

★★★★**Starred Articles**★★★★

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

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.

Others

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

World > 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 **World > 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 **World > 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.

21 China to invest \$160 billion in Andhra Pradesh

Jul **Politics and Government > 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 India among countries facing highest risk of importing deadly MERS virus

Jul **India > 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.

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

Jul **World > 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.

22 ICICI Bank ties up with MoviDa for mobile payments

Jul **Bank Specific > 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.

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

Jul **Politics and Government > 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.

22 Indian Badminton League (IBL) holds auction of players

Jul **Sports > 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.

23 22 killed in Bengal Panchayat polls violence

Jul **India > 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 cruse 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

India > 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 Gold may get dearer as RBI takes measures to boost export

Economy > 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.

23 Jul Top US general outlines military options for Syria

World > 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.

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

India > 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.