

**8th May**

## **AROUND THE WORLD**

### **UN Troops Ready to Move against DR Congo Rebels**

- According to the UN peacekeeping chief, UN troops are preparing an offensive against Hutu rebels in the Democratic Republic of Congo after plans for a joint operation with the Congolese army fell through.
- The UN mission MONUSCO would carry out unilateral operations to drive out the Hutu militia based in eastern DR Congo.

### **Saudi Arabia Proposes 5-day Yemen Ceasefire**

- Saudi Arabia proposed a five-day humanitarian ceasefire in Yemen following weeks of air strikes and clashes, with top US diplomat urging Iran-backed rebels to accept the offer.
- The bombing by a Saudi-led coalition has failed to halt an advance by the Shiite Huthi rebels in Yemen, and concern has been mounting over increasing civilian deaths.
- The ceasefire proposal was announced after talks with Kerry, who described it as a "major opportunity" to ease the humanitarian crisis.
- A date for the ceasefire will soon be set.

## **EARTH MATTERS**

### **Mount Everest May Have Shrunk Due to Earthquake**

- The catastrophic earthquake that jolted Nepal and took away thousands of lives has also left the world's tallest mountain a little shorter! The recent analysis of satellite data has revealed that the 7.8 magnitude has shrunk the height of Mount Everest by about 2.5 cm.
- The new images provided by Europe's Sentinel-1A radar satellite depict that a broad swath of ground near Kathmandu lifted vertically by about 1 metre, which could explain why damage in the city was so severe and also that Mount Everest, got a wee bit shorter.
- Scientists are racing to interpret the Sentinel data, which were made available last week just hours after the satellite passed over Nepal.

## **INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY**

### **FPIs Pull Out Rs. 10,000-crore from Indian Markets**

- Overseas investors have pulled out nearly Rs. 10,000 crore from the Indian capital markets in the last four trading sessions amid taxation worries, after infusing huge funds in the first three months of 2015.

- In April, investments by FPIs had hit four-month low of a little over Rs 15,000 crore. Prior to that, FPIs had made a net investment of Rs. 78,975 crore during January-March period.
- The huge sell-off comes on apprehensions that the government would impose a 20 per cent minimum alternate tax (MAT) on profits earned by overseas investors.
- The income tax department has sent notices to 68 foreign investors for payment of dues totalling Rs. 602.83 crore towards MAT.

## **Micromax to Invest \$400 mn**

- Handset vendor Micromax will invest up to \$400 million this year to pick up stake in at least 20 start-ups across segments such as healthcare, entertainment and gaming as part of plans to strengthen its services portfolio.
- The Gurgaon-based firm is looking at picking up stake in as many as 20 companies this year across the globe. It has already picked up minority stake in Bengaluru-based health and fitness company 'HealthifyMe'.

## **IDBI Bank Cuts Base Rate**

- Public sector lender IDBI Bank cut its base rate by 0.25 per cent or 25 basis point. The bank's new base rate now stands at 10 per cent and will be effective from May 11, 2015. The bank has also decided to reduce the retail term deposit rates in select buckets by 10-25 bps with effect from May 11, 2015. Base rate is the rate below which a bank cannot lend to borrowers.
- The rate cut comes a day after Punjab National Bank also cut its lending rate by 25 bps. The bank revised downwards minimum lending rate to 10 per cent from 10.25 per cent.

## **SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

### **Manned Mission to International Space Station Delayed**

- As per reports from Russian federal space agency Roscosmos the upcoming manned mission to the International Space Station (ISS) would be re-scheduled due to the recent failure of the Progress M-27M cargo craft.
- The programme of the next expedition to the ISS on May 26 may be adjusted due to possible postponements of the launch dates of cargo spacecraft and amendments to the ISS flight programme.
- The new ISS crew has been preparing for its mission at the Yuri Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Center.

## **INFOTAINMENT**

### **Nadal, Serena and Sharapova Move on in Madrid Open**

- Rafael Nadal showed no signs of his recent slump in form as he eased past Italy's Simone Bolelli to reach the quarter-finals of the Madrid Open.

- Women`s top seed Serena Williams and defending champion Maria Sharapova also stayed on course for a potential meeting in the final as they progressed to the last four with wins over Carla Suarez Navarro and Caroline Wozniacki respectively.
- Nadal has yet to win a European clay court tournament this season after defeats to Novak Djokovic at the Monte Carlo Masters and Fabio Fognini at the Barcelona Open last month.

## INDIA – OTHERS

### Indo-Bangla Land Boundary Bill Passed

- The Parliament passed the constitutional amendment bill regarding the land boundary agreement with Bangladesh, with the Opposition's support over the legislation.
- The bill had been unanimously passed by the Rajya Sabha and it received Lok Sabha`s unanimous nod..
- The Bill, which entails exchange of enclaves between the two countries, seeks to amend the First Schedule of the Constitution to give effect to an agreement entered into by India and Bangladesh on acquiring and transfer of territories between the two countries.

### Achal Kumar Jyoti Appointed Election Commissioner

- Achal Kumar Jyoti, a former Gujarat Chief Secretary, was appointed as the Election Commissioner.
- Jyoti's tenure will commence from the day he assumes his charge.
- After V. S. Sampath demitted office in January, H. S. Brahma was elevated as CEC. But after Brahma demitted office, two posts of ECs in the three-member body remained vacant.
- In the coming days, the government will appoint one more Election Commissioner to fill up the last vacancy.

## 9th May

### AROUND THE WORLD

#### David Cameron victorious in British Election



- In the 2015 United Kingdom Parliamentary elections, British Prime Minister David Cameron led Conservative Party has won the election.
- Conservative Party by winning 331 seats out of total 650 seats in House of Commons has emerged single largest party in this general election.

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### Rogue Russian Spacecraft burns up in Earth's Atmosphere



- The Russian space agency said that its out-of-control spacecraft has burnt up as it re-entered the Earth's atmosphere.
- The unmanned cargo ship was launched from Kazakhstan on 28th April, but control was lost soon afterwards.
- The Progress M-27M was carrying more than three tonnes of supplies to the International Space Station.

## INFOTAINMENT

### Serena, Sharapova stunned, Nadal and Murray into Madrid Semis



- Serena Williams's stunning 27-match winning streak was snapped in resounding fashion by Petra Kvitova as the Czech progressed to the Madrid Open final 6-2, 6-3.
- Defending champion Maria Sharapova lost in the Madrid Open semifinals, falling to Svetlana Kuznetsova 6—2, 6—4.
- Also, Andy Murray and Rafael Nadal progressed to the semis.

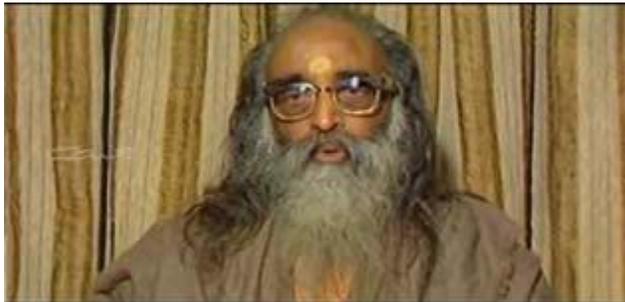
## Sardar Singh and many others recommended for Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award



- Indian men's hockey team captain Sardar Singh has been recommended for the prestigious Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna award while 11 other names, including six women, have been put forward by Hockey India for the Arjuna award.
- For the Arjuna awards, HI has recommended Danish Mujtaba, Dharamvir Singh, V R Raghunath, P R Sreejesh and S V Sunil among men, while Asunta Lakra, Deepika, Rani, Ritu Rani, Sushila Chanu and Vandana Katariya got the nod among women.

## INDIA – OTHERS

### Prime Minister released Commemorative Coin on Swami Chinmayananda Saraswati



- Prime Minister Narendra Modi released a commemorative coin to mark the birth centenary of Swami Chinmayananda Saraswati in New Delhi.
- Swami Chinmayananda was a renowned Hindu spiritual leader and teacher who had inspired the formation of a global nonprofit organisation called Chinmaya Mission to spread the knowledge of Advaita Vedanta.

## **Nadia District in West Bengal got 2015 UN Public Service Award**



- Nadia district in West Bengal has won the 2015 United Nations Public Service Award in the category of improving delivery of public services for the initiative 'Sabar Shouchagar'.
- The award will be presented by the UN Secretary General in June 2015 in Medellin, Colombia.
- Nadia district is the first open defecation free district in country. The district had achieved this feat by making toilets available for all under state governments flagship programme Sabar Shouchagar.

## **10th May**

### **AROUND THE WORLD**

#### **Liberia Declared Ebola-free**

- The U.N. health agency declared Liberia Ebola-free, hailing the “monumental” achievement in the West African country where the virus has killed more than 4,700 people.
- The outbreak of Ebola virus disease in Liberia is over. As per the World Health Organization the 42 days had passed since the last confirmed case was buried.
- The period is twice the number of days the virus requires to incubate.

#### **Mubarak Sentenced to Three Years**

An Egyptian court sentenced ousted President Hosni Mubarak and his two sons to three years in prison after a retrial for embezzlement. Mubarak’s lawyers may try to appeal the verdict. They had already been sentenced to three years on the same charges but an appeal court overturned the original verdict. It was not immediately clear whether the sentencing took into account time served.

## INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

### BMW to Add 10 More Sales Centres

- German luxury carmaker BMW, which has been pushed to a distant No 3 in market share, will open 10 more outlets this year and it also plans to roll out 15 models.
- Most of the new sales centres will come up in tier 2 cities like Vijayawada, etc.
- The company, which used to be the market leader in the luxury car space for many years in the country before its compatriot Audi stormed the market in 2008 and unseated it to no. 3.
- In 2015, the company will expand its product range and cover all the opportunity available in the luxury car segment. It will be launching 15 models this year.
- BMW India began operations in March 2007 and has since then invested Rs. 490 crore.

### Telecom Companies Gross Revenue Rises 9.5 pc

- According to a report by TRAI, the total gross revenue of telecom service providers increased by 9.54 per cent to Rs. 63,955 crore in October-December 2014.
- The combined gross revenue of operators was at Rs. 58,385 crore in the same period of 2013.
- The adjusted gross revenue (AGR), on which telecom operators pay revenue share as licence fee and spectrum charges to government, increased by 10.15 per cent to Rs. 43,591 crore in the last quarter of 2014.
- The monthly average revenue per user (ARPU) of GSM operators like Airtel, Vodafone, Idea and Uninor increased by 5.8 per cent year-on-year to Rs. 118 in the reported period.

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### NASA's Robotic Eel' to Explore Europa

- NASA is developing a 'robotic eel' that could explore the icy water of Jupiter's moon Europa and power itself with energy derived from local magnetic fields.
- The U.S. space agency has selected 15 proposals for study under Phase I of the NASA Innovative Advanced Concepts (NIAC), a programme that aims to turn science fiction into science fact through the development of pioneering technologies.
- One of the selected proposals calls for the use of a soft-robotic rover for missions that cannot be accomplished with conventional power systems.
- This rover would resemble an eel with a short antenna on its back that harvests power from locally changing magnetic fields.
- The goal is to enable amphibious exploration of gas-giant moons like Europa.

## INFOTAINMENT

### Yuki Wins Doubles Title

- Yuki Bhambri and Adrian Menendez-Maceiras of Spain defeated second seeds Sergey Betov of Belarus and Mikhail Elgin of Russia to win the \$50,000 Challenger tennis tournament in Karshi, Uzbekistan.
- The title was worth \$3100 and 90 ATP points, and the runners-up collected \$1800 and 55 ATP points.

- Dhruthi Venugopal won her maiden ITF women's doubles title with Britt Geukens of Belgium to beat top seeds Ola Abou Zekry of Egypt and Anastasia Kharchenko of Ukraine in the final of the \$10,000 ITF women's tournament in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt.

## **INDIA – OTHERS**

### **India Test-fires BrahMos Advanced Version**

- India successfully test-fired an advanced version of the BrahMos land-attack cruise missile.
- The land-to-land configuration of BrahMos Block-III version was test launched from a Mobile Autonomous Launcher (MAL) for its full-range of 290 km.
- The supersonic cruise missile hit the designated land-based target with the desired accuracy.
- The BrahMos missile has been jointly developed by India and Russia.

## **11th May**

### **AROUND THE WORLD**

#### **South Africa Opposition Set for First Black Leader**

- Members of South Africa's opposition Democratic Alliance voted to elect the party's first black leader in what has been billed as a watershed moment for the white party.
- Some 1,425 delegates from across the country began casting their votes with all eyes on Mmusi Maimane, the party's parliamentary leader and the favourite to succeed outgoing leader Helen Zille, who has led the party for eight years.
- He faces competition from Wilmot James who is current the party's chairman.

#### **Houthis Accept Five-day Truce in Yemen**

- Iranian-allied Houthi fighters in Yemen accepted a five-day humanitarian ceasefire proposed by their adversary Saudi Arabia but they would respond to any violations.
- Backed by the United States, a Saudi-led coalition has been conducting air strikes against the Houthis and army units loyal to ex-president Ali Abdullah Saleh since March with the aim of restoring the government of President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi.
- The Houthis say their campaign is aimed at defeating al Qaeda militants based in Yemen and accuse Hadi's forces of supporting the group.

## INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

### Global Banks Try to Muscle into India's Start-up Boom

- Global investment banks are scrambling to get a piece of the action from India's booming technology start-ups, having missed out on the initial flurry of deal-making to their better-connected but much smaller domestic rivals.
- Banks including Goldman Sachs Group Inc, Citigroup and Morgan Stanley are looking to hire more bankers in India and are now regularly attending "bake-offs" to pitch for advisory roles on deals.
- Foreign money has been pouring into India's fast-growing e-commerce sector, with investors ranging from Japan's Softbank Corp to Singapore's Temasek Holdings and GIC Private Ltd piling in.
- The number of venture funding deals for technology start-ups in India in the first quarter of 2015 was the highest in nine quarters and exceeded the number of such deals in China. The total value of investments in India topped \$1 billion for the third straight quarter.

### Air India Likely to Tie up with Citibank and State Bank of India

- National carrier Air India is likely to tie up with Citibank and public sector lender State Bank of India to raise USD 300 million from overseas market via External Commercial Borrowing route.
- Air India is mopping up these funds from the foreign market to meet its working capital requirements. ECB is a fund raising instrument which allows firms to access overseas money.
- Air India has received proposal from several interested banks and financial institutions. It is evaluating them but at this stage offer from Citibank-SBI looks quite attractive.
- Once the proposal is finalised, Air India will sign a term-sheet, which would allow it avail the funds immediately.

### Three Social Security Schemes Launched

- Home Minister launched three social security schemes - `Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana`, `Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana` and `Atal Pension Yojana` in Lucknow.
- These schemes are essential for providing economic security to the millions.
- These schemes were envisaged in the union budget 2015-16 and have taken concrete shape now.
- The three social schemes were launched in simultaneous functions at 115 venues across the country.

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### Underwater Robot to Plan its Own Missions

- Very soon, there would be a robot that can plan and execute its mission in deep oceans. Developed by researchers at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the robot has its own "cognitive" capabilities.
- The new programming approach developed by MIT engineers enables robots perform high-level decisionmaking to figure out how to achieve these goals.
- For example, an engineer may give a robot a list of goal locations to explore, along with any time

constraints, as well as physical directions, such as staying a certain distance above the sea floor.

- Using the system devised by the MIT team, the robot can then plan out a mission, choosing which locations to explore, in what order, within a given time frame.

## INFOTAINMENT

### 14th Asiatic Lion Census

- As per the 14th Lion Census 2015 conducted in May, a growth of 27% from 411 estimated in 2010 Census, the numbers have increased to 523 now. The number of female lion is double the number of male lions.
- About 11 wildlife experts from national and international participated in the Census. The census shows that there are 109 adult lions and 201 adult lionesses along with 213 subadults and cubs.
- Asiatic lions, which are found only in Gir, fall in the "endangered" category of wild animals.

### Andy Murray Stuns Rafael Nadal

- Andy Murray claimed his first Masters series title on clay with a stunning display to beat home favourite Rafael Nadal at the Madrid Open.
- The defeat will see nine-time French Open champion Nadal slip to seventh in the world rankings, the first time he has been outside the top five in 10 years.

## INDIA – OTHERS

### Janata Parivar Formation Unlikely Before Bihar Elections

- Samajwadi Party ruled out the formation of Janata Parivar before the Bihar Assembly polls, which are scheduled to held later this year.
- There is a technical problem. The problem is that if a political party tells the Election Commission that they are going to merge and form a new party, then the original name and symbols of the party will be frozen.

The Bihar elections are near and the merger cannot be done in a hurry.

- Janata Parivar, a merger of six political parties as a single party, will include Nitish Kumar's Janata Dal (United), Lalu Prasad Yadav's Rashtriya Janata Dal, Mulayam Singh Yadav's Samajwadi Party, Om Prakash Chautala's Indian National Lok Dal (INLD), Chandra Shekhar's Samajwadi Janata Party (Rashtriya) and H. D. Deve Gowda's Janata Dal (Secular) will come under the umbrella of the Samajwadi Janata Party.

**12th May**

## **AROUND THE WORLD**

### **Priti Patel Gets Cabinet Rank in Cameron's New Team**

- Prime Minister David Cameron promoted one of Britain's most prominent Indian-origin MPs Priti Patel by making her the new Employment Minister, as he unveiled the first all-Conservative Cabinet in nearly 20 years with his top four aides retaining their previous portfolios.
- The senior-most berths in the Cabinet were confirmed soon after the election results were out with Chancellor George Osborne, Home Secretary Theresa May, Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond and Defence Secretary Michael Fallon being re-confirmed in their respective posts.

## **EARTH MATTERS**

### **Carbon Dioxide Levels Set New Record**

- A new data by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has revealed that Earth has exceeded the highest ever recorded level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere surpassing 400 parts per million in March, 2015.
- The data showed that the CO<sub>2</sub> concentration hit 400.83 ppm in March 2015, an increase from the 398.10 ppm recorded in March 2014.
- Around 300 ppm of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is suitable for the Earth, but CO<sub>2</sub> concentration has risen by more than 120 ppm since pre-industrialisation on a global scale.
- The swift rise in the CO<sub>2</sub> concentration has been attributed by the growth of global emissions from fossil fuel burning.

## **INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY**

### **Car Sales Grow 18.14% in April**

- Car sales in India rose by 18.14 per cent in April, the fastest growth rate in 30 months, as the auto industry continued its journey to recovery riding on improved consumer sentiments, new models and favourable fuel prices.
- The previous fastest was in October 2012 when there was a growth of 21.19 per cent at 1,69,788 units.
- According to the data released, domestic passenger car sales in April stood at 1,59,548 units compared with 1,35,054 in the same month of 2014.
- Total sales of vehicles across categories registered a growth of 1.91 per cent to 15,83,551 units in April as against 15,53,871 in the same month of 2014

## **Tata Communications Ties up with China Telecom Global**

- Tata Communications announced a video network partnership with China Telecom Global to enable and manage media content for customers in China and globally.
- This tie-up enables China Telecom Global to leverage its worldwide reach, along with Tata Communications' Global Video Network to offer live sporting events in China.
- The partnership will cater to a market opportunity of \$2.57 billion.
- This partnership with China Telecom Global is a step in that direction and marks the expansion of Tata Communications' Global Video Network reach into China.
- Tata Communications video network covers more than 300 media hotspots in 125 cities globally. Over 24 per cent of the world's internet routes travel over Tata Communications' network.

## **SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

### **No Evidence of Life in 100,000 Galaxies**

- A team of scientists after searching 100,000 galaxies for signs of highly advanced extraterrestrial life has found no evidence of advanced civilisations in them.
- The idea behind the research is that, if an entire galaxy had been colonized by an advanced spacefaring civilization, the energy produced by that civilization's technologies would be detectable in mid-infrared wavelengths.

## **INFOTAINMENT**

### **India Moves to Fourth Place in ICC Test Rankings**

- India has benefited from the annual update of ICC Test Rankings as it gained four points and two places to occupy the fourth spot in the latest chart issued.
- In the annual update, the results from 2011-12 have been dropped from the calculations and outcomes from the 2013-14 series weighted at 50 per cent. Thus, India's heavy defeats against England and Australia in 2011-12 no longer count.
- The annual update has seen a reshuffle in the middle of the pack and now just three rankings points separate third-ranked New Zealand from seventh-ranked Sri Lanka. Prior to the annual update, the gap between the third and seventh ranked sides was seven points.

## **INDIA – OTHERS**

### **LS Clears Black Money Bill**

- A stringent law imposing a steep 120 percent of tax and penalty on undisclosed foreign assets and income besides a jail term of up to 10 years to deal with black money stashed abroad was passed by the Lok Sabha.

- Before the new law comes into effect, a limited period window will be provided to people to declare their till now undisclosed income and assets, pay 30 percent tax and a similar amount as penalty and escape prosecution.
- The Bill was passed by voice vote with support from the opposition.
- The new law will help bring black money in the declared economy, improve tax collections and would eventually facilitate lowering of tax rates.

## **K. V. Kamath first President of New Development Bank**

- K. V. Kamath will be the first president of USD 100 billion BRICS Bank which will provide infrastructure loans to emerging nations, rivalling multilateral lenders such as World Bank and IMF.
- Kamath will have a five year term at the bank, which is likely to be operationalised within one year as 'New Development Bank' being set up by the five nation grouping, BRICS.
- Kamath is the non-executive Chairman of the India's largest private sector bank ICICI. Besides, he is also the non-executive chairperson of Infosys.
- The BRICS nations account for nearly USD 16 trillion in GDP and 40 percent of the world's population.

## **13th May**

### **AROUND THE WORLD**

#### **Russia Says Will Cooperate with the US 'without coercion'**

- Russia said it was ready to work with the United States on a host of burning issues but insisted it would not bow to "coercion."
- As per a statement by the Russian foreign ministry, Russia is ready for constructive cooperation with the United States both in the bilateral sphere and the international arena where our countries have special responsibility for global security and stability.
- The cooperation is only possible on an honest and equal basis, without attempts to dictate and coerce.

### **EARTH MATTERS**

#### **Global Sea Levels Rising Faster over Past 20 Years**

- As per a new research, global sea levels are climbing at a faster rate than previously thought.
- Records from tide gauges and satellites have shown sea level rise slowing slightly over the past 20 years, but as the ice sheets of West Antarctica and Greenland shed ever more water into the ocean, climate models show it should be doing the opposite.

## INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

### Inflation Slips, Factory Output Slows

- Retail inflation eased to four-month low of 4.87 percent in April while industrial output slowed to a five-month low of 2.1 percent in March, raising hopes for an interest rate cut by RBI.
- Retail inflation in April inched down to a four-month low of 4.87 percent as prices of food items, vegetables and fruits turned cheaper.
- According to data released by the government, factory output as measured by the Index of Industrial Production contracted by 0.5 percent in March 2014.
- The twin macro-economic indicators strengthen government's and industry's call to the Reserve Bank of India to cut interest rates.

### Government Retains 51% FDI in Multi-brand Retail

- Government has retained the previous UPA regime's decision allowing foreign retailers to open multibrand stores with 51 percent ownership, in its consolidated FDI policy.
- The latest edition of the annual FDI document also incorporates all policy changes effected over the past one year, including by the Modi government in sectors like defence, insurance and railways.
- The multi-brand retail was opened up for foreign direct investment, with a 51 percent cap, in September 2012, when the Congress-led UPA government was in power.

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### New Device to Block Pain Signals from Reaching the Brain

- Researchers have created a new device that can stop pain signals from reaching the brain.
- The new implantable device could soon put the minds of chronic pain sufferers at ease by distributing the body's own natural pain relief signals at just the right time.
- Researchers at Linköping University and Karolinska Institutet are the first in the world with a technology that can stop pain impulses in living, freely moving rats using the body's own pain relief signals.

## INFOTAINMENT

### Dipika Pallikal in Race for Khel Ratna

- The Tamil Nadu government has recommended star squash player Dipika Pallikal for the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna, India's highest sporting honour.
- Dipika Pallikal is the first Indian to break into the top 10 of world rankings. She was world no. 11 when her application was sent to the sports ministry and is no. 18 as per the latest Women's Squash Association rankings.

- Performances of last four years will be taken into consideration before the recipient of the coveted award is picked. The Chennai-born player was honoured with the Arjuna award in 2012 and Padma Shri in 2014.
- Pallikal made history at the 2014 Commonwealth Games, where she and Joshana Chinappa sealed the gold medal match, winning India's first ever squash medal in the Games' history.

## **INDIA – OTHERS**

### **Land Bill Sent to Joint Committee of Parliament**

- The Lok Sabha adopted a motion to refer the Land Bill to a joint committee of Parliament.
- The government has discussed with all political parties, and agreed upon that the Land Bill be suggested to a joint committee.
- A joint committee will be constituted comprising 20 members from the Lok Sabha and 10 from the Rajya Sabha to assess the Land Bill.
- The joint committee of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha will have to submit its report on the first day of Monsoon session on the bill which has already been passed by the Lower House.

### **Government Appoints Governors for Four States**

- The BJP-led NDA government appointed Governors for Jharkhand, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya.
- BJP national executive member Tathagata Roy has been appointed Governor of Tripura and Darupadi Murmu has been appointed Governor of Jharkhand in place of Syed Ahmed who has been transferred to Manipur.
- V. Shanmuganthan has been appointed Governor of Meghalaya and J. P. Rakkhowa has been appointed Governor of Arunachal Pradesh.

## **14th May**

## **AROUND THE WORLD**

### **Traces of Chemical Weapons Agents Found in Syria**

- Diplomats have found traces of deadly nerve agents used to make chemical weapons at a site in Syria where they were not supposed to be.
- The discovery of traces of sarin and VX have renewed fears that Syria did not disclose all aspects of its chemical weapons program when it joined the Chemical Weapons Convention in 2013 and agreed to destroy its chemical arsenal.

## Vatican Recognises State of Palestine in New Treaty

- The Vatican has officially recognised the state of Palestine in a new treaty.
- The treaty, which was finalised but still has to be signed, makes clear that the Holy See has switched its diplomatic relations from the Palestine Liberation Organisation to the state of Palestine.
- The Vatican had welcomed the decision by the UN General Assembly in 2012 to recognise a Palestinian state.
- This treaty is the first legal document negotiated between the Holy See and the Palestinian state and constitutes an official diplomatic recognition.

## INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

### Cabinet Approves Stake Sale in IOC, NTPC

- The government will sell its 10 percent stake in blue-chip Indian Oil Corporation and 5 percent in power producer NTPC to mop up about Rs. 13,600 crore in this fiscal's first disinvestment approval.
- The approvals are part of Rs. 41,000 crore disinvestment target for the current financial year.
- Buoyed by diesel price deregulation, the government is looking at selling stake in Indian's largest fuel retailer IOC for the second time in 13 months. Sale of 24.27 crore shares, or 10 percent stake, in IOC would mop up close to Rs. 8,000 crore at current market price.
- A total of 41.22 crore shares, or 5 percent, in NTPC could fetch Rs. 5,600 crore to the exchequer at current rates. The government had last sold stake in NTPC in February 2013.

### Cabinet Clears New Urea Policy

- The government approved a new urea policy aiming to increase domestic production by 2 million tonnes and reduce its subsidy bill by over Rs. 4,800 crore annually, but decided not to raise retail prices.
- The maximum retail price (MRP) of urea for farmers has been left untouched at Rs. 268 per bag of 50 kg, excluding local taxes. Farmers would have to pay an additional Rs. 14 per bag for neem-coated urea.
- The policy will result in direct saving of subsidy of around Rs. 2,618 crore and indirect saving of Rs. 2,211 crore on account of revised specific energy consumption norms and import substitution, respectively.
- The new policy is also expected to result in an additional production of around 20 lakh tonnes of urea annually.

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### ISS Astronauts' Return Delayed

- The return of three International Space Station astronauts, originally scheduled for later this week, has been delayed due to the failure of a Russian cargo spacecraft.
- The spacecraft, Progress 59, launched by a Soyuz rocket from the Baikonur space centre in April failed to dock with the ISS after suffering a communication failure.
- The launch of the next Russian cargo craft, Progress 60, has also been delayed until early July. NASA noted that the ISS has sufficient supplies to support crews until the fall of 2015.

## INFOTAINMENT

### **Rohan Bopanna, Sania Mirza Progress in Rome Masters**

- Rohan Bopanna made it to the second round while Sania Mirza reached the quarterfinals of the Rome Masters after scoring fluent victories with their respective partners.
- Bopanna and his Romanian partner Florin defeated the Argentine combo of Leonardo Mayer and Juan Monaco in the opening round of the Euro 3,830,295 ATP event.
- For a place in the quarterfinals, they will fight it with third seeded team of Dutch player Jean-Julien Rojer and Romania's Horia Tecau.

## INDIA – OTHERS

### **Justice Joseph Takes Charge as NHRC Acting Chairperson**

- Justice Cyriac Joseph, Member, National Human Rights Commission has taken charge as the Acting Chairperson of the NHRC.
- Joseph's appointment follows after justice (retired) K. G. Balakrishnan completed his tenure.
- Joseph, a former judge of the Supreme Court of India had joined the Commission as a Member in May 2013.

**15th May**

## AROUND THE WORLD

### **Mali Rebels Sign Initial Deal**

- Mali's Tuareg-led rebels signed a preliminary peace agreement with the government on Thursday as a gesture of "good faith" to end decades of separatist fighting, but wanted more guarantees before signing a final accord.
- Mali's government had accepted the United Nations- and Algerian-backed deal in March, but the Tuaregled coalition argued that it fell short of their demands for the northern region, which they call Azawad, and sporadic fighting has continued.
- Western powers want a conclusive accord, fearing that the turmoil will allow Islamist militants to return to the north after French military intervention drove them out.
- The rebel alliance, Coordination of Azawad Movements, known by its French initials CMA, would still need more work on a conclusive deal.

## EARTH MATTERS

### New Research Identifies First Warm-Blooded Fish

New research has revealed the opah, or moonfish, as the first fully warm-blooded fish that circulates heated blood throughout its body much like mammals and birds, giving it a competitive advantage in the cold ocean depths. The silvery fish is known from oceans around the world and dwells hundreds of feet beneath the surface in chilly, dimly lit waters. It swims by rapidly flapping its large, red pectoral fins like wings through the water.

## INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

### WPI Inflation Falls (-)2.65% in April

- Deflationary pressure persisted for the sixth month in a row as fall in prices of fuel and manufactured items pulled inflation to a new low of (-)2.65 percent in April, prompting industry to demand a rate cut by the Reserve Bank.
- Inflation, as measured on the Wholesale Price Index (WPI), has been in the negative zone since November, 2014. In April last year, it was 5.55 percent.
- As per the data released, manufactured products witnessed deflation for the second consecutive month in April as inflation dropped to a record low of (-)0.52 percent.

### Contactless Debit and Credit Cards Launched

- State Bank of India joined its private sector rivals to launch contactless credit and debit cards using latest near field technology.
- Called the SBInTouch cards, these contactless debit and credit cards are more secure and hassle-free to use at merchant outlets or ATMs and use the NFC technology which enables users to make payments by waving or tapping the card near the contactless reader instead of swiping or dipping it.
- Private lenders ICICI Bank and HDFC Bank have already launched such NFC cards.

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### Mystery Dark Material on Jupiter's Moon is Sea Salt

- NASA scientists have found that the mysterious dark material coating some geological features of Jupiter's moon Europa is likely sea salt from a subsurface ocean, discoloured by exposure to radiation.
- Presence of sea salt on Europa's surface suggests the ocean is interacting with its rocky seafloor - an important consideration in determining whether the icy moon could support life.
- For more than a decade, scientists have wondered about the nature of the dark material that coats long, linear fractures and other relatively young geological features on Europa's surface.

## Scientists Discover New State of Matter

- Scientists in Japan have discovered a new state of matter called the 'Jahn-Teller-metal' that resembles an insulator, superconductor, metal and magnet all rolled into one.
- The team made the discovery by studying a superconductor made from carbon-60 molecules or buckyballs.
- According to researchers, the research could help develop new molecular materials that are superconductors at even higher temperatures.
- The study shows that the material has a rich combination of insulating, magnetic, metallic and superconducting phases - including the otherwise unknown state, dubbed as "Jahn-Teller metal".

## INFOTAINMENT

### Novak Djokovic Battles Through to Rome Quarter-finals

- Novak Djokovic had to fight back from a set down to beat Thomaz Bellucci and reach the Italian Open quarter-finals while Rafa Nadal produced an "almost perfect" display to despatch John Isner.
- He next meets Japan's fifth-seeded Kei Nishikori, who beat Djokovic's compatriot Victor Troicki

## 16th May

## AROUND THE WORLD

### UN Urges New Israeli Government to Scrap Settlement Plans

- UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has deplored the latest plans to build Jewish settlements in Palestinian territories and urged the new Israeli government to scrap the construction projects.
- Ban made the appeal after the Israeli parliament approved Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's new right-wing government, which is facing a crisis over the way forward to make peace with the Palestinians.
- He pressed the government of Israel to halt and reverse such decisions in the interest of peace and a just final status agreement.

## INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

### Petrol and Diesel Prices Hiked

- State-run fuel retailers raised petrol price by Rs. 3.13 a litre and diesel by Rs. 2.71, including state levies in Delhi, on the back of rising international crude rates and falling value of the rupee against the

Greenback.

- The increase in other states will vary depending on local taxes.
- This is the fourth increase in fuel prices this year and second in a row in the last 15 days.
- Petrol prices had cumulatively been reduced by Rs. 17.11 a litre in 10 reductions between last August and this February. Diesel prices were brought down by Rs. 12.96 in six cuts between last October and February.

## Exports Decline 14% in April

- India's exports contracted by about 14 percent in April to USD 22 billion due to a sharp dip in petroleum, gems and jewellery shipments, registering decline for the fifth straight month.
- The slump in exports is mainly due to global slowdown and softening of crude, metal and commodity prices.
- In April 2014, the country's merchandise exports stood at USD 25.63 billion.
- The last time exports registered positive growth was in November last year when 7.27 percent expansion was recorded.

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### The First Quadruple Quasar Discovered

- A team of astronomers has discovered the first quadruple quasar, four rare active black holes situated in close proximity to one another.
- The four quasars are surrounded by a giant nebula of cool dense hydrogen gas, which emits light because it is irradiated by the intense glare of the quasars. In addition, both the quartet and the surrounding nebula reside in a rare corner of the universe with a surprisingly large amount of matter.

## INFOTAINMENT

### Sourav Ganguly to Become Team India's Manager

- As per reports, BCCI has begun negotiations with cricket legends Sachin Tendulkar, Rahul Dravid and Sourav Ganguly for key roles in the national cricket set up.
- Sourav Ganguly, widely regarded as one of India's greatest ever captains, is set to take over as Team India's high performance manager. Dada has given his nod to take up this role.
- The Indian board wants Tendulkar to help improve the NCA to be state-of-the-art training and research facility for players. The master blaster has agreed to BCCI's offer in principle, but has also communicated to the board that he wished to know more details about his new job.
- Rahul Dravid, who is being looked at as a potential talent development manager, is yet to confirm his availability for the role. Dravid informed the board that he would only reach a decision after the conclusion of the IPL.

## Gagan Narang Secures Quota for Rio Olympics

- Gagan Narang won the bronze medal in the 50m Rifle Prone Event of the ISSF World Cup, earning himself a quota place for the 2016 Rio Olympics.
- Narang, who won the bronze in 10m Rifle at the London Olympics, shot 185.8 overall to secure the third place behind Michael McPhail (208.8 points) of USA and Ole Kristian Bryhn (206.3) of Norway.
- Earlier in the competition, Narang and India's only individual Olympic gold medallist Abhinav Bindra had failed to qualify for the 10m Rifle final.
- Narang is third Indian shooter to make the Rio cut after Jitu Rai and Apurvi Chandela.

## INDIA – OTHERS

### MHA to Set up National Emergency Response System

- The Union Home Ministry has decided to launch a nationwide unique and single emergency response number which can be used in case of any emergency, especially by women in distress.
- The Ministry has invited proposals from reputed and experienced companies to participate in the competitive bidding process for implementation and maintenance of the "Nationwide Emergency Response System" for five years across all states.
- The plan was mooted by the Ministry in the aftermath of the December 16, 2012 gang rape of a young woman in the national capital.
- The ministry has also explained the reason for initiation of this ambitious project which will integrate all smart communication facilities like calls, SMS's and online chat platforms into one.
- The committee had recommended the setting up of a public emergency response system which will have the ability to dispatch an Emergency Response (ER) unit to respond and close the ER calls.

## 17th May

### AROUND THE WORLD

#### Guyana Swears in New President

- A retired army general David Granger was sworn in as Guyana's new President after his multi-ethnic opposition coalition won the South American country's general elections and ended a 23-year reign by the People's Progressive Party.
- His party has pledged to end racial divisions that long have marked politics in Guyana, a country of people who are mainly of Indian and African descent.
- Granger, 69, became Guyana's eighth president since the country gained independence from Britain in 1966.

## Deposed Islamist President Morsi Sentenced to Death

- An Egyptian court sentenced deposed Islamist President Mohamed Morsi and more than 100 other defendants to death over jail breaks during the 2011 uprising.
- Morsi and 128 defendants were accused of plotting jail breaks and attacks on police during the uprising that overthrew President Hosni Mubarak in 2011.
- More than 100 were sentenced to death along with Morsi.

## EARTH MATTERS

### Massive Antarctic Ice Shelf to Disappear by 2020

- As per a study by NASA, the last remaining section of a massive Antarctic ice shelf, which partially collapsed in 2002, is likely to disintegrate completely before 2020.
- The ice is melting so fast that the shelf will be gone before the end of the decade.
- Located on the coast of the Antarctic Peninsula, the Larsen B remnant is about 1,600 sq. km in area and about 500 metres thick at its thickest point.
- In 2002, NASA released dramatic images that showed a portion of Antarctica's Larsen B ice shelf collapse and disappear.

## INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

### Airtel Clinches \$2.5 Billion Chinese Financing Deals

- Bharti Airtel has received financing commitments of up to USD 2.5 billion from China Development Bank and Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, with an average maturity of about nine years.
- The funds will help Airtel further diversify its global financing pool and invest in growth of data networks.
- China Development Bank has committed financing of up to USD 2 billion with an average maturity of about nine years and Industrial and Commercial Bank of China has committed USD 500 million with an average life of about nine years.
- This is the single-largest bilateral commitment by China Development Bank to any telecom operator globally and the largest bilateral commitment to a private Indian company.
- Subject to final agreements and requisite approvals, Bharti Airtel can draw these funds over a long availability period, depending on its financing requirements.

### Future Consumer to Buy Majority Stake in MNS Foods

- Kishore Biyani-led Future Consumer Enterprise announced it will acquire majority stake in confectionery firm MNS Foods and exit from non-core beauty and wellness business.
- The Board of Directors has considered and approved discontinuance of the non-core business activity of beauty and wellness undertaken by its wholly-owned subsidiary Star and Sitara Wellness.
- MNS Foods sells wafer cream biscuits, chocolate enrobed wafer biscuits and confectioneries.
- Future Consumer calls itself a sourcing-to-supermarket food company. Its various businesses include

agri-sourcing, building food infrastructure, manufacturing, food and FMCG brands and retail and distribution.

## INFOTAINMENT

### Sania Mirza-Martina Hingis Enter Rome Masters Final

- Indian tennis player Sania Mirza and her Swiss partner Martina Hingis entered the Rome Masters women's doubles final on the outdoor clay courts of the Foro Italico.
- The top seeds defeated French-Slovenian fourth seeds Caroline Garcia and Katarina Srebotnik. They will take on Hungarian-French third seeds Timea Babos and Kristina Mladenovic for the crown.
- This is the fourth time that Sania and Martina have entered the finals playing together.

### Sadio Mane Fires Fastest Hat-trick

- Sadio Mane blasted the quickest hat-trick in the Premier League history as he netted three times in less than three minutes against Aston Villa.
- Mane took just two minutes and 56 seconds and surpassed the previous record of four minutes and 33 seconds set by Liverpool striker Robbie Fowler in 1994.

## INDIA – OTHERS

### Northeastern States against NDA Government over Curbs on Special Status

- Despite their different political affiliations, the Seven Sisters of India have come together against the NDAruled Centre, alleging that it is taking away the special category status of the region, slashing funds of several schemes, and even stopping several welfare projects. The north-eastern states, including Sikkim, which are members of the North Eastern council (NEC), have recently adopted a resolution, voicing concerns about losing some of the benefits they enjoyed.
- As per the resolution, lead drafted by Tripura Chief Minister Manik Sarkar, the funding pattern of the region was 90:10, where the Centre contributed 90%, and the state chipped in with 10%. However, from the Union Budget, it seems that the funding pattern of centrally sponsored schemes (CSS) have undergone a change.

**18th May**

## **AROUND THE WORLD**

### **Nepal Earthquake Death Toll Becomes Highest on Record**

- The number of people killed in Nepal by two major earthquakes has surpassed 8,500, making the disaster the deadliest to hit the Himalayan country on record.
- A 7.8-magnitude earthquake hit Nepal killing thousands and demolishing more than half a million homes, most of them in rural areas cut off from emergency medical care.
- A second major quake struck 76 kilometres east of the capital Kathmandu, just as Nepalis were beginning to recover from the previous earthquake.
- The death toll from the two quakes now stands at 8,583.
- The previous deadliest earthquake to strike the country was in 1934, which killed at least 8,519 in Nepal, as well as thousands more in India.

## **INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY**

### **Government Contains Fiscal Deficit at 4%**

- Surpassing its own financial targets, the government has contained the fiscal deficit at 4 percent of GDP for 2014-15 at Rs. 5,01,880 crore.
- The revenue deficit has also been confined to 2.8 percent, beating the budget target of 2.9 percent for the last fiscal.
- The gross tax collection registered a growth of 9 percent in 2014-15 and stood at Rs. 12,45,037 crore.
- The fiscal deficit at the end of 2014-15, stands at Rs. 5,01,880 crore which is 98 percent of the projected figure in Revised Estimate for 2014-15. Fiscal deficit as a percentage of GDP is 4.0 percent as against the RE of 4.1 percent.

## **SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

### **New Technique May Help Detect Life on Mars**

- Scientists have now come up with a new way to search for traces of alien life on the red planet.
- Visits to Mars by unmanned probes from NASA and the European Space Agency have found evidence that a prime condition for life once may have existed.
- There has been a tremendous amount of very exciting findings this year that Mars once contained actively flowing, low saline, near-neutral-pH water, pretty much the type of water you find life on Earth.
- This has made people think that it's possible that life could have existed on Mars, although most researchers agree it is unlikely to exist today, at least on the surface, as conditions on the surface of Mars are incredibly harsh.

## INFOTAINMENT

### Novak Djokovic Won the Rome Masters

- Novak Djokovic won the Rome Masters for the fourth time by outwitting old rival Roger Federer.
- The pair met for the 39th time and top seed Djokovic narrowed Federer's lead to 20-19 as he won.
- Earlier, Russian Maria Sharapova defeated Carla Suarez Navarro to win the women's final, the 35th WTA Tour title of her career.

## INDIA – OTHERS

### Government to Hire over 11,000 Women in Central Police Forces

- Over 11,000 women will soon be recruited in central security forces for combat duties like border guarding and law and order assignments.
- It has already set in motion its plan to hire 8,533 women constables in paramilitary forces like CRPF, BSF, CISF and ITBP after it announced one of its biggest recruitment drives to hire over 62,000 young men and women as constables this year.
- Also, sanctions have been granted by the Union Home Ministry for raising 21 new companies or a total of 2,772 women personnel in the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), which guards Indian borders with Nepal and Bhutan by 2017.

## 19th May

## AROUND THE WORLD

### World Bank Pledges \$5 Billion to Improve Education

- The World Bank unveiled plans to double its investment in public education over the next five years with the main focus on improving the quality of education rather than concentrating on boosting enrolment numbers.
- The bank would spend \$5 billion by 2020, double its spending of the previous five years, in an bid to reach more than 120 million children who are out of school and some 250 million more who cannot read or write despite attending school.
- According to World Bank President the bank was adopting a results-based financing system where countries only get money if they meet agreed performance targets.

## **EARTH MATTERS**

### **Air Pollution Causes 8 Million Deaths per Year**

- The latest assessment by the World Health Organization shows that deaths due to air pollution have increased fourfold across the globe over the past decade. The database on which the report is based shows that China and India are by far the worst affected countries.
  - Air pollution is one of the main avoidable causes of disease and death globally. About 4.3 million deaths each year, most in developing countries, are associated with exposure to household (indoor) air pollution.
- A further 3.7 million deaths a year are attributed to ambient (outdoor) air pollution.

## **INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY**

### **Manufacturing Sector Sees Moderate Growth in May**

- India's manufacturing sector witnessed a modest growth in May, but going ahead "weak demand conditions" may persist that could have a negative impact on the industrial output numbers.
- The SBI Monthly Composite Index, a leading indicator for manufacturing activity in the Indian Economy, inched up from 46.8 in April 2015 to 53.8 in May 2015.
- The yearly SBI Composite Index for May 2015 decelerated to 56.4 in May from 58.2 in April 2015, due to entrenched disinflationary impetus and weak demand.
- As per SBI, an index value of less than 42 means large decline, while value of 42 to 46 means (moderate decline), 46 to 50 (low decline), 50 to 52 (low growth), 52 to 55 (moderate growth) and above 55 high growth.

### **Reliance Jio Signs Pact with Huawei**

- Telecom arm of Reliance Industries (RIL), Reliance Jio Infocomm (RJio), has signed a pact with Chinese firm Huawei for sourcing various 4G devices.
- RJio plans to launch 4G service this year in around 5,000 towns and cities, accounting for over 90 per cent of urban India and over 2.15 lakh villages.
- Reliance Jio and Huawei have signed an agreement for 4G devices which includes smartphones, tablets and mifi dongles. It has signed agreement with a couple of other Chinese device maker as well.

## **SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

### **Progress Spacecraft Starts in Second Attempt**

- Russia's space agency managed to restart the engines of the Progress spacecraft and correct the orbit of the International Space Station (ISS) after a failed first attempt.
- ISS is now at the right altitude for its three crew members to return to Earth in early June.

## **NASA Certifies SpaceX**

- NASA has formally certified US-based Space Exploration Technologies Corporation's (SpaceX) Falcon 9 rocket to launch the most ambitious science missions.
- The Falcon 9 is now certified by NASA as a "Category 2" launch vehicle. SpaceX has successfully launched six resupply missions to the International Space Station (ISS) as part of the NASA contract.
- NASA and SpaceX began pursuing the certification of the Falcon 9 in 2012.

## **INFOTAINMENT**

### **Maria Sharapova Regains Second Spot**

Russia's Maria Sharapova regained the second spot in the WTA world rankings after winning the Rome Masters while Spanish finalist Carla Suarez moved to her highest ranking ever at eighth. Romania's Simona Halep, who lost in the semi-finals against Suarez, moved down to third while American Serena Williams continues to lead the pack.

### **The current WTA rankings:**

1. Serena Williams (USA) 9,361 points
2. Maria Sharapova (Russia) 7,710
3. Simona Halep (Romania) 7,360
4. Petra Kvitova (Czech) 6,760
5. Caroline Wozniacki (Denmark) 4,940
6. Eugenie Bouchard (Canada) 4,167
7. Ana Ivanovic (Serbia) 3,655
8. Carla Suarez (Spain) 3,645
9. Ekaterina Makarova (Russia) 3,510
10. Andrea Petkovic (Germany) 3,315

## **INDIA – OTHERS**

### **Draupadi Murmu First Woman Governor of Jharkhand**

- Draupadi Murmu was sworn in as the first woman Governor of Jharkhand. Murmu succeeds Syed Ahmed, who will take over as Manipur Governor.
- She was former Odisha Minister and an MLA from Rairangpur assembly constituency in the years 2000 and 2004.
- She is the first woman leader from Odisha to be appointed as a Governor of an Indian State.
- During the Bharatiya Janata Party and Biju Janata Dal coalition government in Odisha, She was the Minister of State with independent charge for Commerce and Transport from March 2000 to August 2002 and Fisheries and Animal Resources Development from August 2002 to May 2004.

## **S.S. Ahluwalia to Head Joint Parliamentary Panel to go into Land Bill**

- Former Union Minister S. S. Ahluwalia was appointed chairman of a Joint Committee of Parliament that will go into the provisions of the controversial land acquisition bill.
- Almost the entire Opposition and even some allies of the ruling NDA like Shiv Sena and Swabhimani Pakshya, are against various provisions of the amendment bill brought by the government.
- The 30-member Joint Committee of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha would submit its report on the first day of Monsoon Session on the bill which has already been passed by the Lower House. There are 20 members from the Lok Sabha and 10 members from the Rajya Sabha.

## **20th May**

### **AROUND THE WORLD**

#### **UK Inflation Turns Negative for First Time**

- Britain's annual inflation rate sank into negative territory last month for the first time in more than half a century.
- As per reports, the rate hit minus 0.1 percent in April, risking a period of deflation for Britain's economy.
- An experimental data series created by the ONS indicated that CPI was last negative in March 1960, when it stood at minus 0.6 percent.

#### **Japan Approves Third Nuclear Plant for Restart**

- Japan's nuclear regulator signed off on the basic safety of a reactor at a third nuclear plant, as the country inches toward rebooting its atomic industry more than four years after the 2011 Fukushima disaster.
- The decision will be a boost for operator Shikoku Electric Power Co, which relied on its sole Ikata nuclear power station in southwestern Japan for about 40 percent of its electricity output before the meltdowns at Fukushima led to the shutdown of all the country's reactors.
- The safety approval is still only one of three needed before the Nuclear Regulatory Authority (NRA) gives its final sign off. The consent of local authorities, which is seen as a formality, is also required, along with operational checks.

### **EARTH MATTERS**

#### **Global Warming Could Sink Large Parts of Kochi**

- Scientists at the Goa-based National Institute of Oceanography (NIO) have predicted that within 100 years, rising sea levels caused by global warming could submerge large swathes of coastal land in Kochi.
- Inundation scenarios created by NIO scientists using satellite imagery and a digital elevation model have also warned that Kochi, a city the duo claims has "expanded rapidly and heavily stressed from

environmental perspectives", will create "harmful effects" for the population as well as the coastal environment and severely impact fishing, agriculture and other socio-economic activities.

- The two scenarios simulated by the scientists for a one-metre and two-metre sea level rise are in sync with the globally accepted levels of sea rise of 0.5 metre to two- metres over the coming century.

## **INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY**

### **New Service Tax Rate of 14% Effective from June 1**

- The new service tax rate of 14 percent will come into effect from June 1, that will make eating out in restaurants, insurance and phone bills expensive, among many other things.
- The service tax is currently levied at the rate 12.36 percent including education cess.
- Service tax is levied on all services, except a small negative list.
- Advertising, air travel, services of architect, certain type of constructions, credit card, even management, and tour operator are some of the important services which attract tax.

### **Vodafone India's FY'15 Revenue up 12%**

- Vodafone India reported a 12.6 percent jump in its total revenue at Rs. 42,526 crore for the fiscal ended March 31, driven by strong customer additions and growth in data revenues.
- The company had reported total revenue of Rs 37,777 crore in the last financial year.
- Vodafone continues to be net profit positive for the second consecutive year.

## **SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

### **First Hidden Screen Camera Communication Created**

- Researchers have created the first form of real-time communication that allows screens and cameras to talk to each other without the user knowing it.
- Using off-the-shelf smart devices, the new system supports an unobtrusive, flexible and lightweight communication channel between screens (of TVs, laptops, tablets, smartphones and other electronic devices) and cameras.
- The system called HiLight will enable new context-aware applications for smart devices, thus opening the way for new applications of such devices.

**21st May**

## **AROUND THE WORLD**

### **UN Sets Yemen Peace Talks Date**

- The UN set the date for peace talks on Yemen for the next week in Geneva, while the Saudi-led coalition bombed Shiite rebels in at least five of the country's northern provinces.
- The internationally recognised government of Yemeni President Abed-Rabbo Mansour Hadi, now in exile in Saudi Arabia, has demanded that the rebels, known as Houthis, first pull out of towns and cities, including the capital, Sanaa, which they captured in a power grab that started last year.
- UN chief urged all parties to engage without preconditions, stressing the only way to resolve Yemen's conflict is an inclusive, negotiated political settlement.
- The UN announcement came after the world body's new envoy to Yemen held meetings with rival political players in Yemen earlier this month.

### **The US and Britain Fine Six Top Banks**

- The US and British regulators fined six major global banks nearly \$6 billion Wednesday for rigging the foreign exchange market and Libor interest rates.
- The far-flung settlement included guilty pleas from Barclays Bank, JPMorgan Chase, Citicorp and the Royal Bank of Scotland for conspiring to manipulate the massive currency market, as well as a guilty plea from Switzerland's UBS, for violating a prior settlement of Libor charges.
- These five banks agreed to a record \$2.5 billion in criminal penalties, the largest set of antitrust fines ever obtained by the Department of Justice.
- All five, plus the Bank of America, will also pay more than \$1.8 billion in fines to the US Federal Reserve over unsafe and unsound practices in forex markets.

## **EARTH MATTERS**

### **Driest Place on Earth in Atacama Desert**

- According to NASA's Astrobiology magazine, researchers have discovered the driest location on Earth in the Atacama Desert in Chile, and they were surprised to find some bacteria living there. The site is reported to be as dry as Mars.
- This discovery has toppled the Yungay region as the driest area of the hyper-arid Atacama Desert, with conditions close to the so-called "dry limit" for life on Earth. Several academic papers have been published reporting on the extraordinary characteristics of the Yungay site and its relevance to astrobiologists as an analogue of conditions on Mars. However, following a more systematic search of the desert, a Chilean research team has now found that MES is "much drier" than Yungay.

## **Oldest Stone Tools Predate Earliest Humans**

- The world's oldest stone tools have been discovered.
- They were unearthed from the shores of Lake Turkana in Kenya, and date to 3.3 million years ago.
- They are 700,000 years older than any tools found before, even predating the earliest humans in the Homo genus.
- The first tools from the site, which is called Lomekwi 3, were discovered in 2011. They were spotted after researchers took a wrong turn as they walked through the hot, dry Kenyan landscape.

## **INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY**

### **India's Economic Growth to Surpass China's**

- India's economic growth is projected to surpass that of China's, with the GDP expected to zoom by 7.7 per cent in 2016, according to a UN report India will help accelerate economic growth in South Asia.
- The mid-year update of the UN World Economic Situation and Prospects, released India's economy is projected to grow by 7.6 per cent this year and 7.7 per cent in 2016, overtaking China.
- China is projected to grow by 7 per cent in 2015 and 6.8 per cent next year.

### **Renault Unveils Rs. 3 lakh Kwid**

- To take on Maruti and Hyundai in the entry-level car segment, French auto major Renault unveiled 'Kwid' that will hit the market priced between Rs. 3 lakh and Rs. 4 lakh around the festive season this year.
- The SUV-shaped small car will be powered by an 800cc petrol engine. The company is looking to make India a regional hub for exporting the new car.
- As per Renault, the Kwid will be a game changer and it will be in the entry-level segment that accounts for 25 per cent of the Indian car market today.

## **SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

### **Scientists Capture 360 Degree Panoramic Views of Moon**

- Scientists have successfully captured 360 degree panoramic views of the moon by using a rugged camera technology.
- The camera pointing system is a sophisticated tool capable of controlling a camera's movement with precision as well as protecting the camera under extreme conditions.
- The CPS was developed by a joint team of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University and the China Academy of Space Technology.
- The CPS measures 85 cm x 27cm x 16 cm and weighs 2.8 kg. It is capable of moving 120 degrees in a vertical direction and rotating 340 degrees horizontally.

## INFOTAINMENT

### Saina Nehwal Seeded Second in Australian Open

- Defending champion Saina Nehwal has been seeded second in the women's singles competition of the USD 750,000 Australian Open Super Series badminton tournament.
- The World No. 2 Indian will take on a qualifier in her campaign opener.
- The other Indian in women's singles, World No. 11 P V Sindhu is unseeded and will face former World Champion Chinese Yihan Wang, seeded eighth, in her opening match.
- Three Indians men who will compete in the men's singles competition are Kidambi Srikanth, Parupalli Kashyap and H. S. Prannoy.

### Hungarian Author Wins Man Booker Prize

- Hungarian author Laszlo Krasznahorkai has won Britain's prestigious Man Booker International Prize for his achievement in fiction as he edged out India's Amitav Ghosh and eight others to bag the top literary award.
- The biennial Man Booker International Prize is worth 60,000 pounds and is intended to honour a living author for his or her body of work, either written in English or available in English translation. The award can be won only once in an author's lifetime.

## INDIA – OTHERS

### Israel Will Partner India to Develop Missile System

- India is close to finalising another mega military project with Israel, which will further bolster the already expansive but secretive defence cooperation under way between the two countries since the 1999 Kargil conflict.
- According to reports, the contract negotiation committee had now virtually sealed the joint development of a medium-range surface-to-air missile system (MR-SAM) for the Indian Army through collaboration between DRDO and Israeli Aerospace Industries.
- Incidentally, Israel is among the top defence suppliers to India, having already inked deals and projects worth around \$10 billion over the last 15 years, which range from spy and armed drones to sophisticated missile and radar systems.

### Jayalithaa to be Sworn in as Tamil Nadu CM

- Days after being acquitted by the Karnataka High Court in a disproportionate assets case, AIADMK general secretary J. Jayalithaa will take oath as Tamil Nadu Chief Minister on May 23.
- Current Tamil Nadu Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam will tender his resignation on May 22. Also on the same day, the AIADMK has called a meeting of its legislators at the party headquarters to elect Jayalithaa as leader of the AIADMK legislature party.

**22nd May**

## **AROUND THE WORLD**

### **Islamic State Claims it Has Full Control of Palmyra**



- Islamic State fighters tightened their grip on the historic Syrian city of Palmyra and overran Iraqi government defences east of Ramadi, the provincial capital that they had seized five days earlier.
- The twin successes not only pile pressure on Damascus and Baghdad but also throw doubt on a U.S. strategy of relying almost exclusively on air strikes to support the fight against Islamic State.
- According to the British-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, the al Qaeda offshoot now controls more than half of all Syrian territory after more than four years of conflict that grew out of an uprising against President Bashar al-Assad.

## **EARTH MATTERS**

### **Blue Whales Spotted off Maharashtra Coast**



- A group of researchers claimed to have spotted a mother-calf pair of blue whales off the Sindhudurg coast in Maharashtra after nearly 100 years.
- The Cetacean Population Study team also sighted four Bryde's whales also.
- According to Maharashtra state mangrove cell, the last reported sighting of blue whale, the world's largest animal, was in 1914.
- Under the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) project, the team was deployed along the Sindhudurg coast for the past six months.

## INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

### Government Relaxes FDI Norms

- Aiming to attract overseas funds, government has decided that non-repatriable investments by NRIs, OCIs and PIOs will be treated as domestic investments and will not be subject to foreign direct investment caps.
- The Union Cabinet had approved amendments, including changes in definition of NRIs, to be incorporated in the FDI policy.
- The Cabinet's decision is expected to result in increased investments across sectors and greater inflow of foreign exchange remittance leading to economic growth of the country.

### Income Inequality in India Lowest Among Emerging Nations

- India has the lowest income inequality among all emerging economies, but it is much higher than most of the advanced economies.
- The countries with higher income gap than India include Russia, China, Brazil, Indonesia and South Africa, which have recorded the highest income inequality among all developed and emerging economies.
- As per Paris-based Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, a grouping of the world's 34 major economies, the rich-poor gap in most advanced economies has risen to highest levels in past three decades, while it continues to remain much higher in many emerging economies.

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### SpaceX's Dragon Cargo Capsule Returns to Earth



- SpaceX's Dragon cargo capsule has successfully returned to Earth from the International Space Station with some 3,000 pounds of equipment and experiments inside it.
- SpaceX is NASA's only means of getting supplies to the 260-mile high station ever since last year's loss of an Orbital Sciences craft in a Virginia launch explosion.
- The cargo capsule has spent 34 days at the orbiting research complex after its launch on 14th April from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station.
- SpaceX is targeting to launch another shipment from the Cape in June.

## INFOTAINMENT

### Virat Kohli Named Sixth Most Marketable Athlete



- Sports business magazine 'SportsPro' has named Indian cricket captain Virat Kohli as the six most marketable athlete of this year ahead of Usain Bolt, Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo.
- Kohli has been placed just a rung below British Formula One reigning world champion Lewis Hamilton while Brazilian football superstar Neymar was named the second most marketable sportsperson.
- Another Indian, world No one shuttler Saina Nehwal has been placed at the forty fourth place.

### Saina Nehwal Regains Top Spot in World Rankings



- Indian shuttler Saina Nehwal regained the number one spot in the latest BWF world rankings released on 21st May.
- Saina, who secured the number one spot for the first time early last month, slipped from the coveted position subsequently.
- P. V. Sindhu lost a position to be on 12th place.
- In the men's singles, K. Srikanth has retained his fourth place, and P. Kashyap and H. S. Parnnoy also maintained their 13th and 15th positions, respectively.

## INDIA – OTHERS

### Centre Kills Delhi's Heritage City Dream

- The capital's chance to become the first 'world heritage city' in India has been scuppered. The Centre withdrew Delhi's nomination for a UNESCO World Heritage City tag without assigning any reason, abruptly ending a long quest that involved more than a decade of planning. The decision shocked conservationists and heritage lovers as it came just a month before UNESCO's review of nominations from across the world.
- In a huge embarrassment for India, the country is out of the running at this year's World Heritage Committee session as Delhi was its only entry. "Delhi was the only nomination submitted last year for the world heritage tag.

**23rd May**

## AROUND THE WORLD

### Togo Government Resigned as President Began Third Term



- Togo's Prime Minister Kwesi Seleagodji Ahoomey-Zunu and his government resigned, an expected move after elections last month that saw President Faure Gnassingbe extend his family's nearly five-decade grip on power.
- Gnassingbe was sworn in for his third term on May 4 after winning nearly 59 percent of the vote in the small west African country that his family has controlled since 1967.

## EARTH MATTERS

### First Environmental Democracy Index Released



- Washington-based World Resources Institute (WRI) and the Access Initiative released the first Environmental Democracy Index (EDI) for the year 2015.
- The index evaluates the environmental democracy in 70 countries based on recognised international standards.
- India was ranked at 24th position out of 70 countries in the first Environmental Democracy Index that is topped by Lithuania at the first position, Latvia at the second and Russia at the third position.

## INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

### RBI Wins Battle to Keep Debt Management Role



- With the Union Finance Ministry reworking its proposal for setting up the Public Debt Management Authority, the Reserve Bank of India has won its biggest battle in its 80-year history.
- The watered-down proposal no longer envisages that the RBI relinquish control over the task of managing the Centre's borrowings. Instead, the proposed authority, to be housed in the Finance Ministry and staffed mainly by government officials, is being given "limited functionality".

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### Most Luminous Galaxy Found



- A newfound galaxy 12.5 billion light-years from Earth is the most luminous one known in the universe, blazing more brightly than 300 trillion suns, a new study reports.
- The engine behind the galaxy's brilliance may be a supermassive black hole, researchers said. Such behemoths lurk at the heart of most, if not all, galaxies.
- The galaxy has been named WISE J224607.57-052635.0.

## INFOTAINMENT

### CSK Entered Record 6th IPL Final

- Chennai Super Kings defeated Royal Challengers Bangalore by three wickets in a nail-biting second qualifier to sail into the final of the Indian Premier League cricket tournament.
- With this, they have made a record sixth appearance in eight editions of the event.

## INDIA – OTHERS

### G. Mohan Kumar appointed as new Defence Secretary



- Senior IAS officer G Mohan Kumar was appointed as new Defence Secretary for a two-year term.
- He will take over from Radha Krishna Mathur, a 1977 batch Manipur-Tripura cadre IAS officer, who

completes his two year tenure on May 28.

## 24th May

### AROUND THE WORLD

#### Five More Foreign Companies to Invest in Mariel

- Cuba has given the go-ahead to five more foreign companies to set up operations in the Mariel Special Development Zone.
- Till date six companies have been approved, five of them with 100 percent foreign capital.
- The approved companies operate in agribusiness, light industry, electronics, chemicals and transportation.
- As per reports, Cuba has received more than 300 applications to invest in the ZEDM from companies based in Spain, Italy, China, Russia, France, Vietnam, Brazil, Mexico, the Netherlands and Canada.

### INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

#### ArcelorMittal Sign up with SAIL

- ArcelorMittal, the world's biggest steelmaker, signed a pact with the Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL), to build a plant that will manufacture auto-grade steel in India to tap the country's rapidly growing automotive sector. It will be located in Rourkela (Odisha).
- According to Lakshmi Mittal, establishing an automotive-focussed production presence in India, one of the world's fastest growing automotive markets, is a natural progression in executing his global automotive strategy.

### SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

#### UAE Gears up for Mars Mission

- As per reports, state-owned Masdar Institute of Science and Technology is ramping up its efforts to support the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in achieving its goal of sending an unmanned space probe to Mars by 2021.
- The initiative for the UAE's Mars mission, named "Hope", the first in the Arab world, was launched in October.
- Masdar Institute is also a member of the Mohammed bin Rashid Space Centre's science and research team, which is one of the seven teams of UAE national scientists that have been established to cover all aspects of the Mars mission.

## INFOTAINMENT

### Xavi Leaves Barcelona

- Barcelona will never have a player like Xavi as he is leaving.
- Xavi announced this week that he was joining Qatari side Al Sadd after 17 seasons in Barca's first team and 23 trophies, bringing to an end to more than two decades with the club he joined in 1991.
- He is considered one of the greatest midfielders to have played the game.
- He won three Champions League crowns with the Catalan giants and helped Spain clinch back-to-back European Championships in 2008 and 2012 and their debut World Cup in 2010.

## INDIA – OTHERS

### Courts to Fix Child Support till Age of 25

- For the first time in India, the concept of shared parenting has been proposed to give joint custody rights of a child to both parents in case of divorce -equal legal status with respect to guardianship and custody.
- The Law Commission on Friday submitted a draft law to the government proposing amendments to the existing guardianship and custody laws. The draft law provides for welfare of children as paramount consideration while deciding custody.
- It also proposes statutory guidelines on determining child welfare rights in cases of joint custody.

## 25th May

## AROUND THE WORLD

### Andrzej Duda Wins Presidential Elections

- The preliminary exit poll results of the second round of presidential elections in Poland indicated that Andrzej Duda from the Law and Justice Party received 53 percent of all votes and winning the election.
- Incumbent President Bronislaw Komorowski, backed by the Civic Platform party, received 47 percents of all votes.

### Greece 'Has no Money' to Meet IMF Debt Repayment

- Greece warned it has no money to repay the International Monetary Fund on time in June unless a deal is reached with its creditors, in a stark warning that the country could be just days away from defaulting.

- With time running out for four more debt instalments from June 5, Interior Minister Nikos Voutsis told the country has nothing left for the IMF in its coffers.
- The installments for the IMF in June are 1.6 billion euros (\$1.8 billion).

## INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

### City Union Bank Q4 Net up 19%

- City Union Bank has achieved a growth of 18.9 per cent in its net profit at Rs. 99.08 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 31, 2015, against Rs. 83.35 crore in the same period in the previous year. The growth was despite making higher provisions against non-performing assets.
- For the year ended March 31, 2015, the profit after taxation rose by 14 per cent to Rs. 395.02 crore from Rs. 347.07 crore.

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### The Moons of Exoplanets can Sustain Life

- A study suggests that the moons of exoplanets may have all the right conditions to support alien life.
- Using data from the solar system and observations of huge planets far beyond the visual range of any telescope, researchers have shown that some moons of those planets could be habitable.

## INFOTAINMENT

### Mumbai Indians Lift 2nd IPL Trophy

- Mumbai Indians clinched their second IPL title following a crushing 41-run win over Chennai Super Kings in a lop-sided summit clash.
- Mumbai Indians posted an imposing 202 for five as skipper Rohit Sharma and Lendl Simmons rattled up a 119-run stand off just from 67 balls after being invited to bat.
- They restricted the Chennai batsmen to 161 for eight.
- Mumbai had won their first title in 2013 at this very venue, defeating the same rivals. Chennai have now lost four finals 2008, 2012, 2013 and 2015.

## INDIA – OTHERS

### EC Wants Electoral Rolls to be Error Free

- Seeking to check multiple entries in electoral rolls and to make them error-free, the Election Commission has embarked on an ambitious project to link Aadhar numbers with voters' electoral data.
- National Electoral Roll Purification and Authentication Programme (NERPAP) was launched throughout the country in March, with the prime objective of bringing a totally error free and authenticated electoral roll.

- So far 13 crore voters have applied to link their Aadhar numbers with their entries in electoral rolls. While 10 crore requests have been received through various means.
- EPIC data of electors will be linked with Aadhar data of UIDAI for the purpose of authentication. NERPAP will focus on improving image quality of electors along with sorting issues like corrections of errors.

## 26th May

### AROUND THE WORLD

#### Samsung to Merge Two Major Units

- Samsung Group announced the merger of two major affiliates, as the group accelerates restructuring efforts ahead of a generational power transfer within the founding Lee family.
- The all stock deal, approved by the boards of both companies would see Samsung's de facto holding company Cheil Industries, which has interests from fashion to theme parks, acquire general trade and construction affiliate Samsung C&T.
- The combined company will be called Samsung C&T.

#### Russia to Deliver S-300 Missiles to Iran

- Moscow and Tehran have concluded talks on the delivery of Russian S-300 missiles to Iran which should take place quite soon.
- The negotiations on the subject have ended in success.
- The sale of the missiles was blocked in 2010 by former president Dmitri Medvedev, but in April President Vladimir Putin gave the go ahead after Tehran struck a landmark deal in Lausanne with the West over its nuclear programme.
- According to Moscow the progress in nuclear talks between Iran and world powers meant there was no longer a need for it to prohibit exporting the surface-to-air missiles to Tehran.

### EARTH MATTERS

#### Population of Maui's Dolphins Drops

- As per conservationists the remaining population of Maui's dolphins has dropped below 50.
- The critically endangered species is found only in waters off New Zealand.
- According to conservationist fishing should be banned across the dolphin's entire habitat rather than only limited areas.
- According to new estimates just 43-47 individuals, including about 10 mature females, are left.
- The Maui's dolphin is a subspecies of Hector's dolphin that only lives in shallow coastal waters off New

Zealand's North Island; the other subspecies of Hector's dolphin is found around the South Island and is more abundant.

## INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

### TVS Tyres Eyes Capacity Expansion

- As per reports, two wheeler tyre maker TVS Srichakra will increase its capacity from two million units a month to 2.3 million across its two plants in Tamil Nadu and Uttarakhand.
- The company will invest Rs. 150 crore, funded by a mix of internal accruals and debt, towards this expansion.
- During 2014-15, the company had increased the output from 1.70 million tyres a month to 2 million tyres.
- Announcing the financial performance for the quarter ended March 2015, the revenues grew marginally to Rs. 464.98 crore from Rs. 456.79 crore in the corresponding quarter last year while the net profits rose to Rs. 34.03 crore, up 57% from the corresponding quarter last year.

### Canara Bank Posts Flat Q4 Profit at Rs. 613 crore

- State-owned Canara Bank reported a profit of Rs. 612.96 crore for the last quarter of 2014-15 financial year against that of Rs. 610.8 crore in the same period the previous year.
- Total income increased to Rs. 12,429.21 crore in the quarter ended March, 2015, from Rs. 11,609.72 crore in the same period of the last fiscal.
- For the full fiscal 2014-15, the bank's net profit rose by 10.8 per cent to Rs. 2,702.63 crore as compared to Rs. 2,438.19 crore in the previous fiscal.

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### Solar Plane set for the Most Challenging Leg

- The Solar Impulse 2, the world's only solar-powered aircraft is about to undertake its greatest challenge yet - to fly nonstop for six days from China to Central Pacific.
- The plane is powered completely by the sun and has been in Nanjing city in east China waiting for clearer skies during their journey to Hawaii in the Central Pacific.
- So far on its epic round-the-world, the Solar Impulse has only had to do short journeys of about 20 hours.

### World's First Artificial Molecular Pump

- Scientists have developed the first man-made molecular pump, which transports key proteins that cells need to function, that could be used to power artificial muscles.
- The new machine mimics the pumping mechanism of life-sustaining proteins that move small molecules around living cells to metabolise and store energy from food.

## INFOTAINMENT

### DeGale Defeats Dirrell

- James DeGale became the first British fighter to win Olympic gold and a professional title, defeating Andre Dirrell to claim the vacant International Boxing Federation super middleweight crown.
- DeGale has now won 11 fights in a row since suffering his only pro loss, a 2011 majority decision setback in London at the hands of compatriot George Groves.

## INDIA – OTHERS

### Saurabh Kumar India's New Envoy to Iran

- Saurabh Kumar, an IFS officer of 1989 batch, was appointed as the next Indian Ambassador to Iran.
- He is currently posted as a Joint Secretary in the National Security Council Secretariat.
- Notwithstanding US objections, India had earlier this month signed a crucial agreement with Iran for the development of the strategically important Chabahar port which will give India sea-land access route to Afghanistan bypassing Pakistan.

## 27th May

## AROUND THE WORLD

### Four Indians among World's 100 Most Powerful Women

- According to the Forbes' annual list, SBI Chief Arundhati Bhattacharya, ICICI bank head Chanda Kochhar, Biocon founder Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw and HT Media Chair Shobhana Bhartia are among the world's 100 most powerful women. The list is topped by German Chancellor Angela Merkel.
- Two women of Indian-origin PepsiCo Chief Indra Nooyi and Cisco Chief Technology and Strategy Officer Padmasree Warrior also make the list.
- The top 10 include US presidential hopeful Hillary Clinton (2), philanthropist Melinda Gates (3), Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen (3), GM CEO Mary Barra (5), IMF Chief Christine Lagarde (6), Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff (7), Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg (8), YouTube CEO Susan Wojcicki (9) and US First Lady Michelle Obama (10).

### Libya PM Escapes Assassination Attempt

- The Libyan Prime Minister Abdullah al-Thani escaped unharmed when assassins opened fire on his car.

- The Prime Minister's car was hit by bullets when armed men opened fire as it was leaving an area where a session of parliament was held.
- The Prime Minister was not hurt, but one of his bodyguards was wounded.

## INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

### E-commerce Business on Income Tax Radar

- The Income Tax department has trained its scanner on the burgeoning 'e-commerce' business in the country with the taxman deciding to monitor a host of services conducted by these popular online portals to better fill up the revenue kitty.
- After making an official assessment report on the online retail business in India, the department has decided to track these "huge business" conducting services for extracting the special category of Tax Deducted on Source (TDS) which is taken from the payment made by firms and organisations for getting special services done on the internet retail space.
- The e-retail or e-commerce business is a fairly new avenue from the view point of collecting taxes and the sector is witnessing huge money changing hands. The department has prepared some trends in this regard and it has been decided to seriously tap this popular online sector for better TDS collections.

### Indian Promoter must Hold 26% Stake in Insurance Joint Ventures

- The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India has mandated a minimum 26% equity holding by the Indian promoter in any insurance company to ensure that the local investor does not use the liberal foreign investment and listing policy to dilute accountability.
- The regulator insists that the mandatory 26% stake to be held by the local promoter will ensure that there is accountability and that the management does not rest with the foreign company alone in the event of a single block of holding falling below 25%, public shareholding limit, when a company goes for listing.

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### Curiosity Rover Begins New Journey on Mars

- Unable to reach a comparable geological contact farther south on the Red Planet, NASA's Curiosity rover has now approached an alternative site for investigating a geological boundary.
- Such geological contacts can reveal clues about how environmental conditions that produced one type of rock were related to conditions that produced the other.
- Two weeks ago, Curiosity was headed for a comparable geological contact farther south.
- Foiled by slippery slopes on the way there, the team rerouted the vehicle and chose a westward path.
- The mission's strategic planning keeps multiple route options open to deal with such situations.

## INFOTAINMENT

### **Mahesh Bhupathi-Nick Kyrgios Lose in First Round**

- Indo-Australian pair of Mahesh Bhupathi and Nick Kyrgios failed to cross the opening hurdle of the men's doubles event, suffering a straight-set defeat against Lucas Pouille and Thanasi Kokkinakis in the French Open tennis tournament.
- Among other Indians, Leander Paes will pair up with Canada's Daniel Nestor to take on Australia's James Duckworth and Chris Guccione.

## INDIA – OTHERS

### **HC Restores ACB's Power to Act against Govt. Officials**

- In an embarrassment for the Centre, the Delhi High Court restored the powers of Delhi Government's Anti-Corruption Branch (ACB) to probe and prosecute all government corrupt employees, including IAS and IPS officers, within the jurisdiction of Delhi.
- The Delhi high court verdict restoring the powers of the Anti-Corruption Branch (ACB) is a decisive victory for the people of the national capital. The move to curtail the original powers of the ACB through an illconceived notification by the Union Home Ministry in July last year (2014) has been categorically rebuffed by the high court.

**28th May**

## AROUND THE WORLD

### **Member States Asked to Admit 40,000 Asylum Seekers**

- The EU asked its member states to admit over the next two years 40,000 asylum seekers from Syria and Eritrea who have already landed in Italy and Greece.
- Syrians and Eritreans will be relocated from Italy and Greece to other European Union member states over a period of two years.

### **Tony Blair Resigns as Peace Envoy**

- Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair has resigned as the Middle East peace envoy representing the US, UN, Russia and the European Union in the regional peace talks, a role he undertook after leaving 10 Downing Street in 2007.

- Blair resigned after he was criticised for his dual role as diplomat and businessman. His clients include PetroSaudi, an oil company with links to the ruling Saudi royal family, JP Morgan and Mubadala, an Abu Dhabi wealth fund.
- Blair plans to remain active on the issues concerning the Middle East.

## **EARTH MATTERS**

### **Over 70 Percent of Everest Glacier Volume may be Lost**

- Over 70 percent of the glacier volume in the Mount Everest region in the Himalayas could be lost in 85 years if greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise. It also indicates more flood risk in the future in the Kosi River downstream from Nepal to India.
- According to a newspaper, the glacier volume could be reduced between 70 and 99 percent by 2100.
- It is a first approximation to how the Himalayan glaciers will react to increasing temperatures in the region.

The results depend on how much greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise and on how this will affect temperature, snowfall and rainfall in the area.

## **INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY**

### **United Spirits Reports Net Loss at Rs. 1799 crore**

- Liquor firm United Spirits Ltd. reported a net loss of Rs. 1799.28 crore for the three months ended March 2015 on account of increasing debt and liabilities.
- The company had run up a net loss of Rs. 5380.10 crore in the same period of the previous fiscal.
- However, total income of the company on standalone basis rose 5.55 percent to Rs. 2051.25 crore during the quarter under review, from Rs. 1,943.34 crore in the year-ago period.
- However USL's total consolidated income from operation during 2014-15 came down 12.06 percent to Rs. 9,334.99 crore, from Rs. 10,615.41 crore a year ago.

### **Andhra Govt. Waives VAT on Natural Gas**

- Bowing to pressure from private power project developers, the Andhra Pradesh government has issued orders withdrawing the Value Added Tax (VAT) on regasified liquefied natural gas (RLNG).
- The gas is supplied to private promoters by Gas Authority of India Ltd (GAIL) and Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation Limited (GSPCL). The commercial taxes department issued GOs (No. 181 and 182) exempting VAT on RLNG and biogas for two years. The exemption is estimated to result in a loss of Rs. 2300 crore revenue to the exchequer for the two-year period.

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### Scientists to Explore Jupiter's Moon 'Europa'

- NASA has announced that researchers from the Planetary Science Institute will be studying Jupiter's moon Europa.
- According to NASA, the Europa mission slated to be launch in the 2020s, will orbit Jupiter while performing 45 Europa flybys over a three-year period with altitudes ranging from 25 kilometers to 2,700 kilometers.

## INFOTAINMENT

### Seven Top FIFA Officials Held for Graft

- In a stunning move that shook the soccer world to its boots, plainclothes Swiss law-enforcement authorities took into custody seven leading members of the sport's governing body FIFA who had gathered there ahead of a presidential vote this week.
- The move followed the announcement in New York that the US justice department was charging 14 leader soccer officials and promoters from across the world with racketeering, wire fraud and money laundering conspiracies, among other offenses.
- Swiss prosecutors had opened their own criminal proceedings against the officials on suspicion of mismanagement and money laundering related to awarding of rights to host the 2018 World Cup in Russia and the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

## INDIA – OTHERS

### First Transgender College Principal

- In a major initiative to empower the community, the West Bengal government has appointed a transgender educationist as a college principal in the state, a first for India.
- Manabi Bandopadhyay, currently the associate professor in Bengali at Vivekananda Satobarshiki Mahavidyalaya, will take over the reins of the Krishnagar Women's College.

### AFSPA Withdrawn from Tripura

- The Tripura government has decided to lift Armed Forces Special Power Act (AFSPA) from the state, where the controversial law was in effect for the last 18 years to curb insurgency.
- The ministers have reviewed the situation of the disturbed areas of the state after every six months and also discussed the issue with the state police and other security forces working in the state.
- They suggested that there is no requirement of the Act now as the insurgency problem has largely been contained. A gazette notification will be soon issued in this regard.
- This Act was imposed in the state on February 16, 1997 following spurt of violence by the ultras.

- When the Act was imposed there were only 42 police stations and two-thirds of the entire police station areas were under this act.

## 29th May

### AROUND THE WORLD

#### First-ever Female Vice-chancellor of Oxford

- The oldest university in the English speaking world has got its first-ever female head.
- Professor Louise Richardson, currently the principal and vice-chancellor of the University of St Andrews, has been nominated as the next VC of the University of Oxford.

#### S. Chandra Das Appointed Singapore's Envoy to Sri Lanka

- The Singapore government has appointed Indian-origin S. Chandra Das, a former member of parliament and diplomat, as Singapore's non-resident high commissioner to Sri Lanka.
- Das served as Singapore's ambassador to the Republic of Turkey, resident in Singapore from 2006 to 2015. He had previously served as Singapore's trade representative to the former Soviet Union from 1970 to 1972 and also as member of parliament from 1980 to 1996.

### EARTH MATTERS

#### New species of Ancient Human Found

- A new species of ancient human has been unearthed in the Afar region of Ethiopia.
- Researchers discovered jaw bones and teeth, which date to between 3.3m and 3.5m years old.
- It means this new hominin was alive at the same time as several other early human species, suggesting our family tree is more complicated than was thought.
- The new species has been called *Australopithecus deyiremeda*, which means "close relative" in the language spoken by the Afar people.

### INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

#### TCS Rated India's Top Company

- As per a list compiled by Dun & Brastreet, IT giant TCS has been rated as the top company in India in terms of market capitalisation.

- The list of top 500 firms places Reliance Industries and ITC at the second and the third spots respectively.
- Others in the top 10 are ONGC at the 4th place, followed by Coal India 5th, Infosys (6th), HDFC Bank (7th), HDFC (8th), Hindustan Unilever (9th) and State Bank of India (10th).

## INFOTAINMENT

### Abhinav Bindra Qualifies for Rio Games 2016

- Abhinav Bindra qualified for the Rio Olympics 2016 through one of the Olympic quotas after he finished sixth in the men's 10m Air Rifle final at the ISSF Shooting World Cup in Munich.
- Bindra is the fourth Indian shooter to qualify for the Rio Games after he clinched one of the three quotas available to qualify for the games.
- Gagan Narang, Jitu Rai and Apurvi Chandel are the other Indians to have secured an Olympic quota earlier.
- Each country can win a maximum of 30 quota places from a total of 15 shooting disciplines (including shotgun events), two each from each discipline.

## INDIA – OTHERS

### S. Christopher Appointed DRDO Chief

- Eminent scientist S. Christopher was on Thursday appointed as Director General of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) for a two-year term.
- Christopher is presently Distinguished Scientist and Programme Director (airborne early warning and control system) and Director, Centre for Air-Borne Systems in the DRDO.
- Another scientist G. S. Reddy was appointed as the Scientific Adviser to Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar for a two-year term.

**30th May**

## **EARTH MATTERS**

### **Mass Deaths of Rare Antelopes in Kazakhstan**



- The sudden deaths of tens of thousands of endangered antelopes over the past two weeks have left scientists scrambling for answers and conservationists worried about the animal's future.
- More than 120,000 rare saiga antelopes — more than a third of the total global population — have been wiped out.

## **INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY**

### **GDP grew by 7.3 % but failed to Overtake China**



- India's economy grew by 7.3 per cent during 2014-15, the first financial year presided over by the Modi government, failing to overtake China as the world's fastest growing major economy.
- Also, capital formation continued to be lower at 28.7 per cent of GDP against 29.7 per cent during 2013-14. Gross fixed capital formation – a barometer for investments – slowed for the second straight year.

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### First Lab-made Version of Spider Silk Produced



- Spider silk has been grown from genetically modified cells for the first time. The research company behind the feat believes it opens the way for the manufacture of super-strong, light and biodegradable materials within a few years.
- In the current research, cells were taken from the mammary glands of dairy cows and genetically modified with spider genes to produce the proteins used to make spider silk. The proteins were then stretched and spun from an aqueous solution into fine silk fibres.
- Spider silk is one of the strongest and most flexible materials in the natural world, five times stronger than steel by weight. It would be ideal for bullet-proof clothing, biodegradable fishing nets and medical materials, such as sutures.

## INFOTAINMENT

### Sepp Blatter Wins Re-election as FIFA President



- Sepp Blatter was re-elected as FIFA president for a fifth term, chosen to lead world soccer despite separate U.S. and Swiss criminal investigations into corruption.
- The 209 FIFA member federations gave the 79-year-old Blatter another four-year term after Prince Ali bin al-Hussein of Jordan conceded defeat after losing 133-73 in the first round.

## INDIA – OTHERS

### P. K. Sinha appointed Cabinet Secretary



- Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved the appointment of Pradeep Kumar Sinha, a 1977 batch IAS officer of Uttar Pradesh cadre, as the next Cabinet Secretary.
- Mr. Sinha, who has been serving as Power Secretary since July 2013, will succeed Ajit Seth whose term ends on June 13.

## 31st May

### AROUND THE WORLD

#### Martin O' Malley Enters Presidential Race

- Former Maryland Governor and Democratic Party Martin O' Malley threw his hat for the 2016 race to the Oval Office, emerging at this point as the strongest intra-party challenger to Hillary Clinton.
- Although Ms. Clinton is considered to be the Party's frontrunner, Mr. O' Malley is a nationally recognized figure and has built a reputation for strong state and local-level governance as the two-term Governor of Maryland, between 2007 and 2015, and also as the Mayor of Baltimore between 1999 and 2007.

## EARTH MATTERS

### Global Climate Set for Change over Decades

- A study by British scientists shows that the global climate is on the verge of broad-scale change that could last for a number of decades.
- The change is linked to cooling of the Atlantic, and is likely to bring drier summers in Britain and Ireland.
- The study is based on observational evidence of the link between ocean circulation and the decadal variability of sea surface temperatures called the Atlantic Multi-decadal Oscillation (AMO).
- Sea-surface temperatures in the Atlantic vary between warm and cold over time-scales of many decades.
- These variations have been shown to influence temperature, rainfall, drought and even the frequency of hurricanes in many regions of the world.

## INDIA - BUSINESS/ECONOMY

### Larsen & Toubro Profit Drops 27%

- Industrial group Larsen & Toubro reported a 27 percent drop in net profit in the three months through March, reflecting a fall in oil prices and a weak investment climate.
- The company, whose performance is seen as a gauge of the health of the Indian economy, has been cautious in recent quarters on the outlook for domestic demand for its engineering, construction and manufacturing goods.
- As per the company the subdued investment climate in the past year had limited opportunities for the capital goods and infrastructure sector, but now there are seen signs of a pickup in India.

### Coastal Shipping Pact with Bangladesh

- The Union Cabinet approved the agreement on coastal shipping between India and Bangladesh for faster and economic movement of goods between the two countries.
- As per reports, Exim trade between India and Bangladesh would be benefited by way of reduction in freight charges. It will also improve the utilisation of port capacities of Indian ports and open up new opportunity for Indian coastal vessels. It will also help in decongestion of roads especially at the land custom stations/integrated check posts at the Indo-Bangladesh border.
- India`s trade with Bangladesh has grown rapidly during the past few years. Bangladesh is now India`s largest trade partner in south Asia.

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### NASA Celebrates 50th Anniversary of First US Spacewalk

- NASA is celebrating the 50th anniversary of the US' first extravehicular activity (EVA) -- better known as a spacewalk.
- On June 3, 1965, NASA astronaut Ed White became the first American to walk in space.

## INDIA – OTHERS

### P. K. Sinha Named New Cabinet Secretary

- The Narendra Modi government named power secretary Pradeep Kumar Sinha as the new cabinet secretary. He will be officer on special duty in the cabinet secretariat until incumbent Ajit Seth's tenure ends on June 13.
- Sinha one of the senior-most bureaucrats in the country, will have a two-year tenure until June 12, 2017.

### Pinaka Mark-II Missile Successfully Test-fired

- The trials of Pinaka mark-II missile-cum-multi barrel rocket launcher system were successfully conducted at Pokhran field firing ranges. The missile hit the target which was situated 53 kilometres from the firing point.
- Six rounds of the mark-II version of the Pinaka missile were successfully tested. The weapon has been developed by the DRDO for destroying/neutralising enemy troop concentration areas, communication centres, air terminal complexes, gun/rocket locations and for laying mines. High operational mobility, flexibility and accuracy are the major characteristics which give the weapon an edge in the modern artillery warfare for the Indian armed forces.
- The Pinaka can fire 12 rockets in 44 seconds from the launcher." Pinaka was also put to field testing for assessing its capability during the Kargil conflict.