

1. Radio Melody

Those who mourned the loss of Worldspace radio over a year ago, can now rejoice as the service is back in India, after abruptly being ceased at the end of 2009. Saregama India bought a 10 per cent stake in Timbre Media Pvt. Ltd, a company set up by former Worldspace employees, and tied up with it to bring the much-loved genre-based programming to India. With access to Saregama's extensive library of music, the service will provide 24-hour programming of Indian music in genres ranging from old Hindi films, Hindustani classical, Carnatic classical, ghazals and will have stations in all major Indian languages.

2. West Bengal Govt forms panels to probe deaths from '71 to '08

The West Bengal government has decided to set up four more inquiry commissions to probe into the unnatural death and mass killing cases that took place in the state from 1971 to 2008. The decision was announced by State Law Minister Maloy Ghatak. "We have decided to set up more judicial commissions to probe into the cases of mass killings and unnatural death of Block Development Officer Kallol Sur on 9 April 2008 at Daspur in West Midnapore district," said Ghatak. One-member judicial committee headed by former Justice Gitesh Narayan Bhattacharya of the Calcutta High Court will be appointed to find out the real reason behind the death of the BDO, he added. Incidentally, Kallol Sur was found hanging in his quarter, few days after he was said to have brought some CPM panchayat members under the scanner for alleged corruption in government schemes, including NREGS.

3. MP sop for Lanka pilgrimage

The BJP government in Madhya Pradesh will soon offer a subsidy to pilgrims who travel to Sri Lanka, which it believes has several places associated with the epic Ramayana. The state already offers subsidies to pilgrims who travel to Kailash Mansarovar and two sites in Pakistan— Hinglaj Devi temple and Nankana Sahib Gurudwara. The department dealing with religious trusts has sent a proposal to the finance department for subsidising travel to Sri Lanka. Though no money has been allocated as yet, a provision will be made in supplementary budgets. When the proposal takes effect, Madhya Pradesh will become the only state to subsidise pilgrimage of Hindus and Sikhs to places abroad.

4. ISRO mulls hiring foreign transponders

The Indian Space Research Organisation is looking at hiring transponders from a foreign satellite to fill the transponder capacity crunch in the country. Addressing a Press conference in Bangalore, ISRO chairman K Radhakrishnan indicated that the country's premier space technology organisation was looking at hiring or taking on lease some transponders through a foreign satellite. He said, "If we could get a (in-orbit) foreign satellite moved into our (designated, orbital) slots for a short period, it would be good. We have got several orbital slots. We could go up to 320 transponders."

5. NADA conducts surprise raid at NIS Patiala

The National Anti Doping Agency conducted a surprise raid at the National Institute of Sports, Patiala and took samples from the campers in the backdrop of the doping scandal in athletics. A four-member NADA team, headed by doctor Ankush Gupta, raided the premises of NIS and searched rooms of the campers, besides taking urine samples. The raid started around 1300hrs. The raid and taking of samples was not directed to track and field athletes only but to all the campers at the NIS. "A four-member team raided NIS, searched the rooms of the campers there and took urine samples also for dope testing. Dr Ankush Gupta was the team leader and there was one lady officer of NADA also," NADA Director General Rahul Bhatnagar said.

6. Amid joy, hope, a new nation is born

President Omar al-Bashir gracefully ceded control over Sudan's southern part, heralding the birth of a new country, the Republic of South Sudan. India, like several other nations including the US, has recognised the world's 196th and Africa's 54th country. General Salva Kiir Mayardit, a top leader of Sudan Peoples Liberation Army, which has spearheaded the independence movement since 1983, took oath as the first president in capital Juba in a ceremony attended by tens of thousands of citizens and scores of dignitaries from across the world.

7. Murdoch dashes to London for damage control

Media baron Rupert Murdoch is flying here to tackle a burgeoning phone-hacking scandal that has brought down his tabloid News of the World. Murdoch Senior, the 80-year-old chairman and chief executive of News Corporation, is due in the UK to confront the growing crisis in his media group, The Telegraph reported. His sudden dash to London comes as soon-to-be out of work journalists were readying the last edition of his largest selling tabloid which will hit the newsstands on Sunday. Murdoch's intervention comes as a third man was held last night in connection with alleged corrupt payments made to police officers. The man was later bailed until October. A 63-year-old was arrested in Surrey as former News of the World editor Andy Coulson was released on police bail after being quizzed for nine hours over allegations of corruption and the phone-hacking scandal that forced the closure of the 168-year-old newspaper.

8. Ex-US first lady Betty Ford, a profile in courage, dies

Betty Ford, the outspoken and much-admired wife of President Gerald R. Ford who overcame alcoholism and an addiction to pills and helped found one of the best-known rehabilitation centers in the nation, died in Palm Springs, California. She was 93. Her death was confirmed by Chris Chase, her biographer. The news of her death brought statements of condolence from President Obama, former Presidents George Bush, George W Bush and Jimmy Carter, and Nancy Reagan, the former first lady.

9. IMF releases new funds for Greece

The International Monetary Fund has said that it was releasing 3.2 billion euros (\$4.6 billion) to Greece as part of its joint bailout with the European Union for the debt-stricken country. The IMF said earlier that Athens was making "some progress" in reforms, and predicted the country would return to positive economic growth in the first half of 2012. The newest release of the IMF's part in the three-year, 110 billion EU-IMF bailout came as Europe's leaders and banks struggle to achieve an ostensibly voluntary restructuring of the country's debt to relieve pressure on Athens and avert a default on its debt.

10. China inflation hits three-year high

China's inflation hit a three-year high of 6.4 per cent as the food inflation jumped to 14.4 per cent, raising concerns over the impact it will have on salaried classes, the mainstay of China's population. China's consumer price index (CPI), the main gauge of inflation, rose 6.4 per cent year-on-year in June, the highest level since June 2008, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said today. Of the 6.4 per cent CPI growth in June, 3.7 per centage points were contributed by the carryover effect of price increases last year, the NBS said.

11. Finally, Antrix gets own CMD

In keeping with a decision taken in the aftermath of the controversy around allocation of S-band frequency waves to a private company earlier this year, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) named a full-time chairman-cum-managing director for its commercial arm, Antrix Corporation. A three-member selection committee had been tasked with the responsibility of finding a new chairman-cum-managing director for Antrix. Accordingly, ISRO chairman K Radhakrishnan announced the appointment of V S Hegde, currently a scientific secretary, to the newly created post. Radhakrishnan said the move was part of the plan to enable Antrix to exploit the commercial opportunities in the space sector.

12. Sameer settles for silver at Jr Asian b'minton

Second seed Zulkifli Zulfadli of Malaysia defeated India's Sameer Verma 21-15, 21-17 in the final to bag the top honours in the men's singles event of the Badminton Asia Youth Under-19 Championships 2011 which came to a close at UP Badminton Academy, Lucknow. This is the first time that an Indian shuttler has won a silver in the history of the championships. The match between Sameer and Zulkifli lasted for 37 minutes.