

NEWS WRAP

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GREEK AND TURKISH Cypriot portions of Cyprus island have been divided since 1974, when there was a Greece-inspired coup, which tried to unite Cyprus with Greece. The coup provoked a Turkish invasion of Cyprus. The presidential election of Cyprus, on 24 Feb 08, was won by Demetris Christofias, leader of the Communist Akel party, with 53.4% of the votes. Yiannakis Kassoulides of the right-wing gained 46.6% of votes. Mr Christofias would become the only communist head of state in the European Union. The communists will share a coalition with the nationalists. Cyprus would soon be adopting the *euro*, and there are promises not to raise taxes. The Akel Party is friendly toward business, and runs Co-operative banks with cheap mortgages. Many of the party members have been trained by Russia. They are generally employed in accounting and law firms, which safeguard the interests of Russian off-shore companies. There are hopes that Mr Christofias will make renewed efforts to unify the Greek and Turkish Cypriot parts of the island. There was scarcely any contact with Greek and Turkish Cypriot rulers under Mr. Tassos Papadopoulos, the former nationalist Greek-Cypriot president. Mehmet Ali Talat, a moderate left-winger and the new president of Turkish-Cypriot, is open to negotiations for a unification of Greek Cypriot with the self-styled Turkish republic of northern Cyprus. There have been contacts with Mr Talat's left wing party and Akel, through trade union leaders.

The priorities include opening of more border crossings, including one in Nicosia's main shopping district. The two communities would have to run their daily interests amicably.

The locals look forward to hiring and selling property, on both sides of the island. Turkey would require persuasion to withdraw 30,000 troops, from northern Cyprus.

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President George Bush had signed a legislation in 2007, which demanded a five-fold increase in biofuels production, to 36 billion by 2022. Green ethanol is under doubts, as certain critics say the production process of ethanol, absorbs as much energy, as it produces. Utilization of farmland for ethanol, increases food prices internationally. During end Feb 08, world wheat prices increased by 25%. Ethanol utilizes a huge quantity of water, and it has become one of the top ten water consumers in USA. Biofuels ethanol projects are being challenged in courts in Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, central Illinois and drought-hit-Florida. Ethanol plants are now using half as much water per gallon of ethanol, as they did ten years earlier.

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Under the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC), socialist democracy, multi-party co-operation and consultation are being enlarged. Reforms commenced in the late 1970s. For the first time since the 1970s, during 2007, two non-CPC members, belonging to the Party for Public Interest, were appointed ministers. About 31,000 non-Communists are working in China at the

country and urban levels. Amongst them, about 6000 are working in government organizations and judicial bodies. The Supreme People's Court, the Supreme People's Procuratorate and central government departments have provided employment to 20 non-Communist officials. There are 30 non-Communist vice-governors in China's 31 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions; and 15 big and medium-sized cities have non-Communist vice mayors.

Consumer inflation was 4.8% average during 2007, in China. The Chinese premier Wen Jiabao, in his annual "state of the nation" report to the National People's Congress was critical about pollution, misgovenment and the gulf between the urban rich and the farming poor.

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Of the Rs 7000 crores earmarked for the Rajiv Gandhi Drinking Water Mission (RGDWM), Rs 427.47 crores has been diverted to purposes other than to provide "safe and sustainable drinking water sources" to villagers. The water mission has been full of corruption and waste. Rs 3.85 crores was spent in Madhya Pradesh, on 705 tube wells, located in fully covered habitations, under the pressure of influential people. Needs of villagers were never considered. In Amravati district of Maharashtra, Rs13 crores was released, violating guidelines issued during 2005-07. On the basis of fictitious certificates, Rs 52 lacs was spent on pipe procurement, in Meghalaya. Rs 97 lacs was diverted to the Public Health and Engineering Division at Silchar, in Assam. Rs 1.41 crores was diverted in Paonta Sahib division, of Himachal Pradesh, for water works not approved in 2002-07. Under calamity relief, Rs 3.62 crores was diverted in Karnataka. There has been a wasteful expenditure of Rs 61 lacs in West Midnapore district of West Bengal, where pipes have been laid in areas, without sustainable water source. In Bankura town (West Bengal) and Alipore of Kolkata, Rs 1.29 crores has been diverted for providing drinking water in urban areas. Rs 10 lacs has been spent on paying office bills, in connection with hiring of vehicles, in Bankura and Barasat of West Bengal.

Rs 4.15 crores has been spent in Biswanathpur village of Orissa, on projects for 20,000 people, where demands will be fulfilled for barely 10,000 people. Following recommendations from MLAs, Rs 19.56 crores has been allocated for 50 un-approved projects in Jammu and Kashmir. In Jagdalpur district of Chattisgarh, Rs 1.59 crores was spent on 317 tubewells, in fully covered habitations.

Punjab accounts for

fictitious
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