After Dr. Radhakrishnan, Ansari gets a second term

History repeated itself after five decades when United Progressive Alliance nominee Hamid Ansari was re-elected Vice-President. He became the second Vice-President to get a second consecutive term after S. Radhakrishnan, who enjoyed two terms from 1952 to 1962. Mr. Ansari won with a thumping majority against the National Democratic Alliance candidate Jaswant Singh. He polled 490 votes against Mr. Singh’s 238. There was never any doubt about the victory of Mr. Ansari, given the numerical strength of the UPA and other parties supporting him.

Litterateur Samala Sadasiva is no more

Well-known litterateur Samala Sadasiva passed away at the age of 85 in Vidyanagar Colony in Adilabad, Andhra Pradesh. The 2011 Kendra Sahitya Akademi award winner died. He introduced famous literary personalities from other languages to Telugu readers. A prime example is ‘Swaray Layalu’, written in 2008, for which he bagged the Sahitya Akademi award in Telugu section, as it was based on his experiences with Hindustani classical music. Sadasiva was born at Wankidi village in Adilabad on May 11 in 1928. He became teacher at the age of 20, which also charted his tryst with the literary world.

India to work closely with Latin American, Caribbean states

India set in motion the process of integrating with the far-off but rich in mineral and hydrocarbons states of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) by holding the first Foreign Minister-level talks with the organisation’s troika of Chile, Venezuela and Cuba. As the current chair of CELAC, Chile's Foreign Minister Alfredo Charme noted at a joint media interaction “This is the first time that we have an international presentation to another country and that country is India.” The intention behind closer collaboration is both political and trade related — the CELAC countries share common positions with India on U.N. reforms, the international financial crisis, climate change and international terrorism. And trade with India is just one-tenth that with China, which means both sides need to improve on their existing trade agreements. Formed less than a year ago, the process of grouping 33 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean minus the U.S. and Canada has been a decade-long endeavour aimed at evolving as an alternative to the Washington-headquartered Organisation of American States (OAS), which many of these nations believe is too much in America's shadow. CELAC also keeps out territories controlled by the former colonial powers such as the U.K., France and the Netherlands.

Modi Awards presented

Union Finance Minister P. Chidambaram presenting the Gujar Mal Modi Award for Innovative Science and Technology to Prof. Ajay K. Sood and Prof. K. S. Valdiya in New Delhi.

Now, multi-drug resistant TB test to cost 40% less

The world's only diagnostic tool that can detect multi-drug resistant TB (MDR TB) in less than two hours will now be 40% cheaper. United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), USAID, UNITAID and the Gates Foundation reached an agreement, which will significantly reduce the cost of the highly accurate rapid diagnostic test in 145 high-burden and developing countries, including India. Funds provided by the partnership will reduce the cost of Xpert from $16.86 to $9.98, a price that will not increase until 2022. India just recently decided to roll out Xpert across 18 sites to test for and confirm MDR TB. Around 99,000 Indians suffering from TB are becoming drug resistant every year. The only method used in most laboratories in India was smear microscopy, a technique developed in the 1880s by the German bacteriologist Robert Koch that requires visual detection of the TB bacterium under a microscope. Smear microscopy is insensitive for diagnosing TB in patients who are co-infected with HIV and also does not detect MDR TB. Nearly one in six deaths among adults aged 15-49 in India are due to TB. The biggest advantage of the Xpert system is that it can be used outside of conventional laboratories and does not require specialized training.

Mental patients included in BPL health scheme

In the maiden endorsement of India's swelling burden of patients suffering from mental disorders, the Union health ministry has included it under the Rashtriya Arogya Nidhi (RAN), the scheme that till now provided financial assistance to only below poverty line (BPL) patients, who are suffering from major life-threatening diseases. All BPL patients suffering from mental disorders like depression, anxiety, adjustment and personality disorders, alcohol and drug abuse will get a free one-time grant of up to Rs 1 lakh for treatment at any super-speciality government hospital /institutes. The ministry has also included diabetes- an ailment

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that presently affects nearly 50 million Indians under RAN. A note prepared by the ministry says, “7% of population suffers from mental disorders. Around 13 crore Indians are suffering from some form of mental illness from depression and anxiety syndromes to psychosomatic disorders and schizophrenia. Over 90% remain untreated. There is less than one psychiatrist is available for every four lakh population. The psychiatrist/ population ratio is one for every million.”

Himachal bags award for adventure tourism
Himachal Pradesh has been awarded as ‘Best State for Adventure Tourism Destination.’ State chief secretary Sudripa Roy said that the award would be given to Himachal Pradesh on August 18 at New Delhi. In last over two decades Himachal Pradesh has emerged as global tourist destination in the world especially after tourist stopped going to Kashmir after the eruption of terrorism there. Lying in the Western Himalayas, Himachal Pradesh has many locations providing perfect venues for adventure activities. Tourists can opt from options like mountaineering, rock-climbing, trekking, camping, skiing, gliding, ice-skating, roller skating, safaris and a number of water sports including river rafting, golfing and fishing. With Kashmir witnessing turmoil, tourists started flocking tourist towns of Shimla, Manali, Dharamshala and Dalhousie creating new avenues for the people to earn their livelihood through tourism industry

Fijian President calls on Pranab
Fijian President Ratu Epeli Nailatikau called on his Indian counterpart Pranab Mukherjee at Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi and discussed the scope for expanding bilateral ties. Mr. Nailatikau is on a private visit and his first to the country. Mr. Mukherjee recollected the historical ties between the two countries and referred to the presence of a large number of persons of Indian origin in Fiji.

New Species of Spider named after Naturalist David Attenborough
A new species of spider found only on one island in Queensland, Australia was named after the British naturalist and celebrated TV broadcaster Sir David Attenborough. The prethopalpus attenboroughi spider is just over one millimetre in length and exists only on Horn Island in the Torres Strait in Queensland. The spider was discovered and described by Queensland Museum research fellow Barbara Baehr and WA Museum head of terrestrial zoology Professor Mark Harvey. Prethopalpus is commonly known as a goblin spider. It is not the first time a species has been named after Sir David as earlier a fossil of a fish that existed 380 million years ago was named Materpiscis attenboroughi.

Russia to build naval strength in Arctic zone
Russia will build a string of naval bases along its northern coast as it prepares to claim a vast swath of the energy-rich Arctic. Security Council chief Nikolay Patrushev said that a list of naval infrastructure hubs along the Northern Sea Route has been drawn up to serve as resupply bases for Russian warships and border guard vessels. By 2020, Russia is to deploy a combined-arms force of naval, border and coastal guard units to protect its economic and political interests in the Arctic. President Vladimir Putin I said that Russia would build dozens of warships by 2020 to better protect its natural resources in the Arctic. Russia, which is entitled to a 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone in the Arctic, plans to submit next year its claim for a 150-mile additional territory on the grounds that the seabed is continuation of its continental shelf. This claim is disputed by other Arctic powers — Norway, the United States, Canada and Denmark. Russia also plans to open year-round navigation along the Northern Sea Route, which stretches for 5,600 km along Russia’s Arctic coast from Murmansk in the Barents Sea to the Bering Strait in the Far East.

Gibson pays up over illegal import of Indian ebony
Guitar-maker Gibson has agreed to pay $350,000 to avoid U.S. prosecution over allegations that it illegally imported endangered wood from India and Madagascar. “Gibson has acknowledged that it failed to act on information that the Madagascar ebony it was purchasing may have violated laws intended to limit over-harvesting and conserve valuable wood species,” Assistant Attorney General Ignacia Moreno said. The company also imported rosewood and ebony from India in a potential violation of the U.S. Lacey Act, which protects endangered foreign wood species, the statement from the Justice Department alleged.Makers of the legendary Les Paul guitar, Gibson became a cause celebre for U.S. Tea Party activists after wildlife conservation agents raided two of its plants in Tennessee and took away several pallets of Indian ebony.
In a first for Lufthansa, its Boeing 747-8 lands in Delhi
The state-of-the-art Boeing 747-8 Intercontinental touched down, after a flight from Frankfurt, at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi, amid salute by water canon. Thus, India becomes the first destination in Asia to receive the aircraft that boasts lengthened fuselage and redesigned wings, in a sign of its importance for the civil aviation industry in the world. The Frankfurt-New Delhi flight also made Lufthansa, Germany’s national carrier, the global launch customer for the aircraft, the fourth-generation version of Boeing 747. The introduction of Boeing 747-8 marks the beginning of a wider overhaul of Lufthansa’s fleet flying to India. The new aircraft replaces B747-400 to run the Delhi-Frankfurt daily direct service (LH 760/1). This aircraft will also fly between Bangalore and Frankfurt after September 15.

Crisil cuts GDP growth to 5.5 %
Rating agency Crisil Research, cut India’s real gross domestic product (GDP) growth forecast for 2012-13 to 5.5 per cent from its earlier forecast of 6.5 per cent. The revised forecast of Crisil is one percentage point down from the Reserve Bank of India’s forecast of GDP for the same period. The RBI, on July 31, reduced the GDP forecast for the current financial year from 7.3 per cent to 6.5 per cent and hiked the inflation forecast from 6.5 per cent to7 per cent. However, Crisil raised the average WPI (wholesale price index) inflation forecast to 8 per cent from 7 per cent earlier.

Cochin Shipyard delivers tug supply vessel to Shipping Corporation
Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL) delivered a 120T Bollard pull anchor handling tug supply vessel, SCI Ahimsa, to the Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) said. This is the third of the series of four such vessels being built by CSL for SCI. The vessel delivered is of AH03 type, and is certified under dual class by the Rules and Regulations of American Bureau of Shipping and Indian Register of Shipping. This ship is registered under Indian flag with Mumbai as the home port. The vessel is also equipped with two 4000-kW diesel engines and two controlled pitch propeller in Kort Nozzles.

Jet in alliance with HDFC Bank to launch co-branded credit cards
Jet Airways has tied up with HDFC Bank to launch ‘JetPrivilege-HDFC Bank Credit Card’, a range of credit cards which will offer benefits and rewards in the form of JP Miles. Nikos Kardassis, CEO, Jet Airways, said, the tie-up with HDFC Bank “is another unique travel option aimed at making air travel more economical for family travel. The JetPrivilege-HDFC Bank Credit card will be offered in World, Platinum and Titanium variants on the MasterCard network platform. The premium variant, JetPrivilege-HDFC Bank World Credit card entitles members to enjoy several lifestyle benefits, including six JPMiles for every Rs.150 spent and another 10,000 JPMiles within the first 90 days. The partnership will enable cardholders to aggregate all their spends into one account with rewards in the form of JPMiles.

EIH to set up hotel in Navi Mumbai on Reliance land
The Oberoi Group is planning a Trident-brand hotel in Navi Mumbai in Maharashtra on land owned by Reliance Industries Ltd, EIH Chairman P. R. S. Oberoi said. RIL, which, through Reliance Industries Investment Holding Pvt. Ltd., holds a stake of about 18 per cent in EIH, was brought in as a strategic investor in August 2010, in the wake of ITC steadily increasing its equity holding in EIH. At present, the promoter group holds 35.2 per cent of EIH equity followed by RIL’s 18 per cent and ITC’s 14.86 per cent.

CBT allows EPFO to park funds in CoDs, long duration bank FDs
EPFO’s apex decision making body the Central Board of Trustees (CBT) gave green signal to retirement fund body to park its funds in fixed deposits upto five years, short term securities and certificate of deposits of public sector banks. The proposal to provide greater freedom to Employees’ Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) in additional financial instruments. EPFO has corpus of Rs3.5 lakh crore and needed to increase its returns on investments to provide higher rate of interest to subscribers.

TCS, HDFC partner to invest in sports education startup
India’s largest software exporter and the country’s top mortgage lender do not have much to do with sports or education. But Tata Consultancy Services and HDFC have come together, nonetheless, to invest in a startup that is in the business of sports education. The partnership, reminiscent of their equal JV Intelenet for business process outsourcing more than a decade ago, has been enabled by Susir Kumar and the team that built Intelenet into one of India’s most prominent BPOs.
Kirani James wins Grenada's first medal on track
Felix Sanchez recaptured the Olympic gold in the men’s 400m hurdles and was caught in a flood of emotions as he wept uncontrollably at the medal ceremony, while 19-year-old Kirani James, the World champion, put Grenada on the podium for the first time ever in athletics at the Olympics with the gold in the 400m, on an evening when two-time Olympic champion Yelena Isinbayeva had to settle for the bronze. Sanchez is the oldest medallist in the event, as he broke the 104-year-old record of Leonard Tremeer of Britain, while sailing past Michael Tinsley of the US who ran a personal best 47.91 for the silver and Javier Culson (48.10) of Puerto Rico who was the favourite for gold.

SAI to offer officer’s grade jobs to all Olympians
The sports ministry offered all Olympians of the country officer’s grade jobs in the Sports Authority of India a couple of days after champion marksman, Subedar Vijay Kumar, threatened to quit the Army for being denied promotion. Sports minister Ajay Maken said the SAI will post an advertisement on its website calling for all Olympians, including past participants, to join the organisation.

Kenny beats Bauge to coveted sprint gold
Britain's Jason Kenny claimed his first individual gold medal when he stunned Frenchman Gregory Bauge 2-0 to win track cycling's Olympic sprint title. Australian Shane Perkins beat Trinidad's Njisane Phillip to the bronze. Kenny was given the nod over defending champion Sir Chris Hoy to defend Britain's chances of sprint gold at his home Games after the rules were changed to limit each nation to one rider per event.