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- UP worst state in India in terms of law and order

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Service Industry in India: Opportunities and Policy Related Issues



Source: <http://blog.careerfutura.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Service-industry.jpg>

*Compiled by RGICS
Jawahar Bhawan, New Delhi*

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Key Message

Policy Watch is a key instrument of RGICS's vision and strategy.

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Policy Watch informs elected representatives and other political leaders about key policy developments nationally and globally. This will enable them to intervene in policy decision making and reflect people's voice.

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Team RGICS

Service Industry in India: Opportunities and Policy Related Issues

Context

The Service Sector is the propelling engine behind the growth of Indian economy constituting a large part of the economy in terms of employment potential as well as contribution to the national income. The share of services in India's GDP at factor cost (at current prices) increased from 33.5 per cent in 1950-51 to 55.7 per cent in 2011-12 and to 56.9 per cent in 2012-13. If construction is also included, the service sector's share would increase to 65.0 per cent in 2012-13.

However, in recent quarters, in line with general slowdown of the economy, the growth of services sector has also decelerated in the recent quarters. Services export growth has also decelerated since 2011-12. However 'Net Services' growth which decelerated to 1.4 per cent in 2012-13, picked up and stood at 12.6 per cent in H1 of 2013-14. Services sector growth rates were 8.2 per cent in 2011-12 marginally gone down to 7.1 per cent in 2012-13.

Performance of various service sectors

Trade, hotels, and restaurants as a group is the largest contributor to GDP among the various services sub-sectors with an 18.7 per cent share. This is followed by financing, insurance, real estate, and business services with a 17.1 per cent share in 2012-13. Among the major broad categories of services, 'trade, hotels & restaurant' category's growth accelerated to 9.1 per cent in 2012-13 from 6.2 per cent recorded in 2011-12. However, the growth of 'financing, insurance, real estate and business services', and 'transport, storage & communication' decelerated to 8.6 per cent and 1.9 per cent in 2012-13 respectively which contributed to the overall deceleration of the service sector.

Performance of Service Sub-Sectors in India

Service Sub Sector	Potential of the sector
Trade	Indian retail trade is currently in a transformational stage. An expanding middle class, rising incomes and spending power, a youth majority in the total population, rapid urbanisation and several other factors have shaped India's consumption pattern. As per the industry estimates, Indian retail industry accounting for around 14-15 per cent of GDP, is estimated to be worth around US\$ 500 billion currently. Future prospects pose a tremendous growth opportunity for retail players-domestic as well as foreign, with increasing popularity of businesses like online shopping and direct selling. After opening FDI in retail sector in September 2012, the retail landscape is expected to change rapidly.
Tourism	As per the industry estimates, the total market size of Indian tourism and hospitality sector stood at US\$ 117.7 billion in 2012-13 and is expected to touch US\$ 418.9 billion by 2022. Tourism has been identified by the WTO and OECD, as one of the five key sectors with a great potential for high impact in aid for trade. The industry is likely to become more competitive due to the entry of additional international flight operators and world tourist arrivals are expected to increase on an average by 43 million every year from 2010 to 2030 which could boost tourism sector.
Real Estate	As per the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE)'s economic outlook, the real estate and construction sectors are among the largest contributors to the exchequer. In the year 2011-12, the sector contributed Rs. 120 billion to the exchequer. The real estate sector of India is expected to post annual revenues of US\$ 180 billion by 2020 as compared to US\$ 66.8 billion in 2010-11, registering a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 11.6 per cent.

Transport re-lated services	<p>Aviation India is currently the 9th largest aviation market. However, the problems in the Indian aviation sector continued in 2012-13 which is reflected in the drastic drop in the passenger travel. The total number of passengers travelling by air dropped by 4.79 per cent in 2012-13 to 94.8 million, in comparison to 12.05 per cent growth achieved in 2011-12.</p> <p>Rail transport services: The performance indicator of rail transport services, the freight traffic by railways increased by 4.2 per cent to reach 1, 010 million tonnes in 2012-13 whereas, the net tonne kilometer of railways declined by 3.9 per cent to 641.8 billion. However, recent data for the first half of 2013-14 shows an increase of 6.2 per cent in freight traffic as well as a 2.7 per cent increase in the net tonne kilometer over the corresponding period of previous year.</p>
IT and ITeS	<p>India's total IT industry's (including hardware) share in the global market stands at 7 per cent. The enterprise software market in India is expected to reach US\$ 3.92 billion in 2013. However, with uncertain international economic conditions, the growth of IT-BPM service revenues (both software and hardware) decelerated from 14 percent in 2011-12 to an estimated 7.5 percent reaching US\$108.4 billion in 2012-13 as per NASSCOM.</p>
Research and development	<p>India was ranked seventh globally in terms of research and development (R&D) investments in 2012. Its R&D investments are expected to increase to US\$ 45.2 billion in 2013 from US\$ 38 billion in 2011. India ranks ninth globally in the number of scientific publications and 12th in the number of patents filed. By 2020, the global share of publications is expected to double and the number of papers in the top 1 per cent journals will quadruple from the current levels.</p>
Health care	<p>The Indian healthcare industry, which comprises hospitals, medical infrastructure, medical devices, clinical trials, outsourcing, telemedicine, health insurance and medical equipment, is expected to reach US\$ 160 billion by 2017. India is fast becoming the preferred destination for high-end pathology and diagnostic services. An increasing number of hospitals from the UK, US, Middle East and neighbouring countries are tying up with Indian diagnostic centres to conduct laboratory tests.</p>
Banking and Financial Services	<p>India's Rs. 77 trillion (US\$ 1.25 trillion)-banking industry is the backbone of the economy. The sector remained strong even after the global financial crises and which shook most of the developed economies. Indian banking sector is expected to become fifth largest in the world by 2020 as per the report prepared by US based consulting firm KPMG in association with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). Bank credit is expected to grow at a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 17 per cent in the medium term, eventually leading to higher credit penetration in the economy.</p>
Education and Skill Development	<p>Education and skill development are crucial for reaping the demographic dividend. The market size of Indian education sector is expected to increase to Rs 602,410 crore (US\$ 95.80 billion) by 2014-15 in the wake of a strong demand for quality education, according to a report by India Ratings. Major investments are being estimated in the areas of pre-schools, private coaching and tutoring, teacher training, development and provision of multimedia content, educational software development, skill enhancement, IT training and e-learning. The private education sector is estimated to reach US\$ 70 billion by 2013, according to Technopak -a consulting firm.</p>

Telecom and related services	As per Industry estimates, telecom sector contributed 6.9 per cent of GDP in 2012-13 providing employment to more than 5.7 lakh employees. Teledensity (the number of telephones per 100 population) which is an important indicator of telecom penetration, increased from 18.22 per cent in March 2007 to 73.01 per cent as on 30th Sept 2013. The urban and rural teledensity stood at 144.02 and 41.70 per cent respectively, providing the best possible services at one of the most affordable rates globally. The wireless connectivity in India is expected to grow at about 40 per cent by 2017, up from 38 per cent in 2012.
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Table 1: Sector-wise share & growth rate of Service Sector in India

Sector/Sub Sector	Share (at current prices)	Growth Rate (at constant prices)									
		2012-13	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2012-13				2013-14	
						Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
Total Services (excluding construction)	56.9	9.8	8.2	7.1	7.7	7.6	6.7	6.6	6.6	5.9	
Total Services(including Construction)	65.0	9.8	7.9	6.8	7.6	7.1	6.2	6.3	6.2	5.8	
Trade, hotels & restaurant #	18.7	11.5	6.2	9.1	6.1	6.8	6.4	6.2	3.9	4.0	
Trade	17.2	11.5	6.5	9.5							
Hotels & restaurants	1.5	10.8	2.8	4.9							
Transport, storage & communication	6.8	13.8	8.4	1.9							
Financing, insurance., real estate & business services	17.1	10.1	11.7	8.6	9.3	8.3	7.8	9.1	8.9	10.0	
Banking & insurance	5.9	14.9	13.2	7.9							
Real estate, Ownership of dwellings & business services	11.2	6.0	10.3	9.3							
Community, social & personal Services	14.3	4.3	6.0	6.6	8.9	8.4	5.6	4.0	9.4	4.2	
Public administration & defence	6.1	0.0	5.4	3.3							
Other services	8.2	8.0	6.5	9.1							
Construction	8.1	10.2	5.6	4.3	7.0	3.1	2.9	4.4	2.8	4.3	
Overall GDP	100	9.3	6.2	5.0	5.4	5.2	4.7	4.8	4.4	4.8	

Source: Working Paper No. 1/2014-DEA, "Emerging Global Economic Situation: Opportunities And Policy Issues For Services Sector"

Policy Issues in Service Sector

There are two major sets of policy issues in the services sector.

- The first is related to market access issues for India's services abroad
- Second is related to domestic regulations and policy issues in India.

A) Market Access for India's Services Exports: There are a number of market access barriers, some visible and some less visible which hinder India's services exports. Some examples are as follows:

- In the case of **Business Services**, access to the US market, is non-transparent and unsatisfactory as licensing of professional service suppliers is generally regulated at State level.

- In the case of **legal services**, while some of the states, like New York, Texas, California and Washington D.C. allow overseas lawyers to practice within the state, the system and requirements are set by the concerned state bar associations and therefore differ from state to state.
- In the case of shipping, there are many obstacles in the US market such as various types of assistance in US to its domestic shipping sector and use of ships built in US in internal waters, providing huge subsidies to domestic producers etc which discourage the enter of other markets in US economy.
- In the case of **construction and related engineering services and urban planning and landscape services**, the “Buy American” or “Buy local” legislations passed in many states of US stresses on the materials used (i.e. cement) to be domestically manufactured for public works projects financed by state funds.
- In the case of financial services, particularly in insurance, overseas companies face 56 jurisdictions in US, each jurisdiction has its own system of licensing, solvency and regulations with restrictions like need to be licensed in another state before seeking a licence in a state.
- In the case of Port services, there is the issue of Harbour Maintenance tax (HMT) and Harbour services fee in the US is 0.125%. While US has stopped collecting HMT on exports, it is still being collected on imports.
- US has proposed laws that restrict visas for Indian companies is also a major concern. These bills impose numerous restrictions and discriminatory practices to prevent many talented people from entering into US economy and becoming permanent/temporary US residents.

B) Domestic regulations & policy reforms for services

There are many Domestic Regulations for services in India. Re-structuring many domestic regulations could help in improving the growth and exports of services. Some of the domestic regulations existing in Indian market are the following:-

Nodal Agency: Despite having a strong growth potential in various services sub-sectors, there is no single nodal department for services. There is an urgent need to have proper institutional framework to tap the opportunities in services sector in a coordinated way.

Promotional Activities: There is a need for greater marketing of services and increasing visibility of India’s services abroad. This could be done by setting up a portal for services providing all information on India’s services sector in one place showcasing India’s competence in services including non-software services, having regular services related exhibitions/ symposiums/ abroad and using the services of dedicated brand ambassadors and experts in the areas of services.

Linkages with other sectors: The linkage effect is considered to be high in services sector. As per industry estimates, around 20 per cent services output is consumed by end consumers whereas the rest 80 per cent is used by others sectors like manufacturing. So, the linkage between various sectors is very important. For example the growth in hardware sector must support the software sector of the country.

Database: Lack of good data base for services sector data is a big challenge for policy analysis. Many committees have been formed to strengthen the data base like

- The Expert Committee to render technical advice for development of Service Price Index (SPI)
- Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to develop methodology for compilation of the Index of Services Production (ISP)
- An Expert Group on Strengthening of Institutional Mechanism for Regular Collection and Compilation of Data on International Trade in Services set up by MOSPI.

The other broad issues are:

Ease of doing Business: The speed of Business approval is another issue. In India there is a lot of delay in getting clearances.

Tax and Foreign Trade Policy related: There are a number of issues related to taxation policy which needs to be addressed to help the growth of services sector. Some of them are as follows:

- There seems to be some discrimination in the matter of Bank Guarantee to be submitted for import / indigenous procurement of capital goods against Export Promotion capital goods (EPCG) by a service provider.
- Any anomalies in Double Taxation Avoidance Agreements should be set right. For example the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) with Japan does not exempt Technical Services provided by Indian firms/companies. This needs to be addressed.
- Retrospective Amendment of Tax Laws: In recent years, the Indian government has enacted certain amendments to tax laws that have a retrospective effect. Such retroactive changes result in significant uncertainty to the otherwise well established and widely-accepted application of tax laws, and can serve to undermine investor confidence in a fair and reasonable taxing system.

Credit related: Credit facilities and particularly producing collateral is another issue for services sector. There is a need for 'Collateral Free' soft loans to support the service sector's cash needs. Even export or business orders could be considered as collateral for credit worthy service firms.

FDI / Privatization of Railways: Besides the existing policies on FDI in many services sectors, FDI or at least privatization in Railways could be thought of. This has been successful in some countries, but not in others. At least some activities under railways could be privatized.

Employment: Services Sector is facing retrenchment in jobs, which has not only social implications but also economic implications. The government has come up with some schemes in the budget to incentivize private sector to employ more people. This includes among others the Rs.1,000 crore set apart for National Skill Development scheme. But jobs creation is not in proportion with the rapid increase of the workforce.

Recent Policy Measures in Services Sector

The outgoing government has been taking many policy reforms in services sector to address the above policy issues to some extent. Some of the recent reforms are as follows:

In budget 2013-14 Rs. 14,000 crore has been allocated for capital infusion into banks in order to raise additional equity capital from the open market, in proportion to the non-promoter shareholding in each bank.

There are many measures taken in the financial services sector like allowing banks to open branches in tier-I cities without seeking the Reserve Bank of India's prior approval in each case subject to fulfilling certain inclusion criteria in underserved areas in proportion to their expansion in the urban areas.

To help R & D services, India plans to set up Rs 5,000 crore fund called "India Inclusive Innovation Fund" – to boost scientific innovations that can improve the life of common man. Under the Union Budget 2013-14, a sum of Rs. 4,727 crore has been allocated for medical education, training and research. In addition, Rs. 3,415 crore has been

set aside for agricultural research and another Rs. 200 crore to fund organizations that will scale up Science and Technology (S&T) innovations.

To help the shipping sector, the Budget 2013-14 exempts excise duty on ships and vessels. Consequently, there will be no countervailing duty (CVD) on imported ships and vessels.

To help the IT sector, the government has notified safe harbour rules with the aim of removing uncertainties related to transfer pricing. Similarly, the ceiling of Rs.100 crore provided for transactions in the nature of corporate guarantees has also been removed. Besides rationalizing knowledge process outsourcing (KPO) definition, operating margin has also been reduced from 30 per cent to 25 per cent and the ceiling for KPO transactions has also been removed.

The government has also taken many policy initiatives recently to liberalize the FDI policy in financial and non-financial services, construction development, telecommunications, computer hardware & software, and hotel & tourism' which contributed around 46.0 per cent of the cumulative FDI equity inflows during the period April 2000-August 2013.

Conclusion

In order to reap the potential benefit from the enormously growing service sector, there is a need to address the policy gaps faced by the sector. Removing some of the restrictions and addressing some of the policy issues mentioned in the earlier section could help in the growth of different services. However, there is a need to carefully examine the domestic regulations that should continue for achieving social goals and other regulations which can be removed as a *quid pro quo* in WTO and bilateral negotiations. A targeted approach could lead to exponential gains for services sector and for the economy.

Reference

Report, 2014, "Emerging Global Economic Situation: Opportunities And Policy Issues For Services Sector, 2014", Ministry of Finance, Government of India, Accessed from:

<http://finmin.nic.in/workingpaper/EmergGlobalEcoServiceSector.pdf>

Tibetan refugees to be given benefits of welfare schemes

(Gaurav Bisht, *Hindustan Times*, June 02, 2014)

The centre has laid down new guidelines for the state government to extend benefits of public welfare schemes (both central and state-sponsored) to Tibetan refugees scattered across different states in the country. This means that Tibetan refugees will now have the same access to developmental schemes as Indian citizens.

There are nearly 1.10 lakh Tibetans residing in 45 different settlements located in ten different states. Besides, there is a sizeable number of Tibetans living outside the settlements. In order to bring about uniformity in extending different benefits to the Tibetan population, both Tibetan refugees living inside the settlements and outside will be entitled to all the development schemes of the government of India as any Indian citizen.

As per a letter of the union ministry of home affairs (MHA) dated May 15, the Centre has laid new guidelines for the states in this regard. Under the new policy, it is mandatory for all the state governments to sign lease documents for the land occupied by the Tibetan refugees. The lease agreement will be signed by the state government with the Central Tibetan Relief Committee and not with individuals.

Tibetans living in India can now avail the benefits of the MGNREGS, Rajiv Awas Yojana, NHRM and the public distribution system. They can also avail loans from the nationalised banks. There is also a proposal for extending scholarship benefits to Tibetan children. As per the new guidelines, the central government has directed to provide special subsidies to Tibetan children pursuing professional courses. The states have been asked to give special permission for separate land allocations to Tibetans for running 'Tibetan bazaars'. All the co-operative societies run by the Tibetans will be registered in the state.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/punjab/chandigarh/tibetan-refugees-to-be-given-benefits-of-welfare-schemes/article1-1225177.aspx>

Date Accessed: 05.06.2014

(Deepti Somani)

UP worst state in India in terms of law and order

(Aman Sharma, *Economic Times*, June 6, 2014)

An analysis of the National Crime Records Bureau data shows that Uttar Pradesh is the worst state in India in terms of law and order. Uttar Pradesh has recorded the highest number of violent crimes over the past decade and change of government has had little impact on the crime rate in the state.

"Under Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav of SP, the number of violent crimes touched a high of 33,824 incidents in 2012, including nearly 2,000 rapes and 4,966 murders. However, the situation was scarcely less scary in the previous year, when BSP leader Mayawati led the government and the number of violent crimes reported was 32,987 including a similar count of rapes and murders."

Also, despite being the most populous state in the country there is a severe lack of police personnels with just 1.8 lakh guarding around 20 crore people. Outdated and scarce police resources are the major reasons for horrific crime like the recent rape and murder of two minor girls in Badaun.

A senior MHA official explains the situation, "This amplifies that the problem has more to do with the archaic police systems and bureaucratic inertia in UP under consecutive regimes. Cutting-edge level postings are still done on caste basis, irrespective of whether SP or BSP is in power." It is high time that Uttar Pradesh improves its police systems and adopts commissionerate systems like Punjab and Haryana.

http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/36118011.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

Date Accessed: 06.06.2014

(Simi Sunny)

Foreign portfolio investors get liquidity bonanza

(Business Standard, June 4, 2014)

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), in its bi-monthly monetary policy review, allowed few measures to improve the depth and liquidity in the domestic foreign exchange market unlike last July when RBI had imposed restrictions on banks with regard to trading in currency futures and options. Last July, banks were barred from trading in currency futures and exchange-traded currency options market on their own, but were allowed to trade on behalf of their clients in order to arrest volatility in the exchange rate.

The steps taken are:

- ◆ Allowed foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) to participate in the domestic exchange-traded currency derivatives market. The arrangement has been made to the extent of their underlying exposures and an additional \$10 million.
- ◆ It also allowed domestic entities with a similar access to the exchange-traded currency derivatives market.

“The intent is to bring off-shore (unregulated) non-deliverable forward (NDF) flows into the on-shore exchange-traded fund (ETF) platform en-route to the over-the-counter (OTC) platform on which RBI has absolute control,” said Moses Harding, group chief executive officer (liability and treasury management) and chief economist of Srei Infrastructure Finance.

“Allowing FIIs to hedge their underlying plus \$10 million is one step forward towards deepening and broadening the market,” said Mohan Shenoi, president-group treasury and global markets, Kotak Mahindra Bank.

Market players said the move to allow FPI, coupled with recent lifting of curbs on currency trading, would boost liquidity in the exchange-traded currency derivative — offered by the NSE, BSE and MCX-SX. The combined monthly turnover at the three exchanges had come off from its peak of Rs 64,039 crore witnessed in June last year to below Rs 15,000 crore. However, after removal of some of the curbs by the regulators, the average volume in the month of May once again climbed above Rs 20,000 crore.

http://www.business-standard.com/article/finance/foreign-portfolio-investors-get-liquidity-bonanza-114060301341_1.html

Date Accessed: 4.6.2014

(Shruti Issar)

Government mulls common law for all financial-sector regulators

(Vrishti Beniwal, Business Standard, June 4, 2014)

The Finance ministry is said to be considering a unified law for all financial-sector regulators, including the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), for better regulation. This unified law is expected to function on the lines of the Indian Penal Code, which covers aspects of all states' criminal laws, even as the states have individual control over the police.

Financial Sector Legislative Reforms Commission (FSLRC) headed by retired Supreme Court judge B N Srikrishna, was formed in March 2011 to rewrite and harmonise financial-sector laws. It proposed the Indian Financial Code to replace the country's existing financial laws and proposed a review of these laws every three years, besides judicial review of regulations.

The Commission also gave a draft of the code that addressed concerns like consumer protection, micro-prudential regulation, resolution mechanisms, systemic risk regulation, capital controls, monetary policy, public-debt management, development and redistribution, and contracts, trading and market abuse.

Swarup said this would help address the problems that arose among regulators - for example, the one between the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) and the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (Irda) over jurisdiction of unit-linked insurance products a few years ago.

In January, the finance ministry asked regulators to voluntarily implement FSLRC's non-legislative recommendations and released a handbook to guide them in developing a uniform understanding of processes and achieve standardization.

http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/govt-mulls-common-law-for-all-financial-sector-regulators-114060400249_1.html

Date Accessed: 4.6.2014

(Shruti Issar)

India likely to Ease Restrictions for Foreign Online Retailers

(Nandita Bose and Rajesh Kumar Singh, Reuters, June 4, 2014)

With the aim of reviving the country's under-5 growth rate, the upcoming budget session is likely to relax restrictions on online retailers from across the globe, thereby enabling them to sell their own products as early as next month. This decision is being taken to be as one of the first signs of economic reform ushered in by a new government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi that is being hailed for being business-friendly.

Currently, global online retailers like Amazon and eBay cannot sell products sourced by them and rely on third-party suppliers. Their platforms, thus, end up becoming marketplaces for outside suppliers. Opening up competition in this field is likely to boost consumption and benefit small manufacturers and traders. Moreover, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in online retail business will eliminate middlemen, which will in turn reduce the transaction, overhead, inventory and labour costs, industry officials said.

This is likely to brighten up the otherwise gloomy prospects of India in terms of global investments. Britain's Tesco PLC (TSCO.L) is the only retailer that has announced an investment in India so far.

<http://in.reuters.com/article/2014/06/04/india-retail-idINKBN0EF0ME20140604>

Date Accessed: 04.06.2014

(Pallavi Ghosh)

India's service sector grows for first time in a year

(Domain B.com, June 4, 2014)

India's service sector figures for the month of May show a rise in business activities for the first time since 2013. The increase is significant as this is the first time that the country's service sector has shown a surge in terms of business activities since 2013. India's manufacturing sector also grew for the seventh straight month in May. The results reflect optimistic expectations in the market after the formation of the new government.

The survey, HSBC Services Purchasing Managers' Index was compiled by Markit. Data also showed a relatively slower increase in the growth of input costs charged by services companies. Additionally, Reserve Bank of India kept the repo rate unchanged at 8 per cent after the mentioned signs of improving market conditions.

http://www.domain-b.com/economy/general/20140604_service_sector.html#sthash.iE4I96GP.dpuf

Date Accessed: 05.06.2014

(Mahima Malik)

6.5 Million Jobs globally provided by renewable energy in 2013: IRENA

(Jagran Josh, May 13, 2014)

A new study titled “Renewable Energy and Jobs – Annual Review 2014” revealed that people employed in the renewable energy industry worldwide increased from 5.7 million people in 2012 to 6.5 million in 2013. Additionally, India is reported to be one of the largest employing countries in renewable energy sector including countries like China, Brazil and the United States. The report states the importance of renewable energy sector in employment creation and growth of the global economy.

The report was released by International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) which is a mandated global hub for renewable energy cooperation and information exchange by 131 Members. The following are some highlights from the report:

- Employment in renewable energy sector was shaped by regional shifts, industry realignments, growing competition and advances in technologies and manufacturing processes in 2013.
- The largest employing countries in the renewable energy sector are China, Brazil, the United States, India, Germany, Spain and Bangladesh.
- The largest employers by sector are solar photovoltaic, biofuels, wind, modern biomass and biogas.
- The report estimates a five-fold increase of solar PV installations in China from 2011 to 2013.
- In the wind industry, China and Canada provided positive impulses while the United States’ policy response has been mixed because of political uncertainty.
- The offshore wind industry is still concentrated in Europe, particularly the United Kingdom and Germany.
- The biofuels value chain provides the second largest number of renewable energy jobs after solar PV.
- The United States remains the largest biofuels producer, while Brazil remains the largest employer.

<http://www.jagranjosh.com/current-affairs/65-million-jobs-globally-provided-by-renewable-energy-in-2013-irena-1399961436-1>

Date Accessed: 06.06.2014

(Mahima Malik)

POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE

BJP demands white paper on Arunachal's financial crisis

(*The Sentinel*, June 2, 2014)

"The BJP in Arunachal Pradesh has demanded a white paper from the Nabam Tuki government on the state's financial health. Stating that the party was deeply concerned over the state's financial crisis as well as selective payment of employees' monthly salaries for past two–three months" the party demanded explanations from the Government.

The party also demanded "a complete review of all the MoUs/MoAs signed so far with power developers and retain the projects with those developers who are really committed to develop the projects and can develop other infrastructure like roads, inland waterways to connect areas like Pasighat, Tezu, Roing with Assam's Guwahati and other parts of country."

Asserting that BJP would play the role of an "effective and constructive" opposition in the assembly, the opposition leaders assured to help the state government to bring in sufficient central fund for state–building. Listing out priority areas party president Tai Tagak reported that the party could focus on ensuring that the state government improves the law and order situation, secondly separation of judiciary from executive and construction of an alternative highway linking Arunachal with rest of the country via Bhutan. In addition to this the party would like "Arunachal to have an AIMS–like medical college and technical college of IIT repute."

<http://www.sentinelassam.com/arunachal/story.php?sec=2&subsec=7&id=193670&dtP=2014-06-03&ppr=1#193670>

Date Accessed: 05.06.2014

(Junty Sharma Pathak)

Paperless Parliament: Tabs, webcasts to replace bulky documents

(*First Post*, June 02, 2014)

The government has started moving towards advanced e-governance methods for better connectivity within the departments. New government is pushing towards soft copies replacing bulky documents. The National Informatics Centre (NIC) has been campaigning to end all hard copy documents and instead, use only emails and other soft copies for all proceedings.

According to a report in the Economic Times, the National Informatics Centre this year has included "preloaded tabs for MPs, an online messaging system that will replace 'paper slips', live webcast of house sessions, and a detailed training programme for the parliamentarians." This will come with unique email addresses that have already been configured for them. The tabs will also carry a list of the day's agenda, minutes of previous sessions and other documents, noted the ET report. Additionally, the NIC is also looking at initiating a messenger service that will help MPs communicate with each other inside the Parliament.

The ET report said that "inside the house, there is no wi-fi facility but to help MPs connect with each other in the lobby that has high-speed network, there will be a messenger system that can be accessed in areas other than the house. They can dispose of files, discuss the session and reply to e-mails." The MPs will be given a choice – use only soft copies, or asks for hard copy documents. NIC officials are expecting that a lot of MPs will opt for the soft copy option. Since close to 58 percent of the MPs are elected in this term as first timers, the NIC is hopeful that the debutantes will be comfortable with the new technology and help in making the offices paperless. They have also lined up a number of tutorials for the MPs to help them use this new technology, noted the report. The move, if implemented successfully, will be a landmark move in making the parliament offices more systematic, organised and eco-friendly.

But this is not the first time the idea has been mooted. Back in 2011, a scheme was launched to promote the idea among MPs of using tablet PCs. A report in The Hindustan Times said the NIC had developed applications compati-

ble with Apple and Samsung tablets.

http://www.firstpost.com/politics/paperless-parliament-tabs-webcasts-to-replace-bulky-documents-1552335.html?utm_source=ref_article

Date Accessed: 05.06.2014

(Neha Singh)

16th Lok Sabha analyses: Voter turnout rate in rural constituencies higher than urban constituencies

(Saumya Tewari, *India Spends*, May 30, 2014)

A post election analysis has revealed that in the 16th Lok Sabha elections, voter turnout in rural areas remained higher than the urban counterpart. In 2014 general elections, a 15% gap was recorded between the highest rural and urban voter turnout rates, against 17% recorded in 2009. Figures reflect that the reduction in the voter turnout gap in rural and urban constituencies (2%) is not very significant from the previous Lok Sabha elections. However, an overall improvement was recorded in all urban constituencies in 2014 general elections.

The 2014 elections saw a record voter turnout of 66% as against 58% in 2009. Tables 1 and 2 show a sample of selected rural and urban constituencies in India along with their voter turnout rates in 2009 and 2014 general elections.

Increase in voter turnout in selected rural constituencies of India between 2009 and 2014

Name of Constituency	State	Poll % in 2009	Poll % in 2014
Valsad	Gujarat	56	74
Mandi	Himachal Pradesh	64	63
Outer Manipur	Manipur	83	83
Barpeta	Assam	72	84
Gairwal	Uttarakhand	49	53
Rajnahal	Jharkhand	55	70
Jhanyharpur	Bihar	43	57
Banika	Bihar	48	58
Manulia	Madhya Pradesh	56	66
Kandhamal	Odisha	66	73
Jajpur	Odisha	66	75
Raigarh	Chhattisgarh	65	77
Gadchiroli-Chimar	Maharashtra	65	69
Banswara	Rajasthan	53	69
Shravasti	Uttar Pradesh	43	54
Domariaganj	Uttar Pradesh	49	53
Chidambaram	Tamil Nadu	77	79
Banikura	West Bengal	78	82
Mahabubnagar	Andhra Pradesh	68	71
Nagarkurnool	Andhra Pradesh	70	75

Increase in voter turnout in selected urban constituencies of India between 2009 and 2014

Name of Constituency	State	Poll % in 2009	Poll % in 2014
Mumbai South	Maharashtra	40	52
Mumbai South Central	Maharashtra	39	53
Mumbai North Central	Maharashtra	39	48
Mumbai North West	Maharashtra	44	50
Thane	Maharashtra	41	50
New Delhi	NCT Delhi	55	65
South Delhi	NCT Delhi	47	62
Kolkata Dakshin	West Bengal	66	69
Kolkata Uttar	West Bengal	64	66
Chennai North	Tamil Nadu	64	63
Chennai South	Tamil Nadu	62	60
Chennai Central	Tamil Nadu	61	61
Bangalore North	Karnataka	46	56
Bangalore Central	Karnataka	44	55
Bangalore South	Karnataka	44	55
Secunderabad	Andhra Pradesh	55	53
Hyderabad	Andhra Pradesh	52	53
Ahmedabad East	Gujarat	42	61
Ahmedabad West	Gujarat	48	62
Pune	Maharashtra	40	54

Source: Election Commission

Earlier in 15th Lok Sabha elections in 2009, the highest polling percentage was 83% amongst rural constituencies while the lowest voter turnout was 43%. Amongst urban constituencies, the highest voter turnout was recorded to be 66% while the lowest was 39% in 2009. In the previous Lok Sabha elections, among metropolitan constituencies, the worst voter turnout was recorded in Mumbai- South Central and North Central – both with 39%, which improved in 2014- 53% and 48%, respectively. But the improvement is not significant and the voter turnout in Mumbai North Central was one of the lowest turnout rates compared to national turnout rates.

<http://www.indiaspend.com/cover-story/rural-india-continues-to-outvote-urban-india-71875>

Date Accessed: 04.06.2014

(Mahima Malik)

GOVERNMENT

DIPP to simplify Land Acquisition Act

(*Exim India*, June 04, 2014)

In a bid to boost investment and manufacturing in the economy, the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) plans to simplify the Land Acquisition Act by removing the unwieldy rules and procedures in the legislation. Sources claim that the social impact assessment process in the Act, a prerequisite for public-private partnership (PPP) and for private entities to acquire land, would likely be scrapped.

According to domain experts, the Land Acquisition Act, in its present form, had stalled industrial activity and suitable amendments were, therefore, urgently required to spur manufacturing in the economy. Sources say that there was no land acquisition taking place, thereby impacting large projects and hitting manufacturing growth, which contracted by 0.7 per cent in 2013-14.

<http://eximin.net/NewsDetails.aspx?name=75974>

Date Accessed: 05.06.2014

(Deepthi Somani)

Meghalaya has 100 Acts with no official record

(Staff Reporter, *Meghalaya Times*, June 2, 2014)

“The Civil Society Women’s Organization (CSWO) has sought the immediate intervention of the Meghalaya Governor into the alleged failure of the government department concerned to maintain official records of more than 100 Acts of the state government.”

“The action was demanded following an RTI finding filed by the CSWO which found out that the Law department and the Governor’s secretariat have failed to maintain any official records of more than 100 Acts that were legislated by the State Assembly of Meghalaya.”

CSWO President Agnes revealed that as per the RTI filed the state government legislated 477, 100 of which have neither mention nor copy of the manuscripts in the government’s shelves.

“She further alleged that the state government seems to be reeling in much corruption and failure of the governance and government servants making their own rules, ignoring the once laid down, as a great betrayal to the people especially when the whole government should be functioning by the Rule of Law.

The CSWO president also added that there are rules which are blatantly flouted by the government’s servants causing grave injustice to the state and the people.”

<http://meghalayatimes.info/index.php/front-page/25409-meghalaya-has-100-acts-with-no-official-record>

Date Accessed: 05.06.2014

(Junty Sharma Pathak)

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EXCLUSION

Scheduled tribes show worrying decline in child sex ratio

(Times News Network, June 01, 2014)

The scheduled tribes in India have traditionally had the highest sex ratios but data on individual tribal communities according to the latest census shows that the situation is worsening in almost each case with the sex ratio in the population aged zero to six is significantly lower.

In 2011, India's ST population as a whole had a sex ratio of 990, much better than the national ratio of 943. The child sex ratio for 0-6 years of age was also significantly better for tribals at 957 than for the country as a whole (919). It is however; worryingly lower than the overall sex ratio.

Data shows that this decline is happening more or less across the board. Of the 58 tribal communities for which the census has compiled data, 27 have overall sex ratios of over 1,000 i.e. women outnumber men. All 56 others have fewer girls than boys with the ratio dipping to as low as 879 among the Sugalis and 888 among the Malayalis of the south and 888 among Minas.

The released data also shows how wide the variation is among tribal communities on a crucial development The indicator like literacy. While the overall literacy rate of 59% among STs is much lower than the national average of 73%, individual tribal groups have rates ranging from as high as 97.5% - among the Mizo tribes - to as low as 31.8% among the Bakarwals of Jammu & Kashmir.

What is also noticeable % is the large gender gap in literacy among STs. India's male literacy rate of 80.9% is about 16 percentage points higher than the female literacy rate of 64.6%. Among STs, this gender gap widens to over 19 percentage points with male ST literacy at 68.5% against 49.4% for females.

TRIBAL SPIRAL

TOP 5 Literacy rate (%)			TOP 5 Child sex ratio		
Tribe	Zone	Rate	Tribe	Zone	Ratio
Mizo (Lushian) tribes	Mizoram	97.5	Bhottada, Dhotada etc	Orissa	1,007
Kachari, Sonwal	Assam	85.4	Bhuiya, Bhuyan	Orissa	1,002
Dhodia, Dhodi	Maharashtra, Gujarat, Goa	83.7	Gond, Gondo etc	Eastern region	994
Tangkhul	Manipur	82.3	Koya, Doli Koya etc	Andhra Pradesh	994
Tripura, Tripuri etc	Tripura	81.1	Ho	Eastern region	992
BOTTOM 5			BOTTOM 5		
Bakarwal	J&K	31.8	Sugalis	Andhra Pradesh	879
Yenadi, Chella Yenadi etc	Andhra Pradesh	40.8	Mina	Rajasthan	888
Bhil, Bhilala, Barela, Patelia	Madhya Pradesh & Chhattisgarh	42.2	Malayali	Tamil Nadu	888
Kolha	Orissa	42.2	Bakarwal	Jammu & Kashmir	892
Konda Dhoras, Kubi	Andhra Pradesh	45.8	Gujjar	J&K	905

However, the figures for tribes as a whole conceal wide variations across individual tribal groups. For instance, among the most literate tribal groups, the Mizos, there is virtually no difference between male literacy (98%) and female literacy (97%). There is even a group, the Jaintias and Khasis of Meghalaya, in which female literacy at 78.5% is higher than male literacy at 75.5%.

In general, tribal groups in the northeast have both high literacy rates and lower gender gaps in literacy. The Nyishis of Arunachal Pradesh have the lowest literacy rate of 63.2% in the region, but that is still higher than the national average for STs.

In most other parts of the country, however, the gender gap in literacy rates among tribals is 20 percentage points or more. The Minas, once again, are at an extreme in the spectrum, with a male literacy rate of 76.9% against a female rate of just 44%, a gap of nearly 33 percentage points.

The data reveals quite clearly how it would be dangerous for policymakers to treat the scheduled tribes of India or even those of a single region as one homogenous entity. While there is little doubt that STs as a whole are a severely deprived section, some are particularly badly deprived.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/India/Scheduled-tribes-show-worrying-decline-in-child-sex-ratio/articleshow/35861330.cms>

Date Accessed: 05.06.2014

(Deepthi Somani)

Efforts on to repatriate Bangladeshi tribals

(The New Indian Express, June 04, 2014)

The Indian officials have been trying to repatriate Bangladeshi tribals who have entered Tripura in quest of refuge after ethnic violence erupted in their country. Tripura shares an 856 km border with Bangladesh which is absorbent because it spreads out over mountains that are densely forested. More than 350 men, women and children of 70 families belonging to Chakma and Tripuri tribes have taken shelter in four villages of Tripura's Gandachara area along the international border since 2nd June. The tribals who are mostly Buddhists and Hindus, fled their villages after non-tribals attacked their homes in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), a tribal dominated area in Bangladesh that borders India and Myanmar. "The UPDF (United People's Democratic Front) activists supported by the local anti-peace groups attacked the houses of Chakma and Tripuri tribals and also burnt their homes forcing them to take shelter in Tripura." The UPDF is against the peace accord signed in 1997 between the Bangladesh government headed by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samity (PCJSS) led by Santu Larma. In 1986, more than 74,000 tribals had taken shelter in Tripura following violent attacks but the refugees had returned to their homes after the peace accord was signed.

<http://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/Efforts-on-to-Repatriate-Bangladeshi-Tribals/2014/06/04/article2262816.ece>

Date Accessed: 06.06.2014

(Anjana John)

EDUCATION

DU signs MoU with NSDC for job-oriented courses

(Press Trust of India, June 02, 2014)

Under an MOU signed between Delhi University and National Skills Development Corporation, students will soon be provided with training in special skills for jobs and entrepreneurship in the University as Applied Courses of the Four Year Undergraduate Programme.

“The training will be in the sectors of Banking, Financial Services and Insurance, IT and IT Enabled Services, Health Care, Media and Entertainment, Tourism and Hospitality, Automotive Industry.” Alka Sharma, DU Registrar said, “70 per cent of all students under this programme shall be assured placement through NSDC for jobs or for becoming entrepreneurs in these sectors.”

The training will be provided in the second and third years at a fee of Rs 2,500 per semester for a total of 4 semesters. Ms Sharma added that those “who wish can avail of a bank loan through the NSDC, repayable only after the student has been placed in a job.” “Another MoU has also been signed by the varsity for a 30-day skill based training under the Star Scheme of the NSDC for training students during the summer vacation.”

<http://www.dailypioneer.com/nation/du-signs-mou-with-nsdc-for-job-oriented-courses.html>

Date Accessed: 03.06.2014

(Ashwin Varghese)

Uneconomic schools on the rise in Kerala

(The New Indian Express, May 31, 2014)

The number of both government and aided uneconomic schools in Kerala has increased by 523. Based on the information accessed through the Right To Information (RTI) Act, there were as many as 5,137 uneconomic schools in the State (in the academic year 2012-13).. The Department of General Education terms ‘uneconomic schools’ to those schools from lower primary to high school-level which have less than 60 students (average of 15 students in a class). In the academic year 2011-12, the number of uneconomic schools in Kerala was 4,614.

The All-India Save Education Committee, an NGO, informs that there are 2,577 schools in the state at present that have less than 50 students on their rolls. , Among these 1,217 are government schools and 1,360 are aided schools. There are seven Lower Primary Schools in the state which do not even have a single student. The highest number of uneconomic schools is in Kannur (731) district, followed by Pathanamthitta (502) and Kozhikode (499). “The main reason for these schools becoming uneconomic is owing to the parents’ preference to admit their children in CBSE or ICSE schools.” Government should certainly take measures to improve the curriculum and education system of the State board run schools.

<http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/kerala/Uneconomic-Schools-on-the-Rise-in-State/2014/05/31/article22.55202.ece>

Date Accessed: 04.06.2014

(Anjana John)

HEALTH

Poor Sanitation Is making Children More Malnutrition Prone

(Sunil Chandramouli, *LiveMint*, June 5, 2014)



India's sanitation crisis is a key reason for severe child malnutrition burden as states with poor sanitation facilities like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand have registered higher rates of child malnutrition. Open defecation is still prevalent amongst people constituting more than half of India's population.

Unhygienic surroundings along with high population density are breeding grounds for a host of diseases. Lacking adequate sanitation, children are vulnerable to diseases like typhoid and diarrhoea. Such diseases in turn weaken their capacity to absorb nutrients.

In an earlier article published at the *LiveMint* on May 9th, 2014, a joint study by Princeton University economist Dean Spears and his colleagues, Arabinda Ghosh and Ashish Gupta was discussed to share the Cambodian experience, wherein a rapid decline in open defecation in the last 10 years was considered to account for much of the rise in the height of children.

Consequently, the article argues that children are exposed to greater health risks when exposed high density areas with poor sanitation. The writer notes further that states with greater access to toilets like Kerala, Manipur, Mizoram and Sikkim, where more than 80% of the rural population have access to toilets, the child malnutrition levels remain the lowest in India.

<http://www.livemint.com/Opinion/nKCx2zwO66c29nj3vkyNhL/Why-Indias-sanitation-crisis-is-a-public-health-emergency.html>

Date Accessed: 05.06.2014

(Pallavi Ghosh)

Telemedicine can make the Healthcare delivery system more efficient

(David Lalmalsawma, *The Reuters*, June 04, 2014)

According to Medanta, the multi-specialty hospital which started its free telemedicine service about a year ago as an outreach service for patients who cannot visit the hospital mentioned that the healthcare delivery is facing two major problems which are **accessibility and lack of manpower**.

India has 0.7 physicians per 1,000 people, where as BRIC nation have Russia (5), Brazil (1.5) and China (1.5) have better ratios and most Indians travel about 20 kilometres to reach a hospital, according to a 2012 report by accounting firm PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC). Having direct interaction with a specialist is nearly impossible for many patients since most specialist doctors live in cities, while 70 percent of India's population lives in rural areas. Even in cities, hectic lifestyles and longer commutes make it tough to visit the doctor.

But according to the experts, nearly 900 million mobile phone connections and over 200 million internet users wireless technology can be harnessed to decentralise India's healthcare industry, which is expected to touch \$250 billion by 2020. Many e-healthcare companies have telemedicine centres in smaller towns that connect patients to specialists in India's cities. Mediphone, a countrywide medical phone service, costs 35 rupees per consultation.

Several state governments such as Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh have launched free medical helplines. There also are private companies, such as Mediphone which was started in 2011. It is a paid service has more than 1,000 phone calls each day seeking medical advice, with 33 percent of the calls coming from Bihar, one of India's most underdeveloped states. Newer and smarter health devices are also helping the industry's growth. Heart and blood pressure monitors can now wirelessly transmit the patient's data to mobile phones or a central online database accessed by telemedicine centres.

<http://blogs.reuters.com/india/2014/06/04/telemedicine-in-india-might-be-just-what-the-doctor-ordered/>

Date Accessed: 05.06.2014

(Neha Singh)

TRANSPORT

Highways Min looking to clear barriers to road building

(*Exim News Service, June 4, 2014*)

The Ministry of Highways plans to float Cabinet notes on three key issues that have blocked road building as it tries to revive the moribund sector.

The three action areas:

- ◆ liberty to choose the mode of project implementation,
- ◆ authority to modify the model concession agreement (MCA)
- ◆ option for concessionaires to exit fully after construction

The Ministry plans to first file a proposal to the Road Transport, Highways and Shipping Minister, Mr Nitin Gadkari, who is reportedly looking at ways to reduce administrative layers in the decision-making process.

Officials had earlier said that increased power to choose between public-private partnerships (PPPs) and cash contracts (engineering, procurement and construction, or EPC) at the time of awarding of projects would help encourage private sector participation which has gone down drastically. Further, the move would help projects get awarded faster.

<http://www.eximin.net/NewsDetails.aspx?name=75980>

Date Accessed: 5.6.2014

(Divashri Mathur)

Need to actualise goals of UN Decade of Action for Road Safety

(Bindu Shajan Perappadan, *The Hindu*, June 04, 2014)

The World Health Organization's 2013 Global Status Report on Road Safety indicates that the total number of road traffic deaths amount to around 1.24 million per year.

Ms. Kiran Mehra-Kerpelman, director of the United Nations Information Centre for India and Bhutan, in the context of the recent death of the union minister Gopinath Munde noted that there is "an urgent need to actualise the five pillars on which the goals of the ongoing UN Decade of Action for Road Safety are based: road safety management; safer roads and mobility; safer vehicles; safer road users; and better post-crash response."

The article reports that "every four minutes a life is lost in a road accident in India with 1,40,000 deaths recorded in

2012 alone. In the past decade, over a million people have lost their lives in road accidents in the country and over 5 million have been left seriously injured or permanently disabled.”

Save LIFE Foundation, an advocacy group which works on reducing road accident deaths through rapid emergency care blames India’s policy paralysis since 2001 for poor road safety.

The foundation observed that “detailed investigations into road crashes are a rarity, officials in-charge of road safety are almost never held accountable, road design continues to be dangerous, and Indian laws around road safety remain deficient and poorly enforced.” Founder Piyush Tewari said: “The sole statute governing road safety in India, the Motor Vehicles Act-1988 (MVA), has proved ineffective in addressing any of these issues decisively. Even the last tabled Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 2012, which was passed by the Rajya Sabha in 2012, was archaic and contained recommendations which will not solve the current situation on Indian roads.”

The article observes that “only 28 countries, covering 7 per cent of the world’s population, have comprehensive road safety laws on five key risk factors: drinking and driving, speeding, and failing to use motorcycle helmets, seat-belts, and child restraints.”

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Delhi/road-safety-has-been-a-victim-of-indias-policy-paralysis/article6081025.ece?homepage=true>

Date Accessed: 05.06.2014

(Ashwin Varghese)

ENERGY

Equal Access to Electricity Remains a Challenge in India

(S B Agnihotri & P C Maithani, *Down To Earth*, June 15, 2014)

Despite managing to provide electricity to 4 million households in a decade, access to electricity remains a challenge with 80.7 million households living without electricity till date, as indicated by the 2011 Census data. According to the previous Census data of 2001, 84.7 million lacked access to electricity.

Out of the total deprived segment, around 75 million are rural households and the remaining 5.8 million are urban households. This means that 44.7 per cent and 7.3 per cent of rural and urban population respectively lack access to electricity, thereby, highlighting the extent of rural urban inequality.

Moreover, the intra-regional inequality is also stark as data reveals that despite a 4 million drop in the deprived section, a compact cluster of districts in the eastern and northern regions still has nearly half the households using kerosene for lighting in 2011 because they lack access.

According to the article, the use of non-commercial energy has increased from 74 MTOE (million tonnes of oil equivalent) in 1961 to 174 MTOE in 2011. However, there has been a decline in per capita consumption of non-commercial energy- from 169 KGOE (kilograms of oil equivalent) in 1961 to about 144 KGOE in 2011.

<http://www.downtoearth.org.in/content/contours-inequality>

Date Accessed: 04.06.2014

(Pallavi Ghosh)

Pune to utilize solar power to light up slum streets

(Ajay Khape, *The Indian Express*, June 04, 2014)

Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) is going to install solar street lights in slum settlements. The civic body has got the approval from central and state governments providing solar power in remote villages. “The project is inspired by solar lights illuminating rural, remote places. Providing light in slums through cables has been a tough task.” The solar street light reduces maintenance hassles and also helps in saving electricity. “If solar street lights to be installed at 10 slums in Shivajinagar area prove useful then it would be replicated across the city. It would be a permanent

solution to problems faced on illuminating congested slums in the city.” In the initial phase, The PMC will use Rs 1 crore offered by MLC Deepti Chowdhary from funds allotted to legislators as local area development fund. 160 street lights would be installed, each costing Rs 62,499.

<http://indianexpress.com/article/cities/pune/pmc-to-tap-solar-power-to-light-up-slum-streets-at-night/>

Date Accessed: 04.06.2014

(Anjana John)

TECHNOLOGY

Need for devising strategy to drive IT benefits to small cities

(Vinson Kurian, *The Hindu Businessline*, June 05, 2014)

Group of Technology Companies (GTech), an industry body of IT/ITeS companies in Kerala is working to develop and promote strategy to drive the benefits of industry into smaller cities and towns of India.

More than 90 per cent of the IT exports of \$86 billion for 2013-14 came from companies located in seven Indian cities. As a result, the 50-plus tier 2 and tier 3 cities are not enjoying the full benefits provided by the industry in terms of employment, living standards and all-round development. It is estimated that every direct employment in the IT industry generates four indirect job opportunities to the local population.

Chairman of GTech recently stated that “spread of the industry in smaller cities and towns is essential to decongest the big cities, provide rural employment and promote an inclusive growth. And there is a need to for restoration of export benefits through the Software Technology Parks of India scheme at least for those companies in tier 2 and tier 3 cities. Thousands of small IT units, especially those in the MSME sector, will have funds to reinvest and grow, thereby creating additional employment. Large companies will be motivated to develop their base in smaller cities.”

Export benefit schemes

Export benefit schemes for the IT industry were discontinued in March 2011. While large companies have outgrown the need to be supported through tax benefits, there are thousands of small IT companies which need funds for reinvestment and increasing manpower. It is also pointed out that by restoring the export benefits for companies in smaller cities and towns, the revenue loss to the Government is minimal, since 90 per cent of the taxable income today is generated in big cities.

Thrust on entrepreneurship

Putting thrust on entrepreneurship GTech has also sought government intervention to set up an e-governance lab as part of this initiative, which will trigger innovations that will directly touch the day-to-day lives of the citizens of Kerala. IT companies in Kerala belonging to SME sector collectively employ in excess of 25,000 people. Most of them struggle as they attempt to scale up to the next level. So, there is a need to devise policies and schemes to support them.

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/gtech-calls-for-strategy-to-drive-it-benefits-to-small-cities/article6085060.ece>

Date Accessed: 5.06.2014

(Neha Singh)

A Cleaner, Cheaper Way to Make Metals

(Kevin Bullis, *Technology Review*, June 04, 2014)

Metals production is a large source of greenhouse gas emissions. A startup called Infinium is working to reduce source of carbon emissions in the process of metal production. Infinium has been operating since 2008 and is now ready to go to market with its first products the “rare earth” metals neodymium and dysprosium. These materials are needed to make powerful magnets that work at high temperatures and are important for the generators found in wind turbines and many electric car motors. This approach can be used to produce other metals, including magnesium and

aluminum, the company is starting with rare earths because they fetch much higher prices. Its first customer is the U.S. government, which needs rare earth metals for its stockpile of strategically valuable materials. Rare earth ore is mined in just a few places in the world, and high costs and environmental challenges have prevented companies from processing rare earth ore to make metals domestically.

Infinium's process addresses a specific part of metal production i.e. transforming partially processed ores of metal oxides into metals. In process of this conversion large amount of greenhouse gases are released due to the presence of carbon electrode. But Infinium have replaced the carbon electrode with zirconium oxide which reduces the greenhouse emission significantly.

The change in the process will reduce the processing cost by 30 to 50 percent making these metals much cheaper. Parts made of these metals weigh far less than the steel parts ordinarily used in cars, while being just as strong. The weight savings could reduce fuel consumption by 10 percent, according to an auto industry consortium.

<http://www.technologyreview.com/news/527526/a-cleaner-cheaper-way-to-make-metals/>

Date Accessed: 05.06.2014

(Neha Singh)

ENVIRONMENT

India over-reporting green cover: Study

(*Times of India*, June 05, 2014)

Forest researchers from the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) have noted that India could be grossly "over-reporting" its forest cover. The researchers say that the existing forest cover might be equivalent to what the Forest Survey of India had reported in 1997.

The study claims that this is because of the ambiguous definition of 'forest' which doesn't differentiate between tree cover on agricultural land and natural forests. Researchers say that a large area that the government has included under the forest category actually comprises commercial plantations, - coffee, arecanut, cashew, rubber, fruit orchards, parks and gardens.

The article observes that the "Forest Survey of India (FSI) defines forest cover to be 'all lands more than one hectares in area, with tree canopy density of more than 10%, irrespective of ownership and legal status'. This definition could well mean that manmade forests or monocultures (farmland used to grow only one type of crop) are being considered forests."

"The current study raises doubts about India's tall claims about afforesting 1 mha every year...India has been implementing one of the largest afforestation programmes in the world and annually between 1 and 1.5 mha has been afforested since 1980...The team suggests the government modify the current forest area reporting format."

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Home/Environment/Flora-Fauna/India-over-reporting-green-cover-study-finds/articleshow/36083420.cms>

Date Accessed: 05.06.2014

(Ashwin Varghese)

Policy suggestions to curb air pollution

(Anumita Roychowdhury, *Down to Earth*)

World Health Organisation has noted that 13 of the 20 worst polluted cities across the world are in India while air pollution has emerged as the fifth largest killer in the country.

The author notes the share of public transport, walking and cycling is drastically declining. "A recent estimate by the World Bank shows that the health cost of particulate matter pollution (particulate matter less than 10 microns, or

PM10, can penetrate deep into the lungs) accounts for 3 per cent of the country's GDP." The author makes the following suggestions for curbing air pollution:

- "Implement national clean air action plan to ensure that all cities meet clean air standards by 2020-21. Strengthen air quality monitoring systems in all states and issue daily air quality alerts with health advisory for people to take precaution.
- Introduce stringent emission standards. To begin with, enforce Bharat Stage (BS) IV emission standards across the country...Only BS VI norms can effectively curb diesel emissions, which WHO classifies as class one carcinogen for its strong association with lung cancer. Restrict the number of diesel cars and SUVs using fiscal measures like additional excise duty.
- Implement favourable taxation policy for promoting clean fuels like CNG. Only an effective differential between CNG and diesel prices can incentivise CNG. Encourage advanced clean vehicle technologies like electric vehicles with fiscal incentives.
- Increase Central funding substantially to scale up affordable modes of public transport system in cities. Use reform-based funding to integrate these systems and to install safe and well-designed walking and cycling infrastructure and paratransit systems... Reform Central taxes and state road taxes to eliminate burden on public transport and recover the revenue loss by imposing higher taxes on cars...Promote urban design that allows people to live closer to jobs, education, recreation and other services.
- Restrict use of personal vehicles. City authorities must eliminate free parking, organise and limit parking and charge parking fees to recover the cost of valuable public land and environmental impact."

<http://www.downtoearth.org.in/content/mr-modi-wish-us-happy-environment-day?page=0.1>

Date Accessed: 05.06.2014

(Ashwin Varghese)

About 1.6 billion people of the world depend on forests for living

(Kumar Sambhav S, *Down to Earth*, June 06, 2014)

According to the first ever survey of the forest genetic resources of the world conducted by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), more than one-fourths of the world's population relies on forest resources for livelihood. It is not only a major source of economic growth and employment but a huge population depends on them for drugs derived for medicinal needs. However, the countries are little equipped to conserve the rich forest genetic resources posing a threat to several local species of trees and woody plants which may be of actual or potential economic, environmental, scientific or societal value. The report warns that if urgent conservation measures are not taken, the increasing population pressure may lead to the loss of forest genetic resources.

An important concern is that lack of update and correct database of these resources. Development of species distribution maps showing locations of all populations is an essential step in conservation. However, not many countries have the resources to include the development of such maps in their conservation strategies.

The report suggests the countries to initiate tree breeding programmes and also improve the availability information on forest genetic resources. "It suggests that countries should promote sustainable use and management of FGR and strengthen the role of indigenous and local communities in the sustainable management and conservation of FGR. The report says that countries should Integrate FGR conservation and management into wider policies, programmes and frameworks of action at the national, regional and global levels and establish educational and research capacities on FGR."

<http://www.downtoearth.org.in/content/about-16-billion-people-world-depend-forests-living>

Date Accessed: 06.06.2014

(Simi Sunny)

TERI Environmental Survey 2014: Key Points

(Erewise, June 05, 2014)

The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) on 3 June 2014 released TERI Environmental Survey 2014 that said maximum urban population claims that effects of environment degradation is being felt more in the cities than rural areas of the country due to the indiscriminate and unplanned growth of urbanization. TERI in its survey also looked into issues of water and waste in addition of overall environmental concerns and also involved identification of attitude, perception, opinion and awareness of people about their local environment.

Key Findings of the survey were the following:-

- There is decline in number of bird species in cities and deterioration of air quality.
- Availability and quality of water has improved and so the waste management system according to the residents.
- 90 percent of the respondents state that average temperature has risen over time coupled with receding rainfall.
- 40 percent of the respondents believe environment and development work should go hand in hand while 30 percent kept environment above than development.
- Majority of the residents felt that government green policies are either inadequate or not implemented properly.
- 90 percent respondents feels improper waste management is the principal cause of health hazards.
- 25 percent respondents suggested segregation of waste into biodegradable and non-degradable will better suit the need.
- 80 percent of respondents are aware of the problem of e-waste while 86 percent wanted a ban on polythene bags.

The survey was carried out by Innovative Consumer Research & Business Consulting (ICRB) on behalf of TERI between December 2013 and February 2014. It surveyed more than 11214 respondents of diverse socio-economic segments of the society across eight cities namely Delhi, Mumbai, Pune, Kanpur, Coimbatore, Jamshedpur, Guwahati and Indore.

http://www.erewise.com/current-affairs/teri-environmental-survey-2014-key-points_art53902130ba7fb.html#.U5FoSPmSxgg

Date Accessed: 5.06.2014

(Neha Singh)

Experts Hope for Stringent Measures for Green Technology in Real Estate Sector

(Times Of India, June 1, 2014)

Expecting a growth in the construction and property markets, industry experts feel that the Centre needs to take stringent measures to ensure the use of green technology in the construction and real estate sectors.

India was ranked after Canada and China in a recent study by the US Green Building Council (USGBC) for Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) outside the US. LEED is a green building certification program that recognizes best-in-class building strategies and practices. There are around 200-LEED rated green buildings in India currently.

Indian Green Building Council (IGBC), which is a division of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) is expecting that unlike the sluggishness witnessed in the past, with regard to adoption of green technologies will be acquire momentum with a new government in power. The Council has been taking several initiatives for capacity building and improving the services of green buildings. It has certified around 2.07 billion square feet of green footprints in India, setting a target of 10 billion square feet by 2022. There are about 40 IGBC green factory buildings and almost 250 IGBC rated green homes in the country so far.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/environment/developmental-issues/Stringent-measures-needed-for-green-technology-in-realty-sector-Experts/articleshow/35902272.cms>

Date Accessed: 02.06.2014

(Pallavi Ghosh)

Massive plantation campaign in Delhi to restore green cover soon

(The Tribune, June 1, 2014)

The Forest Department of Delhi is launching a massive plantation drive in response to the diminishing green cover and increasing air pollution in the Capital. The initiative will take up plantation of 7.5 lakh saplings in the present financial year and four lakh saplings will be distributed free of cost. The focus of the department is to restore the green cover besides controlling the pollution levels due to the rapid urbanisation. "Green cover in Delhi has reduced by 3.58 sq km between 2009 and 2011. It decreased to 296 sq km in 2011, as measured up to 2009 when it was 299.58 sq km forming over 20 per cent of the total geographical area of approximately 1,483 sq km total area." According to a Forest Survey of India report, in 2011, the green cover shrank to 19.97 per cent in Delhi.

<http://www.tribuneindia.com/2014/20140602/delhi.htm#6>

Date Accessed: 04.06.2014

(Anjana John)

DEFENCE

Defence Ministry, Home Affairs to involve forces in policy making

(Rajnish Sharma, Deccan Chronicle, June 05, 2014)

The PMO had directed the home and defence ministries to ensure that all strategic decisions, especially those relating to the uniformed forces, should be taken only after consultations with their top officers. There is a growing view in the BJP-led government that the uniformed forces have been ignored far too long while taking strategic decisions.

Prime Minister Mr Modi has signalled that any key decision cannot be left to the bureaucrats, and that the forces must be involved at every stage of decision making process as they have firsthand experience of what is happening on the ground.

A official said, "Though the armed forces are involved in testing and checking arms, in reality the entire process is deeply influenced by bureaucrats who have virtually no experience in this field. Similarly, any new welfare scheme for armed or paramilitary forces gets drafted by a joint secretary or director-level officer. Now actual operations officers from the forces will have a greater say."

<http://www.deccanchronicle.com/140605/nation-current-affairs/article/defence-ministry-home-affairs-involve-forces-policy-making>

Date Accessed: 05.06.2014

(Jeet Singh)

REGIONAL

Odisha to Open up Construction Workers' Welfare Fund for BPL and MGNREGA workers

(Subrat Das, *The Telegraph*, June 4, 2014)

With an aim of providing a social security net, the Odisha government has decided to extend the construction workers' welfare fund to those below poverty line (BPL) and employed under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee (MGNREGA) Schemes.

The state has around 3.21 lakh registered construction workers. On the other hand, 14.99 lakh workers were employed under the rural job scheme during 2013-14. These workers are not entitled to avail the benefits available to those registered with the Odisha Building and Other Constructions Workers' Welfare Board.

Registered workers are entitled to a range of benefits including home loan assistance of Rs. 1 lakh with a 2 percent interest and a health insurance of Rs. 1 lakh. They are also eligible for compensation amounts of Rs. 1.5 lakhs, Rs. 80,000 as accident benefit for complete and partial disability. A sum of Rs. 2 lakhs is given for assistance for death in accidents and Rs. 1 lakh for natural death. Apart from these, small amounts of money are made available for various purposes like for performing last rites of a construction worker, marriage in the family, education of children and other form of financial assistance.

The aim of the Odisha government is to spend the corpus fund of the Odisha Building and Other Constructions Workers' Welfare Board more widely and efficiently. Currently, out of the Rs. 600 crore, only Rs. 8 crore has been spent.

However, critics argue that the state government had no contribution in providing assistance to the construction workers and has been inefficient in utilising the funds. The funds were constituted with 1 percent cess collected from construction firms and contractors.

http://www.telegraphindia.com/1140604/jsp/frontpage/story_18475034.jsp#.U48OxPmSyal

Date Accessed: 04.06.2014

(Pallavi Ghosh)

UP to expand air travel with open sky policy

(Virendra Singh Rawat, *Business Standard*, June 03, 2014)

Uttar Pradesh government has adopted an 'open sky policy' to connect important towns and promote tourism through air travel. This will clear the way for commercial operation of small aircraft and air taxis in the state.

Important towns such as Agra, Varanasi, Gorakhpur, Meerut, Allahabad, Lucknow, Chitrakoot, Moradabad, Kushinagar, etc, are proposed to be connected through indigenous air services. Other major towns and tourist spots would also be connected by air.

Under the policy, the state would provide sops and facilities to aircraft operators in the form of seat underwriting, value-added tax (VAT) waiver on air turbine fuel (ATF), free landing/parking facilities at airstrips owned by the state government, among others. The VAT waiver on fuel would only be applicable to scheduled and nonscheduled flights weighing up to 40 tonnes. To ensure transparency in operations, ticketing and seat availability, a dedicated web portal would be jointly maintained by the airline and UP State Tourism Development Corporation (UPSTDC).

In July 2013, the Cabinet had already granted an in-principle approval to the operation of air service with the idea to promote trade/tourism and boost economy through air connectivity. The Cabinet also sought to simplify the evaluation process of projects under public private partnership model by categorising the proposed projects on the basis of cost.

http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/up-opens-skies-for-airlines-through-open-sky-policy-114060301325_1.html

Date Accessed: 05.06.2014

(Deepti Somani)

9.4 lakh households in Delhi eligible to avail of benefits under the Food Security Scheme

(Sowmiya Ashok, *The Hindu*, June 03, 2014)

9.4 lakh households in Delhi have been verified to be eligible to avail of the benefits of the Food Security Scheme, introduced by the previous Sheila Dikshit-led Delhi Government. Eligible households will receive food security ration cards within a month. Under the scheme, households are entitled to subsidized food grains, like wheat at Rs.2 per kg and rice at Rs.3 per kg.

“Food and Supplies Commissioner S.S. Yadav said...that verifications were conducted in 10.5 lakh households of which 9.4 lakh households were found to be eligible and claims of 1.1 lakh households were rejected...The field verification of the remaining households is expected to be completed by July.”

“According to the eligibility criteria, if a household has power connection of more than 2 KW, or if any member of the household owns a property in A to E category colony, or in case any member of the household is a Government employee or if any member of the household owns any 4-wheeler or higher category vehicle, such household is not eligible for benefits under the Food Security Scheme, said Mr. Yadav.”

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-newdelhi/94-lakh-households-eligible-to-avail-of-benefits-under-the-food-security-scheme/article6076868.ece>

Date Accessed: 01.06.2014

(Ashwin Varghese)

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Multilingualism: a key to inclusive education

(UNESCO, May 30, 2014)

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recognises the significance of mother tongue-based bilingual or multilingual approaches in education, which is an important factor to ensure inclusive and quality education. “For UNESCO, ‘multilingual education’ refers to the use of at least three languages in education: the mother tongue, a regional or national language and an international language.”

A recent research illustrates that mother tongue-based bilingual or multilingual education has a positive impact on learning, and also in learning a second language. “The 2014 Education for All Global Monitoring Report found that in Cameroon, children taught in their local language, Kom, showed a marked advantage in achievement in reading and comprehension compared with children only taught in English.” UNESCO acknowledges the positive synergy between linguistic and cultural diversity. It is also guided by the principle of equality of all cultures and languages, according to UNESCO. In this direction, the Director General of UNESCO in collaboration with government officials, policy-makers, researchers, educators and development partners, will reflect on the challenges and new options for effective language education and planning at the ‘International Conference on Language - Enhancing Language Ability and Language Education’, on 5-6 June in China.

http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/resources/online-materials/single-view/news/multilingualism_a_key_to_inclusive_education/#.U5ACy_mSwRF

Date Accessed: 04.06.2014

(Anjana John)

INDIA IN THE WORLD

Obama's energy policy to benefit India and China

(India Today, June 04, 2014)

US lawmakers and policy advocacy group have said that the recent clean energy policy announcement by the US Environmental Protection agency would put the US at a disadvantage against countries like India and China.

Senate minority leader Mitch McConnell told reporters at a joint news conference with other top Republican Senators, "It really won't have much impact in terms of emissions because of what less-developed countries of the world like China and India are contributing."

US Environmental Protection agency has announced to cut carbon emission from existing power plants, which is the single largest source of carbon pollution in the US, by 30 per cent by the year 2030. It also announced to cut by 2030 particle pollution, nitrogen oxides, and sulfur dioxide by more than 25 per cent as a co-benefit.

The White House described this as American leadership to the world. "The proposed rule announced demonstrates US leadership in this important area," the White House Press Secretary, Jay Carney, told reporters.

"I wouldn't predict what specific actions other countries may take, but it stands to reason that leadership by the United State, a demonstration of a seriousness of purpose here, will have at least potentially positive effects on other nations as collectively we address a global challenge," he said.

<http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/obamas-energy-policy-to-benefit-india-and-china/1/365117.html>

Date Accessed: 04.06.2014

(Jeet Singh)

EU Experts to Arrive at India to Help Lift Ban on Indian Mangoes

(Times Of India, June 2, 2014)

In order to help India lift the European Union's (EU) ban on mangoes a team of experts from the European Commission is likely to visit the South Asian country in September to check measures put in place by the country to facilitate the same.

The Labour MP of Indian origin-Keith Vaz- has been spearheading the campaign to overturn the ban. Vaz argues that India had only had 37 interceptions of its mangoes in 2013, whereas Pakistan and Dominican republic had 136 and 46 interceptions respectively in the same year. Consequently, it is not clear as to why a ban has been imposed on mangoes imported from India solely.

The EU had enforced a "temporary ban" on mangoes imported from India (the world's' largest mango exporter) on May 1 after authorities in Brussels found consignments infested with fruit flies. The ban was to remain effective until December 2015.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/Mango-import-ban-EU-experts-team-to-visit-India/articleshow/35938741.cms>

Date Accessed: 02.06.2014

(Pallavi Ghosh)

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

UN launches video campaign to end sexual violence

(UN News Centre, June 3, 2014)

This article highlights the launch of a video campaign on ending sexual violence through gender equality on June 3rd, 2014. The UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon addressed the launch by asserting that the present situation demanded action to eliminate a scourge that harms millions of women and girls around the world.

"I am here to declare with all of you: it is time to act," Mr. Ban said, speaking alongside his Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Zainab Hawa Bangura, and the Executive Director of UN Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka.

The video campaign launch was organized by the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom to the UN and comes ahead of a global summit to be held next week on the issue.

Speaking against the situation of violence in India, the Secretary-General said "I was especially appalled by the brutal rape and gruesome murder of two teenaged women in India who had ventured out because they did not have access to a toilet".

In March, the UN had launched "He for She" campaign urging men to stand up for the rights of their mothers, sisters and daughters. The network includes top government officials, artists and business representatives.

The UN top official on occasion of the video campaign once again urged men in particular to join the fight for gender equality, saying it is the collective responsibility to shield women and girls from the violence that harms them and degrades all.

http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=47948#.U5AJq_mSyVI

Date Accessed: 3.6.2014

(Divashri Mathur)

Majority of people lack proper social protection: UN

(UN News Centre, June 03, 2014)

In the aftermath of the global economic crisis, more than 70% of the world population is without proper social protections. The United Nations labour agency reporting this has urged governments to scale up investment in child and family benefits, pensions and other public expenditures.

Although the global community agreed in 1948 that social security and health care for children, working age people who face unemployment or injury and older persons are a universal human right; yet as many as 122 governments are contracting public expenditures in 2014, of which 82 are developing countries.

According to 'World Social Protection Report 2014/15: Building economic recovery, inclusive development and social justice', at the beginning of the 2008-2009 economic crisis, at least 48 high- and middle-income countries put in place stimulus packages totalling \$2.4 trillion that devoted roughly a quarter to social protection measures and this support "acted as an automatic stabilizer that helped the economies to regain balance and protected the unemployed and vulnerable from economic disaster in the countries where it was extended." But from 2010 onwards, many governments reversed course and embarked prematurely on fiscal consolidation, despite the urgent need to continue supporting vulnerable populations and stabilizing consumption.

Experts highlighted that social protection is also an issue that the international community should embrace prominently in the development agenda following the Millennium Development Goals deadline in 2015.

The report also shows that about 39 per cent of the world population lacks any affiliation to a health system or scheme. The number reaches more than 90 per cent in low-income countries.

Experts claimed that it is only a matter of political will to make universal social protection a reality while citing the successful example set by Thailand and South Africa, which have achieved universal health coverage in a few years; China which is close to achieving universal pension coverage and has sharply increased minimum wages; and Brazil which has accelerated the expansion of social protection coverage and minimum wages since 2009.

http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=47944#.U5BPL_mSxPW

Date Accessed: 05.06.2014

(Deepti Somani)

