth today to ensure that we do not all fry tomorrow."

But presently, rich country governments are trying to absorb more people to hold wages down and grow faster.

Secondly, growth does not necessarily translate into a sense of well-being, as discussed by economist Robert Easterlin, who in his 1974 paper found that there is no correlation between happiness and GNP per head.

Recently, alternative indices have tried to incorporate "quality of life" indicators too.

Another finding says that happiness depends more on relative income than absolute income. In other words, "what matters for life satisfaction is growth, not of mean income but of median income-the income of the typical person."

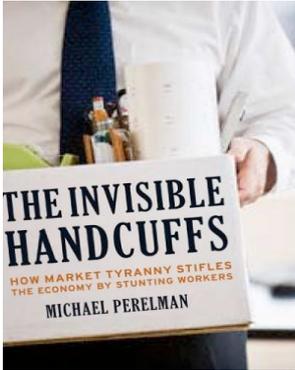
Mean income can be high even in a society where majority of the people are poor, because of the influence of a minority of very rich people.

Great inequality makes us hungrier for goods by reminding us that we have less than the next person. Philosopher J.S Mill had a more refined view: "The best state for human nature is that in which, while no one is poor, no one desires to be richer, nor has any reason to fear being thrust back, by the efforts of others to push themselves forward."

<http://www.straitstimes.com/microsites/global-perspectives/world-cultures/story/happiness-equality-20121023>

(Date accessed: 05.11.2012)

(Amrutha Jose)

BOOKS**The Invisible Handcuffs of Capitalism****(How Market Tyranny Stifles the Economy by Stunting Workers, By Michael Perelman)**

This book is a criticism of mainstream economics' view that "capitalism is based upon an equal exchange rather than exploitation within the workplace." Calling this illusion as the 'invisible handcuffs of capitalism', the author argues that in the free market system capitalism "handcuffs working men and women (and children too) through the very labour process itself."

He points out that mainstream economics ignores working conditions, workers and the work itself. The nature of work we do has a profound impact on our lives. So far mainstream economics has pushed these concerns to the fringes, and has instead tried to rationalize this 'invisible handcuff' by propagating the notion that workers are responsible for their own conditions. As a solution, Perelman proposes that through collective action of society we must eliminate "the economic institutions and practices that force people to accept the discipline of the market" and we must instead build and direct our own society.

<http://monthlyreview.org/press/books/pb2297/>

(Date accessed: 06.11.2012)

(Karishma)