A mega study and a global trial, to fight killer diseases better
The largest ever study to investigate causes of common cancers in India is being carried out through a collaboration between Oxford University in the UK and 12 leading cancer centres in India. Several cancer centres are collaborating in the ambitious project to investigate whether certain factors common in Indian lifestyle are important in influencing the risk of cancer, Dr Raju Chacko, oncologist and a consultant at Christian Medical College, Vellore. Among lifestyle trends being investigated are vegetarianism and common spices in the Indian diet. The researchers will study whether these have a beneficial effect in lowering the risk of cancer. The researchers will also investigate if chewing tobacco, burning wood as a fuel indoors, and the adoption of Western lifestyles in Indian cities have a detrimental effect.

ULFA says talks with Centre positive
The Centre discussed with the top leadership of the banned ULFA various aspects of its 'charter of demands' which sought amendment to the Constitution to find a lasting solution to the three-decade-old insurgency problem in Assam. While the ULFA team was led by its chairman Arabinda Rajkhowa, the Central team was headed by Union Home Secretary R K Singh.

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Darjeeling tea gets EU's protected tag
The European Union (EU) has registered India's Darjeeling tea with a Protected Geographical Indication (PGI). The tag seeks to protect product names from misuse and imitation. This has made Darjeeling tea the seventh non-EU product receiving the protected status, following one from Colombia and five from China.

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China wants bases in Pak tribal region: Report
China has expressed an interest in setting up military bases in Pakistan's volatile tribal area or the Northern Areas, close to the restive Chinese province of Xinjiang, to counter the activities of extremists, according to a media report. The Chinese desire is aimed at containing the growing terrorist activities of Chinese rebels of the al-Qaeda-linked East Turkestan Islamic Movement.

Australia refuses to withdraw travel advisory
Australia has rejected India's demand to withdraw the travel advisory issued by them. India had asked Australia, New Zealand and Canada to withdraw the issuance of such notices which have "disproportionate" language and were contrary to the current tourist trend, television reports stated. Australia, however, has refused to withdraw the notice saying that it was "routine". Australia's foreign minister Kevin Rudd said, "We don't have any specific threats to share with India." Earlier, minister of external affairs SM Krishna, who is in Australia to attend the CHOGM Foreign Ministers Meeting, held talks with his Australian, Kiwi and Canadian counterparts and raised the issue in detail.
RBI gets tough on prepayment penalty, discriminatory rates
After waiting and watching for quite some time, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has finally decided to get tough against the discriminatory pricing of loans and the huge prepayment penalty — up to 2 per cent of the outstanding loans — being charged by some banks. The RBI has decided to set up a Working Group to look into principles governing proper, transparent and non-discriminatory pricing of credit. This panel is expected to look into different rates for old and new loan customers. Banks and housing finance firms charge different rates for their old and new loan customers. Unveiling the monetary policy, the RBI said it has decided to implement the recommendations of the Damodaran Committee, on which a broad consensus has emerged, as also the action points which were identified by the Indian Banks’ Association (IBA) and Banking Codes and Standards Board of India (BCSBI) in the last Banking Ombudsman conference. Banks had agreed to stop prepayment penalty on floating loans at the Ombudsman conference, but most banks are yet to stop this practice.

IBM names Ginni Rometty as first female CEO
Ginni Rometty, 54, will become the first female chief executive officer in IBM's 100-year history. The Armonk, New York based company said she will succeed Sam Palmisano in the role effective Jan 1. Palmisano, CEO since 2002, will remain chairman.

Boeing 787’s inaugural flight lands in Hong Kong
ABOARD ANA FLIGHT 7871: Boeing's much-anticipated 787 carried its first passengers on a four-hour, 8-minute flight filled with cheers, picture-taking and swapping of aviation stories. The new long-haul jet aims to change with the way passengers think about flying with larger windows, improved lighting and air pressure and humidity that closer resembles that on the ground. It's not the fastest jet or the largest jet but the plane, nicknamed The Dreamliner by Boeing Corp, is built of lightweight materials that promise to dramatically improve fuel efficiency.

One embryo in IVF doesn’t cut birth chance: Study
Transferring one embryo into women during in vitro fertilization (IVF) doesn’t lower their chances of giving birth but it does mean fewer women give birth to twins, with all the attendant health risks, a study said. IVF has traditionally involved transferring multiple embryos, which is known to increase by many times a woman’s chances of having twins and other multiple births, and raise risks to both mother and babies, including diabetes during pregnancy, premature birth and cerebral palsy. But improved technology has helped increase births if single embryos are used in younger women judged to have a good chance of getting pregnant, said Jessica Kresowik at the University of Iowa in Iowa City, who led the study.

India at 'extreme' risk from climate change
A third of humanity, mostly in Africa and South Asia, face the biggest risks from climate change but rich nations in northern Europe will be least exposed, according to a report released. Bangladesh, India and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) are among 30 countries with "extreme" exposure to climate shift, according to a ranking of 193 nations by Maplecroft, a British firm specialising in risk analysis. Five Southeast Asian nations - Indonesia, Myanmar, Vietnam, the Philippines and Cambodia - are also in the highest category, partly because of the rising seas and increasing severe tropical storms. Maplecroft's tool, the Climate Change Vulnerability Index (CCVI), looks at exposure to extreme weather events such as drought, cyclones, wildfires and storm surges, which translate into water stress, loss of crops and land lost to the sea. How vulnerable a society is to these events is also measured, along with a country's potential to adapt to future climate change-related hazards. Of 30 nations identified in the new report as at "extreme" risk from climate change, two-thirds are in Africa and all are developing countries.
China to launch unmanned space mission next month
China has said that it will launch an unmanned spacecraft early next month that will attempt to dock with an experimental space station module. The Shenzhou 8 mission is the latest step in what will be a decade-long effort to place a manned permanent space station in orbit.

Wozniacki seals No. 1 ranking as Sharapova pulls out
Caroline Wozniacki will end the year ranked world number one although her hopes of applying icing to the cake by winning the WTA Championships suffered a blow when she lost to Russia's Vera Zvonareva in her second round-robin match.

Bopanna-Qureshi win Stockholm Open, win third title together
Rohan Bopanna and Aisam-ul-haq Qureshi won their second ATP doubles title of the season, and third overall together, after outplaying Marcelo Melo and Bruno Soares in straight sets in the summit clash of the Stockholm Open. The top seeded Indo-Pak pair lived up to its top billing as they downed the Brazilian opponents 6-1 6-4 in just 57 minutes in the final of the euro 600,00 hard court event.