

### **1. Disease surveillance system wound up due to lack of funds**

In spite of promising results, an innovative SMS-based disease surveillance system had to be wound up in the State due to lack of interest and funding by Central health authorities. The information collected through disease surveillance enables authorities to quickly respond to control outbreaks, besides planning preventive measures. With the Integrated Disease Surveillance Project (IDSP), a nationwide Government of India-run programme, having its limitations, the SMS-based initiative was taken up as a pilot project in six districts in August 2008 by the State health officials with assistance from National Informatics Centre (NIC). Following improved reporting even from remote areas, the system was expanded to the entire State and was in operation till the end of 2010.

### **2. Making users upgrade software, a challenge for browser creators**

Insistence on upgrading for better security and keeping users up-to-date the makers of major browsers are facing an uphill task in persuading a reluctant section of users to upgrade their software to the latest versions, despite these coming free of cost. Microsoft, for instance, has found it challenging to get users to let go of an outdated version 6 of its browser, Internet Explorer (IE). Now, almost a decade after it released version 6, there are still a good number of people who are using it in different parts of the world. And this, when Microsoft has already begun promoting version 9. It has even set up a site ([www.ie6countdown.com](http://www.ie6countdown.com)), which displays statistics relating to the usage of this particular version of the browser worldwide, to 'educate' users about the need for a switchover.

### **3. HIV prevalence drops to 0.75 per cent in Namakkal**

Namakkal district, which once found a place in the country's map with high prevalence of people living with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), has witnessed a drop in prevalence to just 0.75 in the year 2010. Thanks to the efforts of the government, district administration, Non Government Organisations (NGOs), Red Ribbon Clubs and various associations which paved the way for the reduced prevalence of HIV. It has gone down from 2.007 per cent in the year 2008 to just about 0.75 per cent in the year 2010, he added.

### **4. Merchant tanker to be salvaged soon**

Merchant tanker Pavit, the unmanned, drift vessel which had grounded at the city's Juhu-Versova beach in July-end, will soon be salvaged and set to sail in the sea. The salvage company removed the sand around the grounded vessel. The salvage company, had mobilised the salvage equipments and expert personnel, carried out the removal of sand from around the grounded vessel and made an attempt to turn the vessel towards the sea.

### **5. 'Climate change impact is visible in the Arctic'**

Arctic scientists are working for evolving models for future sustainable management of the Arctic ecosystems. The efforts attain significance in the wake of glaring signals of melting of glaciers and climate change in the Arctic region, said Bijoy Nandan, Associate Professor (Marine Biology), Cochin University of Science and Technology, who was member of a recent Indian contingent to Arctic. The team came back last week after a summer expedition to the region.

### **6. Nepal's Prime Minister resigns**

Prime Minister Jhalanath Khanal resigned on August 14, 2011 evening, in accordance with the five-point agreement signed among the top political parties in May. Mr. Khanal submitted the resignation to the President, and is expected to explain his position in Parliament. He was in office for a little more than seven months.

### **7. Suu Kyi seeks unity on political trip**

Aung San Suu Kyi called for unity in Myanmar as she was feted by thousands of supporters during her first political trip outside her home city since being released from house arrest. Ms. Suu Kyi, who was released from seven straight years of detention in November just days after a controversial election, defied a government security warning with a visit to the Bago region north of Yangon, in a key test of her freedom.

### **8. Protest forces closure of plant in China**

Chinese authorities agreed to shut down a controversial petrochemical plant after thousands of residents in the north-eastern Chinese port city of Dalian took to the streets in an unprecedented mass protest, sparking "minor clashes" with riot police. The protests were triggered by safety fears in the wake of the typhoon Muifa hitting the area, amid concerns of a possible toxic spill after a dyke guarding the Fujia plant broke. The Fujia plant in Dalian was manufacturing the chemical paraxylene (PX), which is used in the production of fabric and is carcinogenic.

### **9. Facebook crimes on the rise, say experts**

Facebook crimes such as scams, bullying, phishing and many other forms of illegal activities, are soaring and are getting more sophisticated, cyber experts have warned. Rarer cybercrimes on Facebook involve the installation of malicious software or 'malware' on computers so credit card information can be easily stolen. Experts claim that the crimes are not limited to just scams and phishing. There are sexual predators who use this forum, and even robberies have been reported when users post the GPS location to inform others about their whereabouts when out of town. Experts are studying why these crimes are happening at such a rapid rate.

### **10. Some thoughts on the Companies Bill, 2011**

What was Companies Bill, 2008, became Companies Bill, 2009. Now, Companies Bill, 2009, seems to become Companies Bill, 2011. What went wrong was a mindless obsession with smaller company legislation and a lack of honest big ideas. What with a number of big national scams inexorably winding its way to the corporate sector, it would be highly irresponsible, if the new company legislation does not keep pace with this sordid development. Experience has shown that it is not a change of law alone which matters, it is the effective administration of law which matters more. It is but natural to expect the new company legislation to be better than the existing one in all respects. If this is to happen, let us engage in a constructive and introspective discourse how the new company legislation should address the challenges of a rising India.

### **11. Krishna Poonia wins discus title**

Commonwealth Games gold medallist Krishna Poonia won the discus title in the Portland annual athletics meet in Portland, U.S., with a season best 58.88 metres. She had registered her previous season best of 56.23m while finishing fourth in the Asian championships in Kobe, Japan, last month. Poonia is training in Portland under the guidance of former Olympic champion Mac Wilkins. The 'qualification' standard is 59.50m, a mark that Poonia and the other leading discus thrower in the country, Harwant Kaur, should be capable of achieving.