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01 India's first monorail launched in Mumbai

Feb **India > Monorail**

India's first monorail, as a form of public transport, was launched in Mumbai by CM Prithviraj Chavan on Saturday, 1st Feb, 2014. The 8.93 km long mono-rail comprising the first phase will run between Chembur in the East and Wadala in the South and has been made open to the public from Sunday, 2nd February. The second phase - connecting Wadala with Sant Gadge Maharaj Chowk in south Mumbai, a distance of 19.17 km - will be completed by mid-2015. The project cost a total of Rs. 3000 crores and has a minimum height of 5.5 metres.

04 Satya Nadella named as new Microsoft CEO

Feb **Corporate > Microsoft**

Hyderabad-born Satya Nadella has been named as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Microsoft Corporation. Nadella, 46, will be only the third CEO of Microsoft after founder Bill Gates and Steve Ballmer, whom he is replacing. Nadella has worked in Microsoft for 22 years and was executive vice-president of Microsoft's \$ 20 billion cloud and enterprise group. Satya did his schooling from Hyderabad and B.E. from Manipal Institute of Technology. Nadella holds an MS degree in Computer Science from the University of Wisconsin and an MBA from Chicago University. Nadella's elevation highlights how Indian-origin executives are increasingly being considered for top-level posts in global corporations. Bill Gates will relinquish his role as Chairman and will become technical advisor to Nadella. Nadella's main challenge involves protecting the share of PC-centric Windows and Office franchises and challenge Google and Apple in mobile computing.

06 Google names its most senior woman Susan Wojcicki as You Tube chief

Feb **Corporate > Google**

Susan Wojcicki, who has been a senior vice president for advertising and commerce at Google, has been named as the new You Tube chief. Salar Kamangar, who has had the job previously, will now be engaged in early-stage ventures. Wojcicki had been heading Google's incredibly profitable advertising and her change of duties signifies Google's sharp focus on advertising on You Tube. Sridhar Ramaswamy, also a senior vice president for advertising and commerce, will run the ad business. YouTube operates as its own business and Wojcicki was the one who pushed hard for Google's \$1.65 billion acquisition of YouTube in 2006. Wojcicki has been an integral part of Google given that it was her garage that Google's founders, Page and Sergey Brin, rented to start the company, and she became Google's 16th employee and later, Brin's sister-in-law.

10 Cabinet clears Telangana Bill

Feb **Politics and Government > Telangana Bill**

The Union Cabinet cleared the bill for creation of Telangana, paving the way for its introduction in Parliament. The key demands of Seemandhra leaders that Hyderabad be made a Union Territory and that Rayala Telangana be created were rejected, putting a question mark on the fate of the Bill in Parliament. The proposed legislation does not provide for grant of Union Territory status to Hyderabad despite demands but the government will announce a special package for Rayalaseema and north coastal Andhra to address concerns of the people there.

13 Interim Railway Budget 2014 announced, no change in fares

Feb **Politics and Government** > *Interim Railway Budget*

Railway Minister Mallikarjun Kharge announced the interim Railway Budget 2014 on 12th Feb. There was no major investment thrust and passenger and freight fares remained unchanged. 72 new trains were announced and Kharge promised to allow FDI in 2014-15. Although, Kharge tried to highlight the achievement of the railways in the 2nd term of the UPA, he admitted that the inadequacy of financial resources stood in the way of investment in capacity, expansion and passenger amenities. The budget brought to light the rising expenses, the high operating ratio (a measure of expenses as a percentage of revenue) and the poor state of finances of the state-run enterprise.

17 Finance Minister P. Chidambaram announces Interim Budget 2014

Feb **Politics and Government** > *Interim Budget 2014*

Finance Minister P. Chidambaram presented the Interim Union Budget 2014 on 17th Feb. While no populist schemes were announced, he highlighted the economic achievements of the UPA government. Chidambaram raised hopes by saying that he would contain the fiscal deficit at 4.6% of the GDP, less than his target of 4.8% and that the fiscal deficit would further drop to 4.1 % in 2014 /15. Sharp excise duty cuts from 12% to 8% were announced in the case of small cars, scooters, motorcycles and commercial vehicles to simulate demand. In the case of defence pensioners, 'one rank, one pension' was formally agreed to, and an interest waiver of Rs. 2,600 crore was given for 9 lakh student loans. For capital goods as well as consumer non-durables, excise duties were cut from 8% to 10%. With this, TVs, refrigerators, computers, computer accessories and peripherals, vacuum cleaners, dish washers, water coolers, torch lights, digital cameras, hair dryers, electric irons, microwave oven, MP3 and DVD players are set to become cheaper. With a motive to boost local manufacturing of mobile phones, duties on mobile phones have been reduced to 6% with Cenvat credit or 1% without Cenvat credit.

18 Supreme Court commutes death penalty of Rajiv Gandhi's killers to life term

Feb **India** > *Rajiv Gandhi Assassination*

The Supreme Court has commuted the death sentence of three assassins of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to life imprisonment citing the 11-year delay on the part of the Centre in deciding their mercy plea.

The three convicts V Sriharan alias Murugan, T Suthendraraja alias Santhan and AG Perarivlan alias Arivu had pleaded for the commutation of their death sentences on grounds of inordinate delay in deciding their mercy petitions.

19 Telangana bill passed in Lok Sabha

Feb **Politics and Government** > *Telangna Bill*

The process to create Telangana, India's 29th state, crossed the major Lok Sabha hurdle with the BJP coming in support of the UPA to clear the Andhra Pradesh State Re-organisation Bill amid din.

The house passed the Andhra Pradesh Re-organisation Bill, 2014, by voice vote even as those opposed to it demanded a division vote.

Around 3.10 pm, Lok Sabha TV stopped showing the live feed of proceedings in the house as Speaker Meira Kumar went ahead with the process of passing the Bill and then moving amendments pushed by members from across parties.

20 Feb Facebook to buy WhatsApp for \$19 billion, its biggest acquisition ever

Corporate > *Facebook-WhatsApp*

Facebook Inc. will buy popular mobile-messaging startup WhatsApp for \$ 19 billion in cash and stock. The transaction involves \$4 billion in cash, \$12 billion in stock and \$3 billion in restricted stock that vests over several years. The deal is worth more than what Facebook raised in its own IPO, which has come as a surprise to many. In fact, the \$ 19 billion deal is by far Facebook's biggest acquisition and bigger than any that Google, Microsoft or Apple Inc. has ever done. The deal translates to roughly nine per cent of Facebook's market value.

Founded by a Ukrainian immigrant who dropped out of college, Jan Koum, and a Stanford alumnus, Brian Acton, WhatsApp is a Silicon Valley startup that saw immense success within just 5 years of its launch and added more than 450 million users.

20 Feb Indian banks lose Rs 17.2k cr in fraud cases, reveals RTI

India > *Bank Frauds*

According to a RTI query, Indian banks lost Rs.17, 284 cr during 2012-13 due to fraud. 62 banks filed 26,598 cases, with PNB and ICICI being the worst-hit among public sector and private sector banks respectively. Although the state-run banks account for 25% of the total cases, these lenders lost 94% of the total money.

Corporate

04 Feb Latest spectrum auction sees aggressive competition; Vodafone, Airtel license extension cancelled

Spectrum Auction

The latest spectrum allocation in the 900 Mhz band in Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai got off to a flying start with bids worth around Rs. 40, 000 crores on the first day of the spectrum auction. Vodafone India and Bharti Airtel, who are facing stiff competition from Reliance Jio Infocomm, will have to bid the highest if they wish to remain in business after November 2014. The Supreme Court has refused to extend the licenses of Bharti Airtel and Vodafone India, which they had been holding since the past two decades, by another 10 years. Reliance Jio Infocomm needs pan-India spectrum for viable 4G data services with voice.

08 Feb Thomas Cook (India) to merge with Sterling Holiday Resorts in Rs. 8.7 billion deal

Thomas Cook

Tour operator Thomas Cook will merge its operations with resort owner Sterling Holidays in a deal valued at Rs. 8.7 billion rupees. As part of the deal, 100 shares of Sterling will be swapped for 120 shares of Thomas Cook (India). The merger will give Thomas Cook access to Sterling Resorts' 19 properties in 16 holiday destinations across India.

India

01 Harish Rawat sworn-in as Uttarakhand's eighth Chief Minister

Feb *Uttarakhand*

Harish Rawat has been sworn in as the CM of Uttarakhand after the 33-member Congress Legislature Party unanimously elected him as their chief in the presence of senior Congress leaders Ghulam Nabi Azad, Ambika Soni and Janardan Dwivedi.

He succeeds Vijay Bahuguna who was asked by the Congress to step down as part of the organizational revamp being undertaken by the party leadership ahead of the national elections, due by May 2014.

01 LIC is the biggest tax defaulter: Income Tax department

Feb *LIC*

Life Insurance Corporation of India tops the list of top ten pending tax demands in each category given by the Income Tax department to activist Subhash Agrawal in response to his RTI application seeking the list of top tax defaulters.

The tax demand against LIC is Rs 7,027 crore which is followed by Rs 2,372 crore against Aditya Birla Telecom Limited, Rs 2,038 crore against Vodafone Infrastructure Limited, Rs 1,517 crore against Idea cellular and Rs 1,494 crore against Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited.

06 Health Ministry objects to sale of e-cigarettes on Air-India flights

Feb *Air India*

The Health Ministry has objected to the sale of e-cigarettes on Air-India flights, saying that it violates the Cigarettes and other Tobacco Products Act, 2003 (COTPA) and demeans the government, which is the implementing authority for COTPA. The law prohibits any direct or indirect promotion of tobacco products. However, it is not clear if e-cigarettes are classified as tobacco product. The tobacco control department had earlier written to the drug controller general of India to classify e-cigarettes which are electronic products that deliver a shot of vapourised nicotine, as a drug under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act and regulate it accordingly. The COTPA has been invoked for e-cigarettes as it is applicable to any product that might encourage the use of tobacco.

11 IOC revokes ban on IOA

Feb *Sports*

India has been admitted back into the Olympic fold after the International Olympic Committee revoked Indian Olympic Association's suspension.

The IOC lifted the 14-month old ban after the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) barred charge-framed officials from its fresh election in which World Squash Federation chief and younger brother of BCCI chief N Srinivasan, N Ramachandran, was elected as the president.

As a result of the IOC's decisions, the Indian athletes will now be able to compete under the national flag at international events.

13 Tejas light combat aircraft to cost more than Rs. 55, 000 crore

Feb *Tejas Light Combat Aircraft*

The Tejas light combat aircraft, which is still in the making after 30 years, will end up costing India over Rs. 55,000 crore at the very least. The overall cost of the indigenously-made fighter which remains a critical operational necessity, currently stands at Rs. 17, 269 crore. The production cost of each Tejas will conservatively be around Rs 220 crore. As per the existing plan, if IAF goes in for 120 jets and the Navy for 50, it adds up to Rs. 37, 400 crore. The defence ministry till now has approved orders for 20 Tejas jets in "initial operational clearance (IOC)" configuration for Rs 2,813 crore for IAF, and another 20 in final FOC configuration for Rs 5,989 crore. However, these figures are bound to change looking at the rising costs.

17 Tarun Tejpal, founder-editor of Tehelka, charged with rape

Feb *Tarun Tejpal*

Tarun Tejpal, the former editor and founder of Tehelka has been charged with the rape of the female colleague, the same case which has been under investigation since November, 2013. The charge sheet filed by the Goa police crime branch runs into 2684 pages and includes statements of 152 witnesses. Tejpal, who has been in prison since 30 November, has denied the charges. This was the first time that charges had been brought anywhere in the country under the new section 376(2)(k), which came into force after the outrage following the Nirbhaya rape case in 2012.

Background:

Tejpal has been accused by a former junior woman colleague of assaulting her in a lift at the Grand Hyatt hotel, Goa, on two occasions on November 7 and 8, 2013, during the Thinkfest event. Tejpal first admitted the charges and apologized for the same. Later, he described the 'sexual encounter' as consensual and said the allegations were part a 'pre-election political conspiracy'.

19 Food subsidy increased to Rs 1,15,000 crore

Feb *Food Security*

The Government has increased the food subsidy to Rs 1,15,000 crore for financial year 2014-15, for implementation of the National Food Security Act. It is Rs 23,000 crore more than the revised estimates of Rs 92,000 crore for 2013-14. Significant increase in the subsidy has been made to fulfill the Government's commitment to implement the National Food Security Act throughout the country.

Food subsidy seeks to meet the difference between the economic cost of food grains and their sales realization at the Central Issue Price fixed under the public distribution system (PDS) and other welfare schemes.

25 Cost for Delhi-Jaipur expressway jumps to Rs 32,810 crore

Feb *Delhi-Jaipur Expressway*

The new land acquisition law, which has been highlighted by the UPA government as one of its major achievements, has become the main obstacle to the development of the Delhi-Jaipur expressway. The expressway is one of the key infrastructure projects backed by the PMO. The cost of land for the expressway has gone up three times since the new law has increased the amount of money that needs to be paid as compensation to landowners for the sites on which the projects are proposed. The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has said that it will be difficult to finance the project because of lack of adequate resources. Earlier, the cost of land for the 272-km expressway was estimated at about Rs 5, 000-6,000 crore.

This has now gone up to Rs 18, 000 crore. The entire project is now expected to cost more than Rs32, 000 crore and the Government is trying to restructure the financial model to make the project possible.

26 Feb Supreme Court issues non-bailable arrest warrant against Sahara chief Subrata Roy

Sahara Group

The Supreme Court has issued a non-bailable warrant against Sahara chief Subrata Roy for defying its summons in connection with a long-running case involving his alleged failure to refund investors' money. The top court had rejected Roy's plea for exemption from personal appearance. Mr Roy and three other Sahara directors had been summoned over the non-refund of Rs. 19,000 crore by two Sahara companies to millions of investors. SEBI had alleged that the funds were raised illegally and the Supreme Court in August 2012 had ordered Sahara to refund the money to investors with interest.

27 Feb Accident on Indian submarine INS Sindhuratna, Navy chief resigns

Navy

Seven sailors were injured and two officers died after an accident on board Indian Navy submarine INS Sindhuratna off the Mumbai coast in the early hours of Wednesday, 26th Feb. The senior-most submarine officer of the Western Naval Command was also on board. The INS Sindhuratna was being tested at sea when smoke triggered the automatic closure of hatches. The fire was caused due to problems in the cables of the vessel.

The Indian navy chief Admiral DK Joshi has resigned, accepting "moral responsibility" for this latest incident as well as other operational accidents involving navy ships in recent months. Last year 18 sailors died in one of the navy's worst disasters when a submarine sank after a fire at a Mumbai dockyard.

28 Feb First post office savings bank ATM opened in Chennai

Depart of Posts

India's first Post Office Savings Bank ATM inaugurated by Finance Minister P Chidambaram as a part of the government's Rs 4,909 crore IT modernisation scheme for the Department of Posts.

Mr. Chidambaram said the ATM would run on a trial basis for six months. Afterwards, it would become an interoperable where cards of other banks could be used.

Politics & Government

10 Feb AAP govt loses majority

AAP

The AAP government lost majority in the Delhi assembly as independent MLA Rambeer Shokeen withdrew support. Shokeen said he quit after chief minister Arvind Kejriwal reneged on his promises to solve the power and water problems in Delhi.

The AAP won 28 seats in the 70-member house in the December 2013 Delhi assembly elections and formed the government with the outside support of the Congress, which won eight seats.

10 Government orders Reliance Industries Limited to stop LPG retailing

Feb *RIL*

The government has asked Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) to stop retailing locally produced liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), blocking the supply of cooking gas to 1 million customers, mostly in rural areas, and 134 auto LPG outlets, managed by Reliance. Officials said the sale violated an oil ministry directive, called the LPG control order, that mandates that all cooking gas produced in India must be supplied to state-run oil retailing companies. The sale of indigenously produced LPG is permitted only to IOC, BPCL and HPCL. Parallel marketers such as Reliance can import LPG and sell it through its retail outlet. RIL had strongly contested the government's directive and said that it was selling domestic LPG in parallel market because state oil marketing firms were not willing to pay market rates.

11 Delhi Government orders FIR against Mukesh Ambani, M Veerappa Moily and Murli Deora

Feb *AAP*

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal has ordered filing of an FIR against petroleum minister M Veerappa Moily, former minister Murli Deora and RIL chief Mukesh Ambani for alleged collusion in the hike in prices of natural gas from KG basin. He has requested the Centre to put on hold price hike of gas, to be implemented from April 1, and has asked the Anti-Corruption Branch (ACB) of his government to file a criminal case under provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act. Kejriwal alleged that Reliance Industries Ltd was benefited as oil ministry decided to hike the natural gas price to USD 8 per million British thermal unit as against current USD 4.2, which will make the gas price one of the highest in the world. However, Kejriwal did not explain whether the ACB had the jurisdiction to probe the case.

15 Delhi CM, Arvind Kejriwal quits after failing to introduce Jan Lokpal bill

Feb *Arvind Kejriwal*

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal resigned on Friday, 15th Feb, after failing to introduce the Jan Lokpal Bill in the Delhi Assembly. It had been only 48 days after he assumed power. Kejriwal has recommended the 'immediate conduct' of elections to President Pranab Mukherjee. AAP failed to get a majority to introduce the Bill in the Delhi Assembly, as 42 MLAs, 32 of the BJP, 8 of the Congress and 1 of the Janata Dal (United) and an Independent opposed it in the 70-member Assembly. Kejriwal linked their opposition to the Bill to the FIR registered against Mukesh Ambani few days back and said that the Congress and the BJP feared that their own leaders would land up in jail. Delhi Lt. Governor Najeeb Jung said that the bid to table the bill bypassed constitutional procedures and will violate Transaction of Business Rules.

Science and Technology

03 Kaspersky says Facebook wants to read SMSes of Android users

Feb *Facebook*

Social Media giant Facebook wants to read SMSes and confidential information of people on the Android mobile phone platform according to cyber security firm Kaspersky. While installing the app, an updated feature now asks users to allow it "Read your text messages (SMS or MMS)". Facebook justifies this by saying that this helps to confirm your phone number automatically by finding the confirmation code that it sends via SMS. However, no explicit reason is given for seeking permission to access multimedia messages. The app also

www.testfunda.com

asks users' permission to read calendar events and confidential information which Facebook says allows the app to show your calendar availability (based on your phone's calendar) when you are viewing an event on Facebook. Kaspersky has also expressed concern at the word 'automatic' used in the permission sought by Facebook. Facebook is one of the companies accused by US Whistleblower Edward Snowden of sharing confidential information of users with the US government for spying on a global level. Facebook has denied the claims.

17 Feb Virtual Liver developed by IISc Bangalore gets patent in the US

Feb *Virtual Liver*

A two-year old virtual liver product developed by Strand Life Sciences, founded by professors at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bangalore, has been awarded a patent by the US. It has been used by pharmaceutical companies across the world. A major chunk of new drugs fail to pass through the clinical trial stages because of having side effects particularly toxicity issues related to the liver. The virtual liver software mimics normal liver functions and allows number, time and expenditure associated with human and animal trials to be reduced and yet to be able to understand the side effects of new drugs on the liver. Strand has captured a 30% share of the global genomic (the discipline related to genetics) market through its core business of selling software that allows research labs, academics, and pharmaceutical companies to do biological data mining and interpretation.

World

23 Feb Matteo Renzi sworn in as Italy's PM

Feb *Italy*

Matteo Renzi was sworn-in as Italy's Prime Minister replacing Enrico Letta, who resigned from the office on 14 February. A new cabinet of 16 ministers also were sworn in at the Presidential palace in Rome.

Renzi, 39 is Italy's youngest Prime Minister and he is only the third prime minister to reach office without winning an election. Renzi belongs to the Democratic Party, who was the former mayor of Florence.

24 Feb Ukraine protests turn violent, president Yanukovich flees after being ousted from office

Feb *Ukraine Protests*

Protests in Ukraine turned violent last week. The opposition wanted to introduce amendments in parliament that would have limited the President's powers and restored the constitution to what it was in 2004. But the speaker of parliament refused to allow it. Bloody clashes followed leading to the death of 28 people. The government and the protestors agreed on a truce the next day but it quickly broke with gunfire erupting in Independence Square, the main site of protests, killing 20 people. Following the deaths, the parliament ousted President Victor Yanukovich, the focus of protesters' anger, and authorities issued a warrant for his arrest over civilian deaths. But his whereabouts were unknown with reports of him fleeing the capital Kiev. Lawmakers appointed Oleksandr Turchynov to serve as acting President and dismissed several of Yanukovich's ministers. Turchynov has said the country will focus on closer integration with the EU. Ukraine's electoral commission said that election campaign to elect a new president would begin on Feb 25, three months before the May 25 election date set by authorities. Russian authorities criticized the elections and said that Yanukovich was driven out by an "armed mutiny" of extremists and terrorists. The US and the EU, on the other hand, support the opposition parties.

Background:

Protests started in November 2013 when president Mr. Victor Yanukovich rejected a historical agreement with the European Union that would have opened trade and generated economic growth for Ukraine. The primary reason was that Russia had threatened to impose sanctions if Ukraine went ahead with the deal. It also promised Ukraine of deep discounts on natural gas and a \$ 15 billion loan if it joined a Moscow-led customs union instead. The protests have since then left more than 80 dead, the deadliest violence in the country since it gained independence, when the Soviet Union collapsed 22 years ago.

26 **Boko Haram militants massacre 43 students in Nigerian boarding school**

Feb *Nigeria Massacre*

In yet another incident of mass murder and brutality, the Nigerian militant outfit Boko Haram attacked a boarding school in Nigeria's Yobe state after midnight, shooting and burning to death at least 43 students, who were asleep in their dormitories. There were no security forces to combat them. There were also reports of 16 girls being abducted by them. The militants had reportedly told the girls to shun western education and get married. This is the fourth such attack staged by the Boko Haram in the past few months. Boko Haram, which means western education is sin, plans to establish a strict Sharia establishment in Nigeria.