

## **Business and Politics in Muslim World**

**India**  
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## **National Summary:**

BJP and Left parties linked the Bhopal gas verdict to the civil nuclear liability Bill and said the government should reconsider the nuclear legislation. The contentious nuclear liability Bill which allows for Rs 500 crore compensation in case of nuclear accidents is under discussion and CPM and BJP criticised it in a present form.

BJP dispel reports of differences in the party on the inclusion of caste in census, saying there is no confusion in the party. During the debate on inclusion of caste in census in the Lok Sabha, party deputy leader Gopinath Munde had backed inclusion of caste in census. But there were reports that senior leaders like Murli Manohar Joshi was opposed to the suggestion. Joshi, who was of the view that inclusion of caste in census would "disintegrate" the society.

Job opportunities for minority communities have gone up over three per cent in the last three years. According to the latest figures released by the minority affairs ministry, the number of minority community candidates selected for government jobs has risen from 6.9 per cent in 2006-07 to 9.24 per cent in 2008-09.

Members of Parliament from Naxal-affected states said that the right time for involving the Army in anti-Naxal operations has not yet come. The sentiment was expressed at the second meeting between the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and MPs representing the worst Naxal-affected regions.

Gold prices jumped Rs 430 to an all-time high of Rs 19,070 per ten grams in the bullion market as investors rushed for the metal, considered as a safe bet, after global equity markets crashed on concerns over worsening euro zone debt crisis. Trading sentiment turned extremely bullish after gold in overseas markets rebounded from a one-week low as investors opted to buy less riskier assets against melting stocks and forex markets. The pure gold (99.9) surged by Rs 430 to set a new peak of Rs 19,070 per ten gram. The gold with 99.5 purity shot up by Rs 420 to Rs 18,970 per ten gram. Sovereign followed suit and traded higher by Rs 50 to Rs 14,650 per piece of eight gram.

There is likely to be a flight of capital from equity markets in emerging economies, including India, as a result of the Greece debt crisis, claims a survey conducted by Ficci. Consequently, capital flows to India could be on the lower side in the next six months or so. With capital flows into India expected to slow down if not completely reverse in the coming six months, the liquidity situation will also be a little tight in the days and months ahead.

The Indian IT sector is grappling with high attrition rate even as firms are doling out financial and other benefits to employees, says industry body Nasscom. "As a result of the slowdown, the IT industry was rather thin on the bench, but now everyone is hiring laterally. As a result, attrition has already become a problem. The problem will intensify over the next four-five months," Nasscom chairman Mr Som Mittal said.

After last fiscal's double-digit expansion, industrial production picked up more steam to grow by 17.6 per cent in April, boosting the prospects of achieving 8.5 per cent economic growth in 2010-11. The April figure is almost equal to the 20-year-high output of 17.7 per cent achieved in December 2009.

India has been given access to David Coleman Headley, who has confessed to his role in the Mumbai attacks.

India on Tuesday said the continued blockade of Gaza and denial of food and medicine supplies created an immense humanitarian crisis. Condemning the Israeli attack on a ship carrying humanitarian aid to Gaza, India deplored the loss of life and injuries to people on the flotilla.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) on Friday opened the doors for India's entry into the regional grouping, as it lifted the moratorium on new membership. The SCO, which comprises of China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, changed the rules 10 years after its inception. This happened at the SCO summit in the Uzbekistan Capital.

Fifteen persons were injured in clashes between the police and stone-throwing youths who were protesting against an alleged blasphemous depiction of the holy city of Madina on some products, which disrupted life in parts of this city and Baramulla in north Kashmir on Saturday.

Twenty-six years after the world's worst industrial disaster that had left more than 15,000 people dead, a local court convicted all eight accused persons and sentenced them each to two years' imprisonment. The court also imposed a fine of Rs 100,000 on the eight, including former Union Carbide India Ltd (UCIL) chairman Mr Keshub Mahindra. A Rs 500,000 fine has been slapped on UCIL.

India ranked a low 128th on this year's Global Peace Index (GPI) after it slipped six positions. Internal conflicts, terrorism and human rights abuses were the factors assessed by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) to quantify global peacefulness in the only study of its kind in 149 countries. India was ranked 122nd last year while it was in the 109th position in 2007 when the first GPI was compiled.

### **Regional Summary:**

BJP's two-day national executive meeting held from June 12. Gujarat Chief Minister Modi attended the meeting. On his arrival in Bihar all newspapers highlighted the Muslims comparatively better status in Gujarat under his administration, while Bihar Congress criticised Modi government for ill-treatment of Muslim community in Gujarat.

Most parts of north India on Tuesday received moderate to heavy rainfall, causing the mercury to dip sharply as flash floods triggered by Cyclone Phet inundated low-level areas of Rajasthan.

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) on Saturday began a two-day meeting. The Polit Bureau, being held in the backdrop of the recent municipal elections in West Bengal in which the Left Front suffered reverses, also heard a preliminary report on the debacle.

As many as 35 lakh families in Kerala are likely to figure in the below poverty line (BPL) list. The Centre is likely to approve the list.

State energy minister Saurabh Patel has strongly objected to Planning Commission member Sayeeda Hameed's remarks about the plight of minorities in Gujarat, saying Muslims here were in a better position than anywhere else in the country.

## **National Report**

### **Politics:**

#### **BJP to government: Reconsider N-Bill in view of Bhopal**

Describing the Bhopal gas verdict as "painful", the Bharatiya Janata Party linked it to the civil nuclear liability Bill and said the government should reconsider the nuclear legislation. "It's painful. After 25 years of hearing, the accused have got only two years of imprisonment," BJP leader Mr Ravi Shankar Prasad told reporters. Linking the Bhopal verdict with the contentious nuclear liability Bill which allows for Rs 500 crore compensation in case of nuclear accidents, the BJP leader asked the government to reconsider it. "The nuclear liability Bill is under discussion. The government should learn proper lessons from Bhopal gas tragedy," said Mr Prasad. "The Bill, as envisaged, puts any criminal liability on the nuclear operator. Any nuclear accident causes long-term damage," he said. "In light of bitter experience of Bhopal, the government should reconsider the nuclear bill seriously," he added. The Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Bill, 2010, which has been referred to the parliament's standing committee on science and technology, fixes the maximum amount of liability in case of a nuclear accident at Rs 500 crore, to be paid by the operator of the nuclear plant. Opposition parties have argued that this amount was too little and want the government to hike the compensation amount. More than 25 years after a gas leak from a Union Carbide plant in Bhopal killed an estimated 25,000 people, a court held eight accused guilty of criminal negligence in the world's worst industrial disaster and sentenced them to two years imprisonment. The court also imposed a fine of Rs.100,000 on the eight, including Mr Keshub Mahindra, who then headed the Union Carbide India Ltd (UCIL) from whose pesticide plant tonnes of lethal gas leaked on the night of 2 to 3 December, 1984, killing thousands instantly and many more later. (The Statesman)

#### **Defamation suit filed against Varun Gandhi**

Bharatiya Janata Party leader and Member of Parliament Mr Varun Gandhi has been dragged to court by Mr VM Singh, his uncle and Congress candidate from Uttar Pradesh's Pilibhit constituency in 2009 general elections, alleging defamation. Mr Singh filed a defamation suit against Mr Gandhi in the Delhi High Court last week. Justice JR Midha while taking up the matter objected to the delay in filing the defamation suit but issued notice to Mr Gandhi and asked him to file his reply by 28 July. Mr Singh in his petition stated various instances wherein Mr Gandhi used defamatory language against him during the election campaign. Mr Singh, who was among the wealthiest candidates in the election, was pitted by the Congress against his own nephew Mr Gandhi. The petitioner is a first cousin of the sitting MP's mother and former Union minister of state Maneka Gandhi. The election in Pilibhit witnessed a controversy during the campaign due to Gandhi's hate speeches against Muslims. He was jailed by the Uttar Pradesh government and charged under the National Security Act for the speeches. (The Statesman)

## **BJP dispels reports of differences on caste-based census**

BJP on Saturday sought to dispel reports of differences in the party on the inclusion of caste in census, saying there is no confusion in the party. "There is no confusion on the issue of inclusion of caste in census within BJP. It is for Congress to explain its position on the issue," senior BJP leader Prakash Javadekar said, adding Congress was "rather confused" over the issue. However, during the debate on inclusion of caste in census in the Lok Sabha, party deputy leader Gopinath Munde had backed inclusion of caste in census. But there were reports that senior leaders like Murli Manohar Joshi was opposed to the suggestion. Joshi, who was of the view that inclusion of caste in census would "disintegrate" the society, is likely to raise the issue at the National Executive of the party which began. The former HRD Minister had insisted that caste census would not solve any problem and it was not the right thing to do particularly when the country is faced with several other problems. RSS has opposed caste being used as a criterion in the ongoing census and made a strong pitch for inclusion of only nationality in the country-wide exercise. Talking about the national executive meeting of BJP, Javedkar said the meeting would discuss various issues like internal security, Bhopal Gas tragedy, besides the issues related to Maoists problem and discrimination being done by UPA government to the states ruled by BJP. Strategy would also be evolved for the elections to the state assembly in Bihar due towards the end of this year, besides states like Tamil Nadu, Assam, Kerala to take place some time next year, he said. All senior party leaders including L K Advani, party president Nitin Gadkari, Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha Sushma Swaraj, Leader of the Opposition in Rajya Sabha Arun Jaitley, chief ministers of the party would participate in the national executive, he said. (The Indian Express)

## **Minorities' Issues:**

### **Job opportunities for minorities go up by over 3%**

Job opportunities for minority communities have gone up over three per cent in the last three years. According to the latest figures released by the minority affairs ministry, the number of minority community candidates selected for government jobs has risen from 6.9 per cent in 2006-07 to 9.24 per cent in 2008-09. The report said 12,182 minority candidates were recruited for government jobs in 2006-07. The number marginally increased to 12,195, in 2007-08, an increase of 8.32 per cent of the total recruitment. In 2008-09, the figure rose to 15,172, it said. The ministry is now focusing on creating self-employment opportunities for the community members by extending better credit facilities. District Consultative Committees (DCCs) of lead banks have been directed to regularly monitor disposal and rejection of loan applications for minority members to ensure that their credit needs are taken care of. The government aims to provide 15 per cent of the priority sector lending to minorities, which is about 8 per cent at present. The ministry figures also indicate that credit facilities to them have increased in recent years. The number of banks being opened up in districts having a substantial minority population has risen to 1,759 in 2009-10 from 523 in 2007-08. In 2007-08, 523 bank branches were opened in districts with a substantial minority population. In 2008-09, 537



new branches were opened and in 2009-10, 699 new branches were further added. After the Reserve Bank of India revised its “master circular” in 2007 on priority sector lending for improving credit facilities to minority communities, the loans being extended to them have gone up to over Rs 1 lakh crore in the last financial year, an increase of Rs 26,000 crore from 2008-09. (The Statesman)

### **OBC quota to be 17% for govt jobs**

West Bengal: Realising that 10 per cent jobs for Muslims in the other backward class category (OBC) as announced by the chief minister, Mr Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, is not possible, the state government plans to reserve 17 per cent jobs for all those in the OBC category including Muslims, based on their “degree of backwardness”. As of now, those in the OBC category enjoy seven per cent reservation in government jobs in the state. Now, it will be increased to 17 per cent (as the chief minister had already announced 10 per cent jobs for Muslims in the OBC category) but it won't be a flat reservation, where all communities in the category would get equal opportunity. Instead, the OBC communities (irrespective of religions) would be divided into three or four groups based on the "degree of backwardness" of the communities, and a certain percentage of jobs would be reserved for each of these groups. Senior officials at Writers' Buildings said a team from the state backward class welfare department had visited Karnataka recently to find out ways to implement the announcement made by the chief minister. But there seems to be a consensus that the Constitution does not allow religion-based reservation. So, the new formula has been worked out following the path of Karnataka where reservation for Muslims has been made purely on the basis of backwardness of the sub-communities. As first reported in The Statesman on 2 April, the state government has been mulling creating sub-classifications in the OBC lists along the lines of the Karnataka model and according to "backward" and "more backward" to ensure Muslims get the benefit of quotas and ensure that more dominant classes do not grab all the benefits. However, as no study has been conducted in the state so far to assess the backwardness or otherwise of a community that falls under OBC category, the state government has decided to carry out a quickie "sample survey" among various communities that come under the OBC category. It will take another three or four months to complete this "assessment" of the degree of backwardness of OBC communities, well in time though for the 2011 Assembly poll. "The OBC communities may be divided into three to four groups based on their degree of backwardness. Each group would enjoy a certain percentage of reservation within the total reservation allotted for the entire OBC communities. For example, if group A is adjudged as the most backward among the OBC groups, it may be given the benefit of six to seven per cent reservation while the remaining percentage of the 17 per cent job quota will be distributed among the other two or three groups," said an official. The government has also initiated steps to include the maximum possible number of Muslims in the OBC category. So far, 35 Muslim communities have been brought under the OBC category which together constitute over 50 per cent of the total Muslim population. The state expects to include another 22 Muslim communities in the OBC category, a senior official said, adding that with these inclusions the estimate is that 80 per cent of the state's Muslim population would come under the OBC category and avail of the job quota. (The Statesman)

## **Hindu Fundamentalism:**

### **Insurgency Movements:**

#### **Keep Army off Naxal-hit areas for now, say MPs**

Underlining the need of giving a push to development works in the most-backward areas, Members of Parliament from Naxal-affected states said on Friday that the right time for involving the Army in anti-Naxal operations has not yet come. The sentiment was expressed at the second meeting between the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and MPs representing the worst Naxal-affected regions. The meeting, which remained inconclusive, was chaired by Union Home Minister P Chidambaram. “Army’s help can be taken for training, but the time has not come yet for direct involvement of the Armed Forces,” JD(U) MP from Aurangabad (Bihar) Sushil Kumar Singh said after the meeting. Singh added that the Army should only be used as a last option and that the government should first utilise the existing resources at hand. BJP MP from Jamshedpur Arjun Munda, too, stated that the Maoist menace could only be solved effectively by developing the backward areas. “Development should be carried out with a holistic approach. That is the only solution,” he said. (The Indian Express)

#### **After Maoist threat halts trains, services resume in morning**

The Mumbai-Howrah Duronto Express and some other trains resumed their journey on the Kharagpur-Tatanagar section in West Midnapore district on Thursday after being stopped last night following a tip off that Maoists were planning to target the train. South Eastern Railway sources said the Duronto Express left Tatanagar station around 7.55 am and was expected to reach Howrah by 11 am. All other halted trains, including Howrah-Tatanagar Steel Express and the Up and Down Tatanagar-Kharagpur passenger trains have also resumed their onward journey at around 8 am after being halted at Kalaikunda last night, sources said. The trains were halted at Tatanagar, Kharagpur, Kalaikunda and other important stations after the Jhargram GRP alerted authorities last evening about a possible attack by the Maoists on Duronto. Duronto, which was at Ghatsila station, was immediately surrounded by gun-toting security personnel and passengers asked to switch off lights and lower shutters. The train was later taken to Tatanagar. According to the Jhargram GRP, a group of armed people had gathered at Jamui Bhadui, a known Maoist stronghold, near the Khatkhura halt station just an hour before the Duronto was to pass. The GRP apprehended trouble and immediately alerted the authorities in Kharagpur and Tatanagar. A year ago, the Maoists had detained a train at Kalimouli near Ghatsila station. After the May 28 train disaster which left 148 passengers dead, trains are not allowed to run between 10.00 pm to 5.00 am in the Kharagpur-Tatanagar and Kharagpur-Adra sections till June 14. (The Indian Express)

## **Economic Front:**

#### **Gold spikes to record Rs 19,070/10 gm**

Gold prices jumped Rs 430 to an all-time high of Rs 19,070 per ten grams in the bullion market as investors rushed for the metal, considered as a safe bet, after global equity markets crashed on concerns over worsening euro zone debt crisis. Trading sentiment

turned extremely bullish after gold in overseas markets rebounded from a one-week low as investors opted to buy less riskier assets against melting stocks and forex markets. The euro dropped below 1.20 dollar for the first time since March 2006 on mounting concerns that Europe's sovereign-debt crisis would spread to global markets. Panic sparked after a spokesperson for Hungarian Prime Minister said his nation's economy is in a "very grave situation." The US and European equities and commodities retreated the most in a week. Fearing the worsening euro zone debt crisis might slowdown global economy, investors rushed to buy gold as an alternate place to park their funds, market men said. Gold in global markets, which normally sets price trend on the domestic front, jumped up by 12.20 dollar to 1,220.00 dollar an ounce. The ripples were felt in domestic market as pure gold (99.9) surged by Rs 430 to set a new peak of Rs 19,070 per ten gram. The gold with 99.5 purity shot up by Rs 420 to Rs 18,970 per ten gram. Sovereign followed suit and traded higher by Rs 50 to Rs 14,650 per piece of eight gram. However, silver ready lacked necessary buying support and shed Rs 75 to Rs 28,825 per kg and weekly-based delivery by Rs 170 to Rs 28,425 per kg. However, silver coins remained unchanged at Rs 34,400 for buying and Rs 34,500 for selling of 100 pieces. (The Indian Express)

### **Greek crisis: India may see flight of capital**

There is likely to be a flight of capital from equity markets in emerging economies, including India, as a result of the Greece debt crisis, claims a survey conducted by Ficci. This is one of the findings of a quick survey the business chamber did to elicit views of top economists on the implications and impact of Greece debt crisis on India and the global economy. Further, debt related flows could also be lower as global financial market players hesitate to invest in non-dollar areas. Consequently, capital flows to India could be on the lower side in the next six months or so. With capital flows into India expected to slow down if not completely reverse in the coming six months, the liquidity situation will also be a little tight in the days and months ahead. The surveyed economists have opined that RBI would ensure enough liquidity in the system to keep the growth momentum going, and may, therefore, not be in a hurry to raise interest rates. This group of economists was of the view that inflation is likely to dip in the second half of the year due to high base effect in the corresponding period last year. Also, if the monsoon this year is good as forecast, the inflationary pressure would ease. RBI can, therefore, be expected to act keeping in mind the liquidity situation, and this should mean some pause in policy action. Also, with majority of the economists expecting the sell-off pressure from FIIs in the Indian markets to continue for some time, the rupee is expected to be under pressure in the near term. Already we have seen the rupee depreciate against the US dollar. INR, in fact, posted the biggest weekly decline for the week ended 21 May 2010 in nearly 14 years, amidst concerns about Euro zone's growth prospects and implications for funds flows into India. (The Statesman)

### **Attrition worries return to IT**

The Indian IT sector is grappling with high attrition rate even as firms are doling out financial and other benefits to employees, says industry body Nasscom. "As a result of

the slowdown, the IT industry was rather thin on the bench, but now everyone is hiring laterally. As a result, attrition has already become a problem. The problem will intensify over the next four-five months,” Nasscom chairman Mr Som Mittal said. He added that while the attrition rate was in single digit a few months ago, it was growing at the moment. “Last I heard it, was 16 per cent, but it could be inching up depending on the city you are in,” Mr Mittal said. At Infosys Technologies, the attrition rate rose to 13.4 per cent in 2009-10 from 11.1 per cent in the previous year. However, for TCS, the rate has remained stable at 11.8 per cent as on 31 March 2010. Companies need to hire freshers from technical institutes and train them to meet the requirement, Mr Mittal said. “As demand comes back, the need for manpower has also gone up. The industry needs to hire fresh people and build that pipeline. Companies need to hire them (the freshers) and train them, which should help a lot,” Mr Mittal said. Even though attrition is a challenge for HR managers, it spells good news for job hunters as more opportunities open up along with incentives like retention bonus as companies try their best to attract new talents and retain existing critical resources. IT biggies have already announced huge hiring plans. TCS has said it will hire 30,000 people this year. Infosys on Tuesday said it was looking at recruiting nearly 30,000 people this fiscal. Wipro also said that its hiring plans would be in line with volume and demand. (The Statesman)

### **Highest auto sales in May**

The Indian auto industry sold 12,08,851 units last month, a record sale for the month of May, fuelled by an improved economy and an increase in consumer spending. According to the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM), the total sales for all categories stood at 12,08,851 units as against 9,29,917 units for the corresponding period a year ago. The 30 per cent rise in sales is in contrast to the usual trend of lower volumes in May. “Last month's figures were the best ever sales for the month of May in almost all categories... Our economy is growing very rapidly. The per capita income has almost touched \$1,000 and that's a magic figure, which is the threshold for automobile demand,” SIAM director general, Mr Vishnu Mathur, told reporters. Besides, other factors such as stable interest rates and easy availability of finance have also spurred the sales. SIAM puts domestic car sales of the previous month at 1,48,481 units, against 1,13,810 units sold in May last year. This makes for an increase of 30.46 per cent. Car market leader Maruti Suzuki sold 76,120 units in May, a figure higher by 21.06 per cent while rival Hyundai Motor India's sales grew by 15.53 per cent. (The Statesman)

### **Food inflation rises to 16.74%**

Food inflation rose for the second consecutive week, pushed by higher prices of fruits, pulses and milk to 16.74 per cent, prompting speculation that the Reserve Bank may tighten money supply at its policy meet next month. Food prices increased by 0.19 percentage point for the week ending May 29 from 16.55 per cent in the previous week. Prices of pulses shot up by 31 per cent, that of milk by 21.1 per cent and fruits by 18.7 per cent. Consumer staples, such as rice and wheat, turned costlier by 7 per cent and 3 per cent respectively. However, prices of potatoes and onions eased by 30.87 per cent and 12.27 per cent respectively. The RBI, according to analysts, may take steps to control

money supply in a bid to cool inflation, which has remained at an elevated level despite moderation from 20 per cent in December. The Central bank is scheduled to announce its first quarter review of monetary policy on 27 July. The RBI may tighten monetary policy in the quarterly review next month, said Crisil chief economist Mr DK Joshi. "Food inflation would remain range-bound until next harvest season as there has been no sustained decline in food items. Once monsoon arrives, cereal prices may see a decline. So, food inflation would ease in the second half of the fiscal," he said. On week-on-week basis, prices of beef rose by 8 per cent, that of sea water fish by 3 per cent and arhar, moong and fruits and vegetables by one per cent each. However, bajra prices fell by a per cent. Earlier this week, Planning Commission deputy chairman Mr Montek Singh Ahluwalia had said that inflation was likely to fall to 5-6 per cent by the end of the year. "Inflation is too high to be comfortable...it is now decelerating...I am sure that by the end of this year, it will come down to 5-6 per cent," Mr Ahluwalia had said. In April, the wholesale price-based inflation stood at 9.59 per cent, slightly lower than the March number. The RBI has pegged the wholesale price-based inflation at 5.5 per cent in the current fiscal. (The Statesman)

### **IIP zooms by 17.6% to near 20-yr high**

After last fiscal's double-digit expansion, industrial production picked up more steam to grow by 17.6 per cent in April, boosting the prospects of achieving 8.5 per cent economic growth in 2010-11. The increase in output was due to a robust showing by the manufacturing sector and a low-base effect, caused by the global economic slowdown. Manufacturing, which accounts for around 80 per cent of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), expanded by 19.4 per cent in April, with capital goods growing by 72.8 per cent and consumer durables by 37 per cent. The April figure is almost equal to the 20-year-high output of 17.7 per cent achieved in December 2009. Analysts say that the strong uptick in April, coupled with a normal monsoon, would help the economy grow by an estimated 8.5 per cent in 2010-11. However, Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee said he expected the industry to do even better in April. "Of course, my appetite is infinite. I would have been happier if it was 20 per cent," he said. While the double-digit growth has strengthened the case for stimulus rollback, Planning Commission Deputy Chairman Montek Singh Ahluwalia cautioned that withdrawal should not be quickened. "I don't think it (stimulus withdrawal) needs to be quickened," he said. India Inc also cautioned that the trend may moderate from June onwards since part of the industrial expansion could be attributed to a low base in April last year. "This trend of very high growth might moderate from June onwards because of the base effect," Ficci Secretary General Amit Mitra said. In fact, the low base is quite evident as capital goods had contracted by 5.9 per cent in April 2009, even as consumer durables had risen by 17.6 per cent. Crisil chief economist D K Joshi said a one-off rise in IIP numbers would not prompt the RBI to further tighten money supply, especially when the fear of contagion of debt crisis in eurozone is growing. "One piece of figure will not prompt the RBI to change its stance. We expect them to go on with their moderate monetary stance. While inflation is a concern, the eurozone crisis is an active hedge," Joshi said. Production of consumer non-durables grew by 6.6 per cent, a 10.5 per cent fall from April 2009. "In April figures, one missing piece of puzzle is why consumer non-durables are so weak," Joshi said. Besides

manufacturing, mining expanded by 11.4 per cent in April against 3.4 per cent a year ago. On broad sectoral story, electricity was a weak link as generation rose by six per cent in April, lower than 6.7 per cent a year ago. Following strong IIP numbers, the Bombay Stock Exchange benchmark shot up 143 points to close at 17,064.95 point. Of the 17 industries, only two--beverages, tobacco and related products and wood and wood products--posted negative growth in April. The processed food sector, which has been on a decline for quite some time, rose by 22.9 per cent in the month. The rise could fuel prices of food items like flour even further. Output of machinery and equipment other than transport expanded by 55.6 per cent, while metal products and parts grew by 51.9 per cent. April growth was in line with upbeat industrial growth of the previous seven months, when output expanded by double digits. After the collapse of the US financial services icon Lehman Brothers in September, 2008, global financial crisis deepened and industrial production in India contracted for the first time in 16 years in October that year. As industrial growth slipped into the negative zone, the Government rolled out stimulus packages in stages by cutting excise duty by six per cent and service tax by two per cent, besides stepping up public expenditure to prop up growth. However, with the economy picking up pace, the government has started unwinding some of its emergency measures. It partially raised the excise duty on non-petroleum products by two per cent to 10 per cent in the Budget this fiscal. (The Indian Express)

### **Foreign Relations/Geo-strategic developments:**

#### **India, SA join hands over UNSC**

India and South Africa have agreed to support each other for the non-permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council for the year 2011-2012, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said Friday. After meeting South African President Jacob Zuma, Singh said, "We will step up our efforts for reform of global institutions of governance, including of the United Nations Security Council. We have agreed to support each other's candidatures for the non-permanent seat for the 2011-2012 term." The two sides signed three agreements, including one on air services which will enable the two countries to enhance their ties in flight security area and increase the number of flights from both sides. Terming their ties as "historic and unique", Zuma described his maiden visit as "more than success". Zuma said he has also invited Singh to South Africa. (The Indian Express)

#### **India granted access to Headley: Jones**

India has been given access to David Coleman Headley, Pakistani-American Lashar-e-Taiba operative, who has confessed to his role in the Mumbai attacks, United States National Security Adviser James Jones said on Saturday. "Yes, access [to Headley] has been given. This is an ongoing process and I don't have any detailed information that will be helpful except to say that it is in the hands of right professionals from both countries," Mr. Jones told PTI at his White House office. "We have fulfilled our commitment," he said. Asked if this access to Headley is going to be a one-time affair or whether Indian investigating agencies would be given access multiple times, Mr. Jones said: "I don't know but the spirit of cooperation and respect for each other's position is alive and well and we have taken the first step, we just have to wait and see whether there is any other

request beyond this one.” (The Hindu)

### **Menon allays fears about security of India's nuclear assets**

India on Saturday dispelled unusual apprehensions about its nuclear assets and spelt out the norms for extending help to Afghanistan into the future. National Security Adviser Shiv Shankar Menon assured participants at an international conference that they “don't need to worry about Left-wing extremism affecting the security of our nuclear assets.” He told the ninth Asia Security Summit, being organised by the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies, that he was holding out the assurance as an insider with “some knowledge of this issue.” He was answering questions on the Maoist militancy in India its nuclear-asset security. In his plenary address, Mr. Menon said: “India is the only nuclear-weapon state to announce an unequivocal no-first-use commitment and to declare that a world without nuclear weapons will enhance our security.” This was projected as a more substantive policy than Beijing's no-first-use principle, although China was not mentioned at all. On the Maoist menace, Mr. Menon said: “We will combat it [Left-wing extremism] in two ways. One is, of course, the immediate law and order issue... But there is [also] a larger issue of making our growth more inclusive, so that we can remove whatever causes there might be for disaffection.” As for the “very few and small areas affected by it,” Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had said that “Left-wing extremism is probably the major internal security challenge.” Underlining the internal nature of the problem, Mr. Menon said: “It doesn't have the kind of external links that we have seen other terrorist challenges having in the past or the kind of external support” they received. India was “located beside the epicentre of global terrorism.” It was in India's interest to continue helping Afghanistan. “By our standards,” New Delhi's current programme of assistance there was “relatively large.” And, India's future role “will depend on what Afghanistan wants us to do and on the limitations of our capacity.” Asked whether India might replace the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, Mr. Menon said: “I would be amazed if we did. I don't think that's our function.” Asked whether the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation could be drafted for transnational responses to new challenges, he said: “We don't need to overload it.” On energy issues, he said a sense of security “is really the key among the new dimensions of security” that India now faced. “We need to avoid the tragedy of the commons” over competitive national pursuits of security in this sector. Asked about the recent Brazil-Turkey intervention with regard to Tehran's nuclear programme, Mr. Menon said: “Iran has the right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy... [The Brazil-Turkey initiative] tried to [recognise this] in a manner which assuaged or addressed international concerns about the nature of the programme and its peaceful nature in particular. That is an issue [over] which ultimately the International Atomic Energy Agency is probably the best judge. Whether or not the Brazilian and the Turkish initiative managed to do that, I am not so sure: on the objective evidence, not yet.” (The Hindu)

### **‘India’s candidature for UNSC seat in progress’**

Vice-president Mr Hamid Ansari, on his way to the Czech Republic, said that India’s candidature for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) was in

progress in New York and that 'a document' was being worked out on how to go forward with the reforms of the United Nations. Reform of the United Nations has been at the forefront of India's foreign policy initiatives over the last few years. The two countries that Mr Ansari will visit during this visit, the Czech Republic, and Croatia, have both agreed to support India's candidature for a permanent and non-permanent seat on the UNSC. India is competing for a rotating non-permanent seat in the UN Security Council for 2011-12 for which elections will be held later this year. UN reforms will be a part of the discussions Mr Ansari will have with the Czech leaders. "There is a progress on in New York, there has been incremental progress, sometime back, there had been forces in the past, now some progress has been made in negotiating strategies, so now work is going on in New York to form a document that will form the basis on how to go about the reforms of the institute," Mr Ansari said in response to a question as to where India's candidature in the UN was at the present moment. While in the Czech Republic, Mr Ansari will meet President Vaclav Klaus, President of Senate Premysl Sobotka and sign three agreements on cooperation in economic and social issues. Mr Ansari emphasised that his visits are aimed at building relationships with both the countries and that it was important that visits at a senior level keep taking place. Mr Ansari is accompanied by minister of state for communications and IT, Mr Sachin Pilot and four MPs, including former cricketer Mohammad Azharuddin. The vice-president will deliver a lecture tomorrow on some aspects of global governance in the 21st century at the Prague Security Studies Institute. (The Statesman)

### **No justification for firing on flotilla: Anand Sharma**

Reiterating that West Asia remained a region of vital importance, India on Tuesday said the continued blockade of Gaza and denial of food and medicine supplies created an immense humanitarian crisis. Condemning the Israeli attack on a ship carrying humanitarian aid to Gaza, India deplored the loss of life and injuries to people on the flotilla. "There can be no justification for such indiscriminate use of force," said Anand Sharma, Commerce Minister and Prime Minister's Special Envoy to the third Eurasian Summit on Security and Economic Cooperation. It was India's firm conviction that lasting peace and security in the region could be achieved only through dialogue and not by use of force, he told the world leaders. The summit of the conference on "Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia" (CICA) is being attended by heads of states and Ministers from 20 member-countries. Vietnam and Iraq were admitted as new members at the summit. Mr. Sharma called for early adoption of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism as it would be an important contribution towards strengthening the international legal framework. Without naming any nation, he said India consistently underlined the need for all countries acting decisively to dismantle the infrastructure of terrorism and to effectively deal with groups which had chosen to perpetrate indiscriminate violence. "The choice before us is stark: we need to decisively act against this menace," he told the three-day conference that opened on Monday. Sharing international concerns at possible nuclear terrorism, Mr. Sharma pointed out that India had drawn attention to the danger of nuclear materials and technology falling into the hands of terrorists. (The Hindu)



### **India trying for Anderson's extradition: Pranab**

India is trying for the extradition of former Union Carbide chairman Warren Anderson, Union Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee said. "We are trying," Mukherjee said when asked whether India was trying for his extradition. (The Indian Express)

### **India closer to SCO membership**

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) on Friday opened the doors for India's entry into the regional grouping, as it lifted the moratorium on new membership. The SCO, which comprises of China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, changed the rules 10 years after its inception. This happened at the SCO summit in the Uzbekistan Capital, which was attended by External Affairs Minister S M Krishna. However, the criteria for new members were not made public. Pakistan and Iran, both SCO observers, are also keen to join the grouping, although there is no clarity on the rules pertaining to UN sanctions which may bar Iran from joining the group. India, which has been an observer of the SCO since 2005, has always been keen in SCO's regional anti-terror mechanism and the contact group on Afghanistan. New Delhi, even as an observer, has been sending Cabinet rank ministers for taking part in the SCO meeting. However, last year, it decided to elevate the level of engagement as Prime Minister Manmohan Singh attended the summit in Ekaterinberg in Russia. Now, as the Tashkent summit decided to pave the way for India's entry into the grouping, New Delhi will be getting in touch with the SCO secretariat in Shanghai to take forward the process of membership. As a full member, India will be able to cooperate on the issues of regional security, economic development and the critical issue of rebuilding Afghanistan with the SCO members. India is especially keen on having a representative at the Tashkent-based Regional Anti Terror Structure (RATS), which is seen as a professional and technical body and has hard information on terrorism impacting the region. The cooperation against narco-terrorism in this body is said to be of a very high quality. Krishna, who participated in the meeting said, "We have been playing a role as an observer, and now want to play a bigger role in SCO which has countries as our extended neighbourhood." India's induction into the SCO will give a fillip to New Delhi's engagement with Central Asia, which is an energy-rich area, New Delhi will be looking at the inter-connectivity in the future with these countries. The SCO summit was attended by Chinese President Hu Jintao, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari, Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai and Iran Foreign minister Manouchehr Mottaki among others. (The Indian Express)

### **Indian Occupied Kashmir:**

#### **15 injured in Srinagar clashes**

Fifteen persons were injured in clashes between the police and stone-throwing youths who were protesting against an alleged blasphemous depiction of the holy city of Madina on some products, which disrupted life in parts of this city and Baramulla in north Kashmir on Saturday. The police fired warning shots and lobbed dozens of teargas shells to disperse groups of youths who indulged in stone-throwing at Maisuma, Kokerbazar

and Lal Chowk, the nerve centre of the city, official sources said. The protests, initially confined to the old city areas, spread to the civil lines and Baramulla as the day advanced, resulting in the clashes. A police spokesman blamed “miscreants” for disturbing the situation. “The attempt to create tension in society is a deliberate move to disturb the situation by indulging in blasphemous rumours.” The products were found carrying imprints and sketches of buildings that resembled Big Ben and St Paul's Cathedral of London, and other places. But no sketch had any likeness to any Muslim religious place or building, the spokesman said. Trouble started in the Nowhatta area of the old city, as people came out on the streets as word spread about the alleged act of blasphemy. Protesters went round several areas in the city and forced shopkeepers to down the shutters. In Baramulla too, the people took to the streets, and there were clashes between the youths and the police for quite some time. (The Hindu)

### **Prime Minister arrives in Kashmir**

Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh arrived in Kashmir on a two-day visit during which he is expected to make a fresh call to separatists for talks and announce a financial package for saffron growers in the valley. He will hold talks with leaders of various political parties in the state including ruling National Conference and main opposition PDP and CPM. During his visit, the Prime Minister is expected to make a fresh appeal to separatists including Hurriyat Conference for joining the talks. He will also address the fifth convocation of Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology. Dr Singh is likely to announce a Rs 200 crore package for the saffron industry, which is facing tough times due to adulterated saffron flooding the market. Complaining that they were not finding enough buyers, saffron growers had staged a demonstration demanding action against those harming their trade. The Prime Minister, who is visiting Kashmir after a gap of seven months, will hold one-to-one talks with the chief minister and review the progress of the recommendations made during the two sessions of the Round Table Conference chaired by him. The visit comes against the backdrop of the "quiet diplomacy" initiated by Union home minister Mr P Chidambaram with separatist leaders failing to make any headway as the Hurriyat refused to join it owing to pressure from militant groups. The ruling National Conference is likely to seek early talks on providing greater autonomy in the state as recommended by the Sagir Ahmed Committee set up by the Prime Minister, party sources said. The Prime Minister will also carry out a review of the Rs 634 crore Srinagar-Leh Transmission line spread over 375 kms. (The Statesman)

### **Manmohan: human rights violations in Jammu and Kashmir will not be tolerated**

Visiting Jammu and Kashmir amid allegations of fake encounters, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Monday sent out a firm message to the security forces, saying action would be taken if they did not respect human rights of civilians while combating terrorism. The Prime Minister also made a fresh offer of talks to those J&K groups which shunned violence. He said meaningful talks with Pakistan, which could lead to a resolution of “old issues,” would be possible only when its soil was not allowed to be used for terrorism against India. “I am aware of some complaints related to human rights. On this issue, the government policy is to protect the human rights of the people even

when dealing with terrorism,” he said in his convocation address at the Sher-i-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology. “The security forces in Jammu and Kashmir have been strictly instructed to respect the rights of the civilians. We will act to remove any deficiency in the implementation of these instructions,” he said. The Prime Minister's assurance comes in the context of allegations of a fake encounter in the Machil area along the LoC where three civilians were killed reportedly by Army men. An Army jawan has been arrested, a Major suspended and a Colonel removed from command duty in this connection. Significantly, action against the Major and the Colonel was announced only on the eve of Dr. Singh's visit. At the same time, the Prime Minister said there were a handful of people who did not want any political process for empowering people to succeed. He said this was the reason that attempts to disturb the lives of the people in the Valley still continued from across the LoC. “Whenever such incidents happen they spread terror and cause disruption in the lives of the people,” he said. “Our security agencies are forced to act in the wake of such incidents. During the process, sometimes innocent civilians have to suffer but whenever such incidents happen it becomes necessary to act against those responsible for them,” Dr. Singh said. Without naming Pakistan, he said he would like to “say to our neighbours across the Line of Control” that they should help in creating an environment in which people from both sides could live in peace and harmony. On the internal dimension of the Kashmir issue, the Prime Minister noted that three Round-Table Conferences were held in which civil society and political groups participated. “We wish to carry forward the dialogue process [in Jammu and Kashmir]. We are ready to hold talks with representatives of all sections [in the State] who shun violence,” said Dr. Singh, during whose visit separatists gave a call for a bandh.

#### Economic development

He said that as a result of the Round-Table Conferences, five working groups were set up and they gave several recommendations on improving the Centre's relations with the State, furthering cross-LoC relations and giving a boost to the State's economic development. “We are implementing them in a step-wise manner,” Dr. Singh said but did not elaborate.

Pointing out that issues between India and Pakistan are well known, he said good neighborly relations were in the interest of both countries and necessary for peace and harmony, stability and development of the region. He said the government would look at all possible measures to strengthen links between people on both sides of the LoC. (The Hindu)

#### **Social front:**

##### **Bhopal gas leak: 8 convicted after 26 years**

Twenty-six years after the world's worst industrial disaster that had left more than 15,000 people dead, a local court convicted all eight accused persons and sentenced them each to two years' imprisonment. The court also imposed a fine of Rs 100,000 on the eight,

including former Union Carbide India Ltd (UCIL) chairman Mr Keshub Mahindra. A Rs 500,000 fine has been slapped on UCIL. Chief judicial magistrate Mr Mohan P Tiwari pronounced the verdict in a packed court room convicting 85-year-old Mahindra, and seven others in the case relating to leakage of deadly methyl isocyanate gas in the intervening night of 2 and 3 December in 1984. The convicts were held guilty under Sections 304-A (causing death by negligence), 304-II (culpable homicide not amounting to murder), 336, 337 and 338 (gross negligence) of the Indian Penal Code. However, there was no word on Warren Anderson, the then chairman of Union Carbide Corporation of the USA, who was declared an absconder after he did not subject himself to trial in the case that began 23 years ago. Others found guilty are Vijay Gokhle, the then managing director of UCIL, Kishore Kamdar, the then vice-president, JN Mukund, the then works manager, SP Choudhary, the then production manager, KV Shetty, the then plant superintendent and SI Quershi, the then production assistant. The sentencing in the case is expected later. Arguments on the quantum of sentence were put forward by the defence and prosecution counsels. Save Quershi, all the seven others, including Mahindra, were present in the court. A ninth accused, RB Roy Choudhary, the then former assistant works Manager of UCIL, Mumbai, had died during the course of the trial. A total of 178 prosecution witnesses were examined in the trial and 3,008 documents were produced while eight defence witnesses deposed in the court. Anderson, who did not face trial, is based in the USA. The companies Union Carbide Corporation, USA and Union Carbide Eastern, Hong Kong were also not represented in the trial. An FIR in the tragedy was filed on 3 December, 1984 and the case was transferred to CBI on 6 December, 1984. The CBI filed the chargesheet after investigation on 1 December, 1987. Subsequently, a local court framed charges against the accused. CBI counsel Mr C Sahay had argued that defective design of UCIL and its poor maintenance resulted into the tragedy that had left 2259 dead immediately after the mishap. The lingering effects of the highly poisonous methyl isocyanate killed over 15,000 people. Mr Sahay contended that Union Carbide Corporation, USA, in its survey of the factory in 1982 had found serious safety and maintenance lapses on nearly 10 counts. The prosecution argued that even after UCC experts' team visit to the factory, adequate safety measures and maintenance works were not undertaken in UCIL. A Central team, which visited the UCIL plant post-tragedy in 1984, also found lapses in safety norms and maintenance, the counsel said. Refuting the charge that lapses in maintenance and safety norms had led to the tragedy, defence counsels Mr D Prasad and Mr Amit Desai had argued that all steps had been followed to keep the UCIL's Bhopal factory in a proper shape. The defence had also refuted the charge that a team of Union Carbide Corporation, USA, which visited the plant following the death of a worker here in 1982, had found any fault with the unit. The defence had contended that the UCIL was so much concerned on the safety front that after the death of Mohammed Ashraf Khan, it had reported the matter to the UCC, USA, which had then carried out a safety audit. (The Statesman)

### **Bhopal verdict will impact Nuclear Liability Bill: Moily**

The long-delayed verdict in the Bhopal gas tragedy case will have an impact on the pending Civil Liability for Nuclear Damages Bill, Union Law Minister M. Veerappa Moily said on Monday evening. "There is need to take note of the lessons learnt [from

the Bhopal case], while looking at [questions of] investigation, liability, compensation and punishment,” he stressed, responding to a question on whether the government would heed the message of Bhopal while finalising the Civil Nuclear Liability Bill. Mr. Moily also felt that laws relating to industrial disasters needed to be strengthened: “We could even think of a stand-alone legislation so that this kind of offence won't be committed again,” he said, adding, that the law should be such that it is “not open to interpretation.” In this connection, he referred to the fact that while the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) had filed the case under Section 304 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), the Supreme Court, he said, had “understood it as Section 304 A.” This, he said, had the impact of virtually “extinguishing the criminal charge,” but stressed this was because of the limitations of the current law. He, therefore, said there was need to “revisit the law” on “disasters caused by human error.” Asked whether the fact that so much foreign capital was coming in for projects in India increased the urgency to strengthen the law, he said, “It is a matter of serious concern.” While Section 304 deals with “culpable homicide not amounting to murder,” punishment for which can be either life imprisonment or imprisonment extending up to 10 years and fine, under Section 304 A, which deals with “any rash or negligent act not amounting to culpable homicide,” the punishment is far less – a prison term “which may extend to two years, or with fine, or with both.” The Minister, however, said he did not know yet whether the CBI would go in appeal against Monday's verdict by a local court in Bhopal, which convicted all eight accused, including 85-year-old former Union Carbide Chairman Keshub Mahindra, 26 years after the Bhopal Gas tragedy. He, however, promised that if an appeal is filed against Monday's verdict (either by the accused or victims), “This case will get the highest priority and be fast tracked. In all such cases, we need to ensure the swift filing of charge sheets and the completion of trials within two years,” Mr. Moily said. Ever since he took over as Law Minister in 2009, he pointed out, his Ministry had “expedited the case through the law officers, despite the limited mandate and access.” Mr. Moily also stressed the fact that it was the United Progressive Alliance government in its first avatar under Prime Minister Manmohan Singh that had played a pro-active role in “expediting” the payment of compensation to the victims of the tragedy. (The Hindu)

### **Case against Warren Anderson is not over, says Moily**

The former Union Carbide chairman, Warren Anderson, can still be tried in the Bhopal gas tragedy case if he is brought to India, as he is a “proclaimed offender,” Union Law Minister M. Veerappa Moily said on Tuesday. Dismissing as “irresponsible” the claim made by the former Central Bureau of Investigation joint director, B.R. Lall (who handled the investigation in 1994-95), that the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) had written to the CBI asking it not to pursue Mr. Anderson's extradition, Mr. Moily said, “After retirement, people try to become martyrs by making such statements.” The United Progressive Alliance government found itself in an embarrassing position on Tuesday as victims and activists began to remind it that it was a Congress government that was in power in 1984, both at the Centre and in Madhya Pradesh, and that Mr. Anderson, who came to India after the disaster, was actually allowed to fly out quietly. Meanwhile, MEA sources too refuted Mr. Lall's contention, saying repeated requests for Mr. Anderson's extradition were turned down by U.S. authorities on the plea that he was not personally

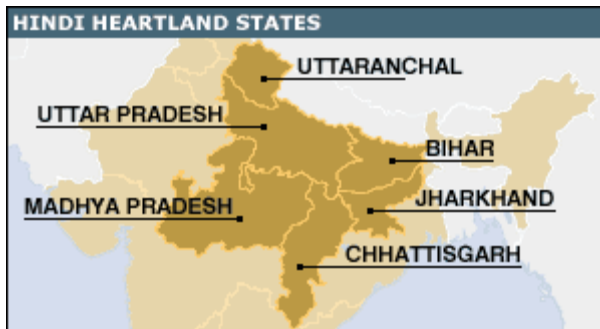
culpable. Apparently, in 2003 a request for his extradition was made under the India-U.S. bilateral extradition treaty. That request was reiterated, but with no results. Mr. Moily said, "Legally and technically" the case against Mr. Anderson was not over. "The case against him is still on ... he can be procured, he can still be tried," he said, as Mr. Anderson's name figured in the CBI charge sheet. But when pressed whether he would take up the issue again with the Prime Minister or the MEA, and whether the government would again try to get Mr. Anderson extradited, Mr. Moily said he could not comment on that. But he repeated that a stand-alone law for manmade disasters was needed and that provisions for class litigation needed to be explored. "Currently, there is no provision for class action. It is limited to insurance liability." (The Hindu)

### **India slips in Global Peace Index**

India ranked a low 128th on this year's Global Peace Index (GPI) after it slipped six positions though it was ahead of violence-hit Pakistan, which was placed among the five countries which were least peaceful. Internal conflicts, terrorism and human rights abuses were the factors assessed by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) to quantify global peacefulness in the only study of its kind in 149 countries. India was ranked 122nd last year while it was in the 109th position in 2007 when the first GPI was compiled. Pakistan was ranked 145th this year. For the second consecutive year, New Zealand has been ranked the most peaceful. It was followed by Iceland and Japan. Iraq was ranked the least peaceful with Somalia, Afghanistan, Sudan, Pakistan, Israel and Russia giving the Arab state company in the bottom of the table. Iraq, Somalia and Afghanistan were the least peaceful for the second straight year. Overall, the world became less peaceful for the second consecutive year, according to a report giving the findings of the fourth annual GPI. As the global economy continues to falter, this year's data shows an intensification of conflicts and growing instability linked to the downturn that began in 2008, with several countries seeing sharp increases in homicides, violent demonstrations and fear of crime, it said. According to the report, South Asia saw the greatest decrease in peacefulness, as a result of increased involvement in conflicts, a rise in deaths from internal conflict and human rights abuses. (The Statesman)

## Regional Report

### Central India (Hindi Heartland)



### Politics:

#### **Kalyan says alliance won't work**

With the Congress joining hands with Ajit Singh's Rashtriya Lok Dal and Mulayam Singh Yadav's Samajwadi Party for the Rajya Sabha polls, former chief minister Kalyan Singh on Friday said that an electoral alliance between the three parties would not work, as it would not be beneficial to any of them. Singh, who had joined hands with SP ahead of last year's Lok Sabha elections but parted ways later, said even if the three parties manage to forge an alliance for the next Assembly elections, it would be over the day they sit down to talk about seat adjustments. The former BJP leader, who recently floated a new party Jankranti Party, said the Congress would not want to help Mulayam Singh as it could be detrimental to its own strength in the state. Claiming that all the political parties in UP were losing their strength because of different reasons, Singh said though the Congress was trying hard it would not be able to make much of a difference in the next Assembly elections. Predicting a hung House after the next Assembly polls, Singh said his party would emerge as a "decisive force" in state politics. Singh claimed that his party was getting "encouraging response" where ever he was going. He also drew similarities between BSP chief Mayawati and SP president Mulayam Singh, saying that both are facing similar charges of possessing disproportionate assets and working under Centre's pressure. Their behaviour towards the Union government is also the same, he said, adding that while they oppose the UPA on the issue of inflation they back it when it comes to voting against it. (The Indian Express)

#### **Modi-fication ahead of BJP Patna meet**

On thursday, Patna's Urdu, Hindi and English dailies carried full-page advertisements showcasing Muslims in Gujarat and saying they are faring well under Chief Minister Narendra Modi's rule in the state. This comes ahead of Modi's Bihar visit for the BJP's two-day national executive meeting from June 12. This will be his first visit of Bihar after Nitish Kumar took over as its Chief Minister. The advertisements showcased Modi as the "one instrumental for Gujarat Muslims enjoying better education, employment opportunities, financial stability, health facilities and infrastructure". The ads quoted the Sachar Committee report on Muslims in Gujarat recording a 73.5 per cent literacy rate,

against the 59.1 per cent national average and Gujarat government departments employing 5.4 per cent more of those belonging to minority community, than West Bengal and Delhi. Senior state officials, while confirming that the government had released those ads in Patna dailies, refused to discuss why only Modi's pro-Muslim face was showcased. They also declined to comment if more such advertisements showcasing Gujarat government's achievements will be published in Patna dailies during Modi's stay there. Preparing the ground for Modi's visit, some voluntary groups from Kosi have put up banners and hoardings at vantage points in Patna welcoming the Gujarat Chief Minister, who had sent substantial relief during the 2008 Kosi floods. JD(U) Rajya Sabha MP and national spokesperson Shivanand Tiwari said their party was not associated with what was essentially an "internal programme" of the BJP. He noted that the party was in any case "playing up the same development agenda as we do, and has even made welcome gates after Muslim saints". He added that there was nothing questionable about the ads featuring Modi, which were only highlighting what the Sachar Committee had said. Meanwhile, the Bihar government has decided to lodge Modi and L K Advani at the state Guest House in Patna, adjacent to Nitish's official residence. Other BJP chief ministers, including its national president Nitin Gadkari, will stay in Maurya and other hotels in Patna. Among them are party leaders in the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha, including Arun Jaitley and Sushma Swaraj. Deputy secretary in the state protocol department N C Jha said this was done for security reasons. Jha also said that Nitish would host a dinner for the BJP CMs and other office-bearers participating in the meet. He, however, added that his department was still to receive detailed programme of Modi's Patna visit from Gandhinagar. (The Indian Express)

### **Eye on Muslim votes, Cong slams Modi, Nitish**

Bihar Congress's new team, AICC state in-charge Mukul Wasnik and state president Choudhary Mehboob Ali Qaisar, on Friday sought to consolidate Muslim votes by choosing to attack Gujarat CM Narendra Modi, who projected himself as a "pro-Muslim" leader in a newspaper advertisement on Thursday. The timing of the BJP national executive meet seemed to provide the right political plank for the disoriented state Congress seeking damage control under Wasnik and Qaisar. Addressing his maiden press conference after taking charge, Wasnik outlined his big Bihar plan to reach out to every block with a definite campaign against the Nitish government. Armed with facts and figures, Wasnik asked: "What kind of rule of law Nitish Kumar seems to have established in Bihar? Conviction rate in Dalit atrocities is only 17 per cent against the national rate of 34 per cent. And now Kumar is getting ready to rub shoulders with Narendra Modi. This cannot inspire people's confidence. Advertisements of Modi are blatantly promoting the man known for wrong reasons. But we cannot expect better behaviour from a party like BJP". (The Indian Express)

### **Social front:**

### **Economic Front:**



## The North



### Politics:

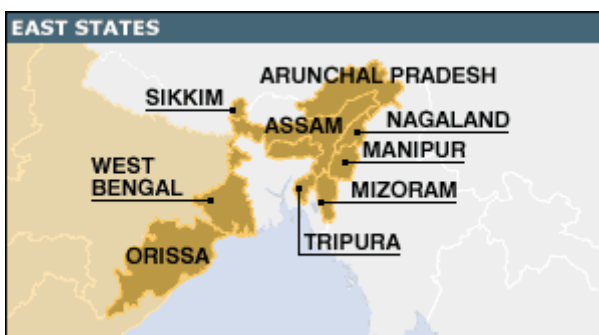
### Social front:

#### **Cyclone Phet floods Rajasthan**

Most parts of north India on Tuesday received moderate to heavy rainfall, causing the mercury to dip sharply as flash floods triggered by Cyclone Phet inundated low-level areas of Rajasthan. Nearly 300 people in Lathi village in Jaisalmer district were evacuated while rail and road traffic continued to be affected due to heavy rains that lashed the desert State for the last two days. However, the meteorological office said the cyclone had weakened towards the evening and that the situation in the western parts of the State was improving. (The Hindu)

### Economic Front:

## The East



### Politics:

#### **CPI(M): we failed to implement our programme in West Bengal**

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) on Saturday began a two-day meeting called primarily to discuss the preparations for the party's extended Central

Committee meeting due to be held in August. The Polit Bureau, being held in the backdrop of the recent municipal elections in West Bengal in which the Left Front suffered reverses, also heard a preliminary report on the debacle. The West Bengal State Committee that is scheduled to meet later this month will hold detailed discussions and the matter will be placed before the Polit Bureau. Party general secretary Prakash Karat told that Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee could not be present at the meeting as his presence was required in the State where violence erupted after the polls. "Four of our people, including one on Saturday, have been killed," Mr. Karat said adding that the Chief Minister also held the Home portfolio. Speaking to journalists later, CPI (M) State leader Biman Bose said one of the reasons for the debacle was the inability of the party to implement its programme completely. He said the party would continue to work and develop closer relations with the people. (The Hindu)

### **We can never join UPA government: SP**

There is no question of the Samajwadi Party joining the UPA government, general secretary Kiranmay Nanda said on Tuesday. Dismissing reports in a section of the media that the SP might consider joining the government if the Trinamool Congress were to withdraw support to it, Mr. Nanda said: "The SP can never join the UPA government. We are completely against the policies of the Congress. Our party has nothing to do with the Trinamool either." (The Hindu)

### **Social front:**

#### **Work towards making Arunachal plastic-free: CEC**

Chief Election Commissioner Navin Chawla has appealed to the people of Arunachal Pradesh to work towards making the state cleaner, greener and plastic-free. "I found Itanagar roads littered with lots of plastic waste...You are fortunate to have 82 per cent forest cover, but to maintain your environment you need to put plastic waste to good use," he told a gathering yesterday on the eve of World Environment Day. He asked the local administration to replicate the recent experiment done in Tamil Nadu's Madurai where plastic waste was used for blacktopping roads. Narrating his experience, Chawla said while driving through Sivaganga district adjoining Madurai he found the roadsides full of plastic wastes. But in Madurai, roads are clean as all the plastic wastes in Madurai are collected, cut to pieces and used for blacktopping roads. Governor Gen (retd) J J Singh who was also present at the function said the problem of plastic wastes, which had become acute in the state two years ago, had been reduced to a great extent after a ban was imposed on use of polythene bags. He said as part of a solid waste management launched in the state capital, government-approved rag pickers collect segregated non-biodegradable solid waste and recyclable waste from each and every household in the city regularly. (The Indian Express)

#### **Census overlooks minority-dominated village**

West Bengal: Census enumerators have overlooked a minority-dominated village located barely 5 km from the district headquarters. Apparently, the enumerators have also given a

number of Wards and localities a miss in many sub-divisions of Burdwan district. But the district administration insists that the census was completed on 15 May. Sujapur, a village accommodating 100 families, falls in Belkash panchayat near Burdwan police station. As many as 250 voters possess Epic there. A government-sponsored Sishu Siksha Kendra and one Anganwari Kendra can be found in the village. And government officials like Sheikh Md Rafiq a policeman and Sheikh Zakir Hussain a school teacher reside in the village. Syed Ali, a local quack, wondered why the village had been left out: "Census enumerators didn't come to our village. We have let the local panchayat know." Belkash panchayat pradhan Mrs Shamima Mallik said: "I have spoken to the local block development officer but he was surprisingly indifferent." Quoting 2001 census figures, she said Sujapur village, that fell in Nala mouza, had a population of 3,514. Census officials said they were slated to cover 2,529 mouzas across the district but were yet to receive complete information from 31 blocks. Sub-divisional officer (north) Mr Arindam Niyogi said: "I am yet to get a detailed report from census officials." The district though has completed House-listing, - the basic part of census work on last 15 May; it is scheduled to initiate the work for population census from 11 February 2011. The OC, Census for Burdwan district, Mr Subrata Hazra said: "We have learnt that a village named Sujapur has not been included in the first phase of census work. Besides certain locations like the captive townships of different industries in Asansol-Durgapur have also been kept away from this work as those have been earmarked as special zones and the directorate of Census is to decide how and when the work for census operations would begin in those areas." (The Statesman)

### **Economic Front:**

#### **The South**



### **Politics:**

#### **Social front:**

#### **35 lakh families may figure in BPL list**

As many as 35 lakh families in Kerala are likely to figure in the below poverty line (BPL) list. The Centre is likely to approve the list. The process adopted by the Local Self-Government Department for identifying the families is understood to have been approved

by the Centre. The system may be emulated in other States too. Time has come to initiate proceedings for the latest survey based on the statistics of 2009, but the State government has apprised the Centre of the hectic work done by the civic bodies for preparing the list, validating the claims and making it foolproof by thorough sifting at various stages. If the Centre decides to discard the list, the entire course of action involving elected members and teachers will become a futile exercise. Starting the survey afresh and completing it within the stipulated time was not feasible. Official sources told that the Centre was convinced of the claim and may accept it. Though the Planning Commission had initially fixed the limit at 10.26 lakh, the upper limit may be enhanced considering the unique features of the State. The method used by the Local Self-Government Department for conducting the survey had come in for appreciation since specific guidelines were given to the civic bodies to identify the families and also validate the list which was prepared earlier by Kudumbasree workers. The civic bodies as well as those who went for the survey were directed to exclude families of government and PSU employees, NRIs, service pensioners and others who have a regular income and instead give priority to include families headed by women, widows, terminally ill and such others in the list. Hence, the families of eight lakh service pensioners, 30 lakh NRIs and 5 lakh government employees will not figure in the list. Those included in the list will be eligible for joining the Comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme, Aashraya, and the rice distributed at Rs.2 a kg. (The Hindu)

### **Economic Front:**

#### **West India**



### **Politics:**

#### **Six elected unopposed to Rajya Sabha from Maharashtra**

Six candidates from various parties were elected unopposed to the Rajya Sabha from Maharashtra after an independent candidate withdrew at the last minute. Congress' Mr Vijay Darda and Avinash Pandey, Nationalist Congress Party's Mr Tariq Anwar and Ishwarlal Jain, Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) Mr Piyush and Shiv Sena's Mr Sanjay Raut of Shiv Sena were the successful candidates. Prominent Congress leader Mr Kanhaiyalal Gidwani, who filed his nomination as an independent, withdrew at the last minute paving the way for the unopposed election of the remaining six party supported candidates.

Elections for the 10 seats of the Maharashtra Legislative Council are also underway. There are 11 candidates in the race and the results are expected later. (The Statesman)

### **Muslims fare better in Gujarat than elsewhere in India: Saurabh Patel**

State energy minister Saurabh Patel has strongly objected to Planning Commission member Sayeeda Hameed's remarks about the plight of minorities in Gujarat, saying Muslims here were in a better position than anywhere else in the country. In a letter to Planning Commission Deputy Chairman Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Patel contended that Muslims in Gujarat are far better off than their counterparts in other states as per the Sachar Committee report, a government release stated on Friday. "Her remarks about Muslims in Gujarat and their plight and allegations against the Modi government reflect the member of the Planning Commission member is biased against Gujarat," Patel said, adding that "Hamid has quoted the figures provided by the NGOs and activists and not the government authorities." Muslims here fared better in view of per capita income, expenditure and other social and economic parameters and the UPA government-constituted Sachar Committee has noted it, wrote Patel. Patel urged Ahluwalia to restrain Hamid from making such "baseless allegations and off the cuff remarks against Gujarat government," the release said. The Planning Commission member, during her recent visit to the state, had said the condition of the minority community in Gujarat was poor. (The Indian Express)

### **Social front:**

### **Economic Front:**