

## **December 14th news:**

### **National:**

#### **Rajasthan is First state in India to Offer e-mail IDs in Hindi**

Rajasthan becomes the first state in the country to launch free email addresses in Hindi (in Devanagari script) for its residents, as per the state IT department Principal Secretary Akhil Arora. The initiative aims to ensure maximum participation of people towards e-governance and that maximum facilities are available in the vernacular language. The first e-mail ID was created for CM Vasundhara Raje.

### **Economy:**

#### **At WTO, India manages to protect interests in food security, fisheries, e-commerce**

India has managed to score a diplomatic win at the 11th Ministerial Conference (MC 11) of the World Trade Organisation in Buenos Aires by ensuring there is no dilution in the peace clause extending protection to all minimum support price (MSP) programmes for foodgrains, no commitments to curb fisheries subsidies and no fast-tracking of e-commerce talks.

The MC 11, which concluded, has failed to deliver in terms of concrete outcomes, but work programmes spelling out future course of work is likely in a number of areas including fisheries subsidies, e-commerce and services.

It is the US which got singled out as a deal breaker for not supporting a permanent solution on food security. While the US has proved to be a party spoiler for India in its quest for a permanent solution, officials say there is no cause for concern.

There were attempts to water down the peace clause by the EU and Brazil which demanded that exports should not be allowed from public stocks, which have been thwarted.

New Delhi now wants a specific work programme so that delegations continue to engage. India wanted a permanent solution that would allow it to continue its food procurement programmes without any cap and with less onerous notification and safeguard obligations than in the peace clause.

In the area of fisheries subsidies, there could not be an agreement on interim solution for banning illegal, unregulated, unreported (IUU) fishing. The proposal that members will try and reach an agreement by MC 12 (in 2018) was something members could endorse, Rockwell said.

In the area of e-commerce, too, New Delhi managed to check attempts by members such as Switzerland, the EU, Japan and Australia to switch over to a new work programme under the General Council of the WTO to accelerate pace of talks. The existing work programme of continuation of discussions under the existing structure of four working group is set to continue.

#### **Jharkhand ex-CM Koda, ex-coal secy convicted in scam**

A special court on 13<sup>th</sup> December held former Jharkhand Chief Minister Madhu Koda and ex-Coal Secretary HC Gupta guilty of corruption and other charges in a coal scam case.

Special CBI Judge Bharat Parashar held Koda, Gupta and other accused, including former Jharkhand Chief Secretary AK Basu and private company Vini Iron and Steel Udyog Limited (VISUL), guilty of varying offences, including criminal conspiracy, in the case pertaining to irregularities in the allocation of Rajhara North coal block in Jharkhand to the Kolkata-based VISUL.

The court, however, acquitted four persons — VISUL director Vaibhav Tulsyan, public servants Basant Kumar Bhattacharya and Bipin Bihari Singh and CA Navin Kumar Tulsyan — of all charges.

All were earlier summoned as accused after the court took cognisance of alleged offences under Sections 120-B (criminal conspiracy) read with 420 (cheating) and 409 (criminal breach of trust by public servants) of the IPC and under various provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act.

The CBI said the firm had applied for allocation of Rajhara North coal block on January 8, 2007. It alleged that although the Jharkhand Government and the Steel Ministry did not recommend VISUL's case, the 36th screening committee recommended the block to the accused firm.

The CBI said Gupta, who was the chairman of the committee, had allegedly concealed facts from then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who then headed the Coal Ministry too, that Jharkhand had not recommended VISUL for the allocation of a coal block.

Koda, Basu and two accused public servants conspired to favour VISUL in the coal block allocation, the investigation agency had alleged

### **Sports:**

#### **Rohit Sharma hits another double centure**

Indian Skipper Rohit Sharma hit double century in One Day International in Mohali. He is the Captain of ongoing 3 One day international series against Sri Lanka. In the Second One day match, Rohit hit double century. It is his third double century in one days, thus became only batsman in world to score three double centuries in one day internationals.

### **Persons in news:**

**Nakul Chopra:** Nakul Chopra, President of AAI and Senior Advisor, Publicis Communications elected as the next Chairman of BARC India. He succeeds Viacom18 Group CEO Sudhanshu Vats. Nakul will be the third Chairman of BARC India. He had joined the BARC India Board in September 2016.