

# 2015 SEPTEMBER

## 1st September

### AROUND THE WORLD

#### Malaysian PM Refuses to Step Down

- Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak refused to resign over a USD 700 million financial scandal and scorned protesters who took to the streets at the weekend to call for his dismissal over the issue, saying he will not let instigators destroy the nation.
- The movement against Najib has been fuelled by influential former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamed who was also present at the rally.
- Mahathir, who led Malaysia from 1981-2003 and was formerly a Najib ally, has called for his resignation.

### INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

#### GDP Growth Down

- In the April –June quarter the GDP growth slowed to 7 from 7.5 percent in the previous quarter, amid deceleration in farm, services and manufacturing sectors.
- The Gross Value Added (GVA), a new concept introduced by CSO to measure the economic activity, also slipped during the first quarter to 7.1 percent, from 7.4 percent a year ago.
- The nominal GDP and GVA at current market price showed a steep decline in the quarter under review. The nominal GDP slipped to 8.8 percent in Q1 from 13.4 percent a year ago while the GVA growth rate nearly halved to 7.1 percent from 14 percent a year ago.

#### Loans to be Cheaper

- After repeated calls from RBI, private lender HDFC Bank and state-run Canara Bank lowered their lending rates by up to 0.35 percent, a move that makes home and other loans cheaper for consumers.
- Other banks may also follow suit due to competitive pressure.
- HDFC Bank lowered base rate by 0.35 percent to 9.35 percent, the lowest in the industry, while Canara Bank cut its minimum lending rate by 0.10 percent to 9.90 percent.
- At the same time, country's third largest private lender Axis Bank cut its deposit rates by up to 0.50 percent across maturities.
- A cut in deposit rate is generally considered a precursor for reduction in lending rates.

### INDIA – OTHERS

#### Kejriwal Government's Third Law Minister in 7 Months

- In a reshuffle in the Delhi government, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia was given the additional charge of the Law Ministry.
- Sisodia replaces Kapil Mishra, who was handling the sensitive ministry ever since Jitendra Tomar was arrested in a fake degree case in June this year.
- Mishra will continue as Minister for Water and Tourism and Delhi Jal Board vice-chairman.
- The Law Ministry under the AAP government has always been mired in controversies.

#### IGCAR Gets New Director

- Distinguished scientist S.A.V. Satya Murty takes over as the director of fast breeder research unit Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research (IGCAR).
- According to a statement issued by IGCAR, Murty, now director of electronics and instrumentation and radiological safety group will take over as IGCAR's director.
- He replaces P.R. Vasudeva Rao.

### INFOTAINMENT

#### Draws Again

- Viswanathan Anand's hunt for an elusive victory continued as the five times world champion could not break the defences of Wesley So of the US in the seventh round of Sinquefeld Cup, a part of the Grand Chess tour.
- In the tournament standings Viswanathan Anand remained on joint eighth position with just two rounds to go in the USD 300000 prize money competition.

## 2nd September

### AROUND THE WORLD

#### The UK Leads G20 Nations in FDI Flow to India

- The UK has become the largest investor in India among all G20 countries with a combined revenue of more than \$54 billion in India.
- Between the year 2000 and 2015, UK's FDI into India amounts to \$22 billion, 9% of all FDI in the country.
- In total, G20 nations invested \$ 73.9 billion in India between 2000-2015 with the UK being the single largest G20 investor into India followed by Japan (\$ 18.3 bn), the US (\$13.7bn), Germany (\$ 7.6 bn) and France (\$ 4.5 billion).

- As India's largest employer, UK firms employ around 691,000 people across the country - 5.5% of total organized private sector jobs in the country. Between 2000 and 2015, UK FDI generated around 138,000 direct jobs, 7% of the total 1.96 million jobs generated by FDI in India.

**EARTH MATTERS****Ancient Life Found in Earth's Mantle Rocks**

- Scientists have discovered evidence of ancient life in Earth's mantle rocks deep below the seafloor, confirming a long-standing hypothesis that interactions between mantle rocks and seawater can create potential for life even in hard rocks.
- The fossilised microbes are likely the same as those found at the active "Lost City" hydrothermal field, providing potentially important clues about the conditions that support extraterrestrial life in rocks below the seafloor.
- According to Klein, confirmation that life is possible in mantle rocks deep below the seafloor may have important implications for understanding sub-seafloor life across a wide range of geologic environments on planetary bodies.

**INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY****No RTGS Facility on 2nd and 4th Saturdays**

- As per RBI, the RTGS system, which allows real time transfer of large funds, will not be operated on second and fourth Saturdays with banks observing public holiday on these days.
- However, the system will operate for full days on other Saturdays of a month.
- Processing of future value dated transactions with value date falling on second and fourth Saturdays will not be undertaken under RTGS.
- As per the new time schedule for regular days, including Saturdays except second and fourth, business opening would be at 0800 hr while initial cut off (customer transactions) would be 1630 hr.

**Coal India Misses August Output Target**

- State-owned Coal India recorded an output of 36.21 million tonnes (MT) in August, missing the target by 3.82 per cent.
- The company's production target for August was 37.65 million tonnes.
- CIL's achieved an output of 192.37 MT in the first five months of the current fiscal, missing its target of 196.73 million tonnes. Coal India's output target for the current fiscal is 550 million tonnes.
- A one billion tonnes coal production target has been set by the government for Coal India by 2020.

**INDIA – OTHERS****India Wins UNESCO Award**

- India has won the top UNESCO prize 'Award of Excellence' 2015 for the remarkable conservation efforts of the majestic Sree Vadakkunnathan Temple in Kerala.
- The Award of Excellence for the conservation of Sree Vadakkunnathan Temple, Thrissur, won this year's top prize in the Asia Pacific Heritage Award for Cultural Heritage Conservation.

**INFOTAINMENT****3 Indian Boxers Enter Asian Championship Semis**

- Shiva Thapa, Vikas Krishan and L. Devendro Singh booked medals and World Championship berths by advancing to the semifinals at the Asian Championships.
- Devendro, a silver-medalist from the previous edition of the event, beat Cornelis Kwangu Langu of Indonesia 3-0 in his quarterfinal bout.
- Shiva defeated Kyrgyzstan's Omurbek Malabekov 2-1 in a bout which had to be stopped in the second round due to an injury to Malabekov.
- Vikas, a former World Championship bronze-medallist, defeated Vietnam's Dinh Hoang Truong.

**3rd September****AROUND THE WORLD****Petition to Accept More Refugees**

- Over 20,000 people had signed a petition to the British government calling on it to accept more refugees, as Europe faced an unprecedented influx of mainly Syrian refugees.
- There is a global refugee crisis. The UK is not offering proportional asylum in comparison with European counterparts.
- Opposition politicians have called on Prime Minister David Cameron to increase the numbers of refugees accepted in Britain, which accepts a lower number of asylum seekers as a proportion of its population than most other EU countries.

**India and Others Won't Support the US if Iran Deal Fails**

- As per John Kerry, countries like India, China, and Japan major customers of oil from Iran would no longer side with the US if the historic Iranian nuclear deal is not approved by American lawmakers.
- Kerry warned that if this plan is voted down, the US cannot predict with certainty what Iran will do.
- The latest figures indicate that the Obama administration is inching towards support for the deal in the

Senate.

**EARTH MATTER****Earth's Tree Count**

• As per a new satellite study, there are more than 3 trillion trees on Earth, around 422 trees for every person, although the number is believed to have dropped by 46 percent since the start of human civilisation. The Yale-led international research found the result of the tree count is around seven and a half times more than some previous estimates.

**INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY****Government to Auction 69 Oil and Gas Fields**

• The government will auction 69 idle oil and gas fields of state-owned ONGC and Oil India to private firms on a new revenue sharing model and liberalised terms including pricing and marketing freedom.

• The 69 small and marginal fields holding 89 million tonne of oil and gas resources, worth Rs 70,000 crore at current rates, will be given to explorers offering the maximum revenue from hydrocarbon produced to the government.

• According to Dharmendra Pradhan, this is a paradigm shift from the controversial production sharing contract (PSC) and cost recovery model to a more equitable revenue sharing model that protects government interest in both low oil and high oil price scenarios.

**Last Date for E-filing of Income Tax Returns Extended**

• The government has extended the last date for e-filing of Income Tax returns by a week to 7th September.

• The government had received various representations that tax payers have faced difficulties in e-filing of returns across the country due to slowing down of certain e-services on August 31, 2015, the earlier due date.

• Earlier, the due-date for filing of the return for Assessment Year 2015-16 was extended till 31st August 2015 in case of those taxpayers who were required to file their tax return by 31st July.

**INDIA – OTHERS****Envoys Present their Credentials to President**

• Envoys of five nations presented their credentials to President Pranab Mukherjee.

• The envoys were Martin Ney, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany, Jagdishwar Goburdhun, High Commissioner of the Republic of Mauritius, Tovar da Silva Nunes, Ambassador of Federative Republic of Brazil, Niankoro Yeah Smake, Ambassador of Republic of Mali and Gonchig Ganbold, Ambassador of Mongolia.

**INFOTAINMENT****Africa to Have First Commonwealth Games**

• Durban was officially named as host of the 2022 Commonwealth Games, making it the first African city ever to stage the sporting event.

• South Africa's third largest city (Durban) was the only candidate for the 2022 hosting rights after Canada's Edmonton withdrew in February.

• The four-yearly, multi-sport event was first staged in 1930, when it was known as the British Empire Games.

**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY****Russian Soyuz Heads to Space Station**

• A Russian manned spacecraft with three astronauts onboard was launched to the International Space Station from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan.

• Veteran cosmonaut Sergei Volkov of Roscosmos is leading a team that also includes first ever Danish astronaut Andreas Mogensen of the European Space Agency and Aidyn Aimbetov from Kazakhstan's Space Agency.

• The three are set to dock to the station on Friday, September 4.

**4th September****AROUND THE WORLD****China Holds Military Parade to Cut Troop Levels**

• President Xi Jinping announced that he would cut troop levels by 300,000 as China held its biggest display of military might in a parade to commemorate victory over Japan in World War II.

• As per Xi, China would cut by 13 percent one of the world's biggest militaries, currently 2.3-million strong.

• No timeframe was given for a reduction that is likely part of long-mooted military reforms. Troop numbers have been cut three times before since the 1980s as part of China's efforts to modernise its armed forces.

**US Trade Deficit Drops in July**

• The US trade deficit fell in July to the lowest level in five months as exports posted a small gain while imports declined, reflecting a big drop in shipments of consumer goods such as cell phones.

• As per the Commerce Department, the deficit narrowed to USD 41.9 billion in July, a 7.4 percent decline from a June imbalance of USD 45.2 billion. Exports were only 0.4 percent to USD 188.5 billion, helped by

stronger sales of U.S.-made autos and machinery, while imports declined 1.1 percent to USD 230.4 billion.

- So far this year, the deficit is running 3.6 percent above last year's level, reflecting weaker export sales. The concern is that U.S. Growth will be hurt by further declines in exports, reflecting a stronger dollar and overseas weakness in nations such as China.

#### **INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY**

##### **Greenpeace India's FCRA Licence Cancelled**

- The Union Home Ministry informed the Delhi High Court that it cancelled foreign contribution registration of Greenpeace India as it was continuing to use its FCRA accounts despite suspension of the same.
- MHA, has claimed that Greenpeace violated Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) by mixing its foreign and domestic contributions.
- The Ministry had on April 9 suspended the NGO's registration under Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) for 180 days.

##### **Services Sector Improves Further**

According to a survey, the services sector improved further in August as new orders received by private firms increased at the fastest rate in five months.

The Nikkei India Services Business Activity Index, which tracks changes in activity at service companies on a monthly basis, rose from 50.8 in July to 51.8 in August.

A reading below 50 means contraction in the sector.

##### **Corp Bond Private Placement Hits 4-month High**

- Indian companies raised over Rs. 46,000 crore through private placement of corporate bonds in August, making it the highest fund raising in the last four months.
- According to the Securities and Exchange Board of India data, companies garnered a total of Rs. 46,564 crore from debt on a private placement basis in August, higher than Rs. 27,920 crore raised in the preceding month.

#### **INFOTAINMENT**

##### **Marvan Atapattu Steps Down as Sri Lanka Coach**

- Marvan Atapattu stepped down as the coach of Sri Lanka's national cricket team, following their 1-2 series loss to the Indian cricket team.
- Atapattu was appointed as the head coach in October 2014, previously serving as the Batting Coach of the team from 2011 and as Interim Head Coach for a brief period from April 2014 after Paul Farbrace resigned.

#### **SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

##### **Key Radar Fails on NASA's Environmental Satellite**

- A key instrument on a NASA's Soil Moisture Active Passive (SMAP) observatory has failed, reducing the ability of scientists to capture data to measure the moisture in Earth's soil in order to improve flood forecasting and monitor climate change.
- As per the US space agency, the mission will continue to produce high-quality science measurements supporting SMAP's objectives with its radiometer instrument.
- The SMAP mission is designed to help scientists understand the links between Earth's water, energy and carbon cycles and enhance our ability to monitor and predict natural hazards like floods and droughts.

## **5th September**

#### **AROUND THE WORLD**

##### **Austria and Germany Ready to Receive Migrants**

- According to Austria's Chancellor, Austria and Germany have agreed to receive thousands of migrants due to arrive at the Hungarian border.
- This decision was motivated by the current emergency at the Hungarian border.
- Hungary was laying on buses to ferry desperate refugees who had set off on foot for the Austrian border after being stranded for days in Budapest's main railway station.

##### **US Unemployment Falls to 5.1%**

- As per the government, the US economy generated a lower than expected new jobs in August.
- The overall unemployment rate fell to 5.1 percent from 5.3 percent in July, hitting the lowest level since April 2008 as the country plunged into recession.

#### **EARTH MATTERS**

##### **Toxic Algae Swirl in Baltic Sea**

- The Baltic Sea is a troubled sea, and one of its recurring troubles is algal blooms that render its waters toxic.
- There are many types of algae, some more benign than others, but concentrations like this are often devastating to larger sea life.
- Sea lions on the U.S. West Coast have been stricken with seizures due to high algae levels.

- Those creatures that do survive remain toxic themselves.

**INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY****UAE-India Target \$75 Billion Investments**

- India and UAE are utilising a congruence of geopolitical and economic interests to realise a potential \$75 billion investment commitment by the Gulf state in Indian infrastructure. The UAE Foreign Minister arrived in India with a 95-member delegation cutting across sectors as diverse as renewable energy to defence, security, tourism and higher education.
- The two sides agreed to increase the bilateral trade by 60% over the next five years and also to encourage the investment institutions of the UAE to raise their investments in India, including through the establishment of UAE-India Infrastructure Investment Fund, with the aim of reaching a target of \$75 billion.

**ONGC Buys Stake in Russia's Vankor Oil Field**

- State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corp has bought a 15 per cent stake in Russia's second- largest oil field from Rosneft for about USD 1.35 billion.
- The 15 per cent stake will give OVL about 3.5 million metric tonnes of oil a year.
- Under the terms of the agreement, OVL will get two seats on the Board of Directors of Vankorneft - a Rosneft subsidiary that operates the Vankor field. Rosneft will retain full control of infrastructure of the Vankor cluster.

**INDIA – OTHERS****Wheeler Island Named after APJ Abdul Kalam**

- In a tribute to late former President APJ Abdul Kalam, the Odisha government has named the Wheeler Island after him.
- The Island will be now known as Abdul Kalam Island.
- Wheeler Island, located off the coast of Odisha some 150 kilometres from Odisha's capital Bhubaneswar, houses an Integrated Test Range that is used by India to test missiles. It is one of the key missile testing facilities in India.

**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY****Soyuz Spacecraft Docks with International Space Station**

- A Russian spacecraft carrying three astronauts successfully docked with the International Space.
- The arrival of Volkov, Mogensen and Aimbetov brings the number of crew on the orbiting outpost to nine for the first time since November 2013.
- The crew will support several hundred experiments in biology, biotechnology, physical science and Earth science - research that impacts life on Earth.

**6th September****AROUND THE WORLD****US Concern over Russia Military Build-up**

- The United States has expressed concern to Moscow about what it called reports of an imminent and enhanced Russian military build-up in war-torn Syria.
- According to John Kerry, if such reports were accurate, these actions could further escalate the conflict, lead to greater loss of innocent life, increase refugee flows and risk confrontation with the anti-ISIL coalition operating in Syria.

**G20 Eyes Faster Economic Reforms**

- Financial leaders from the world's 20 biggest economies agreed to step up reform efforts to boost disappointingly slow growth, as reliance on ultra-low interest rates would not be enough to accelerate economic expansion.
- As per a communiqué of the G20 finance ministers and central bankers, monetary policies will continue to support economic activity consistent with central banks' mandates, but monetary policy alone cannot lead to balanced growth.

**EARTH MATTERS****New Gene Discovery Could Improve Wheat Production**

- A new wheat gene has been discovered that helps the plant adapt to different climates and maximise grain production.
- The newly characterised VRN-D4 gene and its three counterpart genes which were earlier identified are crucial for understanding wheat vernalisation, the biological process requiring cold temperatures to trigger flower formation.
- The VRN-D4 gene and the other three vernalisation genes can be used by plant breeders to modify vernalisation requirements as they work to develop wheat varieties that are better adapted to different regions or changing environments.

**INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY****India among Few Bright Spots in Global Economy**

- As per IMF India is among the few bright spots in the global economy as G20 Finance Ministers began

their two-day meeting against the backdrop of concerns over Chinese economic slowdown looming large on world markets.

- The remarks from International Monetary Fund came at the meeting of G20 Finance Minister and Central Bank Governors where they also discussed monetary policy uncertainties.

**INFOTAINMENT****Gagan Narang Achieves No.1 Spot**

- India's Gagan Narang has achieved the number one spot in men's 50m rifle prone shooting category in Asia.
- Narang has 971 points to his credit while China's Shengbo Zhao is placed second with 896 points.
- Jitu Rai was placed, behind Jongoh Jin of Korea, number two in men's 50m pistol with 1929 points.

**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY****Clues to Star Birth in Neighbouring Galaxy**

- Astronomers with the help from citizen scientists, have analysed images of 2,753 young, blue star clusters in the neighbouring Andromeda galaxy (M31), and have found that M31 and our own Milky Way have a similar percentage of new-born stars based on mass.
- By nailing down what percentage of stars have a particular mass within a cluster called Initial Mass Function (IMF), scientists can better interpret the light from distant galaxies and understand the formation history of stars in our universe.
- Stars are born when a giant cloud of molecular hydrogen, dust and trace elements collapses.

**7th September****AROUND THE WORLD****Rising Sea Levels Real Threat to NASA**

- Rising sea levels along the US coastlines have threatened NASA's launch sites and facilities, including Kennedy Space Centre in Florida, of being submersed under the water in near future.
- Nearly half to two-thirds of NASA's infrastructure and assets stand within 16 feet of sea level.
- Every NASA centre has its own set of vulnerabilities, and some are more at risk than others. But sea level rise is a very real challenge for all of the centres along the coast.
- The rate of sea level rise is faster now than at any time in the past 2,000 years, and that rate has doubled in the past two decades.
- A recent study found that \$66 billion to \$106 billion worth of coastal property is likely to sit below sea level by 2050.

**Russia Denies US Charges on Syrian Conflicts**

- Russia has dismissed US concerns about an alleged Russian military build-up in Syria, which according to the US Secretary of State could lead to escalation of the conflict in the war-torn country.
- President Vladimir Putin denied Russia's involvement in military operations against the Islamic State (IS) group in Syria.

**INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY****Snapdeal to Invest USD 100 Million in Shopo**

- E-commerce major Snapdeal will invest USD 100 million (about Rs 665 crore) in Shopo as it looks to build up the recently launched venture into a one million seller-strong platform.
- Shopo is a mobile-only platform, which aims to bring small and medium businesses (SMBs) that cannot register on bigger e-commerce portals.

**INFOTAINMENT****Shane Watson Retires from Test Cricket**

- Australian all-rounder Shane Watson announced his retirement from Test cricket with immediate effect. It was confirmed by Cricket Australia.
- He made his debut in 2005, and played 59 tests, 190 ODIs and 48 T20s. Runs scored by him are 3731, 5718 and 1156 respectively.

**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY****GSAT-6 Successfully Positioned**

- As per ISRO, GSAT-6, the country's latest communication satellite has been successfully positioned in its orbital slot.
- GSAT-6 has been successfully positioned in its orbital slot of 83 Deg E and collocated with INSAT 4A, GSAT 12, GSAT 10 and IRNSS1C.
- GSAT-6 is the 25th geostationary communication satellite of India built by ISRO and 12th in the GSAT series. It provides communication through five spot beams in S-band and a national beam in C-band for strategic users.

**8th September****AROUND THE WORLD**

**China Forex Reserves Fall**

- China's foreign exchange reserves, the world's largest, shrank by \$93.9 billion in August, the biggest monthly fall on record, reflecting the scale of intervention by the central bank to support the yuan after a surprise devaluation last month.
- As per the People's Bank of China, reserves dropped to \$3.557 trillion, having descended from a record \$3.99 trillion in June 2014.

**North Korea Demands Pullout of the US Army**

- North Korea demanded that US troops be pulled out from South Korea, as US military presence in South Korea is a pretext for ceaseless north-targeted saber-rattling.
- As per a statement, the US-South Korea joint drills have now become a main factor of aggravating confrontation and distrust not only between North Korea and the US but between North and South Korea.

**EARTH MATTERS****First Ever Leopard Count**

- As per reports, the first ever leopard census in India, carried out alongside the tiger census last year, has put the population of the species at 7910 in and around tiger habitats.
- There are leopards outside the areas covered. Based on these numbers, the estimated total leopard population in India is in the range of 12,000 to 14,000.
- The study found the species well distributed across the country, indicating that India's leopard population is quite healthy.

**INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY****Maharashtra to Abolish LBT on Petrol and Diesel**

- The Maharashtra government has decided to abolish the Local Body Tax (LBT) within 15 days on petrol and diesel to end the disparity between fuel dealers and other traders.
- But the government will impose an alternate tax in place of LBT.
- The state government has already exempted traders having an annual turnover below Rs 50 crore from paying LBT across the state from August 1.

**Reliance Defence Sign Pact with ADSB**

- Anil Ambani-led Reliance Defence Ltd. has signed a MoU with Abu Dhabi Ship Building to set up a strategic partnership for construction of naval ships, including frigates and destroyers to address the demands of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), over the next 10 years.
- RDL is a fully owned subsidiary of Reliance Infrastructure Ltd while Abu Dhabi Ship Building (ADSB) is a leading provider of construction, repair and refit services for naval, military and commercial vessels.
- Reliance Group is likely to use its newly acquired ship-building facilities at Pipavav for implementation of this collaboration.

**INDIA - OTHERS****Indians in Forbes Asia's Heroes of Philanthropy List**

- Seven Indians featured in Forbes Asia's 9th Heroes of Philanthropy list, highlighting most noteworthy contributions to philanthropy from 13 countries across Asia Pacific.
- The seven Indians are: Kerala-born entrepreneur Sunny Varkey, Infosys co-founders Senapathy Gopalakrishnan, Nandan Nilekani and S. D. Shibulal, another Infosys co-founder N. R. Narayana Murthy's son Rohan, The other two Indian philanthropists are brothers Suresh Ramakrishnan and Mahesh Ramakrishnan, both London-based entrepreneurs and founders of Whitcomb & Shaftesbury Tailors on London's Saville Row.

**INFOTAINMENT****Andy Murray Out of the US Open**

- Andy Murray was defeated by Kevin Anderson in the fourth round and crashed out of the US Open, making his earliest Grand Slam exit since 2010.
- South African 15th seed Kevin Anderson stunned the British third seed Andy Murray to reach his first Grand Slam quarter-final.

**9th September****AROUND THE WORLD****North and South Korea Agree to Family Reunion**

- North and South Korea agreed to hold a reunion in October for families separated by the Korean War.
- The reunion, only the second to be held in five years, will take place between October 20-26 in North Korea's Mount Kumgang resort.
- Seoul was pushing for an earlier date, before a major North Korean political anniversary on October 10, fearing Pyongyang might use the occasion to engage in a provocative act that could scupper the reunion altogether.
- According to the agreement, 100 people will be selected by each side to take part in the week-long event.
- The reunion programme began in earnest after a historic North-South summit in 2000, and was initially an

annual event.

**Mediterranean Migrant Arrivals Passes 380,000**

- According to the UN, more than 380,000 migrants and refugees have reached Europe via the Mediterranean since the start of the year, while 2,850 have died or disappeared making the journey.
- As per figures from the UN refugee agency, in total, 381,412 had crossed the sea aiming to resettle in Europe.
- Of those, 258,364 had landed in Greece and 121,000 in Italy, with another 1,953 in Spain and 94 in Malta.

**EARTH MATTER****World's Oldest Fossil Sea Turtle Discovered**

- A fossil sea turtle from Colombia that is at least 120 million years old is the world's oldest.
- The skeleton from the Cretaceous period, with a length of nearly two metres, shows all of the characteristic traits of modern marine turtles.
- The turtle described by us as *Desmatochelys padillai* sp. originates from Cretaceous sediments and is at least 120 million years old.

**INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY****Sahara India's Para-banking License Cancelled**

- In a fresh setback to the beleaguered Sahara India Pariwar, the Reserve Bank of India has cancelled the license of its holding company Sahara India Financial Corporation Limited.
- The move comes in wake of several irregularities and ignoring financial rules and regulations by Sahara.
- Under the new order, the Sahara India would be barred from any sort of financial transactions.
- In 2008, the RBI had barred the company from taking any deposits from the people under its chit fund operations.

**Starting Salaries in India amongst Lowest**

- As per a study by professional services firm Towers Watson, entry-level salaries in India are amongst the lowest in the Asia Pacific region.
- The average monthly starting pay in India is around USD 400 (Rs. 24,000), less than one-fifth of the equivalent paid in South Korea and Singapore.
- Out of the top 11 Asia Pacific economies, the average monthly Indian starting salary was ranked ninth.
- The wages for experienced professionals at middle management levels in India are slightly more competitive, but still below their Asia Pacific peers.

**10th September****AROUND THE WORLD****Russia Gets Iran's Clearance for Syria-bound Flights**

- Iran has granted permission for Russian planes to fly over its territory en route to Syria, a bypass needed after Bulgaria rejected Moscow's overflight request amid signs of a Russian military buildup in Syria.
- After Bulgaria rejected Moscow's overflight request for September 1-24, a path via Iran and Iraq appears to be the only one left as Russia apparently wants to avoid flying over Turkey, which once grounded a Syria-bound Russian plane with military cargo.

**Greece Must Respect Deal after Vote**

- As per the EU Commission head, whoever wins the Greek elections on September 20 must respect the terms of the huge bailout deal and implement the tough reforms agreed.
- Greeks go to the polls for their fifth time in six years this month, as former premier Alexis Tsipras seeks a fresh mandate to push through commitments made under the new 86-billion-euro (\$96-billion) bailout.

**EARTH MATTER****Rare Pink Dolphin Spotted**

- A rare pink dolphin has been spotted in the Calcasieu River in southwestern Louisiana.
- Captain Erik Rue of Calcasieu Charter Service spotted the dolphin in 2007, which he nicknamed 'Pinky'.
- Pinky, now an adult, is one of the world's only dolphins with this colour pigmentation.
- Pinky, whose body is 100 percent pink like, the colour of most dolphins bellies, is believed to be an albino.

**INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY****Spectrum Trading Norms Approved for Telecom Firms**

- The Union Cabinet approved the much-awaited spectrum trading norms for telecom companies, so that this scarce resource can be put to optimal use.
- As per the new norms, now the telecom companies can trade spectrum among themselves. For this they need not take any government permission.
- The telecom companies only need to inform the government 45 days in advance before trading and they have to give an undertaking.
- Under the guidelines, mobile carriers can buy or lend unused airwaves from rivals, making it potentially easier for companies like Bharti Airtel and Vodafone India to meet surging demand in the country's phone and data usage.



**NTPC to Raise Rs. 700 crore via Tax Free Bonds**

- State-run power utility NTPC will raise up to Rs. 700 crore through tax free secured non-convertible bonds.
- The government has approved the company's raising Rs. 1,000 crore through tax free bonds, including Rs. 700 crore through public issue.

**INDIA – OTHERS****DRDO Gets 1st Woman Director General**

- J. Manjula has been appointed the first woman director general of the Defence Research and Development Organization's Electronics and Communication Systems cluster.
- She joined DRDO in 1987 and served in the Defence Electronics Research Laboratory, Hyderabad, for over 26 years in the area of integrated electronic warfare.

**INFOTAINMENT****Roger Federer Reaches His 10th US Open Semi-final**

- Roger Federer defeated Richard Gasquet to reach his 10th US Open semi-final, where he will face close friend Stan Wawrinka.
- Roger Federer, bidding to become the oldest champion in New York in 45 years, took just 87 minutes to beat Gasquet for the 15th time in 17 meetings.

**11th September****AROUND THE WORLD****US to Accept 10,000 Syrian Refugees**

- As per a report, President Barack Obama has directed his administration to prepare to take in at least 10,000 Syrian refugees over the next year.
- It is the first specific commitment of the United States made toward increasing its acceptance of refugees from the war-torn country.
- Since the start of the Syrian civil war in 2011, the United States has taken only 1500 refugees.

**INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY****Domestic Car Sales up in August**

- The auto industry continues its drive on a slow road to recovery partly, as car sales in India rose 6.06 percent in August, the 10th consecutive month of growth.
- According to the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers, a major concern is the declining sales of motorcycles, which saw a drop of 9.59 percent in August.
- In August, domestic car sales stood at 1,63,093 units as against 1,53,781 units in the same month last year.

**Government Gives Nod for Gold Bonds and New Monetization Scheme**

- The government cleared two moves meant to reduce the import of gold. The first entails the issue of gold bonds that individuals can invest in instead of buying it in physical form, the second is the Gold Monetization Scheme or a new deposit tool meant to help people earn returns on the precious metal lying idle in bank lockers. The gold deposited through this scheme will be re-circulated in the economy, helping cut imports.
- India is among the top two markets for gold with the demand for bars and coins estimated at 300 tonnes annually as households have traditionally seen it as a safe investment. But the high demand and large quantities of imports distort the trade numbers and put pressure on the current account deficit and, in adverse situations, impacts the exchange rate.

**INFOTAINMENT****Martina Hingis Partners Leander Paes, Sania Mirza Enter US Open Finals**

- Indian tennis stars Sania Mirza and Leander Paes enter the finals of the 2015 US Open, partnering with Swiss legend Martina Hingis in their women's doubles and mixed doubles respectively.
- Paes and Hingis defeated India's Rohan Bopanna and Chinese Taipei's Yung-Jan Chan in the second mixed doubles semi-finals to make the final.

**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY****30,000 Year Old Giant Virus Discovered**

- Scientists have discovered a 30,000-year-old prehistoric virus deep in the frozen wilderness of northeastern Siberia.
- French researchers say that they will revive the giant virus.
- The virus is called Mollivirus sibericum, translated as 'soft virus from Siberia' and is the fourth type of prehistoric virus discovered since 2003.
- The prehistoric viruses are called 'giant viruses' because they are visible by light microscopy and measures at 0.6 microns, just over a thousandth of a millimetre.

**12th September****EARTH MATTERS****Antarctic Ocean Gobbling more Carbon Dioxide than Before**

- As per a new study Antarctic Ocean has been absorbing increasing levels of Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) , a potent greenhouse gas (GHG), over the past decade.
- The study dispels fears that Antarctic Ocean's (also known as the Southern Ocean) carbon sink might have begun to saturate due to increase in CO<sub>2</sub> absorbing levels.

**INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY****Indra Nooyi, 2nd Most Powerful Woman in 2015 Fortune's Business List**

- Indra Nooyi, CEO of food and beverage giant PepsiCo is the sole Indian-origin executive in 2015 edition of Fortune's list of 50 Most Powerful Women in Business.
- This edition of the list was topped by General Motors CEO Mary Barra. She heads United States largest auto-maker and it is her second year as head.

**INFOTAINMENT****Federer and Djokovic to battle in US Open Finals**

- Five-times champion Roger Federer reached his first U.S. Open final in six years as he raced past fellow Swiss Stan Wawrinka 6-4 6-3 6-1 at Flushing Meadows in the semi-finals.
- The top-seeded world number one from Serbia advanced to his fourth grand slam final of the year with a 6-0 6-1 6-1 romp over defending champion Marin Cilic of Croatia, who was hampered by an ankle injury.

**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY****New species of human relative discovered in South Africa**

- Scientists have discovered a new ancestral species in the human family tree dubbed as Homenaledi in South Africa.
- These species are among the first of our kind (genus Homo) and could have lived in Africa up to 3 million years ago.

**13th September****AROUND THE WORLD****US Federal Budget Deficit Shrinks**

- The US federal government budget deficit decreased in August, providing fresh confidence that the country is poised to meet its deficit cuts goal.
- The budget deficit stood at \$64.4 billion in August, 50 percent less than the amount recorded a year.
- In the first eleven months of the fiscal year 2015, which started last October and ends in September this year, the deficit is running ten percent below last year's level.

**INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY****Forex Continues to Shrink**

- Data from the RBI show that the foreign exchange reserves declined by \$2.889 billion to \$349.037 billion in the week through September 4 due to the continuing fall in foreign currency assets.
- In the last two reporting weeks, the reserves had come down by a whopping \$6.322 billion.
- Foreign currency assets, expressed in dollar terms, include the effect of appreciation and depreciation of non-US currencies such as the euro, pound and the yen, held in the reserves.

**INFOTAINMENT****Paes-Hingis First to Win 3 Grand Slam Mixed Titles since 1969**

- Leander Paes and Martina Hingis became the first pair to win three Grand Slam mixed titles in a single year for the first time since 1969.
- The last pair to achieve this feat was that of Margaret Court and Marty Riessen.
- The Paes and Hingis won the final to seal their third major after winning the Australian Open and Wimbledon earlier in 2015.

**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY****Traces of Meteorite that Hit Sweden Found**

- Researchers have found traces of two simultaneous meteorite impacts in the Swedish county of Jamtland - first evidence of a twin strike that occurred around 460 million years ago.
- The researchers discovered two craters - while one is enormous with a diameter of 7.5 kilometres, the other, located 16 kilometres away, has a diameter of 700 metres.

**14th September****AROUND THE WORLD****Germany Reimposes Border Controls**

- Germany was reinstating temporary border controls with immediate effect, as the country buckles under pressure from a record influx of refugees.
- The aim of this measure is to stop the current influx to Germany and to return to an orderly process.
- The announcement came on the eve of a meeting of Interior Ministers from the EU's 28 member states in Brussels to discuss proposals from the EU's executive Commission to redistribute about 1,60,000 asylumseekers across the bloc.

**EARTH MATTER**

**Stone Tools Crafted at Least 10,000 Years Ago Unearthed**

- An archaeological survey has unearthed thousands of stone tools crafted at least 10,000 years ago.
- The rare find is shedding light on a time when prehistoric bison and mammoths still roamed what is now western Washington State. Only a handful of archaeological sites dating back 10,000 years or more have been discovered in the region.

**INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY****Taxpayers to Get Refunds in 7-10 Days**

- Good news for taxpayers, the Income Tax Department will now process and send refunds in 7 to 10 days as its latest technology upgrade of electronic and Aadhaar-based ITR verification has begun on a successful note.
- The department's Central Processing Centre (CPC) as on Sept. 7 processed 45.18 lakh returns and issued refunds to 22.14 lakh taxpayers.

**Healthcare BPO Sector in India Facing Competition**

- According to a recent joint study, players engaged in business process outsourcing (BPO) in healthcare sector in India are facing stiff competition from their Filipino counterparts.
- The Philippines and other low-cost locations are emerging as a big challenge to Indian BPO industry including the healthcare vertical.
- Competition from leading healthcare BPO companies in the U.S. is a big challenge for Indian vendors, since most of them are specialists in the healthcare sector and provide an increased gamut of services as compared to Indian vendors.

**INFOTAINMENT****US Open 2015**

- Novak Djokovic clinched his third Grand Slam title of 2015 and 10th career major winning the 2015 US Open by defeating Roger Federer.
- This defeat shattered Federer's bid to become the oldest US Open champion in 45 years.
- India's tennis star Sania Mirza bagged her second consecutive Grand Slam title of the season, and fifth overall, as she won the US Open women's doubles with Swiss partner Martina Hingis.
- The Indo-Swiss team outplayed Casey Dellacqua and Yaroslava Shvedova in the final.

**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY****Neon Surrounds Moon**

- NASA's Lunar Atmosphere and Dust Environment Explorer (LADEE) spacecraft has found neon in the lunar atmosphere.
- The moon's thin atmosphere contains neon. While scientists have speculated on the presence of neon in the lunar atmosphere for decades, LADEE spacecraft has confirmed its existence for the first time.
- The presence of neon in the exosphere of the moon has been a subject of speculation since the Apollo missions, but no credible detections were made.

**15th September****AROUND THE WORLD**

- Australian PM Tony Abbott ousted by Malcolm Turnbull
- Australia is to have a new prime minister after Tony Abbott was ousted as leader of the centre-right Liberal Party by Malcolm Turnbull.
- In the dramatic late night party leadership ballot, Mr Abbott, who had been plagued by poor opinion polls, received 44 votes to Mr Turnbull's 54.

**EARTH MATTERS****2015, 2016 to Become Hottest on Record**

- Possible big changes in key global climate system suggest that global temperatures in 2015 and 2016 are set to reach record high levels, according to new research by the Met Office, Britain's official weather agency.
- The latest research suggests the Earth's average surface temperature is running at or near record levels so far in 2015 and the trend is not slowing down. Last year's temperature has already broken the record for the hottest year, Xinhua news agency reported.

**INDIA - OTHERS****Assembly rejected proposal to declare Nepal as a Hindu State**

- The Constituent Assembly of Nepal has overwhelmingly rejected the proposal to declare Nepal a Hindu state and reaffirmed to remain secular.
- The proposal to amend the constitution received the support of only 21 lawmakers of the Constituent Assembly in the total 601 member assembly. In order to pass this proposal, it was necessary to secure the required 10 percent of votes.

**INFOTAINMENT****Frank D. Gilroy, Pulitzer prize-winning playwright, Passed Away**

- Renowned American playwright, screenwriter and film producer and director Frank D. Gilroy passed away in Monroe, New York. He was 89.

- In 1965, he won prestigious Pulitzer Prize for Drama for his play The Subject Was Roses.

**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY****Astronomers peer into planet-hosting Star for the First Time**

- Astronomers have successfully peered through the “amniotic sac” of a star that is still forming to observe the innermost region of a burgeoning solar system for the first time.
- No one so far has been able to probe this close to a star that is still forming and which also has at least one planet so close in.
- To observe this distant star called “HD 100546”, the astronomers used the Very Large Telescope Interferometer (VLTI) which is based in an observatory in Chile.

**16th September****AROUND THE WORLD****Hungary Seals Border to Refugees**

- As Hungary threw up the barriers to stop thousands of refugees trekking over its border from Serbia, undeterred migrants began to think of other routes to take.
- The refugees will try enter Croatia, then Slovenia and from there to Vienna and Germany.
- As reports, buses carrying migrants from Serbia’s southern border with Macedonia north to Hungary have been rerouted towards Croatia.
- At least 200,000 migrants seeking refuge from war and poverty in the Middle East, Asia and Africa have crossed into Hungary so far this year.

**INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY****Exports Dip for 9th Month in a Row**

- Contracting for the ninth month in a row, India's exports plunged by 20.66 percent in August to USD 21.26 billion, widening the trade deficit.
- The significant slump in country's exports is attributed to global slowdown and declining commodity prices worldwide.
- According to the data released by the Commerce Ministry, imports too declined by 9.95 percent to USD 33.74 billion in August due to high gold imports, widening the trade deficit to USD 12.47 billion.

**Vedanta-Cairn India Merger Gets BSE, NSE Approval**

- Metals and mining conglomerate Vedanta Ltd. received the go-ahead from both BSE and NSE on the proposed merger of its oil and hydrocarbon arm Cairn India with itself.
- In June, India’s largest private miner Vedanta Ltd. had announced it will absorb oil firm Cairn India in a USD 2.3 billion all-share deal to create the country's largest diversified natural resources firm.

**INDIA – OTHERS****Stamps of Rajiv and Indira Gandhi to be Discontinued**

- Government has decided to discontinue stamps of former Prime Ministers, Rajiv and Indira Gandhi, under the new definitive theme of postal stamps.

**INFOTAINMENT****Tendulkar and Warne’s T20 Series Gets Green Signal**

- Cricket legends Sachin Tendulkar and Shane Warne were given a green signal by the International Cricket Council for their three-match T20 series in the United States.
- It is a one-off event in November.
- Part of the revenue from these three T20 games will be pocketed by the ICC, which it will use to promote the sport in the US.
- Players like Rahul Dravid, Glenn McGrath, Jacques Kallis, Adam Gilchrist, Sourav Ganguly, Brian Lara, VVS Laxman and Wasim Akram will be part of this series.
- The matches will be played at Wrigley Field (Chicago), Yankee Stadium (New York) and Dodger Stadium (Los Angeles).

**17th September****AROUND THE WORLD****The US Warns North Korea against Nuclear Provocation**

- The United States warned North Korea that it will face "severe consequences" if it continues with what Washington sees as its provocative decision to restart a nuclear reactor.
- Pyongyang has restarted the long-mothballed Yongbyon reactor, which is capable of producing weapon-grade plutonium, and has threatened to launch a rocket, which US officials see as a test-bed for ballistic missile technology.

**INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY****RBI Grants in-principle Approval for Small Finance Banks**

- The Reserve Bank of India granted “in-principle” approval to 10 applicants to set up small finance banks under the “Guidelines for Licensing of Small Finance Banks in the private sector.”
- The “in-principle” approval granted will be valid for 18 months to enable the applicants to comply with the

requirements under the guidelines and fulfil other conditions as may be stipulated by the RBI.

**INDIA – OTHERS****Russia Assures India of Support on UNSC Permanent Seat**

- Russia has assured its support to India for permanent membership in the UN Security Council, days after it along with the US and China refused to contribute to the text for negotiations on reforms which was seen as a move to thwart India's bid for the seat.
- The assurance was made by Russian Deputy Foreign Minister during a meeting with Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs Sujata Mehta.

**INFOTAINMENT****Manpreet Kaur Qualifies for Olympics**

- Manpreet Kaur of Railways created a new national record in the women's shot put at the 55th National Open Athletic Championship and qualified for the Rio Olympics.
- Manpreet registered a throw of 17.96 m smashing the previous record of 17.43 m which was set by Harbans Kaur in 1997.

**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY****Sound Waves Used to Activate Brain Cells**

- For the first time, scientists have directly controlled brain cells using sound waves, in a tiny laboratory worm.
- They used ultrasound to trigger activity in specific neurons, causing the worms to change direction.
- By contrast, ultrasound travels relatively unimpeded through the body; this is the property that makes it useful for medical sonograms.
- This could be a big advantage when you want to stimulate a region deep in the brain.

**18th September****AROUND THE WORLD****US Fed Holds Rates Steady**

- The U.S. Federal Reserve kept interest rates unchanged in a nod to concerns about a weak world economy, but left open the possibility of a modest policy tightening later this year.
- As per the U.S. central bank an array of global risks and other factors had convinced it to delay what would have been the first rate hike in nearly a decade.

**Croatia Plans to Close Border with Serbia**

- Croatia will close its border with Serbia if another 8,000 migrants enter the newest European Union member in one day.
- As per the Interior Minister, there was no need for migrants to continue arriving to seek protection as Croatia had no capacity to receive them.
- Some 9,000 migrants entered Croatia following the closure of Hungary's border with Serbia.

**EARTH MATTER****Female Snake Gives Birth without a Male Companion**

- For the second time in two years, a captive snake has given birth without any interaction with a member of the opposite sex.
- As per Jeff Briggler, virgin births are rare but can occur in some species through a process called parthenogenesis. It occurs in some insects, fish, amphibians, birds and reptiles, including some snakes, but not mammals.
- Parthenogenesis is a type of asexual reproduction in which offspring develop from unfertilized eggs, meaning there is no genetic contribution by a male. It's caused when cells known as polar bodies, which are produced with an animal's egg and usually die, behave like sperm and fuse with the egg, triggering cell division.

**INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY****Govt. mulls raising FDI limit in private banks to 100%**

- Seeking to further relax foreign investment norms, the government is considering increasing the foreign direct investment limit in private banks to 100 percent, from the existing 74 percent.
- The move will help the existing private sector banks, payments banks and small finance banks tap overseas markets to enhance their capital base.
- The government is taking several steps to boost FDI and has relaxed FDI norms for sectors such as medical devices, defence and construction activities.

**INDIA – OTHERS****India to Ban Testing of Soaps, Detergents on Animals**

- India has taken the final decision to ban all animal testing of soaps and detergents.
- Pushed actively by Maneka Gandhi, the testing ban will soon be notified by the Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion and the Commerce Ministry.
- The Centre has constituted the CPCSEA to take all such measures as may be necessary to ensure that animals are not subjected to unnecessary pain or suffering before, during or after the performance of

experiments on them. All establishments engaged in research and education involving animals, are required to comply with the various guidelines, norms and stipulations set out by CPCSEA.

**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY****UFO Hunters Find Stone Disc from Alien Spacecraft**

- Alien enthusiast groups claim to have found debris from a UFO that may have landed on Earth a million years ago.
- According to a Russian website, the 'remains' discovered came in the form of a four-metre stone disc.
- The disc, which was one of several reportedly found in the area, is important as it may contain metal tungsten (Wolfram), which is used in military technology and could apparently be present in a UFO.

**19th September****INDIA - OTHERS****PM Modi launched IPDS scheme to strengthen power distribution**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Rs. 45,000-crore Integrated Power Development Scheme (IPDS) which will strengthen distribution networks and ensure 24X7 power supply to all by 2022.
- The IPDS will cover works relating to strengthening sub-transmission and distribution system, including provisioning of solar panels, metering of distribution transformers/feeders/consumer in urban areas and IT enablement of distribution sector.

**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY****Invisibility Cloak Developed**

- Scientists at the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)'s Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (Berkeley Lab) and the University of California (UC) Berkeley have devised an ultra-thin invisibility "skin" cloak that can conform to the shape of an object and conceal it from detection with visible light.
- Working with brick-like blocks of gold nanoantennas, the Berkeley researchers fashioned a "skin cloak" barely 80 nanometers in thickness, that was wrapped around a three-dimensional object about the size of a few biological cells and arbitrarily shaped with multiple bumps and dents.
- Although this cloak is only microscopic in size, the principles behind the technology should enable it to be scaled-up to conceal macroscopic items as well.

**20th September****AROUND THE WORLD****Thousands of Migrants Pour into Austria**

- Thousands of migrants streamed into Austria after being shunted through Croatia, Hungary and Slovenia, as Europe's divided nations stepped up efforts to push the wave of desperate humanity on to other neighbours.
- Between 12,000 to 13,000 people entered Austria over the course of the day.

**INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY****Sun Pharma to Sell Ranbaxy's 2 CNS Divisions**

- Sun Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd. is selling erstwhile Ranbaxy's two divisions in central nervous system segment in India to Strides Arcolab for Rs. 165 crore.
- Sun Pharma and Strides have entered into a definitive agreement related to erstwhile Ranbaxy's 'Solus' and 'Solus Care' divisions operating in the central nervous system segment in India.
- The agreement involves transfer of these two marketing divisions, along with employees to Strides.

**INFOTAINMENT****Ajay Jayaram Enters Korea Open Finals**

- Indian shuttler Ajay Jayaram notched a sensational victory over world No. 7 Chou Tien Chen of Chinese Taipei to enter into the finals of the \$600,000 Super Series event at the Korean Open.

**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY****Melting Arctic Sea Ice Affects Land Ecosystems**

- Melting sea ice may have a direct bearing on methane emissions from Arctic tundra.
- As per a study, changes in the Arctic Ocean can affect ecosystems located far away on land.
- Bright sea ice reflects most sunlight, while open water absorbs most sunlight. Less sea ice, therefore, leads to more absorbed heat, and higher temperatures throughout the North Pole region.

**21st September****AROUND THE WORLD****Nepal Gets New Secular Constitution**

- Nepal adopted a historic Constitution after seven years marking its transition into a fully secular and democratic republic from a Hindu monarchy, amid violence by minority Madhesi groups over a seven province federal structure.
- The President while addressing the final meeting of the CA said that the new Constitution has given an opportunity to maintain unity in diversity in the nation and ensure rights of all.

**Alexis Tsipras Returns to Power**

- Greek voters returned Alexis Tsipras to power with a strong election victory, ensuring the charismatic leftist remains Greece's dominant political figure despite caving in to European demands for a bailout he once opposed.
- He called the election last month when his party split over his reversal on the 86 billion euro bailout.
- As per sources, Tsipras expects to form a government within three days.

**INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY****SBI Cards See e-commerce Share Double**

- SBI Cards, the credit card-issuing joint venture between the country's largest bank and GE Capital, has seen share of e-commerce in its total transactions double to 45% in the last one year.
- The country's third largest credit card issuer is expecting online transactions to overtake physical ones (where cards are swiped) and has launched a dedicated card for online which gathers more rewards points. SBI Cards is offering SimplyCLICK which - through a strategic partnership with Amazon India, BookMyShow, Cleartrip, FabFurnish, Foodpanda, LensKart and Ola Cabs - will offer ten times the reward points of a regular card for a transaction with these merchants. For other online payments, cardholders will get five times the regular reward points.
- SBI Cards had 32.4 lakh customers with nearly 82.8 lakh transactions, amounting to Rs 2,257 crore in May 2015.

**FPIs Pull out Rs. 4,600 cr from Capital Markets**

- Foreign investors have pulled out over Rs. 4,600 crore from the capital markets since the beginning of this month primarily on account of various global and domestic factors.
- Outflows are unlikely to continue as the US Federal Reserve maintained status quo on interest rate, which may give the Reserve Bank of India some headroom to lower its key lending rate.
- The latest pull-out follows a record net outflow of Rs 17,428 crore from equities last month. That was the highest net outflow by foreign portfolio investors in a single month since 1997.

**INDIA – OTHERS****Last Date for Residents of Indian Enclaves in Bangladesh**

- There is going to be a final chance for residents of Indian enclaves in Bangladesh, which is going to be part of Bangladesh from November 1, to enroll as Indian citizenship. There were allegations that Indian enclave dwellers were forced not to opt for Indian citizenship.
- This is the last chance to enroll as Indian citizenship and all news cases would be placed before the committee. Arrangements had been made to rehabilitate the Indians coming from Bangladesh.
- In July the enclave dwellers had the chance to opt to switch citizenship either for Bangladesh or India.

**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY****New Way to Help Map 3D Cosmos**

- A team of researchers have proposed a new way to chart the cosmos in 3-D.
- Researchers proposed a new way to calculate cosmological distances using the bursts of energy also known as fast radio bursts. The method allows researchers to position distant galaxies in three dimensions and map out the cosmos.
- These fast radio bursts travel toward Earth, they spread out and arrive at different times based on their wavelengths. The researchers propose using the delay between the arrival times of different frequencies to map the cosmos. The amount of spread in the signal that arrives on Earth gives scientists a sense of how many electrons, and by extension how much material including stars, gas and dark matter, are in between Earth and the source of the burst.

**22nd September****AROUND THE WORLD****Turkey Blocks New Migrant March to Greek Border**

- Migrants trying to reach Europe overland from Turkey were blocked by police outside Istanbul.
- Around 700 Syrian that had been blocked for the past week at Istanbul's main bus station set out to on foot for the northwestern city of Edirne.
- Turkey has taken in over two million Syrians since 2011, of whom around 260,000 live in refugee camps.

**INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY****Goa Iron Ore E-auction**

- The 11<sup>th</sup> e-auction of iron ore across Goa will kick off on Tuesday.
- A total 1.17 million tonnes of ore will be up for grabs. This time, the ore stacked at 53 different locations, including five spots where high grade lumpy ore is stocked, will be put up for e-auction.
- The department has listed mines in Codli, Sanquelim, Cuddegai, Shigao, Sonus, Collem, Coshti, Shelvona, Sulcorn, Dignem and Maina for the purpose.

**INFOTAINMENT****Richie Richardson inducted in ICC referees panel**

- Dubai: Former West Indies captain Richie Richardson was inducted into the Elite Panel of ICC Match

Referees, replacing Sri Lanka's Roshan Mahanama who stepped down last week.

- Richardson will take over the match referee's role after he has finished his current assignment as the West Indies cricket team manager in January 2016.
- Richardson represented the West Indies in 86 Tests and 224 One-Day Internationals from 1983 to 1996. He captained his side in 24 Tests and 87 ODIs. He played in the ICC Cricket World Cup in 1987, 1992 and 1996.
- He has been the West Indies cricket team manager since January 2011.

#### **SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

##### **ISRO All Set to Launch Astrosat**

- ISRO is all set to launch its first space observatory 'Astrosat' aimed at studying celestial bodies by the end of September.
- SRO's PSLV-C30 will carry the 1.5 ton satellite to place it into a 650-km orbit.
- According to ISRO, six customer satellites - one satellite each from Indonesia and Canada, and four nano satellites from the US will ride along with Astrosat.

## **23rd September**

#### **AROUND THE WORLD**

##### **Greek New Cabinet Unveiled**

- Greece's newly-elected Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras unveiled his new government. The finance portfolio was given to Euclid Tsakalotos and the defence to his nationalist coalition ally, the Independent Greeks.
- The make-up of the new cabinet was largely a carbon-copy of the outgoing government headed by Tsipras, who resigned in August.

##### **Obama Urges European Allies to Accept Refugees**

- The US President pressed European nations to take their "fair share" of refugees, after the EU reluctantly reached an agreement designed to halt a destabilizing humanitarian crisis.
- The statement is likely to be seen as a warning to Hungary, the Czech Republic, Romania and Slovakia who unsuccessfully opposed a deal to relocate 120,000 refugees inside the European Union.

#### **INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY**

##### **SEBI Fines PACL**

- In its biggest ever fine, regulator SEBI imposed a penalty of Rs. 7,269.5 crore on PACL Ltd. and its four directors for illegal and fraudulent mobilisation of funds from the public.
- SEBI last year had asked PACL to refund Rs. 49,100 crore it had collected through illicit schemes over a 15-year period.
- As per SEBI, PACL made huge illegal mobilisation of money, leading to consequent profit to the tune of over Rs. 2,423 crore in a short span of less than one year.

#### **INDIA – OTHERS**

##### **MP Government to Allot Land for Nuclear Power Project**

- The Madhya Pradesh government will allot over 41 acres of land to the first nuclear power station in the state, which will be set up in Mandla district.
- The 1,400 mega watt (MW) project is being set up in Chutka village.
- The Chutka MP Atomic Power Station project had got an in principle approval from the centre five years ago.

##### **India Turns to Israel for Armed Drones**

- India has accelerated plans to buy drones from Israel that can be armed, allowing the military to carry out strikes overseas with less risk to personnel.
- The plan to acquire Israeli Herons was first conceived three years ago, but in January the military asked the government for speedy delivery, as Pakistan and China develop their own drone warfare capabilities.

#### **SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

##### **Magic Machine that Produces Oil from Waste Plastic**

- A Japanese scientist has invented a magic machine that produces oil from waste plastic. This innovation can potentially be solution to plastic disposal problem of a colossal scale.
- In this technology plastic is converted into oil using heat and pressure.
- This machine appears to have all the traits of a disruptive innovation with effects that could very well shake the global oil market.

## **24th September**

#### **AROUND THE WORLD**

##### **US Backs India's Bid for Permanent UNSC Seat**

- The US is committed to India's inclusion as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, days after the General Assembly adopted a negotiating text for the long-pending reforms of the powerful wing of the world body.



- The reaffirmation from the US comes in the backdrop of the maiden India-US Strategic and Commercial Dialogue.

**EARTH MATTER****There's More Oxygen in Earth's Core than Previously Believed**

- A new view of the content of the Earth's core has suggested that there is more oxygen in it than previously believed.
- Some new findings have been discovered about Earth's core and mantle by considering their geophysical and geochemical signatures together. This research provides insight into the origins of Earth's formation.
- Based on the higher oxygen concentration of the core, a team has concluded that Earth must have accreted material that is more oxidized than the present-day mantle
- By combining experimental petrology, geochemistry, mineral physics and seismology, the team found that core formation occurred in a hot (liquid) moderately deep magma ocean not exceeding 1,800-kilometer depth, under conditions more oxidized than present-day Earth.

**INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY****India, Iran and Afghanistan Come Together for Transit Corridor**

- India is looking to step up the pedal over its ambitious Chabahar port project in Iran by signing an international transit corridor agreement with Iran and Afghanistan.
- One of the reasons why the port project is important for India is that it will facilitate access to Afghanistan, bypassing Pakistan. Officials from the 3 countries have met to finalize agreement for a Chabahar transit corridor.
- India is looking at a trilateral transit corridor MoU.

**Flipkart Co-founders New Billionaires**

- According to leading business magazine Forbes India' rich list release, leading Indian e-retailer Flipkart's co-founders Sachin Bansal and Binny Bansal are the latest billionaires in the country, with \$1.3 billion (Rs. 8,582 crore) net worth each.
- Indian e-commerce has added its first billionaires with Flipkart's founders making debut on the rich list at number 86, with \$1.3 billion net worth each.

**INDIA – OTHERS****Rajasthan Govt. Jumps 50% Bar**

- The Rajasthan Assembly passed separate bills providing five per cent reservation to Gujjars and other communities under Special Backward Classes and for 14 per cent quota to Economically Backward Classes of unreserved categories.
- Five communities namely Banjara/Baldiya/Labana, Gadiya Lohar/Gadoliya, Gujar/Gurjar, Raika/Rebari/Debasi and Gadariya/Gadri/Gayari have been included in the bill for 5 per cent quota under SBC.
- The bills will exceed the permissible legal limit of reservation in the state as the reservation under SC, ST and OBC categories will remain unchanged.

**INFOTAINMENT****Robert Lewandowski Scored Five Goals in Nine Minutes**

- Robert Lewandowski re-wrote Bundesliga history by scoring five goals in just nine minutes in Bayern Munich's 5-1 win at home against Wolfsburg.
- The Poland striker scored the first goal, in the 51st minute. Then, set the record for the fastest hat-trick, scoring another two in another three minutes. He scored three goals in 3 minutes 19 seconds.

**25th September****AROUND THE WORLD****Six-month Truce Agreed in Three Syria Towns**

- An agreement was reached between the warring parties in Syria for a six-month truce in the rebel-held town of Zabadani and two Shiite towns in the northwest.
- A ceasefire in Zabadani and the villages of Fuaa and Kafraya was agreed under the sponsorship of the UN.
- The agreement for a six-month truce was reached between rebel fighters including Islamist group Ahrar al-Sham and pro-regime forces and their allies of the Lebanese Shiite Hezbollah movement.

**EARTH MATTER****Delhi's Air Worst among 381 Cities**

- The latest World Bank report on leveraging urbanisation in South Asia has identified "air pollution" as a big challenge for major cities in the region, including Delhi. While Delhi is the worst among 381 cities from developing countries, 19 of the 20 most polluted cities are from South Asia.
- Referring to the WHO report with regard to the level of Particulate Matter (PM) 2.5 in the ambient air in cities, the World Bank said that of all the sources of congestion associated with the growth of cities, one of the most serious for health and human welfare is ambient air pollution from vehicle emissions and the burning of fossil fuels by industry.

**INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY**

**RBS to Exit India Private Banking Business**

- Royal Bank of Scotland Group Plc is selling its Indian private banking unit to a company led by the head of the business, Shiv Gupta, as the British bank pulls back from some foreign markets to focus on UK retail and commercial banking.
- Gupta's company Sanctum Wealth Management will take over the RBS private banking unit's onshore clients and staff.
- Sanctum plans to retain all branch networks currently operated by RBS private banking in India.

**INFOTAINMENT****Ganguly Named New President of CAB**

- Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee announced that Sourav Ganguly has been chosen President of the Cricket Association of Bengal.
- According to a report, the former BCCI and CAB President Jagmohan Dalmiya's son Abhishek will also be inducted into the Bengal board as an official. Ganguly, who is presently a joint-secretary at the CAB, will succeed Dalmiya with the full support of West Bengal government.

**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY****Remnants of Veil Nebula**

- The Hubble Space Telescope has captured stunning images of remnants of a massive star, the Veil Nebula.
- The new set of images reveal the tangled and still expanding remains of the supernova star that exploded 8000 years ago.
- The Veil Nebula is one of the best-known supernova remnants.
- The entire nebula is 110 light-years across, covering six full moons on the sky as seen from Earth, and resides about 2,100 light-years away in the constellation Cygnus, the Swan.

**26th September****AROUND THE WORLD****UN adopts agreement on Sustainable Development Goals**

- United Nations unanimously adopted an ambitious agreement on the outcome document New Sustainable Development Agenda for the next 15 years, i.e. till 2030.
- The document in this regard was adopted in 70th session of United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and was announced by its President Mogens Lykketoft at the UN headquarters in New York.

**Matthias Mueller as new CEO of Volkswagen**

- German auto maker Volkswagen AG has appointed Matthias Mueller as its new chief executive officer (CEO).
- Prior to this appointment, he was serving as CEO of Volkswagen's subsidiary Porsche AG.
- He will succeed Martin Winterkorn who had resigned from office following an emissions cheating scandal (dubbed as Diesel Dope) described as a moral and political disaster.

**INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY****EU imposes anti-dumping duty on Indian steel pipes**

- European Union (EU) has imposed a provisional anti-dumping duty of up to 31.2 per cent on imports of sewage and water steel pipes from India for six months to protect its domestic industry.
- This decision was taken after European Commission in its anti-dumping probe concluded that the material injury was caused by the dumped imports from India to the Union industry.

**INDIA - OTHERS****EPFO gets SKOCH Awards for Smart Governance Initiatives**

- The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has been awarded SKOCH Award for Smart Governance.
- It has been bestowed with this award for its initiatives on UAN Programme and Transformation of Social Security Agenda in India.

**INFOTAINMENT****Jennifer Lopez named first UN Global Advocate for Girls and Women**

- Singer-actress Jennifer Lopez has been named the first-ever global advocate for girls and women at the United Nations Foundation.
- The 46-year-old star will travel the globe in an attempt to highlight the plight of females struggling in war zones, refugee camps and even on the mean streets of her native New York.

**27th September****AROUND THE WORLD****Tsipras Pledges to End Debt Crisis by 2019**

- Greece's newly re-elected Prime Minister pledged to fast-track negotiations with international bailout creditors so that the country can be in a position to get some much-needed debt relief.

- In his first cabinet meeting, Alexis Tsipras told that his aim is to steer the country out of its crisis by 2019 when his four-year mandate ends.
- Mr. Tsipras pledged to respect Greece's commitments for further spending cuts, tax hikes and reforms, and said his first, urgent priority will be to launch talks on reducing the country's crippling debt burden and boost its battered banks.

**EARTH MATTER****Italy's Glaciers Retreated by 40 Percent**

- As per a report released by World Wildlife Fund, Alpine glaciers in Italy have lost an estimated 40 percent of their area over the last three decades.
- The situation of glaciers on the Italian side of the Alps is very worrying.
- The report suggested that drastic measures should be adopted at the Paris summit to prevent further deterioration of the glaciers in Italy and worldwide.
- With respects to the Italian Alps, the report stated glaciers currently cover a total area of about 368 sq.km compared to 609 sq.km in the 1980s.

**INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY****BPCL Eyes 10% in Kenya Oil Block**

- State-owned oil retailer Bharat Petroleum Corporation is in talks with UK-based Tullow Oil to buy a 10% stake in its discovered oil block in the South Lokichar Basin in Kenya with an estimated one billion barrels of oil reserves, of which 600 million barrels may be recoverable.
- At current oil prices, the resource potential is valued at \$27 billion and BPCL may have to shell out about \$2.7 billion, depending upon the recoverable resource potential of the block.

**Corbion Buys Malladi's Lactic Acid Business**

- Corbion Purac, the Netherlands-based speciality chemicals firm has acquired lactic acid business of Chennai-based Malladi Specialties for an undisclosed sum.
- The transaction includes the sales and delivery of lactic acid and lactic acid based derivatives in India. No production facilities will be acquired. Production unit at Renigunta will remain with Malladi Drugs and Pharmaceuticals, which will produce derivatives on behalf of Corbion Purac. This deal allows for a local production base through the partnership.

**28th September****AROUND THE WORLD****Iraq Steps up Anti-Islamic State Coordination**

- Iraq has agreed to set up a cell increasing intelligence coordination with Russia, Syria and Iran in the fight against the Islamic State group.
- It's a committee coordinating between the four countries, with representatives of each country, in the field of military intelligence and aimed at sharing and analysing information.

**INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY****DoP to Seek Cabinet Nod to set up Payments Bank**

- The Department of Posts is expected to seek Cabinet nod within two months for raising Rs. 292 crore from public investment board to set-up payments bank, for which it has already got the RBI approval.
- Payments bank licence will allow companies to collect deposits (initially up to Rs. 1 lakh per individual), offer Internet banking, facilitate money transfers and sell insurance and mutual funds.

**Foreign Investors Get Relief from Controversial MAT**

- With the government deciding to exempt the foreign companies that have no permanent establishment in India from the 18.5 per cent minimum alternate tax demands, all foreign investors have got relief from the controversial MAT.
- The finance ministry's clarification this week puts the MAT controversy to rest as all foreign investors without business presence in India, foreign portfolio investors and companies, are now exempted from MAT, irrespective of whether tax treaties exist between India and other countries where these firms may be domiciled.

**INDIA – OTHERS****World Tourism Day**

- The United Nations World Tourism Organization celebrated World's Tourism Day since 1980 on September 27. The main aim behind celebrating this day was to create awareness regarding the importance of tourism in the international community.
- This year the ministry of culture has announced a free entry for tourists to as many as 200 ticketed monuments and museums across India.
- The report further adds that the free entry includes 116 national monuments like Taj Mahal, Agra Fort, Qutub Minar, Red Fort and 35 museum sites under the ASI.

**Manipur Governor Passes Away**

- Manipur Governor Syed Ahmed passed away. He was suffering from cancer and admitted to Lilavati Hospital in suburban Bandra last week.

- He was sworn in as the Governor of Manipur on May 16, 2015. Ahmed, a former Congress leader from Maharashtra, was shifted to the north-eastern State from Jharkhand, where he was appointed Governor on August 26, 2011 when the UPA Government was in power at the Centre.
- Ahmed joined the Congress party in 1977. He was elected to the Maharashtra Assembly five times from the Nagpada constituency in Mumbai. He also served as a Minister in Maharashtra, where he held portfolios like Housing.

**INFOTAINMENT****Roger Federer Tops Forbes Rich List**

- According to business magazine Forbes, Swiss maestro Roger Federer has been named as the topearning tennis player for the ninth straight year. The 17-time Grand Slam champion has a combined worth of USD 67 million in prize money, endorsement deals and appearances between June 1, 2014 and June 1, 2015.

**29th September****AROUND THE WORLD****Half of Major Afghan City Seized by Taliban**

- The Taliban seized half of an Afghan provincial capital, sending panicked residents fleeing as the hardline Islamists for the first time breached a major city since being ousted from power in 2001.
- Marauding insurgents hoisted their flag over the main square of the northern city of Kunduz, freed prisoners from the local jail.
- The Taliban's incursion into Kunduz barely nine months after the NATO combat mission ended marks a major psychological blow to the country's Western-trained security forces.

**INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY****India Set to Pay Iran USD 700 Million**

- India is paying Iran USD 700 million to clear one-tenth of oil dues, the first payment this year ahead of easing of international sanctions against the Persian Gulf country.
- Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals will pay USD 300 million while Essar Oil will clear a little over USD 300 million in dues on September 30.
- HPCL-Mittal Energy and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation (HPCL) will be the other refiners which will clear part of their outstanding.

**INDIA – OTHERS****India Signs Deal for Purchase of Apache Helicopters**

- India signed a nearly USD 3 billion deal for purchase of 22 Apache attack helicopters and 15 Chinook heavy-lift choppers with American aviation giant Boeing and the US government.
- The contract has a clause to place follow-on orders for 11 more Apaches and seven extra Chinooks.
- American companies have over the last decade bagged defence contracts from India worth around USD 10 billion, including for aircraft like P-8I maritime surveillance planes, C-130J 'Super Hercules' and C-17 Globemaster-III in the transport category.

**V. Shanmuganathan to Hold Additional Charge of Manipur**

- The Governor of Meghalaya, V. Shanmuganathan, has been given an additional charge of Manipur after the demise of incumbent Syed Ahmed Khan.
- Shanmuganathan, who was an RSS worker before joining BJP in 2003, was appointed as Governor of Meghalaya in May this year.

**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY****India Launches its First Space Observatory Astrosat**

- The Indian Space Research Organisation successfully launched its first space observatory 'Astrosat' into the orbit.
- A Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C30) carrying Astrosat and six other satellites, four identical nanosatellites of Spire Global Inc., the US, a micro-satellite from Indonesia and a nano-satellite of the University of Toronto, blasted off from the first launch pad at the rocket port, around 80 km from Chennai.

**Strong Evidence of Water on Mars**

- NASA has discovered evidence of water flowing on Mars, which raises the possibility of some form of life being discovered on the Red Planet.
- Strong evidence for seasonal flows of liquid salty water was detected by NASA's Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter, confirming that this salty water is responsible for seasonal dark streaks seen in spots on the planet's surface.

**30th September****AROUND THE WORLD**

- G7, Gulf States Pledge \$1.8 Billion for UN Refugee Aid
- The G7 group of leading economies and Gulf States pledged \$1.8 billion for UN aid agencies helping Syrian refugees.

- The pledge was announced after a meeting of foreign ministers of the G7 with their counterparts from Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and other European ministers.
- The United Nations is struggling to help some 60 million people displaced by conflict, the highest number since the end of World War II.

**EARTH MATTER****New Zealand's New Ocean Sanctuary**

- New Zealand will create one of the largest marine protected areas in the world, spanning an area of 620,000 sq km.
- As per New Zealand Prime Minister, the Kermadec Ocean Sanctuary will be one of the world's most significant fully protected ecosystems.
- The sanctuary is in the South Pacific Ocean.
- The area is considered crucial in terms of biodiversity, featuring nearly 35 species of whales and dolphins, 150 types of fish and three of the world's seven sea turtle species. It is also geologically significant, encompassing the world's longest chain of submerged volcanoes and the second deepest ocean trench.

**INDIA – BUSINESS/ECONOMY****India No. 1 Foreign Direct Investment Destination**

- According to data, India has emerged on top of the foreign direct investment league table, overtaking China and the United States.
- A ranking of the top destinations for greenfield investment (measured by estimated capital expenditure) in the first half of 2015 shows India at number one, having attracted roughly \$3 billion more than China and \$4 billion more than the US.

**RBI Lowered the Key Interest Rate**

- Home and corporate loans will cost less as the Reserve Bank lowered the key interest rate by 0.50 percent, the biggest cut in over three years.
- In its fourth bi-monthly monetary policy for the current fiscal, RBI cut benchmark repurchase (repo) rate from 7.25 percent to 6.75 percent, lowest in four-and-half-years.

**India up 16 Places on Global Competitiveness Index**

- In a big jump, India has moved up 16 positions to rank 55th on a global index of the world's most competitive economies, which is topped by Switzerland.
- In the World Economic Forum's latest Global Competitiveness Report, the jump in India's position underlines the country's recent economic recovery, improvement in the competitiveness of the country's institutions and its macroeconomic environment and a "slight improvement" in infrastructure.
- Globally, Switzerland has retained its top position as the world's most competitive economy for seventh year in a row and is followed by Singapore, the US, Germany and the Netherlands in the top-five.

**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY****Mid-class Solar Flare**

- An image of a mid-class solar flare has been captured by NASA's Solar Dynamics Observatory.
- Solar flares are powerful outbursts of electromagnetic radiation from the Sun lasting from minutes to hours.
- Researchers have classified this flare as an M7.6 flare.
- Solar flares are classified based on their brightness in the X-ray wavelengths.