

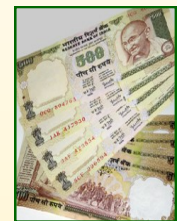
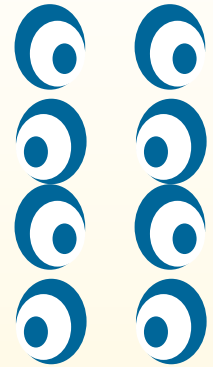
NEWS ALERT

'India To Be Software Superpower By 2020'

INDIA can well become the 'software superpower' of the world by 2020, but everything depends on investments in workforce development and country-level infrastructure, a report by IT research firm Gartner said.

The report on the information and communication technology sector analyses three probable scenarios for it, which requires new investments in education and infrastructure development for supporting continued growth. The scenario considered most promising envisages the country becoming the global leader in IT innovation by the end of the next decade. "The third scenario is most probable. Here, India is most likely to become the software superpower of the world by 2020, provided the country's infrastructure and soft skill development is completed as per plans and India continues to maintain its competitive advantage,"

Gartner's distinguished analyst regional research director (India) Partha Iyengar said.



THE Indian financial markets as well as policy makers will be in a position to better assess data on employment along with other macroeconomic data, with the National Statistical Commission planning to unveil a quarterly employment survey. The data on employment is scattered and is available only after a steep lag. Employment data is a key variable that financial markets in most advanced markets look at to gauge the state of the economy.

BANKS' non-performing assets have shot up nearly 30% at the end of calendar 2009 from a year ago due to stress in many sectors and farm loan waiver, indicating sharply lower profits for banks and possibility of curbs on exposure to sectors that have contributed to the bad assets. In a reply to the Rajya Sabha, the government said the overall NPAs have increased to Rs 80,023 crore at the end of December 2009 from Rs 61,647 crore at the end of December 2008, an increase of over 30%. "Banks will be more cautious towards lending to sectors such as real estate, exports and even retail loans," says a senior banker with a private bank. A number of private banks have already curtailed their retail lending, specially personal loans.