

Census findings point to decade of rural distress

Distress migration on a massive scale responsible for one of the most striking findings of Census 2011: that for the first time since 1921, urban India added more numbers to its population in a decade than rural India did. At 833.1 million, India's rural population today is 90.6 million higher than it was a decade ago. But the urban population is 91 million higher than it was in 2001. The Census cites three possible causes for the urban population to have risen by more than the rural: 'migration,' 'natural increase' and 'inclusion of new areas as 'urban.'

Prithvi-II test-fired

The nuclear-capable Prithvi-II ballistic missile was successfully test-fired as part of the user trial by the armed forces from Chandipur.

Expert group moots a new national health regulatory authority

A report by an expert group on Universal Health Coverage (UHC) has suggested wide-ranging institutional reforms to regulate the public and the private sectors to ensure assured quality and rational pricing of healthcare services. The group, set up by the Planning Commission to develop a blue print and investment plan to meet the human resource requirements to achieve health for all by 2020, focuses on rational use of drugs. The extensive practice of prescribing hazardous, non-essential and irrational medicines should be eliminated. In addition to legislative and other regulatory measures, intensive efforts should be made to educate and encourage doctors and citizens to use generic drugs.

Bhatnagar Prize for monk, 10 others

A monk is among the 11 scientists who have been selected for the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research's (CSIR) prestigious Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize this year. Mahan Maharaj gets the award for his "outstanding contribution" in the area of mathematical sciences. An expert in the highly specialised field of geometric topology, he heads the School of Mathematical Sciences at the Ramakrishna Mission's Vivekananda University located at the famous Belur Math near Kolkata. The other winners are Palash Sarkar of the Indian Statistical Institute; Shiraz Minwalla of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research; K.N. Balaji and U. Ramamurthy of the Indian Institute of Science; Shirshendu De of IIT-Kharagpur; A.P. Sharma of the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology; R. Shankaranarayan of the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology; G.N. Sastry of the Indian Institute of Chemical Technology and B. Sundaram of the Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research. The winners were announced at a function to mark the foundation day of CSIR. The prize is named after the founder-Director of CSIR and carries a cash component of Rs. 5 lakh. It is given annually to young scientists below the age of 45 who have made outstanding contributions in any field of science and technology.

Rajiv Gandhi prize for Azim Premji Foundation

Indira Gandhi National Open University will confer the Rajiv Gandhi International Prize for Technology in Education on Azim Premji Foundation. The award will be presented by Union Communications and Information Technology Minister Kapil Sibal to Azim Premji, the founder of the Foundation. The award is given to an individual or an institution that has made significant contributions to education. The prize comprises a cash component of Rs.5 lakh and a citation.

DGH terms RIL's new gas find as 'unviable'

The Directorate General of Hydrocarbons (DGH) has termed as 'economically unviable' the new natural gas finds in the Eastern offshore KG-D6 block by Mukesh Ambani-owned Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) at the \$4.205 per mBtu (million British thermal unit) approved price. RIL had in December 2009, submitted to DGH an optimized development plan for four satellite gas fields around the currently producing Dhirubhai-1 and 3 gas fields in the KG-DWN-98/3, or KG-D6, block. It proposed to invest \$1.529 billion in producing up to 10 million standard cubic meters per day from the four discoveries in five years' time.

Centre reconstitutes NMCC

The Union Government has announced the reconstitution of the National Manufacturing Competitiveness Council (NMCC) under the chairmanship of V. Krishnamurthy. The Council will now comprise the Planning Commission Member (Industry), Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion Secretary, Finance Secretary, Heavy Industry Secretary, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Secretary and the Director-General of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research from the government side.

Samsung launches first 4G smartphones in South Korea

Samsung Electronics, world's second-largest manufacturer of mobile phones, launched its first smartphones based on fourth-generation (4G) communication technology in a bid to meet growing demand for high-speed wireless services. Galaxy S2 LTE and Galaxy S2 HD LTE compatible with long-term evolution (LTE) technology were rolled out at a media event held in central Seoul. The two new smart phones support LTE with data transmission five times faster than the existing third-generation (3G) mobile phones, featuring functions offered by Galaxy S2 smart phones.

Bill-free broadband plan from Tikona

Tikona Digital Networks, a secured wireless broadband provider, has introduced a bill free plan for the broadband home segment. Under this, a subscriber can get 2Mbps bill-free with up to 30,000 MB of bundled usage for 30 months at a one-time payment of only Rs. 2,999 (plus service tax). The new plan has been introduced under wireless broadband to home service.

37 SEZ developers given more time

The Board of Approval (BoA), under the Commerce Ministry, has granted extra time to as many as 37 special economic zone (SEZ) developers, including Navi Mumbai SEZ, DLF Commercial Developers and Tata Consultancy Services, to implement their projects even as five developers surrendered their projects. SEZ developers, including Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation and Benchmark Realty, had approached the BoA to surrender their projects in view of the uncertainty over the continuation of the tax benefits for the SEZs in the new Direct Taxes Code.

Indian polo team for WC

The Indian team is scheduled to leave for the polo World Cup to be staged at San Luis, Argentina, from October 10 to 21. The team will get acclimatized to the local conditions with a series of practice matches. India opens its campaign against Mexico on October 12 in the 10-team competition that will be played on a league-cum-knockout basis. The team: Vishal Chauhan, Ravi Rathore, Tarun Sirohi, Samir Suhag, Simran Shergill and Gaurav Sahgal; Coach: Brig. V.P. Singh; Manager: Vikram Rathore.