

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

### **India**

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**Summary (Page#4-5)**

#### **National Report:**

##### **Politics:**

- J&K Working Group report unilateral: BJP (cross reference to Indian Occupied Kashmir) (Page#6)
- Tharoor tweets on visa restrictions, says Mumbai killers had no visas (Page#6)
- Centre calls all-party meet next week (Page#7)

##### **Minorities' issues:**

- Mourning processions in Delhi on Mohurram (Page#7)
- Dalits enter temple, offer prayers (Page#8)
- 'Govt let us down as we are Muslim' (Page#8)

##### **Hindu Fundamentalism:**

##### **Insurgency Movements:**

- Maoists torch buses, blast forest office (Page#9)
- 2010 will be bloodier if offensive is launched: Maoist leader Kishanji (Page#9)
- Maoists eye opportunity to consolidate their base (Page#10)

##### **Economic Front:**

- No LoC trade from Tuesday, say frustrated businessmen (Page#11)
- India set to retain top spot in milk production (Page#12)
- Future bright for Indian economy, says Rangarajan (Page#12)
- Need to balance growth, deficit: FM (Page#12)
- India to overtake China in 2020: Swaminathan Aiyar (Page#13)

### **Geo-strategic developments:**

- Navy plans to acquire multi-role fighter aircraft (Page#14)
- Japan's new focus on Asia is good for India (Page#11(Page#114))
- Indian Army's two-front doctrine betrays hostile intent: Pak (Page#16)

### **Indian Occupied Kashmir:**

#### **Social front:**

- Mystery BARC fire kills two scientists (Page#16)
- Armed with Rs 15k crore, govt vows clean Ganga by 2020 (Page#17)

#### **Foreign Relations:**

- Pakistan releases 100 Indian fishermen (Page#17)
- India, Japan to firm up bilateral relations (Page#17)
- US travel alert cautions its citizens to threats of attacks in India, warns against travel to Andhra (Page#18)
- People to people verdict: Peace is the answer (Page#19)
- Canada raises warning level for travellers to India (Page#21)

### **Regional Report**

#### **Central India (Hindi Heartland)**

##### **Politics:**

- Common agenda for governance planned: BJP (Page#22)

##### **Social front:**

##### **Economic Front:**

##### **The North**

##### **Politics:**

##### **Social front:**

- Ruchika case: Rathore seeks anticipatory bail (Page#23)

### **Economic Front:**

#### **The East**

#### **Politics:**

#### **Social front:**

### **Economic Front:**

#### **The South**

#### **Politics:**

- Tiwari quits in the wake of TV exposé (Page#24)
- Protests continue in Telangana, Osmania university tense (Page#25)
- Narasimhan takes over as Andhra governor (Page#25)
- I apologise but I've done no wrong: Tiwari (Page#26)
- Hyderabad, Telangana region hit by bandh in support of statehood (Page#26)

#### **Social front:**

### **Economic Front:**

- With bandhs & blockades, industry image takes a beating in A.P. (Page#26)

#### **West India**

#### **Politics:**

- Maharashtra is for all, says Mohan Bhagwat (Page#27)

#### **Social front:**

### **Economic Front:**

## SUMMARY

BJP has refused to accept the credibility of Prime Minister's Working Group, which has recommended autonomy for Jammu and Kashmir. Opposition leader Arun Jaitley criticized government for appointing a retired judge, head of the working group. He declared report unilateral. Minister of State for External Affairs Shashi Tharoor has questioned the tightening of Indian visa rules in the backdrop of the David Headley case. According to him terrorists need no visa for their violent activities but this policy will harm country's interests as it would create hurdles for the expansion of tourism and foreign investment. Centre has called an all parties meeting to discuss and solve the issue of statehood of Telangana region in Andhra Pradesh.

Dalits are waiting for social liberties in twenty first century's democratic India as they are not allowed to enter in any temple of upper caste Hindus for worship purposes. In Maathur village when they allowed entering in a temple after long negotiations the upper caste Hindus left the village in reaction.

Maoist leader Kishanji said if centre launched operation against Maoist, they will retaliate and the year 2010 will be more disastrous in that case. He said he does not believe on centre's promises for development in tribal areas.

Indian economic experts forecast fast growth of Indian economy in coming decade. It is predicted that if India maintains 9-10% of growth rate then till 2020 it would overtake China but for this purpose it has to control high fiscal deficit.

Indian Navy is planning to buy a state-of-the-art, multi-role, new generation carrier-based fighter aircraft to enhance its capabilities. Indian forces quest to increase their aggressive approach in the region is a threat for region's peace but Indian government is not concerned for that. India takes Japan's increasing presence in Asia is beneficial for promoting its interests and restricting Chinese influence in the region. General Deepak Kapoor's recent speech caused concerns in Pakistan. In his speech he mentioned India's strategy to be prepared for simultaneous two front war with China and Pakistan. Pakistan took strict notice of his statement and made clear that it is ready to fail any such plan and to secure its territorial integrity.

The Indian government is hopeful that polluted River Ganga would be cleaned till 2020 and Rs 15,000 crore will be spent on it.

US and Canada has warned their citizens to be careful while traveling in India. The recent wave of violence in the context of demand for the separate state of Telangana caused security concerns for foreigner citizens. Japan and India want to enhance and developed their bilateral ties further.

In Jharkhand BJP decided to form a coalition government with Jharkhand Mukti Morcha and other regional parties, as it cannot formulate government alone.

Andhra Pradesh's political crisis become more acute as demand for Telangna state turns violent. Protest and strikes badly damaged law and order situation. Andhra Pradesh's governor Tiawaree has been resigned from his seat in the wake of a scandal and new governor replaced him. Protest and strikes caused concerns for business circles of the state as well. Poor law and security situation has restrained foreign and local investment in Hyderabad and other business centers of the state.

RSS leader Mohan Bhagwat criticized Maharashtra Navnirman Sena's leader Raj Thackery's regional politics and said Maharashtra is for all Indians.

## **National Report:**

### **Politics:**

#### **J&K Working Group report unilateral: BJP**

The Bharatiya Janata Party rejected the report of the Prime Minister's Working Group, which has recommended autonomy for Jammu and Kashmir, saying it was an "improperly prepared" document intended to convey the government's willingness to "dilute" its position on the State. In a letter to the Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Arun Jaitley, who was a member of the Working Group, said the Centre should not act on the report on the "sensitive political issue," as it was not based on consensus but was "unilaterally authored." He said the last meeting of the 21-member group, headed by the former Supreme Court judge, Justice Saghir Ahmed, was held on September 3, 2007, and it had virtually been abandoned since then. What was the compulsion for bypassing the Working Group and producing the report? "It is surprising that this Group has come out with the report on various important and sensitive issues," Mr. Jaitley said. It was "improper for a retired judge to have drafted a report on sensitive political subjects impinging on national sovereignty, that too two years after the last meeting of the Group without bothering to discuss it with any member." (The Hindu)

#### **Tharoor tweets on visa restrictions, says Mumbai killers had no visas**

Stoking another potential row, Minister of State for External Affairs Shashi Tharoor has questioned the tightening of Indian visa rules in the backdrop of the David Headley case and wryly said "26/11 killers had no visas." Wondering whether the tightening of the visa norms for foreign nationals made any sense at all and if it would actually "protect" security, Tharoor asked whether India would allow terrorists to make it a "less welcoming" destination. Tharoor, who had set-off major controversies in the past by his tweets over Government's austerity drive and some other issues, in his latest posting on the social networking site Twitter says, "26/11 killers had no visas." The Union Home Ministry has recently tightened visa regulations in the wake of long-term multi-entry visas given to Pakistani-American Headley and Pakistani-Canadian Tahawwur Rana, both arrested in the US for plotting terror attacks against India which led to protests from the US and British governments. "Is all that worth it just in hope of making it difficult for a future Headley to reach? Are we going to allow terrorists to make us less welcoming?," the minister wrote in his twitter account. The Minister also said "making it more difficult to visit India, return here frequently or stay long hurts large numbers of innocents, costs us millions of \$ (Dollars) & alienates." "No easy answer to such questions government is grappling with. But important to recognize that security not become an excuse to change our country," Tharoor said. Thanks for great feedback on visas. Issue is not security vs tourism, but whether visa restrictions protect our security," he said while replying to a tweet. "No easy answer to such questions government is grappling with. But important to recognize that security not become an excuse to change our country for the worse," Tharoor said. (The Hindustan Times)

## **Centre calls all-party meet next week**

The Union Home Ministry has announced the initiation of a consultation process on the Telangana issue by convening a meeting of eight recognised political parties of Andhra Pradesh for January 5 next. Home Minister P. Chidambaram has sent the invitation to the Congress, the Telugu Desam Party, the Praja Rajyam Party, the Bharatiya Janata Party, the Communist Party of India (Marxist), the Communist Party of India, the Telangana Rashtra Samiti and the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen. A Ministry statement expressed “satisfaction” that the bandh called by the Telangana Joint Action Committee in some districts “passed off peacefully” on Wednesday. The all-party meeting comes following a statement by Mr. Chidambaram on December 23 and the subsequent demand by parties seeking clarity and removal of ambiguity (on the formation of a separate State) in that statement. On December 23, Mr. Chidambaram said “a large number of political parties are divided on the issue [Telangana]. There is need to hold wide-ranging consultations with all political parties and groups in the State. The Government of India will take steps to involve all concerned in the process.” Rajya Sabha member and former Union Minister, T. Subbarami Reddy, who is for a united Andhra Pradesh, welcomed the Centre’s decision and hoped that an amicable solution could be found at the January 5 meeting. Peddapalle MP G. Vivekanand, who is one of the 11 Lok Sabha members who quit their posts demanding announcement of a time frame by the Centre for forming a Telangana State, has welcomed the Centre’s decision. Asked whether they would withdraw their resignation letters, he said: “We have to consult among ourselves. Then we will decide in a day or two.” A senior Union Minister said a series of meetings had to be convened on the statehood issue and nothing could be achieved at a single meeting, as divergent voices could be heard on January 5. (The Hindu)

## **Minorities’ issues:**

### **Mourning processions in Delhi on Mohurram**

Thousands of Muslims on Monday took out mourning processions in the capital to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Hussain, the grandson of Prophet Mohammed. Dressed in black clothes and holding flags, men and women, mainly belonging to the Shia sect of Muslims, went in processions, crying and beating their chests in the ceremonial 'matam' or mourning to observe Youm-e-Ashura - the 10th day of Mohurram, the first month of the Islamic calendar. Special prayers were also offered at various mosques across the capital to mark the day. Considered a day of bereavement, many Muslims observe a fast, give to charity and pray in remembrance of Hussain who was martyred around 1,400 years ago at Karbala in Iraq. It was during the month of Mohurram in 680 AD, soldiers of the ruling caliph Yazid surrounded Hussain, his family and some followers at Karbala. In the days that followed, they were denied food and water and many of them were killed in the clash that lasted till the 10th day of the month. "We observe matam (mourning) in the memory of the killing of Prophet Mohammed's grandson and his family. After taking part in the procession, we will distribute food to the poor," said Qazim Abbas, a resident of Okhla. According to Delhi Police, over 300 processions will be taken out Monday across the city. Most of the processions will culminate at Karbala in Jorbagh

in south Delhi. Police have issued guidelines for commuters to take different routes as traffic will be affected. (The Hindustan Times)

### **Dalits enter temple, offer prayers**

Dalits at Maathur village in Semmanarkoil entered a Mariamman temple on Monday afternoon. It was an impromptu move by the district administration after the two days of unsuccessful peace meetings held between the Caste Hindus and the Dalits. The Dalits in the village were not allowed to enter the temple as a practice. The Democratic Youth Federation of India had inspected the village in mid- December and filed a memorandum with the district administration on the prevalence of the practice. Later, CPI (M) had tentatively proposed a temple entry for December 30. On hearing the news of their arrival, Caste Hindu people reportedly locked the doors of the sanctum sanctorum of the temple and left the village. (The Hindu)

### **‘Govt let us down as we are Muslim’**

The family of Mumbai businessman Roshan Jamal Khan, convicted by Spain’s anti-terror court earlier this month, on Tuesday alleged that the Government of India had let them down as he was a Muslim. The family also said it would approach the Supreme Court of Spain and the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague if necessary. In a press conference at the Marathi Patrakar Sangh, Azad Maidan, his brother Mehboob alleged that the government was treating the case with indifference, as he was a Muslim. “I went to New Delhi several times to meet Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi and submitted files to their secretaries. The Ministry of External Affairs has not replied to us once. All we expect from the ministry is to request Spain to make evidence against my brother public. If they are able to produce evidence, we will shut our voices forever,” he said. “In all honesty, I feel we are being treated in this manner because we are Muslim. The government’s intentions are not clean,” he alleged. Jamal Khan was among the 14 Muslim men picked up by the Spanish authorities from a Barcelona mosque on January 19 last year in connection with a terror plot. Four of them, including another Indian, were released later and a 15th suspect was detained in the Netherlands. Jamal Khan’s family has been maintaining that he had gone to Spain on business. He was convicted, along with 10 Pakistanis, by the Spanish court on December 14 for belonging to a terrorist group linked to Taliban leader Baitullah Mehsud. According to the prosecution, the group intended to bomb the Barcelona Metro transport system. The court acquitted them of a specific conspiracy to strike the metro. Jamal Khan’s lawyer has appealed against the conviction and the matter is likely to be heard in the January first week. “We will take up the case in Spain’s Supreme Court if the appeal is turned down. If necessary, we will also go to the International Court of Justice. We are also in touch with Amnesty International,” said Mehboob. Parvez Ubhare, a lawyer working closely with Khan’s family, said, “There is no evidence against Khan to associate him with a terrorist group. The court’s order is also contradictory since it has given a clean chit with regard to a conspiracy to bomb the Metro. It has relied solely on the statement of a protected witness who has worked for three years with the Taliban. It has also relied on an interview by an associate of Behtullah Mehsud eight months after the accused were arrested.” (The Indian Express)

## **Hindu Fundamentalism:**

## **Insurgency Movement:**

### **Maoists torch buses, blast forest office**

Maoists torched four government-owned buses, triggered landmine blasts to destroy a mobile tower and a forest beat house ahead of their day-long bandh in Orissa on Monday to protest alleged police excesses. The incidents took place at Raipanka in Adaba police station last night when armed Maoists asked the passengers of the buses to get down and set ablaze the vehicles, police said. The night buses were plying to different places in southern districts via Raipanka when they came under attack, they said. The Maoists destroyed a mobile tower of BSNL and a forest beat house at Balimela in Malkangiri district during the night by triggering landmine blast before asking the watchmen to come out. The ultras also blocked roads connecting southern Orissa district headquarters by felling trees on the roads. Normal life was affected in the districts in view of the bandh call with most of the shops and business establishments closed. Police have tightened security at vulnerable places in view of the bandh. (The Hindustan Times)

### **2010 will be bloodier if offensive is launched: Maoist leader Kishanji**

If 2009 was bad, 2010 would be "bloodier" if the government goes ahead with its planned offensive against the Maoist jungle bases, a top guerrilla leader has vowed while warning of more retaliatory violence in the months to come. "Home Minister P Chidambaram is a liar. At one level he says the offensive is a media creation but at the same time he is pumping in more troops in Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. I understand there is going to be a major crackdown in March," said Koteswar Rao alias Kishanji, a politburo member of the Communist Party of India-Maoist (CPI-Maoist), which does not believe in parliamentary democracy and swears by the barrel of the gun. "If they (security forces) begin their operations, I promise you 2010 will get bloodier. There will be no respite from violence," Kishanji, in charge of operations in eastern India, told IANS in a telephonic interview from an undisclosed location in West Bengal. Till Nov 15 this year, over 770 civilians and security personnel were killed in Maoist violence, the largest number of casualties in four years. In Jharkhand alone - one of the worst affected states - there have been 1,885 incidents of violence since 2006. Kishanji, 52, operates from the interiors of Lalgurh in West Bengal and is one of those fine-tuning the strategy of the Maoists. It was after considerable effort that IANS managed to track him down on one of the several mobile phones he uses through a chain of contacts. Reputed to be a military strategist and an advocate of tough tactics, Kishanji is said to be the mastermind behind recent killings of Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) members in Lalgurh, West Bengal. In his view, Operation Green Hunt, as the proposed offensive he says is labelled, will "backfire". "This so-called assault against us will backfire. All this talk of war against its own people is humbug and carries no conviction," said Kishanji, originally a resident of Andhra Pradesh. He is wanted in Orissa, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh for waging war against the state. He had initially joined the movement for a separate Telangana state and then became a full-time member of the Maoist outfit way back in 1971. Kishanji, said to be responsible for the abduction of West Bengal policeman Atindranath Dutta and his subsequent release in October, said the Maoist leadership

had changed its strategy after some top-rung leaders were arrested. "We have learnt our lessons. Our tactics have changed and we won't make similar mistakes again," he said, speaking both in English and Hindi. In the last few months, police and security personnel have arrested several Maoist leaders, including Kobad Ghandy from an undisclosed place in Delhi, Chhatradhar Mahato from West Bengal and a couple, Ravi Sarma and B. Anuradha, who were nabbed in Jharkhand. The arrests have come as Chidambaram has been stressing that civil society must stop romanticising the rebels and instead judge them in the context of the "mountain of violence". Kishanji also lashed out at Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's lament that there had been a systemic failure in giving the tribals a stake in the economic processes and how authorities should change ways in dealing with them. "Does he (Manmohan Singh) know what's happening on the ground? State governments go around signing agreements for special economic zones and setting up more sponge iron factories at the cost of the tribals. Where is the healing touch? They are all hypocritical." However, Kishanji did hold hope that there could be room for talks with the authorities. "We can talk, if there is ceasefire and if there is a withdrawal of forces. But it has to be genuine. Otherwise it has no meaning at all." Kishanji refused to comment on reports that a section of Maoists disapproved of methods of "indiscriminate killing" unleashed by him. Media reports have quoted unnamed rebels in the outfit's state unit questioning Kishanji's way of dealing with CPI-M sympathisers. "If that was true, then I would not be here. My ways are transparent and there for everyone to see," he said, refusing to be drawn further into the debate. (The Hindustan Times)

### **Maoists eye opportunity to consolidate their base**

The continuing political turmoil in Andhra Pradesh over the issue of Telangana will provide a perfect ground for the Maoists to re-establish their base in the State, police agencies fear. Their apprehensions are based on the fact that Maoists have always increased their strength in times of political crises and especially when the people's agitations took place irrespective of the political parties' involvement. The ongoing agitation for separate statehood for Telangana is one such development, which the Maoists are trying to take advantage of in Andhra Pradesh, once their stronghold. Maoists have been quite vocal in their support for the pro-Telangana agitation. The CPI (Maoist) has issued two statements so far and its central committee member, Kishanji who is spearheading the Lalgarh resistance in West Bengal, spoke extensively on the issue over telephone to different Telugu news channels. Though it may be a coincidence, Telugu Desam leaders hailing from Telangana convinced their party leaders to join the all-party Joint Action Committee, hours after the Maoist North Telangana unit secretary issued a statement calling upon TD leaders to defy their party president N. Chandrababu Naidu. Officers involved in counter-insurgency operations point out that the cause of concern is the growing militancy among the agitators in Telangana districts. Pro-Telangana agitators have been refusing to pay electricity bills in Medak district. Power officials were confined and told that the bills would be paid only after Telangana was formed. Such is the spontaneous militancy which Maoists could not achieve in the last 10 years. Now that the struggle for Telangana is becoming militant, Maoists would certainly ride piggy-back on the agitation and consolidate their base, if not hijack it, they fear. A parallel is sought to be drawn between the Lalgarh resistance movement led by the Maoists in West Bengal to the ongoing Telangana agitation by officials who monitor Left Wing Extremist activity in the country. Though West Bengal had seen three resistance

movements – Singur, Nandigram and Lalgarh, it is the Lalgarh movement which got so much of people's support that Maoists have dubbed it as a 'Second Naxalbari.' Maoist chief Ganapathi said three months ago that people spontaneously started the Lalgarh movement to fight the 'oppression and exploitation by the CPI(M).' The excesses by police while investigating the landmine attack on West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee's convoy had brought the masses out in the open. "This assumed the form of a long-drawn mass movement, and our party played the role of a catalyst." Maoists are now getting ready to play this role of a 'catalyst' in Andhra Pradesh and the situation is conducive for them. Naxalites could use their sympathisers and mass organisations to notch the level of militancy up forcing the police forces to use excessive force to reach that flash point where they can take over the movement. This is where the role of police in tackling the emerging situations becomes extremely important. Any excessive use of force, as seen during the lathi-charge on Osmania University students on November 29, would fuel the militancy and this is what the Maoists want. "We are aware of this peculiar situation and that is why we are showing extreme restraint while dealing with agitators," police top brass say. The biggest cause of concern for the police leadership is the massive rally of students planned on January 3 in Hyderabad. As the police are instructed to prevent students from reaching the State capital, a potentially explosive situation could emerge in the event of a face-off between police and the students. "We are aware that the quantum of force to be used, if necessary, should be minimum especially when we deal with political agitations like this" police officials say. (The Hindu)

### **Economic Front:**

#### **No LoC trade from Tuesday, say frustrated businessmen**

On the heels of a threat from traders in Rajouri-Poonch to suspend business across Line of Control(LoC), their counterparts from the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad sector have also said they will not join the trade activity from December 29. The trade process started with fanfare in October 2008. Traders on both sides have accused India and Pakistan of not being serious in pushing the process ahead, saying restrictions defeat the basic idea of trading. The trade on the Poonch-Rawlakot side, which touched all-time high of Rs. 8 crore on a single day, has since gone down to Rs. 1.5 crore. Sheeraz Ahmad Khan, spokesman of the LoC Traders Association Islamabad Uri, said the trade had on four days in the past week suffered a loss of Rs. 7 crore and "this is due to the unresponsive attitude of both governments. This has forced us to suspend the trade from Srinagar-Muzaffarabad." The Deputy Commissioners of Baramulla and Poonch were informed that "we will not roll out trucks on these two routes from December 29 and there will be no trade from this side until some decision is taken to review modalities of trade." Mr. Khan said both New Delhi and Islamabad "have banned the items which were fetching us profit and now we are facing losses. Why should we continue?" The traders wanted consumption-based trade and not product-based business. "What people consume here more should come and the demand of the other side should also be met. But nobody listens to us." By a Standing Operation Procedure (SOP) signed between the two countries on August 21, 2008, modalities were fixed and a list of 21 items was approved for trade. Trade on both routes started on October 21, 2008 but, the traders say, the SOP was not being implemented. "It has been reduced to a few items," said Mr. Khan. Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) president Nazir A Dar echoed the

frustration of traders. “They are disgusted as things have not been put in place as we desired,” he told *The Hindu*. “The trade is just being kept alive locally.” The KCCI and other bodies had raised the issue with the government from time to time but there was no response. “They are not sincere and serious in their approach that is why this trade has failed” Mr. Dar said, adding not even a review meeting was convened by the government. (The Hindu)

### **India set to retain top spot in milk production**

India is expected to maintain last year’s record of being the world’s largest milk producer, with an estimated 110 million tonnes in 2008-09. The country achieved the distinction with the production of 104.8 million tonnes in the 2007-08, according to a spokesman of the National Dairy Development Board. The spokesman said the world’s milk production was expected to be 688 million tonnes in 2008-09, a marginal 1.7 per cent increase over the previous year as against about four per cent increase achieved by India. Within the country, farmers’ milk cooperatives showed a better performance. They procured about 9.2 million tonnes, an increase of 9.7 per cent over the previous year, handling over 14 per cent of the national marketable surplus. The cooperative sector covered about 21 per cent of the country’s villages and over 18 per cent of the total milk-producing households in rural areas. The NDDB had prepared a Rs. 173 billion plan for the next 15 years to increase milk production with better productivity, substantially strengthening and expanding the infrastructure for procurement and human resources development. The NDDB had also set up a Centre for Analysis and Learning in Livestock and Food at Anand, in central Gujarat. It would provide reliable and efficient laboratory services for livestock, dairy and food sectors. (The Hindu)

### **Future bright for Indian economy, says Rangarajan**

Forecasting a brighter future for the country’s economy by 2009-10 end, C. Rangarajan, Chairman, Economic Advisory Council to Prime Minister, said that if a consistent growth of four per cent in agriculture and nine per cent in the industrial and services sectors were maintained over the next two decades, it would propel India into the comity of developed nations. In a talk on ‘Challenges before the Indian Economy’ at the College of Defence Management (CDM) on Tuesday, he said the fiscal slowdown had actually not affected India as much as it had hit other industrially-advanced and developed countries. He said that in the latter half of the fiscal 2008-09 and in the first half of 2009-10, things had certainly improved and there was not much cause for alarm. Speaking in a lighter vein, he made a distinction between recession and depression. “If your neighbour loses his/her job, it is recession and if you lose your own job, it is depression,” going on to add that India was much better off than most other countries as far as the financial meltdown was concerned. Among causes for concerns were the decreased agricultural productivity because of unfavourable seasonal conditions. However, while kharif yields of food grains dipped, things were expected to pick up during the current rabi season, he said. (The Hindu)

### **Need to balance growth, deficit: FM**

India needs to strike a balance between economic growth and cutting fiscal deficit, Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee said on Wednesday. India’s fiscal deficit is estimated at 6.8 per cent

of gross domestic product for 2009/10 (April-March), higher than 6.2 per cent in the previous year as the government cut tax rates and boosted spending. The economy grew 6.7 per cent in 2008/09, slower than 9 per cent or more in the previous three years. (The Indian Express)

### **India to overtake China in 2020: Swaminathan Aiyar**

In the past decades, India has been world number one in starvation deaths, foreign aid and bribery. In the 2000s, it was transformed from a chronic under-performer to a potential superpower. Here are eight predictions of what it will look like in 2020: India will overtake China as the fastest-growing economy in the world. China will start ageing and suffering from a declining workforce, and will be forced to revalue its currency. So its growth will decelerate, just as Japan decelerated in the 1990s after looking unstoppable in the 1980s. Having become the world's second-biggest economy, China's export-oriented model will erode sharply - the world will no longer be able to absorb its exports at the earlier pace. Meanwhile, India will gain demographically with a growing workforce that is more literate than ever before. The poorer Indian states will start catching up with the richer ones. This will take India's GDP growth to 10% by 2020, while China's growth will dip to 7-8%. India will become the largest English-speaking nation in the world, overtaking the US. So, the global publishing industry will shift in a big way to India. Rupert Murdoch's heirs will sell his collapsing media empire to Indian buyers. The New York Times will become a subsidiary of an Indian publishing giant. In the 2000s, India finally gained entry into the nuclear club, and sanctions against it were lifted. By 2020, Indian companies will be major exporters of nuclear equipment, a vital link in the global supply chain. So, India will be in a position to impose nuclear sanctions on others. India, along with the US and Canada, will develop new technology to extract natural gas from gas hydrates - a solidified form of gas lying on ocean floors. India has the largest gas hydrate deposits in the world, and so will become the biggest global producer. This will enable India to substitute gas for coal in power generation, hugely reducing carbon emissions and making Jairam Ramesh look saintly. India will also discover enormous deposits of shale gas in its vast shale formations running through the Gangetic plain, Assam, Rajasthan and Gujarat. New technology has made the extraction of shale gas economic, so India will become a major gas producer and exporter. Meanwhile, Iran's mullahs will be overthrown, and a new democratic regime will usher in rapid economic growth that creates a shortage of gas in Iran by 2020. So, the Iran-India pipeline will be recast, but in reverse form: India will now export gas to Iran. More and more regions of India will demand separate statehood. By 2020, India will have 50 states instead of the current 28. The new states will not exactly be small. With 50 states and a population of almost 1.5 billion, India will average 30 million people per state, far higher than the current US average of 6 million per state. China, alarmed at India's rise, will raise tensions along the Himalayan border. China will threaten to divert the waters of the Brahmaputra from Tibet to water-scarce northern China. India will threaten to bomb any such project. The issue will go to the Security Council. Islamic fundamentalists will take over in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The US will withdraw from the region, leaving India to bear the brunt of consequences. Terrorism will rise in India, but the economy will still keep growing. How so? Well, 3000 people die every year falling off Mumbai's suburban trains, and that does not stop Mumbai's growth. Terrorism will bruise India, but not halt its growth. (The Times of India)

## **Geo-strategic developments:**

### **Navy plans to acquire multi-role fighter aircraft**

Looking for an enhanced presence, the Navy is planning to buy a state-of-the-art, multi-role, new generation carrier-based fighter aircraft. And in pursuance of this, the Navy has sent out a request for information (RFI) to some of the world's leading aircraft manufacturers. The aircraft firms included: the European Aeronautic Defence and Space Company (EADS) for their Eurofighter Typhoon, the Boeing Integrated Defence System (for the F/A-18 Super Hornet), Sweden's SAAB (who are offering the Gripen JAS 39) and France's Dassault (for the Rafale). The new naval aircraft are meant for deployment on the Navy's third aircraft carrier, which is expected to be commissioned around 2018. While the Rafale and the F/A-18 are natural choices for naval operations as they were built specifically for carrier-based multi-role operations, the manufacturers of the Typhoon and the Gripen have indicated that their aircraft could be suitably modified for naval carrier-based flying. All four aircraft (along with the Russian MiG-35 and the American F-16) are already in contention for another mega Indian defence forces' deal the \$10 billion - \$12 billion Indian Air Force's plans to acquire 126 medium, multi-role combat aircraft. The Ministry of Defence sources told that the Navy has the go-ahead from the government for the purchase. The RFI has not specified the exact number of aircraft that the Navy is keen on acquiring, nor the modalities that will be specified for their manufacture or offset requirements. Once the manufacturers provided their information, the Navy will send out a request for proposal detailing the Naval Staff Qualitative Requirements that the fighter should possess. After the receipt of the proposals, the Navy will short list, setting in motion the process of flight evaluation trials, selection, commercial negotiations and finally the acquisition. The new aircraft, which will be in the 25-30 tonne class, will be in addition to the 16 Russian-manufactured MiG-29Ks that India is acquiring, and the naval version of the indigenous Light Combat Aircraft Tejas (12-14 tonnes class) which is presently being designed. The Navy on December 4 received in knocked-down condition, the first of its MiG-29Ks. While the MiG-29Ks will be on the deck of the 44,570-tonne Kiev class Admiral Gorshkov (to be rechristened INS Vikramaditya), the naval Tejas is earmarked for the 40,000-tonne, indigenous aircraft carrier that is being built at the Cochin Shipyard. The Navy's only fighter aircraft now is the British-made Sea Harrier jump jets which are deployed on the Navy's sole aircraft carrier, INS Viraat. Official sources said that the Sea Harriers, which were decommissioned by the (British) Royal Navy in March 2006, will be in the inventory as long as the INS Viraat is deployed (could be till 2019). (The Hindu)

### **Japan's new focus on Asia is good for India**

Yukio Hatoyama, who is on his first visit to New Delhi as Prime Minister of Japan, is unlike any other Japanese leader that the Indian side has dealt with in the past decade. After the bilateral chill that set in with the 1998 nuclear tests at Pokhran, political relations steadily improved from 2001 onwards, during the tenures of Junichiro Koizumi, Shinzo Abe, Yasuo Fukuda, and finally Taro Aso. Defence cooperation, including high-level visits and joint exercises began. Despite the immense sensitivity of the nuclear question, Japan finally went along with the Nuclear Suppliers Group consensus decision to lift sanctions on India. And in October 2008, when Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was in Tokyo for the annual summit, the two countries signed a potentially

far-reaching security declaration that seemed to suggest Japan looked at India as a potential strategic partner in the long-term game of hedging against the rise of Chinese power in Asia. As foreign minister during Mr. Koizumi and Mr. Abe's tenures, Taro Aso was the strongest advocate of the short-lived and ill-fated 'quadrilateral' concept that saw India joining Japan, Australia and the United States in joint political consultations and even war games in the Bay of Bengal. Mr. Aso also spoke openly of the need to build an 'arc of democracy and prosperity' across Asia, a geopolitical construct clearly designed to exclude China, though business and pragmatic considerations within Japan helped to staunch any serious deterioration in relations with the Chinese side. With the victory of the Democratic Party in parliamentary elections this September and the arrival of Mr. Hatoyama in the Prime Minister's office in Tokyo, the entire conception of Japan's relations with China and the rest of Asia have undergone a radical change. Looked at superficially, his eagerness to mend Tokyo's fences with Beijing and break free from Washington's vice-like grip on Japanese foreign and security policy may not augur well for bilateral relations with an India accustomed to looking at Japan as a hedge against a rising China and an extension of American power in Asia. But Mr. Hatoyama's vision of an East Asian Community and his desire to work with China provides India and Japan with an opportunity to build their bilateral relations on ground firmer than the quicksand of 'balance of power.' Japanese foreign minister Katsuya Okada has spoken of India and Australia as part of the proposed EAC, a formulation that is in line with the East Asia Summit process run on the basis of Asean+6 rather than the more limited Asean+3 (i.e. China, Japan, South Korea) concept that would exclude India. There is also no reason why triangular relations between India, Japan and China should be zero-sum: all lines of the triangle can and should be strengthened without adversely affecting each other. Indeed, now that the Japanese government is less paranoid about China, an excellent opportunity exists for Indo-Japanese political and strategic relations to be strengthened as something desirable for cooperative security in Asia as a whole. And the first test will be the concrete steps the two sides take to implement the 2008 Security Declaration. The Hatoyama-Okada approach to nuclear disarmament also offers India the prospect of starting a serious dialogue with Japan on how best global efforts to eliminate weapons of mass destruction can be pursued. In the past, India's refusal to accede to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty and Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty has been a major irritant. But on other fronts – the proposed Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty, for example – there is no reason why India and Japan cannot work together. As for the CTBT, the Indian side should have no problem reiterating its test moratorium. Most importantly, the new Japanese government has begun to debate an issue close to the India's global disarmament initiative – the policy of no-first use (NFU). Today, among all declared nuclear weapon states, only India and China adhere to an NFU posture. Japan, which is shielded by the American nuclear umbrella, has traditionally argued that extended deterrence is credible only with the threat of a U.S. first strike on any nuclear-armed adversary. Mr. Okada has spoken of the desirability of NFU but there is, at present, within the Pentagon, no appetite for this. The U.S. focus is on 'non-proliferation,' with the elimination of nuclear weapons a long-term goal that President Barack Obama has said will not be reached in his lifetime. The DPJ's views on disarmament open a door for India and Japan to begin a constructive dialogue on intermediate steps like NFU that serve to delegitimize the role of nuclear weapons in military planning. (The Hindu)

## **Indian Army's two-front doctrine betrays hostile intent: Pak**

Pakistan has said that Indian Army's new military doctrine including scenarios such as a two-front simultaneous war with both China and Pakistan "betrays a hostile intent" and a "jingoistic mindset". Foreign Office spokesman Abdul Basit said in a statement that the Indian Army's new military doctrine "betray a hostile intent as well as a hegemonic and jingoistic mindset which is quite out of step with the realities of our time". Pakistan is prepared to defend itself in the face of all contingencies, Basit said. "No one should ever underestimate our capability and determination to foil any nefarious designs against the security of Pakistan," he said. Indian Army officials have said that the doctrine, which is reviewed every five years at the Army's Shimla-based Training Command, will now include scenarios such as a two-front simultaneous war with both China and Pakistan. Basit called on the world community to take "due notice of such statements". He added: "Pakistan remains mindful of the threats posed to its security as well as the importance of promoting peace in South Asia." The spokesman also told a weekly news briefing at the Foreign Office that Pakistan's desire for peace should not be mistaken for weakness. (The Times of India)

## **Indian Occupied Kashmir:**

### **Social front:**

#### **Mystery BARC fire kills two scientists**

Two research scientists were killed after a fire broke out in a photochemistry laboratory in the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), Trombay, on Tuesday afternoon. They were identified by the police as Umang Singh from Mumbai and Partha Pratim Bag from West Bengal, both PhD students in BARC's Radiation and Photochemistry Division. While the cause of the fire in the third-floor Modular Lab is yet to be ascertained, the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) said that no reactor, radioactivity or radiation was involved. The fire has left authorities puzzled since, as per preliminary information, the two scientists were not dealing with any inflammable material. BARC director Sreekumar Banerjee spoke to National Security Adviser M K Narayanan and PMO officials. Sources said that of the five scientists working in the lab, three were on holiday and only Singh and Bag were at work. Both were University of Mumbai students in their late twenties, working on their PhD in collaboration with the DAE. Their subject: free radical reactions, antioxidant studies of plant extracts. S K Malhotra, head of DAE's Public Awareness Division, said: "The BARC fire brigade brought the fire under control in about 45 minutes." He said the bodies were "charred beyond recognition" and discovered by the firemen as they fought the billowing smoke. Additional Commissioner of Police (East Region) Ritesh Kumar said the Trombay police have begun investigations. This is the second incident after a drinking-water cooler was found to be contaminated with tritium on November 24 at the Kaiga nuclear plant. The BARC incident comes at a time when the government is still not clear about the Kaiga culprits. (The Indian Express)

## **Armed with Rs 15k crore, govt vows clean Ganga by 2020**

The Centre has expressed confidence that by 2020 the polluted River Ganga would be cleaned and Rs 15,000 crore will be spent on it. The Union government is confident of getting the holy Ganga river cleaned by 2020. Rs 15,000 crore will be spent for this purpose under the river development fund," environment minister Jairam Ramesh said. The Centre plans to save the river by making it nirmal (clean) and aviral (free flowing), he said. "We will not only ensure 'aviral dhara' (continuous flow of the river stream), as being demanded by several NGOs, but also ensure nirmal dhara (clean and pollution free flow), the minister said. Ramesh said the World Bank has also committed India at least \$1 billion as assistance for cleaning up the heavily polluted Ganga in the first phase. The clean-up involves building modern sewage treatment, revamping drains and other measures to improve the quality of the river, which has been badly polluted by industrial chemicals, farm pesticides and other sewage. "This is a project of enormous national importance and I am pleased that the World Bank has come forward to assist us," he said. (Times of India)

## **Foreign Relations:**

### **Pakistan releases 100 Indian fishermen**

Pakistan released 100 Indian fishermen from a Karachi prison on Friday, prior to their repatriation. The release was a "goodwill gesture" announced by Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani earlier this week. Hundreds more Indian fishermen remain in Pakistani jails, besides other Indian prisoners. Mr. Gilani's gesture invited some adverse remarks in Pakistan's parliament on Thursday. A senate committee was informed that there were more than 1,000 Pakistani prisoners in Indian jails, and the Indian government was not showing any interest in releasing them. Members of the committee are reported to have observed that "the Pakistan government is releasing the Indian inmates in Pakistan as a goodwill gesture, while we are getting the bodies of Pakistanis in response," a reference to the deaths of Pakistani prisoners in Indian jails. (The Hindu)

### **India, Japan to firm up bilateral relations**

Apart from improving their coordination on security issues, India and Japan will also consolidate their economic ties during the visit of Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama this week. Meeting against the backdrop of Japanese investment in India having exceeded its investment in China for the first time in 2008-09, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Mr. Hatoyama will seek to give a push to the multi-billion dollar Delhi-Mumbai freight corridor with the aim to complete it by 2016-17. The summit level meeting will aim to tie up the loose ends so that the assistance agreement is finalised by early next year. The project will provide speedy transportation to goods from the industrial heartlands of north India to ports on the western flank. The Japanese FDI in India of 809 billion yen as compared to 679 billion yen in China during 2008-09. A further impetus is expected to be provided with the Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC) project. An agreement on the first tranche of project development fund would pave the way for a feasibility study. Once issues such as infrastructure building and electricity supply are settled, the

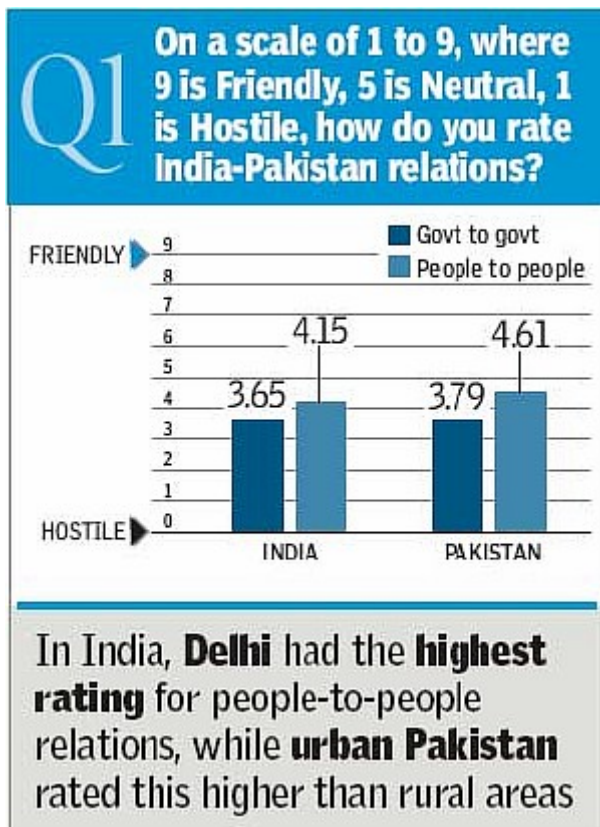
“early bird” Japanese companies besides some from India will set their investment plans in motion. “Without India, Japan cannot grow in future. Therefore infrastructure building projects in India are very important for Japan. The investments in Tata Teleservices, Mitsubishi Chemical plant, Ranbaxy and the setting up of automobile manufacturing units are successful stories that will have a good impact on the minds of potential Japanese investors” said the sources. Japanese telecom giant NTT DoCoMo has acquired a 26 per cent equity stake in Tata Teleservices and Daiichi Sankyo bought 34.8 per cent of Ranbaxy Labs’ equity, while Mitsubishi is financing a petrochemical plant at Haldia in West Bengal. Several Japanese automobile companies led by Suzuki and Honda are operating in the country. On security cooperation, the sources pointed out the similarities between the India-Japan declaration on security cooperation and the one inked during Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd visit to India last month. “This symbolises where Japan is trying to place India in forming a partnership. The idea was there and Defence Minister A. K. Antony’s during his visit to Japan in November signalled India’s willingness to enhance security cooperation. The approach will be different from the earlier security cooperation because this cooperation will not be against a third party,” the sources pointed out. Mr. Antony’s visit was preceded by that of National Security Advisor (NSA) M K Narayanan. Not only were similar sentiments expressed but Mr. Hatoyama broke protocol and escorted the NSA right up to his car, said Indian official sources. Japan has also welcomed Union Home Minister P. Chidambaram’s announcement of a visa-on-arrival scheme for nationals from five countries including Japan and interprets it as India’s desire for closer bilateral ties. (The Hindu)

### **US travel alert cautions its citizens to threats of attacks in India, warns against travel to Andhra**

Apprehending a Mumbai-type terrorist attack in various parts of India, the US on Tuesday alerted its citizens to be cautious during their visit to that country and asked them to defer their travel to Andhra Pradesh as violence continues over issue of a separate Telangana state. This is the third travel alert issued by the United States in quick session. "The US Government continues to receive information that terrorist groups may be planning attacks in India. Terrorists and their sympathisers have demonstrated their willingness and capability to attack targets where Americans or Westerners are known to congregate or visit," the travel alert said. "In addition, there continues to be a possibility of violence in the south-central Indian state of Andhra Pradesh over the contentious issue of creating a separate state," the State Department said. This alert replaces the travel alerts dated October 29 and December 9, 2009, and expires on January 31, 2010, it said. Recent media reports coming from intelligence agencies indicated that suicide bombers have entered India with the objective of creating Mumbai-type mayhem. "The November 2008 attacks in Mumbai provided a vivid reminder that hotels and other public places are especially attractive targets for terrorist groups. US citizens are urged always to practise good security, maintain a heightened situational awareness and a low profile," the travel alert said. Americans are advised to monitor local news reports and consider the level of security present when visiting public places, including religious sites, or choosing hotels, restaurants, entertainment and recreation venues, it said. The US said there is also the possibility of violence in Andhra Pradesh as civil unrest continues over the contentious issue of statehood for the Telangana region. The state department recommends that US citizens defer all non-essential travel to Telangana and certain parts of Hyderabad (especially the Assembly and Secretariat,

Osmania University, Panjagutta, and Ameerpet areas). "There have been repeated clashes between police and protesters, damage to private property, and a number of deaths and injuries associated with the disturbances. Government security forces have been augmented in many parts of the state, especially in Hyderabad and in the Telangana region," said the travel alert. (The Times of India)

**People to people verdict: Peace is the answer**



The neighbourhood we live in may be the deadliest in the world, but it also is one in which the yearning for peace is enormous. Indeed, the very fact that the horrors of hostility have been brought home so forcefully to all those who live in this neighbourhood may explain why two nations that have had such an embittered relationship voice such a strong cry for some sanity. In an extensive poll conducted jointly for The Times of India and the Jang group of Pakistan, what we found was that an overwhelming majority want a peaceful relationship. Most hearteningly and unexpectedly there is also a high degree of optimism about the possibility of an end to hostilities and there is a widespread recognition that bringing about that happy denouement is not a task that can be left to the two governments alone. Aman ki Asha polled people in six Indian cities as well as respondents in eight Pakistani cities and 36 villages to feel the pulse of a sub-continent besieged by violence and fear. About two-thirds of those polled in India (66%) and almost three-fourths of those in Pakistan (72%) said they desire a peaceful relationship between the two countries. It's not as if the rest were opposed to the idea of harmony. A sizeable chunk in both countries — 17% in India and 20% in Pakistan — neither agreed nor disagreed with the

statement that “I want peaceful and friendly relations to prevail between India and Pakistan”. In other words, only a tiny minority, 17% in India and 8% in Pakistan, were opposed to the idea of consigning hostility to the dust bin of history. For countries that have fought three wars and one mini-war and have accused each other of abetting terror, those figures are a whole lot better than what you might expect. In India, the urge for peace was more or less uniform across gender, age and socio-economic categories, but in Pakistan male respondents were surprisingly more strongly in favour of the idea than their female counterparts (77% to 66%). The survey tapped respondents in Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bangalore and Hyderabad in India. In Pakistan, the cities covered were Karachi, Hyderabad and Sukkur in Sindh, Islamabad/Rawalpindi, Lahore, Multan and Faisalabad in Punjab and Quetta in Baluchistan. Desiring peace is one thing, but is there a genuine feeling that it is possible? Once again, we were pleasantly surprised by the findings of the poll. A clear majority in both cases — 59% in India and an even higher 64% in Pakistan — said they were either “very hopeful” or “quite hopeful” that they would see our current state of antagonism becoming a thing of the past within their own lifetimes. In India, the women were more optimistic than the men on this count, though not by a huge margin. Also, respondents from the SEC B socio-economic category were somewhat more hopeful than those from the more elite SEC A category and the relatively young (ages 18 to 19) were just a touch more hopeful than the older lot aged 30 to 45 years. Can people-to-people initiatives — which is what Aman ki Asha is really all about — be effective in bringing about the peaceful relationship that is so fervently desired? The vote in this case was decisive. In India, 78% said they were an “effective” or “very effective” instrument of peace. If that sounds massive, the verdict was even more unequivocal in Pakistan, where 85% chose one of these two responses. In fact, an impressive 43% in Pakistan said it would be “very effective”. We couldn't have asked for a more resounding endorsement of our earnest belief that civil society initiatives can and must make a difference. Indeed, we wouldn't have imagined the response would have been so clear. What explains the scale of this endorsement? A large part of the explanation would seem to lie in the answers to another of the questions asked in the survey. We asked the respondents to rank the current state of the relationship between the two countries on a scale of 1 to 9, where 1 indicates “hostile” and 9 indicates “friendly”. We also asked them to do this rating separately for relations between the two states and between the two peoples. On both sides of the troubled border the responses were revealing. While the average rating given by Indian respondents to state-to-state relations was 3.65 (indicating “cold”), the same respondents rated people-to-people relations at 4.15 indicating something closer to “neutral”. On the Pakistani side, state-to-state relations were rated on average at 3.79, while people-to-people relations were rated at 4.61 on average. In other words, while Pakistanis had a more positive view of the relationship than Indians, both sides agreed that the rapport between people was better than that between the two governments. It is not difficult to see why they believe civil society initiatives are the way forward from here. On each of these questions, there were significant variations in the responses from different Indian cities and there was at least one clear pattern to those variations. Delhi and the southern cities of Chennai, Hyderabad and to a lesser extent Bangalore were more inclined to take a positive view of both the current state of relations and the prospects of peace than the other cities. In contrast, Mumbai was clearly the city with the most gloomy perspective on each of the questions asked. A majority, 54%, for instance said they were not hopeful of peace being achieved in their lifetime. Given the horror of 26/11 that is hardly surprising. But the fact that even in Mumbai 50% said they wanted peace against the 42%

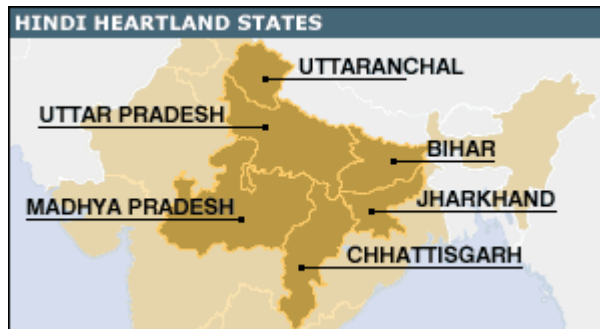
who didn't and 52% voted for people-to-people initiatives as the way to move towards that peace must be seen as a vindication of Aman ki Asha. (The Times of India)

### **Canada raises warning level for travellers to India**

Canada has raised its warning level for travellers to India after violence over the Telangana statehood demand. Urging its citizens travelling to India to exercise great caution "at all times", the Department of Foreign Affairs says: "Since early December, a number of protests and strikes have been taking place in the state of Andhra Pradesh. Several of these, in the vicinity of Osmania University in Hyderabad, turned violent." Canadians are advised to exercise a high degree of caution, avoid large crowds and demonstrations, and follow the advice of local authorities." It says Canadian travellers should also be vigilant on Republic Day Jan 26 as militants have struck on these occasions in the past. "Canadians residing or travelling in India are strongly encouraged to maintain a high level of vigilance, remain aware of their surroundings, monitor local news reports, follow the advice of local authorities, avoid crowded places, and take appropriate steps to increase their personal security," the advisory warns. Referring to the terror attacks in Jaipur, Ahmedabad, New Delhi and later the Mumbai carnage in 2008, the advisory says: "The occurrence of more violent attacks is impossible to predict but the threat of terrorism remains high throughout India, including attacks targeting places frequented by foreign visitors and expatriates. "Bombings and attacks are perpetrated on a regular basis by extremist groups in the state of Assam, and in the rural areas in the states of Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal and Orissa." Even before the violence over the Telangana demand broke out, the Canadian foreign affairs department maintained a strongly worded advisory about the situation in India. The vast majority of Canadians who travel to India are of Indian origin. (The Times of India)

## Regional Report

### Central India (Hindi Heartland)



### Politics:

#### **Common agenda for governance planned: BJP**

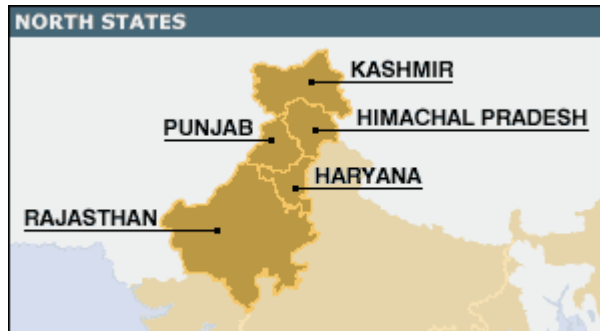
The four coalition partners in Jharkhand will try to work out a common agenda for governance, senior Bharatiya Janata Party leader Yashwant Sinha said on Monday. Apart from the post of Chief Minister it will go Jharkhand Mukti Morcha chief Shibu Soren — the JMM will get four berths. The BJP will get four ministerial berths including a Deputy Chief Minister, the All-Jharkhand Students' Union will get two and the Janata Dal (United) one. While Raghubar Das, a former State BJP president, is billed to be Deputy Chief Minister along with Sudesh Mahto of the AJSU, the BJP has also clinched the Speaker's post. The name of C.P. Singh is being mentioned for this crucial job. Peter Raja is being tipped for minister from the JD(U). Although the BJP is in a celebratory mood, clearly the BJP has lost ground in Jharkhand and is far from the majority mark of 41 in a House of 81. At the Parliamentary Board meeting held a few days ago after the Assembly election results were out, there was some finger-pointing by senior leader Arun Jaitley, apparently gunning for the immediate past president Rajnath Singh (without mentioning his name). Mr. Jaitley is believed to have blamed wrong ticket distribution for the party's poor performance — its tally is down from 30 seats last time to 18. Both Mr. Jaitley and Sushma Swaraj were apparently not in favour of joining efforts to form a government, a view opposed by Mr. Singh and some others. Finally, the view that prevailed was that since no party or pre-poll alliance got a clear mandate, it was incumbent upon parties to form a government to prevent the State from coming under President's Rule once again. Mr. Sinha said, "Under the circumstances, Jharkhand will be getting the best possible government." JD(U) leader Sharad Yadav also said: "No party had a mandate. It was clear a coalition government had to be formed with post-poll partners. The National Democratic Alliance of the BJP and the JD(U) was able to stitch up such a coalition. We hope to give Jharkhand a good government unlike the people's experience under the now disgraced Koda government." Some BJP leaders made no secret of their fear that had the party opted to remain in the Opposition, the Congress would have tried to wean away its legislators by making them resign and getting them elected again adopting a strategy like the BJP's Operation Lotus in Karnataka. Mr. Soren flew from Mumbai to New Delhi on Monday night to invite Mr. Sharad Yadav to the oath-taking ceremony, scheduled for

December 30 in Ranchi. Mr. Soren told journalists that it would be a challenge to meet the aspirations of the people of the State for which he had struggled for decades. He would like to “change the map of Jharkhand.” (The Hindu)

### **Social front:**

### **Economic Front:**

### **The North**



### **Politics:**

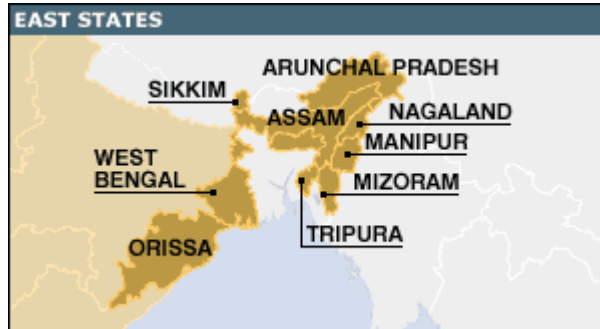
### **Social front:**

#### **Ruchika case: Rathore seeks anticipatory bail**

Disgraced former Haryana director general of police (DGP) SPS Rathore on Wednesday sought pre-arrest bail, following the registration of two fresh cases against him for molesting teenager Ruchika Girhotra and then allegedly hounding her till she killed herself. Rathore's petition is being heard by District and Sessions Judge S P Singh. Carrying a file in his hands, Rathore reached the Panchkula court flanked by his wife, who is also his lawyer. The two fresh FIRs (First Information Report) registered against him include charges for attempt to murder and wrongful confinement. In contrast to his smiling face December 21 when he was convicted for molesting Ruchika, Rathore on Wednesday kept a straight face and avoided answering the barrage of questions thrown at him and his wife by waiting reporters. The government has now ordered a fresh probe into the molestation case and may also charge Rathore with abetment to suicide. Ruchika, a budding tennis player, killed herself three years after the molestation incident, as Rathore allegedly kept hounding her and her family, including the slapping of false criminal cases against her brother. Rathore's six-month jail sentence for molestation and the Rs 1,000 fine came 19 years after the incident. (Times of India)

### **Economic Front:**

## The East



### Politics:

### Social front:

### Economic Front:

## The South



### Politics:

### **Tiwari quits in the wake of TV exposé**

Under pressure from political parties and women's organisations to quit after a television channel showed him, allegedly in a compromising position with women, Andhra Pradesh Governor Narayan Dutt Tiwari resigned on Saturday, citing 'health grounds.' A press communiqué issued by the Raj Bhavan said Mr. Tiwari submitted his resignation to President Pratibha Patil bringing to an end his 26-month long gubernatorial tenure. (A PTI report from New Delhi said the President had forwarded his letter to the Union Government for its recommendation). The resignation by the octogenarian leader, a freedom fighter who served a jail term during 1942-44, came a day after ABN, a Telugu news channel, showed explicit visuals which, it claimed, were those of Mr. Tiwari with three women at the Raj Bhavan. Although the Governor's office described the news story as "a tissue of lies," the widespread condemnation and protests made his continuance untenable. Mr. Tiwari had recently received a respite in a

paternity suit filed in the Delhi High Court by 29-year-old Rohit Shekhar to accept him as his natural son. The court dismissed the suit for being 'time-barred' and said Rohit Shekhar could have sought a declaration within three years of his becoming a major in 1997. Mr. Tiwari is the second Governor of Andhra Pradesh to leave under a cloud. The late Ram Lal was removed in the wake of the pro-democracy agitation in August 1984 when he unceremoniously dismissed the popularly-elected Government of N. T. Rama Rao and installed Nadendla Bhaskara Rao. Born in 1925 in Nainital district, Mr. Tiwari served as Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh four times and became the first elected Chief Minister of the newly created Uttarakhand in 2002. He held important portfolios including Finance, Commerce, External Affairs and Petroleum at the Centre. He floated the Congress (Tiwari) in 1995 following differences with P.V. Narasimha Rao but later merged the party with the Congress. (The Hindu)

### **Protests continue in Telangana, Osmania university tense**

Rallies, hunger strikes and demonstrations continued in Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh after the Joint Action Committee (JAC) intensified its agitation, mounting pressure on the Centre for a separate statehood. The all-party JAC, including major parties like TDP and number of other outfits, had called for protest rallies across the region followed by a bandh on December 30 to press for the Telangana issue. The JAC held a marathon meeting last night following which the decision to step up the protests was taken. Meanwhile, police foiled the indefinite hunger strikes being observed for the last five days by the students of Osmania University late last night and shifted some of them to hospital after their health showed sign of weakness. The Osmania University Students called for massive students convention on January 3, 2010 in support of the Telangana statehood demand. (The Hindustan Times)

### **Narasimhan takes over as Andhra governor**

Chhattisgarh Governor E.S.L. Narasimhan on Monday took additional charge as the governor of Andhra Pradesh following the resignation of N.D. Tiwari. Chief Justice of Andhra Pradesh High Court A.R. Dave administered the oath of office to Narasimhan at Raj Bhavan, the official residence of the governor. Chief Minister K. Rosaiah, his cabinet colleagues, leaders of various parties, Chief Secretary Ramakanth Reddy and other top officials attended the simple ceremony. Narasimhan was given additional charge following Tiwari's resignation in the wake of an alleged sex scandal. Tiwari resigned Saturday citing health grounds, a day after a Telugu channel showed pictures of a man purported to be Tiwari in compromising position with three women in Raj Bhavan. Tiwari has denied the allegations. Narasimhan, former director of the Intelligence Bureau, takes charge as the 22nd governor of the state at a time when Andhra Pradesh is embroiled in a violent agitation over separate statehood to the Telangana region. The central government felt that as a former IPS officer of Andhra Pradesh cadre, his services would be useful in dealing with the agitation. Narasimhan, 63, retired from the IB in 2006. Hailing from Tamil Nadu, he is a graduate in physics from Madras University. He did his post-graduation in political science and also did law from the same university. An alumnus of the National Defence College, New Delhi, Narasimhan joined the IPS in 1968 and was allotted the Andhra Pradesh cadre. Though he spent very little time in the state, he knows Telugu and is well versed with the

state of affairs. He also served as the first secretary in the Indian embassy in Moscow from 1981 to 1984. (The Hindustan Times)

### **I apologise but I've done no wrong: Tiwari**

The former Andhra Pradesh Governor, N.D. Tiwari, who resigned in the wake of a sex scandal, on Monday said the allegations against him were “fabricated and false.” On return to his home State, Uttarakhand, 84-year-old Tiwari told journalists at the Jollygrant Airport: “It is baseless, fake... It is risky to even talk to a woman ... Anyone can make an allegation. It is 100 per cent wrong allegation.” He said some people in Andhra Pradesh hatched a conspiracy against him. Declining to name anyone, he said some people associated with the Telangana statehood agitation wanted to meet President Pratibha Patil during her proposed visit to Hyderabad, but he refused to entertain their request. This angered these people and they hatched a conspiracy against him, he claimed. “I apologise to the nation but I have done no wrong. I have been framed,” he added. The Congress leader said he had no grudge against anybody and would continue to serve the country as well as society. “I am not disturbed. I have participated in the freedom movement and will fight it out,” he said. “I am not going to retire from politics.” (The Hindu)

### **Hyderabad, Telangana region hit by bandh in support of statehood**

Normal life was affected across Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh on Wednesday as the bandh called by Telangana Joint Action Committee in support of a separate state began this morning. The bandh call had its impact as the Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (APSRTC) and railways suspended their services. The APSRTC suspended over 9000 buses plying in Telangana region and those going towards Vijayawada. Thousands of city buses in Hyderabad were cancelled due to which passengers had a tough time reaching their destinations. Many of them were stranded at various places. Private vehicles and auto drivers had a field day in Hyderabad and other places as commuters had no other option except paying the high fare demanded by them. Heavy police force has been deployed across the region to avoid any untoward incident. Prohibitory orders under section 144 have been clamped in Hyderabad and other places. The JAC, comprising Congress, Telugu Desam, BJP and TRS and number of Telangana outfits, would meet in the evening to chalk out their future course of action on the Telangana issue. (The Times of India)

### **Social front:**

### **Economic Front:**

### **With bandhs & blockades, industry image takes a beating in A.P.**

A fresh advisory by the U.S. to its citizens to defer non-essential travel to Telangana and certain areas of Hyderabad has industry captains further worried about the falling image of ‘Brand Andhra Pradesh’. Industry leaders are dismayed at impact of the two travel advisories issued in quick succession as well as Chief Minister K. Rosaiah’s recent statement that the government

was losing revenue of Rs. 100 crore a day because of the agitations. These, they fear, will deter representatives of the U.S.-based pharma and information technology companies from travelling to Hyderabad to place fresh orders, renew contracts or firm up new plans. Hyderabad is the bulk drugs capital of India. It accounted for software exports worth Rs. 32,000 crore in 2008-09. Events of the past month have already taken their toll of the CII's Partnership Summit, which was shifted to Chennai. It was scheduled to be addressed by the Prime Ministers of India and Malaysia, and the Presidents of Maldives and Uganda, besides leaders of 25 other countries. "We have missed a great opportunity to sign MoUs for setting up new industries, says Y. Harishchandra Prasad, president, CII AP chapter. In a bid to undo the damage, the Chief Minister has sought intervention of Union Home Minister P. Chidambaram and Commerce Minister Anand Sharma to bring the event back to Hyderabad. The summit, according to Mr. Prasad, would have given a boost to industry as it did give to the pharma and IT sectors during the previous summits in the State. He estimated the loss suffered by the public and private sectors at Rs. 2,000 crore. Apart from pharma and IT, the sectors of hospitality & tourism and manufacturing, particularly small and medium enterprises, have taken a beating. J. A. Chowdary, president, The Indus Entrepreneurs, A. P. chapter, said frequent bandhs and road blockades were causing anxiety to IT companies, including those engaged in R&D as well the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) sector, as they found it difficult to meet deadlines. They were chalking out plans to move to other cities if the political stalemate did not end soon. The unrest was continuing on New Year Eve, a time when new contracts were signed. "No foreign company will dare come forward to give business to Hyderabad in this situation," said Mr. Chowdary. (The Hindu)

## **West India**



## **Politics:**

### **Maharashtra is for all, says Mohan Bhagwat**

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) sarsanghchalak Mohan Bhagwat on Friday attacked Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) leader Raj Thackeray's "Marathi manoos" policies and said Maharashtra belonged to everybody and not only to the Marathi people. Censuring Mr. Thackeray's divisive policies, Mr. Bhagwat said everybody had a right to earn his or her living in Maharashtra and there were no minorities in India. The RSS chief also stated that "while only

Parsis and Jews could be considered as ethnic minorities, the concept of creating minorities was being used to satisfy selfish political ends.” (The Hindu)

**Social front:**

**Economic Front:**