

### **1. Goa, Navarra join hands to promote tourism**

Nearly 500 years after “the Saint in a hurry”, St Francis Xavier was laid to rest miles away from his home, his birthplace and resting place have come together to jointly promote tourism, in Navarra (Spain) and Goa. Situated at the northernmost tip of Spain, Navarra, which falls in the restive Basque region, is a popular pilgrimage destination in Europe. March is the month of the popular pilgrimage Javierada in Navarra where thousands of people walk from Pamplona, the capital of Navarra, and other places in the region to the castle in Navarra where Saint Francis Xavier was born in 1506. Navarra is also home to another popular Catholic saint Ignatius of Loyola, who along with Francis Xavier, founded a religious order called the Jesuits.

### **2. Phase III of FM radios get nod**

The Government cleared guidelines of the much-delayed FM Radio Phase III expansion that will allow private radio channels to broadcast news of All India Radio and enable revenue generation of Rs 1,733 crore from the auction of license for services in 227 cities. A meeting of the Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh also approved hiking of foreign investment limit on private FM radio broadcasting company to 26 per cent from the current 20 per cent. The FM Phase-III policy extends FM radio services to about 227 new cities, in addition to the present 86 cities with a total of 839 new FM radio channels. The Phase I and Phase II policies have resulted in a total revenue accrual of about Rs 1,733 crore up to May 31, 2011 by way of one time entry fee, migration fee and annual fee among others.

### **3. Maternal mortality rate comes down**

There's good news for India. Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) has come down in Northern India by 67 points from 375 to 308 during 2004-09. MMR measures number of women aged 15-49 years dying due to maternal causes per 1,00,000 live births. Among the Southern States, the decline has been from 149 to 127 during 2004-09. The Other States reported decline from 174 to 149. Empowered Action Group (EAG) States comprise Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand and Assam. The highest decline in MMR has been observed in Assam (90 points) followed by Uttar Pradesh/Uttarakhand (81 points), Rajasthan (70 points), Madhya Pradesh/Chhattisgarh (66 points), Bihar/Jharkhand (51 points) and Odisha (45 points). In southern states Kerala recorded MMR of 81 per lakh live births while Tamil Nadu recorded 97 per lakh live births, the RGI Bulletin said adding that Maharashtra recorded 104 per lakh live births. Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Gujarat and Haryana are in closer proximity to achieving the MDG target of 109. According to the RGI, Bihar has reported the highest TFR (3.9) while Kerala and Tamil Nadu, the lowest (1.7).

### **4. 'Eye on India' to celebrate Indian art and culture**

The first annual 'Eye on India' festival, a unique cultural extravaganza including film screenings, art exhibition and puppet shows, is beginning in Chicago. The 10-day festival includes a screening of 'Chandni Bar' on July 11 as part of an Indian film retrospective, to be hosted by Bollywood star Tabu, who won the Best Actress National award in India for the 2001 film. The Indo-American Center (IAC) will be hosting a dinner on July 10 in the honour of the 40-year-old actress, who will be in Chicago to promote Indian films. 'Eye on India' is focused on Indian artists and their local and international works, literary events and many other chances to participate in a celebration of Indian life and culture.

### **5. China making armed drones; eyes Pak, Arab states for sales**

China has ramped up its research in drone technology and is in the process of building armed, jet-propelled unmanned planes, which it plans to sell to countries like Pakistan. Though much of this work remains secret, the large number of drones at recent exhibitions underlines not only China's determination to catch up in that sector, by building equivalents to the leading US combat and surveillance models, the Predator and the Global Hawk, but also that its desire to sell this technology abroad.

#### **6. SBI hikes lending rates by 25 bps; deposit rates by 100 bps**

Country's largest lender State Bank of India increased lending rates by 25 basis points after Reserve Bank reviewed its policy last month and several banks, including major private lender ICICI Bank , Canara Bank , Bank of Baroda raised their lending rates. But SBI also raised deposit rates by up to 100 basis points. While lending rates will make home, auto and other loans more expensive, deposit rates will provide better returns to savers. The bank has revised the base rate or the minimum lending rate upwards by 25 basis points (bps), or 0.25 per cent, to 9.50 per cent with effect from July 11. The interest rates on fixed deposits with a maturity period of 1-10 years has been fixed at 9.25 per cent. The new deposit rates would be effective from July 11.

#### **7. Exports jump 46.4% to \$29.2 billion in June**

India's exports registered a robust growth of 46.4% year-on-year in June to \$29.2 billion on account of increasing demand in Western markets. Imports, too, grew at a high rate of 42.4% to \$36.9 billion, leaving a trade deficit of \$7.7 billion for the month.

#### **8. UK bank reverts call centre from India**

Financial major Santander has announced that it is closing its call centres in India and bringing it back to the UK since it was the main demand of its customers. It is the second British company to bring back its call centre work from India this month. New Call Telecom, which competes with BT and Sky to offer home telephone services, broadband and low-cost international calls, earlier said it was bringing back its outsourced work from India because operating there was no longer cheap. Many British companies outsourced work to India where costs were low. But in recent years, increasing prices in India have made it a less attractive option than retaining the work in the UK.

#### **9. Now, a car that lets you both 'surf and speed up on land'!**

A car that will allow you both to surf and speed up on the land has been spotted cruising along the River Great Ouse in Britain. The 150,000-pound James Bond-style amphibious car, built by Gibbs Technologies, can convert a car into a boat at the push of just a single button. 'Aquadra', which left onlookers stunned at St Neots, Cambs, boasts a speed of up to 100mph on land and 30mph on water.

#### **10. Asian pollution actually reducing global warming**

A new study has revealed that Chinese coal plants, which are thought to increase pollution, are actually preventing the earth from becoming warmer. Scientists have claimed that sulphur emissions from power plants in China are blocking sunlight, providing a cooling effect on the atmosphere and cancelling out the effect of global warming. The impact of the sulphur emissions has combined with a cooler stage of the sun's cycle and a change from the El Nino to the La Nina weather system in the South Atlantic has kept temperatures artificially low, according to the scientists. If true, this could mean a change in the Sun's 11-year cycle along with measures to refine Chinese coal boilers will cause temperatures to rise significantly. But sceptics of man-made climate change said the researchers "tweak an out-of-date climate computer model and cherry-pick the outcome to get their desired result".