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**01 Jul Job title key to inner access by Snowden, leaked documents reveal US spied on European allies**

**World > US Secret Surveillance**

*How he got access to classified documents:* Snowden's job was actually that of 'an infrastructure analyst', who looks for new ways to break into internet and telephone traffic around the world. Because of his position, Snowden got hold of the secret documents.

*Asylum requests:* Snowden's American passport has been revoked and without travel documents, he would be unable to pass through Russian immigration control or to travel to another country. Snowden has submitted asylum requests to 19 countries, including India (which has rejected it). Russia said that Snowden could stay in Russia, provided he stopped publishing classified documents that hurt the United States' interests.

*Reaction of European allies:* The documents leaked by Mr. Snowden showed 38 embassies and missions on a list of United States electronic surveillance targets. Some of those offices belong to allies like France, Italy, Japan and Mexico. European officials reacted angrily and said that the claims could threaten talks with Washington on an important trade-sharing deal and have a severe impact on EU-US relations.

**01 Jul Nokia to buy out Siemens in joint venture for \$2.2 billion**

**Corporate > Nokia Siemens Networks**

Nokia had entered into an agreement to buy Siemens' entire stake in their telecom equipment joint venture Nokia Siemens Networks for 1.7 billion euro (about \$2.2 billion). The 50:50 joint venture was set up in 2007. Post-acquisition, Nokia Siemens Networks (NSN) will become a wholly-owned subsidiary of Nokia.

**02 Jul Massive protests break out in Egypt to oust Morsi, military serves 48 hours ultimatum**

**World > Egypt Protests**

*Protests:* Millions of people across Egypt demanded the ouster of their first elected head of state, President Mohamed Morsi, in an outpouring of anger at his not being able to transcend his roots in the Muslim Brotherhood (MB). Clashes between Mr. Morsi's opponents and supporters broke out in several cities around the country, killing at least 15 people. The police are in open revolt against Mr. Morsi and did nothing to stop the assault or the arson on MB offices.

*Background:* The protests began in November, when Mr. Morsi tried to declare himself above the courts until the passage of a new Constitution. Mr. Morsi continued to battle institutions within his own government left over from Mr. Mubarak, most notably the judiciary and the police.

*Military Involvement:* The military has served an ultimatum to Morsi to resolve issues within 48 hours, failing which they will enforce a roadmap. The military, however, specifically denied a 'coup'. Egypt's future stability is now in question. Its economy has been beset with issues: fuel shortages, dwindling hard currency reserves and worries about its wheat supplies. The military's move to force the MB from power, despite its electoral victories, could set a precedent for future instability.

## 02 PMO asks for discussion on Jet-Etihad deal in Cabinet, wants to examine stake sale

Jul **Corporate > Jet-Etihad Deal**

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) has asked the civil aviation ministry to bring the Jet-Etihad deal for discussion in the Union Cabinet and also wants to examine the stake sale. The PMO asked for the discussion after it was felt that the deal was "complex" and several MPs opposed it on the ground that it will divert business away from Indian centres like Delhi to Abu Dhabi. The over Rs 2,000 crore planned acquisition by Etihad would have ordinarily gone to the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, but the PMO has pointed to SEBI's concerns over the structure of the company being proposed as well as the Foreign Investment Promotion Board's (FIPB) concern that whether the deal is within the contours of Indian law and policies.

## 02 India launches first dedicated navigation satellite

Jul **Science and Technology > Indian Navigation Satellite**

India on Monday successfully launched its first dedicated navigation satellite from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota. Launched at a cost of approximately Rs. 125 crore, the IRNSS-1A is the first of the seven satellites constituting the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) space segment and has a mission life of 10 years. It is designed to provide accurate position information service to users in the country as well as the region extending up to 1,500 km from its boundary.

## 04 Army puts Morsi under house arrest, more than 50 pro-Morsi supporters shot dead

Jul **World > Egypt**

*Egypt Army detains Morsi*

Egypt's military has toppled Egyptian president Mohamed Morsi and reportedly put him under house arrest and has arrested some of his top supporters. Adly Mansour, head of the country's Supreme Constitutional Court, will replace Morsi as Egypt's interim president. A liberal economist Hazem el-Beblawi has been appointed as the Prime Minister and diplomat Mohamed ElBaradei as a vice president for foreign relations, both appointments aimed to assure the western allies and donors that Egypt must depend on. The Muslim Brotherhood has rejected the new political roadmap announced by the military-backed interim leadership that sets a fast track for amending the Islamist-drafted constitution and holding new parliamentary and presidential elections by early next year.

*Morsi supporters shot dead*

In one of the worst single incidents of violence, 54 pro-Morsi supporters, who were staging a sit-in, have been shot dead near a military barrack in Cairo, where Morsi is believed to be in detention. The Army has denied involvement and said that a 'terrorist group' had tried to storm the barracks. Mansour has ordered the formation of a judicial committee to investigate the attacks.

*Aid from Arab states*

The United Arab Emirates would provide a grant of \$1 billion and an interest-free loan of \$2 billion, while Saudi Arabia would reportedly provide an additional \$5 billion, to stabilize the turmoil surrounding Morsi's overthrow that has pushed the teetering Egyptian economy closer to the brink of collapse and to steer clear of the chances of Arab Spring democracy movements.

*United States to review aid to Egypt*

The United States is reviewing the implications for American aid to Egypt after the ouster of President Mohamed Morsi, and if the U.S. government determines that the army's move qualifies as a coup it would have to cut off more than \$1 billion in aid to Egypt, mostly to the military.

**04 Jul** CBI names officials of Gujarat Police and IB in Ishrat Jahan fake encounter case**India > Ishrat Jahan Fake Encounter Case**

The CBI has named officials of the Gujarat police and the Intelligence Bureau in the fake encounter case of 19-year-old Mumbra college student Ishrat Jahan and three others in June 2004 and called it a cold-blooded murder. Among the accused are absconding additional DGP P P Pandey and DIG D G Vanzara, who is already charged with murder in Sohrabuddin Sheikh and Tulsiram Prajapati fake encounters. Although no IB officer has been named, the CBI has accused the IB of providing the weapons to place them on the bodies of the encounter victims.

**04 Jul** Newspaper reveals France has secret data collection programme, US Postal Service tracks all mails of US citizens**World > US Secret Surveillance Programme**

French newspaper Le Monde has disclosed that France has its own large program of data collection, which sweeps up nearly all the data transmissions, including telephone calls, e-mails and social media activity that come in and out of France, without clear legal authority. It also accused the government of recording data from large American networks like Google and Facebook. Although French officials didn't comment on this, the disclosures, made the French outrage against the US programme of spying on its allies seem hollow.

Fresh revelations have brought to light a longtime surveillance system of the US Postal service called mail covers, a forerunner of a vastly more expansive effort, the Mail Isolation Control and Tracking program, in which Postal Service computers photograph the exterior of every piece of paper mail that is processed in the United States. It is not known how long the government saves the images. The program was created after the anthrax attacks in late 2001 that killed five people, including two postal workers and have since then helped avert and detect various crimes and illegal activity. The programme shows that all postal mail is subject to the same kind of scrutiny that the National Security Agency has given to telephone calls and e-mail.

**05 Jul** Delhi doctors create software to differentiate malaria from dengue**Science and Technology > Software**

A team of doctors from Sir Ganga Ram Hospital (SGRH) in Delhi in collaboration with a Russian lab have developed software to differentiate dengue, malaria and other viral fevers, otherwise a challenging task due to their similar symptoms. The software expected to aid in faster detection, reduction in cost of treatment and minimization of antibiotic resistance as only fever-specific antibiotics need to be given to patients.

**07 Jul** 9 explosions rock Mahabodi Temple at Bodh Gaya, 2 injured**India > Bodh Gaya Blasts**

A series of 9 low intensity blasts went off in and around the Mahabodhi temple, a UNESCO World Heritage site associated with the Buddha's enlightenment on the 7th of July. The first blast occurred at 5:45 a.m. Nine explosions followed in the next hour — four at temple sites and five in a 500-meter radius. A 50-year-old

Tibetan and a 30-year-old Myanmar national were injured in the attack. The terror outfit Indian Mujahideen (IM) is believed to be behind the blasts. Arrested IM operatives had revealed during interrogation in October 2012 that Dilsukhnagar in Hyderabad and Buddhist temples in Bodh Gaya were targeted by them. Both the places saw blasts and now security agencies are seriously looking at other targets revealed by them. The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has taken over the investigation of the serial bomb blasts.

## 09 Currency controls in Cyprus increase worry about Euro system

Jul **Economy > Cyprus**

Capital controls introduced in Cyprus as part of a bailout for the country's ailing banks has made a euro in Cyprus no longer the same as one in France, Germany or Greece. With a gross domestic product of only about \$ 23 billion, Cyprus has introduced currency controls on the Euro to restrict the flow of capital from the country. It has raised a crucial question that whether the breakup of the Eurozone had already started since the Euro can't have restricted movement and can't have a different value and status within the 16 countries in the Eurozone. The rules of the European Union ban restrictions on the movement of capital, but the measures by Cyprus have been endorsed by the European Central Bank as essential to prevent money from fleeing the country. Although rigid capital controls introduced in March have been steadily relaxed, Cypriots need to present invoices and other documents to justify moving their money. Transfers over 500,000 euros by a company and 300,000 euros by an individual, require the central bank's approval.

## 10 Arundhati Bhattacharya to be named SBI's first woman managing director

Jul **Corporate > SBI**

SBI Caps chief Arundhati Bhattacharya will be appointed as the State Bank of India's first woman managing director, a decision that is expected to pave the way for her to take over as the chairman of the bank. Bhattacharya will succeed Diwakar Gupta, who retires at the end of the month. Even now, there are at least three women public sector bank chiefs although SBI is yet to match its smaller peers. In the private sector, Chanda Kochhar is ICICI Bank MD & CEO and Shikha Sharma heads Axis Bank.

## 11 Supreme Court says MPs and MLAs to be disqualified if they face conviction charges

Jul **India > Supreme Court**

In a path-breaking judgement, the Supreme Court has scrapped a provision in the Representation of the People Act that offered convicted politicians a three month window to appeal convictions and keep their seats while those appeals were pending. MPs or MLAs could henceforth be disqualified even if they are slapped with minor fines and jail terms in offences such as insulting the national flag or defiling a place of worship. However, lawmakers who have already been convicted by courts would not incur disqualification if they had appeals against such convictions pending. As of now, 31% legislators are said to be facing some trial or the other in a variety of cases.

## 11 RBI curbs currency derivatives trade by banks and raises Marginal Standing Facility (MSF), SEBI raises margin for non-bank traders

Jul **Economy > RBI**

The combined steps of the RBI and the SEBI to reduce speculation helped the rupee recover and brought in signs of stability, though a sustained recovery might prove elusive unless the trade balance improves. The

Reserve Bank of India banned banks from indulging in proprietary trading in currency derivatives, which took the pressure off the currency, and the Securities & Exchange Board of India raised margin requirements for non-bank traders.

The RBI also raised the Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) rate and Bank Rate each by 200 basis points to 10.25 percent and capped the amount up to which banks can borrow or lend under its daily liquidity window at 1 percent of banks' deposits, roughly 750 billion rupees. It also announced a 120 billion rupee sale of government bonds for Thursday, 18th July.

## 13 Jul Modi accuses Congress of hiding in veil of secularism, his 'puppy' comment on Gujarat riots irks many

**Politics and Government > Narendra Modi**

Gujarat CM and BJP's chief campaigner Narendra Modi's recent comments on the Congress and the 2002 Gujarat riots has created quite an upheaval in the Indian political scenario. Accusing the UPA government over the downturn in economy, falling rupee and corruption at a rally in Pune, Modi said that "the moment there is a crisis, they (Congress) wear the burqa (veil) of secularism and hide in a bunker." The Congress responded that it was much better than "naked communalism".

In yet another incident, defending himself against accusations over the 2002 riots in an interview to the newswire Reuters, Modi said he was sad about the riots, adding he would be sad even if a "puppy" came under a car. He said his government used its "full strength" to "do the right thing" and he had no guilty feeling. Modi's comments came under fire from the ruling Congress, the BSP and estranged ally JD (U) as well.

## 15 Jul India's fifth generation fighter to miss development deadline as Russia hikes cost

**India > 5th Generation Fighter Aircrafts**

India's biggest defence project, development of the Fifth-Generation Fighter Aircraft (FGFA), with Russia is unlikely to be concluded in the 2013-14 fiscal as Russia has hiked costs. India was planning to induct the FGFA from 2022 onwards, with IAF test pilots getting three prototypes in 2014, 2017 and 2019 for trials. The timeframes would now have to be revised. India will eventually end up spending close to \$35 billion over the next two decades to induct over 200 such fighters. The final design contract now being negotiated was pegged at \$11 billion, with India and Russia sharing \$5.5 billion each. Each fighter was to cost over \$100 million. Now, a committee of specialists and finance officials will verify the rise in costs and an internal contract negotiation committee is also in progress to steer the project.

## 15 Jul Egypt to investigate Morsi's 2011 jailbreak, freezes assets of top brotherhood leaders

**World > Egypt**

Egyptian prosecutors will investigate allegations of jailbreak by ousted president Mohamed Morsi and more than 30 other Muslim Brotherhood leaders during the 2011 revolution to topple Hosni Mubarak. It has been alleged that Morsi had escaped from prison with help from the Palestinian militant group Hamas. Hamas has denied any role and Morsi says local residents helped him escape.

Egypt's public prosecutor has ordered the freezing of assets belonging to 9 top Muslim brotherhood leaders, including the group's general guide Mohamed Badie. Assets of five Islamists from other groups were also frozen in connection with four deadly incidents since Morsi's ouster.

## 15 Government shuts down Telegraph service

**Jul** **India > Telegraph Service**

The government of India officially closed down the 160 year old Telegraph service on Sunday, July 14, 2013. The Government decided to wind up the department to minimise losses to the Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL). Owing to poor usage of the service and dwindling revenue, the government has taken this extreme step. The Telegraph service was established in 1850 in Calcutta (Now Kolkata). Many people visited telegraph offices to send the last telegram to their near and dear ones and experience a slice of the soon to become history.

## 16 Jamaat Boss, Ghulam Azam, 91, gets 90 years in jail for war crimes

**Jul** **World > Bangladesh**

The leader of Bangladesh's fundamentalist Jamaat-e-Islami, 91 year old Ghulam Azam, has been sentenced to 90 years in jail for masterminding atrocities during the 1971 Bangladesh liberation war in which around 3 million people were killed. The wartime head of Jamaat and now its spiritual leader was spared the death penalty because of his age and health. He was found guilty of murder and torture by the International Crimes Tribunal. Azam was the fifth Jamaat leader to be sentenced for war crimes but his was the most awaited verdict in Bangladesh swept by the anti-fundamentalist Shahbag movement. With Jamaat calling a strike in protest against the sentence, clashes broke out in various parts of Bangladesh.

## 16 Supreme Court lifts ban on dance bars in Mumbai

**Jul** **India > Dance Bar Ban**

Dance bars in Mumbai are set to make a comeback after a gap of 8 years with the Supreme Court upholding a Bombay High Court's decision against the ban. In 2005, the Maharashtra Government imposed a ban on dance performances in permit rooms, beer bars and eating houses. In 2006, The Bombay High Court ruled that the ban violated the constitutional right to earn a living and was against the public interest. The Supreme Court ruled that there was no justification that a dance permitted in dance bars would be derogatory, exploitative or corrupting of public morality and the ban was an overreaction on the part of the state government. The judgement was welcomed by hoteliers and bar dancers while the state government said that it would seek legal advice on how to keep dance bars shut.

## 16 22 children die after consuming mid-day meal in Bihar

**Jul** **India > Mid-Day Meal Tragedy**

22 children have died till now and 25 more have fallen sick after consuming free mid-day meal at a government school in the village of Masrakh in Bihar's Saran district. The children were admitted to hospitals in the nearby town of Chhapra and the state capital, Patna. The poisoned meal consisted of rice, pulse and soyabean and a preliminary investigation suggests the food had traces of an organo-phosphate used as an insecticide on rice and wheat crops. It's believed the food was not washed before it was served at the school. Chief Minister of Bihar, Mr. Nitish Kumar, has ordered a high-level enquiry into the incident and has announced a compensation of Rs. two lakh each to the families of the deceased. Following the incident, violent protests erupted in Chhapra where people armed with sticks and rods set ablaze a bus and damaged public property.



## 19 Detroit, world's largest auto-making capital, files for bankruptcy

Jul **Economy > Detroit**

Detroit, the auto capital of the world, became the largest US city ever to file for bankruptcy. Detroit has more than USD18 billion in debt and unfunded liabilities and doesn't have the revenues to meet those obligations and provide an adequate level of services to its people, who pay the highest taxes per capita in Michigan. Detroit which at one time had some two million population has now reduced to just 70,000 and bankruptcy is the only feasible option to fix the city's finances. Detroit's move, if successful, could prove to be a model for other financially distressed cities across the US.

## 20 Six sentenced to life imprisonment over Swiss Gang rape case

Jul **India > Swiss Gang-Rape Case**

Six men accused in the gang rape and robbery of a Swiss tourist in March this year in Madhya Pradesh, have been sentenced to life imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 10,000 has been imposed on each of them. The victim, a 38-year-old Swiss national, had come to India along with her husband on a holiday. They were cycling from Orchha to Agra and had stopped near Jhadia village in Datia, 405 km north of Bhopal, when they were targeted by these six men. The accused had also robbed the couple of their belongings.

## 22 Japan set to have a stable govt. as PM Shinzo Abe wins thumping victory in Upper House

Jul **World > Japan Upper House Polls**

Japanese Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) won a thumping victory in the Upper House elections of the Japanese parliament. His party won 65 of the 121 seats being contested; with its junior partner New Komeito securing 11. The country's main opposition party, the Democratic Party of Japan, won just 17 seats. Since 2007, the upper house parliamentary deadlock has led to a new Prime Minister assuming office every year. The ruling party's victory in both houses of parliament will ensure Japan's first politically-stable government since 2006. Mr. Abe's primary focus, now, would be to pursue his radical economic policies to revitalise the Japanese economy and rewrite the pacifist post-war constitution, which confines the nation's military to only a self-defence force. Another challenge would be restarting Japan's nuclear reactors because a strong anti-nuclear sentiment is still present following the March 2011 Fukushima disaster.

## 22 Amartya Sen says he doesn't want Modi to be India's PM

Jul **Politics and Government > Amartya Sen**

Coming out strongly against Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi, Nobel laureate Amartya Sen said he does not want him to become India's prime minister as he does not have secular credentials and did not do enough to make minorities feel safe. Sen also criticised Modi's model of governance saying he did not approve of it and said that Gujarat needs to do much more on the health and education sectors and bring equity.

## 22 Major earthquakes strike China and New Zealand, death toll rises to 94 in China

Jul **World > Earthquakes**

A 6.6 magnitude earthquake struck a rural, semi-arid area of northwestern China's Gansu province killing 94 people and injuring more than 1000. About 1, 23, 000 people were affected by the quake and almost 2,000

homes were completely destroyed, and about 22,500 damaged. Paramilitary People's Armed Police has launched a massive search for survivors. The Chinese Red Cross would help with relief work. Heavy rains predicted for the next week could hamper rescue efforts.

Meanwhile, a 6.9 magnitude earthquake struck about 35 miles south of New Zealand's capital, Wellington, in the channel between its northern and southern islands. No fatalities or serious injuries were reported. A disaster warning has been issued to all people working in the central city.

## 22 Jul Al Qaeda militants flee Iraq jail in violent mass break-out, blasts rock northern Iraq

**World > Iraq**

More than 500 inmates, most of them convicted senior members of al Qaeda who had received death sentences, escaped from Iraq's Abu Ghraib jail as Al Qaeda comrades launched a military-style assault to free them. Suicide bombers armed with car bombs blasted their way into the compound and attacked guards with mortars and rocket-propelled grenades. Other militants fought off security reinforcements sent from Baghdad. Ten policemen and four militants were killed in the ensuing clashes.

A similar attack followed on another prison, in Taji, around 20 km (12 miles) north of Baghdad, but guards managed to prevent any inmates from escaping. Sixteen soldiers and six militants were killed. Recent attacks by Sunni insurgents backed by Al Qaeda have targeted mosques, amateur football matches, shopping areas and cafes. Two attacks on Monday, 21st June, rocked Mosul, the northern Iraq metropolis, where blasts killed at least 20 people and injured many.

## 25 Jul Planning Commission says poverty ratio declined 15% in 2011-12 from 2004-05, Congress says full meal available for Rs. 12 and 5 at Mumbai and Delhi

**Politics and Government > Poverty Ratio**

The Planning Commission on Tuesday said poverty ratio in India had declined to 21.9 percent in 2011-12 from 37.2 percent in 2004-05 on account of increase in per capita consumption. The Planning Commission's report means that the people whose daily consumption of goods and services exceed Rs.27.20 in villages and Rs.33.33 in cities are not poor. The BJP has slammed the Planning Commission over the formula for calculating poverty figures.

Congress spokesperson Raj Babbar said that one can have a full meal for Rs.12 in Mumbai whereas Congress leader Rasheed Masood of Delhi said that one can get a meal for Rs. 5 in Delhi Jama Masjid. The comments have received widespread criticism from all angles, including the BJP and the JD (U). The Congress has downplayed the comments saying that the Planning Commission has compared the decline in poverty in 2004 during the NDA regime with that of 2012 during the UPA tenure.

## 26 Jul 120 Morsi supporters shot dead in deadly state massacre, US not to classify Morsi ouster as a coup

**World > Egypt**

Millions of Morsi supporters took to the streets in protest after former president Mohamed Morsi was charged with espionage and murder. In a violent massacre by the state, at least 120 supporters of Morsi have been shot dead by security officials at a sit-in in East Cairo. Morsi supporters allege that people were shot in the



head and above the waist. Medics said that bullet holes in the centre of the head and in the back of the skull proved that the snipers were shooting to kill and not just to injure.

The United States has determined the ouster of Morsi by the military as not being a coup. A coup determination would force the United States to end military aid to Egypt.

## 28 Publicis and Omnicom merge to create world's biggest advertising company

Jul **Corporate > Mergers and Acquisitions**

France's Publicis and US firm Omnicom have announced a merger to create the world's biggest advertising company worth \$35.1bn (£22.8bn). Omnicom chief executive John Wren and Publicis Groupe boss Maurice Levy are to become joint CEOs. The companies see savings of \$500m from the merger, and the deal is expected to be finalised by the end of the March 2014. The merger should be "tax-free" and the holding company would be based in the Netherlands.

## 30 Government announces bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh to create Telangana

Jul **India > Telangana**

The government on Tuesday, 30th July, announced the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh to create a separate state of Telangana. With a population of over 3.5 crore, India's 29th state will have 17 Lok Sabha seats and 119 assembly seats. The decision is expected to strengthen the Congress Party's fortune in the state ahead of the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. Hyderabad will remain the common capital of the splintered states for at least 10 years. The creation of Telangana is expected to overcome the poverty and backwardness in the region which were at the roots of the separate state movement.

## Bank Specific

### 01 Shadow banking grows in China

Jul **China**

China's biggest banks are using lightly regulated wealth management products to repackage old loans and prop up risky companies and projects that might not otherwise be able to borrow money. The loans are often made off the balance sheet, and therefore outside the purview of bank regulators, which is why experts call it shadow banking. They are made at higher interest rates, so everyone right from the borrower, the banks, to the investor of the wealth management product, benefits, as long as the borrower repays. Shadow banking is helping drive the rapid growth of credit in a weakening economy, which could lead to a series of bank failures. By the end of last year, China's shadow banking activity was valued at \$6 trillion, twice the level in 2010, and now the government is taking all possible steps to curb the practice.

### 02 Big Indian corporates seek banking license

Jul **Banking License**

26 companies, including conglomerates, such as Aditya Birla Group, Tata Sons, and Anil Ambani's Reliance Group and large corporates such as L&T Finance, Venugopal Dhoot's Value Industries and Bajaj Finserv have applied for a bank license. The RBI will face the tough job of selecting a handful of candidates who it feels are best placed to run a bank. Among the 26 applicants, are also public sector promoted entities such as India Post, LIC Housing Finance and post-liberalization finance companies, including Edelweiss, India Infoline and Indiabulls etc. After YES Bank in 2003, no new bank has been given a licence.

## 22 ICICI Bank ties up with Movida for mobile payments

Jul *ICICI*

Movida, the mobile payments joint venture between Visa and Monitise, today said private bank ICICI Bank will utilise its payment services. The service will enable ICICI Bank payment card holders to pay bills and recharge prepaid airtime among others. The payment solution is designed to operate across all mobile networks using any payment card and can be accessed through all kind of mobiles including basic handsets.

## 29 UIDAI and banks disagree on use of biometric authentication at ATMs

Jul *Aadhar for ATM Transactions*

The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) that issues AADHAR cards is pushing for biometric authentication for credit card and ATM transactions. However, bankers are disagreeing saying that upgrading each and every automated teller machine and point of sale terminal will be very expensive. An RBI-constituted panel has pegged the cost of banks' readiness for Aadhaar at 4,259 crore compared with 3,556 crore the banking industry has to spend to upgrade machines to implement biometric authentication. UIDAI might give dissent note on cost figures arrived at by the panel. UIDAI is of the view that Aadhar-based payment technology can be cost effective and beneficial as it will take electronic payments to the masses.

# Corporate

## 01 Vodafone offers Rs.4, 000 crore for retaining 2G spectrum

Jul *Vodafone*

Vodafone India has offered to pay Rs.4,000 crore for retaining premium 2G spectrum in Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata, where its licences will expire in November, next year. The government, however, has plans to auction spectrum in the three circles in the forthcoming round scheduled later this fiscal.

## 02 Google might launch Flight Search in India, flight aggregators cry foul play

Jul *Google Flight Search*

Google would likely launch its 'Flight Search' service in India, which might put the business model of Indian flight aggregators such as Makemytrip, Yatra, and Cleartrip etc. under threat. Flight Search lets users compare fares offered by airlines and book tickets directly from airline websites. This could, in effect, make flight aggregators redundant. The companies are considering steps to protect their interests, including a possible complaint to the Competition Commission. They further claim discrimination by Google when it comes to search results for queries relating to online travel.

## 10 Yahoo shuts down early web search engine AltaVista

Jul *AltaVista*

Yahoo has closed down AltaVista, one of the most popular early web search engines. AltaVista was introduced in 1995, three years before Google Inc. was founded. AltaVista's popularity had already faded by the time Yahoo acquired it as part of its \$1.7 billion purchase of Overture Services Inc. in July 2003. Overture had bought AltaVista earlier that year from Massachusetts-based CMGI Inc. AltaVista's decline began after it expanded to become more like Yahoo, offering a bevy of online services instead of sticking solely with search.

By the time it decided to revert and focus solely on search, its finances had declined and Google had gained ground as the top search engine.

## 10 Flipkart raises \$200 million, biggest in Indian e-commerce space

Jul *Flipkart*

Online retailer Flipkart has raised \$200 million (about Rs 1,200 crore) from its existing investors, the single largest round of investment in the Indian e-commerce space. The investment values the company at \$1.5 billion. The investors are Naspers, the South African internet major that recently bought out bus ticketing startup redBus, private equity firms Accel Partners and Tiger Global, and San Francisco-based family office Iconiq Capital. The total investment in the company, over five rounds of funding, is now over \$380 million.

## Economy

## 01 Gold prices increase after falling to 3-year low last week

Jul *Gold*

Gold rose by Rs. 45 to Rs. 26,475 per 10 grams and silver increased by Rs. 200 to Rs. 41,200 per kg on increased offtake by jewellers and coin makers. Gold and silver, rose in the bullion market following sustained buying by stockists and retailers, after Gold dropped to its lowest level in 34 months on 29th June which lured buyers and led to an increase in its demand.

## 04 2 prime European banks promise to keep rates low, assure investors of easy money

Jul *Europe*

The European Central Bank and the Bank of England have promised that they would keep interest rates at the present level or even lower for an extended period of time. The extended period would definitely be more than 12 months. The forward guidance is aimed at providing more certainty to investors at a time when tensions in Europe are rising again following a political crisis in Portugal, which has raised questions about whether the region's governments will be able to withstand popular discontent with their policies of cutting budgets to bring public debt under control. Although investors had pushed up the risk premium on bonds issued by troubled Eurozone countries, market rates on Italian and Spanish bonds retreated after the banks' announcement. The commitment to keep rates low reassured investors that they can count on easy money for the foreseeable future.

## 10 PM backs plan to raise FDI across sectors to boost economy

Jul *FDI*

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has backed the plan to raise foreign direct investment (FDI) ceiling in telecom to 100%, besides allowing overseas funds to flow into several sectors without prior government approval. The list of sectors where companies will be allowed to invest through the so-called automatic route includes oil and gas refining, courier and commodity and power exchanges. The higher cap for telecom is intended to send an encouraging message to global investors. Regarding FDI in defence, Defence minister A K Antony has opposed higher foreign investment in the sector citing vulnerabilities. However, he has left the door open for allowing over 26% FDI backing in case-to-case clearances by the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS).

## 23 Gold may get dearer as RBI takes measures to boost export

Jul *Gold*

Gold jewellery may become expensive as the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has made it mandatory to export 20% of all imported gold in the form of ornaments. Besides, traders will now be prompted to sell gold to overseas buyers even at lower prices to meet the latest export rules. This might force them to raise domestic jewellery prices to cover losses. RBI also specified that gold importers would have to supply gold in any form only to jewellers or dealers supplying ornament manufacturers to stem investment in gold in order to bring down the country's Current Account Deficit (CAD) and strengthen a falling rupee.

## 30 Government and RBI, both say promoting growth is the other's responsibility

Jul *Growth*

Finance Minister P Chidambaram endorsed the measures taken by the RBI recently to stabilise the rupee, but said that the RBI's mandate should not be limited just to price stability, but also promote growth and generate employment. He added that banks had enough funds to meet the credit demands and the industry should come up with large investment projects.

In response, RBI governor D Subbarao has made it clear in his policy that the responsibility of bringing back the growth momentum lay with the government. The government should undertake structural reforms to ease supply side bottlenecks and thereby push growth.

## 31 Detroit bankruptcy puts \$2.5 billion city art collection under threat

Jul *Detroit*

Detroit which has a \$18 billion long-term debt is looking at all sources of revenue to pay back creditors, even selling off Detroit's prized art collection at the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA). The world-famous 60,000-piece collection is worth up to \$2.5 billion and includes world famous works by Rembrandt, Matisse, Cézanne, Degas, Van Gogh and Gauguin. Any attempts to liquidate the museum's collection could face resistance from arts patrons, who still donate millions of dollars a year to the DIA. Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette wrote a legal opinion arguing that the collection is held by a charitable trust for the people of Michigan and that the city doesn't actually own the art and hence can't sell it.

# India

## 09 Penguin Random House asks author Vikram Seth to return \$ 1.7 million advance

Jul *Vikram Seth – Penguin Random House deal*

The newly merged entity and now the World's largest book publisher Penguin Random House has asked author Vikram Seth to return his \$1.7 million (approx Rs ten crore and thirty lakh) advance, a part of which was paid to him for A Suitable Girl, the sequel to his best-selling novel, A Suitable Boy. Seth was scheduled to submit his manuscript this June but has been unable to do so leading to the publishers' demand. The drastic step might have been taken by Penguin Random House in an effort to cut costs and streamline operations. Seth, who commands million dollar advances and took eight years to write the voluminous 'A Suitable Boy', works on his own terms and his agent is trying to negotiate with the publishers for a new date.

## 13 Jul 13 Mumbai policemen sentenced to life in jail for Lakhan encounter killing

### Jul *Lakhan Encounter*

21 convicts including 13 policemen have been handed out life sentences in the case of the 2006 fake encounter killing of former Chhota Rajan aide Lakhan Bhaiya alias Ramnarayan Gupta. Among the six police officers and seven constables convicted is former encounter specialist Pradeep Suryavanshi. The main accused, former encounter specialist Pradeep Sharma, has been acquitted. Lakhan Bhaiya was picked up from Vashi and killed in an encounter at Versova on Nov 11, 2006. This is the first encounter case in Mumbai in which so many policemen have been convicted.

## 13 Jul CBI says Intelligence Bureau (IB) tapes, which reveal LET's motive to kill Modi, made up

### Jul *Ishrat Jahan Fake Encounter*

Police Inspector Bharat Patel who has been arrested by the CBI in the Ishrat Jahan fake encounter case has said that IB officials Rajinder Kumar, M K Sinja and others made alleged terrorist Amjadali Rana speak to Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Toiba commander Muzammil over satellite phone and cell phone and recorded the conversation while he was in their "illegal" custody at Arham Farm on the outskirts of Ahmedabad. The IB tapes pointed to Muzammil instructing Javed, an alleged terrorist killed in the fake encounter to convince Jishan Johar, another alleged terrorist, to eliminate right wing leaders including Narendra Modi and L K Advani. However, the CBI chargesheet claims that Rana told crime branch officials that LeT had no plan to kill Modi, but he was sent to target crowded places.

## 22 Jul India among countries facing highest risk of importing deadly MERS virus

### Jul *MERS Virus*

Scientists from St. Michael's hospital in Toronto have warned that the deadly MERS coronavirus that has emerged in the Middle East could spread faster and wider in India during the annual festivals of Umrah and Haj, when millions of domestic Muslims will visit Saudi Arabia in the month of October this year. Around 1.7 lakh Indian Muslims will visit Haj this year. Mumbai and Kozhikode are at the top of the list of susceptible cities, as both cities have received more than 3, 50, 000 commercial air travellers between June and November 2012 from the four countries where MERS cases have been traced back to.

## 23 Jul 22 killed in Bengal Panchayat polls violence

### Jul *Bengal*

22 people have been killed and several others, including minors, have been injured in the violence that has engulfed West Bengal's Panchayat polls. Mangled by splinters from a crude bomb, a child's hand had to be amputated whereas three children, aged below 10 years, were injured when they mistook stockpiled bombs for balls at the house of a Trinamool woman candidate. Even the Central forces were targeted in Malda's Ratua, where they were forced to open fire, in which a villager died. Five people have died and more than 50 people from the CPI (M), the Congress and the Trinamool Congress have been injured in post-poll clashes in Murshidabad district. The fifth and final phase of polling is on July 25.

## 23 Jul Maharashtra to ban all forms of chewable tobacco, except raw tobacco and raw supari

### *Tobacco Ban*

The Maharashtra government has banned the manufacture, storage, distribution, or sale of tobacco and betel nut, which is either flavoured, scented or mixed with any of the said additives, and whether going by the name or form of gutka, paan masala, flavoured / scented tobacco, flavoured / scented supari, kharra (also known as mawa, which is a mixture of tobacco and betel nut). Except raw tobacco and raw supari, all other forms of tobacco would be banned.

## 23 Jul Wal-Mart tells government it cannot meet 30% sourcing clause

### *FDI*

The world's largest retailer Wal-Mart has expressed its inability to the government on meeting the sourcing norm in the multi-brand segment that requires 30% procurement from Indian small industries, stating it can procure only about 20%. However, officials have said that it would be really difficult for the government to ease this provision as it is a politically sensitive issue. Several global retailers have raised their concerns over the sourcing restriction. Although 51 percent FDI is now allowed in multi-brand retail, no formal proposal has been received by the government yet.

## 24 Jul Salman Khan charged with culpable homicide, charges 130 crores for Bigg Boss 7

### *Salman Khan*

Bollywood star Salman Khan has been charged with culpable homicide by a Mumbai court. In September 2002, he allegedly drove his car into a bakery in Mumbai, killing a man sleeping on the street and seriously injuring 3 others. If convicted, he faces 10 years in prison. The trial will begin on 19th August.

Salman, who was reportedly getting a whopping Rs. 2.5 crore per episode for anchoring Bigg Boss Season 6, will now be tucking in Rs. 5 crore per episode for the reality show's season 7. Rs. 5 crores per episode multiplied by 26 episodes totals to a huge amount of Rs. 130 crores. With this, he will become the highest paid actor on small screen.

## 25 Jul Tablets register growth of 424% in India, Apple iPhone sales also record 400% growth

### *Tablets and iPhones*

Tablets are eating into the PC market and have registered a phenomenal growth of 424 percent. The decline in the growth of PC is a matter of concern which is growing by only 5 percent, as India still has very low PC penetration. The combination of basic functioning of a PC coupled with affordability has made tablet PCs a favourite among consumers.

Apple Inc. CEO Tim Cook has said that iPhone sales in India beat all expectations to soar 400% in the April-June quarter just a year after he famously said he loved India but felt business opportunities were much more elsewhere.



## 26 Bihar teachers stay off mid-day meal duties

### Jul *Mid-Day Meal*

Nearly three lakh government teachers boycotted the mid-day meal scheme on the grounds that it constituted non-academic work. Bihar Primary School Teachers' Association said that their repeated requests to the government to remove primary teachers from mid-day meal duty had not been attended. It also said that the Saran school principal, arrested on charges related to the mid-day meal deaths of July 16, had been wrongly framed in the case.

## Politics & Government

## 02 India loses \$ 5 billion Kazakhstan oilfield deal to China

### Jul *India-Kazakhstan Oil Deal*

India's ONGC has lost the giant Kashagan oilfield to the Chinese after Kazakhstan blocked its \$5 billion deal to buy US energy major Conoco Phillips' stake in the Caspian Sea oilfield. ONGC had in November last year struck a deal with Conoco Phillips to buy its 8.4 percent stake in Kazakhstan's biggest oilfield, Kashagan. According to Kazakh law, the government has the right to buy any oil asset for sale in the country at the price agreed on by the buyer and seller. Kazakhstan will now buy the 8.4 stake and sell it to China National Petroleum Corp (CNPC) for a reported \$5.3-5.4 billion. India has lost at least \$12.5 billion of deals to China in past years.

## 09 Chinese Army enters Ladakh yet again, raids Indian post

### Jul *Indo-China Relations*

In yet another incursion, Chinese troops crossed over into the crucial Chumar post area and smashed bunkers and cut wires of cameras before taking away an Indian surveillance camera after dismantling it on June 17. The Chumar post is in the same area which had sparked off the 21-day faceoff between the two sides in April. The video camera was returned on July 3 after an Army-ITBP team lodged a strong protest during a flag meeting at Spanggur Gap in Chushul sector. Despite the need for good relations harped by both countries during the recent visits of Chinese Premier Le Keqiang to India and the Indian Defence Minister A. K. Antony to China, Chinese Troops continue to infiltrate into the Indian territory along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

## 09 Leaked report suggests Bin Laden lived undetected because of Pakistani negligence

### Jul *Pakistan*

A leaked Pakistani government report suggests Osama Bin Laden lived in Pakistan undetected after fleeing Afghanistan in 2001, because of the culpable incompetence and negligence at almost all levels of the Pakistani military and government. Over a period of six years the unusual nature of the compound, where Laden lived, failed to draw the attention of Pakistan's intelligence services. The report said it could not rule out "the possibility of some degree of connivance inside or outside the government". The report also voiced harsh criticism of the Navy Seal raid on Abbottabad, describing it as an "American act of war" and Pakistan's "greatest humiliation" since East Pakistan seceded in 1971. It quotes officials as saying that Pakistan air force jets were scrambled to shoot down the US helicopters, but were too late. The 336-page document was the result of interviews with more than 200 witnesses, including senior civilian and military officials, as well as with Bin Laden's three widows prior to their deportation to Saudi Arabia. Javed Iqbal, the head of the Abbottabad Commission, formed to establish whether the failures of the government were due to incompetence or

colluding with al-Qaeda, said that the report was based on "assumptions" and did not include even one out of more than 100 recommendations made by the Commission.

## 15 Mayawati seeks ban on RSS, VHP

Jul *Mayawati*

Following the ban on caste-based rallies by the Allahabad High Court, Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati justified such gatherings organized by her party and instead demanded a ban on RSS, VHP and Bajrang Dal. She said outfits like them which claim to be non-political, control the BJP in reality and design caste-based and religion-based political strategies for the BJP besides finalizing its Prime-Ministerial candidate. She said that they are a bigger threat to the nation.

## 21 China to invest \$160 billion in Andhra Pradesh

Jul *Indo-China*

China is ready to invest about \$160 billion in Andhra Pradesh in different sectors like food processing, small-scale industries, infrastructure and education, among others, and improve bilateral ties with India. However, any timeframe or phases in which such a huge investment could materialize was not mentioned. Additionally, China would send 10,000 students to Hyderabad for education in various streams.

## 22 US vice-president Joe Biden on maiden visit to India to bolster ties

Jul *Indo-US*

In his first official visit to India after assuming office in 2009, US vice-president Joe Biden arrived on 2nd July with his wife, Jill, on a four-day trip aimed at bolstering ties in key sectors of trade, energy, defence and security. Biden will hold meetings with top Indian leadership, including President Pranab Mukherjee and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

# Science and Technology

## 04 Scientists Fabricate Rudimentary Human Livers

Jul *Rudimentary Human Livers*

Researchers in Japan have used human stem cells to create tiny human livers like those that arise early in fetal life. When the scientists transplanted the rudimentary livers into mice, the little organs grew, made human liver proteins, and metabolized drugs as human livers do. Although the scientists warned that this was very basic research and the method would have to be scaled up enormously in order to treat a patient, it was a major breakthrough in terms of its application in future medical treatment.

## 09 World's first solar-powered family car developed

Jul *Solar Family Car*

Students from the Netherlands' Eindhoven University of Technology unveiled 'Stella', the world's first solar-powered family car with room for four people, a trunk, intuitive steering, that expands or contracts when you are driving too fast or too slowly, and a range of 600km. The solar cells of 'Stella' generate more electricity on average than the car uses and that means the surplus electricity can be returned to the power grid, thereby making the car 'energy-positive'. The solar-powered cars manufactured to date are usually built for just one person and 'Stella' comes as a welcome innovation.

## 12 NASA finds blue planet where it rains glass

Jul *Astronomy*

NASA scientists have discovered a blue planet that possibly rains glass, orbiting a star 63 light years away, marking the first time an exoplanet's true colour has been determined. Scientists measured changes in the colour of light from the planet before, during and after a pass behind its star. In the planet, the daytime temperature is nearly 1,093°C, and it possibly rains glass — sideways — in howling, 7,242 kmph winds.

## 13 Scientists develop artificial heart from cow tissue

Jul *Artificial Heart*

Carmat, a company based in Paris, has designed an artificial heart fashioned in part from cow tissue. The device, soon to be tested in patients with heart failure, is regulated by sensors, software and microelectronics. And its power will come from two external, wearable lithium-ion batteries. Fifteen years in development, the artificial heart has been approved for clinical trials at cardiac surgery centers in Belgium, Poland, Saudi Arabia and Slovenia. Surfaces in the new heart that touch human blood are made from cow tissue instead of artificial materials like plastic that can cause problems like clotting.

# Sports

## 22 Indian Badminton League (IBL) holds auction of players

Jul *Indian Badminton League*

The first-ever auction of players for the Indian Badminton League (IBL) saw success as the franchisees spent \$861,000 on 36 Indian players. Billed as the world's richest badminton league, with \$1 million as the prize fund, the event is aimed at benefiting the home players as well as improving the popularity and conditions of the sport in India. Each of the franchisees had a budget of about \$2, 75,000 (Rs 1.6 crore) to buy 10 players for their team. Men's world number one player Lee Chong Wie was bought by Mumbai Masters, for \$135,000 (over Rs 80 lakh). The most valued female player was Saina Nehwal, who was bought by Hyderabad Hotshots, for \$1, 20,000 (Rs 71 lakh). Other icon players included P.V. Sindhu who was sold to Awadh Warriors (Lucknow Warriors) while P. Kashyap was bagged by Banga Beats. The Chinese, however, have stayed away from the event. IBL will begin from August 14 and will be played across the six franchise cities till August 31.

# World

## 01 Deadly wildfires ravage Arizona, 19 firefighters killed

Jul *Arizona Wildfire*

A deadly wildfire in Arizona killed 19 firefighters and ravaged more than 8,000 acres of land. The fire spread rapidly owing to the ravaging monsoon winds. Scientists say that an increasingly hot and dry West has become the new normal and would result in more catastrophic fires. Since 1970, Arizona has warmed at a rate 0.72 degrees per decade, the fastest among the 50 states. The fire potential is exacerbated by the past policy, beginning around 1900, of putting out all fires which are a natural way of clearing out the dry combustible underbrush. Moreover, in the 1990s, more than 2.2 million housing units were added in these fire-prone areas, suppressing natural fires, while allowing a buildup of combustible materials like the "slash" debris left behind by logging.

## 12 Malala Yousafzai, Pakistani girl shot by Taliban, makes appeal at U.N.

Jul *Malala Yousafzai*

In a speech at the United Nations Youth Assembly in New York on her 16th birthday, Malala Yousafzai, who was shot in the head by the Taliban for promoting education for girls in Pakistan, called on world leaders to provide “free, compulsory education” for every child. She said that the terrorist attack on her and her colleagues have been unable to silence them and have made them even stronger. Yousafzai has been an outspoken critic of the Taliban since 2009 when Taliban militants attacked more than 800 schools as part of their violent campaign against girls’ education in northwestern Pakistan.

## 14 Former watch volunteer George Zimmerman cleared of charges in the 2012 Trayvon Martin killing

Jul *Treyvon Martin Killing*

Neighborhood watch volunteer George Zimmerman was cleared of all charges in the shooting of Trayvon Martin, the black teenager, whose killing in February 2012 unleashed furious debate across the US over racial profiling, self-defense and equal justice. The jury of six women acquitted Zimmerman on the basis that he had shot Martin in self-defence. Previously in 2012 soon after the killing, protesters nationwide had lashed out against the police as it took 44 days for Zimmerman to be arrested.

Demonstrators upset with Zimmerman’s acquittal protested mostly peacefully throughout the US but some protesters broke windows and vandalized a police squad car in Oakland during protests. Hundreds took to the streets in New York to protest Zimmerman’s acquittal.

## 16 Snowden reveals Microsoft’s cooperation with NSA, seeks temporary asylum in Russia

Jul *US Secret Surveillance Programme*

US secret surveillance programme whistleblower Edward Snowden has alleged that Microsoft cooperated with the American National Security Agency (NSA) to intercept users’ data, including helping the agency to crack Microsoft’s own encryption codes. It also said that the NSA had tapped into Skype customers worldwide. Microsoft said that legal obligations forced it to provide the NSA access to its services. However, Microsoft does not provide any government with blanket or direct access to SkyDrive, Outlook.com, Skype or any Microsoft product.

Snowden has requested temporary asylum in Russia, until he is able to travel to Latin America, where three countries have offered him political asylum. He had been holed up at the transit zone of Moscow’s Sheremetyevo airport since his arrival from Hong Kong on June 23.

## 18 Purported letter from Taliban tells Malala Yousafzai why she was targeted

Jul *Malala Yousafzai*

In a letter to Malala Yousafzai, a senior Taliban commander, Adnan Rashid, purportedly tells her that she was targeted not because she advocated education for all girls, but rather for her provocative criticism of the militant group. The letter was released just days after 16-year-old Malala delivered an emotional plea at the United Nations for the right to go to school on behalf of all children. Malala was 15 when she was shot in the head by Taliban militants on her way home from school in Pakistan on October 2012. Rashid said he was writing to express shock and regret at the shooting. The letter went on to say that the Taliban supports the

education of women, as long as it adheres to Islamic law. He urged her, according to the letter, to return to Pakistan and use her pen for Islam and the plight of the Muslim community.

## 19 Obama addresses nation in surprise speech on Trayvon Martin verdict

### Jul *Trayvon Martin Killing*

While addressing the nation on the Trayvon Martin verdict, Barack Obama called Martin's death a tragedy saying that Martin could have been his son or could have been him 35 years ago. Though he didn't explicitly criticize the jury verdict, he understood the response to the verdict. He went on to say how the African-American community was treated with mistrust and insecurity and also mentioned at one point that if a white had been involved in the same kind of scenario, the outcome and the aftermath might have been different. Obama gave some ideas such as reconsidering legislation like 'stand your ground' which encouraged the confrontation as well as reducing mistrust in local law enforcement and racial profiling. Obama also urged celebrities and authority figures to embrace and strengthen the community of young male African Americans. Obama ended his speech on a hopeful note saying that, talking to his daughters, he sees that things are getting better.

## 19 Indian-American Nisha Biswal nominated as assistant-secretary of state for South Asia

### Jul *Indian Origin Asst. Secretary of State*

President Barack Obama has nominated Nisha Desai Biswal, an accomplished Indian-American administrator, to head the South Asia bureau, which oversees US foreign policy and relations with India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Maldives and Bhutan. Upon confirmation by the Senate, Desai will become the first person of Indian or even South Asian origin to head the bureau.

## 22 Kate Middleton, wife of Prince William, gives birth to royal baby boy

### Jul *Royal Baby*

Prince William's wife Kate Middleton gave birth to a baby boy, their first child who will be third in line to the British throne. The birth was welcomed by well-wishers and media gathered outside St. Mary's Hospital in west London, where William was born to the late Princess Diana in 1982. The news has been displayed on an easel in the forecourt of Buckingham Palace in line with tradition.

## 23 Top US general outlines military options for Syria

### Jul *Syria Conflict*

Top US military officer, Gen Martin Dempsey, has outlined the costs, risks and benefits of possible American military involvement in the Syrian conflict. He has offered five military options, including limited strikes and establishing a no-fly zone but said that using force in Syria would be similar to an act of war and could cost the US billions of dollars. More than 90,000 people have been killed in Syria since the uprising against President Assad began in 2011. Washington has so far ruled out military intervention in Syria but has delivered humanitarian aid to Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries and provided non-lethal help to the Syrian opposition.

## 25 56 killed and 70 injured as train derails in Spain

### Jul *Spain Train Disaster*

At least 56 people were killed and 70 injured when a train derailed on the outskirts of the northern Spanish city of Santiago de Compostela on 24th July. The train was driving at 192 kilometres per hour in a curve, where the speed limit was 80 kilometres. The driver has been charged with professional recklessness.

## 29 Pope Francis says gays must not be judged or marginalized

### Jul *Pope On Gays*

In a conversation with journalists, Pope Francis said that gays should not be judged or marginalized and should be integrated into society, but he reaffirmed Church teaching that homosexual acts are a sin. The Pope also said that he is no one to judge a priest for being gay. The Pope however said that lobbying by the gay orientation is a problem as with Masonic lobbies, political lobbies or other such lobbies. Francis also said the Roman Catholic Church's ban on women priests was definitive, although he would like them to have more leadership roles in administration and pastoral activities.

## 31 Mamnoon Hussain wins Pakistan presidential election

### Jul *Pakistan*

Agra-born Mamnoon Hussain, the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's nominee, won the country's presidential election with a huge margin on Tuesday securing 432 votes against his rival's 77. Hussain, 73, will take oath as the 12th president of Pakistan on August 9, a day after President Asif Ali Zardari's five-year term in office gets over. The main opposition, Pakistan Peoples' Party, and two other parties boycotted the polls saying they haven't been given enough time to campaign.

## 31 China indicts top politician Bo Xilai on corruption charges

### Jul *China*

Bo Xilai, former member of the Communist Party of China's powerful 25-member Politburo has been indicted for bribery, corruption and abuse of power. Bo has been in detention since April 2012. Bo took advantage of his position to secure other's interests in return for money and properties. He also embezzled a huge amount of public money harming the interests of the state and the party. Bo was credited with a spectacular crackdown on organized crime as well as his economic policies on social housing. However, allegations of murder against his wife in April last year led to further unravelling of his own political misdeeds.

Bo's wife Gu Kailai had been convicted and had received a suspended death sentence for the murder of British businessman Neil Heywood, in November 2011.