

➤ Scientists have found a source of **STEM CELLS** that does not involve destroying embryos. The cells can be harvested easily from the fluid surrounding developing babies in the womb and could help overcome ethical concerns. It has been known for decades that the placenta and the amniotic fluid (the liquid that envelops a developing baby) contain important cells, "We asked the question: is there a possibility that within this cell population we can capture true stem cells? The answer is yes," said Anthony Atala, director of the **INSTITUTE FOR REGENERATIVE MEDICINE** at Wake Forest in **NORTH CAROLINA**, who led the research. Stem cells can grow into any type of body tissue and are used to research cures for conditions such as diabetes and brain disorders, including Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease. It is hoped that one day they may be used to grow replacement tissue that is a perfect genetic match for patients. Stem cells from embryos are highly prized because they are the most adaptable. They are hard to obtain, however, because they are normally harvested from embryos left over from fertility treatments. Anti-abortion campaigners argue this leads to destruction of human life. Adults also have stem cells but these can turn into fewer types of body tissue.

➤ **TELOMERES**, which are nubby strips of DNA that cap the ends of chromosomes, predict a man's risk of developing heart disease, according to study published in the issue of *The Lancet*. Telomeres get shorter each time a cell divides. Shorter telomeres indicate older cells and are thus a marker of biological ageing, which varies according to the individual. British doctors measured the length of telomeres in the chromosomes of white blood cells among men aged 45-64 who had enrolled in a study on coronary prevention in Scotland. The 484 men who went on to develop coronary heart disease had shorter telomeres than the 1,058 who remained disease-free, the investigators discovered.

➤ A **TAIWANESE** research team on Jan. 29 said it had produced a bird flu vaccine that had passed initial animal tests. "The vaccine against the H5N1 strain has passed tests on mice", said **PELE CHUANG**, the head of a 25 member team at the National Health Research Institute. The H5N1 bird flu strain is potentially deadly to humans. The vaccine, using cell culture technology, needs validation by the Health Ministry before human tests are undertaken. They are due to be completed before the end of June next year. If all goes to plan, mass production of the vaccines - up to a million doses a year - would begin in late 2008.

➤ **THE INDIAN SPACE RESEARCH ORGANISATION (ISRO)** hopes to land a motorized rover on the moon in 2010 or 2011, as a part of its second Chandrayaan mission. The rover will be designed to move on wheels on the lunar surface, pick up samples of soil or rocks, do in situ chemical analysis and send the data to the mother-spacecraft Chandrayaan-II, which will be orbiting above. Chandrayaan-II will transmit the data to the ground. **ISRO CHAIRMAN, G.**

MADHAVAN NAIR said: "We are trying to conceive of an experiment in which the system will land on the lunar surface, more around and pick up samples, do their chemical analysis and transmit the data back to the ground. "Chandrayaan-II will consist of the spacecraft itself and a landing platform with the moon rover. The platform with the rover will hivel itself off after the spacecraft reaches its orbit above the moon, and land on lunar soil. Then the rover will roll out of the platform. M. Annadurai, Project Director, Chandrayaan-I, said: "Chandrayaan-II will carry a semi-hard or soft landing system. A motorised rover will be released on the moon's surface from the lander. The location for the lander will be identified using Chandrayaan-I data".

➤ On Jan. 29, scientists from across the world gathered to hammer out the final details of an authoritative report on climate change that is expected to project centuries of rising temperatures and sea levels unless there are curbs in emissions of carbon dioxide and other gases that trap heat in the atmosphere. Scientists involved in writing or reviewing the report say it is nearly certain to conclude that there is at least a 90 per cent chance the human caused emissions are the main factor in warming since 1950. The report is the forth since 1990 from the **INTER-GOVERNMENTAL PANEL** on climate Change, which is overseen by the United Nations. The report, several of the authors said, will describe a growing body of evidence that warming is likely to cause a profound transformation of the planet. Three large sections of the report will be forthcoming during the year. The first will be a summary for policy makers and information on basic climate science. Among the findings in recent drafts are: the Arctic Ocean could largely be devoid of ice during summer later in the century.

➤ The **LARGEST HARAPPAN NECROPOLIS** in the Indian subcontinent has been discovered near Sanauli village on the banks of Yamuna in Baghpat, Uttar Pradesh. The findings have been reported in the latest issue of *Puratattva*, the Indian Archaeological Society journal. The chairman of the Society **DR. S.P. GUPTA** said, "Such a site has never before been found and excavated in India. The area which is under sugarcane cultivation seems an unlikely place for a cemetery but it harbours 116 graves. Many more may be found". One of the most significant of findings has been the discovery of a grave with the sword and sheath which represents the Ganga valley civilization of the third and second millennia B.C. This suggests that there was an intermingling of the Harappans and the Gangetic civilization, evidence of which has never been found earlier." The cemetery seems to have been used over several centuries as burials were found at three superimposed levels. The tentative time bracket has been given from 2200 B.C. - 1800 B.C. which puts it in the Harappan period.

➤ Google has already planted its flag on the earth, the moon and Mars. The universe could be next. The Internet search company has struck a partnership with scientists building a huge sky-scanning telescope, with hopes of helping

the public access digital footage of asteroids, supernovas and distant galaxies. The 8.4-m LSST is expected to begin surveying the sky in 2013, from a mountaintop in Chile. Its goal is to scan space continuously, taking a series of 15 second exposures that allow it to cover the sky every three nights. The telescope will open “a movie-like window” on nearby asteroids and far-off exploding stars, and help explore the mysterious “**DARK ENERGY**” believed to fuel the universe’s expansion.

➤ The **TINY WOMAN DUBBED THE HOBBIT** who lived 18,000 years ago on a remote Indonesian island deserves to be deemed a new human species and not taken for a deformed modern human as skeptics asset, researchers said. In the latest salvo in a scientific shootout, an international team led by Florida State University anthropologist Dean Falk compared the Hobbit’s skull to those of nine people with microcephaly, a rare condition in which the head is abnormally small due to improper brain development. They concluded that the one-metre tall adult woman had a highly evolved brain, unlike that of a **MICROCEPHALIC** person. This, they say, confirms that she belongs to the proposed extinct species **HOMO FLORESIENSIS**, closely related to modern Homo sapiens.

➤ According to **IUCN**, the number of threatened animal and plant species has risen to 16,119.

➤ The pair of moons orbiting Pluto are named **NIX AND HYDRA**.

➤ Scientists find evidence of **GIANT HYDROCARBON** lakes on Saturn moon Titan.

➤ ‘**HONG KONG PROTOCOL**’, a new liver transplant protocol can halve Hepatitis B surgery costs.

The Stockholm Conference	1972
Nairobi Conference	1982
Helsinki Conference	1989
London Conference	1990
Copenhagen Conference	1992
The Rio summit	1992
Kyoto Summit	1997
World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg	2002
Stockholm Convention	2004
Montreal Summit	2005

➤ **JANUARY 2007** was the world’s hottest January on record, in further evidence that greenhouse gas emissions are causing global warming, Japanese scientists said. Temperatures across the planet were 0.45 degrees Celsius above average in January, the highest since figures were first compiled in 1891, the Japan Meteorological Agency said. It said that temperatures were particularly high in eastern Russia and northern Europe.

Reasons behind the high temperatures are considered to be the impact of global warming due to an increase in carbon dioxide, along with El Nino and the cyclical natural movement in temperatures.

➤ **RISING TEMPERATURES** will leave millions more people hungry by 2080 and cause critical water shortages in China and Australia, as well as parts of Europe and the United States, according to a new global climate report.

By the end of the century, climate change will bring water scarcity to between 1.1 and 3.2 billion people as temperatures rise by 2 to 3 Celsius (3.6 to 4.8 Fahrenheit), a leaked draft of an **INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE (IPCC)**.

➤ The report, due for release in April but detailed in The Age newspaper, said an additional 200 million to 600 million people across the world would face food shortages in another 70 years, while coastal flooding would hit another 7 million homes.

➤ The IPCC was set up in 1988 by the **WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION** and the **UN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM TO GUIDE POLICY** makers globally on the impact of climate change.

➤ Thirty-six **INDIAN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT)** and business process outsourcing (BPO) made it to the 2007 Global Services 100 list of the best IT and BPO companies in the world.

➤ The US came second with 32 companies, according to Global Services magazine which compiles the list on the basis of an 18 country survey. However, over a dozen of the US companies service their clients largely through BPO offices based in India.

➤ Scientists have found that covering just 0.5 per cent of the world’s hot deserts with **CONCENTRATED SOLAR POWER (CSP)** would provide for the world’s electricity needs. CSP technology uses mirrors to concentrate the sun’s rays on a gas-filled vessel.

➤ CSP technology is not new. There has been a plant in the Mojave desert in California for the past 15 years. Others are being built in Navads, southern Spain and Australia. There are different forms of CSP but all share in common the use of mirrors to concentrate the sun’s rays on a pipe or vessel containing some sort of gas or liquid that heats up to around 400 C (752 F) and is used to power conventional steam turbines.

➤ According to a report in Proceedings of the **NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES**, a tiny ant **ODONTOMACHUS BAURI** (its scientific name) has the fastest jaw in the animal kingdom – literally quicker than the blink of an eye. The trap-jaw ant can clamp its mandibles shut at between 78 miles per hour and 145 mph. The ant is able to store powerful forces and release them suddenly. From an engineering perspective this may be useful in robotics.

➤ **NASA** reported in October 2006 the discovery of 16 extra-solar planets in the central region of the **MILKY WAY** with its **HUBBLE SPACE TELESCOPE**, hinting the possible existence of approximately six billion Jupiter-sized planets in the galaxy. Five of the newly discovered bodies, represent a new extreme type of planet not found in any nearby searches. These are dubbed as ultra-short-Period Planets, which whirl around their stars in less than one Earth day.

➤ Russia has agreed to build additional nuclear power units at **KOODANKULAM ATOMIC STATION** and the construction of more 'Russian design' nuclear power plants at yet-to-be-identified new sites, among agreements reached on the first day of the **RUSSIAN PRESIDENT, VLADIMIR PUTIN'S** visit to New Delhi on, January 25.

➤ Besides the civil nuclear co-operation, eight accords were signed by the two sides, including one on sharing of data from **RUSSIA'S GLOBAL NAVIGATION SATELLITE SYSTEM (GLONASS)** and another to jointly launch a satellite **YOUTHSAT**. The two sides also supported early finalization of a result-oriented programme of action by the Joint Study Group set up to increase bilateral trade to \$10 billion by 2010. The issue of Indian participation in oil exploration and production with Russian companies in India, Russia and third countries was also discussed during delegation-level talks.

- Geostationary, **GEO** Satellite orbits the equator, the same rate as the Earth spins.

- * Commercial and **MILITARY COMMUNICATIONS SATELLITES** (S35,760 km)

- Asynchronous, **MEO & LEO** Satellite passes overhead at different times of day on Earth.

- * Global Positioning System 9,700 to 19,400 km)

- * Science (4,800 to 9,700 km)

- * Observation (480 to 970 km)

- * Hubble Telescope (600 km)

- * International Space Station (400 km)

- Polar Satellite flies at a low altitude and passes over the planet's poles on each revolution. Often used for mapping and photography

- * Military Intelligence

- * Weather (850 km)

- Active satellites in orbit number more than 800, representing 4% of total objects catalogued by the US space surveillance network.

- The rest includes abandoned satellites, spent rocket boosters and other debris.

Space Junk (850 km)

- Approximately 20,000 items of space junk, large enough to be tracked with radar, are in orbit.

- 46% are in **LOW EARTH ORBIT (LEO)**

- Most are remains of old rockets, satellites, discarded equipment and other hardware released during deployment.

➤ A **FRENCH-LED SATELLITE** project **COROT** was launched on December 27, from Kazakhstan to seek out new Earth-like planets beyond the solar system and to explore the interior of stars.

➤ The **COROT** project sent into orbit a telescope capable of detecting planets smaller than is currently known – some may be just a few times the size-of Earth and rocky, rather than the larger, gaseous types.

➤ **COROT**, short for convection rotation and planetary transits, is the first instrument capable of finding small rocky planets beyond the solar system.

➤ **COROT**, project of the **French National Space Studies Center (CNES)** in which **EUROPEAN SPACE AGENCY (ESA)** is participating, will be able to detect smaller, rocky planets by measuring the light emitted by a star and detecting the drop in brightness caused when a planet passes in front of it.

➤ **THE UNITED STATES** could generate as much electricity by 2050 as that flowing today from all of the country's nuclear power plants by developing technologies that tap heat locked in deep layers of granite. The technique, called enhanced geothermal, involves drilling several holes – some two or three miles deep – into granite that has been held at chicken-roasting temperatures, around 400 degrees or more, by insulating layers of rock above. There are successful plants harvesting heat from deep hot rock in Australia, Europe and Japan.

➤ The world's 10 warmest years have all occurred since 1994 in a temperature record dating back a century and a half according to the United Nations' weather agency.

BRITAIN'S Met office makes a global forecast every January with the University of East Anglia, and expected the world's average temperature to be 0.4 degrees Celsius above the 1961-1990 long-term average of 14 degrees. There is a 60% probability that 2007 will be as warm or warmer than the current warmest year, 1998, which itself was 0.52 degrees above the long-term average it said in a statement.

➤ More scientists agree that temperatures will rise by between two and six degrees Celsius this century due mainly to carbon emissions from burning fossil fuels for power and transport.

➤ **THE KYOTO PROTOCOL** is the only global action plan to curb carbon emissions, but it expires in 2012, and is rejected by world's biggest polluter – the United States.

➤ **CHINA** unveiled on January 5, a new-generation fighter aircraft Jian-10 which officials claim is "**SUPERIOR**" in many aspects to the **US F-16** and French Mirage 2000 jets. The **J-10 FIGHTER JET**, a third-generation fighter plane independently designed by Chinese military experts, is the most advanced fighter jet developed by China.

- **CHINESE** scientists have successfully bred partially green fluorescent pigs by injecting fluorescent green protein into embryonic pigs, which they hope will boost stem cell research.
- **NASA** scientists are developing a speech recognition system that can understand and relay words that haven't been said out loud. The system uses electrodes attached to the throat to detect biological signals that occur as a person reads or talks to himself.
- **ENVIRONMENT MINISTERS** of the **EUROPEAN UNION (EU)** announce in Brussels (Belgium) that they will cut down overall carbon dioxide emissions by 20 percent by 2010, however, the E.U.'s 27 nations are still to agree what each should do to meet a 20 percent target for the entire bloc.
- **BANGLADESH** president **MR. IAJUDDIN AHMED** steps down as interim leader and postpones elections due in January. His departure came just hours after he had announced a state of emergency and a curfew in the country.
- **MR. KARIM MASIMOV** is appointed the new prime minister of Kazakhstan.
- **MR. MICHAEL PERHAM**, a 14 year old British school-boy steered his way into the record books this afternoon when he became the youngest person to single-handedly sail the Atlantic.
- **MR. DANIEL ORTEGA**, the newly elected president of Nicaragua, takes office on January 10, 2007.

PERSONALITIES

- **DR. BALDEV RAJ**, Director, **INDIRA GANDHI CENTRE FOR ATOMIC RESEARCH (IGCAR)**, Kalpakkam, on August 21, was elected Chairman of a seven-country International project to define a future **FAST REACTOR WITH CLOSED NUCLEAR FUEL CYCLE (FR WITH CNFC)** that will contribute to the generation of 300 GWe to 500 GWe of Nuclear Power by 2050. The seven countries are **India, Russia, China, France, Japan, South Korea and Ukraine**.
- **ACTRESS SHABANA AZMI** has been named the recipient of this year's prestigious **GANDHI INTERNATIONAL PEACE PRIZE**, which will be awarded to her at a ceremony in the British House of Commons on October 26. The award is given away by the London-based Gandhi Foundation.
- For the first time in the history of New Zealand, a man of Indo-Fijian descent, **JUDGE ANAND SATYANAND** was sworn in as the Governor-General on August 22, 2006. He is that **FIRST GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF ASIAN DESCENT**. He replaced Dame Sylvania Cartwright.
- **QUEEN ELIZABETH OF BRITAIN** appointed **MR. SATYANAND** in April this year on the recommendation of **NEW ZEALAND PRIME MINISTER HELEN CLARK**. The Governor-General is the representation of the New Zealand monarch, which is Queen Elizabeth II at present.
- An Ethiopian court convicted former dictator **MR. MENGISTU HAILE MIRIAM** of genocide for atrocities committed during his 1974-1991 Marxist regime after a marathon 12-year trial.
- **ISRAEL'S** Labour party appoints **MR. RALEB MAJADELE** as science and technology minister – making him the first Arab Muslim in Israel's cabinet.
- **JAMES JOSEPH BROWN**, the '**GODFATHER OF SOUL**', dies on December 25, 2006. An American entertaining icon, Brown left an indelible influence on 20th Century popular music.
- In the **U.S. CONGRESS**, Democrats **NANCY PELOSI** AND **STENY HOYER** are elected Speaker of the House of Representatives and Senate Majority Leader respectively.
- Prominent Anti-Syrian Christian politician **PIERRE GEMAYEL** is assassinated in a suburb of Beirut on November 20, 2006. Gemayel, the minister of industry and son of former **PRESIDENT AMIN GEMAYEL**, was a supporter of the anti-Syrian parliamentary majority, which is locked in a power struggle with pro-Syrian factions led by Hezbollah.
- Ex-Russian spy **ALEXANDER LITVINENKO**, poisoned in London in the first week of November 2006, dies aged 41, Alexander, a fierce critic of **RUSSIAN PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN**, fell ill after meeting two Russians at a hotel. Litvinenko had been investigating the killing of **RUSSIAN JOURNALIST ANNA POLITKOVSKAYA**, also a vocal critic of Putin who was gunned down at her Moscow flat on October 7. Traces of Polonium – 210 were found in his body.
- **ECUADOR'S** leftist **RAFAEL CORREA** is the country's new president after winning over 55% per cent of the votes.
- **VENEZUELA'S** incumbent president **HUGO CHAVEZ** wins the presidential election, defeating his nearest rival, Manuel Rosales.
- The **2006 Doha Asian Games** suffer a tragedy on December 7, 2006, when South Korean rider **KIM HYUNG-CHIL** dies after falling from his horse during the equestrian competition.
- Fiji's military chief, Commander **FRANK BAINIMARAMA**, topple prime minister Laisenia Qarase's government, claiming it is corrupt. He appoints Jona Senilagakali as the prime minister.

- Madagascar's millionaire president, **MARE RAVALOMANANA** wins a second term in office. Former U.S. president **MR. GERALD FORD** dies, aged 93, Mr. Ford was never elected president. He took office after **RICHARD NIXON** resigned over the Watergate scandal in 1974 but lost to Jimmy Carter in 1976. Mr. Ford was the only U.S. president never to win a national election.
- Turkmenistan's authoritarian president **MR. SAPARMURAT NIYAZOV**, who ruled the Central Asian country for 21 years, has died aged 66. **MR. NIYAZOV**, who named cities and airports after himself in a personality cult, left no designated successor.
- Social activist **ANNA HAZARE** on August 9 began an indefinite hunger strike against proposed amendments to the Right to Information Act at Alandi, a famous pilgrimage centre, near Pune. On August 21, he called off his 11-day hunger strike, following the centre's decision not to bring in amendments to the **RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT**, for now.
- An Iranian-American telecommunications entrepreneur **ANOUSHEH** was a passenger aboard in the cramped interior of Soyuz TMA-9 for a flight to the **INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION (ISS)** on September 18. She reportedly paid \$ 20 million to become the fourth private astronaut to take a trip on a Russian spacecraft and visit the station. She has set down three space records: the first female tourist, first female Muslim and the first Iranian in orbit.
- year old **NISHCHAL NARAYANAN** has got an entry into the Guinness Book of World Records in the "**MOST RANDOM OBJECTS MEMORISED**" category. He broke the record of his own teacher, **JAYASIMHA RAVIRALA**, who made it to the **GUINNESS BOOK** for memorising 200 objects in December 2005 in Hyderabad. Nischal made the record of memorising 225 random objects without seeing them in the presence of 15 eminent judges.
- **CBI DIRECTOR VIJAY SHANKAR** has been elected to the Executive Committee of Interpol. In the election to the post of delegate for Asia, he received the highest number of votes.
- **RAJA RAO** a pioneer of Indian writing in English and best known for his novels **KANTHAPURA** and **THE SERPENT AND THE ROPE**, died in Austin, USA. He along with R K Narayan and Mulk Raj Anand, formed the **GREAT TRIO** of Indian English Literature. Some of the great classics such as **THE SERPENT AND THE ROPE (1960)**, **THAT CAT AND SHAKESPEARE (1966)**, **COMRADE KIRILLOV (1976)**, and **THE CHESSMASTER HIS MOVES (1988)**. The noted author was honoured with the Padma Bhushan in 1969.
- Former **ORISSA CHIEF MINISTER AND VETERAN CONGRESS LEADER NANDINI SATPATHY** passed away. Ms. Satpathy was the second woman to become Chief Minister in Independent India. Known as "**THE IRON LADY OF ORISSA**". A prominent author and translator, she has several books to her credit, including Ketoti Katha (1967) and Saptadasi (1989). Winner of several awards, she also translated Taslima Nasreen's Lajja into Oriya. Satpathy was born to an illustrious family in 1931 at Christian Sahi, Cuttack. Her father **PADMABHUSHAN KALINDI CHARAN PANIGRAHI** was a renowned author of Oriya literature.
- Well-known economist **Y.K. ALAGH** will replace DR. VERGHESE KURIEN as the chairman of **IRMA**, Y.K. Alagh has held important portfolios as union minister of power and minister for planning and programme implementation. He was also a member of the Planning Commission.
- **M. DAMODARAN**, Chairman of **SEBI** is elected Chairman of the **EMERGING MARKETS COMMITTEE** of the **INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION OF SECURITIES COMMISSIONS (IOSCO)** at its annual conference in Hong Kong.
- **INDIRA NOOYI MS**: Pepsico named **INDIRA NOOYI**, an Indian, as its worldwide Chief Executive Officer from October one, 2006, **MS. NOOYI** will succeed **Mr. STEVE REINEMUND**.
- **NARAYANA MURTHY JOINS THE GLOBAL BOARDS**: India's **IT ICON AND IT MAJOR INFOSYS CHIEF MENTOR N.R. NARAYANA MURTHY** will join the Board of Trustees of **A**
- **PATHAK PANEL**: The **OIL PAYOFF** Scam.
- **GIRIJA DEVI** An dalit woman from Bihar was invited to give speech at the woman development cell of the UN for her work on the development of dalits.
- **ANIL AGARWAL, CEO, VEDANTA RESOURCES**, signs a MoU with **Orissa government** to set up a **VEDANTA UNIVERSITY** with an investment of **\$1 BILLION**. It will be modelled on Harvard and Stanford Universities and will have a sprawling campus of 10,000 acres and 1 lakh students by 2009.
- Former Daewoo boss **KIM WOO-JUNG** is sentenced to 10 years in prison for fraud on May 30, 2006.
- **CHUNG MOO-KOO**, the Chairman of Hyundai Motor is arrested on charges on embezzlement and breach of trust Hyundai is the worlds 7th largest automaker and a pillar of South Korea's economy. He is charged with setting up a \$105 million slush fund to bribe government officials and politicians. He is also accused of causing damage of more than \$315 million in damages to the company through misconduct.
- **MARIA ESTHER DE CAPOVILLA (116)**, the world's

oldest person dies in the Ecuador capital Quito.

➤ **GOLDMAN SACHS** chairman **HENRY PAULSON JR** will be the new United States **TREASURY SECRETARY**. He will replace John Snow who has resigned after a three year stint.

➤ **BISMILLAH KHAN: SHEHNAI** maestro **USTAD BISMILLAH KHAN**, died on August 21, 2006. In **2001**, he became the **A** to be awarded the **BHARAT RATNA**, India's highest civilian honour.

➤ **VAN ALLEN DEAD: JAMES A. VAN ALLEN**, the physicist who made the first major scientific discovery of the early space age, the Earth-circling radiation belts that bear his name and sent spacecraft instruments to observe the outer reaches of the solar system, died.

➤ **MARK INGLIS**, a New Zealander, becomes the first double-amputee to climb Mount Everest.

➤ Fiji's incumbent Prime Minister **LAISENIA QARASE** wins a majority in the general elections.

➤ **FIDEL CASTRO** of **CUBA** temporarily hands over the presidency to his brother, **RAUL CASTRO**. Fidel Castro has been in power since 1959 and is the world's oldest ruling head of a state.

➤ Nobel Prize winner **GUNTER GRASS** admits to having served in Hitler's dreaded **Waffen SS** during the Second World War. He says his "**SILENCE ALL THESE YEARS WEIGHED ON ME**". He says he was ashamed of having been in the **Waffen SS**. **GRASS WON THE NOBLE PRIZE FOR LITERATURE IN 1999**. He is regarded as an important moral voice speaking out against xenophobia and war. The **Waffen SS** was a combat force of **SS**, which took part in fighting alongside the regular army.

➤ **NELSON MANDELA** wins the **AMBASSADOR OF CONSCIENCE AWARD, 2006**, the Amnesty International's most prestigious honour.

➤ **JUDGE ANAND SATYANANDA**, a leading lawyer and Ombudsman of Indo-Fijian descent, was sworn-in as New Zealand's Governor-General. He has become the first Governor-General of Asian descent.

➤ **ATASHA KAMPUSCH**, an 18 year-old Austrian girl who was held hostage for 8 years, is found alive in the cellar of a house in a village near Vienna. Her captor, Wolfgang Priklopil, commits suicide just after Kampusch escapes.

➤ **Baloch rebel leader, AKBAR KHAN BUGTI** is killed by Pakistani security forces in a cave near Dera Bugti in Balochistan province on August 26, 2006.

➤ **SIR CLYDE LEOPOLD WATCOTT**, the great West Indian cricketer, dies on August 26, 2006, at the age of 80. **WALCON, WITH EVERTON WEEKES AND FRANK WORRELL**. Was one of the so-called **3 Ws** who dominated West Indian cricket in the years after World War.II. He averaged 56.68 for the west Indies over 44 Tests with 15 centuries. He published two autobiographies, **ISLAND CRICKETERS (1958) AND SIXTY YEARS ON THE BACKFOOT (1999)**

➤ **STEVE IRWIN**, the quirky 44-year-old Australian naturalist who won worldwide acclaim, was killed by a stingray barb through the chest on September 4, 2006 while diving off Australia's northeast coast. Steve was hit by a stingray in the chest while filming an Underwater documentary off Port Douglas, Irwin won global fame following for his dare-devil antics but also triggered outrage in 2004 by holding his then one-month-old baby while feeding a snapping crocodile at his Australian zoo.

➤ **AJEET BAJAJ**: Becomes the first Indian to **ski** to the North Pole. Ajeet Bajaj is the first Indian to reach the North Pole on skis as part of a cross-country skiing expedition from a Russian polar research station on the Arctic Ice to the North Pole-a distance of 200 km-in 11 days.

➤ **PRATYUSH SINHA** sworn in as new **CENTRAL VIGILANCE COMMISSIONER**.

➤ **CBI DIRECTOR VIJAY SHANKAR** elected to the post of **delegate for Asia in the Executive Committee of Interpol**.

➤ **M.H. KHERAWALA** takes over as **CENTRAL BOARD OF DIRECT TAXES CHAIRPERSON**.

➤ **ANJALI GUPTA** the first **INDIAN AIR FORCE WOMAN OFFICER** to face court martial is dismissed from service for indiscipline.

➤ President nominates **M. S. SWAMINATHAN AND KAPILA VATSYAYAN** to the Rajya Sabha.

➤ **SUKHADEO THORAT** named the UGC Chairman.

➤ The former Lok Sabha Speaker, **PURNO AGITOK SANGMA** wins the Tura Parliamentary seat in Meghalaya for the ninth consecutive term.

➤ The doyen of cooperation movement and "**WHITE REVOLUTION**", **VARGHESE KURIEN** quits as member and Chairman of the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation.

➤ **THE NARMADA BACHAO ANDOLAN** leader **MEDHA PATKAR** launches an indefinite strike in New Delhi demanding that the height of the **SARDAR SAROVAR DAM** not be raised and rehabilitation of the affected people.

- Australian "**CROCODILE HUNTER**" **STEVE IRWIN (44)** dies following a stingray blow to the chest while filming a documentary on the Great Barrier Reef off the coast of Port Douglas in Queensland State.
- Princess Kiko, wife of Japan's crown Prince **NARUHITO** gives birth to a male child, later named **HISAHITO**, the long awaited heir to the **CHRY-SANTHEMUM** throne.
- **PUNE'S SHEETAL MAHAJAN** has become the first woman in the world to successfully do a free fall para-jump on the South pole from a height of 12,000 feet in minus 33 degrees C. She achieved the feat on December 22, Sheetal is also the first woman to participate in a group jump over the south pole, undertaken by an Indian team of four. Sheetal (23) had successfully jumped over the north pole in 2004. She had never even been in an aircraft before she jumped in 2004.
- Bhutan's King **JIGME SINGYE** Wangchuk abdicated the throne, 34 years after ascending it, in favour of his son Crown Prince Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuk. The 26-year-old **JIGME KHESAR BECOMES THE FIFTH MONARCH** and head of state of the Himalayan Kingdom, which is set to adopt the system of parliamentary democracy in 2008.
- **UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL** appointed **INDIA'S ATUL KHARE** his special representative for Timor-Leste and head of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste. Mr. Khare replaced Sukehiro Hasegawa of Japan, whose appointment expired on September 30.
- The new envoy served with the United Nations Missions of Support in East Timor from June 2002 till its completion in May 2005, first as chief of staff and later as deputy special representative of the Secretary-General. Prior to joining the U.N. Mr. Khare was a member of the Indian Foreign Service.
- On December 8, **VICE PRESIDENT BHAIRON SINGH SHEKHAWAT** has been unanimously elected president of the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) for the third time. He holds the post for a period of two years.
- Chairman of the Railway Board **J.P. BATRA** was elected **CHAIRMAN OF THE INTERNATIONAL UNION OF RAILWAYS (UIR)**, a Paris-based world organisation for international cooperation among railways and promotion of rail transport mode. Mr. Batra is the first non-European to be elected to the post.
- On December 14, **ANTON BALASINGHAM(68)**, theoretician and political adviser of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), passed away in London after a spell of illness.
- **MR. BALASINGHAM** associated with the Tamil liberation struggle for more than 30 years and participated as Chief negotiator of the LTTE in almost all political negotiations, beginning with the Thimpu talks in 1985. As a close associate of **LTTE** chief, **VELUPILLAI PRABAKARAN** he was regarded as the ideologue of the Tamil Tigers.
- Former **US PRESIDENT GERALD R. FORD**, who picked up the pieces of **RICHARD NIXON'S SCANDAL-SHATTERED WHITE HOUSE** as the 38th and only unelected president in America's history, died on December 26 at Los Angeles. He was 93. Mr. Ford took office after Richard Nixon reigned over the Watergate scandal in 1974. But he lost to Jimmy Carter in the 1976 election. Gerald Ford became the longest living US president when he passed 93 years and 121 days, the record held by Ronald Reagan.
- Turkmenistan's authoritarian president-for-life **SAPARMURAD NIYAZOV** died, raising concerns about stability in the gas-rich but impoverished Central Asian country of 5 million. He was 66. He ruled Turkmenistan with an iron fist for 21 years, the longest stay in power for any leader in the post-Soviet states. Mr. Niyazov held the posts of president, prime minister, commander-in-chief and head of the Democratic Party the only legal political party in Turkmenistan.
- **AMERICAN JOSEPH BARBERA**, half of the Hanna-Barbera animation team that produced such beloved cartoon characters as Tom and Jerry, Yogi Bear and the Flintstones, died. He was 95.
- Eminent painter and **PADMASHREE AWARDEE BIKASH BHATTACHARJEE** died on December 18 after a prolonged illness in Kolkata. He was 66. He was the founder member of the Society of Contemporary Artists.
- Former **GE CHILEAN** dictator **AUGUSTO PINOCHET**, who terrorized his opponents for 17 years after taking power in a bloody coup, died on December 10, ending a decade of intensifying efforts to bring him to trial. He was 91. Supporters saw Pinochet as a Cold War hero for overthrowing democratically elected president **SALVADOR ALENDE** at a time when the U.S. was working to destabilize his Marxist Government and keep Chile from exporting communism in Latin America. But the world soon reacted in horror as Santiago's main soccer stadium filled with political prisoners to be tortured, shot, disappeared or forced into exile.
- Former **BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION (BBC)** chairman **MARMADUKE HUSSEY** died at the age of 83 on December 27 in London. Hussey was appointed to the top BBC job in 1986, steering it for a decade during which it was criticised for alleged left-wing bias under conservative **PRIME MINISTER MARGARET THATCHER**.

➤ His journalistic career began in 1949 when he joined 'Associated Newspapers' as a trainee. He had been a soldier during World War II, losing a leg. After his time at the BBC he was given a life peerage, becoming Lord Hussey, in **QUEEN ELIZABETH II'S** Birthday Honours list in 1996.

➤ **SUNIL MITTAL**, chairman & group managing director of the Bharti group, has been adjudged as CEO of the Year by the leading business daily Business Standard. The award goes to him for transforming Bharti into India's biggest private telecom service provider, backed by leading edge technologies, and for charting new territory in agri-exports and retailing.

Though best known as India's telecom czar with 30 million customers, Mittal's crowning glory came in late November when he tied up with Wal-Mart, the biggest retailer in the world. He also counts the Rothschilds, Vodafone, SingTel, and Axa among his business partners.

Previous winners of the award include **TATA STEEL MD B MUTHURAMAN**, Bharat Forge chairman & MD Baba N. Kalyani, Tata group chairman Ratan Tata, Reliance group chairman Mukesh Ambani, Hero group chairman Brij Mohan Lal Munjal, and Infosys chief mentor NR Narayana Murthy. **MR. MITTAL** has also been adjudged as **ASIA'S BUSINESSMAN OF THE YEAR** by the US magazine Fortune for steering his telecom business in the world's fastest growing wireless market. Fortune said, "After establishing Bharti Airtel as India's number one mobile service provider, Mittal is now forging his most audacious partnership yet.

➤ **SANDIP DAS**, deputy MD, Hutchison-Essar, has resigned. Das, who put in 13 long years with the India's third largest private mobile phone firm is moving to Malaysia where he will head Maxis Malaysia, Malaysia's largest cellphone firm as CEO. Das, second in command for nearly two years now to MD Asim Ghosh, has taken up his new assignment recently.

In his new job, He will be based in Kuala Lumpur and report directly to Data Jamal, Group CEO, Maxis Group. The mechanical engineer and MBA from Delhi's FMS, he is also expected to play a critical role in Maxis expansion in India through Aircel, where it holds a 74 per cent stake. For Das this will be his second overseas placement, having put in a stint with Dubai's Al Futtaim group.

➤ **VINOD SAWHNY**, currently the joint president of Enterprise Services, Bharti Airtel Ltd, has been appointed as the Head of Bharti Retail (Pvt) Ltd. Mr. Sawhny will report to the chairman of Bharti Retail (Pvt) Ltd.

In his new assignment, Mr. Sawhny will look after the new retail initiatives of Bharti Enterprises including the operations in Hyper-markets. Neighbourhood stores and Super Centres on a pan-India footprint.

He joined Bharti in 2002 as the CEO of Northern Region (Mobile) operations.

➤ **MR. PRASOON JOSHI** has been appointed as the ex-

ecutive chairman of McCann Erickson India.

Mr. Joshi is credited with turning the fortunes of many big brands, the most outstanding recent examples being Coca Cola "Thanda", Nescafe, Perfetti (Chlormint, Hakppydent), Microsoft, HLL (Pears), Master Card and local brands such as Dabur and NDTV.

He has won more than 300 advertising awards including Gold Lions at Cannes, AdFest Asia, Media Spikes, Cresta, honours at The One Show and Clio and a cache of national awards in India.

His creativity is not limited to advertising but finds expression in other fields as well. He is a well-published author and a famous lyricist for Bollywood blockbusters and popular music charts.

➤ With the firm on the brink of raking in the highest profits in its 71 year history. **MORGAN STANLEY** gifted its **CEO**, John Mack, a gigantic bonus of \$40 million – the figure is the largest to be given to a head of any Wall Street firm.

The figure overshadows Goldman Sachs Inc CEO Henry Paulson's fat bonus of \$38.3 million in 2005.

➤ India's **SANTHI SUNDARAJAN**, silver medallist for women's 800 metres run, officially stripped of her medal after she failed a gender test on December 20, 2006, five days after Asian Games closed. Soundararajan, aged 25, was declared the best athlete at an Indian championship in the capital, Delhi, in 2006.

➤ **KIM'S TRAGEDY**: Tragedy struck the Asian Games when Korean equestrian athlete Kim Hyung-chil died after falling off his horse during the cross country competition which took place in the rain. The horse mistimed his jump in the wet conditions and slipped. After the horse, named Bundaberg Black, rolled over him, he was taken to the hospital, with his death later confirmed by the organizing committee.

➤ **'NECKS' FOR CHESS MEDALS**: At the **ASIAN GAMES 2006** in Doha, Chess was introduced first time as a competitive sport. And, the first-ever chess gold medals have found their deserving 'necks' in the form of Humpy Koneru of India and Murtas Kazhgaleyev of Kazakhstan.

➤ **SAMSUNG MOST VALUABLE PLAYER**: Swimming sensation Park Tae Hwan was named the Samsung Most Valuable Player (MVP) of the 15th Asian Games, a fitting recognition for the Korean teenager's seen medals – the most by any athlete at Doha 2006. Park received 231 votes of the 869 votes cast by journalists covering the 15 day spectacular in the Qatari capital and was a clear winner from Chinese gymnast Yang Wei with his 99 votes.

➤ The **SENIORMOST JUDGE OF SUPREME COURT, JUSTICE MR. K.G. BALAKRISHNAN** was sworn in as the Chief Justice of India on January 14, 2007, succeeding **JUSTICE MR. Y.K. SABHARWAL**. He is the 37th Chief Justice of India and the first Dalit to hold this esteemed office.

- **SUNITA I. WILLIAMS** became the second person of India origin to go into space after **KALPANA CHAWLA** when she went to the International Space Station (ISS) aboard the Discovery space shuttle on December 9, 2006. She replaced German astronaut T. Reiter for a six month stay on the ISS.
- Steel baron **MR. LAKSHMI NIWAS MITTAL** has been adjudged. The Sunday Times Business Person of 2006. Earlier, he was appointed CEO of Arcelor-Mittal, the world's first 100 million-tonne-plus steel-making company. He was also presented the Asia Society Leadership Award on Dec. 6, 2006.
- Former Team India skipper and stylish southpaw **SOURAV GANGULY**, nicknamed "**PRINCE OF KOLKATA**", made a splendid comeback to Test cricket in the three-Test series against South Africa that ended in January 2007. He aggregated 214 runs, the highest by any Indian batsman in the series.
- **MARGARET CHAN, MS**: Next Director-General of World Health Organisation.
- **PEACE EMISSARY**: India's **DEEPIKA VASUDEVAN**, who won the fourth place and the prestigious Ms. Talent award at the **WORLD MISS UNIVERSITY PAGEANT 2006**, has been chosen as a 'Peace emissary' of the world.
- **INDIAN BEAUTY MISS BRITAIN: PREETI DESAI** became the first person of Indian origin on November 21, to win the miss Great Britain title, earning the honour of representing the UK in the Miss Universe contest.
- **MILTON FRIEDMAN**, one of the most influential economists of the past century and a champion of free markets, died on November 16, at age 94.
- **FORMER KGB SPY DEAD**: A former Russian spy **ALEXANDER LITVINENKO** who said he had been poisoned died on November 23, at a London hospital, following a mysterious and rapid decline that left doctors puzzled over the cause of death.
- **ISHAQ KHAN DEAD**: Ghulam Ishaq Khan, the **PAKISTANI PREIDENT** who dismissed two democratic governments, died on October 27, in Peshawar aged 91. Mr. Khan was an important eyewitness to and participant in some of the most important and dramatic moments of Pakistan's history.
- **P.W. BOTHA**, the South African leader who struggled vainly to preserve apartheid rule in a tide of domestic racial violence and global condemnation, died on October 31. He was 90.
- **ANTI-SYRIAN LEBANESE MINISTER ASSASSINATED**: Pierre Gemayel (34), an anti-Syrian politician and scion of Lebanon's most prominent Christian family, was gunned down on November 21, in an assassination that heightened tensions amid a showdown between opponents and allies of Syria that threatens to topple the US backed government.
- **MR. P.C. HALDAR**, a 1970 Bihar cadre officer, is chosen to succeed **MR. E.S.I. NARASIMHAN** as the new chief of the Intelligence Bureau (IB).
- **JAMES BROWN**, the "**GOD FATHER OF SOUL**" whose rasping vocals and revolutionary rhythms made him a founder of rap, junk and disco as well, dies in Atlanta at the age of 73.
- **NANDAN NILEKANI**: President CEO and MD of the Bangalore-based IT giant Infosys Technologies, Mr. Nandan Nilekani, has been named 'Businessman of the Year' for 2006 by Forbes Asia. Mr. Nilekani has been chosen for his nimble stewardship in keeping the company ahead of peers in the global outsourcing phenomenon.
- **HU JINTAO**: Chinese President Mr. Hu Jintao paid in November 2006 his first visit to India since he took over as the leader of one of the world's biggest and most flourishing economies. During his landmark visit, he set a new trail to strengthen Sino-Indian bilateral relations. Representing China during the APEC summit in Hanoi (**Vietnam**), he called for the resumption of the six-party talks to solve the Korean crisis.
- **SHINZO ABE**, the leader of Japan's Liberal Democratic Party, was elected as the new **PRIME MINISTER OF JAPAN** on September 26, 2006. Mr. Abe is the youngest leader to be elected to the country's top post.
- **MUHAMMAD YUNUS**: Prof. Muhammad Yunus, founder of Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, and the Grameen Bank have been chosen for the **NOBEL PRIZE FOR PEACE** for the year 2006. They were selected for the award for helping millions escape the poverty trap through a system of small-scale loans known as micro-credits. Prof. Yunus has also received several other awards, including the Ramon Magsaysay Award.
- **PANKAJ ADVANI**: Cueist Pankaj Advani, the first player to have clinched the rare grand doubles in both the points format and the time format titles in the IBSF World Billiards Championships, was presented the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna 2005, the nation's highest sports award, on August 29, 2006.
- **JASPAL RANA**: Ace shooter Jaspal Rana bagged two Gold Medals in 25m Standard Pistol and 25m Centre Fire Pistol individual events at the Doha Asian Games on December 7-8, 2006. In the 25m Centre First Pistol event, he

equalled the world record set by Zagreb Ech of YUgoslaia in 1989.

➤ **FABIO CANNAVARO**: Star footballer Fabio Cannavaro was selected 'FIFA World Player of the Year' at a function organised in Zurich (Switzerland) on December 19, 2006. The Italian captain, who was earlier awarded '**EUROPEAN PLAYER OF THE YEAR**', is the first defender to receive this coveted award.

➤ **RICKY PONTING**: Australian cricket captain Ricky Ponting was named ICC Player of the Year and Test Player of the Year in the ICC Awards 2006. Ponting, whose name figures in both the ICC World Test and ODI teams, led Australia to their maiden win in the ICC Champions Trophy 2006.

➤ **ZENEDINE ZIDANE**: French soccer star Zinedine Zidane has won the Golden Ball Award for the best player of the 2006 FIFA World Cup. He beat Italians Fabio Cannavaro and Andrea Pirlo in the ballot for the award. The 2006 World Cup final was the last match as a professional for Zidane.

➤ **RAHUL ROY** : Bollywood actor Rahul Roy on Jan.27 walked away with the prize money of Rs.50 Lakh after winning Sony TV's reality show Big Boss. Out of the last three contestants, including Bhojpuri superstar Ravi Kishan and top model Coral Gracias, Rahul turned out to be the lucky one. Big Boss, the Indian version of the internationally acclaimed show Big Brother, started on November 3 with 13 participants including Aryan Vaid, Anupama, Varma, Rakhi Sawant and Bobby Darling. Bollywood's popular comic star Arshad Warsi hosted the show.

➤ **NANCY PELOSI**: US is not exactly at the forefront when it comes to women in politics. It took more than 200 years for US Congress to select a female Speaker. Nancy Pelosi, to the House of Representatives. There were 22 women in the House when Pelosi was first elected to her California district in 1987. There are a record 71 female representatives presently, giving women 16 percent of the seats.

➤ **DREW GILPIN FAUST**, 59, a celebrated historian became Harvard's first female president since its founding in 1636. She was named 28th president of the oldest US institute of higher learning making Harvard the fourth of the nation's eighth elite Ivy League schools to name a woman leader.

➤ Indian American corporate honcho, **MS INDIRA NOOYI**, known as one of the most powerful women in the US, has been elected as the Chairwoman of PepsiCo. She is currently the Chief Executive Officer of the more than \$ 32 billion global convenient food and beverage company.

➤ Israel appointed **GALEB MAGADLA** its first Muslim cabinet minister on January 28, a step that would help its Arab citizens identify more strongly with the Jewish state.

➤ **MARIA SHARAPOVA** has become the latest celebrity to be appointed goodwill ambassador of the UN Development Program (UNDP), pledging to use her charisma and fame to galvanise support for the fight against world poverty.

➤ Hyundai Motor Co. chairman **CHUNG MONG-KOO** was convicted on February 5, of embezzlement and other charges and sentenced to three years in prison over a slush fund scandal that has weighed on the world's sixth largest automaker. Judge Kim Dongoh gave lesser sentence because of his contributions to the growth of country's economy.

➤ **ROBERT ADLER**, who created the couch potato, the co-inventor of the T.V. remote control, died at the age of 93. Mr. Adler has been credited as the device's inventor. Mr. Polley created the Flashmatic in 1955 that operated on photocells. Mr. Adler introduced ultrasonics to make the device more efficient in 1956.

➤ **JOE EDWARDS**, an artist who worked on the 1942 debut issue of Archie comics and later created the character Li'l Jinx, died on February 8. He was 85.

➤ **SIDNEY SHELDON**, an Oscar winning Hollywood screenwriter who went on to become one of the world's most prolific novelists, died in California on January 30, at the age of 89.

➤ Veteran Bollywood music director **O. P. NAYYAR** died on January 28. He was 82. Nayyar composed music for several hit Hindi films.

➤ Noted economist **MANU SHROFF** died on January 29. Former editor of The Economic Times, he was 77.

➤ **BALJEET SINGH LALLI** is selected Prasar Bharati CEO.

➤ **PRATYUSH SINHA** was appointed the new Central Vigilance Commissioner.

➤ Parliament approved **VIKTOR YANUKOVYCH** to become Ukraine's Prime Minister.

➤ **R. LAKSHMIPATHY**, publisher of Tamil daily Dinmalar, was unanimously elected Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Press Trust of India.

➤ **PERCY SONN** of South Africa replaced **EHSAN MANI** as ICC president.

➤ Left wing politician **GEORGIO NAPOLITNO** (80) was elected President of Italy in the fourth round of an acrimonious vote.

➤ The former diplomat, **MOHAMMAD HAMID ANSARI**, has taken charge as chairperson of the National Commission for Minorities (NCM).

➤ **NAUKSHAD ALI**, one of the greatest music directors of Indian cinema who composed hit songs like 'Mohabbat Ki Jhooti Kahani pe roya' ('Mughal-e-Azam') and Duniya mein him aaye hain to jeena hi padega's ("Mother India") died at the age of 86.

Britain's leading Indian Industrialist and Labour peer **SWRAJ PAUL** was installed as the first ever Chancellor of the University of Westminster in a move aimed at affirming its multiethnic character. **VICE-CHANCELLOR GEOFFREY Copland** said the university was delighted to have Lord Paul as its "inaugural" Chancellor.

➤ The elder **DHIRUBHAI** scion became the emperor of India's corporate market as his personal net worth swelled to Rs.70,000 crore taking him past Azim Premji's Rs.64,723 crore.

➤ Chennai born **INDRA NOOYI**, who was recently appointed as CEO of global soft drink giant PepsiCo, has been named as the World's most powerful business woman by Fortune magazine, ahead of people like Oprah Winfrey and eBay chief Meg Whitman.

➤ Bankrupt energy giant **ENRON'S** former chief executive officer **JEFFREY SKILLING** has been sentenced to more than 24 years in prison for his role in a massive fraud in one of the biggest scandals **IN US CORPORATE HISTORY**.

➤ **JSYOTI RANDHAWA** has overtaken compatriot Jeev Milkha Singh as the top-ranked Indian player in the latest Official World Golf Rankings following his play-off victory at the Hero Honda Indian Open.

➤ **LEWIS PUGH** A lawyer became the first person to swim the length of Britain's Thames river on August 6 taking nearly three weeks to complete his journey.

➤ **MITTAL STEEL AND ARCELOR SA** announced the appointment of **ROLAND JUNCK** as the Chief Executive Officer and Aditya Mittal as the Chief Financial Officer of the newly merged entity Arcelor Mittal.

➤ **THE BILL & MELINDA GATES** Foundation announced it's awarding \$ 287 million in grants over five years to create an international network of scientists to speed up the development of an AIDS vaccine.

➤ **DR.A.P.J. ABDUL KALAM** became the first President to make a sortie in a supersonic fighter jet, fulfilling a childhood dream when he made a flight in a Su-30MKI multi role combat aircraft from an airbase in Pune.

➤ **AUDREY HEPBURN'S** elegance is certainly timeless, as it has put her ahead of today's Hollywood beauties Halle Berry, Scarlett Johansson and Catherine Zeta Jones. The 'My Fair Lady' star has been voted the most beautiful woman of all time by readers of New Woman magazine.

➤ **JK ROWLING** was voted the greatest living British write.

➤ **WARREN BUFFETT**, the world's second-richest person, is donating about \$ 37 billion- more than 80% of his fortune – to foundations run by his friend Bill Gates and by the Buffett Family.

➤ He has climbed many a peak, but scaling **MOUNT EVEREST** has been special for BSF officer **S.C. NEGI** as the feat made him the highest-ranking paramilitary official and the oldest Indian to reach the roof of the world.

➤ Al-Qaida plotter **ZACARAI MOUSSAOUI** has been spared execution by a US federal jury which recommended a life in prison for his role in the September 11 terror attacks that killed nearly 3,000 persons.

➤ **SUNITA WILLIAMS** became the second woman of Indian origin after **KALPANA CHAWLA** to venture into space when the US shuttle Discovery, with seven astronauts onboard, rose into the night sky on a 12-day repair mission to the International Space Station (ISS). The shuttle blasted off with a thunderous roar in a cloud of white smoke and flame and reached orbit about nine minutes later also carrying with it an to add 11 million-dollar equipment to add to the space lab. The shuttle took off at 8.47 PM local time, the first night launch by NASA in four years since the disintegration of space shuttle Columbia in 2003 which killed seven astronauts, including Chawla. Formerly a navy test pilot, Sunita, 41, is a flight engineer on the mission and will stay behind at the ISS for a six-month period replacing German astronaut Thomas Reiter of the European Space Agency. Discovery's two rocket boosters successfully separated from the orbiter two minutes after lift off from the Kennedy Space Centre in Cape Canaveral, Florida, and the shuttle later also shed its massive external fuel tank.

➤ 500 people were burned alive when fuel from a vandalised pipeline exploded in **NIGERIA'S LARGEST CITY**. Lagos, emergency workers said. Hundreds of residents of the Abule Egba district went to scoop fuel using plastic containers after thieves punctured the underground pipeline overnight to siphon fuel into a road tanker.

➤ **JOE BARBERA**, one half of the creative duo that delighted generations of children with the homicidal spats between a cat and a mouse, the ranger-baiting activities of a delinquent bear and the adventures of a ghost-hunting Great Dane and his pesky friends, died on Dec., 18. He was 95. In partnership with Bill Hanna, Barbera gave the world such

classic cartoon characters as Tom and Jerry, Yogi Bear, Scooby-Doo, the Flintstones and the Jetsons.

➤ **MR. ASHOK CHATURVEDI** is selected as the new Director of the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW).

➤ **ADVENTURER AJEET BAJAJ** unfurls the tri-colour at the South Pole as India celebrates Republic Day, achieving the unique feat of becoming the first Indian to go to both North and South Poles.

➤ Music maestro **O.P. NAYYAR**, who immortalised tracks such as 'YE HAI BOMBAY MERI JAAN', passes away following a cardiac arrest.

➤ **AIR MARSHAL FALI H. MAJOR**, Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Air Command, becomes the first helicopter pilot to be named the **CHIEF OF THE AIR STAFF**.

➤ India-born Republican **BOBBY JINDAL** made it to the US House of Representatives from Louisiana for the second straight term securing 88 per cent of the total votes cast. Jindal's victory for the first time in 2004 ended a five decade drought for Indian Americans in the House of Representatives even as several other prominent members of the community had been quite successful politically at the state level.

➤ **MR. SIDNEY SHELDON**, noted author and screenwriter, passes away, aged 89. Mr. Sheldon was known for his fiction books like Rage of Angels. The Other Side of Midnight, Master of the Game, and If Tomorrow Comes.

➤ Goldman Sachs Group chairman and CEO **MR. LLOYD BLANKFEIN** is eligible for an \$87 million bonus after the firm earned a record profit of \$14.6 billion profit before tax. A payment of this size would be more than double the \$40 million bonus awarded to Morgan Stanley CEO Mr. John Mack for his 2006 performance.

➤ Renowned Bharatanatyam dancer and choreographer **MS. CHANDRALEKHA**, dies at the age of 78. She caught the public imagination through her innovations and radical explorations in contemporary dance. She bagged many honours including the Sangeet Natak Academy fellowship and the Kalidas Samman.

➤ Renowned Hindi writer and **PADMA BHUSHAN AWARDEE SRI KAMLESHWAR** dies in New Delhi of a massive heart attack. The legendary writer, who won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 2003 for his book Kitney Pakistani.

➤ Air Marshal **FALI H MAJOR**, Air Officer-Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Air Command, becomes the first helicopter pilot to be named chief of the Indian Air Force. Mr. Major, the

senior-most Air Marshal in the IAF, will succeed Air Chief Marshal S.P. Tyagi when he retires on March 31, 2007.

➤ **MR. CARLO PONTI**, one of the Italy's greatest film producers and the husband of diva Sophia Loren, dies in Switzerland at the age of 94. Mr. Ponti produced classics like Federico Fellini's "La Strada" (1954) David Lean's "Doctor Zhivago" (1965), and Michelangelo Antonioni "Blow up" (1966).

➤ IN an unprecedented move against the country's ceremonial head of state, Israel's Attorney General decides to indict president MR. MOSHE KATSAV on charges of rape and sexual harassment.

➤ **MS. SEEMA DHUNDIYA**, the commander of an **ALL-FEMALE UNITED NATIONS INDIAN POLICE UNIT** in Liberia, as part of an advance team that will pave the way for the landmark deployment of a 125-strong force in February. This is the first time the world body has sent an all-woman specialised police unit as part of a peacekeeping operation. **MS. SEEMA DHUNDIYA**, who is leading the formed police unit, reached the Liberian capital of Monrovia along with logistics and engineering specialists.

➤ **MR. L. MANSINGH**, former secretary of consumer affairs, will lead the **PETROLEUM REGULATORY BOARD (PRB)** that will oversee downstream oil and natural gas sector.

➤ **KAUR, SURINDER**: The nightingale of Punjab, the original popular queen of Punjabi singing, died at the age of 77.

➤ **MUKERJEE, HRISHIKESH**: Noted Hindi cinema film director, he died on August 27, 2006. He was 83. His repertoire of 46 films included Anari (1959), Namak Haram (1973), Satyakam (1969), Anand (1970), Abhimaan (1973) and Bemisal (1982). He was a recipient of the prestigious Dada Saheb Phalke award.

➤ **NIVRITTI RI AND IFTHEKAR AHMAD SHARIF**: The two US citizens have become the first NRIs to get the Overseas Indian Citizenship (OIC) cards.

➤ **PENJOR GYELTEN**: A strapping 21 year old from the town of Paro in North Western Bhutan, he is the first cadet of IMA, since India's independence, from a foreign country, to win the Sword of Honour of Indian Military Academy (IMA).

➤ **PRINCE, ASHWELL**: He is first non-white player to be appointed captain of cricket team of South Africa.

➤ **PRIZM, WAHIDA**: She is the first woman ever to command a parade of graduating officers of the Indian Armed Forces Medical Service.

- **RAHUL DRAVID** : Indian cricket captain, along with his Pakistani counterpart Inzamam-ul Haq, was selected to become spokesman for 'Sport for Development and Peace' at the UN.
- **RAMDEV, SWAMI**: Well-known yoga guru, he was invited to New York, by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, to deliver a lecture on poverty alleviation, as part of the world body's anti-poverty drive (Stand UP Against Poverty Campaign)
- **RAO, C.N.R.**: An eminent scientist, he was named the first recipient of the India Science Award instituted by the government of India.
- **UMRIGAR, POLLY**: One of the most dedicated servants of Indian cricket, Polly Umrigar passed away on November 7, 2006. He was 80. At the time of his retirement, he held these records – most Tests most runs, and most hundreds for India. He was the first Indian to hit a Test double ton. He scored a century and took wickets in an innings against WI in 1962, becoming one of only two Indians (Vinoo Mankad was the other) to achieve such a feat.
- Senior Congress leader **O. IBOBI SINGH**, who has the distinction of being Manipur's first Chief Minister to complete a full term in office, was sworn in to hold the top post for a second consecutive term on March 2 at Imphal.
- Former Vice-Chancellor of Visva-Bharati University, Santiniketan, Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, has been appointed Chairman of the **INDIAN COUNCIL OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH (ICHR)**. **PROF. BHATTACHARYA** was a professor of Indian economic history at the Jawaharlal Nehru University. He has also been President of the Indian History Congress.
- German author **LOTHAR-GUENTHER BUCHHEIM**, whose war novel "**DAS BOOT** " was adopted into a critically acclaimed film, died at the age of 89. Mr. Buchheim wrote 30 books, many of them about art and artists.
- **DR. CHITRA BHARUCHA**, an Indian-born haematologist, took charge as the acting Chairperson of the British Broadcasting Corporation, becoming the first woman and first Asian to head the giant organisation. Incidentally, the BBC Trust, of which Bharucha is the acting Chairperson, took over the responsibility of running the organisation from the BPC Board of Governors from Jan. 1.
- UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has appointed Tanzanian **FOREIGN MINISTER DR. ASHA-ROSE MIGIRO** as the Deputy Secretary-General. Dr. Migiro became the third person and second woman in history to be appointed the UN Deputy Secretary-General, when she accepted the post offered to her.
- A momentous occasion in the history of independent India, **MR. JUSTICE K.G. BALAKRISHNAN** became the first Dalit to occupy the highest constitutional post in the judiciary as he was sworn in as the new Chief Justice of India by President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. Dr. Kalam administered the oath of office and secrecy to Mr. Justice Balakrishnan as the 37th CJI at an impressive ceremony in the Durbar Hall of Rashtrapati Bhavan.
- The former chairman of the Task Force on Interlinking of Rivers and current Member of Parliament, **SURESH PRABHU**, has been selected to chair the **SOUTH ASIAN GLOBAL WATER PARTNERSHIP (GWP)** , in Stockholm, for three years. The organisation is a network created by stakeholders, including Sweden, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank and the Committee of Economic Development of Australia.
- The former Intelligence Bureau Director, **E.S.L., NARASIMHAN**, and the former Finance Minister of Kerala, **K. SANKARANARAYAN**, were appointed Governors of Chhattisgarh and Nagaland respectively.
- New U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon has appointed veteran Indian diplomat **VIJAY NAMBIAR** as his chief of staff and Haitian journalist Michele Montas as his spokesperson.
- The controversial British historian **DAVID IRWING** was sentenced to three years imprisonment in Vienna, Austria for denying the Holocaust and the gas chambers of Auschwitz.
- Two members – **ANDRE BETELLE AND P.B. MEHTA** resign from National Knowledge Commission in protest against Centre's reservation policy.
- **V. KURIEN** resigns as chairman of IRMA.
- Army is ready to adopt marathon **KID BUDHIA SINGH**.
- Renowned dancer and **CHOREOGRAPHER CHANDRALEKHA**, recipient of Sangeet Natak Academy Fellowship and the Kalidas Samman along with a number of other honours, passes away at the age of 78.
- Jammu University Vice-Chancellor **AMITABH MATTOO** has been elected to the International Council of Pugwash, which is the highest decision-making body of the Nobel Peace prize winning non-governmental organisation. The 22 member council has representatives from the US., Europe, China, Japan and Latin America. Prof. Matto, one of the youngest Vice-Chancellors, was a member of the National Security Advisory Board and Prime Minister's task force on Global Strategic Developments. He

was Professor of Disarmament Studies in the School of **INTERNATIONAL STUDIES, JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY**, New Delhi. He played a key role in the Kashmir-specific conferences organised recently by the **PUGWASH** at Islamabad and Cairo, Egypt.

The Pugwash was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1995 for its efforts to reduce role of nuclear arms in international politics.

➤ **UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL BANKI-MOON** announced the appointment of **KIYOTAKA AKASAKA** of Japan as Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information.

➤ Writer-social activist **SUKUMAR AZHIKODE** has not accept the Padma Shri given to him. He said "**SUCH HONOURS ARE AGAINST THE CONSTITUTION**". The Constitution says everyone should be treated as equal. Giving such honours at different levels, the State discriminates between people.

➤ Noted Hindi writer and **PADMABUHAN AWARDEE KAMLESHWAR** died. He was 75 years old. The 20th century writer won the Sahitya Akademi award in 2003 for his book "**KITNEY PAKISTANI**" had penned 30 books and several short-story collections.

➤ Russian Olympic 3,000m gold medallist **YELENA ROMANOV** has died at the age of 42 years. She topped the Olympic podium at the Barcelona Games in 1992.

➤ Leading India-origin businessman **SIR GULAM NOON**, whose 'curry' empire is worth around 55 million pounds, has been named among the 100 most influential Muslims in Britain.

Sir Noon, who is the chairman and managing director of Noon Products Ltd, which specialises in chilled and frozen ready-to-eat meals, is the man credited with bringing authentic Indian foods to British supermarkets.

➤ **NAUSHAD ALI**, 86, music composer, Padma Bhusan, Phalke Award.

➤ **AMULYA K.N. REDDY**, 75, Scientist and pioneer of appropriate technology in India.

➤ **J.K. GALBRAITH**, 97, American economist, educator and writer, who was ambassador in India. The Affluent Society.

➤ **ARNOLD NEWMAN**, 88, photographer, known for environmental portraits.

➤ **FREED TRUEMAN**, English fast bowler.

➤ In a rare distinction, **DR. CHITRA BHARUCHA**, an Indian-born haematologist, on January 1, took charge as the acting

chairperson of the British Broadcasting Corporation, becoming the first woman and first Asian to head the giant Organisation.

➤ **IWAO TAKAMOTO**, the animator who designed the cartoon canine Scooby-Doo as well as characters on such shows as The Flintstones and The Jetsons, died.

➤ Korean Martial arts master **BONG SOO HAN**, who helped revolutionise Hollywood's understanding of martial arts by crating fight sequences for modern American films, died.

➤ **S. RAJARATNAM**, one of Singapore's founding fathers and a pioneer of ASEAN.

➤ **NAUSHAD ALI** (86), veteran music composer, at the Nanavati hospital in Mumbai. Hits include Mughal-e-Azam, Ram Aur Shyam.

➤ **LILLIAN GERTRUD ASPLUND** (99), the last American survivor of the sinking of the Titanic in 1912, in Shrewsbury, Massachusetts.

➤ **PROFESSOR AMULYA K.N. REDDY** (75), pioneer of appropriate technology in India in Bangalore after a prolonged illness.

➤ **A.M. ROSENTHAL** (84), former Executive Editor of The New York Times and Pulitzer awardee, at a Manhattan Hospital.

➤ **ODUVIL UNNIKRISHNAN** (62), Malayalam actor, at a hospital in Kozhikode.

➤ **FREDRICK VICTOR ARUL** (88), retired Inspector General of Police, Tamil Nadu and first Indian to become Interpol vice-president, at his Chennai residence.

➤ **SURADHA** (84), veteran Tamil poet, in Chennai after a brief illness.

➤ **AARON SPELLING** (83), producer of TV serials like Dynasty, Charlie's Angels, at his home in Los Angeles.

➤ **KORATALA SATYANARAYANA** (83), Marxist leader, in Hyderabad.

➤ **GERHARD FISCHER**(84), Gandhi Peace Prize Winner in Norway.

➤ **KENNETH LAY** (64), founded and former chairman of Enron, at his home in Aspen, Colorado.

➤ **DR. GOVINDAPPA VENKATASWAMY** (87), kfounder of the Aravind Hospital in Madurai.

- **SYED BARRETI (60)**, founding member of British rock group Pink Floyd in his Cambridgeshire house from diabetes-related complications.
- **RAJA RAO (98)**, author of novels Kanthapura and The Serpent And The Rope, in Austin, U.S.
- **MICKEY SPILLANE (88)**, creator of the macho detective Mike Hammer at his South Carolina home.
- **TA MOK (80)**, one of the chief architects of the Khmer Rouge's brutal rule of Cambodia, in Phnom Penh.
- **DAME ELISABETH SCHWARZKOPF (90)**, the greatest soprano of the post-war years at her home in Schruns, Austria.
- **NANDINI SATPATHY (75)**, former Orissa Chief Minister, of cardiac arrest in a Bhubaneswar hospital.
- **SURAJ BHAN (78)**, Chairman of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Commission, at the AIIMS in New Delhi.
- **CHANDRA PRASAD SAIKIA (80)**, Assamese litterateur, in Guwahati after a prolonged illness.
- **SARASWATHI GORA (94)**, freedom fighter, of lung infection in Vijayawada.
- **HRISHIKESH MUKHERJEE (83)**, noted film-maker, at Leelavati Hospital in Mumbai.
- **NAGUIB MAHFOUZ (94)**, the first Arab writer to win the Nobel Prize in Literature, in the Egyptian capital Cairo.
- **GLENN FORD (90)**, Hollywood actor who made his mark in films like Gilda (1946), and The Big Heat (1953) at his Beverly Hills home.
- **SIR MALCOLM ARNOLD (84)**, the first ever British composer to win an Oscar in 1958 for his music to the film The Bridge on The River Kwai, at the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital.
- **GHULAM ISHAQ KHAN (91)**, former Pakistan President, in Peshawar.
- **PIETER WILLEM BOTHA (90)**, former South African Prime Minister, of a heart-attack at his home in Wilderness.
- **BULENT ECEVIT (81)**, former Turkish Prime Minister, in Ankara.
- **ED BRADLY (65)**, award-winning CBS newsman and correspondent for "60 minutes", of leukaemia at Mount Sinai Hospital.
- **MARKUS WOLF (83)**, former East German spy chief, at home.
- **ROBERT ALTMAN (81)**, the creator of a string of classic Hollywood satires, including M-A-S-H. and Gosford Park, in Los Angeles.
- **AUGUSTO PINOCHET UGARTE (91)** former Chilean dictator at a military hospital in Santiago.
- **ANTON BALASINGHAM (68)**, LTTE 'ideologue' and political adviser of cancer in London.
- **JOSEPH BARBERA (95)**, creator of cartoon characters like Tom and Jerry, in Los Angeles.
- **JAMES BROWN (73)**, founder of rap disco, in Atlanta.
- **GERALD FORD (93)**, former U.S. President in California

ABBREVIATIONS

ADC	Access Deficit Charge
ARC	Asset Reconstruction Company
ASMA	Antarctica Specially Managed Area
CECA	Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement
DIN	Director Identification Number
FSSAI	Food Safety and Standards Authority of India
GLOVE	Galileo in-Orbit validation Element
GNSS	Global Navigation Satellite System
JNNURM	Jawahar Lal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission.
NAMA	Non-Agriculture Market Access
NREGA	National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
SRE	Space Capsule Recovery Experiment
SWAP	Solar Wind Around Pluto

INDIA

➤ **KIRAN DESAI'S** Booker Prize-winning novel, "*The Inheritance of Loss*" has been nominated for the £30,000 **ORANGE PRIZE** for fiction, awarded every year to a **WOMAN NOVELIST** writing in **ENGLISH**.

➤ The Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C8), which will deploy an Italian satellite Agile, will lift off from Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh on April 23, 2007.

For the first time, the PSLV-C8 will fly without its six strap-on booster motors. The '**core alone**' vehicle will have two roll-control motors in the first stage for achieving symmetry. The PSLV will be launched without the strap-on motors because the weight of Agile and AMM put together is only 540 kg. A PSLV with the normal configuration, which includes the strap-on motors, can put a satellite weighing 1,600 kg in orbit.

➤ Antrix Corporation, the commercial wing of the Department of Space.

➤ **TEN MILLION GIRLS** have been killed by their parents in India in the past 20 years, either before they were born or immediately after, a government minister said on December 14, 2006, describing it as a "national crisis".

A **UNICEF** report released in the second week of December 2006, said 7,000 fewer girls are born in the country every day than the global average would suggest, largely because female foetuses are aborted after sex determination tests but also through murder of new born. "Who has killed these girl children? Their own parents".

➤ According to the 2001 census, the national sex ratio was 933 girls to 1,000 boys, while in the worst-affected **NORTHERN STATE OF PUNJAB**, it was 798 girls to 1,000 boys. (worst state: **HARYANA**) The ratio has fallen since 1991, due to the availability of ultrasound sex-determination tests. Although these are illegal they are still widely available and often lead to abortion of girl foetuses.

SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN

- Launched in 2001
- During 10th Plan, expenditure to be shared between the Centre & states in the ratio of **75:25**.
- All children in **6 – 14 yrs**. Bracket in school.
- Bridge all gender & social category gaps at primary stage by 2007 & elementary stage by 2010
- **UNIVERSAL RETENTION BY 2010**.

THE NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

HUMAN RIGHTS ACT, 1993

Hon'ble Justice **SHRI RAJENDRA BABU** Chairperson
91-11-23382514 (O) E-Mail: chairnhrc@nic.in

Hon'ble Dr. Justice **SHIVRAJ V. PATIL** Member
91-11-23387328(O) E-Mail: patilsv@nic.in

Hon'ble Sri Justice **Y. BHASKAR RAO** Member
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Shri R.S. KALHA Member
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Shri P.C. SHARMA Member
91-11-23382432(O) E-Mail: pcsharma@nic.in

MOHD. HAMID ANSARI Chairperson, 91-11-24690592
National Commission for Minorities Ex-officio Member

DR. GIRIJA VYAS Chairperson, 91-11-23236204 (O)
National Commission for Women Ex-officio Member

➤ **CONSTITUTION OF A NHRC**

The Commission shall consist of:

- (a) a **Chairperson** who has been a **Chief Justice of the Supreme Court**;
- (b) one Member who is or has been, a **Judge** of the Supreme Court;
- (c) one Member who is, or has been, the **Chief Justice of a High Court**;
- (d) two Members to be appointed from amongst persons having knowledge of, or practical experience in, matters relating to human rights.

➤ **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON AND OTHER MEMBERS**

(1) The Chairperson and other Members shall be **appointed by the President** by warrant under his hand and seal. Provided that every appointment under this sub-section shall be made after obtaining the recommendations of a **COMMITTEE** consisting of

- (a) **The Prime Minister —Chairperson**
- (b) **Speaker of the House of the People — Member**
- (c) **Minister in-charge of the Ministry of Home Affairs in the Government of India — Member**
- (d) **Leader of the Opposition in the House of the People — Member**
- (e) **Leader of the Opposition in the Council of States — Member**
- (f) **Deputy Chairman of the Council of States — Member**

➤ **REMOVAL OF A MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION**

The Chairperson or any other Member of the Commission shall only be removed from his office by order of the President on the ground of proved misbehaviour or incapacity after the Supreme Court, on reference being made to it by the President

➤ **TERM OF OFFICE OF MEMBERS**

- (1) A person appointed as **Chairperson** shall hold office

for a term of **five years** from the date on which he enters upon his office or until he attains the **age of seventy years**, whichever is earlier.

(2) A person appointed as a **Member** shall hold office for a term of five years from the date on which he enters upon his office and shall be eligible for re-appointment for another term of **five years**. Provided that no Member shall hold office after he has attained the age of **seventy years**.

(3) On ceasing to hold office, a Chairperson or a Member shall be ineligible for further employment under the Government of India or under the Government of any State.

➤ The **UNION HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT MINISTRY** has revised the guidelines of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme to increase calorie and protein content, and introduce micronutrients in food served under the largest school meal programme in the world. As per the new guidelines, the calorie content in food served in schools will have to be 450, an increase of 150 over the norm set in 2004 while protein content has been fixed at 12 gm, up from 8 gm. Micronutrients have not been specified till date in the programme, which is now 11 years old. The revised norms specify that iron, folic acid, vitamin A and other micro nutrients shall be provided in adequate quantity to all children in these schools from classes I to V.

- Children shall be given a dose (every six months) for deworming and **VITAMIN-A** supplementation, a weekly **IRON, ZINC AND FOLIC ACID supplement**, and other supplements to meet common deficiencies local to the area where the school is located.

- Since the increase in the cooking cost from Re1. to Rs.1.5 in all states other than those in the North-East – where it has gone up to Rs.1.80 per child – meant an additional burden on the central coffers in excess of Rs.100 crore, the proposed revision was referred to the **CABINET COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS (CCEA)**.

➤ The following are the highlights of the Annual Supplement 2006 to the Foreign Trade Policy unveiled by Commerce and Industry **MINISTER KAMAL NATH**.

- Exports cross \$ 100 bn to touch \$ 10 bn in FY'06.
- Imports increase to \$ 140 bn
- Vishesh Krishi Upaj Yojna (VKUJ) expanded
- VKUJ to cover village and cottage industries
- Target Plus Scheme scrapped
- Focus Product & Focus Market schemes introduced
- Precious metal & stones imports to be made easier
- Import of new vehicles by component manufacturers made easier
- Clear guidelines for import of GM crop inputs
- Food supplies to international flights treated as exports
- Advance Licensing and DFRC schemes clubbed

- New scheme called Duty Free Import Authorisation scheme
- Export Promotion Capital Goods scheme made flexible.

➤ **WAHIDA PRIZM** the first woman to command a parade in the history of the Indian Armed Forces Medical Services at the Armed Forces Medical College in Pune. She is Wahida hails from a remote village in Kashmir.

➤ **INDIA AND RUSSIA** sign seven agreements during the visit of Russian Prime **Mikhail Fradkov**. The agreements are as follows: (a) **ISRO** and the Russian Federal Space Agency (**ROSCOSMOS**) sign an agreement on the joint development of Glonass-**K** navigation satellites; (b) **ISRO** also signs another agreement with the **ROSCOSMOS** to launch Russian navigation satellites Glonass-**M** by a variant of the Indian **GSLV**; (c) The Indian Oil Corporation and Russia's Sroytransgaz sign an MoU for pursuing petro-infrastructure projects for design and construction of pipelines, gas, and oil storage facilities worldwide jointly through a consortium; (d) The EXIM Bank agrees to open a \$ 100 million line of credit with Russian Vneshtorg Bank, and (e) another pact on cooperation was signed between ICICI Bank and Vnesheconon Bank.

➤ India's largest company, **INDIAN OIL CORPORATION (IOC)** signs an MoU with Russian construction firm **Sroytransgaz (STG)** for jointly pursuing pipeline projects in India and abroad.

➤ The Bombay Stock Exchange's benchmark index, **SENSEX**, crosses 11,000. The new high was reached after the Sensex joined the elite 10,000 club. Only **Japan's Nikkei, Hong Kong's Hang Sang, and the U.S. Dow Jones** industrial average can boast of being about **10000**.

➤ **NAINA LAL KIDWAI** becomes the first woman to head the operations of a foreign bank in India. She has been deputy CEO of HSBC since 2004. She was also the first Indian woman to graduate from Harvard Business School.

➤ The **MCA-21 Project** of the Union Government will network 20 Registrars of Companies over seven lakh companies. It is the biggest e-governance project in the country. The Delhi RoC went on line in March 2006. By May 2006, all RoC's are expected to go on line.

➤ **BILATERAL TRADE** between India and Bangladesh has almost doubled in the last five years growing to \$ 1.6 billion in 2004-05 from less than \$ 900 million in 2000. India enjoys a **trade surplus** with Bangladesh.

➤ **TATA STEEL** has been ranked the **best steel making company in the world** by World Steel Dynamics Inc (WSD) in the US. Based on a study of 22 world-class steel makers, the WSD report of February 2006 covers the study of all the leading steel manufacturing companies across the

globe including POSCO, Arcelor, Nippon Steel, Bao Steel, and ThyssenKrupp. The final announcement was made after the assessment of 20 different parameters. Tata Steel has been ranked first with a weighted average score of 8.51, POSCO of South Korea ranked second with score of 8.41. India's leading steel maker is fast becoming a global enterprise and is set to become a 15 MT producer by 2010 from its current production of 8.7 MT. The company has been ranked best steel maker in the world three times – the first two time in 2001 and 2005.

➤ **JAYA BACHCHAN:** of the Samajwadi Party from Rajya Sabha membership with retrospective effect from July 14, 2004, for holding an 'office of profit' as chairperson of the Uttar Pradesh Film Development Council (UPFDC). She was elected to the Upper House on July 4, 2004. She was disqualified under sub-clause (a) of Clause 1 of Article 102 of the Indian Constitution.

➤ **MOHAMMAD HAMID ANSARI,** a former diplomat, takes charge as Chairperson of the National Commission for Minorities (NCM). Ansari was India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, High Commissioner to Australia, and Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates, Afghanistan, Iran, and Saudi Arabia. He also served as the Vice-Chancellor of the Aligarh Muslim University from May 2000 to March 2002.

➤ **ADWAITYA,** a tortoise that once belonged to British colonial Lord Clive in the 18th century, has died at the age of 250 in a zoo in Kolkata

➤ **SCIENTISTS at IIT ROORKEE** develop microwave absorbing nanocomposite coatings that could make an aircraft almost invisible to radar. The technology to develop invisible or stealth aircraft is a closely guarded secret of developed countries and a handful of laboratories in India are doing research in this area. Radars that emit pulses of microwave radiation identify flying aircraft by detecting the radiation reflected by the aircraft's metallic body. The nanocomposite coatings absorb most of the radiation and reflect very little.

➤ **THE CONSTITUTION (NINETY-THIRD AMENDMENT) ACT, 2005** [20th January, 2006.]

An Act further to amend the Constitution of India. Be it enacted by Parliament in the Fifty-sixth Year of the Republic of India as follows:-

1. Short title and commencement.-

(1) This Act may be called the Constitution (Ninety-third Amendment) Act, 2005.

(2) It shall come into force on such date as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint.

2. Amendment of **article 15**.-In article 15 of the Constitution, after clause (4), the following clause shall be inserted,

namely:-

“(5) Nothing in this article or in sub-clause (g) of clause (1) of

ARTICLE 19 shall prevent the State from making any special provision, by law, for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes or the Scheduled Tribes in so far as such special provisions relate to their admission to educational institutions including private educational institutions, whether aided or unaided by the State, other than the minority educational institutions referred to in clause (1) of article 30.”.

➤ **India's first rubber dam** is installed across the Janjhavathi river in Andhra Pradesh's Vizianagaram district.

➤ The World Bank's flagship report for India, its **Development Policy Review (DPR) 2006** entitled Inclusive Growth and Service Delivery: Building on India's Success was released in New Delhi.

The headcount poverty rate in rural **ORISSA (43%)** and **RURAL BIHAR (41%)** is higher than similarly measured poverty rates of African countries like Malawi or Ghana. By the same standard, poverty in **rural Haryana** is only 5.7% – less than upper middle income countries like Colombia and Brazil and rural Punjab is only 2.4 per cent – approaching the rates of Costa Rica (famed for its social successes). The gap between rural Punjab and Turkey, which is knocking on Europe's door, is only 2 percentage points – 20 times smaller than the gap between Punjab and Orissa

➤ **ULFA:** - The **United Liberation Front of Asom** is a separatist armed opposition group from Assam, among many other such groups in North-East India. It claims to have been founded at the site of the historic Ahom structure Rang ghar on April 7, 1979. It is reported that in 1986 it came into contact with National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) and the Kachin rebels operating in Myanmar. It was permitted to establish camps in Bangladesh in 1989. It initiated major violent activities in 1990. The US State department lists ULFA under "Other groups of concern". ULFA has a Communist ideology and is known to have relations with Maoists and it claims that some of its cadres were trained in Pakistan.

➤ **SURRENDERED ULFA (SULFA):** Sulpha represents that faction of ULFA who have already surrendered and have come to the mainstream. SULFA, has become an important element in the armed politics and business in the state of Asom.

➤ **TATA SKY** became the third company to offer Direct-to-Home (DTH) services in the country as it launch India's most expensive service in this arena. Tata Sky, a JV, between Tata Group and Start Group, follows the **Zee-backed Dish TV and DD Direct Plus from Prasar Bharati**. Tata-Sky is a 80:20 joint venture between Tata Sons and Rupert

Murdoch's STAR Group. In an attempt to replicate the success of the mobile phone strategy. Tata-Sky will sell pre-paid recharge vouchers for its service through neighbourhood retail outlets.

➤ Assamese literature and editor of the Assamese literary journal "**Gariyoshi**", **CHANDRA PRASAD SAIKIA**, died.

➤ India has regained its status as an **AVIAN INFLUENZA-FREE COUNTRY**. The Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries, under the Ministry of Agriculture on August 11 sent the final report in this regard to the Office International des Epizooties (OIE) (World Organisation of Animal Health). India's claim followed no outbreak of bird flue in the last three months. Surveillance for **N5N1** was carried out in a 15 km radius of the affected areas in Maharashtra, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. It was also carried out over the rest of the country.

➤ **SUNIL MITTAL** : announced that Bharti will team with **WAL-MART** to transform India's under-developed retail market. The magazine said it was an easy choice to declare Mittal as Asia's top leader for his business acumen and some crucial agreements he has signed in recently. Bharti and Wal-Mart, the world's largest retailer, will form a JV to take on back-end activities in which overseas investments is permitted, including wholesale, logistics, supply chain management and distribution. Mittal has also entered into a \$750 million outsourcing contract with IBM to farm out the bulk of Bharti's IT services, including billing, management of customer accounts and even operation of its intranet. More recently, he launched a JV with **France's AXA** to sell life insurance products in India. He tied up with the Rothschild family to export fresh fruit and vegetables grown in India to supermarkets in Europe.

➤ **YECHURI** was the third political leader to be invited by IIMA after **Railway Minister Laloo Prasad Yadav** and **Chief Minister of Bihar Nitish Kumar**.

➤ India's economy may be expanding rapidly, but **ABOUT ONE-THIRD** of its rural population or over 200 million people still live on less than Rs. 12 per day.

➤ **THE NATIONAL SAMPLE SURVEY ORGANISATION (NSSO)** report, "level and Pattern of Consumer expenditure, 2004-05", also revealed that Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, and Uttar Pradesh remain the poorest states in the country in terms of Monthly Per Capita Consumer Expenditure (MPCE) of rural population.

➤ The **PANCHSHEEL AGREEMENT**, basically a trade pact between China and India streamlining their bilateral trade operations in Tibet and, therefore, at the time of signing it was not visualised as a CSBM agreement, though without

saying it in so many words, it intended to serve the same objectives as the latter two CSBM agreements of 1993 and 1999. The negotiations for this agreement were held in Beijing between December 31, 1953, and April 29, 1954, at the end of which this agreement was finally signed in Beijing. The Five Principles (Panchsheel) are:

- Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty;
- Mutual non-aggression;
- Mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs;
- Equality and mutual benefit, and
- Peaceful coexistence.

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISORY BOARD: The Central Govt. on August 12 reconstituted the NSAB with former Foreign Secretary **M.K. RASGOTRA** named

➤ **convener** for a second term. Other members of the National Security Advisory Board are the Editor of the Hindu **N. Ram**; former bureaucrats **K.S. Rao** and **V.K. Jain**; Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis Director **N.S. Sisodia**; Scientist **Rodham Narsimha**; former Army Chief **V.N. Sharma**; former Indian Air Force Chief **S. Krishnaswamy**; former Naval Officer **P.S. Das**; former Atomic Energy Commission Chairman **M.R. Srinivashan**; former Intelligence Officers **S.P. Talukdar** and **A.S. Dulat**; academicians **Rakesh Datta**, **N. Balakrishnan** and **Alka Acharya**; former Foreign Service Officials **K.V. Rajan** and **V .K. Grover**; Political Analyst **Wasbir Hussain**; and Director, Indian Council for Research in International Economic Relations **Rajiv Kumar**. The NSAB will now have **19 members** instead of 15 as in the past. Barring the convener, the Central Govt. has dropped all members of the previous National Security Advisory Board.

➤ **WORLD FAMOUS HAMPI** removed from the UNESCO's list of world Heritage sites in Danger by the World Heritage Committee.

➤ **MIZORAM:** to become the **most IT Literate state by 2010**.

➤ **US-WHO JOINT PACT FOR TB:** The United States Ambassador, David C. Mulford and World Health Organisation (WHO) representative to India, Salim Habayeb, on September 26, signed an agreement for Tuberculosis in India.

➤ **SREEKANTHAPURAM** in Kannur has become the first fully **e-literate panchayat** in India.

➤ **THE UNION CABINET** chaired by Prime minister Manmohan Singh on September 29 approved a Rs. 16,978.69 crore rehabilitation package for farmers in the **PRE-DOMINANTLY SUICIDE-PRONE** districts of **Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Maharashtra**.

- **NEW EIA NORMS:** The Central Govt. notified the new **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)** norms, relaxing the rules for obtaining environmental clearance from the centre. Developmental projects with a built up area of between 20,000 to one lakh square metres will be given environmental clearance by the **State Pollution Control Boards** and those with a built-up area of over a lakh square metres will have to approach the Union Environment and Forests Ministry for EIA clearance.
- **THE AUTOMOBILE SECTOR, BIO-MEDICAL INDUSTRIES AND FLYOVERS** will not require environmental clearance from the centre, but will have to **approach the State Pollution Control Boards**.
- **KISHORI SAKTHI YOJANA, SWA SAKTHI, SWAYAMSIDHA AND SWALAMBAN** programmes are for the economic empowerment of women.
- **Definition of the term 'Information' under the RTI Act-2005** - Section 2 (F) of the Right to Information Act states that "Information means any material in any form, press releases, circulars, orders, logbooks, contracts, reports, papers, samples, models, data material held in any electronic form and information relating to any Private body which can be accessed by a Public authority under any other law for the time being in force".
- **LALU AND THE RAILWAYS** have made a really big difference is in the freight segment that accounts for more than 80% of total revenues. In 2005-06, by **adding just 4 to 8 tons** of extra freight in each wagon, the Railways moved an **additional 100 million tonnes** of freight without investing any money. The result: Additional revenues of Rs.110 billion! The **next three big moves** for Railways: A Rs.220 billion investment plan to create a high speed dedicated corridors between metros, manufacturing centres and ports; a plan to increase the wagon capacity from 64 tonnes currently to 80 tonnes in two years; and a plan to increase the number of coaches in long distance passenger trains to 24 from the current 16. Together, these three strategic moves promise to transform Indian Railways into a globally competitive transport company. Recently he has taken a class **(3 Hrs) for IIM (A)** students. Next going to meet the **Civil services** probationers at **MUSSORRIE**.
- The **BLACK BOOK OF OUTSOURCING** has ranked **SATYAM COMPUTER SERVICES** as the number two outsourcing vendor among the top 50 best managed companies in its 2006 worldwide survey. The survey was conducted by **Brown Wilson Group**. The U.S. based Affiliated Computer Services is ranked at the top. The survey covered 872 outsourcing vendors in 63 countries.
- The sixth edition of the country's biennial air show. Aero India 2007 was held at Air Force Station. **YELAHANKA NEAR BANGALORE** in the second week of February. By far the largest edition, the five-day show reverberated to the roars of over 50 aircraft ranging from the tiny Hansa to the giant C-130 Hercules, to mean fighting machines like the Su-30MKI, F/A 18F Super Hornet, Gripen, F-16 Fighting Falcon, Light Combat Aircraft, MiG-35 and to sleek business jets like the Falcon and the Bombardier.
- The Government has planned to open centres where people can abandon unwanted daughters in a bid to tackle the abortion of female **foetuses** and infanticide according to a report released on February 18. India has 927 girls for every 1,000 boys under the age of six, as opposed to the worldwide average of 1,050 girls.
- **INDIA-CHINA YEAR OF FRIENDSHIP** through Tourism 2007 was launched in New Delhi on February 14.
- The **HARYANA** Archaeological Department has discovered a new Harappan site near '**Kirsloa**' village in Jind district which could produce "valuable information about the downfall of the Harappan culture and its merger with post Grey Ware Cultures".
- Congress President and local MP Sonia Gandhi laid the foundation for the country's **THIRD RAIL COACH FACTORY IN LALGANJ (RAE BARELI)** on February 13, and later flagged off a bi-weekly Rae Bareli-Lokmanya Tilak Link Express. The foundation stone of the **FIRST UNIT** at **PERAMBUR** in Chennai was laid by former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and the second in **KAPURTHALA** by Rajiv Gandhi. The proposed factory will produce 1,000 coaches annually which will enable Indian Railways wipe out arrears of overaged and old design coaches.
- **INDIA AND YEMEN** have cemented their energy partnership by signing on February 3, in Sanna, a protocol, on bilateral cooperation in the oil and gas sector which would allow Indian investments in all aspects of Yemen's oil and gas industry.
- **INDIA** would be the partner country at the **Berlin Tourism Fair-2007**.
- **BELGAUM** becomes second capital of Karnataka.
- Former Supreme Court judge, **S. RATNAVEL PANDIAN** is appointed chairman of the **National Commission for Backward Classes** for three years. He also headed the Fifth Central Pay Commission.
- **SIXTH PAY COMMISSION:** constituted with **Justice B.N. Srikrishna** as chairman. The three members are- **Professor Ravindra Dholakia IIM** (Ahmedabad), former Additional Secretary of expenditure reforms commission **J.P. Mathur & Sushma Nath**, Additional Secretary, Deptt. Of Agricultural Research and Education. The sixth Pay Commission will go into revision of wages for **33 lakh Central**

Govt. employees.

➤ **RESERVATION** : Reservation in democracy is recognized as the powerful medium of society. Reservation were born out to remedy injustices which deprived certain sections of society of equal opportunities to enhance their status in society. The constitution of India needed to provide a level playing field for all deprived and depressed classes for centuries could not be equated with the privileged ones. **ARTICLE 335** of Indian Constitution provided the provision for 10 years, but due to the political selfishness of the leaders this limit has been extended from time to time.

➤ **Article 330-339** provides the special provision and reservations to SC and ST, including reservation in Lok Sabha, State assemblies and quota in govt. jobs and necessity of a national commission for SC & ST. Indian constitution also provides the reservations to OBCs, **Ex PM V.P. Singh** declared the 27% reservation in central govt. jobs for OBCs.

➤ **Article 331 & 333** of the constitution provides the reservation to Anglo-Indian community of India.

➤ Through the **73rd & 74th** constitutional amendment women have been given the 30% reservation in the Panchayati Raj System.

➤ Constitution also provides the reservation to Ex-servicemen and physically challenged people.

➤ **SUGGESTIONS**: There should be **A CREAMY LAYER CRITERION** in SC & STs also as in the case of OBC. The benefit of reservation should be given to **ONLY ONE MEMBER** of the family. **Same steps should be followed in matters of elections of State Assemblies and Parliament.** Economic condition should be the main parameter of reservation and not caste. This way the reservation **can be extended to Higher castes.**

➤ **OPERATION SUKOON** was launched by India to evacuate its nationals and that of **SRI LANKA, NEPAL** who were fleeing from the Israeli-Lebanese conflict. *Sukoon* means relief in Urdu. It was the first part of a two part air-sea bridge, the sea bridge was performed by Operation Sukoon of the Indian Navy and the air bridge by **Air India**. Four Indian Navy warships that were a part of Task Force 54 that were returning back to India from the Mediterranean after a goodwill visit were ordered to turn back just before they were to cross the Suez Canal to assist the evacuation. The ships were **INS Mumbai, INS Brahmaputra, INS Betwa** and the fleet tanker **INS Shakthi**. This has been touted as **THE LARGEST POST-INDEPENDENCE CIVILIAN-EVACUATION OPERATION** by the Indian Navy.

➤ **INDIA JOINS** forces with **Argentina, Brazil and Egypt** to lead a campaign against the latest **IMF reform plan**.

➤ **THEN DEFENCE MINISTER PRANAB MUKHERJEE** visits **Neuve Chapelle**, some 300 km north of the French capital, to lay a wreath at memorial for Indian soldiers who fought in the British colonial army in **World War-I**.

➤ The Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, agrees to implement the recommendations of the **MOILY COMMITTEE** to enhance its student intake by **54 %** within the next three years, starting **2007-08**.

➤ **WORLD TRADE REPORT 2006**, in 2005 (Calendar Year) India's merchandise exports were worth **\$90 b**, which comes to **0.81%** of the total global exports of **\$10,121 b**. India's share of **0.4%** in 1992-93 increased to 0.8% in 2002. The government has fixed a target of reaching **1.5%** of world trade by 2009. The **TOP 4 EXPORTERS** in 2005 were **GERMANY** (\$971 billion), **USA** (\$904 billion), **CHINA** (\$762 billion), and **JAPAN** (\$596 billion).

➤ India and Pakistan will file a joint application for **GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION (GI)** Registration in the U.S., and Europe for **Basmati rice**, according to the Union Minister of State for Commerce, **Jairam Ramesh**. Detailing the significance of GI Registration for agricultural and manufactured products and handicrafts associated with geographical regions of their origin, the Minister said that 28 such products have been registered in India in the last one year. They include **Darjeeling tea, Kancheepuram silk, Mysore agarbatti, Madurai sonagudi, Coimbatore wet grinder, and Mysore sandalwood soap**.

➤ The flowering of the **BAMBOO** in Manipur, which takes place once in every **48 years**, is attracting large number of **rats**. The swarming rodents are destroying crops and eating up tonnes of grain. The situation is so acute that the **soldiers posted in the area to fight insurgents** have been called in to tackle the rodent menace.

➤ There has been **decrease in FOREST COVER in 11 of the 8 Tigers Reserves** in the country while 5 reserves have shown an increase in the same. The forest cover in the remaining 12 has remained unchanged, according to a report brought out by the Forest Survey of India and Directorate of Project Tiger. Titled **"Forest Cover in Tiger Reserves of India – Status and Changes"** the report says that moderately dense forest has decreased by 251 square kilometres while very dense and open forests in these reserves have shown an increase of 33 sq.km and 124 sq.km respectively between 1997 and 2002. The major loss in forest cover has occurred in Nameri, Buxa, Mahas, Indravati, and Dampa Tiger Reserves, primarily due to socio-economic reasons and natural disasters. Forest cover in the outer surround (10 km radial distance from the periphery) has decreased in 21 tiger reserves, increased in 21 reserves and is unchanged in five. The total forest cover in the outer surround of the 28 tiger reserves has decreased by 124 sq.km. according to the report.

➤ **PETROLEUM MINISTER MURLI DEORA** represents India at the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)** Summit in Shanghai in June 2006. The **SCO has six members**. They are **China, Russia, Kazakhstan,**

Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. India, Pakistan, Iran, and Mongolia enjoy an **Observer status** in the **SCO**.

➤ **ANDAMAN & NICOBAR NEW DISTRICT:** Andaman and Nicobar islands, which till now had only two districts, has been officially **trifurcated** into three districts. The newly created district of '**NORTH AND MIDDLE ANDAMANS**' will consist of **Rangat, Mayabunder and Digipur tehsils**.

➤ **AFTER NOKIA AND FLEXOTRONICS,** it is the turn of **Motorola** to set up a manufacturing unit in the Sriperumbudur-Sunguvachahiram belt of Tamil Nadu. **Motorola** is the world's second largest cell phone manufacturer.

➤ The Union Government decides to cap the number of **SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONES (SEZs) TO 150**.

➤ **INDIGENOUSLY DESIGNED** and developed Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) **TEJAS** prototype version-2 (PV 2) is test flown, for supersonic speed in a "weaponised" state. The **PV2** aircraft had completed its maiden supersonic flight in the first week of May 2006. The weaponised flight lasted 24 minutes and was armed with two state-of-the-art air-to-air missiles.

➤ SBI will be **THE FIRST INDIAN BANK** to offer full-fledged banking operations in **China**. The opening of the Shanghai branch comes ahead of China's planned opening of its huge but creaky banking system to foreign competition under **Beijing's Commitment** to the **World Trade Organisation (WTO)** in 2001. Under this, **China** has promised to open its **banking sector to foreign banks by December 11** this year.

➤ **Microsoft India** has launched a **RURAL INNOVATION FUND** in partnership with **International Development Research Centre (IDRC)** with an initial seed funding of **\$200,000 (Rs. 90 lakh)** - **each partner** contributing **\$100,000**. The Fund would help local software application development vendors in smaller towns to create and provide localised applications and customised solutions for rural communities.

➤ **INDIA & BHUTAN - THE HIMALAYAN COUNTRY** signing three agreements in the area of hydroelectricity power and trade. A protocol to the **Inter-Governmental Agreement** signed on **5th March, 1996** on the setting up of the **Tala Hydroelectric Project** was also signed by the two ministers. The protocol outlines the commercial arrangements for the purchase of Tala power by India. The **1020 MW Tala project** is the largest bilateral cooperation project undertaken by India in the field of hydropower in a foreign country. The Tala project, managed by **Tala Hydroelectric**

Project Authority (THPA), is located in **Chukha Dzongkhag** in western Bhutan. According to a survey, **Bhutan** has the potential of producing **30,000 MW of hydropower**. India has also agreed to **Purchase Surplus Power** from Bhutan. Another agreement on **trade, commerce and transit** that provides for **continued free trade arrangements** between India and Bhutan with simplified procedures, and additional facilities and routes was also signed between the two countries. This agreement will remain valid for ten years. Delhi recently provided an assistance package worth **\$ 450 million** to **Thimpu** for its **ninth five-year planing ending 2007**.

➤ **PROJECT ELEPHANT:** Launched in **1992** with the aim of ensuring long-term survival of identified viable population of elephants in their natural habitat.

➤ **PROJECT TIGER:** Launched on April 1, **1973** to ensure maintenance of a viable population of tiger in India for scientific, economic, aesthetic, cultural and ecological values.

➤ **PROJECT CROCODILE:** Launched in **1975** to save crocodiles from extinction and to rehabilitate them in various rivers.

➤ **Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG)** audit of **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)** showed thousands of village schools running without a single teacher, tens of thousands managing to do with just one teacher and lakhs of rupees given in grants to non-existent schools. The Audit showed that after spending **Rs. 11,000 crore** and two extra years, authorities have yet extra years, authorities have yet to send **13.6 million 6 to 14 year old** to school. The **flagship programme** of India's bid to universalise elementary education, the **SSA**, set out in 2001 to enrol **34 million** out-of-school children in schools, education guarantee centres, alternate schools and back to school camps by 2003. The **deadline** was revised to **2005**.

➤ **JAWAHARLAL NEHRU NATIONAL URBAN RENEWAL MISSION (JNNURM)** was launched by the Prime Minister on December 3, 2005 to encourage cities to initiate steps to bring about improvement in the existing service levels in a financially sustainable manner. The objectives of the mission, inter alia, include planned development of identified cities including semi-urban areas, outgrowths and urban corridors and improved provision of, basic services to the urban poor. The duration of the mission would be seven years beginning from 2005-06.

➤ **TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE DIGITAL LIBRARY (TKDL):** is a collaborative project of **National Institute of Science, Communication and Information Resources (NISCAIR)**, the Department of **Ayush** under the Union Health Ministry, and the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion under the Ministry of Industry and Commerce. Data on 65,000 formulations in Ayurveda, 70,000 in Unani, and 3,000

in Siddha have already been put in the digital library.

➤ The **10th UNAIDS REPORT ON THE GLOBAL AIDS** epidemic shows that India has overtaken South Africa in total number of **HIV** cases. South Africa, with 5.5 million HIV cases, has a much higher prevalence rate among adults (18.8 %) compared with India's infection rate of just 0.9 %. But UNAIDS estimates that 5.7 million Indians are infected with HIV an incredibly troubling statistic given that, with a billion people, even a small statistical increase results in a huge number of new infections.

➤ **GAZPROM**: Russia's natural gas monopoly, signs an agreement with the **Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation (GSPC)** for joint exploration and development of on-shore and offshore hydrocarbons in Gujarat.

➤ **UNDERSECRETARY-GENERAL FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC INFORMATION** in the **United Nations**, **SHASHI THAROOR**, is nominated by India as a candidate for the post of UN Secretary-General. **Author of eight books**, (**RIOT** etc) has been working for the U.N. since **1978**. Tharoor is of Indian origin from the State of Kerala. Apart from being a reputable author and journalist, he is also a fellow the USC Center on Public Diplomacy. Tharoor has written numerous books in English. Perhaps his most famous work is **The Great Indian Novel**. His other famous books include **Riot**, **The Five Dollar Smile and Other Stories**, **Bookless in Baghdad**, **Nehru: The Invention of India**, **Kerala: God's own country**, **India: From Midnight to the Millennium and Reasons of State**. Most of his literary creations are centered around Indian themes. He is a winner of numerous journalism and literary awards, including a Commonwealth Writers' Prize in 1991.

➤ **MCA-21**: Parliament passed a Bill that seeks to give a legal validity to the **MCA-21 project**, which is a major **e-governance** initiative of the Ministry of Company Affairs. The Rs.300 crore MCA-21 project is expected to bring about more efficiency in the administration of the Companies Act. This project mandates and facilitates online filing of statutory documents by companies.

➤ **The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC)** rates **India** as one of the foremost **tourist growth centers** in the coming decade. The tourism industry in India is expected to generate \$121.4 billion (over Rs.5,44,500 crore) of economic activity by **2015**. Foreign tourist arrivals in India in 2004-2005 contributed over \$5 billion (Rs.22,500 crore) in foreign exchange.

➤ **INDEX OF HAPPINES**: India is the **125th happiest country** in the world, a world map of happiness prepared by a British scientists. **Denmark** is the happiest country in the world and **Burundi** in Africa is the most unhappy as per the

map produced by Adrian White, Analytic Social Psychologist at the University of Leicester. According to the study, happiness is found to be most closely associated with **health, followed by wealth and education**, China, in the 82nd position, is happier than India; Japan is placed 90th. The Finance Minister, P. Chidambaram, **launches "insta remit"** an e-remittance gateway for overseas Indians.

- **Sugarcane Breeding Institute (SBI)**, Coimbatore, Tamilnadu
- **Central Soil Salinity Research Institute**, Karnal, Haryana
- **Indian Institute of Soil Science**, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh
- **National Research Center of Weed Sciences**, Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh.

➤ The Government allows **100 per cent FDI** in up linking of television channels in the non-news category.

➤ **INDIA AND IRELAND** sign three agreements after talks between Prime Ministers Manmohan Singh and Bertie Ahern.

➤ The first Amritsar-Lahore bus "**Punj-aab**" is flagged off from Amritsar.

➤ The Saudi Arabian monarch **King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz al Saud** and the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh sign the "Delhi Declaration" in New Delhi. Jeddah and New Delhi agree to develop a strategic energy partnership.

➤ Feb. 13 – The President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, creates history by becoming the first Head of State to sail in a submarine by going on a sortie in **INS SINDHURAKSHAK** in **Visakhapatnam**.

➤ The New Delhi-Bhopal Special Shatabdi Express clocks the top speed of **150 km per hour** to become the country's fastest train.

➤ The **DREADED BIRD FLU** hits India with about 50,000 birds suspected to have been infected in Navapur taluka in the tribal Nandurbar district of Maharashtra.

➤ The Thar Express from Pakistan arrives in Munabao station in Rajasthan 41 years after the disruption of the rail link on the western border.

➤ **INDIA AND FRANCE** sign **NINE** accords. Paris issues a declaration on "development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes", after Chirac-Manmohan Singh talks in New Delhi.

➤ 2006 designated **year of passenger service with a smile**.

- The **WORLD'S LONGEST RAIL** is flagged off from Bhilai Steel Plant.
- The Supreme Court directs the Kerala Government to raise the level in the **MULLAPERIYAR DAM** from 136 feet to 142 feet.
- The fire aboard the Sabarmati Express at the Godhra railway station in Gujarat on Feb, 27, 2002 which killed 59 is just **accidental**, holds the Justice **U.C. BANERJEE Commission**.
- **INDIA AND CHILE** enter into a preferential Trade Agreement, the **FIRST SUCH** between New Delhi and an individual Latin American country.
- The Gujarat Government begins work on raising the level of the **SARDAR SAROVAR DAM** on the Narmada river from **110.64 metres to 121.92 metres**.
- Former **SHIV SAINIK RAJ THACKERAY** launches his new party Maharashtra Navnirman Sena.
- The Cellular Jail in **Port Blair** turns **100** on 10.3.06
- **EDUCATION IS THE "BEST CONTRACEPTIVE"** for population stabilisation, says the Lok Sabha Speaker, **Somnath Chatterjee**, inaugurating the 22nd Asian Parliamentarians' Meet on **Population and Development in New Delhi**.
- The Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, sets up a three member panel under the former CAG, **V.K. Shunglu**, to study relief to Narmada oustees.
- Child prodigy **BUDHIA SINGH** a four-and-a-half year old enters the Limca Book of Records by running 65 km from Puri Jagannath Temple to Bhubaneswar in 7.02 hours.
- The **DMK-LED DEMOCRATIC PROGRESSIVE ALLIANCE** wins a comfortable majority in the Tamil Nadu Assembly elections. In Pondicherry the DPA led by the Congress emerges victorious. **THE CONGRESS**, the single largest party in Assam polls.
- **TARUN GOGOI** is sworn in for a second term as Assam Chief Minister.
- Then Defence Minister, Pranab Mukherjee, releases the **FIRST EVER JOINT WAR DOCTRINE AT THE UNITED COMMANDERS'** meet in New Delhi.
- **BUDDHADEB BHATTACHARJEE** is sworn in as the Chief Minister of West Bengal's seventh consecutive Left Front Government, in Kolkata.
- **V.S. ACHUTHANANDAN** is sworn in as the Kerala Chief Minister heading a 19 member Cabinet.
- **N. RANGASAMY** assumes office as Pondicherry Chief Minister for a second successive term.
- The **Tarun Gogoi**-led Congress-Bodoland People's Progressive Front (Hagrama) coalition Ministry is sworn in Assam.
- **VERGHESE KURIEN** resigns as chairman of the Institute of Rural Management, **ANAND**.
- **A.P.J. ABDUL KALAM** becomes the first President to make a sortie in a combat aircraft after flying in a Sukhoi-30 MKI after takeoff from Lohegaon airbase, Pune.
- The **FIRST BUS SERVICE BETWEEN** Poonch in Jammu and Kashmir and Rawalko town in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir in the post-Independence era is flagged off from Chakan Da Bagh along the Line of Control.
- India and China formally inaugurate border trade through the **NATHULA PASS LINKING SIKKIM** and the Tibet Autonomous Region. The 4,310 metre-high pass was closed 44 years ago after the 1962 conflict.
- At least 181 people are killed and 772 injured as seven serial blasts rock **MUMBAI'S SUBURBAN RAILWAY NETWORK**.
- The Government orders a **BAN ON CHILD LABOUR** in restaurants and households effective October 10 –2006.
- The **JUSTICE R.S. PATHAK INQUIRY** Authority raps Natwar Singh and his son Jagat Singh for misusing positions in getting Iraq oil contracts.
- **MAJOR DAMS IN GUJARAT OVERFLOW** swamping many towns. The toll in Maharashtra goes up to 52. The havoc in Andhra Pradesh leaves 100 dead even as the Godavari and its tributaries flood many villages and island habitations.