

AUGUST 2015

1st August

AROUND THE WORLD

Bangladesh and India exchange Enclaves

- Ending a border dispute, the much-awaited exchange of enclaves (Chhitmahals) between India and Bangladesh came into effect at the stroke of midnight.
- History was written as India gave away to Bangladesh a total area of 17,160 acres, covering the 111 enclaves and in return received 7,110 acres comprising 51 enclaves.

INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

SEBI cancelled Sahara's mutual fund licence

- Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has cancelled licence of Sahara asset Management Company (AMC).
- The license will stand cancelled after sixty days from the date of the order.
- The apex market regulator took this decision as Sahara AMC is not fit to carry out the business of mutual fund.

INFOTAINMENT

India's first Harbour Defence System commissioned in Kochi

- India's first Integrated Underwater Harbour Defence and Surveillance System (IUHDSS) was commissioned in Kochi, Kerala.
- First of its kind system in the country is part of initiatives to strengthen and beef up coastal security in the western coastline.
- Cricketer Ravichandran Ashwin presented with Arjuna Award
- Union Government has conferred Arjuna Award on Indian cricket team off-spinner bowler Ravichandran Ashwin.
- With this Ashwin became 48th cricketer to receive the prestigious award.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Distant Uranus-Sized Exoplanet Discovered

- Astronomers have confirmed the existence of a Uranus-sized exoplanet orbiting far from its central star, discovered through a technique called gravitational microlensing.
- Nasa's Hubble Space Telescope and the W M Keck Observatory in Hawaii made independent confirmations of the exoplanet orbiting far from its central star.

2nd August

AROUND THE WORLD

Skydivers Form Largest Ever Vertical Formation

- Smashing all previous records, 164 skydivers flying head-down formed the largest ever vertical skydiving formation over central Illinois.
- The vertical formation formed by the skydivers has hit a new world record beating the 2012 mark set by 138 skydivers.

No Final Deal in Pacific Trade Talks

- Delegates negotiating a huge Pacific free-trade agreement have failed to reach a final deal after several days of intense talks in Hawaii, in a setback to the US President Barack Obama.
- There are 12 countries involved in the Pacific free-trade agreement.
- The failure to hammer out the final details of the accord is a blow to Obama as it could see the TPP become campaign fodder as the United States gets set to enter election season.

INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY

Major Car Makers Post Healthy Sales Growth

- Car sales in India witnessed an upward swing in July with major companies, including market leader Maruti Suzuki, Hyundai, Tata Motors and Honda, posting healthy double-digit growth.
- Maruti Suzuki's domestic sales increased by 22.5 percent last month to 1,10,405 units.
- Hyundai Motor India saw its domestic sales growing by 24.7 percent at 36,500 units last month.
- Tata Motors saw its passenger cars sales in July, 2015 rising by 27.1 percent at 8,520 units.
- Honda Cars India also reported 18.44 percent cent increase in domestic sales at 18,606 units in July.

Forex Reserves up \$322 Million

- India's foreign exchange reserves grew by \$322 million in the week ended July 24.
- According to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), India's foreign exchange reserves during the week under review stood at \$353.64 billion.

- The reserves during the previous four weeks were impacted by currency fluctuations, pull-back of funds by foreign investors in the Indian equity markets, Greece's debt crisis, Chinese stock markets crash and anxiety over US Fed's decision on raising interest rates.
- The reserves had plunged by \$1.03 billion during the previous week and stood at \$353.32 billion.

INDIA – OTHERS**Smart City Project**

- As per reports the state capitals of Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Telangana, Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Assam have made it to the Smart cities list.
- The central government has set a target of 100 smart cities to be built in the coming years.
- Some smaller cities have outdone the state capitals to bag the place in the list.
- The cities nominated by the states are as follows:
 - Uttar Pradesh: Allahabad, Luknow, Kanpur, Varanasi, Agra, Aligarh
 - Maharashtra: Navi Mumbai, Greater Mumbai, Nagpur, Thane, Nasik, Solapur, Amravati
 - West Bengal: New Town Kolkata, Bidhan Nagar, Durgapur, Haldia
 - Gujarat: Ahmedabad, Gandhi Nagar, Surat, Rajkot, Vadodara
 - Karnataka: Shivamogga, Mengaluru, Balagavi, Davangere
 - Andhra Pradesh: Kakinada, Tirupati, Vishakhapatnam
 - Rajasthan: Jaipur, Kota, Ajmer, Udaipur
 - Chhattisgarh: Raipur, Bilaspur
 - Odisha: Bhubaneswar, Rourkela
 - Bihar: Muzaffarpur, Bhagalpur, Bihar Shariff

INFOTAINMENT**India's First-ever Individual Medal in the World Archery Championships**

- Rajat Chauhan earned India its first-ever individual medal in the World Archery Championships when he bagged the silver medal.
- Thus, India opened their account in the ongoing World Archery Championship where they had never won any individual medal.
- Women's recurve team of Deepika Kumari, Chekrovolu Swuro and Laishram Bombayla Devi had won India a World Championship medal in 2011.

3rd August**AROUND THE WORLD****Canadian PM Calls General Election**

- The Canadian Prime Minister called general elections for October 19, kicking off a campaign for a fourth straight term in power amid a sluggish economy.
- Harper who is in power since 2006 dissolved parliament after meeting with Governor General David Johnston.
- Voters will be choosing all 338 members of the House of Commons, 30 more than in the last election because of redistricting.

The US and Egypt Begin First Strategic Dialogue Since 2009

- The United States and Egypt took a step towards repairing the cracks in their relationship launching their first strategic dialogue since 2009 on a wide range of topics including human rights and an Islamist insurgency in Egypt.
- As per US officials, the talk led by Egyptian Foreign Minister and US Secretary of State will address the "political environment" and human rights in Egypt, as well as Cairo's battle against Islamist militants based in the Sinai peninsula.
- The launching of the strategic dialogue is a serious chance for the two sides to review the different parts of the Egyptian-American relationship, politically, militarily and economically and assessing this relationship in all respects.

INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY**UTI MF Crosses Rs. 1 Trillion Mark**

- UTI Mutual Fund, the country's oldest fund house, has attained an asset base of over Rs one lakh crore with about one crore investor accounts and is now targetting leadership positions across various segments.
- Besides expanding its presence to smaller cities, the fund house is also looking to bolster its offerings in terms of pension and offshore market products.
- UTI AMC, which runs UTI Mutual Fund, is also looking to launch an Initial Public Offer (IPO) to become the country's first asset management company to go public.

INDIA – OTHERS**First heart transplant in Rajasthan**

- A farmer has become the first person to receive a heart transplant in the state. The state has created a

history by saving lives of four persons through one cadaver organ donation.

- Two kidneys, liver and heart of a brain dead person were harvested and transplanted to four different people.
- The organs were taken from a 18-year-old resident of Sanganer was declared brain dead at Mahatma Gandhi Medical College & Hospital (MGMCH) in Jaipur.

INFOTAINMENT

Indian Women's Recurve Team Bag Silver

- Indian women's recurve team defeated top seed Russians in the shoot-off to bag a silver medal at the World Archery Championships.
- Thus, India picked their second silver in the ongoing World Archery Championships where compound archer Rajat Chauhan opened the account with a historic individual medal.
- This is India's best ever show in the World Archery Championships where they are in hunt for a third medal, and a double for Laxmirani who will fight for a bronze in the individual recurve section later.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

NASA Captures Earth Flyby of Space Peanut

- NASA scientists have captured a peanut-shaped asteroid that approached close to Earth last weekend. The next time an asteroid will approach Earth this close will be in 2054.
- The asteroid named 1999 JD6 appears to be a contact binary -- an asteroid with two lobes that are stuck together.
- In July the asteroid had made its closest approach to Earth at a distance of about 7.2 million km.

4th August

AROUND THE WORLD

US Widens Sanctions on Syria

- The United States widened sanctions on Syria, targeting individuals and entities, saying that they are providing energy products used by the Assad regime in fighting its own people.
- Many of these entities are front companies that the Government of Syria and its supporters have used in an attempt to evade US and EU sanctions.
- The sanctions freeze any US assets of the individuals and entities and bar Americans from any transactions with them.
- These targeted sanctions intensify the economic and financial pressure on the Syrian government to cease its campaign of violence against its people.

EARTH MATTER

Climate Change

- US President Barack Obama has unveiled what he called "the biggest, most important step we have ever taken" in tackling climate change.
- The aim of the revised Clean Power Plan is to cut greenhouse gas emissions from US power stations by nearly a third within 15 years.
- The measures will place significant emphasis on wind and solar power and other renewable energy sources.

INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY

Bharat Forge Posts 35 % Increase in First Quarter

- Bharat Forge (BFL) reported a 35 per cent growth in its net profit for the quarter ended 30th June 2015 at Rs. 195.4 crore. The company's top-line grew 14.2 per cent to Rs. 1,128.4 crore while the operating profit was up 23.5 per cent at Rs. 359 crore. BFL registered strong performance with revenues growing 14 per cent on back of 21 per cent growth in exports.
- According to the company, a gradual pick up in the economy with a revival in the infrastructure sector, increased clearances of road projects and opening of mining sector could be a significant driving force for volume growth in the remaining part of the year for commercial vehicles.

Jump in FDI in Petroleum and Gas Sector

- Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in petroleum and natural gas sector witnessed an almost 10-time jump in 2014-15 as compared to the preceding fiscal, touching Rs. 6,473.22 crore.
- As per Union Minister, the government is encouraging foreign investment to supplement domestic investment and technological capabilities.
- Over the last three financial years, the sector attracted FDI worth more than Rs. 8,375 crore.

INDIA – OTHERS

Land Bill: BJP Does U-turn

- In a major climb down from its stated position, BJP appears to have agreed to restore key provisions of UPA's land law including those related to consent and social impact assessment.
- The committee, headed SS Ahluwalia, has sought time till 7th August to submit its report on the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (Second Amendment Bill), 2015.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Three Super-earths Discovered

- A new "secret" planetary system that includes three super-earths and one outer giant planet has been discovered at a distance of just 21 light years from Earth.
- The system named HD219134, in the constellation Cassiopeia hosts one outer giant planet and three inner super-earths, one of which transits in front of the star.
- The transiting super-earth has a density similar to the Earth's. It is by far the closest transiting planet known today

5th August**AROUND THE WORLD****48th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meet**

- The 48th ASEAN foreign ministers' meet started, drawing representatives from 10 Southeast Asian countries.
- The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is in its final stages to establish a single community by the end of 2015, which involves a plan to create a common economic, political-security and sociocultural region.
- This will be a huge step towards making the ASEAN motto 'One Vision, One Identity, One Community' a reality.
- Established in 1967, ASEAN comprises 10 Southeast Asian countries, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

EARTH MATTER**World Glaciers Melting Faster than Ever**

- The intense ice loss of the past two decades has resulted in a strong imbalance of glaciers in many regions of the world, indicating that glaciers will suffer further ice loss even if the climate remains stable.
- The observed glaciers currently lose between half a meter and one meter of its ice thickness every year. This is two to three times more than the corresponding average of the 20th century.
- According to the team, the current rate of glacier melt is without precedence at global scale, at least for the time period observed and probably also for recorded history.
- In addition, the study shows that the long-term retreat of glacier tongues is a global phenomenon.

INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY**RBI Keeps Key Rates Unchanged**

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) kept its interest rates unchanged at its third bi-monthly monetary policy review.
- Highlights of the third bi-monthly monetary policy statement by the RBI.
- Key policy rate (repo) kept unchanged at 7.2 percent
- Cash reserve ratio (CRR) unchanged at 4 percent
- Banks have passed on an average 0.3 percent interest rate cut as against RBI's 0.75 percent rate cut since January.
- New investment demand emanating from private sector and government remains subdued
- RBI retains growth target at 7.6 percent for 2015-16
- Fourth bi-monthly monetary policy to be announced on 29th September.

Bharti Airtel Profit up 40%

- Telecom major Bharti Airtel posted about 40 percent jump in consolidated net profit to Rs. 1,554.3 crore for the first quarter ended June 30, 2015-16, on account of sale of mobile tower assets and boom in data usage.
- It had posted net profit of Rs. 1,108.5 crore in the April-June quarter of last fiscal, 2014-15.
- Mobile data or Internet revenue of the company grew by 67.3 percent, year-on-year basis, to Rs. 2,609 crore.
- Total customer base of Bharti Airtel across 20 countries globally stood at 33.18 crore at the end of June.

INFOTAINMENT**New Record for Highest ODI Run Chase**

- New Zealand openers Martin Guptill and Tom Latham set a new ODI record for the highest run-chase without losing a wicket, in the 2nd match against Zimbabwe.
- Chasing the target of 236, both the openers went on to score unbeaten centuries as New Zealand crushed Zimbabwe by 10 wickets to level the three-match series 1-1.
- The previous best was 231 that Sri Lanka chased in a 10-wicket win over England in the 2011 World Cup quarter-final.

New 50m Breaststroke World Record

- South Africa's Cameron van der Burgh broke the 50m breaststroke world record in Tuesday morning's heats at the world swimming championships in Kazan.
- Van der Burgh, defending his title, clocked 26.62 sec to shave 0.05 sec off his own record he set at the

2009 championships.

6th August

AROUND THE WORLD

70th Anniversary of Hiroshima Atomic Bombing

- Japan marked 70 years since the atomic bombing that helped end World War II but still divides opinion today on whether the total destruction it caused was justified.
- Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and foreign delegates were among the tens of thousands gathered in Hiroshima's Peace Memorial Park to observe a moment of silence.
- An American B-29 bomber named Enola Gay dropped an atomic bomb, dubbed "Little Boy", on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945.

Russia and France Agree on Refund for Warships

- France says it has reached an agreement with Russia to cancel the contract for the sale of two French warships.
- France will fully refund Russia for the amount the country has already paid.
- The delivery of a Mistral-class warship to Russia was suspended last year over the Ukrainian crisis. A second French-built warship which was part of the deal was due to be delivered to Russia later this year.
- The 1.2 billion euros (\$1.3 billion) deal was supposed to be the biggest arms sale ever by a NATO country to Russia.
- As per a survey, the services sector returned to growth in July, after two consecutive months of contraction, as new orders witnessed a surge and hiring gathered pace to hit a two-year high rate.
- As per the Nikkei India Services Business Activity Index, the growth in the services sector increased to 50.8 in July from 47.7 in June, indicating the first rise in services activity in three months.
- Services activity rose primarily due to a renewed increase in new business orders. This upturn in incoming new work led Indian service providers to take on additional workers in July. Rate of employment rose at the fastest pace in two years.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Breakthrough in Cancer Cure

- In a medical breakthrough, two Indian scientists have discovered that dopamine, known as the happy hormone, can also kill tumours.
- The study was carried out by two Kolkata-born scientists Partha Dasgupta and Sujit Basu.
- According to the scientists, trials on mice have been successful, adding that if human trials succeed, cancer treatment will get significantly cheaper.
- According to the researchers, dopamine also starves cancerous tumours of blood, causing them to shrink and eventually vanish.

Largest Feature in Universe Found

- Astronomers have found what may be the largest feature in the known universe, a ring of nine gamma ray bursts and hence, galaxies five billion light years across.
- Gamma-ray bursts are the most luminous events in the universe, releasing as much energy in a few seconds as the Sun does over its 10 billion year lifetime.
- They are thought to be the result of massive stars collapsing into black holes. Their huge luminosity helps astronomers to map out the location of distant galaxies.
- The GRBs that make up the newly discovered ring were observed using a variety of space- and groundbased observatories.

7th August

AROUND THE WORLD

Egyptian President Inaugurates New Suez Canal

- Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi unveiled the new Suez Canal, seeking to boost the country's economy and international standing by expanding the vital waterway.
- The event in the port city of Ismailiya was attended by several heads of state, including French President Francois Hollande.
- The new section, built at a cost of \$9 billion (7.9 billion euros), runs part of the way alongside the existing canal connecting the Red Sea and the Mediterranean.
- Officials hope the new waterway will more than double Suez earnings from \$5.3 billion expected at the end of 2015 to \$13.2 billion in 2023.

Mediterranean Migrant Crossing in 2015

- As per the United Nations, some 224,000 migrants and refugees have crossed the Mediterranean to Europe so far this year.
- Nearly all of the people crossing the Mediterranean during the first seven months of the year, often in rickety boats and at the mercy of human traffickers, have landed in Greece and in Italy.
- Eritreans make up 12 percent of those landing on Europe's shores, followed by Afghans at 11 percent, Nigerians at 5 percent and Somalis at 4 percent.

INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY**Airtel Launches 4G Services across India**

- Becoming the first player to launch the fourth-generation mobile telephony across the country, Bharti Airtel began its high-speed data offering in 296 towns ahead of the much-awaited entry of rival Reliance Jio.
- Bharti Airtel, India's largest telecom group by sales, also plans to sell low-cost smartphones at a price as low as Rs. 4000.
- The company has 4G spectrum in 14 circles while Reliance Jio is the only player to have these airwaves in all the 22 telecom circles. Reliance Jio is expected to launch its 4G services towards the end of the year.
- Airtel also announced a tie-up with Samsung and Flipkart for offering 4G handsets.

Banks Can Shift, Merge Urban, Semi-urban Branches

- The Reserve Bank of India said banks can shift, merge or close urban and semi-urban branches without its approval. This is to allow greater operational freedom.
- Rural branches outside the block can also be shifted without prior approval of RBI.
- In a notification RBI said shifting, merger, or closure of any rural or sole semi urban branch would require approval of the District Consultative Committee/District Level Review Committee. The regulator further said that while doing these activities, banks have to ensure that banking needs continue to be met through either satellite offices/mobile vans or through business correspondents.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**ISRO to Launch American Satellites**

- Antrix Corporation, the commercial arm of Indian Space Research Organisation has signed deals to put nine American nano/micro satellites into orbit by the end of 2016.
- These include a couple of nano/micro US satellites which are likely to be launched by the ISRO this year as piggyback luggage on its own satellite.
- Generally, nano satellites are ones that weigh between 1-10 kg while micro satellites weigh from 10-100 kg.
- The Astrosat satellite is slated for launch in September. It will be launched using the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) rocket.

8th August**INDIA - BUSINESS AND ECONOMY****YES Bank Placed Rs. 315 Cr of Green Infrastructure Bond With IFC**

- YES Bank, India's 5th largest private sector bank, has raised Rs. 315 crore through the issue of Green Infrastructure Bonds to International Finance Corporation, Washington, member of World Bank Group on a private placement basis.
- This is the first investment by IFC in an Emerging Markets Green Bond issue in the World. The bonds are for a tenor of 10 years.
- The amount raised will be used by YES Bank, to finance Green Infrastructure Projects like solar power and wind power in the Renewable Energy space.

Rekha Menon to head Accenture India

- Rekha M. Menon will be the new chairperson of Accenture's India subsidiary from August 21, the global software major said.
- She is the US-based company's human resources managing director for growth markets, driving its human capital strategy for Asia-Pacific, West Asia, Africa, Russia, Turkey and Latin America.

Government to impose 10 per cent import duty on wheat

- Government has decided to impose 10 per cent import duty on wheat to discourage wheat importers, applicable from 31 March 2016 after the gap of eight years.
- This move was taken in wake of increased overseas purchase of wheat when adequate domestic stock is present in India.

INDIA - OTHERS**DRDO transfers Technology to L&T to develop Lakshya**

- Indian Multinational conglomerate Larsen and Toubro (L&T) is going to be the first to receive license for technology of full-scale system to make Lakshya from Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- Lakshya is a pilotless target aircraft developed by DRDO and L&T will get the technology for its digital version that to be sold to the armed forces.

9th August**AROUND THE WORLD****Obama Takes on pro-Israel Group**

- U.S. President Barack Obama gave a tough message for the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, or AIPAC, the powerful pro-Israel group that is furiously campaigning against the Iran nuclear accord.

- Obama accused AIPAC of spending millions of dollars in advertising against the deal and spreading false claims about it.
- In a speech Mr. Obama denounced the deal's opponents as "lobbyists" doling out millions of dollars to trumpet the same hawkish rhetoric that had led the U.S. into war with Iraq. The President never mentioned AIPAC by name.

EARTH MATTER**World's First Venomous Frogs**

- Scientists claimed to have discovered the world's first known venomous frogs with spikes on their heads in Brazil.
- Scientists have long known of poisonous frogs, but the two species of frog discovered in the wilds of Brazil have been found to be capable of injecting poison into predators using horns on their head.
- As per study even tiny amounts of these secretions introduced into a wound caused by the head spines could be dangerous and these frogs are capable of using their skin toxins as venoms against their would be predators.

INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY**BHEL Commissions Thermal Power**

- Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited has added one more coal-based power plant to the grid by successfully commissioning the 500 MW Unit-13 of Vindhyachal Super Thermal Power Station (STPS), Stage-V of NTPC. The project is located in Vindhyanagar in Singrauli district of Madhya Pradesh.
- Earlier BHEL had commissioned six units of 500 MW rating each, at Vindhyachal power station. With the commissioning of this unit, BHEL now has commissioned seven units of 500 MW each aggregating to 3,500 MW, the highest by BHEL in a power project.
- BHEL makes units of 500 MW rating class. Today BHEL has 76 units commissioned by it in the country.

TVS Motor to Wind up Two Overseas Entities

- TVS Motor Co. Ltd. (TVSM) has taken steps to wind up two of its wholly-owned subsidiaries. The axe will fall on TVS Motor Company (Europe) B.V. and Sundaram Business Development Consulting (Shanghai) Co. Ltd. (SBDC). At the same time, TVSM's other overseas entity, TVS Motor Singapore Pte. Ltd. would continue to hold the investment in PT TVS Motor Co. Indonesia (PT TVS). These entities were started a few years ago. During 2015-16, PT TVS plans to launch 200cc sports motorcycle and a new variant of its 110cc Dazz scooter with fuel injection systems.

INDIA – OTHERS**Mysuru Cleanest City**

- The city's USP as a tourist and investment destination is set to get a leg-up with Mysuru emerging as the cleanest city in the country under the Swachh Bharat scheme.
- It was ranked number 1 out of 476 towns and cities across the country in terms of total sanitation practices, extent of open defecation, solid waste management, water treatment etc.
- Besides Mysuru, Mandya, Hassan and Bengaluru also figure in the top 10 cities of India in the rankings. The Union Ministry of Urban Development surveyed 476 towns and cities for total sanitation practices covering a set of parameters, including the extent of open defecation, solid waste management, waste water treatment, drinking water quality, surface water quality etc.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**Signs of a Lake Found on Mars**

- Evidence of an ancient lake on Mars that likely represents some of the last potentially habitable surface water ever to exist on the red planet was discovered by researchers.
- An 18 square mile chloride salt deposit in the planet's Meridiani region near the Mars Opportunity rover's landing site was examined by researchers.
- Large-scale salt deposits are considered to be evidence of evaporated bodies of water.
- Researchers are pretty certain that this is one of the last instances of a sizeable lake on Mars.

10th August**AROUND THE WORLD****Iraq PM Calls for Sweeping Reforms**

- Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi proposed scrapping top government posts and privileges in an ambitious reform drive sparked by swelling popular anger over corruption and poor governance.
- The proposed reforms followed weeks of demonstrations and a call for tougher reform measures from Iraq's top Shiite cleric Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani.
- The cabinet approved the reform plan, but changes such as abolishing the posts would apparently require the Constitution to be amended, which would necessitate parliamentary action.

INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY**India Received \$24 Billion in FDI from EU**

- Despite the Free Trade Agreement talks with the European Union being in limbo, India has received an impressive \$24 billion in foreign direct investment from the 28-nation bloc over the last three years.
- As per official figures, India received \$6.23 billion in FDI equity inflow from EU in 2012-13 which increased

to \$9.06 billion the next year.

- The FDI inflow was \$8.20 billion in 2014-15. In 2015-16, the amount in first two months of current fiscal was \$1.39 billion.
- The EU has been India's largest trading partner and the two-way trade is likely to swell significantly if the countries could firm up the long-pending Free Trade Agreement.

Timex Sees India among Top 3 Global Markets

- US-based Timex group is betting big on sale of specialised watches and accessories in India and expects it to be among its top 3 markets globally within the next five years.
- India is the fastest growing market for the company and is already among its top five, with sales of Rs. 139.64 crore last fiscal.
- The company, year after year is seeing the category grow in double digits. Now, it will focus on tech accessories, sports and fitness and health and wellness segments. It expects India to become one of our top 3 global markets in 5 years.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

NASA Drones to Explore Moon and Mars

- NASA engineers are developing drones that can fly to areas which are inaccessible to rovers, such as the shaded region of a crater, on Mars, asteroids and Moon to gather samples.
- The flying robotic vehicles, designed for the thin atmosphere of Mars and the airless voids of asteroids and the Moon, would use a lander as a base to replenish batteries and propellants between flights.

11th August

AROUND THE WORLD

US Calls for Peace between Afghanistan and Pakistan

- The US has called for lowering of tension between Pakistan and Afghanistan and has asked leaders of both the countries to work together to combat violent extremism.
- The US Secretary of State called up President Ashraf Ghani to discuss situation on the ground in the aftermath of the series of terrorist attacks in Kabul over the last one week.
- As per the US, it is in the urgent interest of both countries to eliminate safe havens and to reduce the operational capacity of the Taliban on both sides of the border.

EARTH MATTER

UK Butterfly Species at Risk of Extinction

- Continuing climate change caused by carbon emissions from power stations and vehicles is set to have catastrophic consequences for British butterflies including currently widespread species such as the cabbage white and large skipper.
- As per researchers, the increase in extreme droughts as global warming takes hold will cause six species of UK butterflies to be lost from several areas of the country as soon as mid-century.

INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY

RBI Net Dollar Purchase Touches \$565 Million

- The Reserve Bank has remained the net buyer of the US currency in June with it net purchase USD 565 million from the spot market.
- The central bank bought USD 5.530 billion from the market, while it sold USD 4.965 billion in the reporting month.
- The net amount purchased in June was much lower than it did in April and May.
- RBI intervention in the foreign exchange market is aimed at curbing volatility in the currency market.

Domestic Car Sales up in July

- The car sales rose by 17.47 per cent in July, the highest in three months, to 1.62 lakh units helped by Maruti and Honda, but rural market dependent motorcycles and LCVs continued to skid.
- This marks the ninth consecutive month of domestic sales growth for passenger cars and a strong rebound from a modest rise of just 1.5 per cent in June.
- According to the data released by the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers, domestic passenger car sales in July stood at 1,62,022 units as against 1,37,922 in the same month of the previous year.

INDIA – OTHERS

Govt. To File Complaint against Nestle

- The Department of Consumer Affairs is all set to file a complaint against Nestle over the Maggi issue in the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission.
- According to sources, the complaint is to be filed on the basis of unfair trade practices and misleading advertisements and the government may seek financial penalties among other actions.
- Usually, NCDRC comes into play following complaints filed by a consumer, but a section of this Act of 1986 also provides for the government to register a complaint.
- For the first time, government is taking action under Section 12-1-D of the Consumer Protection Act, under which both Centre and states have powers to file complaints.

INFOTAINMENT**Gagan Narang in First Air Rifle Final of World Event**

- Indian shooter Gagan Narang missed out on a podium finish after reaching his first final of men's air rifle event in a global event since winning the London Olympics bronze medal, at the ISSF World Cup.
- Having qualified for the 8-man final in 8th position, Narang improved three positions and finished fifth.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**New Braille Smartwatch**

- An affordable Braille smartwatch which allows the visually impaired to receive and read text messages in real time and even read e-books has been developed by a South Korean startup.
- The smartwatch, named Dot, relays the time with a set of pins that rise and fall. Users will be able to receive and read text messages in real time, read e-books and even learn Braille.
- When it comes to watches for the visually impaired, there are not many devices that use real-time Braille text and the ones that do typically cost thousands of dollars.

Protogalaxy 10 Billion Light-years Away

- Astronomers have discovered a giant protogalaxy 10 billion light-years away, and found that it is about four times larger in diameter than our Milky Way.
- Using the Caltech-designed and built Cosmic Web Imager, researchers imaged the protogalaxy and found that it is connected to a filament of intergalactic medium, the cosmic web made of diffuse gas that crisscrosses between galaxies and extends throughout the universe.
- The finding provides the strongest observational support yet for what is known as the cold-flow model of galaxy formation. That model holds that in the early universe, relatively cool gas funneled down from the cosmic web directly into galaxies, fueling rapid star formation.

12th August**AROUND THE WORLD****Sundar Pichai Named Google's New CEO**

- India-born Sundar Pichai will be the new CEO of Google under a major restructuring at the technology giant.
- Co-founder Page announced the formation of a new parent company Alphabet Inc which will replace Google as the publicly-traded entity and all shares of Google will automatically convert into the same number of shares of Alphabet, with all of the same rights.
- Google will become a wholly-owned subsidiary of Alphabet, which will have Page as CEO and co-founder Sergey Brin as President.

Japan Ends Nuclear Shutdown

- Japan switched on a nuclear reactor, ending a two-year shutdown in the country that was sparked by public fears following the 2011 Fukushima crisis, the worst atomic disaster in a generation.
- The reactor, operating under tougher post-Fukushima safety rules, is expected to start generating power by Friday.
- The restart comes more than four years after a quake-generated tsunami triggered meltdowns at the Fukushima plant, prompting the shutdown of Japan's stable of reactors and setting off a pitched battle over the future use of atomic power.

EARTH MATTER**Rare White Humpback Whale Spotted**

- A rare white humpback whale was sighted north of Australia's Gold Coast.
- There was speculation whether it was the world famous white whale called Migaloo. This beast was first spotted in 1991, and until recently was the only known albino humpback, among a population of about 23,000 whales that pass by the Gold Coast on their way from Antarctica to warmer waters to the north.
- But Sea World marine sciences director Trevor Long confirmed that it was another albino mammal.

INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY**State Bank of India Q1 Net Profit Rises**

- State Bank of India reported a 5.9 percent increase in net profit at Rs. 4,713.57 crore for the first quarter ended June on the back of a decline in bad loans.
- The bank registered a consolidated net profit of Rs. 4,448.15 crore in the same quarter last year.
- The bank's provisions for bad loans fell to Rs. 3,358.58 crore as against Rs. 3,903.41 crore in the yearago period.
- Its gross non-performing assets (NPAs) dropped to 4.29 percent of total advances at the end of June.

INDIA – OTHERS**Government Seeks Rs. 640 crore from Nestle**

- The consumer affairs department filed a complaint against food major Nestle India with the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission seeking damages of Rs. 640 crore alleging that the company sold unsafe and hazardous products, Maggi noodles, to millions of consumers endangering their health. It has also alleged the company indulged in misleading and deceptive advertisements and also resorted to unfair trade practices to earn unjust profits.

- NCDRC on behalf of consumers has appealed to the apex commission to direct Nestle India to deposit the amount in Consumer Welfare Fund as permissible under the Consumer Protection Act.

INFOTAINMENT**Sania Mirza to be Awarded Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna**

- Sania Mirza is set to be awarded the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award.
- It is a new feather in the cap for the women's doubles player who is ranked No. 1 in the world.
- Mirza's has already been conferred with Arjuna Award in 2004 and Padma Shri in 2006.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**ISS Cosmonauts Successfully Complete Spacewalk**

- Two Russian cosmonauts serving aboard the International Space Station completed a spacewalk without incident.
- Gennady Padalka and Mikhail Kornienko spent 5 hours, 31 minutes outside the craft.
- Padalka, made his ninth spacewalk, while it was the second excursion for Kornienko.

13th August**AROUND THE WORLD****North Korea Slams South-US Drill**

- North Korea condemned a looming South Korea-US joint military exercise as a declaration of war and boasted of its ability to make retaliatory strikes against Seoul and the White House.
- It is one of a number of annual joint drills that Washington and Seoul insist are purely defensive in nature, but which Pyongyang condemns as provocative rehearsals for a full-scale attack on the nuclear-armed North Korea.

INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY**Azim Premji, Shiv Nadar among World's Richest Tech People**

- According to an inaugural list by Forbes, Wipro Chairman Azim Premji and HCL founder Shiv Nadar are the only two Indian tycoons in the top 20 richest people in the world of technology.
- The list has been topped by Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates. Premji is ranked 13th followed by Nadar on the 14th spot.
- Two Indian-origin technology czars Romesh Wadhvani and Bharat Desai are also in the list. As per Forbes, Premji who has a net worth of USD 17.4 billion is among Asia's most generous tycoons, having given away more than USD four billion of his fortune. Nadar has a net worth of USD 14.4 billion and gets bulk of his wealth from software services outfit HCL Technologies.

Retail Inflation at Record Low

- Retail inflation fell to a record low of 3.78 percent in July and industrial production hit a 4-month high of 3.8 percent in June, which may add to the clamour for interest rate cut by RBI.
- Retail inflation rose by 3.78 percent year-on-year in July, slowest pace on record, helped by lower food prices of certain items including of vegetables, fruits and cereals.
- The twin macro-economic indicators strengthen the government's and industry's call to Raghuram Rajan to cut interest rates.

INDIA – OTHERS**India Suffers as the US, Russia and China Oppose UNSC Reform Talks**

- In a setback to India's bid for a permanent seat in an expanded UN Security Council, the US, along with Russia and China have opposed negotiations to reform the powerful UN body, refusing to contribute to a text that will form the basis for the long-drawn reform process.
- India has received support from France and the UK, the two remaining permanent members of Security Council. The two nations along with Kazakhstan and Romania have specifically named in the negotiating text Brazil, Germany, India, Japan and an African representation to be included among the permanent members of a reformed UNSC.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**Smallest Super Massive Black Hole**

- Astronomers using NASA's Chandra X-ray Observatory have identified the smallest super-massive black hole ever detected in the centre of a galaxy.
- It is estimate that this super massive black hole is about 50,000 times the mass of the sun.
- This is less than half the mass of the previous smallest black hole at the centre of a galaxy.

14th August**AROUND THE WORLD****Myanmar Ruling Party Chief Sacked**

- Shwe Mann has been sacked from his post of chairman of Myanmar's ruling Union Solidarity and Development Party amid a power struggle.
- The USDP offices were surrounded by security forces to prevent officials from leaving. Myanmar will hold elections after three months which will be the first since democratic reforms that began in 2011. Mann is

believed to have been discussing an alliance with opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

EARTH MATTER**Toxic Blue-green Algae Pose Increasing Threat**

- According to a report, blooms of toxic cyanobacteria, or blue-green algae, are a poorly monitored and underappreciated risk to recreational and drinking water quality in the United States, and may increasingly pose a global health threat.
- Several factors are contributing to the concern. Temperatures and carbon dioxide levels have risen, many rivers have been dammed worldwide, and wastewater nutrients or agricultural fertilizers in various situations can cause problems in rivers, lakes and reservoirs.
- As per researchers, the problems with these toxins reach their peak during the heat of summer.

INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY**RBI Pays Dividend to Government**

- The Reserve Bank of India paid a dividend of nearly Rs. 66,000 crore to the government, the highest ever from the central bank in its 80-year history, and 22% more than it paid last year. On a point to point basis, RBI's dividend payment to the government is up more than four times.
- This payment will help ease the government's finances, meet its fiscal deficit targets, provide liquidity to the system so that the rate of interest remains low and also make available funds for the government's capital expenditure.
- The RBI has several sources of income. The three main sources of income are the coupon payments it gets on its holding of government securities, the interest it receives from banks which borrow money from it (repo operations) and also interest incomes on its holdings of sovereign bonds like US treasury bills etc.

The Third Tranche of Coal Auctions

- In the third tranche of coal auctions, the government kitty swell by a total of Rs. 4,364 crore, including Rs. 1,835 crore from Majra mine in Maharashtra for which Jaypee Cement emerged as the highest bidder.
- On the first day the government auctioned two blocks in Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra, which fetched Rs. 2,529 crore.
- The Majra coal mine has extractable reserves of 14.92 million tonnes.

ONGC Q1 Net Jumps 14%

- State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC) reported over 14 per cent jump in its June quarter net profit as its fuel subsidy outgo reduced and oil output rose.
- Net profit in April-June period at Rs. 5,460 crore was up 14.2 per cent from Rs. 4,782 crore in the year ago quarter.
- The major gain came from the reduction in its fuel subsidy outgo.

INDIA – OTHERS**NDRF Gets First Woman Commander**

- The country's national disaster combat force, NDRF, has appointed Rekha Nambiar a woman as its first commanding officer of a full operational battalion.
- The 4th Battalion of NDRF based in Arakkonam in Tamil Nadu will now be commanded by senior Commandant Rekha Nambiar. She had who recently joined the force on deputation from the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF).
- The NDRF unit based in Arakkonam is tasked with responding to disasters primarily in south India but in case of emergency, it can be airlifted to any part of the country.

INFOTAINMENT**World Badminton Championships**

- India's P. V. Sindhu stunned Olympic champion Li Xuerui of China to enter the World Championship quarter-final.
- Saina Nehwal beat Japan's Sayaka Takahashi in straight sets to enter quarters.
- Sindhu will next take on Sung Ji-hyun of South Korea.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**Young Jupiter Discovered**

- Astronomers have discovered a planet 100 light years away that looks a lot like Jupiter once did and may offer new insights on how planets are formed.
- Known as 51 Eridani b, it is the first exoplanet detected by a new instrument called the Gemini Planet Imager.
- The star it circles, 51 Eridani, is just 20 million years old, fairly young considering the Sun is about 4.5 billion years old.
- The planet is twice the size of Jupiter, the largest planet in our solar system. It contains the strongest methane signature ever detected in the atmosphere of an alien planet.
- Its temperature is estimated to be about 800 degrees Fahrenheit.

15th August**INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY**

- Axis Bank launched the First Multi-Currency Contactless Card service in India
- India's third largest private sector lender, Axis Bank has launched the first Contactless Debit, Credit and Multi-Currency Forex Card in association with VISA payWave in the country.
- To facilitate contactless cards operations bank will upgrade 50,000, of its point of sale (PoS) machines across the country.

INFOTAINMENT**Assam passed Witch Hunting Bill, 2015**

- Assam state legislature has passed Assam Witch Hunting (Prohibition, Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2015.
- This law was prepared in order to reign in the rising incidents of witch hunting cases across the state.
- Boxing Coach Swatantra Raj Singh recommended for Dronacharya Award 2015
- Boxing Coach Swatantra Raj Singh has been recommended for the prestigious life time achievement Dronacharya award 2015.
- Along with Singh, Nihar Amin (Swimming) and Harbans Singh (Athletics) also have been chosen for this year's Dronacharya award.

The Founder of Hero Cycle Om Prakash Munjal Passed Away

- The founder of Hero Cycle and a leading industrialist Om Prakash Munjal breathed his last in the DMC Hero Heart Centre, Ludhiana.
- He was 87.

16th August**AROUND THE WORLD****Greek Faces Revolt after Eurozone Approves Bailout**

- Greek Prime Minister battled a major revolt amongst members of his radical-left party who opposed the third huge bailout for the crisis-hit country.
- Finance ministers from the 19-member eurozone approved a package of 86 billion euros (USD 96 billion) that Greece will receive over three years in exchange for far-reaching pro-market reforms. The green light for the deal, designed to stop Athens from defaulting on its huge debts and crashing out of the euro, came after the Greece parliament voted through the agreement after a bitter debate.
- As per Tsipras the bailout was in Greece's best interests. The agreement will advance Greece by making its financial system more stable.

EARTH MATTER**Godzilla El Nino the Worst One till Date**

- Scientists have predicted a 'Godzilla El Nino,' which will be worse than all the previous El Ninos is already happening.
- Scientists and meteorologists, who have been monitoring sea surface temperatures since March, have agreed that the world was in the midst of an El Nino.
- They have also said that this El Nino had the potential to be the most powerful on record.
- El Nino is the warm phase of the El Niño Southern Oscillation (commonly called ENSO) and is associated with a band of warm ocean water that develops in the central and east-central equatorial Pacific.

INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY**SEBI Notifies Norms for Startups**

- To aid fund-raising by technology-driven startups from the public market, SEBI notified easier norms for companies from sectors like IT, data analytics, biotechnology and nanotechnology to list on a special platform where only investors who can take higher risks can trade.
- The startup platform will be a combination of existing institutional trading platforms and some of the rules of the main trading platforms of the BSE and the NSE where most of the stocks are currently traded.
- The changed norms will allow significant relaxations in terms of disclosure requirements, and easier delisting and takeover rules. The changes are aimed at encouraging Indian startups to look at raising funds from within India and not moving abroad for funds.

Wholesale Inflation Lowest Since 1976

- Wholesale prices plunged for the ninth consecutive month in July on the back of a decline in food and fuel prices, raising prospects of a cut in interest rates to give a push to growth. This was the lowest level of the inflation based on wholesale price index (WPI) since 1976. According to economists, is the longest stretch of negative wholesale prices in the country since 1975. WPI inflation was in negative zone for 12 months between July 1975 and June 1976.
- Data released by the commerce ministry showed the wholesale inflation fell 4.05% in July compared to a decline of 2.40% for the previous month and 5.41% during the corresponding month of the previous year.

INDIA – OTHERS**Kerala India's First Complete Digital State**

- Chief Minister Oommen Chandy declared Kerala as a 'complete digital state' and announcement of a new

youth programme in memory of former President, the late A. P. J. Abdul Kalam on the Independence Day.

- The state has achieved 100 per cent mobile density, 75 per cent e-literacy, highest digital banking rate and broadband connection up to panchayat level.
- Wi-fi hotspots would be in all local self government institutions and implement complete mobile governance in the next phase to achieve the best results of the Digital Kerala initiative.

INFOTAINMENT

Saina Nehwal Enters World Championships Final

- Saina Nehwal became first Indian to enter the final of World Badminton Championships.
- The second-seeded Indian wrapped up the women's singles second semi-final in 55 minutes.
- She will play top-ranked and defending champion Carolina Marin of Spain in the final.

17th August

AROUND THE WORLD

Brazilians Demand Resignation of Dilma Rousseff

- Hundreds of thousands of protesters demanded Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff's resignation, blaming her and the leftist Workers' Party for runaway corruption and looming recession in Latin America's biggest country.
- It was the third major anti-Rousseff protest this year. The first was in April and then in March.
- As per spokesman Edinho, the government sees these demonstrations as part of normal democracy. These are dark days for Brazil, which hosts the Summer Olympics in Rio next year.

- Brazil is the seventh-largest economy of the world and its economy is sliding into recession, its credit rating reduced to near junk status.

INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY

NITI Aayog Offers 30% hike to Attract Talent

- To attract talent, NITI Aayog has proposed paying over 30 percent more than the pay scale offered by the erstwhile Planning Commission to young professionals on its payrolls.
- NITI Aayog being seen as one of the most ambitious projects of the Modi government to overhaul governance and policymaking practices in the country.
- Inviting applications from 'young professionals', NITI Aayog has now offered salaries in the range of Rs. 40,000-70,000 per month, along with an annual increment of Rs. 5,000 in the monthly pay.
- This is more than 30 percent higher than the pay package of Rs. 31,500-51,500 offered by the erstwhile Planning Commission for such young professionals.
- NITI Aayog has also brought down the age limit for such positions to 32 years, from 40 years prescribed earlier by the Planning Commission.

RIL Loses most Profitable Tag

- Within two quarters of losing its 23-year-old reign as the country's most profitable company to TCS in the December quarter, Reliance Industries was again humbled in the June quarter by Indian Oil this time.
- The state-run firm booked Rs. 118 crore more profit than the Mukesh Ambani-run firm net income of Rs. 6,318 crore.
- IOC's refining margins soared to a seven-year high during the reporting quarter.
- The third most profitable company in the June quarter was Tata Consultancy Services with net income at Rs 5,684 crore for the June quarter.
- Till FY14, ONGC was the undisputed leader in the profitability rung when it had reported a whopping Rs. 26,506.53 crore net income.

INDIA – OTHERS

Cochin International Airport to be Fully Solar Powered

- Cochin International Airport Limited is all set to become the first airport in the country that will operate on solar power.
- When the photovoltaics panels laid across 45 acres near cargo complex become functional, Cochin Airport will have 50,000 to 60,000 units of electricity per day to be consumed for all its operational functions, which will technically make the airport absolutely power neutral.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Cells in Mice Restore Liver Damage

- In a breakthrough discovery, medical researchers have discovered a type of cell in mice which restores liver damage without the risk of cancer.
- Similar cells have also been found in humans.
- When healthy liver cells are depleted by long-term exposure to toxic chemicals, the newly discovered cells, known as hybrid hepatocytes, generate new tissue more efficiently than normal liver cells.

18th August

AROUND THE WORLD

South Sudan Government Refused to Sign a Peace Deal

- As per news, South Sudan's government refused to sign a peace deal with rebels despite the threat of

international sanctions, but will return to finalise an agreement within 15 days.

- Rebel chief Riek Machar had signed a deal and called on President Salva Kiir to join. As per Machar it was an opportunity to end the war.
- Machar signed a deal, along with the secretary-general of the ruling party Pagan Amum, but mediators said he was not representing the government.

EARTH MATTER

World's most Beautiful and Expensive Gem Stone

- The world's most exquisite and precious opal was unearthed in the mining region of South Australia. This rare multicoloured opal called the 'Virgin Rainbow' is being touted as the most beautiful gem stone ever.
- It is worth more than \$1 million and was formed over millions of years from the opalized fossils of dinosaurs. Opal is created when water and silica mix together to form a gel that flows into rocks and fossils.
- The gem will make its public debut at an exhibition in September.

Central Asian Glaciers

- Mountain glaciers in Central Asia have shrunk four times faster than the world average, threatening river flows vital for agriculture and hydro power from Uzbekistan to western China.
- According to a study, global warming is likely to quicken the thaw in the vast Tien Shan range in coming years, melting half the remaining ice by the 2050s.
- A local rise in temperatures, perhaps linked to climate change in the North Pacific and North Atlantic Oceans, means ever more precipitation is falling as rain in summertime on the Tien Shan, eroding glacier ice.
- The Tien Shan range, whose glaciers contain about seven times the amount of ice as the Alps or a third of the Himalayas, stretches 2,500 km through Central Asia.

INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY

IndiGo Confirms Largest Global Order

- In the largest aircraft acquisition, Indian carrier IndiGo firmed up an order to purchase 250 narrow-body A320 Neo planes worth over USD 25.5 billion, as per list prices, with European manufacturer Airbus.
- The carrier had earlier too placed orders of 100 A-320s in 2005 and another 180 A-320 neos in 2011 worth about USD 11 billion, which was the largest-ever at that time.
- The A320 Neo comes with many features.

Birla Corp Buys Lafarge's Two Units

- Harsh Lodha led Birla Corporation has acquired Lafarge India's two cement units in the eastern region in a deal valued at Rs 5,000 crore. It will mark the biggest M&A play in the Kolkata-based company's centuryold history and make it a stronger rival to Kumar Mangalam Birla's UltraTech Cement.
- The Lafarge acquisition, subject to regulatory approvals, will cement Birla Corporation's rank among the top 10 players in the country with an annual capacity of 15 million tonnes. Lafarge's two cement units have a total capacity of 5.5 million tonnes with mineral rights over adequate reserves of limestone, while Birla Corporation has a capacity of 10 million tonnes with units in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. The deal will be funded via a combination of internal accruals and debt.

INDIA – OTHERS

Indian Universities Fail Global Test

- According to the 2015 Academic Ranking of World Universities released by Shanghai Jiao Tong University, only one Indian university has made it to the top 500 university rankings. The lone Indian entry, Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore, ranks as low as between 301-400.
- More than 1,200 universities are ranked by ARWU every year and the best 500 are published.
- Eight universities in the top 10 alone are from the US with two being UK-based.
- Harvard University remains the number one in the world for the 13th year with the other top 10 universities being Stanford, MIT, Berkeley, Cambridge, Princeton, Caltech, Columbia, Chicago and Oxford.

19th August

AROUND THE WORLD

Mahinda Rajapaksa Concedes Defeat

- Former Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa conceded defeat even before the official announcement of the results.
- The Rajapaksa-led UPFA was defeated by the United National Party, led by incumbent Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe.
- As per Rajapaksa, his dream of becoming Prime Minister has faded away.

EU Migrant Crisis

- According to new figures, a record 107,500 migrants crossed the European Union's borders last month, arriving in dramatically increasing numbers and creating a humanitarian crisis for the 28-nation bloc.

- As per the EU border agency, the latest figures far outstripped the previous monthly record in June of 70,000.
- This is an emergency situation for Europe that requires all EU member states to step in to support the national authorities who are taking on a massive number of migrants at its borders.
- The EU has approved 2.4 billion euros (\$2.6 billion) of funding to help member states cope with the flood of migrants.

EARTH MATTER**Global warming Halts Ocean Cooling**

- New research shows that global warming caused by human activities has halted the 1,800 years of steady cooling trend in the oceans of the world.
- Today, the Earth is warming about 20 times faster than it cooled during the past 1,800 years.
- This study highlights the profound effects we are having on our climate today.

INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY**India's Turn to Become Factory of the World**

- As per a Chinese media, it is now India's turn to emerge as the factory of the world, citing the economic downturn in China forcing companies to turn to India for manufacturing.
- Plans from Xiaomi and Foxconn to invest in India point to strong movement of Chinese firms to cash on growing Indian market.
- Xiaomi Corp. launched its first made-in-India handset a week ago while its Redmi 2 Prime is being assembled by Taiwanese contract manufacturer Foxconn which has signed an agreement worth USD five billion to expand its R&D facilities in India.

ICICI Bank Launches Digital Locker

- ICICI Bank launched the first of its kind fully automated digital locker, which would be available to customers even on weekends and post banking hours. The locker named 'Smart Vault', is equipped with multi-layer security system, including biometric and PIN authentication and debit cards, among others. Customers can access it without any intervention by the branch staff.
- The 'Smart Vault' is an example of 'Make In India' programme as it has been designed and manufactured by Indian partners.
- The vault uses robotic technology to access the lockers from the safe vault and enables customers to access their lockers at any time.

Moody's Cuts India's Growth Forecast

- Moody's Investors Service cut its forecast for India's economic growth to around 7 percent this year from 7.5% because of lower than expected rainfalls in the ongoing monsoon season.
- Moody's maintained its forecast of around 7.5 percent increase in gross domestic product (GDP) for 2016, but pointed to risks ahead that include delays to the government's reform plans.
- Moody's rates India at its lowest investment grade rating of Baa3.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**Cassini Spacecraft Zip past Saturn's Moon Dione**

- NASA's Cassini spacecraft zipped past Saturn's moon Dione for its last time, in search of direct evidence that the moon is geologically alive and active.
- During its mission to Saturn, Cassini has flown close to the icy moon Dione four times.
- Cassini's cameras and spectrometers will offer NASA scientists a high-resolution look at Dione's North Pole from this flyby. The data will give scientists better knowledge of the moon's internal structure.
- Cassini's closest-ever flyby of Dione was in December 2011, at a distance of 60 miles.

20th August**AROUND THE WORLD****Nigeria to End Boko Haram Insurgency**

- The Nigerian government has set a three-month deadline for ending the Boko Haram insurgency that has claimed more than 10,000 lives and displaced millions in the West African nation.
- National Security Adviser visited the forces undertaking security operations and gave them orders to wipe out the militants.
- The Nigerian President also met leaders of Chad, Niger and Cameroon to discuss the ongoing joint offensive against the Boko Haram militants.

First Tranche of Greek Bailout Funds

- Eurozone finance ministers formally approved the first tranche of a new 86 billion euro (\$95-billion) bailout for Greece after parliaments in member states backed the rescue-for-reforms deal.
- According to a report, Greece will receive a sum of 23 billion euros that will allow Athens to make a loan repayment of 3.4 billion euros due to the European Central Bank.
- In a breakdown of the first tranche, 10 billion euros will be placed in a fund to recapitalise Greek banks while another 13 billion euros will be partly used to repay the loan to the ECB and a bridging loan of 7.16 billion euros, which the EU granted to Athens in July to allow it to honour previous commitments to the

ECB and the IMF.

INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY**RBI Clears 11 Payments Banks**

- The Reserve Bank of India 'in principle' cleared 11 entities, department of posts, top conglomerates such as Reliance Industries and Aditya Birla Group, telecom giants like Airtel and Vodafone, and a number of tech and finance companies, to set up payments banks.
- Ever since the first round of bank nationalization in 1969, only two private business groups have been allowed to promote a bank. Although most corporate houses had applied for a universal bank licence, only IDFC and Bandhan Microfinance being granted licences earlier this year.
- The new payments bank to be set up by the department of posts will have access to the 1.55 lakh post offices across the country. State Bank of India will pick up a 30% stake in RIL's bank which will use Reliance Jio's 4G network to provide banking services. Airtel has the backing of Kotak Bank, which will hold a 19.9% stake in the proposed bank.
- The in-principle approval granted will be valid for a period of 18 months, during which the applicants have to comply with the requirements under the guidelines and fulfil the other conditions as may be stipulated by RBI. On being satisfied that the applicants have complied with the requisite conditions laid down by it as part of in-principle approval, RBI would grant a banking licence.

Adani Group in Talks with Softbank and Foxconn

- Adani Group is in talks with Japan's Softbank and Foxconn to secure investment in a \$3 billion project to make solar cells and panels in the country.
- Softbank, Foxconn and Bharti Enterprises have already pledged to invest about \$20 billion in solar projects in India. A new deal with Adani, one of the country's largest conglomerates, would boost efforts to promote manufacturing and create sorely needed jobs.

Telenor to Bid for 3G in Next Auctions

- Norwegian telecom major Telenor will bid for 3G spectrum in the next round of auctions in India just as the company eyes expansion through mergers and acquisitions (M&As).
- The company, which operates in India under the Uninor brand and has operations in six telecom circles, is also actively looking at boosting its network capacity by striking spectrum sharing arrangements.
- Uninor, which only offers 2G services so far, had participated in the spectrum auctions earlier this year too, but failed to buy airwaves.
- Uninor, which pitches its services on the 'lowest-price' plank, operates in UP (West), UP (East), Bihar (including Jharkhand), Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat. It will soon begin services in Assam.

INDIA – OTHERS**Karnal Singh Gets Additional Charge**

- Senior IPS officer Karnal Singh was given additional charge as chief of Enforcement Directorate (ED).
- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved assigning the additional charge of the post of Enforcement Director to Singh for a period of three months.
- Singh is now working as Special Director, Centre Region in ED, under the Department of Revenue.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**Japan Cargo Ship Embarks on ISC**

- An unmanned cargo ship blasted off from southern Japan with food, water and gear needed to keep the research station and its crew functioning.
- It will take the capsule five days to reach the station.
- In addition to refilling the station's pantries, HTV carries spacesuit gear, water filters, a galley and science instruments, including a telescope to measure cosmic rays, particles with the highest energy in the universe.

21st August**AROUND THE WORLD****World's Richest Individual under 35**

- As per Wealth-X report, Facebook co-founder and Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg is the wealthiest individual under the age of 35, with a personal fortune of \$41.6 billion.
- Zuckerberg is joined on the list by fellow Facebook co-founders Dustin Moskovitz, who claimed the second place on the list with an estimated net worth of \$9.3 billion and Eduardo Saverin who was ranked fourth with an estimated net of \$5.3 billion.
- The top-20 list features only six women.
- Huiyan Yang, the Vice Chairman of Chinese real estate developer Country Garden Holdings, is the richest woman on the list, taking the third spot with an estimated net worth of \$5.9 billion.
- The top-10 wealthiest individuals under the age of 35 also include Scott Duncan (5th), Elizabeth A Holmes (6th), Nathan Blecharczyk (7th), Brian Chesky (8th), Joe Gebbia (9th) and Thomas Persson (10th).

Greek PM Resigns

- Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras resigned, hoping to strengthen his hold on power in snap elections after seven months in office.
- Tsipras submitted his resignation to President Prokopis Pavlopoulos and asked for the earliest possible election date.
- A snap election should allow Tsipras to capitalise on his popularity with Greek voters before the toughest parts of the programme begin to bite, and may allow him to return to power in a stronger position without anti-bailout rebels in Syriza to slow him down.

INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY**SEBI Bars 59 Companies from Market**

- Market regulator SEBI banned 59 entities, including some high net worth individuals from the stock market for using the equity derivatives contracts on the exchanges for illegal trades to avoid taxes worth crores and also convert black money into white.
- SEBI's investigations found that, through a series of synchronized trades, several related entities notched up trading losses and gains, most of which happened during the last quarter of the financial year. The suspicion is that these trades were done to avoid paying taxes on trading profits these entities had earned through the financial year that ended in March 2015.

Signs of Revival in Urban Consumption

- Urban consumption growth appears to be showing signs of improvement, with the fastest-growing segments for the top 200 cities being multiplexes, retail apparel and quick-service restaurants. Not only consumption patterns, job opportunities and financial infrastructure have also shown a revival over a four-year period since March 2011.
- Financial infrastructure has been the fastest-growing segment among the three indices, with ATMs being the key driver for the strong growth.
- Multiplexes are the fastest-growing consumption segment, multiplex penetration has increased to about 65% from 30% in 2011 in the top 200 cities.

INDIA – OTHERS**Rajasthan Local Body Polls**

- BJP won majority in 66 civic bodies including the Ajmer Municipal Corporation, while the Congress bagged 35 of them in the Rajasthan civic body polls.
- The 129 civic bodies, encompassing a total of 3,351 wards, in the state had gone to polls on August 17.
- In a neck-and-neck electoral race, ruling BJP won 1,443 out of the total of 3,351 wards while opposition parties including Congress and Independents bagged 1,908 wards.
- In the final tally of results, out of 3,351 wards in the civic bodies including the Ajmer Municipal Corporation, BJP won 1,443 wards, Congress 1,164, Independents 703, NCP 19, BSP 16, CPI 5 and CPM 1 ward.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**Planet three Times Large than Jupiter Discovered**

- An astronomer Maritza Soto has discovered a planet three times as large as Jupiter orbiting a red giant star larger than the Sun and located some 290 million light years from Earth.
- Last November, Soto, 25, discovered the planet now bearing the designation HD110014b.
- The discovery of planets orbiting red giant stars is rare, with only five such planets located around stars of that kind to date.

22nd August**AROUND THE WORLD****Ranil Wickremesinghe Sworn in PM of Sri Lanka**

- Ranil Wickremesinghe has sworn-in as the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka for fourth time.
- He was administered the oath of office by President Maithripala Sirisena at the oath taking ceremony held at Presidential Secretariat in Colombo.

EARTH MATTERS**July was the hottest month in history: US Scientists**

- The world broke new heat records in July, marking the hottest month in history and the warmest first seven months of the year since modern record-keeping began in 1880, US authorities said.
- The findings by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration showed a troubling trend, as the planet continues to warm due to the burning of fossil fuels, and scientists expect the scorching temperatures to get worse.

INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY**Bharti Airtel, Uber signed pact for free 4G Internet on the go**

- US-based taxi-hailing app Uber has signed an agreement with telecom major Bharti Airtel to offer free high-speed Internet in its cabs across the country.
- Besides, Airtel will also become Uber's official telecom partner across India by offering mobile, data and device plans to Uber driver-partners. The service, which has been launched in Mumbai, will soon be extended to other cities.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**US Scientists Grew Replica of Human Brain in a Laboratory**

- Scientists from United States (US) have successfully grown a replica of a human brain in a laboratory dish.
- This medical breakthrough research was undertaken team of researchers from Ohio State University led by Professor Rene Anand.
- Bizarre Bat with Longest Tongue Discovered in Bolivian Park
- The groundbreaking Bolivian scientific expedition, Identidad Madidi, has found a bizarre bat along with a new species of big-headed or robber frog (*Oreobates sp. nov.*) from the Craugastoridae family in Madidi National Park.
- The researchers found the bizarre tube-lipped nectar bat (*Anoura fistulata*) -- the first record of this species in the park.
- It has the longest tongue in relation to its size of any mammal -- stretching 8.5 cm to reach into the deepest flowers.

23rd August**AROUND THE WORLD****North and South Korea Resume Crisis Talks**

- North and South Korea resumed top-level talks to avoid a threatened military clash, even as Seoul accused Pyongyang of undermining the process with provocative naval and land deployments.
- The North is adopting a two-faced stance with the talks going on.
- As per Analysts, the decision to keep talking is a positive sign, with the presidential Blue House in Seoul saying the two sides would "continue to narrow down differences."

INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY**Shah Panel's Recommendation on MAT**

- As per Union Minister of State for Finance Jayant Sinha, the A.P. Shah Committee's recommendation to grant relief to foreign institutional investors (FIIs) on Minimum Alternate Tax (MAT) will be a positive for the market.
- As per the Shah report, the Minimum Alternate Tax (for the period before April 1, 2015) issue should be resolved quickly, which will be positive for the market.
- The panel was set up to resolve the dispute between FIIs and the government after notices were served to 68 FIIs by the Income Tax Department demanding Rs. 602 crore as MAT dues.

Foreign Reserves Grow

- After two weeks of consecutive falls due to plunging gold prices and international currency devaluations, India's foreign exchange (Forex) reserves gained \$1.08 billion in the week ended August 14.
- The reserves for the week under review stood at \$354.43 billion after falling by \$321.1 million since July 31.
- The FCA which constitutes the largest component of Forex reserves includes nearly 20-25 percent of nondollar currencies, securities and bonds bought abroad.
- The major catalyst for the earlier FCA losses was the devaluation of yuan, intended to boost Chinese exports.

INDIA – OTHERS**Bengal Tops Human Trafficking List**

- The highest number of cases of human trafficking in the country is from West Bengal, which alone accounts for 20 per cent of all reported cases in India.
- According to the latest data released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), 5,466 cases of human trafficking were recorded in the country in 2014 of which 1,096 were from West Bengal.
- Tamil Nadu recorded the second highest number of 509 cases, less than half of what has been registered in West Bengal.
- Under the category of human trafficking, crimes under Section 370/ 370 A of Indian Penal Code include bringing girls from abroad and procuring, buying and selling girls for prostitution.
- West Bengal also accounts for the bulk of cases relating to procuring minor girls.

INFOTAINMENT**Aditi Ashok Makes History**

- India's Aditi Ashok made history becoming the first player from the country to win the Ladies British amateur stroke-play championship here.
- Aditi had earlier won the St. Rule Trophy at St Andrews in July this year and finished second in the 2015 European Women's Amateur Championship, also claimed the overall title called 'The Nicholls Trophy' as well as the 'Dinwiddy Trophy' given for the lowest score by an under-18 player.

24th August**AROUND THE WORLD**

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Britain Reopens Embassy in Iran

- In a significant development that marks immense improvement in Iran-West relations, United Kingdom reopened embassy in Tehran.
- The embassy was closed in 2011 after hardliners angry over imposition of sanctions had stormed the compound, smashing windows and burning British flags.
- The British Embassy would initially have a small number of staff with limited consular services, but officials expect to upgrade its leadership to full ambassador status in coming months.

INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY**Bandhan Bank Joins Indian Banking League**

- Bandhan Bank began operations as a full-fledged bank with 501 branches and 1.43 crore accounts across the country, becoming the newest member of the estimated USD two-trillion Indian banking industry.
- As per reports, Bandhan Bank is starting operations with 1.43 crore accounts, around Rs 10,500 crore loan book and 19,500 employees. To begin with, it has got 501 branches, 2022 service centres and 50 ATMs across 24 states.
- Bandhan Bank plans to have 632 branches and 250 ATMs in 27 states by the end of fiscal year 2016.
- State-wise, West Bengal has the maximum number of branches 220, followed by Bihar 67, Assam 60, Maharashtra 21, Uttar Pradesh and Tripura 20 each, and Jharkhand 15.
- The Kolkata-headquartered bank has two divisions -- micro banking and general banking - and will offer complete retail financial solutions, including a variety of savings and loan products.

INFOTAINMENT**Roger Federer Captures his Seventh Cincinnati Masters**

- Roger Federer moved into pole position for a US Open title run, capturing his seventh Cincinnati Masters with a dominant win over Novak Djokovic.
- Federer was playing his first tournament since falling to Djokovic in the Wimbledon final.
- With the win he takes back the world number two ranking Murray seized for a week and will be seeded second behind Djokovic.

25th August**AROUND THE WORLD****North and South Korea Reach Agreement**

- North and South Korea reached an agreement after more than two days of talks to end a standoff involving an exchange of artillery fire that had pushed the divided peninsula into a state of heightened military tension.
- Under the accord, North Korea expressed regret over the recent wounding of South Korean soldiers in a landmine incident and Seoul agreed to halt anti-Pyongyang propaganda broadcasts.
- North Korea also agreed to end the quasi state of war it had declared. The two sides will hold follow-up talks to discuss a range of issues on improving ties.

INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY**SEBI Clears Commodity Trading Norms**

- Setting September 28 as the date for merger of Forward Markets Commission (FMC) with itself, SEBI announced new norms for commodities derivatives market under which exchanges and brokers in this segment will need to comply with rules applicable to their stock market peers. The new regulations will also come into force on September 28.
- These norms, approved by Sebi's board, will enable the functioning of commodities derivatives market and its brokers under SEBI norms and integration of commodities derivatives and securities trading in an orderly manner. As per SEBI, the new regulations provide for compliance of Securities Contracts Regulation (Stock Exchanges and Clearing Corporations), 2012, which are currently required to be complied with by stock exchanges.

Royal Enfield Enters Indonesian Market

- Royal Enfield announced its entry into the Indonesian market, which is the third largest two-wheeler market in the world.
- Royal Enfield is the oldest motorcycle brand in continuous production, with roots dating back to 1901 in Redditch, England. The iconic motorcycle brand with British origin is part of Eicher Motors Royal Enfield.
- As per the company, Indonesia is a strategic market for Royal Enfield and has enormous potential to upgrade to the next level of motorcycles, should there be optimal product choice.
- In 2014, Royal Enfield sold more than 300,000 motorcycles globally. Parent company, Eicher Motors Ltd., recorded its highest ever total revenue of \$1.4 billion, with large contributions from the Royal Enfield business unit. In CY 2015 the company aims to produce 450,000 motorcycles to support its growth strategy globally.

INDIA – OTHERS**Amol Palekar Appointed Chairman of India's Oscar Jury**

- Veteran actor-director Amol Palekar has been appointed as chairman of India's Oscar jury, which will select the country's official entry in the best foreign film category of the 88th Academy Awards.
- The process of selecting the film to represent India at Oscars 2016 is yet to begin.
- The 88th Academy awards will take place in Los Angeles on February 28.

INFOTAINMENT**Kumar Sangakkara and Michael Clarke Retire**

- Cricket fans across the world will miss Kumar Sangakkara and Michael Clarke in the time to come, as the two legends drew curtains on their careers.
- As tributes poured in from across the world, Clarke took the opportunity to wish the Lankan legend.
- Clarke was given a winning farewell by his team, who won the final Ashes Test comprehensively by an innings and 46 runs. Sangakkara's last Test ended up in defeat after the Indian team bounced back in the series to win the second Test after losing at Galle from a winning position.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**Neurons that Help us Form Habits Discovered**

- Researchers have discovered neurons in the brain that weigh, costs and benefits to drive formation of habits.
- Researchers found that habit formation, at least in primates, is driven by neurons that represent the cost of a habit, as well as the reward.
- Previous work has discovered clear beginning and ending signals in the brain when habits are performed.

26th August**AROUND THE WORLD****The U.S. and Mexico Open First New Rail Link**

- The United States and Mexico opened their first new rail link in more than a century as part of plans to update infrastructure carrying nearly \$600 billion a year in bilateral trade.
- The West Rail Bypass International Bridge connecting Brownsville, Texas with the city of Matamoros across the border will largely carry freight.
- Since the North American Free Trade Agreement was implemented over 20 years ago, trade with Mexico has increased six-fold and Mexico has become one of the biggest trading partners with the United States.
- The West Rail project broke ground in December 2010 and was designed to expand regional transportation capacity, improve air quality and alleviate urban congestion by re-routing rail traffic out of the most populated areas in both border cities.

US Oil Below \$40

- The US crude prices finished below \$40 a barrel for the first time in six years on worries about weakening demand in China after a Shanghai equities sell-off roiled global markets.
- The US benchmark West Texas Intermediate for October delivery dropped \$2.21 to \$38.24 a barrel.

EARTH MATTER**July Was Earth's Hottest Month on Record**

- As per Federal officials July was Earth's hottest month on record, smashing old marks.
- July's average temperature was 61.86 degrees Fahrenheit, beating the previous global mark set in 1998 and 2010 by about one-seventh of a degree. That's a large margin for weather records.
- Records go back to 1880, but nine of the 10 hottest months on record have happened since 2005.
- As per scientist Jake Crouch, it is quite likely that 2015 will end up the hottest year on record, beating last year.

INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY**Indian Crude Oil Basket Dips below \$43 per Barrel**

- As global crude oil prices plummeted to fresh six-year lows, the Indian basket also fell to \$42.97 per barrel from \$45.21.
- As per data with the government-run Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell, the Indian basket, comprising 73 percent sour-grade Dubai and Oman crudes, and the balance in sweet-grade Brent, fell to its lowest since December 2008 when the prices averaged \$40.61 for the month.
- Two key benchmarks, Brent and Western Texas Intermediate (WTI), were trading lower in the Asian markets at \$43.13 per barrel and \$38.67 per barrel, respectively.

Investors Rescue Indian Oil Divestment

- Institutional investors saved the day for the government as the Indian Oil Corporation divestment sailed through a stock market crash. The issue, which will help the government raise Rs. 9,300 crore, was subscribed 118%, although retail portion received bids for only 18% of the 4.8 crore shares reserved for this segment.
- The government was looking to sell over 24 crore shares in the country's largest fuel retailer as part of its ambitious sell off programme that is targeting to raise Rs 69,000 crore during the current financial year.

L&T Bags Orders Worth Rs. 1,563 crore

- Larsen & Toubro power transmission and distribution business of L&T Construction has bagged orders worth Rs. 1,563 crore in July and August.
- The company has received a breakthrough order from Tenaga Nasional Berhad (TNB) for design, manufacture, supply, installation, testing and commissioning of a 500 kV double circuit transmission line in Malaysia.
- Other orders received by the company include two orders from Oman Electricity Transmission Company, an order from Dubai Electricity & Water Authority and an order each from Tamil Nadu Transmission Corporation and Power Grid Corporation of India.

INDIA – OTHERS**BJP Wins Bengaluru Civic Polls**

- The Bharatiya Janata Party retained control of the 198-ward Bengaluru municipal corporation for a second successive term, winning 100 wards and relegating the state's ruling Congress to the second place.
- As per the results, the Congress won 76 wards, Janata Dal-Secular (JD-S) 14 and Independents 8.
- Polling was held in 197 wards, as BJP candidate Bharati Ramachandra was declared elected unopposed earlier from Hongasandra (ward 189) after nomination of Congress candidate K. Maheshwari was rejected on August 13 for submitting a fake caste certificate.

INFOTAINMENT**ICC Test Rankings**

- Virat Kohli has dropped out of ICC's top-10 list for batsmen in the five-day format, but R. Ashwin's remarkable performance helped him earn a place to 8th spot in bowling while holding the 2nd spot in the all-rounders' rankings.
- Meanwhile, Sri Lanka batting legend Kumar Sangakkara finished his glorious career at the 7th spot, while Australian captain Michael Clarke finished his 115-Test career at the 25th spot.
- The other big movers in the latest batting rankings are India's Ajinkya Rahane (up two places to a careerhigh 20th), Sri Lanka's Dimuth Karunaratne (up two to 34th) and England's Moeen Ali (up two to a careerhigh 48th), while Lokesh Rahul (up 30 places to 87th) and wicketkeeper Wriddhiman Saha (up 15 places to 100th) also climbed up the ladder.

27th August**AROUND THE WORLD****Ukraine and Separatists to Strive for Full Ceasefire**

- Ukraine and pro-Russian separatists, in a gesture to shore up a tenuous ceasefire, agreed to strive for an end to all truce violations from 1st September.
- In February, the two sides agreed to a ceasefire between their forces in eastern Ukraine in parallel to a political process, including plans for local elections and establishment of a special self-management status for separatist-minded regions.

EARTH MATTER**World's Largest Extinction Events Triggered by Metal Pollution**

- New research suggests, metal poisoning caused the malformation observed in fossil remains of marine plankton from the late Silurian (415 million years ago) and may have contributed to their extinction and that of many other species.
- Several Palaeozoic mass extinction events during the Ordovician and Silurian periods shaped the evolution of life on our planet.
- As per researchers, the malformed fossil remains of marine plankton from the late Silurian contain highly elevated concentrations of heavy metals, such as iron, lead, and arsenic.

INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY**ICICI Launches Loan Product with Mortgage Guarantee**

- In the extremely competitive home finance market, ICICI Bank launched a mortgage product backed with a guarantee to help the borrower avail more credit and also extended the tenure, for an upfront fee of 2 percent of the loan amount.
- The new offering will help customers raise the eligible amount by up to 20 percent and increase the tenure by up to seven years, for an upfront fee of 2 percent of the new loan amount.
- The product is targeted at customers in the 40-plus age bracket as they are one of the largest segments of home buyers.
- The product christened ICICI Bank Extraa Home Loans has been launched in association with India Mortgage Guarantee Corporation (IMGCC).

IFFCO Launches Joint Venture with Mitsubishi Corp

- Fertilizer cooperative IFFCO formally launched a joint venture with Japanese firm Mitsubishi Corp for manufacturing agrochemicals in India that will start operation in this Rabi season starting October.
- In the shareholding pact signed last month, IFFCO holds 51% stake and the rest is held by Mitsubishi in the joint venture IFFCO-MC Crop Science Private Ltd.
- IFFCO-MC will come up with 20 different products across various product ranges of agrochemicals.

INDIA – OTHERS**Term of the Seventh Pay Commission Extended**

- The Cabinet extended the term of the Seventh Pay Commission by four months, which was set up in February 2014 to revise remuneration of some 48 lakh central government employees and 55 lakh pensioners.
- The Commission will now have time until 31st December to submit its report.
- The government constitutes the Pay Commission almost every 10 years to revise the pay scale of its employees and often these are adopted by states after some modifications.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**Remarkable Images of Ceres**

- NASA's Dawn spacecraft has delivered the closest-yet views of the dwarf planet Ceres.
- The latest pictures provided by Dawn show the small world's features in unprecedented detail, including Ceres' tall, conical mountain, crater formation features and narrow, braided fractures.
- Dawn takes 11 days to capture and return images of Ceres.
- Dawn is the first mission to visit a dwarf planet, and the first to orbit two distinct solar system targets. It orbited protoplanet Vesta for 14 months in 2011 and 2012, and arrived at Ceres on March 6, 2015.

28th August**AROUND THE WORLD****Vassiliki Thanou Named Caretaker Greek PM**

- As per reports, the head of Greece's Supreme Court, Vassiliki Thanou, has been named as the country's caretaker Prime Minister ahead of early elections.
- The date for Greece's general election, the fifth in six years, is to be officially announced by President Prokypis Pavlopoulos by the end of the week.
- Outgoing Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras ruled out forming a national unity government should he fail to win an outright majority in the snap elections.

EARTH MATTER**Seas Rising More than Predicted**

- According to NASA scientists, sea levels worldwide are rising faster than predicted as a result of climate change.
- According to the latest satellite measurements from NASA and its partners, seas around the world have risen an average of nearly 3 inches since 1992, with some locations rising more than 9 inches due to natural variation.
- In 2013, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) issued an assessment based on a consensus of international researchers that stated global sea levels would likely rise from 1 to 3 feet by the end of the century.
- Data from NASA reveal that ice sheets in Greenland and Antarctica are melting faster than ever, and oceans are warming and expanding much more rapidly than they have in years past.

INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY**Daimler Signs MoU with Two Banks**

- Daimler India Commercial Vehicles, a 100% wholly-owned subsidiary of Daimler AG, signed two MoUs with Canara Bank and State Bank of Bikaner and Jaipur to provide commercial vehicle financing packages to BharatBenz customers across the country.
- As per Erich Nesselhauf, CEO and managing director, partnering with State Bank of Bikaner and Jaipur and Canara Bank as our preferred financiers allows us to strengthen our presence across key North and South regions. This partnership will help our dealers in this region leverage on the banks support and promote BharatBenz products in these markets.
- Apart from Daimler's own captive financing brand, BharatBenz Financial, Canara Bank and State Bank of Bikaner and Jaipur now become a key financing partner for BharatBenz along with others like HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Sundaram Finance, Kotak Bank etc. adding substantial choice and value for customers.

INDIA – OTHERS**Girish Sahni Appointed CSIR Chief**

- Girish Sahni, former director of CSIR-Institute of Microbial Technology in Chandigarh, has been appointed as the new director general of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research.
- He will also act as the secretary of Department of Scientific and Industrial Research.
- Dr. Sahni joined CSIR-IMTECH in 1991 and became its director in 2005.

List of Smart Cities Released

- The government released a list of 98 cities, including 24 state capitals, which are to be developed as smart cities.
- The maximum number of to-be-developed smart cities is in UP, followed by Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra.

- In the first year, the government would select 24 cities that would be developed into smart cities.

India Free of Maternal and Neonatal Tetanus

- India has eliminated maternal and neonatal tetanus. It has been reduced to less than one case per 1000 live births across the country. The World Health Organisation has validated adding India to the list of countries that have successfully battled the disease.
- This is a huge achievement for India, which until a few decades ago reported 150,000 to 200,000 neonatal tetanus cases annually.
- With India's achievement, almost the entire South East Asian region, barring a few districts in Indonesia, has eliminated maternal and neonatal tetanus.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**GSAT-6 Successfully Placed in Orbit**

- India successfully placed its GSAT-6 communication satellite in orbit using its heavy GSLV-D6 rocket geosynchronous satellite launch vehicle.
- This was the ninth flight of the GSLV and the third development flight using a cryogenic engine.
- GSAT-6 is the twenty fifth geostationary communication satellite of India built by ISRO and twelfth in the GSAT series.

29th August**AROUND THE WORLD****Pakistan Banned Islamic State Militant Group**

- Pakistan has banned the Islamic State (IS) militant group which has undertaken vast stretches of Iraq and Syria in its control.
- This decision was taken Pakistan Government on the recommendation of the Foreign Office, which regularly updates it about international militant groups banned by the United Nations (UN).

EARTH MATTERS**The Hidden Meltdown of Greenland**

- NASA-supported researchers have found that ice covering Greenland is melting faster than previously thought.
- All by itself, Greenland could bump sea levels by 7 meters (23 feet) if its ice melted completely.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**NASA started year-long isolation to simulate life on Mars**

- A team of Nasa recruits began living in a dome near a barren volcano in Hawaii to simulate what life would be like on Mars.
- The isolation experience, which will last a year, will be the longest of its type attempted.

30th August**AROUND THE WORLD****Rouhani Opposes Parliament Vote on Nuclear Deal**

- President Hassan Rouhani has opposed a parliamentary vote on the landmark nuclear deal reached with world powers, saying terms of the agreement will turn into legal obligation if it is passed by the house.
- As per Rouhani, the deal is a political understanding reached with world powers, not a new pact that requires parliamentary approval.

INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY**IHH Buys Global Hospital**

- Malaysia's IHH Healthcare, the world's second-biggest healthcare firm by market value, is buying a 73.4% stake in India-based Ravindranath GE Medical Associates Private for \$195 million or over Rs. 1,200 crore.
- As per managing director of IHH, the acquisition will catapult us towards becoming one of the leading hospital groups in India.
- IHH will inject 169 million ringgit into the acquired business, known as Global Hospitals, to fund its capital expenditure requirements and optimize its cost of borrowing.
- Global Hospitals operates five hospitals with a total of 1,100 beds in Hyderabad, Bangalore, Chennai and Mumbai.

IT Companies in India Eyeing Opportunities in African Market

- The IT companies in India are eyeing \$35 million opportunities in the burgeoning African market to expand business as they aim to reduce dependence on the U.S. and the U.K. markets, which presently accounts for about 80 per cent of their revenues.
- As per reports, Africa presents a huge opportunity. There are 50 plus countries with a population of over one billion people. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is seen as a catalyst for development and is high on the agenda of many African governments.
- According to Nasscom, the partnership will help Indian companies “de-risk from over dependence on the English speaking markets” and it will enable African countries to leverage the maturity of Indian companies.

INDIA – OTHERS

New Managing Director for Gillette India

- FMCG firm Gillette India has appointed AI Rajwani as MD of Gillette India for a period of five years.
- Besides, Narendra P Sarda has also been appointed as an independent director of the company.

INFOTAINMENT**Women's Hockey Team Seals Olympic Spot after 36 Years**

- Indian women's hockey team qualified for the 2016 Rio Olympics after England defeated Spain in the semi-finals of the EuroHockey Championships in London.
- This is the second time that the women's team has made it to the Olympic Games and the first time since 1980.
- This news comes on a day when the country is celebrating hockey wizard Major Dhyan Chand's birthday as National Sports Day.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**New Horizons' Next Mission**

- New Horizons has a new destination, a small Kuiper Belt object (KBO) known as 2014 MU69.
- NASA has picked 2014 MU69, an icy world that orbits nearly a billion miles beyond Pluto, as New Horizons' next flyby.
- Although it has selected 2014 MU69 as the target, as part of its normal review process NASA will conduct a detailed assessment before officially approving the mission extension to conduct additional science as part of its normal review process.
- As per NASA, New Horizons will perform a series of four maneuvers in late October and early November to set its course toward 2014 MU69, which it expects to reach on January 1, 2019.

31st August**AROUND THE WORLD****Saudi Women Allowed to Run in Local Elections**

- In a historic first for the ultra-conservative Muslim kingdom, Saudi Arabia allowed women to register to stand in local elections.
- In a country where women face a host of restrictions including a driving ban, the move was welcomed as an important step forward.
- The late king Abdullah in 2011 granted women the right to vote and to stand as candidates in this year's local elections.

EARTH MATTER**Mount McKinley Renamed**

- Mount McKinley, the tallest mountain of North America is officially being renamed Denali.
- The mountain had been named in 1896 after US President, William McKinley, but local authorities had worked on the change for years, restoring an Alaska Native name with deep cultural significance.
- Finalizing a process initiated by the State of Alaska in 1975, President Obama announced that the Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell used her authority to rename the mountain as Denali.
- The mountain rises about 20,000 feet (6,000 metres) above sea level.

INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY**Airtel and Idea Hike Post-paid Data Tariffs**

- Bharti Airtel and Idea Cellular have now hiked charges for their post-paid users by around 20 percent in various circles including the national capital.
- A few months back, the top three operators, Airtel, Idea and Vodafone, had raised pre-paid data tariffs for 2G and 3G services in Delhi by up to 47 percent.
- There has not been any hike in data charges by Vodafone in the post-paid category in Delhi or any other circles.
- Airtel has raised data tariffs in Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan, UP East and UP West circles; while Idea Cellular has hiked charges in Delhi, Punjab and UP West.
- Post-paid customers of the two operators in the above-mentioned circles will now have to pay Rs 300 for 1GB 3G data, against Rs 250 earlier for the same amount of data usage.

Tata Group's Revenue Rises

- Tata group's total revenue rose by over five percent to USD 108.78 billion in the last fiscal, while its total headcount crossed six-lakh mark with IT and communications business accounting for more than half of the overall staff strength.
- The international operations of the group, which has more than 100 companies across various businesses spread over the world, accounted for almost 70 percent of its total revenue in the fiscal 2014-15.
- The total revenue rose by 5.3 percent to USD 108.78 billion, from USD 103.27 billion in the fiscal 2013-14.
- The revenue growth rate has, however, fallen from 18.5 percent recorded in the previous fiscal 2013-14.