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## MD Writes...



I would like to share a thought which my colleague

Hitesh Vaidya

voiced last month. April 2011 marks the 18th anniversary of the 74th Constitutional Amendment, a landmark in the devolution of powers to urban local government in India. He compared the evolution of urban governance in India to the tentative steps of a growing child and despite occasional successes, concludes that the child is perhaps still not ready to venture into adulthood. IPE has been associated with urban reforms right from the beginning and we still continue - be it in planning, municipal finance, infrastructure maintenance, project management, urban livelihoods and poverty alleviation - all to make cities sustainable centres of economic growth. The child may have grown but we shall continue to provide our helping hand, wherever needed!

- Ashwajit Singh

## Editorial

## Two-third countries on track to achieve MDGs

The [Global Monitoring Report 2011: "Improving the Odds of achieving the MDGs"](#) released on 15 April 2011 asserts that two-thirds of developing countries are on track or close to meeting the [Millennium Development Goals](#) (MDGs).

The Global Monitoring Report (GMR) series, produced by the World Bank and the



International Monetary Fund, focuses on how the world is doing in implementing the policies and actions for achieving the MDGs and provide a framework for accountability in global development policy.

The key messages of GMR 2011 are:

- Global progress toward the various targets continues to be mixed; countries with slow growth and poor institutions are behind while economic growth, sound policies and strong institutions have driven countries ahead.
- The quantity of health and education services has increased, but not the quality. This may be one reason progress is slower for MDGs measured by outcomes (such as health) than those measured by access (such as education).
- This substantial progress is not a reason for complacency; it could still break down.
- Reaching the MDGs is only one milestone, for there is still much work in fostering inclusive growth, reducing inequality and poverty, and improving health and education outcomes in even the most successful countries.

Dear **All**

First of all, a very big **Thank You** for the overwhelming response to INSPIRE - it is very encouraging!

This month, we have some encouraging facts about MDGs (as an aside, do read Claire Melamed's critique on "[To MDG or not to MDG](#)") but we also focus on the alarmingly high stillbirths in the developing world. Alongwith the "[so-called stillbirths](#)" i.e. mis-classified newborn deaths, stillbirths represent our blind spot - numbers that are neglected in development and under-reported in statistics. A 2008 Sample Survey showed that India has an [average of 8 stillbirths per 1000 children](#), glaringly low compared to the high infant and maternal mortality!

Holistic development needs social awareness and sensitivity, not only numbers and targets - even if they are for MDGs. The optimist in us says that we shall see that day soon!!

Stay Inspired. Stay Ahead!!

- *Abdul Rahim & Preethi Thomas*

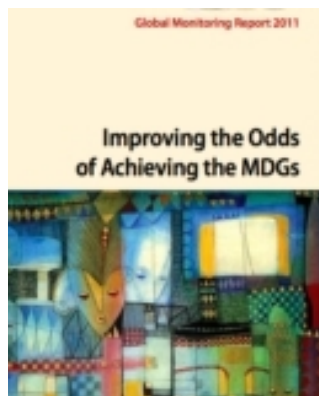
The GMR comes close on the heels of [The World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security and Development](#) [released](#) on 11 April 2011.

Download the full version of the GMR 2011 [here](#) and the WDR [here](#). For previous editions of GMR please visit [here](#).

The GMR is the latest in a spurt of reviews to reach the MDGs, now only 4 years away. Earlier reports include:

- [MDG Report Card: Measuring Progress Across Countries](#) (Sep 2010) by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI)
- [Unlocking progress: MDG acceleration on the road to 2015](#) (Sep 2010) by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- [The MDGs and the Road to 2015](#) (Sep 2010) by the World Bank

The GMR mentions that India, despite shortcomings in targeted programmes such as poverty reduction and women empowerment, has seen considerable improvement in education enrollment rates. A press report on India's MDG progress status is available [here](#). DFID's Fact Sheet on India's MDG progress can be seen [here](#).



**The Global Development Report 2011.**

*Click picture above.*



**The World Development Report 2011.**

*Click picture above.*

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**India has highest stillbirths in the world**



Nearly one-fourth of all stillborn babies worldwide are from India, the highest for any nation, and more than half of them could be saved by better maternal and obstetric care. This is a key finding from the '[Stillbirth Series of The Lancet](#)' issued in April 2011. It assesses almost **2.6 million stillbirths every year**, of which [India accounts for more than 23%](#) - that's 1,680 babies born dead every day in the country!

Nearly **two-thirds of all stillbirths are in 10 countries** - India, followed by Pakistan, Nigeria, China, Bangladesh, Congo, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Afghanistan and Tanzania. The Lancet series seeks to highlight that despite increasing attention and investment for maternal, neonatal and child health, **stillbirths remain the 'invisible' source of infant death.**

The Lancet Series has [6 Papers](#), [2 Articles](#) and [6 Comments](#) on the subject - all available [here](#).

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## Revised FDI rules in India

The Government of India has released the 3rd edition of the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Guidelines, subsuming all FDI policies and regulations of FEMA and RBI, effective from April 1, 2011. This edition has some significant [changes in policy](#) especially in FDI for agriculture but omits some expected changes such as FDI in retail and LLPs. India's FDI inflow was USD18.3 billion during April'10-February '11, 25 percent lower than the same period last year. Download the Consolidated FDI Guidelines (April 2011) [here](#).

## New Delhi Superbug

Initial reports of August 2010 in [The Lancet Infectious Diseases Journal](#) on the superbug called [New Delhi metallo-beta-lactamase](#) (NDM-1) were [denied by the Delhi Government](#) and the Lancet Editor [apologised for naming it after New Delhi](#). However, a [recent study](#) in the same journal claiming NDM-1 is prevalent in tap water samples from New Delhi, even while refuting that all such infections arise from Indian hospital history, may adversely affect [medical tourism in India](#). Read the recent Lancet paper [here](#).

## Mobile Governance

With the increasing access, affordability and use of mobiles, [e-governance](#) is giving way to [m-governance](#). The Government of India released a [Draft Mobile Governance Framework](#) in Feb 2011 to promote citizen interaction through mobiles. In addition, it also has an [Electronic Service Delivery Bill](#) which, when enacted, will mandate public services delivery in electronic form from a cut-off date. [Kerala leads the states](#) with its m-governance drive through its [State IT Mission](#) covering more than 90 departments, as [this paper](#) details.

## Lokpal Bill:

## Cure Or Malady?

In this EPW paper (23 April, 2011), Gautam Patel highlights some of the reasons why civil society is pushing the [Jan Lokpal Bill](#) instead of the government proposed [Lokpal Bill](#), which with its hidden flaws, may be a cure worse than the disease! He highlights some policy imbalances and anomalies in it and concludes that though the Lokpal Bill is not ill-intentioned, it needs specificity, clarity, well defined objectives and constitutionally valid methods to be successful. Read the full Paper [here](#)

## Giving vs Estate Tax

The recent campaign by Warren Buffet and Bill Gates to encourage rich Indians to take the [Giving Pledge](#) may not have had many takers but it highlighted i) American's tendency to donate liberally in their lifetime due to the high estate tax after death and ii) India's cultural difference i.e. of '[Silent Giving](#)'. However, as Vijay Kelkar argues in his paper: [Indian Social Democracy: The Resource Perspective](#), is it a time to levy an [Estate Tax on the super rich](#) in India to bridge the economic gap?

## Beyond Farmer Suicides

In this EPW Paper (April 2011), Vishva Bharti delves into the untold stories of suicide by Agricultural Labourers in prosperous Punjab. He documents the evils in the Indian rural sector like debt, exploitation, stagnant wages and non existence of support mechanisms leading to agricultural worker suicides. However, he finds a ray of hope with rural laborers wanting to fight for their rights through better implementation of the MGNREGS, and fair distribution under Atta-Dal scheme. Read full paper [here](#).



## Fighting malaria

25th April marked World Malaria Day, a disease which continues to challenge the world! Despite efforts through the [Global Fund](#) as well other agencies, malaria remains neglected as brought out by [Bill Gates in this TED Talk](#).

On this day, Awa Marie Coll-Seck of [The Roll Back Malaria \(RBM\) Partnership](#) writes on the challenges of malaria and its



## Researching Health

Health research in India has been scarce! Despite the highest disease burden in the world, a Lancet [Paper](#) (Jan 2011) estimated India's share in global public health research at less than 5%. To address this, the Indian Health Ministry created a national [Department of Health Research](#) in 2007 and has released a [National Health Research Policy](#) (NHRP). Although a recent EPW [paper](#) by Upendra Bhojani (Apr 2011) critiques the NRHP for its policy imbalances, any efforts in this direction would be welcome. Read the full paper [here](#)



## Coastal Wetlands Change Climate

A recent World Bank report finds that degradation of coastal wetlands emit



## Local Technology Network

In this interesting [TED](#) video [Anil Gupta](#), an IIM (Ahmedabad) professor speaks of his unique [Honey Bee](#) networking initiative - an [effort to tap the grassroots innovations](#) in India. He not only showcases unique local efforts such as the pedal-operated washing machine etc. but also the need to recognise these inventors and upscaling their work. A Must Watch [Video](#) (23 mins).

success especially in Africa, where 11 countries have reduced malaria cases and deaths by over 50 per cent. Read her news [here](#) and an article [here](#).



## Recycling to Upcycling

Move over recycling - '[Upcycling](#)' or the conversion of waste to fashionable materials and products is here! From [Conserve india](#) which believes in '[Reimagining Waste](#)' to [Thunk in India](#), an NGO which 'Recreates from Waste', these 'trendy' products cater to the hi-end boutiques in India, apart from a developed overseas market. Read an Outlook article on this [here](#).

significant carbon dioxide directly into the atmosphere which contributes to climate change. The report on '[Mitigating Climate Change through Restoration and Management of Coastal Wetlands ...](#)' (World Bank, March 2011) also has innovative suggestions for addressing these issues. Read the Report [here](#).

## Making Great Presentations

Finally, a simple guide to making better presentations! Vivek Singh from [All About Presentations](#) shares some well kept secrets on good presentation design. He talks of the 'Proximity' principle, the 'Alignment' principle, the 'Repetition' principle and the 'Contrast' principle to enhance the design of our presentations. If you make at least 1 presentation a month, this book is for you - find it [here!](#)