

### **PATH's claim of India's large burden of cervical cancer faulty: study**

A recent study has shown that the current available data on human papillomavirus (HPV) type and cervical cancer incidence do not support the epidemiological claims made by the Programme for Appropriate Technology in Health (PATH) regarding India having a large burden of cervical cancer. In April 2010, the Indian Council of Medical Research suspended research on the feasibility and safety of HPV vaccine in Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat amid public concerns about its safety. The study was being done for two pharmaceutical companies by PATH and was supported by the ICMR. The paper, published in the latest edition of the Royal Society of Medicine Journal is written by I. Mattheji and P. Brhlikova, describes cervical cancer and cancer surveillance in India and reviews the epidemiological claims made by PATH. The PATH, a U.S.-based not-for-profit non-governmental organisation undertook post-licensing observational studies on HPV vaccines in India on coverage, acceptability, feasibility and costs of the vaccines in Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Cervical cancer is estimated to cause around 2,74,000 deaths a year, approximately 80 per cent of which occur in the developing world. Guidelines for cervical cancer screening are implemented in few States in India. HPV is associated with cervical cancer and of the 100 HPV types, 18 have been categorised as high risk types or possible high risk types for cervical cancer. HPV types 16 and 18 are said to account for approximately 70 per cent of all cervical cases in India.

### **Kerala is country's most crime-prone state, NCRB statistics show**

These are one set of statistics Kerala will not be proud to own up to: God's own country, and not the badlands of north India, is the most crime-prone state, ahead of Uttar Pradesh and even Delhi. The latest National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) figures comparing incidents of crime with the population of a state, notes Kerala is most affected by crime and Kochi is the most dangerous city. Figures compiled till 2010 show that Kerala has a crime rate of 424.1, more than double the national average of 187.6. Kochi's crime rate is even scarier at 1,879.8 compared to most cities, where the figure averages 341.9. NCRB's figures show that Kochi also saw an exponential rise of 193% in crime in 2010 compared to 2009. Among states with significant population and area, Kerala has left most others far behind with Madhya Pradesh a distant second at 297.2 offences per lakh population, and Delhi ranks third with a rate of 279.8. UP, much reviled on the crime front, has a crime rate of only 87.5. Kerala also ranks highest on incidents of rioting and arson with a rate of 26 compared to the national average of 6.4, although Bihar at 8,809 incidents accounts for almost 13% of all riots in the country.

### **CMD of Nuclear Power Corporation takes charge**

Kailash Chandra Purohit, 58, Director, Projects, Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL), has been elevated as Chairman and Managing Director of NPCIL. His predecessor Shreyans Kumar Jain retired from service recently to become Chairman of the Governing Board of World Association of Nuclear Operators - Tokyo Centre (WANO-TC), Japan. At a simple function organised at the NPCIL headquarters in Mumbai, Mr. Purohit took charge as CMD in the presence of Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission, R.K. Sinha, Director, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre Sekhar Basu, and others.

### **Award for M.S. Swaminathan**

Noted agricultural scientist Dr. M.S. Swaminathan has been selected for the Nandiyode Rajan memorial award instituted by the Thiruvananthapuram Regional Cooperative Milk Producers Union (TRCMPU). Dr. Swaminathan was chosen for his contribution to the Green Revolution.

### **Turkey avoids jingoism over shooting down of its warplane in Syria**

The shooting of a Turkish warplane threatened, to escalate the Syrian conflict at a time when a proposal to include Iran in a fresh round of diplomacy was encountering stiff resistance among regional countries who seemed more inclined to pursue a military option to resolve the crisis. Turkey's President Abdullah Gul acknowledged that a two-seater F-4 Phantom jet might have strayed into Syrian air space and was subsequently shot down. But he stressed that the fighter-jet was not on a mission to breach Syrian airspace — a comment that steered clear of jingoism and seemed to signal that Ankara wished to avoid a flare-up over the incident.

### **Sunita Williams heading back to space again**

Indian-American astronaut Sunita Williams is all set to return to the International Space Station, where she spent a record six months in 2006. Daughter of an Indian American father from Gujarat and a Slovenian mother, Williams is currently making final preparations for a July 14 launch from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan, according to a NASA announcement. Williams is the second woman of Indian heritage to

have been selected by NASA for a space mission after Kalpana Chawla and the second astronaut of Slovenian heritage after Ronald M. Sega.

### **Dhaka to honour Indian Colonel who rescued Hasina**

Bangladesh will confer the Friends of Bangladesh Award on a retired Indian Army officer for his outstanding contributions in the 1971 war. Colonel Ashok Tara, now retired from service, rescued Sheikh Hasina, who is now Prime Minister, her mother Begum Fajilatunnesa Mujib, her sister Sheikh Rehana and her brother Sheikh Rasel from a house in Dhaka's Dhanmondi where they were held captive by Pakistani military throughout the nine months of the country's liberation war. A team led by Colonel Tara rescued them on December 17, a day after the Pakistani Army surrendered to the joint Bangladesh-India command in Dhaka. Hasina government prepared a list of 561 "foreign friends" to be honoured. The highest national award, the 'Bangladesh Freedom Honour', was awarded to Indira Gandhi for her role in the country's liberation. The government conferred awards to a total of 83 individuals, institutions and organisations in two categories the Bangladesh Liberation War Honour and the Friends of Liberation War Honour. The maximum number of individual awardees, 31, were from India followed by 15 from the United States, seven from the former Soviet Union, five from the United Kingdom, three from Japan, two from Germany and one each from Nepal, Bhutan, the former Yugoslavia, Italy, Sweden, Ireland and Denmark.

### **Lonely death for Lonesome George**

The giant tortoise Lonesome George whose failed efforts to produce offspring made him a symbol of disappearing species was found dead, officials at the Galapagos National Park announced. Lonesome George was believed to be the last living member of the Pinta island subspecies and had become an ambassador of sorts for the islands off Ecuador's coast whose unique flora and fauna helped inspire Charles Darwin's ideas on evolution. The tortoise's age was not known but scientists believed he was about 100, not especially old for giant tortoises, which can live well over a century. Various mates had been provided for Lonesome George after he was found in 1972 in what proved unsuccessful attempts to keep his subspecies alive. The park said the cause of his death would be investigated. The Galapagos' giant tortoise population was decimated after the arrival of humans but a recovery programme run by the park and the Charles Darwin Foundation has increased the overall population from 3,000 in 1974 to 20,000.

### **Suzlon sells Chinese arm**

Debt-laden wind turbine major Suzlon, said it had sold its Chinese manufacturing subsidiary to China Power (Tianjin) New Energy Development Company for \$60 million (Rs.340 crore). The two companies had signed a binding term-sheet for sale of the subsidiary, Suzlon Energy Tianjin, with the majority of its assets and liabilities for \$60 million. Suzlon, the world's fifth largest wind power maker by installed capacity, has over Rs.10,000 crore in debt, out of which around Rs.6,000 crore in working capital loan and Rs.4,000 crore in long-term debt.

### **'LulzSec' members plead guilty of hacking**

Two members of the computer hacking group LulzSec pleaded guilty to a string of charges of breaking into several high-profile websites in Britain and America. Ryan Cleary (19) and Jake Davis (18) admitted in court ahead of a trial next year that as part of LulzSec (an offshoot of the Anonymous hacking collective), they were involved in attacks on sites belonging to Britain's Serious Organised Crime Agency, the National Health Service, Rupert Murdoch's media group News International, Sony, 20th Century Fox and Arizona State police among others. LulzSec, a play on the word "lulz" or "lol" (laugh out loud), employed a technique called distributed denial of service (DDoS) to flood websites with high traffic in order to render them unusable.

### **Moody's reaffirms 'stable' rating outlook for India**

Ushering in positive sentiments in an otherwise despondent economic environment, global rating agency Moody's, retained India's credit rating outlook at 'stable' as it viewed that the current slowdown was unlikely to be a permanent feature of the country's economy. Unlike its peers such as Standard & Poor's and Fitch, which lowered the outlook to 'negative' and threatened to downgrade the sovereign credit rating to 'speculative' from 'investment' grade on account of deteriorating growth prospects and the government's inertia on the reforms front, Moody's Investors Service chose to maintain its stable outlook on India's current 'Baa3' rating.

### **Top archer Deepika Kumari hopes for a medal in London**

The 18-year-old archer Deepika Kumari has climbed to the top of the World Archery Foundation ranking, ahead of the London Olympics. Earlier, she was placed third. Deepika, who hails from Ranchi, was felicitated by the Jharkhand government. Deputy Chief Minister Sudesh Mehto honoured her with the Peter Thangraj Award. Mr. Mehto said: "Very soon, we will start a sports university, which will be the first of its kind in India. Deepika is the current junior world champion and a gold medallist at the Delhi Commonwealth Games. She also won the Cadet World Title in 2009. She won her first World Cup individual recurve gold medal in Antalya, Turkey, in May 2012 and the gold medal in Turkey in 2009. The most significant was the women's gold medal she won at the 11th Youth World Archery Championships in the USA in 2011, beating Sayana Tsyrempilova of Russia 115-109 in the finals in a long and hard tournament.

### **Hales shines in England win**

England beat the West Indies by seven wickets to win the lone T20 international. World Twenty20 champion England, set 173 to win, finished on 173 for three with Alex Hales making an England best 99 at this level. West Indies 172 for four in 20 overs lost to England 173 for three 19.4 overs.