

## National:

### **Manipur to ban import and sale of food packets from Myanmar**

The Manipur Health Minister Phugzathang Tonsing announced that the government will soon ban import and sale of food packets from Myanmar since these items do not have manufacturing details, including the expiry date. He said the undisclosed ingredients may be harmful to the consumers. Following some instances of sickness among children, the authorities in Nagaland had banned sale of these food items. These food packets, including tinned fish, chicken and beef, have heavy demand in the north eastern States. The Manipur government had already banned the sale and consumption of smokeless tobacco products.

### **India provides new immigration system for Maldives**

An Indian company might have been unceremoniously thrown out of the multi-billion dollar Male airport modernisation project, but New Delhi is ensuring passengers get smooth immigration service at the same airport. At a ceremony held in Male's Ibrahim Nasir International Airport, High Commissioner Dnyaneshwar Mulay formally handed over a new system to facilitate travellers. The Maldivian government, drawing some of its resolve from these parties, cancelled the biggest single foreign direct investment to the country amid New Delhi's protestations. Called the Airport Passenger Information System (APIS), it will feed advance information on passengers travelling to and from Maldives, to the border control system. This is used by enforcement authorities like Immigration, Customs, Police and the Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF).

### **Selected for Attimabbe Award**

Well-known writer Saraswathi Chimmalagi has been chosen for the Dana Chintamani Attimabbe Award for 2011. Senior gamaki H.K. Ramaswamy has been selected for the Kumaravyasa Award for 2011.

### **Kurien to head Indian delegation to Vatican**

Rajya Sabha deputy chairman P J Kurien will lead the Indian delegation to the inaugural pontifical mass of Pope Francis I in Vatican City. Besides Kurien, the four-member delegation includes his wife Susan, his secretary P J Antony and Kerala Congress Lok Sabha MP Jose K Mani. The inaugural pontifical mass of the new Pope will be held on March 19 morning at St. Peter's Basilica.

## International:

### **Aneesh Chopra wins straw poll for Virginia Lt Governor**

Indian-American Aneesh Chopra, a former White House IT czar, has won the straw poll for Virginia Lieutenant Governor, giving a big boost to his electoral ambitions later 2013. 40-year-old Chopra, who had formally entered the race, received more than 70 per cent of the votes in the straw poll. This is the second straw poll won by Chopra. The first he won in Feb. 2013. If elected, he would be the first Indian American to be elected to the top post in Virginia.

### **India remains top arms importer while China becomes fifth largest exporter**

India remains the world's biggest weapons importer for the third year in a row, ahead of China, which has turned into an exporter and overtaken the UK as the world's fifth largest supplier, selling its military wares mainly to Pakistan. More than half of the weapons exported by China are bought by Pakistan, which is now the world's third largest importer of weapons after India and China, the 2013 edition of the annual study by the highly regarded Stockholm International Peace Research Institute said. India replaced China as the world's leading importer of weapons in 2011 and has retained the distinction since. Despite criticism of its import dependency -India imports 70% of its armament needs - and failure to develop a defence industrial base at home by engaging the private sector, India accounted for 12% of global imports during 2008-12. China replaces Britain in the top five arms-dealing countries between 2008 and 2012, a group dominated by



the United States and Russia, which accounted for 30 percent and 26 percent of weapons exports. SIPRI maintains a global arms transfers database base that tracks arms exports back to the 1950s. Germany and France ranked third and fourth on the arms exporter list.

#### **Japanese architect Toyo Ito wins Pritzker Prize**

Japanese architect Toyo Ito has won the 2013 Pritzker Prize," often called the Nobel Prize of architecture. Ito's buildings, which include libraries, theaters and homes, have been praised for their fluid beauty and balance between the physical and virtual world. The Pritzker announcement was made in Los Angeles by the prize's jury, which included US Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer. The 71-year-old Ito is the sixth Japanese architect to receive the prize.

## **Business & Economy:**

#### **India may become 5th-largest manufacturing nation**

India may become the fifth-largest manufacturing nation from ninth position at present if the country is able to increase the share of manufacturing in GDP to 25 per cent, a Boston Consultancy Group report has said. The National Manufacturing Policy envisages that India's manufacturing sector should increase its share of GDP from 15 per cent at present to 25 per cent by 2022. It will help India become the fifth-largest manufacturing nation.

#### **DoT issues order to CDMA players for one-time spectrum fee**

**The Government has asked CDMA telecom operators to pay one-time fee, amounting to about Rs3,033 crore, for the spectrum they hold beyond the initial frequencies that were allocated to them.**

In its order on levy of one time spectrum charges for CDMA spectrum held by the incumbent telecom service providers, Department of Telecom has said: "For CDMA spectrum holding above 2.5 Mhz in 800 Mhz band, the rate for one-time spectrum charges shall be applicable from 01-01-2013." As per the order, the charges will be levied on additional spectrum for the rest of the licence period and operators not willing to pay these charges will be allowed to surrender their spectrum held over 2.5 Mhz. Reliance Communications, Tata Teleservices, Sistema Shyam (SSTL), BSNL and MTNL hold spectrum beyond 2.5 Megahertz (Mhz) in a few telecom service areas.

#### **Pvt oil cos may not sell fuel to PSUs if pricing model changes**

**Private oil refiners such as Essar Oil and Reliance Industries may not sell any fuel to State-owned oil firms if the Government changes the way petrol and diesel are priced.** The Finance Ministry wants petrol and diesel to be priced at a rate they can get in export market, rather than current practice of pricing the fuels after adding transportation and customs duty to the international price. The difference between the Export Parity Price (EPP) being propagated by the finance ministry and the currently in vogue Trade Parity Price is about \$3-4 per barrels. Essar and Reliance supply one-fifth of diesel that Indian Oil Corp, Hindustan Petroleum and Bharat Petroleum sell through their petrol pumps.

#### **SBI to open 1,200 branches, 8 overseas offices next fiscal**

**State Bank of India (SBI) plans to open about 1,200 branches in the country and another eight branch offices overseas, including China and the UK, in the next fiscal.** Plans are afoot to open two branches each in Bangladesh and the UK and one each in China, the Netherlands, South Korea and Sri Lanka. In the case of South Korea, the existing representative office of SBI would be upgraded into a full-fledged branch. With addition to these eight branches, SBI's offshore network will increase to 59. SBI, India's largest bank, has 14,677 branches across the country. Under the bank's domestic expansion plans, about 100 branches would be opened in West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh.

## **Sport:**

### **Nadal beats Del Potro to clinch Indian Wells title**

Rafael Nadal defeated Juan Martin del Potro 4-6, 6-3, 6-4 to win his third Indian Wells ATP Masters title and cement his return from a seven-month injury layoff. The 11-time Grand Slam champion from Spain claimed his first hard court title since 2010. He came back to post a runner-up finish in Vina del Mar, followed by victories at Sao Paulo and Acapulco.

### **Sharapova routs Wozniacki for Indian Wells title**

Maria Sharapova beat Caroline Wozniacki 6-2, 6-2 to win her second Indian Wells WTA title in emphatic style. The 25-year-old Russian, already projected to supplant Australian Open champion Victoria Azarenka at No. 2 in world rankings by reaching her first final of the season, broke Wozniacki twice in each set en route to the victory in one hour and 21 minutes. The win in a match between former champions gave her a second title to go with the Indian Wells crown she claimed in 2006.

### **South Africa's Aiken wins Avantha Masters**

Thomas Aiken of South Africa led from start to finish on the final day to win the \$2.3 million Avantha Masters by three shots in India. Aiken, who began the last round with a three-stroke lead, scored a flawless five-under 67 and sealed his second win on the European Tour with a birdie at the 18th hole. The 29-year-old from Johannesburg finished with an overall score of 23-under 265, three shots ahead of Gaganjeet Bhullar at the Greg Norman-designed par-72 Jaypee Greens in Greater Noida.

### **Indian women retain title**

Defending champion India retained the title defeating Pakistan 31-19 in the final of the fourth South Asian women's handball championship in Lucknow. India remained undefeated through the tournament that was held at the KD Singh Babu Stadium. Manisha top-scored with 11 goals and Varuni Negi scored seven goals for India. For Pakistan, Madiha Latif was the top scorer with five goals.

### **Ecclestone tops F1 Rich List**

Formula One group CEO Bernie Ecclestone has topped the sport's Rich List with a £6.2 billion fortune, ahead of Red Bull's Dietrich Mateschitz.