

First common test for MBBS on May 5

The first-ever common entrance test for admission to MBBS and BDS courses across the country will be conducted by the Central Board of Secondary Education on May 5, 2013. The National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) will cater to admissions in all the government and private medical and dental colleges in the country on the basis of its merit list. Over 10 lakh students are expected to take this examination. With this, the All-India PMT exam held earlier along with other State medical entrance examinations would not be held now and this NEET-UG will substitute all the previous tests.

Now Delhi bans plastic bags

Taking a giant leap forward towards protecting the environment, the Delhi Government has imposed a blanket ban on manufacture, sale, storage and use of plastic bags in the city. Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit said the government would soon issue a notification stating that no person including any shopkeeper, vendor, wholesaler or retailer, trader or hawker would sell or store or use any kind of plastic carry bags. No person will manufacture, import, store, sell or transport any kind of plastic carry bags in the city. Also, no person will use any kind of plastic cover or plastic sheet or plastic film or plastic tube to pack or cover any book including magazine, invitation or greeting card. The notification will, however, not affect the use of plastic carry bags as specified under the Bio-Medical Waste Management & Handling Rules, 1998.

ISRO target: 10 missions this year

The nation should see 10 space missions in the next 12 months, according to K. Radhakrishnan, Chairman of ISRO and Secretary, Department of Space. The September 9 PSLV launch was its milestone 100th mission. The ISRO chief said the first 20 missions took 13 years; the next 20 were done over 11 years, but post-2000, 20 missions have needed just six and four years. In 2010-11, space scientists completed 18 missions. Communications satellite GSat-10 is waiting in Kourou, French Guiana, to be put in orbit on September 21 aboard the European Ariane-5 launch vehicle. GSat-10 weighs 3.4 tonnes which is far beyond the current Indian launcher capability. It has 30 transponders, which would expand the availability of satellite capacity for government and domestic private users. On December 12, ISRO plans to launch the 103rd mission, the Indo-French satellite SARAL, on a PSLV rocket from Sriharikota.

Highest under-5 deaths in India

India lost over 16 lakh children under the age of five last year, earning it the dubious distinction of topping the chart of the 10 countries, which registered the largest number of under-five deaths in 2011. According to figures released by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in its "Child Mortality Estimates Report 2012," it fared worse than Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Pakistan, China, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan. Around 50 per cent of under-five deaths occurred in just five countries: India, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Pakistan and China. The world's lowest under-five mortality rates were in Singapore, the Nordic countries, some European countries and Japan. Globally, the leading causes of death among children under five years of age include pneumonia (18 per cent), pre-term birth complications (14 per cent), diarrhoea (11 per cent), intrapartum-related complications (9 per cent) and malaria (7 per cent). India tops the charts of the countries with the greatest number of under-five deaths, mainly because of the large population, high birth rate and thus larger mortality base.

Haryana prepares action plan to eradicate Hepatitis C

Haryana Health Department, in collaboration with PGIMS, Rohtak, has prepared an action plan having a multi-pronged strategy to completely eradicate the disease of Hepatitis C from the state. Hepatitis C being a viral infection disease, is caused by Hepatitis C virus (HCV) and spreads through body fluids. Those who get infection of Hepatitis C, generally develop a long term infection and usually there are no symptoms. Its acute form is completely curable but chronic form requires medical care throughout life for a comfortable living. About Rs six crore has been approved for effective implementation of the scheme. The equipment and material required to implement the strategy included Polymerised Chain Reaction (PCR) Machine.

U.S. ambassador to Libya killed in mob attack

The ambassador of the United States to Libya, Christopher Stevens, has been killed during an armed mob attack in Benghazi on the 11th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, raising fresh questions about the merits of Washington's policy of "regime change" in West Asia that followed these strikes. Mr. Stevens is the second U.S. ambassador to be killed during an outstation posting since the death of Adolph Dubs in 1979 during his tenure in Afghanistan. The angry mob, protesting against a U.S.-made film that ridicules Prophet Muhammad, first torched the consulate building which had already been peppered with gunfire. Consequently, the ambassador and other officials were moved to a second building on the consulate compound, which was considered safer. However, that building also came under attack after members of the Libyan security team signalled to the protesters the relocation of the officials.

Allende's death was suicide, says court

A Chilean court closed an investigation into the death of former President Salvador Allende, after concluding that he committed suicide during a September 11, 1973 coup. The Santiago court of appeals decreed an end to the investigation, 39 years to the day after Allende's death. The remains were exhumed in 2011 to determine the cause of death during the coup led by General Augusto Pinochet. In July 2011, Chilean medical experts concluded that Allende killed himself on the day of the coup, confirming an official version who said the former President had vowed to die with weapons drawn. The appeals court endorsed a report by Judge Mario Carroza attributing the death to suicide, with Allende using an AK-47 assault rifle given to him by Cuban leader Fidel Castro, as the presidential palace came under air and ground attack. Allende was the first Marxist to be elected President in Chile.

Infosys launches SpeedSolve for call centres

IT bellwether Infosys said it has launched "a comprehensive next generation product"- SpeedSolve - to redefine customer service by making communication faster and more efficient for call centres and related operations. SpeedSolve, launched with AT&T, "leverages state-of-the-art technologies for messaging, multimedia, reporting and smart device integration to facilitate real-time collaboration between customer service representatives and subject matter experts," Infosys said.

Samsung building \$7 billion chip plant in China

South Korea's Samsung Electronics said it had started building a new \$7 billion chip plant in the Chinese city of Xian its biggest-ever investment in the country. The plant, scheduled to come on line in 2014, will produce the advanced 10-nanometre-class NAND flash memory chips used for devices such as smartphones and computers. The world's largest memory chipmaker said earlier the plant, when completed, would produce 10,000 12-inch wafers each month.

The world's largest technology firm that makes popular gadgets from smartphones to tablet PCs, Samsung also provides chip components to other IT firms including its industry rivals Apple and Nokia.

iPhone 5, Apple's answer to Samsung

Apple Inc. has unveiled the iPhone 5, saying it's thinner and lighter than the previous model, even though it has a bigger screen. Marketing head Phil Schiller unveiled the year's most eagerly awaited phone at an event. The phone costs between \$199 for the cheapest 16 gigabyte version and \$399 at the top end.

JLR invests £370 m to upgrade U.K. facilities

In preparation for the launch of its all-new Range Rover in 170 countries, Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) has invested 370 million pounds, which will go mainly, into upgrading its U.K. Facilities. JLR said the inaugural sales of the new, fourth generation Range Rover sports utility vehicle (SUV) would begin in September. JLR had installed a new aluminium body shop for the latest Range Rover at its Solihull plant, near Birmingham, UK, along with upgrades to its paint-applications technologies, trim assembly, warehousing and customer handover centre. Deliveries will start in early 2013. .

Amul keen to acquire Delhi Milk Scheme

Dairy major Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF) - the parent company of Amul, has expressed its willingness to the agriculture ministry to acquire the Delhi Milk Scheme (DMS). DMS, which was launched in 1959, has been incurring losses for the past several years. GCMMF's decision to acquire the entity comes with a view to better leverage its existing infrastructure as well as exploit DMS's full business potential.

Times Internet Limited launches BoxTV.com

Times Internet Limited (TIL) announced the launch of BoxTV.com, a premium video service that would allow users to stream movies, TV shows and short films directly on to their computer, smartphone or tablet. The service, which is conceptually similar to Hulu and Netflix that are available in the US, aims to serve local users and Indian diaspora across the world. It would allow users to stream Bollywood and Hollywood films as well as video content in local languages like Tamil. Currently, the service is in invite-only alpha stage. The public availability is expected in a few months.

Many countries crackdown on MHA supplements

Several countries have, in recent months, cracked down on the manufacture, supply and sale of products containing methylhexaneamine (MHA) as dietary supplements, leading to speculation that the substance may no longer be available as an across-the-counter nutritional aid. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) of the U. K., ruled that products containing methylhexaneamine needed to be removed from the UK market because of "potential risks to public safety." The drug, also known by several other chemical names, including dimethylamylamine (DMAA), is an ingredient of many dietary supplements that are used by sportspersons. Other supplements have also been found contaminated often with this drug which is categorised as a stimulant and banned by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA).

HCL Infosystems open to selling 'Me' brand if good price offered

Days after denying that it was selling its hardware unit to Chinese computer maker Lenovo, information technology company HCL Infosystems said it will sell the unit if the price is right. HCL's hardware business, where it sells laptops and tablets under the 'Me' brand, is worth about Rs 1,500 crore. HCL Infosystems in June, hived off its hardware business into a separate wholly-owned subsidiary called HCL Computing Ltd. This had sparked speculations that HCL may be looking to sell the unit eventually.

Juan Ferrero to retire

Former world No. 1 Juan Carlos Ferrero will retire from professional tennis in October after a 14-year career in which he won 16 tour titles. Ferrero, 32, said he would retire after the Valencia Open 500 tournament in his home city in eastern Spain from October 20 to 28, organisers said. Ferrero, nicknamed 'The Mosquito', won the French Open in 2003 and reached the final of the US Open the same year. He won 15 other major tour titles.