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International Current Affairs 2009

Climate Conference in Copenhagen 6 to 18 December 2009 (16th Dec 2009)

In 2012 the Kyoto Protocol to prevent climate changes and global warming runs out. To keep the process on the line there is an urgent need for a new climate protocol. At the conference in Copenhagen 2009 the parties of the UNFCCC meet for the last time on government level before the climate agreement need to be renewed. Therefore the Climate Conference in Copenhagen is essential for the worlds climate and the Danish government and UNFCCC is putting hard effort in making the meeting in Copenhagen a success ending up with a Copenhagen Protocol to prevent global warming and climate changes.

Karzai sworn in for second term afghan president (19th Nov 2009)

Afghan leader Hamid Karzai was sworn in as president pledging to fight graft and take control of his country's security before his five-year term ends, after a fraud-marred election left his image in ruins. Karzai said he hoped Afghanistan's own security forces could take responsibility for the entire country within five years, and take the lead in unstable areas within three. It is a goal he will share with his Western backers, who are seeking an exit strategy from the 8-year-old war.

GCC population seen growing to 53 million by 2020 (16th Nov 2009)

The population explosion in the Gulf region is predicted to continue with a new report seeing it rising by a third in the next decade. Latest research by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) said the GCC's population was likely to hit 53 million by 2020, with the vast majority of people under 25 years old. The rapid growth and the relative youth of the population present serious challenges as well as major opportunities faced by GCC.

7.7 quakes shake north Chile (15th Nov 2009)

Thousands of Chileans may have to sleep in the streets after a 7.7 magnitude earthquake rattled the north part of the country, killing at least two people, injuring dozens and destroying hundreds of homes. Chile has been the scene of hundreds of strong earthquakes throughout history, including the largest one of the 20th century on May 22, 1960.

Sri Lanka military chief 'quits' (12th Nov 2009)

Sri Lanka's armed forces chief Sarath Fonseka, who helped secure the defeat of Tamil Tiger rebels in May, has resigned, opposition politicians say. Gen Fonseka is reportedly considering challenging President Mahinda Rajapaksa in an election to be held before April. He is due to make a speech shortly. The resignation was swiftly accepted by the president Mahindra Rajapaksa.

GSK Donates 50 Million H1N1 Doses to WHO (11th Nov 2009)

GlaxoSmithKline signed an agreement with the World Health Organization to donate 50 million doses of adjuvant H1N1 flu vaccine to developing countries around the world. The drug will be available to 95 developing countries despite industry-wide shortfalls affecting the ability of developed nations to inoculate their own citizens. Twenty percent of production from GSK's Canadian vaccine production facility has been allocated to developing countries.

Germany marks anniversary of anti-Semitic program (9th November 2009)

As Germany celebrated the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall more subdued tributes were held to mark the 71st anniversary of the Nazi's Kristallnacht anti-Semitic pogrom. On Kristallnacht — the Night of Broken Glass — at least 91 German Jews were killed, more than 200 synagogues were destroyed, and thousands of Jewish businesses vandalized and looted in state sanctioned, riots. In the capital, a special service was being held at a memorial outside the Jewish Community of Berlin's building. The event was also to pay tribute to Anne Frank, whose poignant diary has inspired countless people.

Earthquake rocks southern Iran (4th November 2009)

A 4.9-magnitude earthquake rattled southern Iran injuring about 700 people, officials said. Iran lies along seismic fault lines and has been rocked strong earthquakes, notably in December 2003 when a 6.6-magnitude quake devastated the ancient city of Bam, killing at least 30,000 people.

ASEAN Summit 2009 (25th October 2009)

Leaders of ASEAN countries have decided to increase cooperation in education at the 14th ASEAN Summit held in Hua Hin, Thailand, on October 23-25, 2009. The cooperation agreement signed by the leaders of the ten ASEAN member countries at the summit's closing ceremony on Sunday. The ASEAN community in 2015 will be based on three pillars, security of the political community, economic community, and socio-cultural community. Therefore, ASEAN leaders had been urged to step up educational competency in their respective countries. All these efforts may serve as a common reference for ASEAN to a better quality education. The member country had also expressed readiness to establish a research convention on education. The result will serve as a basic framework for new cooperation in the sector. The summit also announced a plan to observe ASEAN's founding anniversary every August 8, and introduce the history of the regional organization as well as its latest developments to the students.

Global population to reach seven billion by 2011 (23rd October 2009)

The global population is expected to reach seven billion in 2011 and the increase would happen in just 12 years after reaching six billion in 1999, says the World Population Data Sheet prepared by the Population Reference Bureau (PRB). In a statement issued by the Information Services Department, growth of the world's youth population was shifting to the poorest countries' especially Asia and Africa, and latter's population of one billion was growing by about 24 million per year, and would double by 2050. The bulk of today's 1.2 billion youth are in developing countries with 8 out of 10 living in Africa and Asia.

Obama Wins Nobel peace prize 2009 (9th October 2009) The chairman of the Nobel Peace Prize committee cited President Obama's outreach to the Muslim world and his push for Israeli-Arab peace in explaining its decision to award him the prize. "One of the first things he did was to go to Cairo to try to reach out to the Muslim world, then to restart the Mideast negotiations and then he reached out to the rest of the world through international institutions," Thorbjorn Jagland said in Oslo last Friday after announcing that Obama had won the prize. The formal citation notes Obama's "extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples" and his "vision of and work for a world without nuclear weapons." Obama will receive the \$1.4 million prize in Oslo on Dec. 10.

Kabul's Indian Embassy attacked (8th October 2009)

A vehicle packed with explosives drove into the sidewall of the Indian Embassy in Kabul. A huge blast followed. Seven Afghan civilians were killed and 45 more were wounded in a blast outside the Indian embassy in the Afghan capital on Thursday, police sources said. The Taliban has claimed responsibility for the suicide attack. On its website, it said it intended to target the Embassy. There was some speculation whether the real targets were other government buildings nearby.

Al-Qaida calls for holy war against China (7th October 2009)

In a video message, a senior Al-Qaida leader has urged Muslims to launch a holy war against Chinese "invaders" in response to the "massacre" of Uighurs in western China. "The atheist criminals have long used the most despicable, cruel and brutal means against Muslims in Turkistan," said Abu Yahya al-Libi, who is sometimes identified as the commander in Afghanistan of the international terrorist network Al-Qaida.

China celebrates its 60th anniversary (1st October 2009)

A confident China on Thursday marked 60 years of Communist rule as it unveiled its military might parading new generation battle tanks and long-range cruise missiles, with President Hu Jintao asserting that only socialism can save the country.

Afghan Presidential election (18th September 2009)

President Hamid Karzai won an absolute majority in Afghanistan's presidential election, according to a final preliminary result released by the election commission. Incumbent Karzai won 54.6% of the vote in the Aug 20 poll, nearly double the 27.8% of his nearest rival, former foreign minister Abdullah, the commission said. Voter turnout was 38%, which accounts for more than 5.5 million votes cast on the election day. Of that percentage, 42% were men and 38% were women, Daoud Ali Najafi, chief electoral officer said.

US largest supplier of arms in 2008 (7th September 2009)

Defying the trends of global recession, the United States has emerged as the largest supplier of arms, accounting for more than two-third of the USD 55.2 billion of arms sales in the year 2008. The United States has not only supplied arms and weapons to its traditional market, but also begun creating a pie for itself in the traditional Russian supplier markets like that of India, says a latest Congressional report. The increase in American weapons sales around the world was attributable not only to major new orders from clients in the Near East and in Asia, but also to the continuation of significant equipment and support services contracts with a broad-based number of US clients globally.

Powerful earthquake kills 57 in Indonesia (3rd September)

At least 57 killed, another 400 injured, says disaster agency Tsunami watch quickly expires, Pacific Tsunami Warning Center says Older buildings damaged in Tasikmalaya in Indonesian island of Java, witness says Series of quakes hit Indonesia's Sumatra Island three weeks ago. Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono visited Cianjur, and vowed to free up nearly \$500,000 (5 billion rupiah) for emergency response efforts.

Angry student throws acid on professor in Vietnam (25th August 2009)

A college professor and 13 students were hurt, when a former student upset over an English test splashed him with acid in Vietnam. Dang Huu Dung, a professor at the Agriculture and Forestry University, received acid burns to a third of his body. The police arrested Tran Xuan Thanh, 28-year-old who finished his four-year course in 2006 but did not graduate because he failed the English test on mechanics. The former student wants to apply for another English test but the professor refused. The student got angry and thrown acid on professor thinking Mr Dung was not fulfilling his responsibilities towards his students.

Miss Venezuela win Miss Universe 2009 title (24th August 2009)

Impressing 12 judges and beating 84 contestants Miss Venezuela Stefania Fernandez crowned the Miss Universe 2009 from Dayana Mendoza. 18-year-old Stefania is the sixth Venezuelan to win the crown.

Michael Jackson is Dead (25th June 2009)

Michael Jackson, the King of pop died because of cardiac arrest at the age of 50 at Los Angeles. The only man who neither needs any introduction nor any eulogy died leaving millions of fans grieving. Keeping aside the controversies he stirred in the last few years, Michael Jackson was definitely an extraordinary artist, musician and a performer. Jackson left behind some heart touching songs like 'Earth Song'.

Racial attack in Australia (15th June 2009)

So far there have been 14 attacks encountered by Indian students in Australia. Indian students are continuing their street protest against the racially motivated attacks. The Indian community leaders in Australia have asked the Indian students to stop violent protests in Harris Park in Melbourne. There have also been some stray incidents of Indian students retaliating.

Air France 447 jet Crash (2nd June 2009)

The Air France 447 jet with 228 people on a flight to Paris vanished over the Atlantic Ocean after flying into towering thunderstorms and sending 24 automated messages that the electrical system had failed. Massive operations were taken to locate the, but all 228 passengers seem to have died. The hunt for the black boxes and plane parts still continues. The total bodies recovered were only 50. The bodies found were sent to perform DNA tests to the Legal Medical Institute in Brasilia. The United States of America has also joined in the efforts.

LTTE chief Prabhakaran's body found (18th May 2009)

The Tigers of Tamil Eelam "Velupillai Prabhakaran" has been shot dead and his body has also been found by the Lankan army. His son "Charles Antony" has also been shot dead. Prabhakaran's top aides came out of their last hiding place in a small convoy of van and an ambulance and tried to drive out of the war zone, but were gunned down. The Tiger chief was killed with two others, who are believed to be his closest associates - LTTE intelligence chief Pottu Amman and Sea Tigers' chief Soosoi. The deaths of the top LTTE leaders came a day after Tamil Tigers conceded defeat saying the decades-old battle has reached its "bitter end" and they have decided to "silence" their guns.

Escaped Bali Terror Suspect Is Caught in Malaysia (8th May 2009)

A suspected terrorist leader who embarrassed Singapore last year by disappearing through a bathroom window in a high-security prison has been caught in Malaysia. Mas Selamat bin Kastari, 47, was arrested early last month, after Singapore Police failed to capture him. The Singapore government has described Mr. Mas Selamat as the local leader of the regional Islamist terrorist group Jemaah Islamiyah, which carried out the 2002 bombings in Bali, Indonesia. He was captured in southern Malaysia, just across the Johor Strait from Singapore. An official investigation found that by letting the water run in the bathroom and hanging a pair of pants over a ledge above the door, Mr. Mas Selamat gave himself 11 minutes to make his getaway, even as a guard waited just outside the door. The prisoner squeezed through the window, shinnied down a drainpipe onto a cushion of rolls of toilet paper, climbed a fence and disappeared. He had asked for privacy in a bathroom as he changed.

Obama gets a 'B+ grade' for his presidency (29th April 2009)

Barack Obama celebrated his successful completion of 100 days (called as 'hallmark holiday') as US president. Obama's first 100 days was fighting against global terror, an economic crisis worse than the great depression of the 1930s and a pandemic, swine flu. He has made milestone changes in foreign relations with Cuba and Iraq along with policy shifts towards China and Mexico. To improve economic status, he has provided for 787-billion-dollar stimulus

bill, along with environmental and health care reforms on the launch. Robert Gibbs gave Obama a grade of "B plus," observing that 'there's always room for improvement'. A survey on Obama's leadership showed positive reactions of the people and 63% approving his presidency.

Over 150 people died due to Swine flu in Mexico (29th April 2009)

The death toll has risen to 159 people in Mexico due to Swine flu disease. Out of a total of around 2,500 suspected cases of the virus, more than 1,300 people are reported to be in hospitals, some of them 'seriously' ill. Most of the deaths occurred in Mexico City. Other affected states, such as Aguascalientes and Veracruz have only seen a handful of deaths. The victims include all age groups ranging from children, adults, and middle-aged people

6 killed in murder-suicide bid in US (31st March 2009)

In a shocking incident 6 people, including 3 children, were shot dead and one critically injured reportedly in a murder-suicide bid in Santa Clara, a city in the Silicon Valley. Media reports suggest that an 'Indian passport' was found inside the house where the incident occurred.

The body of suspected shooter was found inside the house. Police also recovered two handguns used in the killings. The killer was a man in his 40s. Mike Sellers, the Santa Clara Police Captain said, "It does appear as though they (the victims) were related."

Titanic museum to open in UK (31st March 2009)

A new museum charting the story of the Titanic could be built in Britain ahead of the 100th anniversary of the ill-fated liner's sinking.

The 28 million pound museum in Southampton, from where the liner set sail in 1912 on her maiden voyage, is set to feature a climb-aboard replica of the doomed ship, which hit an iceberg causing the loss of 1523 lives.

BUSH GETS ATTACKED BY SHOES IN IRAQ

An Iraqi TV reporter threw his shoes at President Bush during a news conference. Muntadhar al-Zaidi, a reporter for the TV channel Al-Baghdadia, faced testing for alcohol and drugs to determine his state of mind, said a government official.

At Sunday's news conference, the journalist whipped off his shoes and hurled them at Bush during the president's unannounced stop in Baghdad. The reporter called his shoe-throwing, a traditional insult in Arab culture, a "farewell kiss" to a "dog" who launched the 2003 invasion of Iraq

"This is the farewell kiss, you dog," the man shouted in Arabic. After the incident Bush apparently said that he was ok and dismissed the incident as an example of a healthy democracy and an example of free speech. **LTTE LOSES MULLAITHIVU**

The Sri Lankan military on Sunday announced the capture of Mullaithivu town, the last major settlement of the LTTE in the only remaining district under its control. With this the Tigers are now confined to Puthukkudiyiruppu and Vishwamadu areas in the same district.

The fall of Mullaithivu came three weeks after the military marched into Kilinochchi — the administrative and political headquarters of the Tigers. After Kilinochchi, the Tigers lost control of their strategic base at Elephant Pass at the mouth of the Jaffna peninsula and the government gained total control of the A 9 highway for the first time since the departure of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) in 1990.

The rapid advance of the military into Mullaithivu town caught the political and diplomatic circles by surprise. The manoeuvre was expected to take time in view of the large number of civilians in the war zone, besides thick jungles and lagoons en route, not to mention the added threat of a possible attack by the Tigers to defend their last citadel.

Mullaithivu town is situated in a narrow stretch of land between Nanthikandal lagoon and the Indian Ocean. It has been under the control of the Tigers since 1996 and was considered their main military base. **ISRAEL ATTACKS GAZA**

Israeli warplanes killed 10 Palestinians on Tuesday in attacks that targeted Hamas government buildings and other symbols of the Islamist group on the fourth day of the fiercest air offensive in Gaza in decades. Israeli missiles flattened five ministerial buildings and a structure belonging to the Islamic University in Gaza City, witnesses said.

The death toll from the attacks on Gaza continues to rise, reaching 345 dead with more than 1,400 injured. Hamas has retaliated against Israel with a deadly barrage of rockets that reached deep into Israel. With this evidence that airstrikes alone have not been able to stop all Hamas rocket launches, Israel is hinting that it will broaden its assault with a ground invasion:

Israel hinted it was ready to broaden its assault on the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip with a ground operation after three days of air raids failed to bring an end to cross-border rocket attacks.

National Current Affairs 2009

Sheikh Hasina chosen for Indira Gandhi Peace Prize (19th Nov 2009) Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been chosen for the prestigious Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development this year for her "outstanding contribution to the promotion of democracy and pluralism". After her re-election in December last year, Hasina embarked on her "Vision 2021", aimed at transforming Bangladesh into a middle-income country by 2021, by eliminating poverty and inequity, the Trust said. The award, which carries a cash prize of Rs. 25 lakh and a citation, would be presented to her at a function to be held at a later date.

India retains 84th position among the world's most corrupt nations (17th Nov 2009)

Transparency International has released their annual corruption index, and has ranked China as 79th and India 84th out of 180 countries. The evaluation of the extent of corruption is based on opinion from country experts – resident and non-residents – and business leaders. The corruption index measures perceived levels of public sector corruption in a country. New Zealand, Denmark, Singapore, Sweden and Switzerland are the top five least corrupt nations.

India second worst terror-hit country, says NGO (14th Nov 2009) India is the second worst terrorism-afflicted country - behind only war-ravaged Iraq - facing eight terror attacks in 2008 alone and losing over 3,500 lives in the last few years. Quoting a recent United States (US) report, city-based NGO "Bombay First", said India follows Iraq in the number of lives lost in terror attacks last year.

K.R. Narayanan Award for the Hindu Chief Editor N. Ram (13th Nov 2009) N. Ram, Editor-in-Chief of Hindu has been chosen for this year's K.R. Narayanan Award for his outstanding contribution to journalism in India. Instituted by the K.R. Narayanan Foundation in memory of the late President, the award is to honor individuals who have excelled in various fields. It carries a statuette, citation and a 'ponnada.'

Madhu Koda discharged, summoned by ED (9th November 2009)

Former Jharkhand Chief Minister Madhu Koda was discharged from a hospital and will be questioned by the Income Tax department in a money laundering case on Nov 10 while the Enforcement Directorate summoned him to appear before Nov 13 who is in the Rs 2,000 crore alleged Hawala and illegal investments case.

India, Sweden to sign MOU on environment (5th November 2009)

India and Sweden are expected to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on environment as Swedish Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeld visits India on Thursday for the 10th India-EU summit. The MoU will cover climate change, clean technology, clean development mechanisms, environmental protection, environmental governance and air-water quality.

Brave Rukhsana appointed as special cop (2nd November 2009)

Rukhsana, the valiant and determined Jammu and Kashmir girl, who took on Lashkar-e-Toiba terrorists who barged into her house in September, has been appointed special police officer (SPO), a temporary job which will fetch her Rs 3,000 a month. Rukhsana is currently in Delhi. Her brother, Aijaz, too has been appointed SPO

Radhakrishnan takes over as new ISRO chief (31st October 2009)

Radhakrishnan, one of the key persons behind India's Chandrayaan-1 mission, on Saturday took over as the Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation. Dr Radhakrishnan, also director of Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, succeeds Dr G Madhavan Nair. Dr K Radhakrishnan is an accomplished technocrat with a distinguished career of more than 38 years in the fields of space technology, applications and space programme management.

Dorjee Khandu became new chief minister of Arunachal Pradesh (25th October 2009)

Dorjee Khandu, who led the Congress to a two-thirds majority in the Arunachal Pradesh Assembly elections, was sworn in as the fifth Chief Minister of the state. All the newly-elected MLAs were present at the oath-taking ceremony. Khandu, a former army intelligence officer rewarded for his exploits during the Bangladesh war, had turned a social activist before joining politics in 1980.

A.R.Rahman wins Ghent Award (23rd October 2009)

Oscar winner musician A. R. Rahman's 'Jai ho' has again won laurels at prestigious World Soundtrack Academy awards in Ghent (Belgium). This song from SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE won "best original song written for film" category at the ninth World Soundtrack Awards announced at Ghent.

Test fires nuclear-capable Prithvi-II missile(12th October 27, 2009)

India successfully test fired the nuclear-capable surface-to-surface Prithvi-II missile twice from a test range in Orissa, officials said. The missiles were fired from the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Chandipur in Balasore district, some 230 km from state capital Bhubaneswar first at 10.28 a.m. and then again five minutes later at 10.33 a.m.

The tests were described as part of a "user trial". Two naval ships tracked and monitored both the missiles hitting the targets accurately. All the radars and other sensors along the east coast monitored the missiles' trajectory parameters. The missiles have a striking range of about 350 km. Prithvi is India's first indigenously built ballistic missile. It is one of five missiles being developed under India's Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP). Two versions of the missiles have already been deployed with the Army and the Air Force. According to defense officials in the national capital, Prithvi missile has the capability to carry 500-kg of warhead.

India can hold 2010 Games: CWG Officials (10th October 2009)

The Commonwealth Games Federation officials have expressed buoyancy over India's capability to host the 2010 event, after completing the second day of inspection.

Visiting shooting range in Tughlaqabad, Jamia Millia complex, the Rugby 7s facility in Delhi University and Siri Fort Complex where the badminton event is scheduled to take place, the delegates were convinced that the country could hold 'great' Games in 2010. In the press release released by the committee, Australia's Don Stockins has been quoted as saying "So far it's good. The block that we visited in the Games Village was good; if all end up like that it will be great. Delhi will be a great host and it is a very pretty city." Jamaican Olympic Association Vice-President Donald Anderson has also expressed confidence in India's facility to host the games next year.

US announce \$100,000 aid for India's flood victims (8th October 2009)

Heavy rain and floods have inundated many parts of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra killing over 200 people and leaving millions homeless. The US announced \$100,000 aid for the victims of recent floods in parts of southern and western India. 'The heart-breaking personal loss, the destruction of homes and property, and the loss of cattle and crops have been devastating,' US ambassador to India Timothy J. Roemer said while announcing the aid.

Dolphin is national aquatic animal (5th October 2009)

Dolphin is now India's national aquatic animal. The decision was taken following a suggestion by Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar at a meeting of the National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA), chaired by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh said the new status for the dolphin would help save the rare freshwater species from disappearing from the country's aqua map.

Major Floods in Andhra and Karnataka (4th October 2009)

Five days of torrential rain have left at least 205 people dead and 750,000 displaced in southern India, authorities said. Floods submerged villages, severed transport and communication links and raised fears of disease spreading in relief camps. Large parts of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka states – which weeks ago were suffering a severe drought – have been inundated. Air force helicopters dropped food and drinking water packages to hundreds of cut-off villages. The flooding worsened after authorities released water from rain-swollen reservoirs to prevent them from bursting their banks.

Air India Strike (29th September 2009)

Air India cancels over 20 flights, pilots agitation continues. With the agitation by Air India Executive pilots entering the fourth day, the airlines cancelled over 20 flights, including 15 from the national capital, and suspended bookings for the next 15 days.

Talks between the management and the striking Executive pilots failed to break the deadlock over the issue of cut in perks. The agitation by the pilots, who are protesting against the cut in the Productivity Linked Incentives (PIL), is likely to intensify as the executive pilots working with the airlines before its merger also joined them.

Chandrayaan-1 Not A Failure, Finds Water on Moon (24th September 2009)

India's first lunar mission Chandrayaan-1 has found evidence of large quantities of water on the lunar surface, before the project was terminated by ISRO. This discovery is credited to the Moon Mineralogy Mapper (developed by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration). NASA's Moon Mineralogy Mapper (M3), an imaging spectrometer, was one of the 11 instruments on board Chandrayaan-I. M3 was aimed at providing the first mineral map of the entire lunar surface. Lunar scientist's debate for possibility of water repositories came to an end. Chandrayaan-1 was India's first unmanned lunar probe which was launched by ISRO on 22 October 2008. After suffering from several technical issues including failure of the star sensors and poor thermal shielding, Chandrayaan stopped sending radio signals on 29 August 2009 shortly after which, the ISRO officially declared the mission over. Chandrayaan operated for 312 days as opposed to the intended two years but the mission achieved 95 per cent of its planned objectives.

Six European satellites launched by India (23th September 2009)

India successfully launched a cluster of six European micro-satellites into low-earth orbit after deploying its 960 kg remote sensing satellite Oceansat-2 in the polar sun-synchronous orbit. Of the six micro-satellites, four are from Germany and one each from Switzerland and Turkey, with a combined weight of 20 kg. The first four tiny spacecraft, named Cubsats, are educational satellites from European universities weighing around 1 kg and developed to perform technology demonstration in space. The other two spacecrafts are named Rubin-9.1

and Rubin-9.2 weighing 8 kg each, are primarily used for the automatic identification system for maritime applications.

Earthquake in North Eastern Region of India (21th September 2009)

An earthquake measuring 6.3 on the Richter scale felt by people in parts of Assam, other north-eastern states of India, West Bengal and neighboring Bhutan Monday afternoon causing damage to various properties in both the countries. The duration of this earthquake was around 5 seconds. The epicenter was plotted in Munggar in Bhutan. Munggar, is located along the India-Bhutan border, 125 km northwest of Guwahati where the abnormal movement of earthquake was observed.

Problems in BJP party (4th September 2009)

The BJP seems to be in the docks after the Lok Sabha defeat. BJP has expelled Jaswant Singh, Sudheendra Kulkarni, Khanduri from the party. Also BJP has decided to break ties with the Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) in Haryana. BJP president Rajnath Singh also asked senior Rajasthan leader Vasundhara Raje to resign as leader of opposition. In the party meet it has been decided that Advani will resign as party opposition leader and will not be prime ministerial candidate for the next election. Seems like a lot of "Manthan" or churning within the party.

Andhra CM YSR died in a chopper crash (3rd September 2009)

The Dynamic Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh is no more. Mr. YS Rajasekhara Reddy was on his way to Chittoor from Hyderabad in a Helicopter. After sometime in flight, the chopper went missing in the dense forest area of Nallamalalla hill range. A massive hunt for the missing aircraft was launched. Three Indian Air Force (IAF) helicopters from Bangalore were involved in finding about the helicopter and the missing YSR. After a day, the missing chopper was found in a mangled state along with five burnt bodies. About 100 people died of shock after hearing the news of YSR's death.

Almost all the state ministers, about 22 MPs and several Congress legislators have pitched for Jaganmohan Reddy, son of Late Y S Rajasekhara Reddy to be the next CM of Andhra Pradesh. The Congress meanwhile is waiting for the euphoria to settle before deciding.

Mumbai TV actress arrested for abusing minor (22th August 2009)

A Mumbai actress has been arrested for allegedly abusing her 10-year-old maid. The TV actress, Urvashi Dhaanorkar who reportedly brought the minor girl to Mumbai in the pretext of adoption and education and kept her captive and tortured her. She had received burns and injuries. The girl told reporters that she was roughed up by the actresses. The case came to light when one of the neighbours found the girl in a bad condition and decided to go to the police. The police who rescued the girl from the Raheja Classic Society in Andheri arrested the actress under the Child Abuse Act.

Indian Navy jet crashes, pilot feared dead (21th August 2009)

An Indian Navy fighter jet crashed into the Arabian Sea and the pilot is presumed dead. The jet, a British-made Sea Harrier, plummeted into the sea 15 kilometers off Goa's coast. The cause of the crash was not immediately known.

Bhindra honored with Rajiv Gandhi Award (20th August 2009)

India's first Olympics gold medalist Abhinav Bindra, Bollywood actors Shahid Kapoor and Katrina Kaif and other young achievers were felicitated with prestigious Rajiv Gandhi Award.

Businessman buys Gandhi's home, plans for museum (30th July 2009)

Mahatma Gandhi's Johannesburg house, has been bought by a Bandra businessman, Pradeep Bhavnani for about Rs 2.25 crore on July 30. Mahatma Gandhi lived in this house from 1908 for three years while he fought against the racial discrimination in South Africa as a lawyer. The house that was designed by artist Hermann Kallenbach is called 'The Kraal'.

Pradeep Bhavnani, who is senior BJP leader L K Advani's nephew and a self-professed Gandhian is planning to turn it into a museum. After buying the house, he intends to buy 34 souvenirs and photographs from the Aditya Birla Group to install them in the museum. After inaugurating the museum on Oct 2, Gandhi's birth anniversary, it will be handed over to Government of India on the same day.

Rajmata Gayatri Devi laid to rest (28th July 2009)

Rajmata Gayatri Devi passed away after a prolonged illness at the age of 90. The people of the city gave their daily routines a miss to catch a glimpse of the Queen's last journey. They grieved the fact that the only person who really cared about their grievances had passed away. The Queen was cremated with State Honours and the event was graced by the presence of the Rajasthan Governor Shailendra Kumar Singh and Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, along with several members of the State Cabinet.

Class X girl selected for NASA training (26th July 2009)

Palak Agarwal, is one of the two school girls selected from India for NASA training in space shuttle designing. She is a student of 10th class in a school in remote Karnal dist. She was selected under a student programme under which a few students across the globe get an opportunity to get training in NASA.

PM launches India's first nuclear submarine (26th July 2009)

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's wife Gursharan Kaur launched the country's first nuclear powered attack submarine, INS Arihant in Vishakhapatnam. The INS Arihant will be commissioned in the Indian Navy after extensive outfitting and sea trials. It is the first of three such vessels to be built in the country. Its length is 112-metre-long. India has achieved a 'historic milestone in the country's defence preparedness' with the launch of the submarine.

Bill Gates to receive Indira Gandhi Peace Prize (23th July 2009)

Bill Gates has received the Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development on behalf of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. In 2003, the foundation launched Avahan, a 10-year initiative to support India's efforts to reduce the spread of HIV.

India's first sea bridge (30th June 2009)

The Congress president Sonia Gandhi inaugurated the Bandra Worli sea link in Mumbai. The 5.6 kilometers long cable-stayed bridge has been designed to allow for speedy road travel between Bandra and Worli. It costs Rs. 50 to take a trip on the link, and will cost Rs. 75 for a round trip. It would be nothing compared to the Rs 100 crore per year that the link will save in the vehicle operating cost alone. The link is equipped for traffic monitoring, emergency support and an automated toll system. The construction of the sea link would save people's time.

Union minister threatens HC judge to grant bail (30th June 2009)

R Regupathi, a Madras High Court judge has threatened to write to the central government and the prime minister about a Union Minister seeking to influence him to release a medical student petitioner and his father, a doctor on anticipatory bail. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has booked both of them in connection with a forged mark sheet case.

Government to make class X examination optional (25th June 2009)

Kapil Sibal, Union Minister for Human Resource Development (HRD) has suggested that the government may make class X examination optional for students. He said that the examination system would be reformed in accordance with the National Curriculum framework-2005. This will permit students to continue in the same school. Schools may take an internal assessment test instead. This he says, will be done in 100 days.

Air Force AN-32 aircraft Crash (10th June 2009)

Indian Air Force, Army and paramilitary forces made a search for missing Air Force AN-32 aircraft which crashed over Arunachal Pradesh. The IAF began aerial reconnaissance to trace the transport aircraft while Army and paramilitary forces too have been pressed into the search operation. There were 13 people on board including six IAF officers and seven Army personnel and all of them are feared dead. The aircraft had taken off from Machuka in Arunachal Pradesh on a supply sortie and was on its way to Mohanbari in Assam when it went off radar due to bad weather and crashed. The last radio contact with the missing aircraft was 35 miles from Machuka. Top-level sources in IAF say that the flying crew of the AN-32 was highly experienced and bad weather is suspected to be the reason for the crash.

Family donates their dead son's organs to 7 people (9th June 2009)

A family in Andhra Pradesh mourning the loss of their 19-year-old member Ganpati in a road accident has ensured his legacy by donating his organs and transforming the lives of seven people. Johnson, a six-year-old boy, was suffering from the dangerous blue baby syndrome but now a critical heart surgery has ensured he would live healthily. It's not just Johnson but six other people, too, who have received vital organs including the kidneys and liver donated from Ganpati's body. Ganpati had met with an accident and was brought to hospital brain dead. Doctors counselled with the family. Though it wasn't an easy decision for Ganpati's family to donate his organs, Ganpati's elder brother Pradeep went ahead, believing that his brother will live on by this deed. Ganpati's family is unaware of the identities of any of the seven people who have benefited from his organs. But they do find solace in the thought that Ganpati continues to live on.

Dream Houses / Mumbai Flats on rent for Rs. 800/- (3rd June 2009)

The common people of Mumbai may now dream of affordable homes. An ambitious low-cost housing programme promises to provide flats on rent for as less as Rs 800. The Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) announced that they are going to construct 133,000 flats near the city. The MMRDA, in collaboration with real estate giant HDIL, will construct the flats on 525 acres in Virar suburb in Thane district north of Mumbai. The project aims to house around 2 lakh people in the flats. The rent for the flats will range from Rs 800 to Rs 1,500 per month. Each flat measures 160 sq ft and will be given on lease for a period of five years. The Metropolitan Commissioner told that 90,000 (flats) are made for free-sale components and 43,000 are purely rental housing tenements of 160 sq feet each. Only people with a minimum monthly income of Rs 5,000 will be eligible to apply for houses. Applicants should preferably be residing in Maharashtra but it isn't a compulsory requirement. The MMRDA also announced eight other low-cost housing projects in the city to house 5 lakh families in the next few years. The authority will earn Rs 5,000 crore in rent and builders will benefit as they would be allowed to construct taller buildings with more flats.

Oz Racial attack: AP student battling for life (28th May 2009)

Shravan Kumar, a 25-year-old student was attacked by teenagers in Australia is battling for life after he and three of his friends from Andhra Pradesh were attacked on May 26. Doctors are not 'very optimistic' about chances of his recovery. Shravan was critically injured after one of the boys attacked him with a screwdriver. The other three identified as A Krian, Subhash and Sandip escaped with minor injuries. The attackers abused the Indian students and asked them to leave Australia. While Shravan is still in hospital, the other three moved out of the house. This is the second attack on Indian students in a week. Meanwhile there are reports that the house where Shravan and his friends were staying is apparently robbed by some miscreants.

Congress' victory, credit to Sonia's inner voice (18th May 2009)

The amazing victory of the Congress Party and the pathetic defeat of the BJP in the Lok Sabha polls 2009 has come as a surprise. Nobody expected that the Congress will bag over 200 seats on its own and cross 260 with its allies. All political Pundits and Sephologists were predicting highly fractured result on 16 May 2009, the day of counting. But May 16 became a 'black Saturday' for the Bharatiya Janata Party with an astonishing victory for the Congress.

UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi once again made it clear that she is not in race for the PM post of India. Ms Gandhi had made her point clear that Manmohan Singh is the Prime Ministerial candidate of Congress. This cleared a long standing doubt in the minds of many Indians who are not happy to see a foreigner as India's Prime Minister. This worked and converted into votes.

UPSC results: Women on top, 791 succeeded (5th May 2009)

The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) exam results for the year 2008 were announced. A higher number of women have topped these numbers. The top three ranks have been grabbed by women for the first time. The Rank 1 holder, 30-year-old Shubhra Saxena from Ghaziabad has become the talk of the country. She told the media that the risk of quitting her job to serve the rural masses was worth it.

River Ganga still reels under Pollution (4th May 2009)

The river Ganga remains highly polluted even after being declared the 'National River' by the Central Government. Filled with chemical wastes, sewage and even the remains of human and animal corpses, it poses major health risks to around 400 million people living by its side and all others who benefit from it. The Ganga also suffers from another major problem called silting which results into chocking of its flow.

People believe that constructing dams on the Ganga could be the cause of low water level in the river. The residents say no steps have been taken to improve the condition of the Ganga. The condition of the Ganga is deteriorating by the day. There is more sand in it. Though it is declared a 'National River', no efforts are being made to clean it. If water is released from the dam, then only the water level will increase in the river. Efforts have always made to clean up the Ganga since a long time but none have been proved successful.

Satyam bidding Completed: Tech Mahindra wins bidding (13th April 2009)

In the Satyam Computers bidding process, three huge companies namely Tech Mahindra, Engineering L&T, and Wilbur Ross had participated. Tech Mahindra has won in the Satyam bid by paying Rs. 1757 crore and now has 31% stake in Satyam. Tech Mahindra will pay Rs 58 per share; L&T had offered to pay of 49 Rs per share and so lost out.

Girl dies due to asthma in Delhi School (22nd April 2009)

Aakriti Bhatia of class 12 student of the Modern School in Vasant Vihar of Delhi died due to an asthma attack. Her parent's alleged negligence by the school resulting in her death. It seems while taking Aakriti to hospital the school authorities removed the oxygen provided to her, also instead of calling an ambulance they waited for Akriti's father's car to take her to hospital, which could have lead to the death. However the school claims that they did everything possible to save her. Other parents and people are demonstrating against the school.

Parents protest fee hike in schools (April 2009)

Hundreds of parents opposing the fee hike in schools protested at various places in Delhi and demanded its immediate rollback. The parents association of Guru Nanak Public School staged a demonstration and criticized the school authorities over the fee hike. All India Parents Association (AIPA) also extended its support to the demonstration. The children also shouted slogans from the classrooms. The matter of fee hike has been challenged in the Delhi High Court. The court would hear the case on April 29.

Tata Nano The People's Car Launched (23rd March 2009)

People's car 'Nano' launched amidst much waiting and expectation.

Tata Motor's 'Nano' was commercially launched in Mumbai on 23/3/09 promising to meet the expectations of people under some circumstances which is likely to bring about a change in the auto market in the nation

Modi minister held in post-Godhra riot case (March 2009)

As prime ministerial candidate L K Advani and chief minister Narendra Modi on 27/3/09 launched the BJP's campaign at the Kankaria lakefront, a few kilometres away, in Gandhinagar, Maya Kodnani, a minister in Modi's cabinet, was arrested in one of the post-Godhra riot cases of 2002.

Minister of state for women and child welfare and higher education, Kodnani was arrested after the Gujarat high court cancelled her anticipatory bail on Friday in the Naroda Patia and Naroda Gam riots case. A trained gynaecologist, she resigned from the ministry and surrendered before the SC-appointed Special Investigation Team in Gandhinagar with VHP leader Jaideep Patel.

Varun guilty; EC asks BJP not to field Varun (March 2009)

The Election Commission has found the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader, Varun Gandhi guilty of making remarks against Muslims in an election rally in Pilibhit and in the wake, violating polls laws. The EC has also declared that the CD was not doctored and said that it will initiate criminal proceedings against him.

The EC has also asked BJP not to give a ticket to contest polls in Pilibhit in Uttar Pradesh.

"The commission considered the speeches as a grave violation of the model code of conduct, apart from amounting to promoting feelings of enmity and hatred between different classes on the ground of religion, outraging the religious feeling of a particular community, and promoting hatred and ill-will between two classes of citizens and provoking a section of the citizens to indulge in violence."

"Any sponsorship of his candidature by the BJP, or any other political party at this election, would be perceived as endorsing his unpardonable acts of inciting violence and creating feelings of enmity and hatred between different classes of citizens of India, destroying the social, democratic and plural fabric of the country," it said. **SATYAM FRAUD**

The fraud at Satyam may well turn out to be the biggest of all scams unearthed from corporate India. Through multiple routes involving a large number of related companies and myriad transactions, the promoters of Satyam Computer Services, led by the company's Chairman Ramalinga Raju, are alleged to have siphoned out a huge quantity of money from the firm. To cover that up, the accounts were manipulated and documents were forged to declare nonexistent cash reserves and understate liabilities.

The money that was taken out may have been used, among other things, to acquire large quantities of land in what seems to be a set of speculative real estate ventures that could enrich the family. The Maytas companies that had titles that spelt Satyam in reverse were important conduits in this process, but there were clearly many more. According to reports, the Registrar of Companies has found that "Satyam's annual report reveals several transactions with subsidiaries and other group companies by way of investments, purchase of assets and other receivables" that point to the concealed transfer of funds out of the company.

Shockingly, one of the allegations made by the Crime Investigation Department (CID) of Andhra Pradesh is that the company had only 40,000 employees on its rolls as compared with the 53,000 claimed by it and the remaining 13,000 were mere fake salary accounts through which as much as Rs. 20 crore a month were taken out of the company over a period of five years. If true, this involves descent to a level of manipulation and fraud that could spell the end for Satyam. **MANGALORE PUB ATTACK**

Activists of a self-styled pro-Hindu moral brigade called Sri Rama Sene barged into a pub in the coastal city of Mangalore in January and bashed up a few young girls for 'violating traditional Indian norms'.

At least two girls were punched and their hair pulled by the activists 4 p.m. Saturday at the pub Amnesia - The Lounge in Mangalore, about 350 km from Bangalore. The young men

accompanying the girls to the pub on the busy Balmatta Road were also assaulted when they tried to protect their friends.

Following this shocking incident, at least 10 of the activists have been arrested by Mangalore police. From the accounts given by the eyewitnesses, who did not want to be identified, the girls were the target of attack. About 40 men forcibly entered the pub claiming unethical activities were on inside and pushed their way inside. They began assaulting the young men and women who ran for safety. At least two of the girls started screaming for help and managed to flee from the attackers.

The ugly incident has a murky dimension also with leaders of Sri Rama Sene and Bajrang Dal, another pro-Hindu organisation fighting to take credit for the attack in the name of punishing those going against 'traditional Indian norms'. **RAILWAY BUDGET 2009**

Railway Minister Lalu Prasad Yadav Friday presented his sixth rail budget in February. He is the first Railway Minister to introduce the low fare air-conditioned trains known as "Garib Rath". Fifteen such trains are already running and five more are expected to start in the near future.

The Railways minister cut rail fares across ticket categories by 2% and announced plans for 43 new trains on Friday.

The fare cut will bring down rail fares on air-conditioned travel the most, mounting further pressure on low-cost airlines, while fares for second-class, second-class sleeper, and general compartments will also go down for tickets worth more than Rs 50 per passenger. Suburban commuters who use express or mail trains will also see their ticket costs get Rs 1 cheaper.

The fare cuts, announced in the government's interim railway budget for 2009-10, are expected to set the Indian Railways back by only around Rs 700 crore but will make little difference to its cash pile of Rs 90,000 crore. In any case, Mr Prasad said a cut in fares would not necessarily lead to a loss of revenues. The Railways has cut fares four times in as many years, lowering AC first class and AC two-tier rates by 28% and 20%, respectively and taking the competition straight to the doors of the low-cost airline sector.

The Minister also proposed starting 43 new trains during 2009-10, and said the Railways would extend services of 14 existing trains. The frequency of various Rajdhani and other express trains will also be increased taking into account the rise in the number of passengers.

DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST VALENTINE'S DAY

Activists of the Hindu fundamentalist political party Shiv Sena on Wednesday staged a token protest at Central Delhi's Jantar Mantar against St. Valentine's Day celebrations in the capital. The activists said that they viewed celebrations of St. Valentine's Day contrary to Indian ethos and a proof of the growing influence of western culture on rest of the world. Besides, the protestors said that the St. Valentine's Day was corrupting the Indian youth, as most of the youth on this day take advantage of the occasion and indulge in immoral behaviour at public places.

Such protest were undertaken at quite a few places in India like Bhopal, Bangalore etc. In Uttar Pradesh, Right-wing Hindu activists beat up young couples during Valentine's Day protests across the country. Shiv Sena said it was holding protests across the country against Valentine's Day celebrations which were against Indian culture and had a "corrupting influence" on Indian youth.

Protests by Hindu and Muslim groups were reported from the national capital Delhi, central Bhopal and southern Hyderabad cities. Fifty activists of the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party's student wing attacked a shop selling Valentine's Day gifts in Hyderabad and set fire to the greeting cards. They carried saffron flags and chanted slogans such as "Save Culture" and "Death to Valentine's Day." Muslim groups also campaigned against Valentine's Day and displayed posters at public places asking youth to refrain from celebrating the day.

In central Bhopal city, another Hindu right-wing group the Bajrang Dal held protests threatening to marry off lovers found "misbehaving" in public places. Other Hindu religious organizations held protests in the western Gujarat state distributing handbills to college students asking them to shun western culture.

Valentine's Day has become popular in India over the past decade with shops selling romantic cards, heart-shaped balloons, cuddly toys and other gifts. But the day has also seen regular protests by Hindu and Muslim hardliners who claim the celebrations threaten Indian culture and social norms.

Sports 2009

Maradona fined and banned for foul-mouthed tirade (16th Nov 2009) FIFA's disciplinary body has dished out a two month ban to Argentina's coach Diego Maradona, punishing him for the tirade after this team grabbed a spot in the 2010 finals in South Africa. Apart from the ban effective from Nov 15 to Jan 15, 2010, the body also slapped a fine of 25,000 Swiss francs (\$24,600) on the football legend.

Novak Djokovic wins Paris Masters (15th Nov 2009) Third-seeded Novak Djokovic scrambled to a 6-2, 5-7, 7-6 (3) victory over local favorite Gael Monfils to win the Paris Masters for the first time. The victory gave Djokovic back-to-back ATP Tour titles after his win over top-ranked Roger Federer in the Swiss Indoors final. The third-ranked Djokovic also beat World No. 2 Rafael Nadal in the semifinals in Paris and will be a strong favorite when he'll try to defend his title at the eight-man ATP World Tour Finals from Nov. 22-29 in London.

Bhupati and Paes exit Paris Masters in 2nd round (13th Nov 2009) Leander Paes and Mahesh Bhupathi ended their campaign early in Paris Masters by making an exit in the second round with their partners. Fourth seeded Paes and Lukas Dlouhy of Czech Republic were beaten 7-6(5), 4-6, 5-10 by American Travis Parrott and Australian Jordan Kerr.

Golden whistle for Indian Hockey umpire (10th Nov 2009) Satinder Kumar has become the first Indian umpire to get the golden whistle from the International Hockey Federation (FIH) for officiating in 100 matches. Satinder is the 29th international umpire to get the honor, Hockey India said in a statement. Satinder umpired in his 100th match at the ongoing World Cup Qualifiers in Invercargill, New Zealand yesterday.

American swimmer Peter Marshall beats own 50 backstroke world record at short-course meet (11th Nov 2009)

Peter Marshall of the United States has broken his own world record in the men's 50-meter backstroke at a short-course World Cup meet. Marshall won the race in 22.73 seconds, beating his previous record of 22.75 set in October in Durban, South Africa. It was the sixth world record set at the meet in Stockholm. Earlier American teammate Jessica Hardy broke her own world record in the women's 50 breaststroke, finishing in 28.96.

Australia win series against India (11th Nov 2009)

Australia won the One-day International series against India 4-2 after the seventh and inconsequential final match at the DY Patil Stadium in Mumbai was washed out due to cyclonic storm that hit the western coast. The possibility of the match being played was remote due to heavy downpour in the city.

Murray beats Youzhny to win Valencia Open tennis (8th Nov 2009)

Andy Murray won his sixth title of the season in his first tournament back from a wrist injury, beating Mikhail Youzhny of Russia 6-3, 6-2 in the Valencia Open final. Murray won 26 of 29 first-serve points as he improved his indoor record to 12-0 this season. Having saved two of three break points in the first set, Murray jumped out to a 4-0 lead in the second by dictating play from the baseline. He closed out the victory with an ace.

Pankaj Advani wins bronze in Asian Indoor Games (7th Nov 2009)

Pankaj Advani capped his Asian Indoor Games campaign by winning a bronze medal in the English Billiards singles' category. Advani blanked Myanmar's Kyaw 3-0 in the third place play off.

Indoor Asian Games: India win 2 gold on final day, end at 7th place (7th Nov 2009)

India claimed four medals, including 2 gold, on the final day of the competition to end the third Asian Indoor Games on a high. India ended the continental event on seventh position with 40 medals- six gold, nine silver and 25 bronze. M.C Mary Kom and Kavita Goyat won gold for India in the Asian Indoor Games on Wednesday. The other Indians in the final, Sarita Devi and N. Usha lost their respective bouts and had to contend with silver medals.

Schiavone wins women's Kremlin Cup final (26th October 2009)

Francesca Schiavone trounced Olga Govortsova 6-3, 6-0 Sunday to capture the women's final at the Kremlin Cup tennis tournament in Moscow. The Italian, the event's eighth seed, lost just 11 points the entire match, capping a week of avoiding the losses suffered by higher seeds in her second straight final.

Davydenko beats Nadal to win Shanghai Masters (20th October 2009)

Shanghai Nikolay Davydenko upset top-seeded Rafael Nadal 7-6 (3), 6-3 on Sunday to win the Shanghai Masters for his fourth title of the year. The sixth-seeded Davydenko broke decisively in the sixth game of the second set to collect his 18th career title. His flat ground strokes and angled winners denied the Spaniard a sixth title for this year and his first since the Rome Masters in May. Nadal had reached the semifinals at Beijing last week on his return to the tour. The winner of six Grand Slam tournament titles also was sidelined after the French Open for two months with tendinitis in both knees.

Australia wins Champions Trophy 2009 (6th October 2009)

Australia claimed their second successive Champions Trophy title in beating New Zealand by six wickets in the final at Super Sport Park in Centurion, South Africa. Australia had a huge fight on their hands at 2-6 against some inspired bowling, but Shane Watson again kept a cool head with his second successive unbeaten century to steer Australia (4-206) side past New Zealand's 9-200.

India wins Compaq Cup 2009 (14th September 2009)

India wins the Compaq Cup tri-series after defeating Sri Lanka in a nail biting encounter. Chasing a mammoth total, Sri Lankan showed brave face and reduced the defeat margin. After showing good batting performance, Indian was poor at fielding and bowling. They dropped couple of easy catches and missed run out chances. Finally managed to win by 46 runs.

Clijsters Wins over Serena Williams in U.S Open (13th September 2009)

On match point in the U.S. Open semifinals, defending champion Williams was penalized a point for unsportsmanlike conduct — a bizarre, ugly finish that gave a 6-4, 7-5 upset victory to Kim Clijsters. The match featured plenty of powerful ground strokes and lengthy exchanges.

England Win the Ashes Series 2009 (23th August 2009)

England has regained the Ashes. Australia's defiance ended with England completing a 197 run victory to spark loud scenes of celebration and jubilation at The Oval. Mike Hussey scored a dogged 121 as Australia lived up to their promise of having a "crack" at their history making target of 546 to win. But in the end they ran out of batsmen and England cut through the tension in south London to regain the urn surrendered in the whirl of an Ashes whitewash two years ago.

Sania Mirza clinches Lexington Challenger title (27th July 2009)

Sania Mirza defeated top-seed Frenchwoman Julie Coin 7-6 (7/5), 6-4 to lift the International Tennis Federation (ITF) Lexington Challenger title. With this win, she climbed up three places in the latest WTA singles rankings. She stands in the 80th place now. After the 2003 tournament, this was only the second Challenger title for her.

Roger Federer and wife are proud parents of twins (24th July 2009)

Federer's wife, Mirka gave birth to twin girls Myla Rose and Charlene Riva. The children are healthy along with their mother.

Sania & Sohrab exchange rings amid tight security (10th July 2009)

The Tennis star Sania Mirza exchanged rings with her childhood friend, Sohrab Mirza. The 22-year-old Hyderabad girl wore the ring that signified her engagement with 23 year old MBA Student Sohrab Mirza. The ceremony was graced by biggies like badminton player P Gopichand, Union Minister of State for Human Resource D Purandareswari, her husband and legislator D Venkateshwara Rao, Telugu film actor Vishnu and industrialist G V K Reddy. There was a tight security provided for the event nearly 50 policemen surrounded the Taj hotel.

Federer Wins a record 15th Grand Slam Title (5th July 2009)

Roger Federer, the world no 1, has won the Wimbledon title in the men's single event for the sixth time and crossed the record of 14 Grand Slam titles set by Pete Sampras. Federer defeated Andy Roddick in one of the most interesting finals in the Wimbledon in London. The five setter final was won by Federer 5-7, 7-6(6), 7-6(5), 3-6 and 16-14.

Sushil Kumar wins gold medal in wrestling (28th June 2009)

Sushil Kumar won the gold medal in style, after emerging the champion in the 66 kg freestyle category. India won two gold, one silver and two bronze medals, accounting for a total of five medals. Rahul Balasaheb secured the gold medal in the 55 kg freestyle category. In 120 Kg freestyle category, Rajiv Tomar secured the silver medal, Ravinder Singh and Ramesh Kumar won the bronze in the 60 kg Greco Roman in 74 kg freestyle categories respectively.

Pakistan wins Twenty20 World Cup (22nd June 2009)

The Pakistan Team had scored a sensational victory against Sri Lanka and won the T20 World cup. Pakistan achieved a 139-run target for the loss of two wickets with eight balls to spare. This win is the first major trophy since 1992, when Imran Khan led them to victory in the 50-over World Cup in Australia. As Pakistan scored the winning run with Shahid Afridi, people danced with joy, fired up crackers and celebrated by distributing sweets at Lahore.

India knocked out of World T20 (15th June 2009)

Defending champion India was knocked out of the World Twenty20 title race after a three-run defeat at the hands of an inspired England in the Super Eight match. Chasing a modest victory target of 154, India's batting order crumbled when it mattered most and the defending champions could manage only 150 for five.

Federer won French Open (7th June 2009)

Roger Federer has won the French Open title by defeating Robin Soderling. The scores were 6-1, 7-6 (1), 6-4. The 14th major title won by Federer breaks the Pete Sampras record. He has now become the sixth man to win all four Grand Slam championships. Federer won his 14th Grand Slam championship at the age of 27. He will now try for the 15th Grand Slam title beginning in two weeks at Wimbledon, which he has won five times already. He has also won the US Open for the past five years, and he has three Australian Open titles with him.

Anand wins Chess Oscar for sixth time (8th May 2009)

The World Champion Viswanathan Anand continued to dominate supreme bagging the Chess Oscar for the sixth time and becoming the first non-Russian to do so. He received the award

from International Chess Federation (FIDE) President Kirsan Ilyumzhinov being contested between teams of Azerbaijan and FIDE World, in Baku. The Indian ace has earlier won the honour in 1997, 1998, 2003, 2004 and 2007 while Russia's Garry Kasparov has claimed it 11 times and Bobby Fischer of America has taken it home thrice. The Chess Oscar is awarded by Russian chess magazine '64 - Chess Review' on the basis of a poll carried out among chess journalists and experts. The Oscar comes in the form of a statuette also called the "Fascinated Wanderer".

Brasa appointed Indian men's hockey coach (1st May 2009)

Spain's master coach Jose Brasa has been appointed as the new chief coach of the Indian men's hockey team. Pravir Krishna, the Joint Secretary of Union Ministry of Sports said "Brasa will soon join the Indian men's hockey team as the chief coach". He also informed that Brasa was handed a two-year contract, but didn't rule out the chances of his agreement being extended till the 2012 London Olympics. The Spaniard put forth a list of demands, including a free hand in running the team, the need for technology and a good physiotherapist, and a support staff of 14 people, including two from Spain. The Sports Ministry accepted his demands. The official also informed that Brasa would be coming to India early next week to formally take charge of his duties.

BCCI nominates Gambhir, Jhulan for Arjuna award (30th April 2009)

The Board of Control for Cricket in India has recommended batman Gautam Gambhir and women's team captain Jhulan Goswami for the esteemed sports award, the Arjuna Award. Gambhir, opener has scored 1,579 test runs at an average of 75.19, and 1,494 runs at 46.38 in ODIs. Jhulan won the ICC Women Cricketer of the Year Award in 2007.

Book on Tendulkar released (24th April 2009)

A book, titled 'If Cricket Is a Religion, Sachin is God' was released on Sachin's 36th birthday. The authors of the book are Vijay Santhanam and Shyam Balasubramaniam who are graduates of IIM (Ahmedabad). They believe that Tendulkar is one of the greatest sportspersons of our times and surely the finest cricketer of our times. The most remarkable thing about Tendulkar is the way he has handled himself and his fame right from his early teens, they feel.

India seals historic win in NZ after 41yrs (7th April 2009)

Though rain stopped India from winning the third and final test against New Zealand at Basin Reserve in Wellington, it sealed the historic 1-0 series victory on Apr 7 after 41 years. The last time India won a series in New Zealand was under the captaincy of Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi in 1967-68. India had won the first Test in Hamilton by 10 wickets and drew the second Test in Napier.

India win Hamilton Test, a win in NZ after 33 years (21st March 2009)

Dominant India defeated New Zealand by 10 wickets in the 1st Test to take 1-0 lead. This is India's first Test win in New Zealand since 1976.

India wrapped up New Zealand's second innings on 279 with the hosts giving a 38-run lead in the 1st Test. Harbhajan Singh took six wickets for his side.

India thrash New Zealand to seal ODI series (Feb 2009)

India won the One day series against New Zealand soil at first time.

Science and Technology 2009

NASA signs agreement with ISRO for use of Indian satellite oceansat-2 (19th Nov 2009)

US space agency NASA has signed an agreement with ISRO to use data from Indian satellite Oceansat-2, for various American agencies for research activities, including weather forecasting. Launched on September 23, 2009 using the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle from

Sriharikota, Oceansat-2 is designed to provide service continuity for operational users of the Ocean Colour Monitor (OCM) instrument on Oceansat-1.

Scientists Create Bacteria that Light Up Around Landmines (16th Nov 2009) A stunning 87 countries around the world are still littered with undetonated landmines, and their impact is devastating. Thousands of people are killed or injured by mines every year, and they pose a grave threat to ecosystems and wildlife. But an unexpected solution may be on the way-- scientists have developed a special kind of bacteria that actually begins to glow in the presence of landmines. Scientists produced the bacteria using a new technique called BioBrick, which manipulates packages of DNA. The bacteria are then mixed into a colorless solution, which forms green patches when sprayed onto ground where mines are buried. The bacterial stew can also be dropped via airplane in extremely sensitive areas. Then, only a few hours after it's sprayed or dropped, the bacteria begins to glow green if it's next to an undetonated explosive. This, of course, would be an invaluable asset in the ongoing quest to rid nations like Somalia, Bosnia, and Cambodia of their atrocious, deadly minefields. Scientists are especially optimistic about the bacteria because the solution is cheap and easy to mass produce.

"Significant" Moon Water Released by NASA Crashes (13th Nov 2009) In October, NASA crashed a two-ton rocket and the SUV-size LCROSS (Lunar Crater Observation and Sensing Satellite) into the permanently shadowed crater Cabeus on the moon's South Pole. The crashes were part of an effort to kick up evidence of moon water. The LCROSS team took the known near-infrared light signature of water and compared it to the impact spectra LCROSS near-infrared recorded after the probe had sent its spent rocket crashing into the moon. They have good fits with each other. Additional support for moon water came from LCROSS's ultraviolet spectrometer, which detected energy signatures associated with hydroxyl, a byproduct of the breakup of water by sunlight.

New ocean forming in African desert (5th Nov 2009)

Geologists have confirmed that the African continent is being torn in two, forming a new ocean. An international collaboration has shown that a 35 mile long rift in the Afar region of the Ethiopian desert, which opened in 2005, is likely to be the beginning of a new sea. The recent study, published in the journal Geophysical Research Letters, brings together seismic data from the formation of the rift, showing that it is driven by similar processes to those at the bottom of oceans.

Snow on Mt. Kilimanjaro to melt in twenty years (3rd Nov 2009)

Scientists at the Ohio University predicted that the ice sheets of Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa's tallest mountain peak, will melt in the next twenty years due to global warming. The ice that was present in 1912 gradually decreased by 85% by 2000, and by 2007 another 26% of the amount in 2000. This was the first time that the volume of the ice in Kilimanjaro was measured. The tests were conducted by Lonnie Thompson, a professor at Ohio University.

Scientists report discovery of 32 new exoplanets (20th Oct 2009)

With help from the High Accuracy Radial velocity Planet Searcher (HARPS), scientists have reported the discovery of 32 new exoplanets. The latest batch of exoplanets announced comprises not less than 32 new discoveries. Including these new results, data from HARPS have led to the discovery of more than 75 exoplanets in 30 different planetary systems.

Nobel Prize in Chemistry to India-born scientist (October 7 2009)

Three Americans won 2009 Nobel Prize and one among them is India-born. They are Venkatraman Ramakrishnan, Thomas Steitz and Ada Yonath. Ramakrishnan is India-born American and Ada Yonath is Israeli. They were awarded with Nobel Prize in chemistry for mapping ribosomes. It is the protein-producing factories within body cells, at the atomic level.

NASA telescope discovers giant ring around Saturn (October 7 2009)

The Spitzer Space Telescope has discovered the biggest but never-before-seen ring around the planet Saturn, NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory announced. The thin array of ice and dust particles lies at the far reaches of the Saturnian system and its orbit is tilted 27 degrees from the planet's main ring plane, the laboratory said. Although the ring dust is very cold — minus 316 degrees Fahrenheit — it shines with thermal radiation.

13-year-old Indian to address UN climate change summit (September 21 2009)

A 13-year-old Indian girl from Lucknow, Yugratna Srivastava has won the honour to address US President Barack Obama, President Hu Jintao of China and other world leaders on behalf of the world's three billion youth and children. The UN summit that Yugratna would address is part of the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon's campaign to bring about a fair and ratifiable green house gas reduction agreement at this year's Climate Conference in Copenhagen, Denmark. "World leaders must recognise the energy and potential which lies in children and youth. This age group is just like flowing rivers and they make their own way in the direction in which they march," said Yugratna, a lively, committed and very passionate teenager.

Largest ever telescope launched from French Guiana (May 15 2009)

Ariane 5 rocket, the world's largest telescope was launched on May 15 from the Kourou spaceport in French Guiana to investigate the origins of the universe. The Herschel telescope was developed by the European Space Agency (ESA) at a cost of 1.1 billion euros (\$1.49 billion). The main objective of the telescope is to determine how the stars and galaxies are formed in the universe. The Physicist Albrecht Poglitsch, of the Max Planck Institute for Extraterrestrial Physics, worked on the development of Herschel's instruments. The stars are comprised of gas and dust, a mix that makes it impossible to see into the star itself with light. Herschel's strength is to enable a look into the gas-dust clouds. The primary mirror of the Herschel telescope is 3.5 meters in diameter, more than four times larger than those of previous infrared space telescopes and almost one and a half times larger than the Hubble space telescope. Herschel will tap into previously unexplored wavelengths and examine phenomena that had been out of reach for other observatories. The telescope will begin to carry out its three-and-a-half-year mission in about a month.

First face transplant patient in US shows face (6th May 2009)

Five years ago, Connie Culp, 46-year-old woman in a shotgun blast left a ghastly hole in the middle of her face. Five months ago, she received a new face from a dead woman. She stepped forward to show off the results of the nation's first face transplant, and her new look was a far cry from the puckered, noseless sight that made children run away in horror. Culp's expressions are still a bit wooden, but she can talk, smile, smell and taste her food again. Her speech is at times a little tough to understand. Her face is bloated and squarish, and her skin droops in big folds that doctors plan to pare away as her circulation improves and her nerves grow, animating her new muscles.

UK scientists to develop Swine Flu vaccine (4th May 2009)

As the world is getting ready to fight against Swine Flu (H1N1 virus), researchers from all over the world have stepped up to build a vaccine to fight the scary disease. A team from National Institute for Biological Standards and Control (NIBSC) in Hertfordshire had started their work for developing a vaccine against the H1N1 virus. The researchers aim to drill a hole in hen's egg, considered for growing up flu viruses. The process involves injecting a small amount of virus into each egg. The scientists are using two different techniques for the process.

The first one is 'reverse genetics', where scientists take the H and the N surface proteins from the H1N1 virus and mix them with a laboratory virus known as PR8. This leads to a creation of a harmless hybrid virus, which can be used for the vaccine.

The second technique involves injecting both the H1N1 and PR8 viruses into eggs and allowing the hybrid strain to be created through a natural re-assortment of their genes. The vaccine will work by dodging the immune system into it has been infected with the H1N1 swine

flu virus so that it creates antibodies against it. The researchers hope that the first seed strain of H1N1 swine flu vaccine will be ready in three to four weeks. It will then take another four or five months for vaccine manufacturers to produce the vaccine in bulk.

PET bottles potential health hazard (29th April 2009)

Wagner, a lead researcher stated, "Drinking water from PET plastic bottles is harmful to human health". It has a higher probability of drinking estrogenic compounds (which affects reproductive hormones) through water. He analysed 20 samples of mineral water. Nine samples came out of glass bottles, nine were bottled in PET plastic and two were in cardboard. The specialised yeast, which change colour in the presence of estrogen like compounds, revealed estrogenic activity in seven of the nine plastic bottles (and both cardboard samples), and compared with just three of the nine glass ones. The levels of these compounds in the water were surprisingly high.

ISRO launches RISAT-2 (20th April 2009)

The Indian Space Research Organisation successfully launched a revolutionary spy satellite RISAT-2. It is designed by the Israeli Aerospace Industries. It can take images through the thickest cloud cover, rain and snow or fog conditions during night and day or even of the hundreds of winding mountain valleys. It will be used extensively for purposes like mapping, managing natural disasters and surveying the seas, it can also see through camouflage like cloth or foliage used to conceal camps or vehicles. It will enable India to keep a watch on terror camps, military installations across boundaries, missile sites and suchlike. It should also help keep track of ships at sea that could pose a threat. The RISAT will reduce India's dependence on foreign suppliers like Ikonos for satellite imagery.

March

Discovery Crew Returns Home From ISS

The Discovery space shuttle crew returned home to the Johnson Space Center in Houston on Sunday(29/3/09) after completing a 12-day mission.

Discovery landed at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida at 3:14 p.m. Saturday(28/3/09), after traveling more than 5.3 million miles. Its crew delivered solar arrays to help power the International Space Station and science experiments taking place there. The astronauts completed three space walks, lasting more than six hours each, to install, repair, and maintain equipment for the station.

The STS-119 flight marked the first trip to space and the first spacewalks for former science teachers Joseph Acaba and Richard Arnold. Both are now NASA astronauts. The flight was Discovery's 36th trip to space. It marked the 125th space shuttle mission and the 28th shuttle trip to the space station.

Internet Crime Up 33 Percent, FBI Reports

Internet-based crime increased by 33 percent last year, making 2008 the biggest year ever for reported cybercrime incidents, according to an Internet Crime Complaint Center annual report.

The ICCC, a nonprofit organization run by the FBI and the National White Collar Crime Center dedicated to monitoring online fraud, issued a report Monday showing that fraud losses incurred from cybercrime reached a total of \$264.6 million in 2008, compared to \$239.1 million the previous year, Reuters reports. Losses in recent years pose a sharp contrast to cybercrime losses of \$18 million in 2001.

"2009 is shaping up to be a very busy year in terms of cybercrime," said John Kane, director of the National White Collar Crime Center based in Richmond, Va., and the report's author, to Reuters.

Adobe, Facebook partner to create Flash developer tools

Adobe has partnered with one of the most popular social networking Web sites, Facebook, to give developers a new set of tools to create applications.

The applications will use Adobe's Flash platform and the new ActionScript 3 Client Library for Facebook the two companies developed together. The client library is a free open source programming language that supports Facebook application programming interfaces (APIs) including Facebook Connect.

Microsoft to discontinue Encarta

Microsoft Corp. (MSFT.O) is to exit its Encarta encyclopedia business later this year after losing ground over the years to freely available reference material on the Internet on web sites like Wikipedia.

"People today seek and consume information in considerably different ways than in years past," the software maker said in a notice posted on its MSN website.

Microsoft, which axed 5,000 jobs earlier this year to cut costs and warned profit and revenue would fall over the next two quarters, said it would stop selling Encarta software products by June. Encarta websites worldwide, except Encarta Japan, would be discontinued on October 31 and Encarta Japan will cease after December 31, the company said.

Obama to restore stem cell research funding

US President Barack Obama on Monday signed an executive order reversing Bush administration restrictions on Federal funding for stem cell research. He said that he would ensure that all research on stem cells would be conducted ethically and with rigorous oversight.

This move would be in line with Mr Obama's campaign vow to restore funding to embryonic stem cell research. This development impressed scientists who have long campaigned for the Bush policy to be overturned, but will likely be condemned by conservative right-to-life groups.

Mr Bush barred Federal funding from supporting work on new lines of stem cells derived from human embryos in 2001, allowing research only on a small number of embryonic stem-cell lines which existed at that time. He argued that using human embryos for scientific research - which often involves their destruction - crossed a moral barrier and urged scientists to consider other alternatives. Embryonic stem cells are primitive cells from early-stage embryos capable of developing into almost every tissue of the body.

India To Send Sun Mission Aditya In 2012

After the successful launch of the moon mission, Chandrayaan-1, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is now gearing up for a mission to the sun. The proposed sun mission christened as "Mission Aditya", is aimed at unraveling the secrets of the sun. G Madhavan Nair, chairman of the Indian space agency ISRO, announced that, the agency is ready with its new space programme to explore the corona of the Sun in 2012.

"Mission Aditya" will find out answers for how and why solar flares and solar winds disturb the communication network and play havoc with electronics on the earth. It will also uncover the mysteries surrounding the sun's corona that create geomagnetic field disturbances on the earth and often damage man-made satellites and spacecraft moving in the sky under intense sunlight.

Though the sun mission of ISRO has been on the cards for quite some time now, it got a boost after the successful launch of Chandrayaan-1. The success of the Aditya Mission will provide vital clues to ISRO to protect its satellites and spaceware from being damaged by hot winds and flares ejected out of the sun's corona.

Indian-American Scientist Vivek Pai Creates Top Web Technology

The researchers' team led by Indian American scientist Vivek Pai has developed a revolutionary way to expand internet access around the world. The team of Princeton University computer science researchers created a new efficient data storage system called HashCache which got listed as one of the top emerging technologies of the year in scientific magazine, Technology Review. The scientific magazine is being published by Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

HashCache claims to store information more efficiently than current methods. The newly created data-caching system is expected to expand web use in developing regions around the world by making internet access more affordable. The new data storage system increases the possibilities of expanding internet facility across the poorer regions as it is very affordable. Compared to RAM, HashCache is capable of storing more information from frequently visited web sites on a local hard drive thereby enabling direct data access. Vivek Pai explained that by increasing the efficiency of internet data transfer, HashCache can reduce the cost of maintaining a hard drive.

February

Indian Scientists To Clone Pashmina Goat

A team of scientists from Jammu and Kashmir and Haryana is working on a project to clone the famous pashmina goat. A success in this direction is expected to give boost to the dwindling trade in pashmina wool. The project is under a World Bank aided project known as National Agriculture Innovation Project.

The project 'Value Chain on Zone Free Cloned Embryos Production and Development of Elite Germ Plasma Pashmina' hopes to change the pashmina production scenario in the state. A six-member team will use somatic cells of the goat to clone the cell to produce new pashmina goat. Scientists will use a hand-guided cloning technique and the four-phased project will run for next three years.

NASA's Kepler Mission To Begin Quest To Find Planets Hosting Life

NASA's Kepler spacecraft is all set to begin its maiden journey in search for worlds that could potentially host life. The spacecraft is scheduled to blast-off from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, in Florida aboard a Delta II rocket on March 5, 2009. Kepler is the first mission with the ability to find planets like Earth. The mission will study rocky planets that orbit sun-like stars in a warm zone where liquid water could be maintained on the surface that is believed to be essential for the formation of life.

The mission will spend three-and-a-half years in the space. It will survey more than 100,000 sun-like stars in the Cygnus-Lyra region of our Milky Way galaxy. It is expected to find hundreds of planets of the size of earth and larger, at various distances from their stars.

ISRO To Use Home-Grown Cryogenic Engine For GSLV Launch

The India Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will use an indigenously developed cryogenic engine to launch the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV). Reports say that ISRO will undertake the launch operation in July this year. The use of home-grown cryogenic engine to put GSAT-4 into orbit will end India's dependency on Russia. India has been importing the cryogenic engines from Russia since 1991. So far, India has launched five GSLV rockets. But now ISRO has developed its own cryogenic engines and all the tests have been completed successfully, the source added.

The launch of GSAT-4 communication satellite using an indigenously developed cryogenic engine will provide internet connectivity in remote villages. The ISRO is also considering to use the GSLV for the Chandrayaan-II mission scheduled for 2012. Earlier, ISRO used PSLV to launch Chandrayaan-I.

January

1. World's First Internet Car Radio Unveiled

The Australian researchers have developed a new internet car radio for the first time which enables the users to access 30,000 stations including online broadcasts and AM and FM stations from all round the globe. The internet car radio developed by Melbourne-based online radio aggregator miRoamer was launched in prototype form at the 2009 Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. miRoamer has signed a deal with German-based Blaupunkt which is one of the largest producers of car radios in the world.

Under the new deal, Blaupunkt will produce internet radios which will be fitted in latest models by car manufacturers such as Ford, Holden, Mercedes, BMW and Audi. The internet radio will also be sold separately for those who want to install it in their cars. It is very imperative that radio lovers will prefer internet car radio to traditional broadcasters as it offers a huge number of stations from all over the world. The new product is expected to be launched in the US and Europe in the second half of 2009. In more ways than one, the internet car radio is going to revolutionise the way people listen to radio.

2. Motorola Unveils Cellphone Made From Recycled Water Bottles

Motorola has unveiled a new kind of mobile phone called MOTO W233 Renew which is made from recycled plastic water bottles. According to the handset manufacturing company, MOTO W233 Renew is also a carbon neutral phone. The company is said to have collaborated with Carbonfund.org to manufacture the new mobile phone. Interestingly the container that holds the phone is also made from recycled material.

In order to uplift its recycling program for mobile phones and accessories, Motorola has also entrusted another postage-paid box with the MOTO W233 Renew which can be used by customers to mail their old phones back to the company for recycling. The postage-paid box is also made from recycled paper, claimed Motorola.

The new MOTO W233 Renew offers nine hours of talk time with ChrystalTalk technology and has messaging capabilities. The new mobile handset from Motorola is expected to be launched at the 2009 International CES in Las Vegas. The phone will be available in the market by the first quarter of 2009.

MOTO W233 Renew has been designed for eco-conscious consumers as well as for those who loves to make phone calls. The recycling program of Motorola is ready to accept any mobile phone or accessory for recycling which it feels will help to recover valuable materials for reuse that will reduce environmental impact.

3. UK Doctors Deliver Cancer-Proof Baby

The first British baby genetically selected to be free of a breast cancer gene has been born. She grew from an embryo screened to ensure it did not contain the faulty BRCA1 gene, which passes the risk of breast cancer down generations.

According to the sources of University College Hospital in London the mother, a 27-year-old Londoner, and her little girl were in very good condition. Women in three generations of the father's family have been diagnosed with the disease in their 20s, including his mother, grandmother, sister and cousin.

A girl born with the altered BRCA1 gene have a 50-80% chance of developing breast cancer - but screening can prevent this. The technique used is known as Pre-implantation genetic diagnosis (PGD), which involves taking a cell from an embryo at the eight-cell stage of development, when it is around three-days old, and testing it.

The treatment follows the green-signal given by Britain's Human Fertilization and Embryology Authority in 2006, which said doctors could test for 'susceptibility genes' such as BRCA1. A properly functioning BRCA1 protein helps stop cancer before it starts but faulty genes greatly increase the risk of cancer.

BRCA1 and a related version of another gene, BRCA2, account for around 5% of breast cancer.

Sony To Launch World's Lightest 8-Inch Notebook PC

In a bid to capture the rapidly growing market for ultra-portable personal computers, Sony Corp of Japan decided to launch 8-inch notebook PC which is considered to be one of the lightest laptops in the world. The new Sony Vaio PC will have Microsoft Corp's Windows Vista operating system. Windows Vista operating system incorporated in Sony laptops will support all the software programs found in full-sized notebooks.

While revealing the plan, Sony said that the new notebook weighs only 1.4 pounds and it is as thin as a mobile phone. The notebooks will available for pre-orders and were released in the market in the first week of February 2009. the Sony notebook is priced at about \$900, setting itself apart from Netbooks.

The Red Planet Of Mars May Have Life On It

NASA, the space agency of USA, may be ready to announce alien microbes living below the Martian soil are the cause of a methane haze surrounding the Red Planet of Mars.

Researchers from around the world have shown a greater interest in the Red Planet, as possible traces of water and ice dust have raised hopes of discovering signs of life on or underneath the planet's surface. Even though methane is created on Earth by volcanoes, scientists haven't found any active volcanoes on the Red Planet.

In addition, it seems NASA researchers found high levels of methane in the same regions as water vapor clouds, which are absolutely necessary for life. The study was conducted during a seven year examination of the planet.

Indian Scientists Conduct Anti-Warming Experiment In Antarctic Ocean

A group of scientists from India and Germany jointly conducted an anti-warming experiment in Antarctic Ocean. It is believed that the experiment may find out a possible solution to on-going global warming crisis. The scientists began their experiment by scattering iron powder on hundreds of square kilometres of the Antarctic Ocean. The iron powder will fertilize the growth of phytoplankton which will eventually remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and take it deep under the ocean surface.

The technology of iron fertilization is likely to stop global warming at a very little cost. About six tonnes of iron are to be scattered on 300 sq km of sea. The group of scientists which left Cape Town on board the Polarstern on January 7 includes thirty Indian and 18 from other nations. The tiny organism called phytoplankton can eliminate carbon dioxide which is the main greenhouse gas contributing to global warming. The technology used by the Indian and German scientists can be path-breaking one in curbing global warming which stands out to be a major threat to mankind.

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