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ISSUE

# RGICS POLICY WATCH



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- World unemployment rose by 5 million in 2013: ILO report
- Immense challenges for world hunger: Agriculture ministers

Disclaimer: The articles are summaries of the original article and the headlines have been changed in certain cases. For the original articles please click on the link given below the article.

## Migrant Labour Force and Employment in Delhi



Source: The Hindu, <http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Delhi/migration-slowing-population-growth-declining/article5084777.ece>

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## Key Message

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RGICS's core vision is opening up the Indian state to peoples' voice -- in its legislative, executive and judicial functions.

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## **Migrant Labour Force and Employment in Delhi**

### **1. Introduction**

Delhi is one among the top destinations for internal migrants in India. According to the findings of Census 2001, the population of Delhi metropolitan city consists of 43% migrants. The city provides employment not only to the people of Delhi but also to a large number of migrants every year. The high in-migration of labour necessitates an understanding of the job market in Delhi and its response to the needs of migrant labour force. The Delhi Human Development Report (DHD Report), 2013<sup>1</sup> explores livelihood and employment in Delhi, amongst the various other indicators of Development and also gives an insight to few such issues in context of migrants. The Report includes a Perceptions Survey (2013) covering about 8000 households, including migrant households, to answer queries regarding how they perceive their lives in Delhi.

### **2. Migrant Profile**

#### **2.1 State Wise Profile**

The rate of migration in Delhi has declined, as a large number of migrants are settling in other parts of NCR. However, according to the Economic Survey Report (2013), every year 75000 people migrate to Delhi. In terms of the state-wise share of the population migrating to Delhi, the maximum number of migrants to Delhi come from Uttar Pradesh (UP) (47 per cent), followed by Bihar (31 per cent). The share of migration from UP and Bihar has increased between 2001 to 2013. In the case of Bihar, the share has more than doubled, from 13.6 per cent to around 31 per cent in 2013. On the other hand, the respective shares of migration of all other states have shown a decline (Table-I).

#### **2.2 Professional and Education Profile**

The profile of those migrating to Delhi is also changing, with a tilt towards better educated and skilled migrants. “The proportion of migrating professionals has increased while that of service workers and skilled low-paid workers has declined over the years, except in the case of unskilled low paid workers, marginally increased (DHDR, 2013)” (Table-II). The city therefore absorbs the better educated and skilled migrant labour force easily, while being a difficult destination for the lesser educated or skilled migrants.

#### **2.3 Gender Profile**

The gender profile of migrants however reveals some negative trends in context of female migrants. Census data for the year 2001 reveals that very few women migrate to cities for economic activities. The low migration of women has much to do with a highly masculine market structure. The proportion of women migrants for employment purpose in Delhi is as low as 4.2 per cent<sup>2</sup>. The large portion of female labour migration feeds largely into the rapidly growing demand of domestic helps and unskilled construction workers. These women, who migrate from socially, economically and educationally poor parts of India, continue to have a vulnerable existence even in Delhi.

**Table 2.9**  
**Occupation of Main Migrant Earners and Highest Educational Level in the Migrant Family by Duration of Migration Years of Migration**

Occupation	Up to 1 Year	2-5 Years	6-10 Years	> 10 Years	Total
Professional	12.1	11.0	6.3	5.2	7.6
Semi-professional	8.5	11.2	8.7	14.3	11.5
Service Workers	20.1	24.0	36.0	31.8	30.1
Skilled Low-paid Workers	12.2	15.2	21.3	28.6	21.7
Unskilled Low-paid Workers	18.3	8.2	18.1	19.1	15.6
Others (Students)	28.8	30.5	9.5	1.0	13.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Educational Level</b>					
Illiterate	4.9	6.5	2.9	3.5	4.3
Primary Education	3.3	5.3	16.7	12.4	11.1
Secondary Education	17.7	18.6	30.0	40.2	29.8
Senior Secondary Education	8.5	11.3	16.4	16.9	14.7
Higher Education	65.6	58.3	34.0	27.0	40.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Perceptions Survey, 2013.

## **2.4 Reasons for Migration**

Besides a change in state wise share, the reasons for migrating to Delhi are also undergoing a gradual shift. As opposed to earlier, when migration was mainly due to better employment opportunities, trends indicate that those migrating for the purpose of education and training have increased. The number of migrants coming to Delhi for pursuing education, and acquiring skills and training in various disciplines doubled in the past decade, with the highest proportion being registered during 2012 alone. Though the migration trend in last ten years shows that there is a decline in proportion of people who migrate for employment related reason, it still remains the major driver for migration with around 59 per cent people migrating in search of better wages and better employment opportunities.

## **3. Employment Growth Pattern in Delhi**

Delhi has recorded tremendous growth in the economy during last one decade. The GSDP of the state increased three and half times from Rs. 10,030 billion in 2004-05 to Rs. 36,570 billion in 2012-13 at current prices (DHDR, 2013). The high economic growth of Delhi has attracted various kinds of labour force from across the states. An absolute increase of 13.45 lakh labour force has been recorded in Delhi during 1999-2000 to 2012-13. A large portion of this number is constituted by in-migrant job seekers in the city. The NSSO data reveals that employment generation in city was highly responsive to the increasing labour force.

The major sectors providing employment in Delhi are trade, hotel, restaurants, manufacturing, finance, real estate, business and institutions of governance such as administration, health, education. During the ten-year period from 1999-2000 to 2009-10, the highest increase in the share of employment was in the finance, real estate and business sector followed by manufacturing, transport, trade, hotels and restaurants. On the other hand, the largest decline in employment share was observed in the governance sector.

### **3.1 Growth of Unorganized Sector**

Data indicates that there has been a boom in jobs within the unorganized sector such as retail, whole sale, real estate, hotel, restaurants and manufacturing (Table-III). The 'Wholesale and retail trade' sector has generated highest employment in the unorganized sector. During the period of 2005-2010 top three industries within 'Wholesale and Retail trade' sector generated 2,98,000 employment and most of them are self-employment in nature (DHDR, 2013). Vulnerable occupations such as street vendor and hawkers constitute a majority of this kind of employment. The NSS survey of the 67<sup>th</sup> Round, 2010-11, shows that retail trade dominates unorganized sector employment, accounting for a share of nearly 28.2 per cent.

According to the DHDR (2013), around 85 per cent of employment has been generated in the unorganized informal sector. The employment in organized sector in Delhi has recorded marginal increase from 0.85 million in 2000 to 0.86 million in 2011. Even in private organized sector, the increase in employment is marginal from 0.22 million in 2007 to 0.27 million 2011.

### **4. Working Conditions and Employment Opportunities for Migrants**

A large section of Delhi's workforce constitutes of migrants from different rural and urban parts of India. Though recent trends reveal that education and training are becoming important reasons for migration, yet, for around 78 per cent of people better employment opportunities was the main reason for migration, in the last decade. . It is important to note that around 50 per cent of migrants were distress migrants with no job in hand when they came to Delhi because they were in search of employment (DHDR, 2013). Such migrants are also often victims of exploitation and suppression.

#### **4.1 Informalisation of Employment**

Social security, job tenure, working conditions, leaves, health and standard wages for employees are few such areas where vulnerability of workers can be judged. Organized sector and formal working conditions actually enable employees to exercise minimum labour rights. On the other hand, the unorganized sector and informal working conditions leads to vulnerability and exploitation of the workers.

During the last decade, most of the jobs in Delhi were generated in the unorganized sector. This has led to lack of contracts, varying work hours, poor working conditions and no social security. Analysing the workers' distribution, DHD Report (2013) highlighted that "around 86 per cent of all workers in Delhi are informal workers. This reveals that though the size of formal sector is very large in Delhi as compared to India as a whole, most employment created in Delhi in recent is informal in nature." According to the data used in the DHD report (2013) two third of workers in formal sector are informal in nature (Table-IV). It argues that "informalisation of the formal sector is increasing." Increasing number of informal workers in formal sector increases insecurity and vulnerability of the workforce. According to the DHD report (2013), "About half of informal workers in the formal sector have no written contracts and 6 per cent of them work under written contracts of less than one year" (Figure-I).

#### **4.2 Vulnerability of Migrant Laborers**

The report further asserts that those workers who belong to the economically and educationally backward segments are concentrated in informal sectors such as domestic and community help, agriculture and construction. On the other hand, migrants from high-income households work in formal sectors such as corporate establishments, public administration and other government institutions. The formal sectors in Delhi provide better income, stable working hours, social security and job security. However, as a large proportion of newly generated jobs in the formal sectors are informal in nature, many migrant workers even within the formal sector do not benefit in any way.

The remittance pattern shows that, only one-third of the migrant households belonging to the lowest income category of households remit money to their native places. This indicates that the lowest income households are not able to remit because of the higher cost of living that they have to incur to survive in the metro city. As such, in a majority of the cases, employment in regular work provides some relief to them in terms of regular incomes but not in livelihood protection.

### **5. Migrant Perception of opportunities and quality of life**

While an analysis of working conditions of migrants reveals that they suffer on several accounts such as job security, wages, social security etc., the perception of migrants towards their socio-economic conditions reveal a different picture. The perception survey conducted for DHD (2013) reveals that around 60 per cent of the migrants interviewed feel that employment opportunities for men in the working age group have improved in their households, whereas this percentage was only around 51 per cent for non-migrants.

In terms of income status, while 27.6% of non-migrants felt that their income levels had improved, a lower percentage of migrants (22.2%) witnessed an improvement. However, a smaller percentage of migrants (8.3%) witnessed a downward income spiral as compared to non-migrants (8.3%).

In terms of healthcare, neighbourhoods and overall achievements in life—the levels of satisfaction among the migrants are higher than those of non-migrants (Table-V).

However, this may be indicative of a better standard of living in Delhi for the migrants as compared to their hometowns. This perhaps also stems from the fact that when migrants in Delhi compare their living standards to migrants in other cities, they feel that they fare far better. However, this could just be an outcome of both relative advantage and life in the capital.

As the national capital city, Delhi provides various advantages such as higher minimum wages, better quality services in education, health, transportation, communication etc which are not available in other cities of the country. Hence, despite having informal work conditions and very low social protection mechanisms, migrants in Delhi are able to avail better quality public services as such. This accords with the findings of the Perception Survey, which states that migrants in Delhi feel “largely satisfied” with regard to the various aspects of the quality of life and livelihoods in the city, and are more satisfied than non-migrants.

### **6. Conclusion**

An analysis of the DHD Report shows that Delhi is a better destination for migrant workers when compared to other cities in India. Migrants themselves feel largely satisfied in terms of various indicators of human development as compared to non-migrants. However, some negative trends may indicate a rethinking in policy paradigms for migrants. For one, the high degree of informalisation in the labour market is indicative of the need for gradual formalization of informal workers. Policy in this context must focus on registration, formal contracts and provision for legal workspaces with safe working conditions. In terms of migrant vulnerability, some measures of social protection in terms of pension, healthcare and maternity benefits etc. must be put in place for migrant workers. With a growth of the service sector in Delhi, many migrants with low levels of education and training face unemployment and underemployment. In this context, policies and programmes of credit, technology, skill up gradation and training for the low productive sectors, particularly the manufacturing sub-sector would serve to address the employment insecurity that plagues migrants. Finally, better urban planning in Delhi in terms of urban and livelihood planning of the NCR is required due the interlinkages between migration and employment.

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- <http://iussp2009.princeton.edu/papers/92006>

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## **Delhi world's most polluted city: Study**

(Chetan Chauhan, *Hindustan Times*, January 29, 2014)

"India has slipped 32 ranks in the global Environment Performance Index (EPI) 2014 to rank a lowly 155 and Delhi has earned the dubious tag of being the world's most polluted city. A comparative study of 178 countries on nine environmental parameters by the US-based Yale University shows that one of the world's fastest growing economies is a disaster on the environmental front. According to a study by the Harvard International Review, every two in five persons in Delhi suffer from respiratory ailments. The Lancet's Global Health Burden 2013 report termed air pollution the sixth biggest human killer in India."

The study described India's air pollution as the worst in the world, tying with China in terms of the proportion of population exposed to average air pollution levels exceeding World Health Organisation (WHO) thresholds. Data gathered by a Nasa satellite showed that Delhi had the highest particulate matter 2.5 pollution levels followed by Beijing. Delhi, with 8.1 million registered vehicles, has repeatedly beaten the Chinese capital on particulate matter pollution.

The high PM2.5 pollution caused by high vehicle density and industrial emissions is the reason for the dense smog that has been engulfing Delhi during the winter months in the last few years, with adverse health implications. And while Beijing's infamous smog has hogged headlines and prompted government action, even led to the announcement of rewards for cutting back on pollution, the dangers in Delhi have been largely ignored.

Anumita Roy Chaudhary, executive director of Delhi-based advocacy group Centre for Science and Environment, said policy-makers have failed to take the kind of action needed to check phenomenal growth in air pollution in India. "The gains of the introduction of CNG in 2000 have been lost. We are heading for dark days if policy-makers fail to wake up to the growing environmental health hazard," she said.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/delhi-world-s-most-polluted-city-india-slips-in-green-index/article1-1177777.aspx>

Date Accessed: 29.01.2014

(Karishma Mutreja)

## **World unemployment rose by 5 million in 2013: ILO report**

(*The Indian Express*, January 20, 2014)

According to International Labour Organisation (ILO), global unemployment has increased by five million in 2013 to 202 million despite green shoots in the world economy, signalling a jobless recovery. Business activity is picking up but the misery of unemployment continues to pile up. By 2018, about 215 million people worldwide are expected to be unemployed, according to the ILO.

"Employment needs to be put at the centre of international policy-making. There is a clear linkage between these unacceptable levels of unemployment in the world, and growing inequality, and that inequality functions as a brake on growth." A global labour market recovery is being held back by a shortfall in demand, the ILO said, noting that in many developed economies, cuts in public spending and increases in income and consumption taxes were weighing heavily on businesses and households. In addition, the financial sector remains troubled, credit is still hard to obtain for small businesses in many economies, and wage rises have lagged behind increases in productivity.

"North Africa remained the hardest-hit region of the globe in 2013, with an unemployment rate of 12.2 per cent, followed by the Middle East on 10.9 per cent. Europe, North America and other developed economies followed on 8.6 per cent, ahead of ex-Yugoslavia and the former Soviet Union's 8.2 per cent, and Sub-Saharan Africa's 7.6 per cent." In East Asia- a label covering China- the level was 4.5 per cent, while the rates in Southeast Asia and the Pacific, and South Asia, were 4.2 per cent and 4.0 per cent respectively.

<http://indianexpress.com/article/world/world-others/international-labour-organisation-report-world-unemployment-rose-by-5-million-in-2013/>

Date Accessed: 27.01.2014

(Anjana John)

## **Immense challenges for world hunger: Agriculture ministers**

(Rudy Ruitenberg, *Live Mint*, January 20, 2014)

Efforts to rid the world of hunger face immense challenges as farmers deal with resource scarcity, climate change and loss of soil fertility, agriculture ministers from 65 countries said in a joint statement published by the German agriculture ministry. In addition, economic and financial crisis and excessive price swings create uncertainty that endangers investment in agriculture.

“Food production will have to rise 60% between now and 2050 as the world population expands to 9 billion, the United Nations’ Food and Agriculture Organization estimates. The FAO estimates about 870 million people were undernourished in 2010-12. International food prices in the past three years have been higher than ever before, FAO data show.”

The ministers wrote that eradicating hunger and malnutrition, and ensuring the human right to food, is one of the greatest goals in the world. Writing about their mission to highlight the importance of agriculture in contributing towards eradicating hunger and malnutrition, they expressed that we must “enable agriculture to adapt to new conditions, deal with risks and recover quickly from crises.” They also highlighted the need for deeper national and international cooperation, as well as cooperation between government, civil society, companies and academia to achieve the goal.

<http://www.livemint.com/Politics/NBA3EJzRvizHRI6uPRrA3M/Immense-challenges-for-world-hunger-agriculture-ministers.html>

Date Accessed: 27.01.2014

(Amrutha Jose Pampackal)

## Government imposes 5% export duty on iron ore pellets

(Business Standard, January 28, 2014)

The finance ministry on Monday imposed a 5% export duty on iron ore pellets as an attempt to appease the domestic steel industry. The government had raised export duty from 5% on fines and 15% on lumps into a uniform 20% in March 2011 and to 30% in December 2011. However, iron ore pellets were exempt from the duty.

"However, in April-November 2013, exports of iron ore pellets have risen sharply, causing an apprehension about shortage of iron ore in the country. Iron ore is a critical raw material required for production of steel," said the Central Board of Excise & Customs in a notification.

Iron ore exports took a hit after the Supreme Court imposed a ban on mining last year, following widespread scandals in Karnataka and Goa. India's biggest destination for iron ore exports is China. After an increase in import duty on iron lumps and fines, India, the third-largest iron ore exporter in the world, is expected to become a net importer of iron ore this financial year. In 2012-13, India exported 15.85 million tonnes (mt) of iron ore compared to 89.73 mt in 2010-2011.

"They want to discourage iron ore exports in order to make the raw material available to the domestic steel industry. However, it's not good news for the Indian mining or iron ore industry, as their competitiveness in the exports market gets compromised," said Pratik Jain, partner, KPMG.

The production of iron ore has come down from 218 mt in 2008-09 to 140 mt in 2012-13 due to the enforcement of strict environmental and other regulatory measures. The steel industry says it is forced to import iron ore because of the drop in production levels.

[http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/govt-imposes-5-export-duty-on-iron-ore-pellets-114012800038\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/govt-imposes-5-export-duty-on-iron-ore-pellets-114012800038_1.html)

Date Accessed : 28.1.2014

(Shruti Issar)

## Indian trade paradox: "open trade but restrictive trade policy"

(Arvind Subramanian, Business Standard, January 10, 2014)

The article highlights the surprising reality about India's foreign trade regime: India's trade is closed in terms of "trade policy" but open in terms of "trade outcomes". India has been claimed to have a fairly restrictive trade policy. However, the research has concluded that while trade policy is relatively strict, outcome reveals that India is actually an "over-trader".

Two trends are noted in India's trajectory of trade reforms:

1. Tariffs were stratospherically high - in absolute terms and relative to the rest of the world - prior to 1991 but have declined dramatically.
2. India's manufacturing sector faces modest levels of protection, and the services sector faces extremely high levels of protection, resulting in an "overall trade regime that is quite protectionist." Data from World Bank researchers (Borchert, Gootiz, and Mattoo, 2012) reveals that barriers are very high (both in absolute terms and relative to other countries) in services. In fact, they are among the highest in the world.

A judgement of trade outcomes, by studying trade-to-GDP ratio, reveals that India's trade has been relatively open its outcome. India's trade-to-GDP ratio (exports plus imports over as a share of its gross domestic product) doubled over the course of a decade from about 25 to 53 per cent in 2012. Also, India's open economy coincides with the period of rapid growth in the 2000s. Research also reveals that India's overall trade is about 25 per cent greater than it should be for a country of its size and economic development.

[http://www.business-standard.com/article/opinion/arvind-subramanian-an-indian-trade-paradox-114011001430\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/opinion/arvind-subramanian-an-indian-trade-paradox-114011001430_1.html)

Date Accessed: 27.01.2014

(Mahima Malik)

## Housing for poor can spur economic growth

(Im4change)

The *Report on Trend and Progress of Housing in India 2013*, by National Housing Bank has confirmed that despite growing demands for affordable housing, supply has been weak. The article notes that "even though the housing sector can directly impact employment and income generation, and has multiple forward and backward linkages with various industries, it needs innovative ideas, pro-poor thinking and policy stimulus."

"As per the Technical Group on Housing Shortage, dearth of housing in urban India stands at 18.78 million in 2012 with 95 percent shortage in economically weaker section (EWS)/ low income group (LWG) segments. The problem will accentuate once 40 percent of India starts residing in urban centres by 2030 (as predicted), thanks to rapid urbanization. The rural housing shortage is estimated at 43.9 million in 2012 with 90 percent of the shortage in lower income and marginalized segments."

The report recommends "innovative and flexible financing mechanisms and technologies along with appropriate policy interventions at the Central and State levels so as to match supply with growing demand for housing. The report reveals that the lack of institutional and formal credit to the low income and informal households has contributed to housing shortage in the country."

The supply impediments, as identified by the report, “in building low cost and affordable housing for the masses include high prices of land (owing to shortage and massive urbanization), archaic building bye-laws, delay in project approval and unfavourable credit provisions for construction agencies. There has been proliferation and growth of slums and squatters because of unaffordable housing and limited availability of land. Many states have unrealistic rent control laws and rules.” It suggests that for “affordable housing, a coordinated approach between the government, regulators and the lending institutions along with the real sector actors viz. the construction agencies in the private and public sector, is required.”

<http://www.im4change.org/news-alerts/housing-for-poor-can-spur-economic-growth-23978.html>

Date Accessed: 28.01.2014

(Ashwin Varghese)

## **MSME creates more than 20 lakh jobs by assisting 2.33 lakhs new entrepreneurs under PMEGP**

*(Press Bureau of India, February 2, 2014)*

More than 20 Lakh persons have been provided employment under the Prime Minister’s Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) which is being implemented by the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises. The Government has released Rs 5381.63 crore under the scheme since 2008-09 and more than 2.33 lakh projects have already been assisted.

The PMEGP is a major credit-linked subsidy programme aimed at generating self-employment opportunities, as well as wage employment through establishment of micro-enterprises in the non-farm sector by helping traditional artisans and unemployed youth. KVIC is the Nodal agency at national level to implement the scheme across the country.

The Government has been enhancing the allocation for PMEGP every year and the allocation for the current year for 2013-14 (B. E.) is Rs 1418.28 crore. For the country as a whole, the outlay for XII Five Year Plan under PMEGP has been kept at Rs 8060 crore which is 70% higher than the allocation of XI Plan for the scheme.

Towards speedy and effective monitoring of implementation of the scheme an Advisory Committee for each district has been constituted. The committee liaises and coordinates with KVIC, State Government and other agencies including Banks for effective mobilization of young entrepreneurs under PMEGP. It also ensures that the scheme is implemented in accordance with its guidelines. The advisory committee tracks the progress of implementation to meet the target, monitor both input and output, i.e. whether the services and projects are being set up on schedule and review the progress/achievement.

The Ministry has also directed KVIC and the implementing agencies to ensure that at least 100 projects per district are assisted this year.

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=102923>

Date Accessed: 03.02.2014

(Neha Singh)

## **Educate the educator for economic growth**

*(Ajay Piramal, Hindustan Times, January 21, 2014)*

In the light of the Annual State of Education report (ASER) 2013 which states that more than half of all children in Class 5 are atleast three grade levels behind where they should be, the article tries to assess the Indian education system. Since the 1950s, India has spent on an average 3-7% of its GDP annually on education and it is expected to contribute to around 57% of the new workforce by 2030 along with China but the Indian education system has failed to impart adequate level of skills to its workforce.

One of the major issues being debated in the context of the Indian education system is the lack of educational leadership programmes. We appoint government school principals on the basis of seniority. The transition from a teacher to a principal is not aided through any formal education programme unlike our international counterparts. Principals undergo a training programme that typically should include at least the following four leadership skill levels — personal, organisational, instructional and social. The government has proposed the National Centre for School Leadership (NCSL), along with the National University of Education Planning and Administration (NUEPA) for imparting leadership training in schools.

India has also recorded a deficiency of secondary school seats and secondary schools teachers. The government set a target of adding 82 million school seats by 2016, but, according to a McKinsey 2012 report, we would need to add 34 million secondary school seats and double the number of secondary school teachers hired every year to reach the target.

Given the dependence of a country’s economic development on the education of its workforce, it is high time that the Indian industry aids the government and its school principals in helping build a nation of educated and skilled people. We need to aim for deeper innovation when it comes to curricula, student pedagogy, teacher training, headmaster training and industry support.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/comment/analysis/educate-the-educator-for-economic-growth/article1-1175360.aspx>

Date Accessed: 31.01.2014

(Simi Sunny)

## POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE

### I-T department is making efforts to check multiple PAN card identities

*(Times Of India, January 28, 2014)*

With the aim of checking issuance of multiple identity cards, the Income Tax department has notified new procedures for verification processes for allotment of new Permanent Account Number (PAN) cards. This, in turn, is likely to or forging details to evade taxes and create 'benami' properties.

The new cards issued by the income tax department will cost Rs 105, including taxes. New procedures of checking original documents for proving date of birth, address and identity have been included to check the complaints of fake PAN cards or multiple cards obtained by a single entity.

Further efforts are being put to make technology systems of the I-T department more error free in terms of feeding and maintain correct data. While the address of the card holder will not be mentioned in the new cards, the applicants will require getting copies of their proof of identity, address and date of birth checked against original documents.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/New-PAN-card-to-cost-Rs-105/articleshow/29498464.cms>

Date Accessed: 28.01.2014

(Pallavi Ghosh)

## DEVELOPMENT

### Govt panel recommends effective freedom for Prasar Bharati

*(DD News, January 24, 2014)*

The committee, headed by Sam Pitroda presented its report to Information and Broadcasting Minister Manish Tewari recommending various mechanism to provide autonomy for Prasar Bharti. The report suggested developing a funding mechanism for Prasar Bharti to address the need for autonomy with financial accountability. It also recommended "amending the Prasar Bharti Act 1990 where necessary so as to impart genuine and effective autonomy to the organization."

The Pitroda committee was the fourth one set up by the government last February to review the institutional frame work of Prasar Bharati, its relationship with government and its continuing role as a public broadcaster. The committee report called for reorganisation of the Prasar Bharati board to make it a professionally managed body effective in guiding the organisation. It sought to give the organization the power to frame rules and regulation for its employees without requiring government approval and hiring skilled professionals.

"Enough discussions on these recommendations have taken place and I hope and we start implementing some of them if not all of them. We cannot wait for too long to start implementation," Pitroda told reporters while releasing the report. Manish Tewari said his ministry would seriously, studiously and diligently examine the recommendations.

Significantly, it recommended setting up of a regulatory body to ensure public accountability of the organisation with respect to all content broadcast on its television and radio network. "We all agreed that the public broadcaster should look into the public interest and not necessarily at the government interest. Government interests are equally important, it should have flexibility to promote government interest either through separate budget but government should use this infrastructure partly and use other infrastructure," he said.

<http://www.ddinews.gov.in/Social/Social%20-%20Headlines/Pages/newrules.aspx>

Date Accessed: 28.01.2014

(Jeet Singh)

## **Govt. launches India Inclusive Fund**

*(Hindu Business Line, January 27, 2014)*

The National Innovation Council and the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) have jointly announced the creation of the India Inclusive Innovation Fund (IIIF).

The IIIF which has been approved by the Cabinet seeks to create a new class of capital which helps set up and scale entrepreneurial skills and innovation. The fund will invest in innovative ventures that are scalable, sustainable and therefore profitable, but address social needs of the less privileged citizens in areas such as healthcare, food, nutrition, agriculture, education and skill development, energy, financial inclusion, water, sanitation employment generation, etc.

Lack of capital has been one of the major reasons why ventures and entrepreneurs seeking to address the needs at the base of the economic pyramid have failed to take off, with IIIF seeking to address exactly this gap. At least 50 per cent of its investments initially would be to enterprises that fall in the MSME stage.

The fund will be registered under SEBI's Alternative Investment Fund Category I guidelines with an initial corpus of Rs 500 crores, with the Ministry of MSME committing to 20 % (Rs 100 crores) and the balance being given by banks, insurance companies and overseas financial and development institutions.

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/govt-launches-india-inclusive-innovation-fund/article5623566.ece>

Date Accessed: 30.01.2014

(Deepthi Somani)

## **Policy must curb growing inequality: UN report**

*(Kirthi V Rao, LiveMint, January 31, 2014)*

As per a UN report titled *Humanity Divided: Confronting Inequality in Developing Countries*, disparities of income in developing countries have increased by 11% between 1990 and 2010, thus rejecting the common view that inequality is a necessary outcome of high growth and said. The report, on evidentiary basis, states that beyond a certain threshold, inequality harms growth and poverty reduction.

Some economists argue that inequality is necessary for growth, taking a cue from the so-called Kuznets Curve relation where inequality is low at low levels of economic growth, rising as the economy accelerates. Dismissing that this always holds, the report states, "...rising inequality does not seem to be an inevitable outcome of growth. Despite continued growth in the 2000s, some countries were able to reverse the direction of change in inequality and started to witness falling income inequality (Brazil, for example)."

The report states that inequality also harms the quality of relations in the public and political spheres of life and individuals' sense of fulfilment and self-worth and points out that trade globalization, financial globalization and technical change have been the three drivers of rising income inequality as they lower labour's share of income.

The report highlights the need of policy makers to address inequality by focusing on moderating income inequality and reducing gaps in health, nutrition and education.

<http://www.livemint.com/Politics/5bMShNhOOVbZtWeKTYxUvL/Policy-must-curb-growing-inequality-says-UN-report.html>

Date Accessed: 31.01.2014

(Deepthi Somani)

## **GOVERNMENT**

### **New policy seen helping Major Ports optimise land use**

*(Exim News Service, January 22, 2014)*

Union Cabinet has approved new land use policy which will help boost revenue. As per the policy, Boards of Major Ports could approve leasing of land for a period up to 30 years. However, for leasing beyond 30 years and up to 99 years, approval of the government has to be obtained through the mechanism of Empowered Committee. As per the new guidelines, the ports could lease out land through tenders to develop storage facilities and cargo-related activities.

Additionally, the guidelines mention that the government is committed to further augmenting the capacity at Major Ports, which currently handle approximately 61 per cent of the cargo traffic in the country.

As per an official, the policy will help to increase Visakhapatnam Port's revenue as the Port would be able to lease out land on long-term basis for storing and processing commodities like iron, coal and fertilizers.

Major Port Chairmen described the new policy as a significant step that would lead to greater transparency and increased efficiency at the

facilities.

The plan for 2013-14 is

To expand port capacity by 220 million tonnes per annum (mtpa) through 30 projects.

Of these, 20 projects, with capacity totalling approximately 100 mtpa, have already been approved.

The remaining projects, including the ambitious Rs 8,000-crore JNPT terminal 4, were likely to be approved during the ongoing quarter of the current fiscal, as per the government.

<http://www.eximin.net/NewsDetails.aspx?name=74646>

Date Accessed : 28.1.2014

(Shruti Issar)

## **Centre to launch 'Rajiv Khel Abhiyan' soon**

*(The New Indian Express, January 30, 2014)*

The UPA Government is going to launch its ambitious scheme exclusively for the youth. The Union Cabinet is likely to clear '4,500-crore mega-sports training scheme -- Rajiv Khel Abhiyan -- which aims at creating sports infrastructure, including stadiums, appointing coaches in 6,500 blocks spread over 634 districts in the country. The Centre will also officially launch its national youth policy, cleared by the Cabinet, early this month.

"Under the scheme, a stadium will be built at block level, sports kits and coach will be appointed at these centres. Boys between the age group of 6-12 years and girls between 6-25 years would get training in different discipline. The scheme would also be spread in Naxal-affected areas to wean away youth from the violence."

"The new youth policy replaces the earlier policy started during the NDA regime in 2003. Under the new policy, five well-defined objectives and 11 priority areas have been identified." The priority areas include education, skill development and employment, entrepreneurship, health and healthy lifestyle, sports, promotion of social values, community engagement, participation in politics and governance, youth engagement, inclusion and social justice. The policy also suggests policy interventions required to achieve greater results in these key priority areas.

<http://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/UPA-to-Launch-Rajiv-Khel-Abhiyan-Soon/2014/01/30/article2027622.ece>

Date Accessed: 30.01.2014

(Anjana John)

## **RTI Act lies buried in several states**

*(Bhavika Jain & Hemali Chhappia, The Times of India, February, 03 2014)*

Eight years after the RTI Act was enacted, a reality check reveals that in most states do not have enough commissioners and the pendency of appeals has only increased and in several other parts of India, the process of hearing appeals has become non-functional.

"RTI activist Sunil Ahya, who commissioned the survey by connecting with information commissions across the county and also the local activists, suggested that the Act allows maximum of 11 commissioners to be appointed and so if the pendency rates are so high then the state governments should appoint more commissioners."

Within states too, there is a disparity. In Maharashtra, the second appeal is heard earliest in Mumbai where it takes close to a fortnight and the time lag is worse in places like Nagpur, Aurangabad and Pune where it may take up to two years to hear an appeal.

Punjab, Andhra Pradesh and Haryana have the maximum count of information commissioners—10, nine and eight respectively. The vacancy of posts may be the main reason for long disposal time of an appeal.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/RTI-Act-lies-buried-in-several-states/articleshow/29795652.cms>

Date Accessed: 03.02.2014

(Neha Singh)

## SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EXCLUSION

### Tribal children dying in Kerala

(Manikandan A.D, *Economic & Political Weekly* January 11, 2014)

Malnutrition deaths of infants/children are highly prevalent in India. The country accounts for 29 per cent (3.09 lakh) of all first-day deaths globally (Singh: 2013). The extent and severity of malnutrition deaths of infants/children, however, differs among various social groups and states. For instance, malnutrition deaths are highly prevalent among socially marginalised groups such as tribals, fisherfolk and dalits, and rampant in socio-economically backward states such as Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh (Khera: 2008). But it is shocking to see in Kerala –a state with superb achievements in human development, people’s planning, governance, and women’s literacy– an alarming rate of malnutrition deaths of tribal infants/children.

A UNICEF report (2013) observed that a total of 39 deaths had been reported from Attappady tribal block in Palakkad district between April 2012 and May 2013. The status of nutrition of tribal children is appalling in Attappady tribal block in the Palakkad district of Kerala. One of the first tribal blocks to be established in India, Attappady is one of the most backward blocks in Kerala. Tribal groups are suffering from extreme starvation and malnourishment even after 50 years of its formation. A study by Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA) (2008) reveals that 48% of the total tribal households are poor. “A recent survey conducted by Thampu, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) dealing with tribal rights, found that out of the 300 tribals affected by malnutrition, 200 were children. Difference between the nutritional status of Kerala’s general rural populace and that of Attappady could be as high as 50%. Considering these dismal statistics, Attappady can be called Kerala’s sub-Saharan Africa.”

<http://www.epw.in/web-exclusives/tragedy-unfolding-tribal-children-dying-attappady.html>

Date Accessed: 27.01.2014

(Anjana John)

### Dalits, low caste people get less aid after disaster: Report

(*FirstPost*, January 29, 2014)

In a report released by the International Dalit Solidarity Network, it was revealed that around 260 million people face caste- based discrimination and denial of human rights in countries including India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nigeria, Senegal, Yemen and Japan.

The report-"Equality in Aid"- further shows as to how the situation worsens in the wake of a natural calamity as relief aid is denied to people belonging to lower castes. The report cited the example of the 2001 Gujarat earthquake, 2004 Tsunami disaster in India and the 2010 Pakistan floods, wherein such discrimination was practiced.

It explained that low-caste groups lack assets to qualify for compensation. For example, many Dalits have unregistered fishing boats or nets and make-shift houses without land titles. As a result, lack of formally recognised assets lead to significant disaster losses.

Loans further debilitate their financial capacities leaving them vulnerable to exploitative practices like bonded labour or underpayment and so on.

<http://www.firstpost.com/world/dalits-low-caste-people-get-less-aid-after-disaster-report-1364551.html>

Date Accessed: 29.01.2014

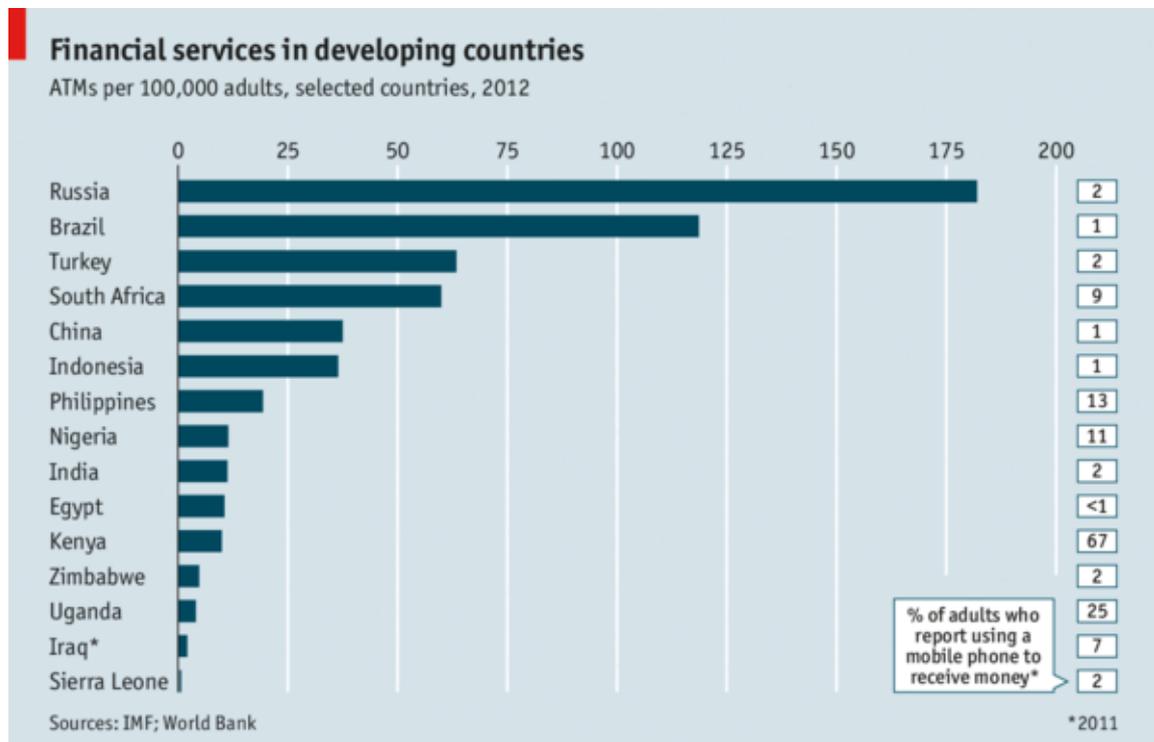
(Pallavi Ghosh)

### Financial services in developing countries

(*The Economist*, 26 September 2013)

Access to traditional financial services, such as deposit-taking accounts and automatic teller machines (ATMs), in developing countries has expanded in recent years. Since 2004 the number of ATMs per 100,000 adults has more than doubled, to around 22 (compared with over 70 in rich countries). Russia and Brazil have more ATMs relative to their population than other emerging markets, but according to a World Bank survey less than 2% of adults there used a mobile phone to receive money. Mobile payments are a substitute for traditional banking. In Kenya, where there are 2,381 ATMs (less than ten for every 100,000 adults), over two-thirds of people use mobile money.

In India there are less than 15 ATMs per 1 lakh adults. Only 2% of adults use their mobile phones to receive money. While there are many pockets that are highly connected and have access to modern banking and financial services, the data suggests that overall picture is still quite poor.



<http://www.economist.com/news/economic-and-financial-indicators/21586861-financial-services-developing-countries>

Date Accessed: 25.01.2014

(Gayatri Verma)

## CONNECTIVITY

### PAC to ask Government to infuse equity in Air India

(*The Pioneer*, January 27, 2014)

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) headed by Murlu Manohar Joshi decided to ask the Government to infuse Rs. 30,231 crore in an expeditious manner in order to bail out the national carrier, saying it was a matter of paramount importance. The Parliamentary Panel is also set to ask the Government to take urgent steps to claim compensation from Boeing for delay in aircraft deliveries as well as grounding of the Dreamliners.

The four-month grounding caused by the malfunctioning of lithium ion batteries used in the airplane, as well as a series of technical faults later witnessed in the Dreamliners, has led the Committee to ask the Government to safeguard the interests of Air India in terms of the aircraft's warranty with Boeing.

The panel is also believed to have taken note of the delayed delivery of 50 aircraft by Boeing to Air India, all of which were supposed to have been delivered by October 2011 according to the contract. However, only eight Boeing 777-200 LRs, 12 Boeing 777-300 ERs and eight Boeing 787-8s were delivered till September 2013.

The parliamentary panel has concluded deliberations on the performance of the civil aviation sector in the country with specific reference to Air India and is likely to meet soon to adopt a report on the matter. The PAC also raised objection on air India's largesse to former Civil Aviation secretaries and family members in the highest class.

<http://www.dailypioneer.com/nation/pac-to-ask-govt-to-infuse-equity-in-ai.html>

Date Accessed: 29.01.2014

(Jeet Singh)

## EDUCATION

### In South Asia, India doing well to protect child rights: study

*(The Hindu, January 19, 2014)*

India has done the most towards establishing an enabling legal and policy framework for children in the SAARC region as per the South Asian Report on the Child-friendliness of Governments. The study evaluates the efforts of the governments at fulfilling the obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The report states that “a gradual change is happening in South Asia, as governments are taking important steps to acknowledge and implement children’s human rights, often in collaboration with and influenced by a range of non-state actors. This is particularly true in India and Bangladesh but the other governments have also taken some action.”

Since 2000 in particular, governments in the region have put in place a basic enabling framework of laws, policies and institutions for implementation of the Convention and made important progress in children’s health and education. However, countries that did the most for putting in place an enabling structural framework have not always been able to ensure good education, health and protection outcomes, nor have they necessarily promoted children’s voices in decision-making at local and national levels.

Despite the progress, 500 million South Asians still live in extreme poverty, and there are great disparities between rich and poor children. Inequalities, gender discrimination and conflicts based on religion, caste and ethnicity deeply affect children, who are also influenced by social norms condoning child labour, child marriage and corporal punishment.

The report states that there is need to better ensure children’s legally enforceable right to health, education, protection and participation, and to ensure that the structural framework in place has the power to create change. Stronger mechanisms are needed to translate new laws, policies and institutions into meaningful entitlements and services for children; data collection should be used more systematically to track progress; and further collective efforts of governments, inter-governmental organisations, non-state actors, communities and children are necessary, nurturing a cadre of child rights professionals and activists. Of the greatest importance is inclusion of children’s issues at the highest political level in national planning, budgeting and governance.

<http://www.one.in/hindu/in-south-asia-india-doing-well-to-protect-child-rights-study-1-3421061.html>

Date Accessed: 30.01.2014

(Deepti Somani)

### India tops in adult illiteracy: U.N. report

*(The Hindu, January 29, 2014)*

According to a report by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, “India has by far the largest population of illiterate adults at 287 million, amounting to 37 per cent of the global total.”

According to the 2013/14 Education for All Global Monitoring Report, “India’s literacy rate rose from 48 per cent in 1991 to 63 per cent in 2006...but population growth cancelled the gains so there was no change in the number of illiterate adults.”

The report also said that while the richest young women in India have already achieved universal literacy “the poorest are projected to only do so around 2080, noting that huge disparities within India point to a failure to target support adequately towards those who need it the most.”

It also noted that “a global learning crisis is costing governments \$ 129 billion a year. Ten countries account for 557 million, or 72 per cent, of the global population of illiterate adults...ten per cent of global spending on primary education is being lost on poor quality education that is failing to ensure that children learn.”

This converts to a situation where one in four young people in poor countries unable to read a single sentence.

<http://www.thehindu.com/features/education/issues/india-tops-in-adult-illiteracy-un-report/article5629981.ece>

Date Accessed: 29.01.2014

(Ashwin Varghese)

## Education for all

(Hariz Baharudin, *The Nepali Times*, January 29, 2014)

Nepal will become a part of the Global Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI) to address the issues of out of school children. The first phase of the campaign has already been implemented in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

The study, currently in its second phase, aims to look at the specific problems regarding OOS children from 26 countries and get them to start learning. There is currently a lack of adequate tools and methodologies to identify OOS children, and the study hopes to gather more data to find specialised solutions for each country.

Regional Education Advisor for the UNICEF Regional Office of South Asia (ROSA), put forward the findings of the first phase of the study, which included India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Some 27 million children, between the ages of 5 to 13, were found to be OOS in these four countries.

Nepal along with Bhutan is to be included in the second-phase campaign that aims at reaching its commitment to provide quality education for all, one of the key components of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

South Asia has the second highest number of out-of-school children next to the Sub-Saharan Africa. According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, approximately 32.86 million children remain out of school in the region.

According to Nepal's Department of Education around 700,000 children are out-of-school in Nepal. More than 70 per cent children quit the school as they reach grade five.

<http://www.nepalitimes.com/blogs/thebrief/2014/01/29/education-for-all/>

Date Accessed: 03.02.2014

(Neha Singh)

## HEALTH

### Launch of the National Adolescent Health Programme marks a paradigm shift

(UNFPA, January 16, 2014)

The Government of India in partnership with UNFPA launches the National Adolescent Health Programme: Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram in January 2014.

The Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK) marks a paradigm shift from existing clinic-based curative approaches to a holistic model that focuses on community-based health promotion and prevention, reaching out to adolescents in their own environment i.e. schools and communities. It focuses on six priority areas of action: Reproductive and Sexual Health, Nutrition, Mental Health, Injuries and Violence including Domestic and Gender Based Violence, Substance Misuse, Non- Communicable Disease.

A continuum of care approach provides information, commodities and services at the community level and links them to the public health system through referrals. Key drivers of the program are community based outreach through peer educators and counsellors, communication for information and behavior change and adolescent-friendly health clinics.

Adolescents (10–19 years) constitute about one-fifth of India's population and young people (10–24 years) about one-third of the population. By investing in adolescent health today, we invest in the workforce, parents, and leaders of tomorrow, and break the inter-generational cycle of poor health.

This programme strategy is underpinned by evidence that adolescence is the most important stage of the life cycle for health interventions. Addressing adolescent health needs would obviate several reproductive, maternal and child health challenges. The strategy has been developed in consultation with various ministries, development partners, multi-laterals, civil society, academicians and the voices of those who matter the most - the adolescents.

<http://india.unfpa.org/2011/10/19/4053/>

[the-government-of-india-in-partnership-with-unfpa-launches-the-national-adolescent-health-programme-rashtriya-kishor-swasthya-karyakram/](http://india.unfpa.org/2011/10/19/4053/the-government-of-india-in-partnership-with-unfpa-launches-the-national-adolescent-health-programme-rashtriya-kishor-swasthya-karyakram/)

Date Accessed: 27.1.2014

(Divashri Mathur)

## Palliative care not available for majority in developing countries: WHO

(Kundan Pandey, *Down to Earth*, January 31, 2014)

A recent report by World Health Organization (WHO) and Worldwide Palliative Care Alliance (WPCA) has revealed that only 20 countries across the world have palliative care well integrated into their health-care systems. According to the report in 2001, over 29 million people across the world died from diseases which required palliative care. The present estimated number of people in need of palliative care, at the end of life, is 20.4 million.

Alzheimer's and other dementias, cancer, cardiovascular diseases (excluding sudden deaths), cirrhosis of the liver, diabetes, HIV/AIDS, kidney failure, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, drug-resistant tuberculosis (TB) are some of the diseases which need palliative care among adults and among children, those afflicted with cancer, cardiovascular diseases, cirrhosis of the liver, congenital anomalies (excluding heart abnormalities), blood and immune disorders, HIV/AIDS, meningitis, kidney diseases, neurological disorders and neonatal conditions need such care.

According to the report, in 2011, approximately three million patients received palliative care, the vast majority at the end of their life. Although maximum palliative care is being provided in high-income countries, almost 80 per cent of the need for palliative care is in low and middle-income countries. The report further suggests that only 20 countries across the world have palliative care well integrated into their health-care systems and 78 per cent of adults in need of palliative care at the end of life, belong to low and middle-income countries where it has not got sufficient attention from local government.

<http://www.downtoearth.org.in/content/palliative-care-not-available-majority-developing-countries-who>

Date Accessed: 31.01.2014

(Simi Sunny)

## ENERGY

### Nationwide Green Power Initiative launched

(Confederation of Indian Industry, January 29, 2014)

In a key step towards promoting renewable energy among corporate India, the Green Power Market Development Group (GPMDG) has been launched on a nationwide basis. The GPMDG initiative seeks to create a demand for renewable energy among corporate and help companies in meeting their renewable energy purchase obligations and also make them sustainable in the long term.

The GPMDG - India is a joint initiative of Confederation of Indian Industry and World Resources Institute and supported by Shakti Sustainable Energy Foundation.

India has experienced significant economic growth in recent times yet its growth is constrained by energy supply and availability. Industry experts have time and again emphasized the need to focus on clean energy and energy efficiency across sectors and to include corporate sector in the policy making process in this regard.

<http://www.cii.in/PressreleasesDetail.aspx?enc=9t8ffKU4qtYuD3MoLQxQTds1doC7eNVyO4aJYon+ZBk>

Date Accessed: 31.01.2014

(Deepti Somani)

## TECHNOLOGY

### Taking Doordarshan Global

(Nandini Lakshman, *Gateway House*, 24 January, 2014)

News channels like China's CCTV, Russia Today and Al-Jazeera have become definitive voices for their nations and for international views. It is the right time for Doordarshan, to be unshackled from Prasar Bharti and made an independent broadcasting authority to showcase India's growing global ties and the success of its democracy to the world. A new management with professionals from both the public and private sector who have a sophisticated knowledge of technology can reposition DD to make it web and social-media savvy.

India has been a late entrant to the arena of global electronic influence. Positioning DD globally could be an effective way to highlight the strengths of India: a lively and overactive domestic media, a vibrant, negotiating democracy, globally relevant and affordable products, the quest for equity and sustainable economics, a global diaspora, soft power and cultural acceptability – and yes, a status quo foreign policy.

At a time when existing political and economic development models are being questioned, India's growing global engagement and the success of its diverse democracy, offers a model for countries seeking a more replicable, equitable alternative to the one promoted by the western-dominated media. This has, till now, not been projected.

It is an opportune moment to do this since older global broadcasters like the BBC and CNN are cash-strapped, and are curtailing coverage and pulling out correspondents from many locations worldwide. DD can replace the authoritative opinion of foreign channels with powerful voices from emerging economies. Bureau-sharing arrangements in these countries will help optimise the field force and minimise cost. In DD's domestic bureaus, correspondents and cameramen can, and should, be encouraged to aspire for global postings based on merit.

Taking DD global will also rejuvenate the domestic channel. It will gain from the infusion of talent and the new technology that was not available during its heyday in the 1980s, helping it to compete effectively with the private channels. The independence of the international outfit will rub off on the domestic operation, helping DD regain its national viewership and credibility.

<http://www.gatewayhouse.in/taking-doordarshan-global/>

Date Accessed: 27.01.2014

(Gayatri Verma)

## ENVIRONMENT

### Growing demand for cropland threatens environment, UN agency reports

(*UN News Centre*, January 24, 2014)

This article highlights the findings of a report titled "Assessing Global Land Use: Balancing Consumption with Sustainable Supply", produced by the International Resource Panel hosted by the UN Environment Programme's (UNEP).

According to the report, if demand for new land on which to grow food continues at the current rate, by 2050, high-end estimates are that area nearly the size of Brazil could be ruined, with vital forests, savannahs and grassland lost.

"Recognizing that land is a finite resource, we need to become more efficient in the ways we produce, supply and consume our land-based products," said Under-Secretary-General and UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner.

Authors attribute the increasing demand for land to more protein-rich diets in developing countries and a growing demand for biofuels and biomaterials, especially in developed countries. The report outlines the need to balance consumption with sustainable production, focusing on land-based products – such as food, fuels and fibre – and describes methods to enable countries to determine whether their consumption levels exceed sustainable supply capacities.

Among its recommendations, the report pushes for measures that improve land management and land use planning, investment in restoration of degraded land, and a reduction in food waste and shift towards more vegetable diets.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=47002&Cr=environment&Cr1=#.UuiiMxC3TIU>

Date Accessed: 27.1.2014

(Divashri Mathur)

## **India ranked 155<sup>th</sup> in global environmental performance list**

*(PTI, January 26, 2014)*

India has been ranked at a low 155th position in a global list that evaluates countries on how well they perform on high-priority environmental issues. India is behind neighbouring China, Pakistan, Nepal and ranks much lower than its BRICS peers.

The report states that emerging economies, including China, India, Brazil, Russia, and South Africa, have had modest improvement over the past decade, but they have also paid an environmental price for their rapid growth.

The environmental performance index (EPI) tells how well countries perform on high-priority environmental issues mainly in the areas of protection of human health from environmental harm and protection of ecosystems. The EPI reveals that improved environmental results are possible when measurement and management practices align.

Urbanisation without sufficient investment in environmental safeguards is a key reason for emerging economies' poor showing when it comes to air quality, biodiversity and habitat protection. The 178 nations in the index represent 99% of the global population, 98 % of the world's total land area, and 97% of the global GDP, the report said.

The index is prepared by researchers at Yale and Columbia Universities in collaboration with the World Economic Forum (WEF) as well as with support from the Samuel Family Foundation and the McCall MacBain Foundation.

[http://zeenews.india.com/news/eco-news/india-ranked-155th-in-global-environment-performance-list\\_907002.html](http://zeenews.india.com/news/eco-news/india-ranked-155th-in-global-environment-performance-list_907002.html)

Date Accessed: 30.01.2014

(Deepti Somani)

## COMMUNALISM

### Cabinet approves enactment of ‘waqf properties (eviction of unauthorized occupants) bill, 2013’

(Press Information Bureau, January 30, 2014)

“The Cabinet has approved the enactment of a new Stand-alone legislation named ‘Waqf Properties (Eviction of Unauthorized Occupants) Bill, 2013’ moved by Shri K. Rahman Khan, Minister of Minority Affairs.

The Sachar Committee in its report dated 17.11.2006 recommended to treat waqf as Public Premises as these properties are for the benefit of public and not for individual and encroachment on these properties to be treated as encroachment on Government Land. In view of this, the Ministry of Minority Affairs moved a proposal to the Cabinet to have a Stand-alone legislation to protect Waqf Properties from encroachments and alienation, in consultation with the Ministry of Law, and the Cabinet has approved the feasibility of such a legislation.”

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=102863>

Date Accessed: 30.01.2014

(Ashwin Varghese)

## GENDER

### ‘Violence against women an indicator of how violent a society is’

(The Hindu, January 26, 2014)

American feminist activist Gloria Steinem noted that the “biggest element that determines whether a country is violent from inside or towards other nations is not poverty or religion or access to natural resources but is violence against women,” she also noted that “the world is in a state of ‘great crisis’ because violence against women is so severe.”

“Speaking on issues like how the idea of masculinity depends on domination of woman and how men try to control reproduction, Ms. Steinem said “men raising children would make a huge difference” in their attitudes towards women. She said women’s movements across the world have to rely on inter-dependence and that the recent times are indicative of the pre-nationalism era.”

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/violence-against-women-an-indicator-of-how-violent-a-society-is/article5619066.ece>

Date Accessed: 27.01.2014

(Ashwin Varghese)

## REGIONALISM

### Partial success of RORC programme in Odisha

(Manoj Kar, The Telegraph, January 26, 2014)

The rice distribution process under Rice for Olive Ridley Conservation (RORC) programme that was meant to check mass exodus of people from fishing zones of Kendrapara and Paradip has failed to meet its destined purpose. Under the RORC programme, rice was made available at a cost of one rupee per kg.

Fishing zones were identified and RORC cards were subsequently distributed in Ganjam, Puri, Bhadrak, Kendrapara and Paradip districts. While some regions have benefited from the scheme, fishermen from Kendrapara and Paradip have been at the losing end as apart from the scheme having failed to reach its targeted beneficiaries, the ban on sea fishing in Paradip-Dhamra coastline since November 1, 2013 has left them all the more insecure.

Among other reasons for failure, the vast number of ghost beneficiaries listed in the registers is a major setback to successful implementation of the programme.

[http://www.telegraphindia.com/1140126/jsp/odisha/story\\_17864498.jsp#.Uuc5vRC6bIV](http://www.telegraphindia.com/1140126/jsp/odisha/story_17864498.jsp#.Uuc5vRC6bIV)

Date Accessed: 28.01.2014

(Pallavi Ghosh)

## UP government launches pension scheme for multi-pronged development

(Piyush Srivastava, *Mail Today*, January 29, 2014)

The state government of Uttar Pradesh launched a pension scheme on January 28, 2014 to aid poor, rural families in the state, which is likely empower the poor not only financially, but also in terms of education and health.

Under this scheme, more than 40 lakh rural families will get a monthly pension of Rs.500-750 based on the benefits derived from several existing schemes which are being avail.

However, the government has additionally made it compulsory for the beneficiary's families to send their children, between the age of six and 14 years, to school and set an over 70 per cent of attendance for their wards. Regular vaccination of children below six years of age has also been made mandatory for families to benefit from the scheme. Moreover, illiterate people above the age of 15 years would be registered under the National Literacy Mission Programme.

<http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/samajwadi-pension-scheme-akhilesh-yadav-uttar-pradesh-lok-sabha-elections/1/340413.html>

Date Accessed: 29.01.2014

(Pallavi Ghosh)

## DISABLED

## RTE has failed to enabled the disabled: study

(Anubhuti Vishnoi, *Indian Express*, January 27, 2014)

Three years after the RTE Act came into effect promising free and compulsory education to children aged six to 14 years and special focus on admission and retention of children with disabilities, an NCERT study has found that disabled children in schools across states still face serious infrastructure and pedagogy handicaps.

The NCERT report — ‘Status of Implementation of RTE Act in context of disadvantaged children at elementary stage’ — says that “poor infrastructure, non-availability of appropriate furniture for children with disabilities, non-availability of special aids and appliances, poor quality of aids and appliances for children with locomotor disabilities are major challenges in the fulfilment of RTE to these children”. The study adds that “educational materials for children with disabilities were non-existent in most sample schools. States/ UTs have very limited vision of arranging different types of educational materials for children with various disabilities”.

The 2012-13 study on children with disabilities had revealed that while 99 per cent of these children liked attending regular schools but 57 per cent of teachers were not trained to understand their special needs.

The study was conducted by the NCERT’s department of elementary education in Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Jharkhand, Orissa, Gujarat, Uttarakhand and the Union Territories of Puducherry and Andaman & Nicobar Islands through questionnaires and interviews with school teachers, parents of disabled children and disabled students.

<http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/rte-has-failed-to-enable-the-disabled-study/2/>

Date Accessed: 30.01.2014

(Amrutha Jose Pampackal)

## Disability data: census 2011

(*Im4change*)

Disability data from 2011 Census shows that of the 2.68 crore disabled persons in India, nearly 69.5 percent live in rural areas. While the population of rural disabled persons has increased by 13.7 percent (1.64 crore in 2001 - 1.86 crore in 2011) the population of urban disabled persons has increased by 48.2% (0.55 crore in 2001 to 0.82 crore)

The article partially attributes this increase to changes in definitions of various types of disabilities between the two censuses. For example, “new categories like mental retardation and mental illness have been introduced in 2011, which were earlier covered under the category of mental disability in 2001. Two new categories-multiple disability and any other-have also been introduced in the latest Census.”

“It is claimed that the Census 2011 has been designed to cover most of the disabilities listed in the "Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995" and "The National Trust Act, 1999".

Disability rights groups have been demanding a comprehensive Bill on disability that both harmonizes the disability specific legislations – the Mental Health Act 1987, Rehabilitation Council of India Act 1992, Persons with Disability (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act 1995 and the National Trust Act 1999 – and broadens the definition of disability.

<http://www.im4change.org/news-alerts/disability-rises-in-urban-india-census-2011-23786.html>

Date Accessed: 28.01.2014

(Ashwin Varghese)

## ELDERLY

### Kerala to introduce a policy to adopt the elderly

(Meera Manu, *The New Indian Express*, January 30, 2014)

The Social Justice Department of Kerala government is set to change the way we treat the elderly, by devising a policy, supportive of people who are ready to offer filial care and affection to people in their old age. The department will promote the foster care of people aged above 60, an idea similar to the practice of adopting kids, through the revised State Old Age Policy 2013.

“The concept of ‘de-institutionalisation’ is encouraged through the policy. If someone shows interest in taking care of the elderly and provide them with a homely atmosphere, the chances of them taking shelter in old-age homes can be prevented.”

When it becomes a scheme, the person who protects the old-person could avail assistance from the government. The Old Age Policy states that by the end of the 12th five-year plan, the elderly will comprise 15 per cent of the population of the state. By 2030, their number will stand two per cent above the population of children. As per the data available till 2011, the 400 old-age homes in the state have close to 15,000 inmates.

<http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/kerala/Now-a-Government-Policy-Lets-You-Adopt-the-Elderly/2014/01/30/article2027252.ece>

Date Accessed: 30.01.2014

(Anjana John)

## INDIA IN THE WORLD

### India among 'Fragile Five': The latest club of markets in turmoil

(Landon Thomas Jr, *The Economic Times*, January 29, 2014)

According to Morgan Stanley- a research analyst- India figures amongst the Fragile Five nations that have become too dependent on foreign investment for securing growth. Other countries that comprise the Fragile Five group are Turkey, Brazil, South Africa and Indonesia.

The analyst highlights as to how excessive emphasis on increasing economic growth rates is strainful for countries. This has raised pressing questions about emerging markets.

All the nations in the group rely heavily on short term foreign investments to reduce annual current account deficits. Investor behaviour is influenced by other factors such as political and economical trends of the nations, which if remain uncertain, fare bad for its economy, thereby, weakening it further. Analysts have also argued this leads to a currency being overvalued.

Sharp outflows from Turkey as well as some other countries enlisted in the Fragile Five group have been alarming signs for these nations. However, Jim O' Neill- an economist who coined the term BRICs- said that he still believed that these nations provide best investment opportunities in the world.

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/india-among-fragile-five-the-latest-club-of-markets-in-turmoil/articleshow/29542510.cms>

Date Accessed: 29.01.2014

(Pallavi Ghosh)

## INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

### Anti-corruption law for private companies takes effect in Brazil

(*Associated Press*, January 28, 2014)

An anti-corruption law that makes companies liable for bribes paid by their employees and for acts of corruption with public officials went into effect in Brazil. The law is significant because it specifies that not only individuals, but companies too could be punished for bribery and corruption. The legislation comes in response to violent protests in Brazil against corruption, transportation fare hikes, high taxes, poor services and high World Cup spending.

With the new law, Brazil complies with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's Anti-Bribery Convention that criminalizes bribery of foreign public officials in international business transactions. Under the new law, liability extends to a company's directors, officers and employees involved in unlawful acts, whether in Brazil or abroad. Companies that resort to bribes face fines of up to 20 percent of their gross annual revenue or a maximum of \$25,000.

It also makes it difficult for firms who are found to have engaged in corrupt activities to receive credit from public financial institutions for up to five years. Additionally, corrupt firms will have their assets confiscated and will be forced to end their operations in the country.

<http://sg.sports.yahoo.com/news/anti-corruption-law-takes-effect-brazil-150128300.html?.tsrc=yahoo>

Date Accessed: 21.01.2014

(Mahima Malik)

## EAST AND SOUTH EAST ASIA

### Tighter controls to combat money laundering, terrorist financing in Singapore

*(Channel News Asia, January 10, 2014)*

According to National Risk Assessment report on money laundering and terrorist financing risks, tighter controls to combat money laundering and terrorist financing are underway in Singapore. Singapore's openness as an international transport hub and financial centre exposes it to cross-border money laundering and terrorist financing risks.

Singapore already has a strong anti money laundering mechanism in place. Based on official data, there were 70 money laundering convictions under the Corruption Drug Trafficking and Other Serious Crimes (Confiscation of Benefits) Act from 2009 to 2011. There were seven such convictions under the Moneylenders Act in 2011.

As for terrorist financing, there were a number of cases that were investigated, but there has not been any prosecution to date, as most cases involved terrorists who were self-financed.

Robust new rules to govern sectors like pawnbrokers and corporate service providers such as accounting firms, law firms and corporate secretariat firms, could be brought in. Other sectors identified as vulnerable to money laundering and terrorist financing risk are banks, casinos, remittance agents, money changers, internet-based stored value facility holders and online payment firms like Paypal and Alipay.

According to a joint statement by the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, and the Monetary Authority of Singapore on Friday, "relevant government agencies will be strengthening the legislative and supervisory framework through the year to address the risks in these sectors more effectively".

In addition, areas identified for further study include virtual currencies like bitcoins, precious stones and metals dealers, and the Singapore Freeport, which is a high-security storage facility designed for valuables, such as gold and art.

<http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/business/tighter-controls-to/949812.html>

Date Accessed: 20.10.2014

(Mahima Malik)

### BTC China accepting Bank Deposits again

*(Coin Desk, January, 30 2014)*

Chinese have been very enthusiastic buyers of Bitcoin, but in December, 2013 the Chinese government harshly stopped financial firms from dealing with Bitcoin exchanges, making it almost impossible for anyone in China to buy or sell Bitcoin for yuan. As a result the volume of transaction in December was very low. According to the memo issued by the People's Bank of China (PBOC) on 5th December, the banks in the country were not allowed to set up or become a Bitcoin business.

But in January, 2014, the BTC China is again started accepting customer deposits via its corporate bank account, plus offering small prizes to its customers. Interestingly, "BTC China has also launched a promotion to bring awareness to its Maker-Taker programme and reward its customers. Because of this model and the depth of the order book, BTC China states customers can easily buy and sell tens of thousands of bitcoins without moving the market."

The prominent Chinese Bitcoin exchanger, Bobby Lee, argued that this innovation can benefit bitcoin in China. The Maker-Taker method accomplishes two things – it brings more market depth and more liquidity to the site, plus it reduces volatility, which makes for a healthier market for bitcoin in China. with these new advancements the market of Bitcoin in China is expected to grow manifolds.

<http://www.coindesk.com/btc-china-accepting-bank-deposits/>

Date Accessed: 30.01.2014

(Neha Singh)

## AMERICAS

### Twenty years of NAFTA's devastating effects on Mexico

*(Global Post, January 2, 2014)*

The article highlights the negative ramifications of North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) which has been signed between the US and Mexico in 1994. The agreement intended to develop Mexico's manufacturing sector and create employment has in fact led to a vicious cycle of Mexico's dependence on US imports. Dumping of cheap goods in Mexico and an increased dependence on the US imports has caused much harm to Mexico.

Even after twenty years into NAFTA, about half the population is estimated to be in poverty, many without secure access to food.

For the first 10 years, the dumping of low priced corn produce by the United States in Mexico led to a steep fall in crop prices in the later country. Domestic farmers were left severely hit with the steep fall in prices as corn import dependence of Mexico grew from 8 percent before NAFTA to 32 percent. Similarly, soybeans, wheat, cotton and rice saw exports surging by the United States under NAFTA, with huge drops in producer prices in Mexico. This price volatility was further compounded in 2000 when the US deregulated its financial markets causing a severe blow to developing countries like Mexico who were importers of food. Moreover, in 2007, international prices for many staple crops steeply increased, which further caused problems for Mexico that had largely become dependent on imports.

Beer industry in Mexico stands as a telling example of the severe distortion that NAFTA caused in Mexico. Corona beer is famous beer brand in the US. However, the reality is that all the ingredients to prepare the beer are imported from the US, while Mexico is merely hub of bottling of beer.

<http://www.globalpost.com/dispatches/globalpost-blogs/global-pulse/nafta-20-years-mexican-beer>

Date Accessed: 21.01.2014

(Mahima Malik)

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