

### **1. CIC penalises its own official for not providing information**

In a decision that is perceived to be one of the finest since the enactment of Right to Information Act 2005, the Central Information Commission has imposed a penalty of Rs.25,000 on its Public Information Officer-cum-Deputy Secretary, for not providing certain information to an RTI applicant within the stipulated 30-day period. The issue relates to an RTI application made by Rajeev Sharma of Delhi to the PIO of CIC on April 20 last year seeking details of the number of complaints and second appeals pending with respect to Bharat Scouts and Guides along with the names of the Information Commissioners who heard those complaints as well as second appeals. As per rules, the information should have been provided within a month.

### **2. Nod for Bill to protect children from abuse**

The Lok Sabha passed the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Bill, 2011. The Bill, already passed by the Rajya Sabha, will protect children below 18 from sexual abuse. It seeks to set up special courts for speedy trial of cases against them and provide stringent punishment extending up to life term for offenders. The Bill is gender-neutral. It seeks to protect children from sexual offences and the burden of proof will be on the accused. All those below 18 years would be treated as children and efforts had been made to keep the provisions of the Bill child-friendly, including in-camera trial of offences. The legislation had been necessitated by the fact that incidents of child abuse had increased immensely, particularly in the National Capital Region. According to a study conducted by Ministry of Women and Child Development in 13 States, 53 per cent of children admitted that they had been sexually exploited. The Bill had a provision for the State governments to set up special courts to try the offences. It had another provision for a stringent punishment to perpetrators extending up to life term and a heavy penalty the quantum will be decided by the court. Whoever uses a child for pornographic purposes shall be liable for rigorous imprisonment which may extend to five years and shall also be liable to fine and, in the event of second or subsequent conviction, with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to seven years and also with fine.

### **3. Anand Marriage Act**

The Lok Sabha passed the Anand Marriage Act, meeting a long-standing demand of the Sikh community for a law allowing them to register their marriages under a separate Act, instead of the Hindu Marriage Act. Sikhs could register their marriages under the Anand Marriage Act. It was earlier passed by the Rajya Sabha. Although the Anand Marriage law was enacted in 1909, there was no provision for registration of marriages. Hence marriages were registered under the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955. Sikh groups have maintained that members of the community face problems abroad as their certificates are issued under the Hindu Marriage Act. Besides Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists are issued certificates under the Hindu laws. Sikh marriage ceremonies are known as 'Anand Karaj' (blissful event). According to the amendment Bill, couples whose marriages have been registered under this Act will not be required to get their marriage registered under the Registration of Births, Marriages and Deaths Act, 1969 or any other law for the time being in force.

### **4. Minimum seven-year jail term mandatory for rape: Supreme Court**

Rapists should be awarded a minimum sentence of seven years, which can be reduced only in special circumstances, the Supreme Court has ruled, ticking off the Rajasthan High Court for reducing the punishment of two convicts in a rape case. The Court passed the judgment while upholding an appeal filed by the Rajasthan Government challenging the High Court's decision to reduce the sentence of two rapists without recording any special reasons for taking the lenient view. The Special Judge, Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act had awarded a seven-year rigorous imprisonment to the duo after convicting them for the rape of a Scheduled Caste woman. The High Court had on an appeal by the convicts reduced the sentence for one of the accused to five years and the other's to 11 months and 25 days. Section 376 of the Indian Penal Code (rape) mandates a minimum seven-year punishment.

### **5. Copyright Bill cleared; artistes entitled to lifelong royalty**

Song writers, artistes and performers can now claim royalty for their works, as Parliament approved amendments to the Copyright Act that entitles artistes to lifelong royalty. The Bill, passed by the Rajya Sabha last week, declares authors owners of the copyright, which cannot be assigned to producers, as was the practice till now. The Bill made it mandatory for broadcasters both radio and television to pay royalty to the owners of the copyright each time a work of art was broadcast. It bans persons from bringing out cover versions of any literary, dramatic or musical work for five years from the first recording of the original creation. The Bill provides for exemption from copyright for any work prepared for the physically challenged in special formats such as Braille. It also permits compulsory licence to be granted for a certain number of copies in non-special formats to non-profit organisations working to help disabled persons. The Bill also exempted students from the copyright laws for using such material for research purposes. It sought to impose a fine and two years' imprisonment for persons indulging in piracy.

### **6. Catholics take Obama administration to court on birth control**

In an effort to show a unified front in their campaign against the birth control mandate, 43 Roman Catholic dioceses, schools, social service agencies and other institutions have filed lawsuits in 12 U.S. federal courts challenging the Obama administration's rule that their employees receive coverage for contraception in their health insurance policies.

### **7. A home in the skies**

Dubai, which already claims the world's highest building, has set a new record with Princess Tower, which the Guinness World Records website has said is the world's tallest residential building. Princess Tower in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, is 413.4 metres high and has 101 storeys above ground, dedicated to residential use. The tower, topped with a crown, is located in Dubai Marina, a manmade canal overlooking the Gulf. Overall, it is 107 floors high and contains a combination of apartments, shops, as well as sports and recreational facilities including swimming pools and sauna rooms. Dubai's 828-metre-tall, 160-storey Burj Khalifa, the tallest building on earth, broke many engineering and architectural records when it opened in January 2010.

### **8. Sea trials of INS Vikramaditya**

INS Vikramaditya will set sail on comprehensive sea trials later this week at a ceremony likely to be attended by Russia's President Vladimir Putin. The extensively modernised former Soviet-era carrier Admiral Gorshkov is scheduled to take to the sea from the Sevmash shipyard in the northern port city of Severodvinsk on the White Sea on May 25. However, bad weather may delay the ship's departure as a storm alert has been issued for the weekend. It was during Mr. Putin's presidency that the deal for upgrading the hybrid carrier/cruiser Gorshkov into a full-fledged heavy aircraft carrier was signed. During the trials, the Vikramaditya will undergo a full range of sea-going tests. Russia is due to hand over the vessel to India in December 2012, after a delay of four years caused by differences over retrofitting costs.

### **9. SpaceX blasts off in historic first**

Opening a new era in private space flight, the U.S. company SpaceX became the first commercial outfit to launch its own craft toward the International Space Station. The test flight of the Dragon space capsule, which launched atop SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket, aims to show that industry can restore U.S. access to the ISS after NASA retired its space shuttle fleet year 2011. The cargo-carrying spacecraft entered orbit and live video images showed mission control staff at SpaceX headquarters in Hawthorne, California jumping from their seats, hugging and clapping. SpaceX chief executive officer and Internet entrepreneur Elon Musk said watching the rocket rise from the launch pad was an "extremely intense moment". SpaceX engineers discovered the root cause was a faulty check valve and repaired it. No humans are travelling aboard the

Dragon, but six astronauts are already at the \$100-billion space lab to help the capsule latch on, to unload supplies and then restock the capsule with cargo to take back to Earth. If NASA gives the green light, the Dragon will then approach the ISS on May 25 in an attempt to berth with the station.

#### **10. Singapore approves \$2.5 b F1 float**

Formula One has been given the go-ahead for a \$2.5-billion share sale in Singapore, but analysts said conditions might not be ideal after Facebook's recent disappointment. Private equity firm CVC Capital Partners, which has a majority stake in the glitzy motor sport's holding company, will gauge interest among investors and fund managers with a view to selling part of its stake at the end of June. Singapore hosts a popular Formula One night race, one of 20 stops on the F1 tour year 2012, and has a strong fanbase for the sport. This year's Singapore Grand Prix is scheduled for September 23.

#### **11. HP India pulled up for customs duty evasion**

Hewlett Packard's India unit has been ordered to pay over Rs 2,000 crore for alleged customs duty evasion. The US-based computer giant has been accused of "evading payment of customs duty by grossly undervaluing the imports made by them."

#### **12. Vodafone India may postpone its IPO**

Vodafone India may not go ahead with its planned initial public offer (IPO) in 2012 if the government accepts the proposals of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) with regard to auction of Telecom spectrum, according to Vodafone India, MD & CEO, Marten Pieters.

#### **13. Suzuki Motorcycle India to increase capacity**

Two-wheeler manufacturer Suzuki Motorcycle India Pvt. Ltd. (SMIPL) is in the process of adding more products to its portfolio and increasing the manufacturing capacity in the country. The company, a subsidiary of Suzuki Motor Corporation of Japan, manufactures two wheelers at Gurgaon, Haryana. It announced its decision to set up another plant in Rohtak in the same State. The Rohtak plant was expected to be commissioned by the end of 2014 and would have a capacity of five lakh units.

#### **14. PNs used to re-route black money**

The Central Government admitted that the facility of PNs (Participatory Notes), provided to overseas entities for investment in Indian bourses, was being utilised by Indian citizens to re-route black money into the country. Even as the PN facility is still available to foreign institutional investors (FIIs) for participation in the country's stock markets, the White Paper on black money tabled in Parliament by Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee said: "Investment in the Indian stock market through PNs is another way in which the black money generated by Indians is re-invested in India".

#### **15. Idea slashes 3G tariffs**

After Bharti Airtel's surprise move to slash rates of its 3G services, Aditya Birla group company Idea Cellular, brought down its 3G tariffs by up to 70 percent. Under the new plan, Idea's pre-paid and post-paid customers will pay three paise for 10 KB of data, a reduction of 70 per cent from the earlier levels of 10 paise.

#### **16. Thomas Cook sells Indian arm stake to Fairbridge**

U.K.-based travel services provider Thomas Cook Group will sell its entire 77 per cent holding in the Indian arm to Fairbridge Capital (Mauritius) Ltd., a subsidiary of Fairfax Financial Holdings, for Rs.817.4 crore .

### **17. London Olympics: India opens campaign against the Netherlands**

Eight-time champion India will start its campaign against the Netherlands on July 30 in the men's hockey competition of London Olympics. The London Olympic Organising Committee, along with the International Hockey Federation (FIH), unveiled the hockey competition schedule. India, which has been clubbed with Germany, Korea, New Zealand, Belgium and Netherlands in Pool B. India, which won its first Olympic gold medal in 1928, will next take on the current Olympic champion Germany on August 3, before locking horns with Korea a day after. India will play Belgium in its last preliminary match on August 7.

### **18. Indian men beat Kazakhstan**

Grandmaster and Asian champion, Parimarjan Negi, came good with his white pieces to register a 2.5-1.5 victory against Rustam Khusnutdinov of Kazakhstan in the fifth round of the Asian Nations chess cup in Zaozhuang (China). The victory ensured that the Indian men kept pace with China-1, who also scored an identical victory over Vietnam.

### **19. AIFF to appoint Koevermans as coach**

Former Dutch international Wim Koevermans is all set to take over as the chief coach of the Indian football team for a two-year term, ending a more than a year's search for a full-fledged occupant for the top job. Following All India Football Federation's sacking of Englishman Bob Houghton early year 2011, Armando Colaco and Savio Medeira whose contract expires on May 31 were given short stints, but they failed to yield much success. Another Dutchman Rob Baan, who was appointed Technical Director in October 2011, was given the responsibility to search for the chief coach and he has handpicked compatriot Koevermans for the job. AIFF vice-president A R Khaleel said that Koevermans' appointment will be approved by the Executive Committee early and the Dutchman will take charge soon after that.

### **20. Hari Ram Indian Grand Prix from May 25**

The inaugural edition of the Hari Ram Indian Grand Prix wrestling will be held at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium in New Delhi from May 25-27. According to the chairman of the organising committee, Ashok Aggarwal, wrestlers from 23 countries would participate in the event which would feature competitions in freestyle and women sections. The president of the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI), Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, said top Indian wrestlers, including the Olympic-bound athletes, would be part of the event.

### **21. Nadal back at No.2**

Rafael Nadal has reclaimed the World No. 2 spot from Roger Federer in the latest ATP rankings released, a day after beating Serbian World No. 1 Novak Djokovic to win the Rome title. Nadal is hoping to finesse his sixth trophy at the Rome Masters into a lucky seventh at Roland Garros as the Spaniard heads to Paris for the Grand Slam beginning on May 27.

### **22. Three for world u-21 snooker**

Laxman Rawat from Delhi, Himanshu Jain (AP) and Mizoram's Lalrina Rentheli, the top three finishers at the end of the National camp and the two selection camps in Chennai will represent India at the IBSF World Under-21 snooker championship at Wuxi, China from July 14 to 22.