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Look Inside



AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

Larry Page – Business Person of the Year

The Fortune Magazine has named CEO and Co-Founder of Google, **Larry Page** as the **Business Person of the Year 2014**. Others in the race include *Jack Ma* (Alibaba), *Zuckerberg* (Facebook), *Tim Cook* (Apple), and *Fred Smith* (FedEx).. etc.

Larry Page came on top in the 20 global corporate leaders' list. The list was compiled on the basis of various factors such as company's performance, leadership style and total shareholder returns.

Prime Minister released commemorative coins to honor Jamsetji Tata

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has released commemorative coins to honor Tata Group founder **Jamsetji Nusserwanji** Tata on his 175th birth anniversary.

Jamsetji will be the first industrialist in India to be felicitated by the government in such a manner. He was pioneer industrialist who had founded Tata Group- India's biggest conglomerate company. He is regarded as **Father of Indian Industry**.

State Pre-Eminent Science and Technology Award

Chinese nuclear scientist **Yu Min** was conferred with the **State Pre-eminent Science and Technology Award** 2014 by Chinese President **Xi Jinping**. He was awarded for his involvement in research into nuclear weapons since the 1960s.

Yu Min is considered as the "**Father of China's Hydrogen Bomb**". He was graduated from Peking University and served as a researcher at the Modern Physics Research Institute of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.



He was also the recipient of the "Two Bombs, One Satellite" Achievement Medal, a science award given by the Chinese government.

Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards

Vice President **Mohammad Hamid Ansari** presented the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards 2015 to fifteen personalities on the **XIII edition** of Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas.

The Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award was organized by the Union Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs to honor the contributions of NRIs in their respective profession. The Awardees are,

- Essop Goolam Pahad from South Africa
- Ashraf Pellarkunnmal from UAE
- Kanwaljit Singh Bakshi from New Zealand
- Rajamal Parakh from Oman
- Duraikannu Karunakaran from Seychelles
- Dr Rajaram Sanjaya from Mexico
- Bharat Kumar Jayantilal Shah from UAE
- Mahendra Nanji Mehta from Uganda
- Nathuram Puri from the United Kingdom
- Lord Raj Lumba from the United Kingdom
- Satyanarayan Nadela from USA
- Mala Mehta from Australia
- Kamlesh Lulla from the US
- Nandani Tandon from US
- President Donald Rabindernauth Ramaotar from Guyana

The 72nd Golden Globe Awards

The 72nd Golden Globe Awards honoring the best in film and television for 2014 were presented at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills, California. Some of the important awards are,

MOVIES

- Best motion picture (drama) – **Boyhood**
- Best motion picture (musical or comedy) – **The Grand Budapest Hotel**
- Best animated feature film – **How to Train Your Dragon 2**
- Best director – **Richard Linklater, “Boyhood”**
- Best screenplay – **Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu, “Birdman”**
- Best original song – **“Glory” from “Selma”**
- Best foreign language film – **“Leviathan” (Russia)**

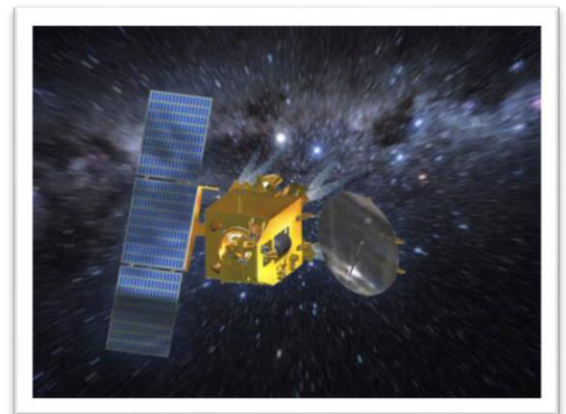
TELEVISION

- Best TV series (drama) – **The Affair**
- Best actor in a TV series (drama) – **Kevin Spacey, “House of Cards”**
- Best actress in a TV series (drama) – **Ruth Wilson, “The Affair”**
- Best TV series (comedy) – **Transparent**
- Best TV movie or miniseries – **Fargo**

ISRO’s MoM Team wins the 2015 Space Pioneer Award

Indian Space Research Organization’s (ISRO) **Mars Orbiter Mission** (MoM) or **Mangalyaan Team** has won the United States based **2015 Space Pioneer Award** in the science and engineering category. The award is given by National Space Society (NSS), an educational and scientific group.

The award comprises a silvery pewter **Moon globe** cast by the Baker Art Foundry in California, from a sculpture created by Don Davis, an astronomical artist.



According to the NSS, the India’s Mangalyaan achieved two significant mission firsts.

- An Indian spacecraft that has entered the Mars orbit on the very **first attempt** and that no other country has ever done this.
- The spacecraft is in an elliptical orbit with a high **apoapsis**, and also it has a high resolution camera capable of taking full-disk **colour imagery of Mars**.

Anirban Lahiri voted 2014 Asian Tour Players’ Player of the year

Golfer **Anirban Lahiri** has been voted as the 2014 **Players’ Player of the Year** for his success in the Asian Tour where he won two titles and finished second on the Order of Merit. Lahiri’s efforts on the Asian Tour earned huge compliments by his peers who recognized his efforts and battling spirit.

Cristiano Ronaldo wins Ballon d’Or 2014 Award

Cristiano Ronaldo has won the prestigious **Ballon d’Or 2014 Award**. He has beaten Argentina’s **Lionel Messi** and won this award for a second consecutive year. Ronaldo was voted best player in the world ahead of the Argentina and Barcelona forward Messi and Bayern Munich goalkeeper Manuel Neuer at a FIFA ceremony.

Raghuram Rajan bags “Governor of the Year” Award

Reserve Bank of India’s Governor **Raghuram Rajan** has been named ‘**Governor of the Year**’ by **Central Banking Awards** for 2015. The awards are announced by Central Banking Publications. Rajan was awarded for his disciplined and focused approach to bring macroeconomic stability in India.

Jammu & Kashmir bags the National e-Governance Award

Jammu and Kashmir has won the **National e-Governance Award** for the best **district-level initiative** in India. The National e-Governance Award was institutionalized in the year 1997 and Jammu & Kashmir bags the award for the first time. The award is given for the project launched in 2013 called **e-Panchayat** for strengthening 147 panchayats in the state.

Vyas Samman Award for 2014

Renowned Hindi writer **Kamal Kishore Goyanka** has been selected for the prestigious **Vyas Samman Award** for 2014 for his book ‘**Premchand Kee Kahaniyo Kaa Kaalkramanuser**’, a chronological study of short stories of Premchand, one of the foremost Hindi writers.

The Vyas Samman Award is an annual award instituted by the K K Birla Foundation. The award carries a cash prize of Rs 2.5 lakhs. The selection for the award has been made by a committee headed Surya Prasad Dixit, Former head of Lucknow University.

Periyar Tiger Reserve bags the NTCA Award

The **Periyar Tiger Reserve** in Kerala has been awarded with **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) award** for encouraging local public participation in managing the reserve. According to the report, more than 75 communities are living around the reserve, which includes tribal people, who are dependent on Government’s eco-development programmes. **The Anamalai Tiger Reserve** in Tamilnadu has been awarded for **best communication strategy**.



Vikram Sarabhai Memorial Award for SHAR Director

The Indian Science Congress Association (ISCA) has selected **M Y S Prasad** for the prestigious **Vikram Sarabhai memorial award**. Prasad is the current Director of Satish Dhawan Space Centre, **Sriharikota Range (SHAR)**. The Award comprises a gold medal and certificate, in recognition of his exceptional contribution to Research and Development in the field of space science at the Indian Space Research Organisation.

The previous recipients of this award are *Dr. Satish Dhawan, Dr. K. Kasturi Rangan, Dr. G. Madhavan Nair and Dr. K. Radhakrishnan*.

Prabhu Nath Dwivedi wins Sahitya Akademi Award

Sanskrit scholar **Prabhu Nath Dwivedi** has been conferred with the esteemed **Sahitya Akademi Award** for Sanskrit, 2014. He won this award for his work called '**Kanakalochanaha**', which is a collection of 16 short-stories that touch upon various social issues destroying the system.

In 2012 Prabhu Nath Dwivedi was in the selection committee for the Akademi's prize. The award comprises an engraved copper plaque, a shawl and a cheque for Rs. 100,000. The award will be given in March during the Festival of Letters to be held in New Delhi.

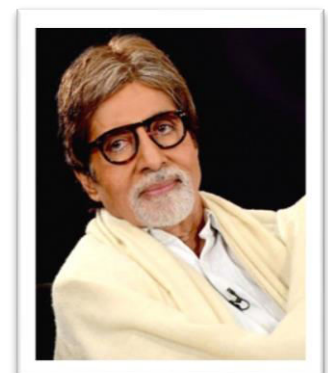
CV Anand conferred with NSC Award for Best Electoral Practices

Cyberabad Police Commissioner **C V Anand** has been conferred with the Election Commission of India's (ECI) **National Special Category Award** for the Best Electoral Practices in 2014.

He has been bestowed with this award for the measures taken by him in the area of '**Expenditure Monitoring and Tackling Money Power**' during the 2014 Lok Sabha election. The ECI has conducted a country-wise analysis of best practices adopted by over 450 District DEOs/SPs in India.

Amitabh Bachchan – Social Media Person of the Year 2015

Legendary Actor **Amitabh Bachchan** has been named the **Social Media Person of the Year 2015** by the **Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI)**. He has been conferred this award as he is an active blogger and a user of different social networks. Bachchan has more than 10 million followers in Twitter and more than One Crore people like his Face book official page.



Subash Chandra Agarwal Conferred with Giraffe Hero Award 2015

RTI activist **Subhash Chandra Agrawal** has been conferred with the **Giraffe Hero Award 2015**. The award is given by the US-based voluntary association set-up by a former US-diplomat and citizen activist.

Best Indian Language Website in India – navbharattimes.com

The **navbharattimes.com** website has bagged best **Indian language website** in India for the second time consecutively. The award was given by **Internet and Mobile Association of India** (IAMAI). The awards are given to organizations or individuals or companies for their extraordinary achievements in the digital world.

Ashok Srinivasan bags the prestigious Hindu Literary Prize 2014

Ashok Srinivasan bagged **The Hindu Literary Prize 2014** for his debut collection of 13 short stories, **Book of Common Signs**. The award was presented by the former Chief Justice of the Himachal Pradesh High Court Justice Leila Seth at the Lit for Life 2015, a literary festival organised by the Hindu newspaper.

Frank Islam conferred with Martin Luther King Award

Indian American **Frank Islam** has been conferred with the prestigious **Martin Luther King Award**. Frank Islam is an eminent entrepreneur, civic leader, and philanthropist. He has been honored for his contribution in international service and civil engagement.

Indian origin author Jhumpa Lahiri won the DSC Prize for South Asian fiction

The Indian American writer **Jhumpa Lahiri** has won the **Asia's richest literary prize- \$50,000 DSC award for south Asian fiction**, for her novel, **The Lowland**, which pivots around the Naxalite uprisings of the 1960s. Lahiri was the recipient of **Pulitzer Prize 2000**. The novel had been shortlisted for the Man Booker prize in 2013. The winner of this award was announced at the annual **Jaipur literature festival**.

Arundhathi Subramaniam bags Khushwant Singh Memorial Prize

Poet **Arundhathi Subramaniam** won the inaugural **Khushwant Singh Memorial Prize** for Poetry for her work **When God is a Traveller**. The prize announced at International Literature Festival, worth Rs. 2 lakh, was instituted by Suhel Seth in memory of the late Khushwant Singh.

National Bravery Awards for India's Young Bravehearts

Prime Minister Narendra Modi presented the **National Bravery Awards** 2014 to **24 Young Brave hearts of India**. A total of 8 girls and 16 boys were conferred with the awards. The awardees receive a medal, certificate and cash incentive. Also, they will participate in the Republic Day parade.

The award winners are

- Sanjay Chopra Award – **Devesh Kumar**
- Bapu Gaidhani Award – **Monika, Rumoh Meto and Riya Chaudhary**
- Geeta Chopra Award – **Gunjan Sharma**
- Bharat Award – **Resham Fatma**
- General National Bravery Award – **18 Young People**

Government announced the Prestigious Padma Awards

President Pranab Mukherjee has approved conferring the Nation's highest awards to 104 personalities. This year the awardees comprise of 9 **Padma Vibhushan**, 20 **Padma Bhushan** and 75 **Padma Shri**.

Senior BJP leader L K Advani, actors Amitabh Bachchan, Dilip Kumar and Punjab Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal will be awarded with Padma Vibhushan Award.

Microsoft founder Bill Gates and wife Melinda Gates will receive the Padma Bhushan, for their social work.

To see the full list of Awardees, Please click this. [Complete Padma Awards List](#)

Reasoning Study Material Check it here

INDIAN AFFAIRS

Planning Commission renamed as “NITI Aayog”

Government of India has renamed Planning commission as **National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog**.

The renaming of the Planning Commission is being seen as the first step towards replacing it with a new-age institution. NITI Aayog will serve as a ‘**Think Tank**’ of the government. It will also provide governments at the central and state levels with relevant strategic and technical advice across the spectrum of key elements of policy formulation.

GOI blocks 32 websites for ISIS Propaganda and Anti-Indian views

The Government of India has blocked access to 32 websites for carrying anti-India views and spreading banned terrorist outfit **Islamic State of Iraq and Syria’s (ISIS)** propaganda following an advisory given by an **Anti Terrorism Squad (ATS)**.

GOI launched women safety mobile app – “Himmat”

The Government of India has launched an integrated women safety mobile app called **Himmat**. It is a mobile application of Delhi Police that will allow women to send a distress call to Police Control Room and their relatives in case of any emergency. It is an android based mobile app, which aims to cater employed women who have smart phones and travel alone late in the night. The app was launched by **Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh**.

Operation Smile – An Initiative to Trace Missing Children

As per the directions of the Ministry of Home Affairs, the **Cyberabad** (IT hub of Hyderabad) **Police** has launched a campaign called ‘**Operation Smile**’ to rescue the missing children. A total of 11 teams have been formed to perform the task.

Union Cabinet Approves 2G Spectrum Auction

The Union Cabinet of India has approved the largest ever telecom **second generation (2G) spectrum auction** that is targeted to fetch at least Rs.64,840 crore from the sale next month. The frequency includes 800 MHz, 900 MHz and 1800 MHz bands at a reserve price set by the Telecom Commission. The previous auction that took place in February 2014 had earned the Centre close to **Rs.62,162 crore**.

President signs the Ordinance to Amend Citizenship Act

Government of India promulgated an ordinance that seeks to merge **Person of Indian Origin** (PIO) and **Overseas Citizenship of India** (OCI) schemes. Now it is possible for the PIOs to get life-long Indian visa and it also give exemption from appearing before the local police station on every visit. The President Pranab Mukherjee has signed the Citizenship Ordinance.

Sales of loose Tobacco and Cigarettes Banned in Punjab

Punjab has become the first state to completely ban the sale of loose cigarettes (as single sticks) and other tobacco items. The ban had been issued as the loose sale is in violation of **Section 7 of the COTPA** (Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products, Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution Act, 2003).

India Assists Nepal to Control Goitre

Government of India has decided to assist **Nepal** to launch the Iodine Deficiency Disorder Control Programme (IDDCP) for **goitre control** across the country. GOI will provide 69 million rupees to control this disease, which causes swelling of the neck or larynx resulting from enlargement of the thyroid gland.

PM Narendra Modi Ji Inaugurates Dandi Kutir Museum

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated **Dandi Kutir museum** in **Gandhinagar** of **Gujarat**. Dandi Kutir is the a state-of-the-art museum of three-storeys, which is based on the life and works of our Father of Nation Mahatma Gandhi. Modi has inaugurated the museum on the occasion of the **13th Pravasi Bhartiya Divas (PBD)**.



Presidential Rule in Jammu and Kashmir

President rule was imposed in **Jammu and Kashmir** on the recommendation of the Governor of the state **N N Vohra**. The decision has been made as no political party took the charge to form the government in the state after the Legislative Assembly elections 2014.

India Celebrates National Youth Festival

The 19th **National Youth Festival** has begun in **Guwahati** (Assam) with the theme Youth for Clean, Green and Progressive India. The main aim of this festival is to spread national

integration and harmony. The five-day long Youth Festival coincides with the 152nd birth anniversary (January 12) of the True Spiritual Leader of India, Swami Vivekananda.

Mobile App for Safety of Women

A mobile app called “**m-Indicator**” was launched by the Union Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu for the safety of women passengers who are using Mumbai’s suburban trains. With the help of this app, the passengers can avail immediate help from the Railway Protection Force (RPF) while traveling.

India’s First CNG Train Flagged off in Haryana

Union Railway Minister **Suresh Prabhu** flagged off the country’s first **Compressed Natural Gas (CNG)** based two trains (**Rewari to Rohtak** and **Rewari to Bikaner** station) from Haryana’s Rewari station. This is a major milestone achieved by the Indian Railways. The train is powered by Diesel Electric Multiple Unit (DEMU), which is based on dual fuel system, i.e. diesel and CNG.

Flamingo Festival begins in Pulicat lake

The annual ‘**Flamingo Festival**’ began at **Sullurupeta** near the **Pulicat lake bird sanctuary** in Nellore district of **Andhra Pradesh**. The arrival of a large variety of migratory birds always held a special charm at Pulicat. The festival was being held every year to bring together the people and various Government departments in the task of preserving the Pulicat lake and surroundings.

PM launches National Programme for LED-based Home and Street Lighting for energy conservation

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched **National Programme for LED-based Home and Street Lighting** in New Delhi for energy conservation by reducing energy consumption. Along with this programme, PM launched scheme for Light Emitting Diode (LED) bulb distribution under the Domestic Efficient Lighting Programme (DELP) and a web-based system to enable consumers in Delhi to register requests for procuring LED bulbs under DELP.

Vibrant Gujarat Summit 2015

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the **VII Vibrant Gujarat Summit** (January 11 to January 13) in Mahatma Mandir, Gandhinagar, Gujarat. The inauguration ceremony was made special with the presence of United Nations General Secretary Ban Ki Moon and US State Secretary John Kerry. Ministers from Japan, Australia and Canada, Europe and many CEOs of top companies have attended the ceremony. This event is expected to bring in record investments to Gujarat.

Odisha's Sun Temple gets ASI's Adarsh Monument tag

Sun Temple at Konark, Odisha has been the coveted with Adarsh Monument tag by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). Along with Sun Temple, three other monuments of eastern India were given Adarsh Monument tag. They are Hazarduari Palace in Murshidabad district of West Bengal, Vaishali-Kolhua in Bihar, AND Rang Ghar in Sibsagar (Sivasagar) district of Assam.

GOI has commissioned India's first Hi-speed rural broadband network

Government of India has commissioned India's first Hi-speed rural broadband network using the National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) in the Idukki district of Kerala. The Hi-speed rural broadband network comes under the PM Narendra Modi's Digital India programme.

Buddha Heritage Walk

People from 11 countries chanted "Buddham Sharanam Gachchami" and walked through a 13 kilo meter long forest trail which Lord Gautama Buddha had once walked to reach Rajgir from Bodh Gaya around 2,543 years ago. This is the first-ever Buddha Heritage Walk introduced by the Bihar Tourism Development Corporation (BSTDC). More than 500 people were participated in this Heritage Walk in a very peaceful manner.

Union Government merges PIO and OCI cards

Union Government has merged Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) card-holders with Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) card-holders. Union Home Ministry in this regard has issued notification mentioning that all PIO card-holders henceforth are deemed to be OCI card-holders with effect from 9th January 2015.

Thus, withdrawing PIO cards with immediate an effect. Now only OCI cards facility with enhanced benefits will exist to provide maximum possible benefits to Indian Diaspora.

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley adopts four villages in Gujarat

Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley has adopted four villages in Vadodara district in Gujarat as part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana' for the Members of Parliament. The villages are Karnali, Pipaliya, Valida, and Baglipura.

International Kite Festival at Gujarat

The **International Kite Festival** is as one of the biggest festivals celebrated in the state of **Gujarat**. The festival is organized by state government and tourism department of the state. The festival is celebrated in many cities of Gujarat like **Ahmedabad, Surat, Vadodara, Rajkot, and Nadiad**.

India funds Nepal's Pancheshwar project to counter Kheri floods

Indian Government has decided to provide a fund of Rs 1500 crore to Nepal's **Pancheshwar multi-purpose project** on Mahakali river for countering the **Kheri floods in Uttar Pradesh**. This move of Union government comes after a delegation of MPs visited Nepal and had submitted their report to government.

India's Largest Solar PV Manufacturing Facility

Adani Enterprises and **Sun Edison Inc** signed an MoU to establish a **Joint Venture** to build the largest, vertically integrated **solar photovoltaic (PV) manufacturing facility in Mundra, Gujarat** with an investment of around \$4 billion. This joint venture will create 4500 direct jobs and more than 15,000 in-direct jobs. The facility will create enough solar panels to fuel substantial solar growth in India.

Censor Board Chief Leela Samson quits

The Censor Board chief **Leela Samson** has resigned from her post citing interference and corruption in the Information and Broadcasting Ministry. She resigned after the Film Certification Appellate Tribunal (FCAT) cleared the controversial film **Messenger of God**, a movie about Dera Saccha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh. Leela Samson had denied the clearance certificate to the film earlier.

Red Sari – a Controversial Book on Sonia Gandhi is out in India

A book about Sonia Gandhi's life by Spanish author named **Javier Moro – Red Sari** is now available in India. The book was published in Spanish with the title '**El Sari Rojo**' in 2008 and created much controversy with the chief lawyers of Congress. The Congress party ensured that this controversial biography of Sonia Gandhi was never available in Indian bookstores.

Jammu & Kashmir bags the National e-Governance Award

Jammu and Kashmir has won the **National e-Governance Award** for the best district-level initiative in India. The National e-Governance Award was institutionalized in the year 1997 and Jammu & Kashmir bags the award for the first time. The award is given for the project launched in 2013 called **e-Panchayat** for strengthening 147 panchayats in the state.



President launched Polio Immunization Program

President Pranab Mukherjee has launched **Pulse Polio Immunization programme** by administering polio drops to children at Rashtrapati Bhavan ahead of the National Immunization Day, which is on January 18. Children of less than five years age will be given polio drops on this day as a part of the Union Government's polio eradication programme. India was certified by WHO as '**polio free**' in 2014.

Indian Air Force gets LCA Tejas after 32 years

Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Project was launched in 1983 by the GOI. After 32 years, the first indigenously designed and built **Tejas LCA** was handed over to the Indian Air Force by the Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar. The Tejas LCAs are intended to replace the phased out Mig-21 Fighter jets.

IIT and ONGC signed an MoU to develop indigenous technologies to enhance oil exploration

Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) and the **Oil and Natural Gas Corporation** (ONGC) have signed a Memorandum of Collaboration to develop indigenous technologies to enhance oil exploration.

It was signed in the presence of the Union Minister of Human Resource Development Smriti Irani and the Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas Dharmendra Pradhan in New Delhi.

HRD Minister laid Foundation stone for IIM-Visakhapatnam

Union Human Resource Development Minister Smriti Irani laid the foundation stone for **IIM-Visakhapatnam at Gambheeram village of Andhra Pradesh** (AP) in the presence Urban Development Minister M Venkaiah Naidu and AP's Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu.

Kiran Bedi – BJP's Chief Minister Candidate in Delhi

Bharatiya Janata Party has announced that former IPS officer **Kiran Bedi** will be its chief ministerial candidate for the upcoming Delhi Legislative Assembly Elections, 2015. The announcement was made by BJP president Amit Shah. He also added Kiran Bedi will contest from the Krishna Nagar seat, BJP's traditional seat.



Probability of death by Non Communicable Diseases is high in India: WHO

The **World Health Organization** states that the probability of death from four main non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as **cancer, diabetes, heart and respiratory diseases in India is 26%.**

In 2014, 60 per cent of the 9,816,000 deaths were on account of NCDs. In South-East Asia, the number of deaths due to NCDs stands at 8.5 million and is expected to grow. WHO has suggested "simple lifestyle changes and diet modifications" to prevent the NCDs.

As per the report, the death toll due to NCDs would mount to 52 million in 2030 from 38 million in 2012.

Global Talent Competitive Index 2014

In a Global Talent Competitive Index, compiled by **INSEAD Business school**, India ranked **78th globally out of 93 countries.** The top 5 are Switzerland, followed by Singapore, Luxembourg, Denmark, and United States. INSEAD business school has partnered with Adecco and Human Capital Leadership Institute of Singapore (HCLI) to compile this index.

Modi's Jan Dhan Yojana entered into Guinness Records

Narendra Modi's **Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana** (PMJDY) has entered into **Guinness book of World Records** for most bank accounts opened in one week. In the financial inclusion campaign (23-29th of August 2014), a total of 18,096,130 bank accounts were opened. Till now 11.5 crore accounts have been opened under PMJDY in less than five months.

TRAI issues draft rules for full mobile number portability

The **Telecom Regulatory Authority of India** (TRAI) has issued draft regulations to facilitate full mobile number portability (MNP). In this regard, TRAI has issued draft amendment to the Telecommunication Mobile Number Portability Regulation, 2009. It will enable mobile subscribers to retain their numbers when they shift to other states or telecom service areas.

PM Narendra Modi Launches “Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao”

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Ji has launched the ambitious **Beti Bachao-Beti Padhao** (BBBP) campaign, which mainly aims to improve the **child sex ratio** and also to save & empower girl child. The scheme was launched from **Haryana**, which has the lowest Child Sex Ratio in country (879 girls per 1,000 boys). The national child sex ratio is 918 girls per 1000 boys.



The scheme will be implemented in 100 districts of the country and the Ministry of Women and Child Development is the nodal agency for the implementation of the scheme.

World Toilet Summit 2015

The **14th edition of the World Toilet Summit** organized by the World Toilet Organization was held in **New Delhi** (Jan 19 to Jan 20). The Summit had added an impetus to the Modi's quest of eradicating open defecation in India.

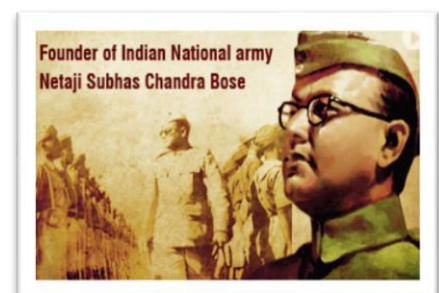
Special Secretary Devendra Chaudhary announced that the Ministry of Power will construct around 1,00,000 toilets in close to 60K government schools spread across India. Under the ambitious 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan' Modi has taken a personal agenda to build over 100 million toilets in India in next five years.

Zee Jaipur Literature Festival 2015

The **Jaipur Literature Festival**, famously referred as **Asia's biggest literary festival** has began at the Diggi Palace Hotel of Jaipur. It is an annual Literary festival taking place in Jaipur since 2006. The 2015 festival is the VIII edition and was inaugurated by the **Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundra Raje**.

India remembers Netaji on his birth anniversary

January 23 is the birth day of **Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose**, a veteran freedom fighter and the great son of India. He lived for the country and ultimately laid his life in the struggle to free India from the British Colonial rule. This year 2014 marks the 118th birth anniversary of Netaji.



India and US Sign a Joint Declaration in the field of ICTE

India and United States have signed a Joint Declaration of Intent for cooperation in the field of **Information & Communications Technology and Electronics (ICTE)**. The Joint Declaration was signed by the Secretary, Department of Electronics and IT RS Sharma, and the US Ambassador to India Richard Verma.

Shantha Kumar Panel submits report on FCI restructuring

The Government of India set up a **High Level committee** of eight members on restructuring the **Food Corporation of India (FCI)** on August 20, 2014. **Shanta Kumar**, the committee's Chairman submitted the report to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Key Recommendations

- Cutting down taxes levied on food grains (wheat and paddy) procured in the state from the present 14.5% to just 3%.
- Focusing on eastern states such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and Assam, where farmers sell their produce in distress.
- Revisiting the policy of minimum support price (MSP)
- Deregulating the fertilizer sector by directly transferring Rs 7,000 per hectare as subsidy to the farmers
- Outsourcing storage operations
- Converting FCI godowns into silos.
- Cash transfer to beneficiaries of PDS
- Movement of grain be done in containers instead of gunny bags.

India's first International Institute for Music

Kerala Culture Minister K C Joseph announced the setting up of **India's first International Institute of Music** in Kerala. The entire responsibility of setting up of the Institute has been entrusted with the Trust headed by **Sarod Maestro Ustad Amjad Ali Khan**. The state government will provide only land. The other infrastructure facilities will be built by a trust managed by Khan's family.

Kerala Government slaps Rs 54 crore fine on 4 Online Trading Companies

Kerala Commercial Taxes Department has slapped a fine of Rs 53.63 crore on online trading companies, ie **Vector e-commerce, Flipkart, Robemall Apparels and Jabong** for allegedly doing illegal business in the state. The fine was imposed by the intelligence wing of the Commercial Taxes Department. The companies have been penalized for evading taxes for the last two years.

The fine details are,

- Flipkart – Rs 47.15 crore
- Jabong – Rs.3.89 crore
- Vector e-commerce – Rs 2.23 crore
- Robemall Apparels – Rs 36 lakh

India and United States sign three MoUs on smart cities

India and **United States (US)** have signed three Memoranda of Understandings (MoUs) on building **smart cities**. These MoU's seeks to give an impetus to Indian government's flagship smart cities scheme, by building smart cities in

- Vishakapatnam in Andhra Pradesh.
- Ajmer in Rajasthan.
- Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh.

The 66th Republic Day of India

India celebrated its 66th Republic Day on January 26'2015.

US President Barack Obama was the Chief Guest of this day. It was the first time that the US President attended the Republic Day Function.

Theme for the 66th Republic Day Parade was **Nari Shakthi** which means Women Empowerment.

Wing Commander **Pooja Thakur** has become the first woman officer to lead the ceremonial Guard of Honour at Rashtrapathi Bhavan. On 25 January 2015, she led the ceremonial Guard of Honour which was inspected by the U.S. President Barack Obama at Rashtrapathi Bhavan.



Late Major **Mukund Varadarajan** and **Naik Neeraj Kumar Singh** were awarded posthumously the highest peacetime military honour, the **Ashok Chakra**, by President Pranab Mukherjee. The two army personnel laid down their lives while combating militants in Kashmir Valley.

India and the United States have signaled a "**new era**" in their relations and the leaders of both countries have signed a number of new deals. Obama has announced \$4 billion in government-backed investments and lending to India.

Cartoonist RK Laxman Passes away

R K Laxman, the iconic cartoonist of India and the creator of **Common Man** cartoon, passed away at age of 94 after suffering multi-organ failure. For more than five decades, every morning, his fans waited for the Common Man, who has represented the hopes, aspirations, troubles of the citizens of India.

Make in India: Suzuki to invest Rs.8,000 crore in Gujarat

Japan's automobile giant **Suzuki Motor Corporation** plans to invest Rs.8,000 crore in Gujarat by setting up three manufacturing units with a total capacity of 7,50,000 lakh vehicles annually.

The first plant will have an area of 640 acres and is scheduled to start production in mid of 2017. Total investment of this plant will be Rs 3,000 crore, and this will have an annual capacity of 250,000 units.



Supreme Court directs search engines to block sex determination advertisements

The Supreme Court of India has directed search engines like **Google India, Yahoo and Microsoft's Bing** to block advertisements on **sex determination** and strictly comply with the laws. This ruling was given by SC bench comprising Justice Dipak Misra and Prafulla C. Pant on public interest litigation (PIL) filed by Dr. Sabu Mathew George in 2008.

The PIL had highlighted that the use of Internet and popular search engines to promote sex determination technologies violates laws.

Himachal Pradesh has succeeded in reducing Poverty – World Bank

The World Bank has released a report named “**Scaling the Heights: Social inclusion and sustainable development**” on Himachal Pradesh.

The World Bank report appreciates the state for effectively balancing the economic growth with good human development outcomes and also for successfully reducing poverty four-fold in the last 15 years. The report notes that female child sex ratio, under-nutrition in children and an ageing population still remain issues of concern.

Founder of GNLF Subhash Ghisingh dies at 76

Hills Dictator Subhash Ghisingh, the founder of Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF), passed away on January 29'2015 at a hospital in New Delhi following prolonged illness. Ghisingh was a former Gorkha Rifles soldier and founded the GNLF in 1980.

India to build missile launch testing facility for DRDO in the Krishna Delta Complex

The **National Board for Wildlife** led by environment minister **Prakash Javadekar** gave approval to the **Defence Research and Development Organisation** (DRDO), to build a missile launch testing facility in **Krishna Delta Complex** of Andhra Pradesh.

The DRDO project seeks an area of around 155 hectares of forest land for setting up a test site, a technical facility, a road connecting the test and technical facility.

IMPORTANT APPOINTMENTS

New Chairman for Airports Authority of India

Government of India has appointed IAS officer **R K Srivastava** as the new chairman of Airports Authority of India (AAI). He is a 1984-batch Jharkhand-cadre IAS officer and he will succeed Sudheer Raheja.

Railway Board gets new Chairman

Government of India has appointed **A.K. Mittal** as Chairman of Railway Board. He will succeed incumbent chief Arunendra Kumar whose term had ended on 31st December 2014.

His name was cleared by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) headed by Prime Minister.

Arvind Panagariya appointed as NITI Aayog vice-chairman

Arvind Panagariya, eminent free-market economist has been appointed the first Vice Chairman of the newly-created National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog along with six members and three special invitees. The NITI Aayog will be headed by the Prime Minister, and comprises a vice-chairperson, besides full-time and part-time members. Bibek Debroy and VK Saraswat are full-time members.



Sindhushree Khullar Appointed New CEO of NITI Aayog

The Government of India has appointed **Sindhushree Khullar** as the first CEO of the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog. She was the former Planning Commission Secretary. Prime Minister Modi appointed economist Arvind Panagariya as NITI Aayog's Vice-Chairman. The Chairman post is held by the Prime Minister himself.

Aziz Qureshi sworn in as Governor of Mizoram

Aziz Qureshi has sworn-in as the **Governor of Mizoram**. The swearing-in ceremony was held at the Durbar Hall of the Raj Bhavan in Aizawl. It was attended by the Mizoram Chief Minister Lal Thanhawla and some of his cabinet colleagues.

Earlier Aziz Qureshi was governor of Uttarakhand. But in December 2014, he was transferred from Uttarakhand and was appointed as the Mizoram Governor.

A S Kiran Kumar – ISRO's New Secretary and Chief

The Government of India has appointed **AS Kiran Kumar** as the new secretary of the Dept of Space and also the Chairman of **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)**. He was the director of Satellite Application Centre and joined ISRO in 1975. He played a key role in India's Mars Orbiter Mission which entered the Martian orbit successfully.

Hari Shankar Brahma – New Chief Election Commissioner

President Pranab Mukherjee has appointed **Election Commissioner Hari Shankar Brahma** as the **Chief Election Commissioner (CEC)** of India, as the current CEC **V S Sampath** is getting retired on January 15, 2014. Brahma was 1975-batch IAS officer of Andhra Pradesh cadre and he hails from Assam.



Pahlaj Nihalani is new Censor Board Chairperson

Producer **Pahlaj Nihalani** has been appointed as the new chairperson of the **Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC)**. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting also appointed nine new members as a replacement of those members resigned with former chief Leela Samson. The new members include George Baker, BJP leader Vani Tripathi Tikoo, Mihir Bhuta and filmmakers Ashoke Pandit and Chandra Prakash Dwivedi.

Manjul Bhargava to lead Modi's teach in India programme

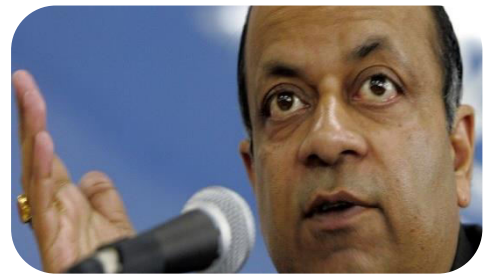
Indian origin Mathematics professor in US, **Manjul Bhargava** has consented for Narendra Modi's education project **Global Initiative for Academic Networks (GIAN)** programme to rope in eminent scholars and scientists abroad to teach students at IITs and central universities. Bhargava met HRD Minister Smriti Irani and agreed to 'recruit' scientists in the US and across the world to participate in the GIAN.

Sunil Sood – Vodafone's new India CEO

Sunil Sood, the current chief operating officer of **Vodafone** is now named as the new India CEO of the telecom giant. He will succeed Martin Pieters, a longest serving chief of any Indian telecom company (since 2009). Pieters is also referred as crusader for the telecom industry. The Vodafone India doubled the revenues and added more than 100 million customers during his leadership.

Indian diplomat Atul Khare named as UN Under Secretary-General for Field Support

Indian diplomat **Atul Khare** is named as **UN Under Secretary-General** for Field Support, Department of Field Support (DFS). It was announced by Secretary-General of United Nations Ban Ki-moon. He will succeed Bangladesh's **Ameerah Haq**. This appointment makes him as one of the highest ranking Indian officials in UN.



Prof Kaptan Singh Solanki sworn in as the Governor of Punjab

Haryana governor **Prof Kaptan Singh Solani** took over the additional charge of 34th Governor of Punjab. He was given the additional charge, as the tenure of Shivraj V Patil as Punjab governor ends. Solanki signed separate charge reports, both as Governor of Punjab and Administrator of Chandigarh (UT).

Divya Prakash Sinha appointed as Security Secretary

Divya Prakash Sinha has been appointed as the **Security Secretary** in the Union Cabinet Secretariat. The post had been lying vacant since November 2013. The post was previously held by Yashovardhan Azad, the current information commissioner. DP Sinha's appointment was approved by Appointments Committee of the Cabinet.

DP Sinha was a 1979 batch IPS officer of the Manipur-Tripura cadre. He has been with the IB for many years and handled operations in North-East and also in Delhi.

Durga Prasad appointed as Special Director General of CRPF

The Government of India has appointed **Durga Prasad** as the **Special Director General of Central Reserved Police Force** (CRPF). Durga Prasad was a 1981-batch IPS officer of Andhra Pradesh cadre and he served as Chief of Special Protection Group (SPG). As per the orders, he will be in office for next three years.

Kalyan Singh appointed takes oath as Himachal Pradesh Governor

Rajasthan Governor **Kalyan Singh** sworn in as the **Governor of Himachal Pradesh**. He has been given an additional charge of Himachal Pradesh as Urmila Singh completed her tenure as Himachal Pradesh's Governor. Kalyan Singh was the former Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. He is the 26th Governor of Himachal Pradesh.

Subrahmanyam Jaishankar takes charge as Foreign Secretary

Subrahmanyam Jaishankar assumed charge as the **30th Foreign Secretary of India**, replacing Sujatha Singh. Jaishankar is India's ambassador to the US. He was a 1977-batch IFS officer and with this new designation, he will serve for another two years.



Shekhar Sen appointed as new chairman of Sangeet Natak Akademi

The Ministry of Culture has appointed renowned musician and theater director **Shekhar Sen** as the **Chairman of Sangeet Natak Akademi**, India's leading institution for arts. He will be holding this post for the next five years. Shekhar Sen is very famous for his mono act musical plays such as 'Tulsi', 'Kabeer', 'Vivekananda', 'Sanmanti', 'Saahab' and 'Soordas', which have been highly acclaimed.

Hanumanthu Purushotham appointed as CMD of NRDC

Eminent scientist **Hanumanthu Purushotham** has been appointed as the new Chairman and Managing Director of **National Research Development Corporation** (NRDC). Previously Purushotham served as Head of Knowledge Management Centre of International Advanced Research Centre for Powder Metallurgy and New Materials (ARCI), Department of Science and Technology at Hyderabad.

New Appointment 2014 Capsule Download Now

Krishna Chaudhary appointed as Chief of ITBP

Senior IPS officer **Krishna Chaudhary** has been appointed as the Director General of border guarding force **Indo-Tibetan Border Police** (ITBP). He will succeed Subhas Goswami, who retired on December 31, 2014. Chaudhary was a 1979-batch Bihar cadre officer and he is currently the Director General of the Railway Protection Force. Chaudhary will be in office till June 2017.

Robert Mugabe appointed African Union Chairman

Zimbabwe's President **Robert Mugabe** has been appointed as the new Chairman of the **African Union**. Mugabe replaced Mauritania's **Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz**. In the meeting, Mugabe called the member countries to improve infrastructure and tackle climate change, conflict and Ebola, and with a familiar rallying cry that Africa's wealth belongs to Africa and not "imperialists and colonialists".

FINANCE AND BUSINESS

SEBI frames new Rules for Municipal Bonds

Market regulator **Security and Exchanges Board of India** (SEBI) framed a new set of rules for listing and trading of municipal bonds on stock exchanges. It will boost the centre's 'smart cities' initiative and also helps to channel the household investments into urban infrastructure development.

New MD and CEO for four Nationalised Banks

The **Department of Financial Services** (DFS) has appointed the Managing Directors (MD) and Chief Executive Officers (CEO) of four Nationalised Banks.

- Bank of India Executive Director **R Koteeswaran** was appointed as MD and CEO of Indian Overseas Bank (IOB).
- Bank of India Executive Director **Animesh Chauhan** was appointed as MD and CEO of Oriental Bank of Commerce (OBC).
- Punjab & Sind Bank Executive Director **Kishore Kumar Sansi** was appointed as MD and CEO of Vijaya Bank.
- Bank of Baroda Executive Director **P. Srinivas** was appointed as the MD and CEO of United Bank of India.

Union Government signs \$ 75 million loan deal with ADB

The Government of India has signed an agreement with Asian Development Bank (ADB) for \$75 million loan to improve water resource management in three towns of Karnataka namely, Byadagi, Davanagere and Harihar in the Upper Tungabhadra sub-basin. The project is named as Karnataka Integrated Urban Water Management Investment Program (KIUWMIP).

RBI and US banking regulators signs an information sharing agreement

The RBI has signed an information sharing agreement with US banking regulators for better coordination with them in supervising financial institutions.

Earlier on December 9, 2014, RBI had concluded a Statement of Co-operation (SoC) on Supervisory Cooperation and Exchange of Supervisory Information with the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System (FRB), Office of the Comptroller of Currency (OCC) and Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC).

ICICI Bank Launches Digital Village Project in Gujarat

The Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India (ICICI) Bank has launched its own version of Digital Village Project by adopting entire Akodara Village in Sabarkantha district of Gujarat. This project will provide services ranging from cashless banking to digitised school teaching.

RBI Relaxes the KYC norms for NBFCs

India's Central Banking Institution, The Reserve Bank of India has relaxed the Know Your Customer (KYC) norms for existing clients of Non-Banking Finance Companies (NBFCs) based on risk their profile. The rules have been eased due to practical difficulties and constraints in getting KYC documents at frequent intervals.

Contactless Debit and Credit Cards – Launched by ICICI Bank

India's largest private sector bank, the ICICI Bank has launched country's first 'contact less' debit and credit cards, that would work on the Near-Field Communication (NFC) technology. The NFC technology enables the customers to make electronic payments by waving the cards near a merchant terminal instead of swiping the cards. Another advantage of this card is, it reduces the time to a great extent and also improves the security features.

Kotak Mahindra & ING Vysya Merger gets Shareholders Approval

Shareholders of Mumbai based private sector **Kotak Mahindra Bank** approved the merger with **ING Vysya Bank** with a share exchange ratio of 725:1000. Now Kotak Mahindra Bank is the fourth-largest private sector bank in India. ING Vysya Bank's shareholders, too, had approved the merger proposal.

RBI cuts Repo Rate by 25 basis points

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) reduced the repo rate by **25 basis points** from 8.0% to 7.75% with immediate effect. The Cash Reserve Ratio has been kept unchanged at 4%. Subsequently the reduction in the repo rate made the reverse repo rate adjust to 6.75% and the marginal standing facility rate and Bank Rate to 8.75%.

HDFC bank among the World's 50 Most valued Lenders

HDFC Bank is the only **Indian bank** among the world's **50 most valued lenders** in 2014 with a market capitalization (M-Cap) of \$41 billion. The State Bank of India (SBI) has been ranked at 51st position with M-Cap of \$36.40 billion and ICICI Bank is at 55th position with M-Cap of \$33.42 billion.

India to upstage China's growth rate by 2016: IMF

According to the **International Monetary Fund**, India is expected to grow at **6.3% in 2015** and 6.5% in 2016, crossing China's projected growth rate. The main reason IMF quoting was promising government's reforms.

In 2014, India's growth rate was 5.8% against China's 7.4%, as per the World Economic Report update released by the IMF. In 2013 however, India's growth rate was 5% against China's 7.8%.

The report also added that there will be a boost in global growth as the oil prices are getting lower. Global growth in 2015- 16 has been estimated at 3.5 and 3.7 per cent.

India's Growth to rise 6.3% in 2016: UN WESP Report

The **UN World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP)** 2015 report states that India's growth in terms of GDP is expected to reach **5.9% in 2015 and 6.3% in 2016** due to the key reforms announced by the new government

SBI signs €100 million loan pact with European Investment Bank

India's largest public sector bank, the State Bank of India (SBI) has signed a loan agreement for €100 million with the European Investment Bank (EIB) to support the private sector's development in India — in particular small and medium-sized enterprises, social and economic infrastructure as well as climate change mitigation and adaptation.



RBI signs an information sharing agreement with Brazil's Central Bank

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has signed an MoU on Supervisory Cooperation and Exchange of Supervisory Information with Brazil's Central Bank- Banco Central do Brasil (BCB).

This MoU was signed by Anthero de Moraes Meirelles, Deputy Governor for Supervision, BCB and S.S. Mundra, Deputy Governor, Reserve Bank of India.

RBI modified procedure for External Commercial Borrowings Policy

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) gave more power to banks to restructure external commercial borrowings (ECBs) of companies. RBI has allowed the banks,

- To modify the draw-down and repayment schedules of the ECBs.
- To change the ECB loan from one company to another in case of re-organization or merger.
- To reduce the amount of ECB along with any changes in draw-down and repayment schedules.

India's FDI increased by 26% in 2014: UNCTAD

According to the Global Investment Trend Monitor Report released by United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the FDI flows to India increased by 26% in 2014 to an estimated US\$ 35 billion, with maximum growth in services sector especially in electricity, gas, water, waste management and information and communication.

The report points out that the Global Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows declined by 8% in 2014 to an estimated 1.26 trillion US dollars due to the fragility of the global economy, political uncertainty and geopolitical risks.

RBI sets up High Powered Committee on Urban Co-operative Banks

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has constituted a **High Powered Committee** (HPC) to re-examine and recommend appropriate set of businesses, size, conversion and licensing terms for the Urban Cooperative Banking (UCB) Sector. The HPC is headed by RBI Deputy Governor **R Gandhi**. The committee will look into the lines of businesses that can be permitted for UCBs and the necessary benchmarks in terms of size of business, capital requirement, regulatory regime, etc.

Base year change pushed GDP Growth

The **Central Statistics Office** (CSO) has come out with a new series of national accounts with 2011-12 as base year for computing economic growth rate. The economic growth rate revised upwards to **6.9% for 2013-14**, as against 4.7% estimated earlier, after the government updated the base year for measuring national accounts. (Previously the GDP was computed on 2004-05 base year).

The base year was last revised in January 2010 and goes under revision every five years. Similarly, the economic growth rate for **2012-13** has been revised upwards to **5.1%** from earlier estimate of 4.5%. The previous estimates had put economic growth rate at sub-5% level for the past two years.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

J Y Pillay reappointed as advisor to Singapore President

Indian-origin **J Y Pillay** was re-appointed as the top advisor to **Singapore's President Tony Tan Keng Yam**. The 80-year-old Pillay was sworn in and re-appointed as the Chairman of the Presidential Council of Advisers (CPA) for a period of four years.

Mr Pillay was first appointed to the CPA on Jan 2, 2001. He has served as Chairman of the CPA since Sep 2, 2005. As Chairman of the CPA, Pillay will exercise the functions of the President's office in the absence of President.

Sri Lankan Elections – Rajapaksa concedes defeat

In 2015 Presidential election at Sri Lanka, **President Mahinda Rajapaksa** conceded defeat to his opposition challenger **Maithripala Sirisena** of United National Party after a bitterly fought presidential election. Rajapaksha have been ruling Sri Lanka for a decade.



According to the critics, Rajapaksha's government had become increasingly authoritarian and marred by nepotism and corruption.

World's Safest Airlines – Qantas of Australia

AirlineRatings.com has released the ranking of the World's safest airlines and also the budget carriers. The ranking was based on specific safety criteria and out of 449 airlines, Qantas Airlines of Australia ranked first. Qantas has a fatality-free record in the jet era. The Australian Airlines claimed the top spot for the second consecutive time.

Other Safe Airlines in the top 10 were Air New Zealand, British Airways, Cathay Pacific, Emirates. etc. Etihad Airways, the national airline of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), was recognized as one of the top 10 safest airlines in the world.

Presidential Election in Croatia

Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic has won the Presidential election of Croatia and she became the first woman to hold this post in the country. She secured 50.5% of the vote with and her opponent Ivo Josipovic had secured 49.5% of the votes.

Ms Grabar-Kitarovic belongs to Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), which played a major role in pushing the country towards independence from the former Yugoslavia in 1991. She was a former Foreign Minister and also served as Assistant to the NATO Secretary General.

Deep Kumar Upadhyay – Nepal's Ambassador to India

Nepal Government named Nepali Congress leader Deep Kumar Upadhyay as Nepal's new ambassador to India. This post has been lying vacant for more than three years. Rukma Shukshere Rana, Nepali Congress leader, held this post lastly in August 2011. Deep Kumar Upadhyay hails from Kapilvastu district in southern Nepal.

Britain and US join hands to counter Cyber Threats

The US President Barack Obama and UK Prime Minister David Cameron announced joint measures in combating cyber threats in the bilateral summit held in Washington DC. The "cyber-agents" of both countries are going to join forces to protect the UK's biggest banks, transport systems and energy supplies. A new joint cyber task force will be created for better threat information sharing.

Mali declared free of Ebola

The government of **Mali** and the United Nations have declared the nation **free of Ebola** following a 42-day period without a new case of the deadly virus. A total of 7 people have died in Mali in the past one year outbreak of the deadly Ebola virus.



To be declared as Ebola-free, a country should report no new cases for 42 days. According to World Health Organization (WHO) report, Ebola has killed more than 8,400 people, mostly in **Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia**.

Pakistan bans Jamaat-ud-Dawa and Haqqani network

Due to the pressure from the US, Pakistan has banned the **Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD)** and the **Haqqani network**. The Ministry has also banned groups like Harkat-ul-Jihad Islami, Falah-i-Insaniat Foundation, Haji Khairullah Hajji Sattar Money Exchange, Rahat Limited, Al Akhtar Trust.. etc.

The Haqqani Network was indulged in heinous attacks on the US-led foreign forces in Afghanistan. The network was founded by Jalaluddin Haqqani and was designated as a terrorist organization by the US in September 2012.

Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz passes away

Saudi Arabia's King **Abdullah bin Abdulaziz** has passed away on Friday (23rd of January, 2015). Abdullah's brother **Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud** will be his successor and the new King of the World's largest Oil exporter.

Salman has named his half-brother Muqrin as the new crown prince and his heir. Abdullah spent almost a decade on the throne. He came to the throne in 2005.

World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2015

The World Economic Forum annual meeting for 2015 is being conducted in **Davos, Switzerland**. From India, Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley led a team comprising Power Minister Piyush Goyal, Industry Secretary Amitabh Kant, Chief Ministers of Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh, and Chief Economic Adviser Arvind Subramanian.

EU lifts ban on Import of Mangoes from India

The **European Union** has lifted the ban imposed on the import of India's **Alphonso mangoes**. The ban was imposed seven months back due to the presence of fruit flies in the consignments. Still the ban on imports of **bitter gourd, brinjal, snake gourd and taro** remains as it is. As the ban is lifted, the price of the mangoes may rise for local consumers, as the exports will reduce the availability in the Indian market.

Yemeni government resigns in protest at Houthi rebellion

The President of Yemen **Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi** resigned after the **Houthi rebels** battled their way into his presidential palace. The takeover by Houthi rebels pushes the country into a new phase of instability. **Prime Minister Khaled Bahah** and the entire cabinet quit their posts a day after the Rebels announced the President had yielded to their demands for a much greater power sharing in Yemen's political affairs.

Yingluck Shinawatra banned from Thai politics

In a secret vote, **Thailand's** military-stacked parliament has impeached former **Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra** from politics and proceeded with criminal charges that could lead to her serving 10 years in jail. She was impeached for her corruption in a scheme she oversaw to subsidize rice farmers.



UN committee appoints Saraswathy Menon in peace-building panel

United Nations Chief **Ban Ki-moon** has appointed Indian sociologist **Saraswathi Menon** in a peace building panel of seven members. Ms. Menon has a doctorate in sociology from Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi. She was a lecturer at Madras University.

Miss Columbia crowned Miss Universe

Miss Colombia Paulina Vega has been crowned **Miss Universe**, beating out contestants from more than 80 other countries. Miss Ukraine Diana Harkusha was named a runner-up, along with Miss USA Nia Sanchez from Las Vegas. As Miss Universe, Paulina Vega will receive an undisclosed sum of money as salary, a beautiful and luxury apartment in New York, a wardrobe and oodles of beauty products, and a one-year scholarship from the New York Film Academy.



Edwar Lugu is Zambia's new President

Edwar Lugu of Patriotic Front sworn in as the new President of Zambia. He secured 48.3% of the ballot in Zambia's 150 constituencies. His opponent Hakainde Hichilema of United Party for National Development received about 46.7% of the votes.

Mr. Lungu headed both the Justice and Defense Ministries in the previous government. He will serve out the remainder of President Michael Sata's (died on October 2014) term until new elections in the fall of 2016.

V General Assembly of IRENA

The V General Assembly of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) has begun in Abu Dhabi. Nearly 1,000 international participants from 171 IRENA member countries attended the Assembly.

The meeting seeks to address global issues like enhancing the share of renewable energy in the overall energy mix and to tackle global challenges like climate change, energy access and energy security.

New Trade and Travel relation between US and Cuba

The US and Cuba have come into effect in the biggest policy Changes between the two countries in more than 50 years. Measures include allowing US citizens to use credit cards in Cuba and for US businesses to export latest technologies.

Americans will be able to take home up to \$100 (£66) in alcohol and tobacco from Cuba. The move implements last month's agreement to re-establish ties severed since 1961.

Italy's President Giorgio Napolitano Resigns

Giorgio Napolitano, Italy's longest-serving president, resigned on 14 Jan, creating a challenge for Prime Minister Matteo Renzi's plans to overhaul the nation's economy and political system.

The 89-year-old Napolitano, widely respected outside Italy as a guarantor of stability during the euro zone crisis, had always been expected to step down before the end of his second term in office because of his advanced age.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Narendra Modi inaugurates 102nd Indian Science Congress 2015

PM Narendra Modi Ji has inaugurated the **102nd edition of Indian Science Congress 2015** at the **Mumbai University**. The theme for this year event is Science and Technology for Human Development. The main aim of this session is to bring together eminent scientists and research scholars to popularize science and foster a scientific temperament.

More than 12 thousand delegates around the globe are going to participate in the session. The congress session edition will cover a wide range of topics like Agriculture and forestry, veterinary science, earth science, environment, engineering, information & communication, computer sciences, mathematics, medicine, biology, physics and plant sciences.

DRDO successfully tests advance EW suite in Tejas-PV1 Aircraft

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully tested an advanced **electronic warfare (EW) suite**. It was tested onboard of the country's Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas-PV1. It is developed by Defence Avionics Research Establishment (DARE) of DRDO. EW suite consists of Radar Warner and Jammer. This suit gives pilot an additional capability of nullifying the effect of detected radar threat by appropriate mode of jamming.

Government gives nod to the Neutrino Observatory

The Government of India has approved the setting up of India-based **Neutrino Observatory** (INO) in Theni district of Tamil Nadu. The estimated cost of the project is Rs.1500 crore and it aims at building a world class underground laboratory mainly to study about the properties of neutrinos, which are subatomic particles produced by the decay of radioactive elements.

The project will be jointly supported by the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) and the Department of Science and Technology (DST). The Neutrino project involves building an underground laboratory with a rock cover of approximately 1200 metres. A giant 50,000 tonne magnetized iron calorimeter (ICAL) detector will be kept under the laboratory.

The Unstoppable Kepler discovered more than 1000 planets

NASA's Kepler spacecraft has discovered more than **1,000 alien planets** since it's launch in March 2009. Kepler has found more than half of all known exoplanets to date. The telescope has also spotted 3,200 additional planet candidates.

Two of the newly validated planets are named as **Kepler-438b** and **Kepler-442b**. The former one is 475 light-years away and it is 12 per cent bigger than Earth, while the later one is 1,100 light-years away and it is 33 per cent bigger than Earth.

Union Government launches monitoring system for skill development scheme

Union Government has launched **Management Information System (MIS)** to check progress and implementation of **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana (DAY)** scheme in different states. MIS aims to track real time progress on skill development and enhancing livelihood opportunities for urban poor under DAY scheme. It was launched by Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (HUPA) Minister M Venkaiah Naidu.

Beagle 2 Spacecraft found after 11 years

Beagle 2 is a British Spacecraft launched in 2003 by the European Space Agency and it successfully landed on Mars. But Beagle 2 failed to deploy its solar plates. Without these plates, it is not possible to communicate with the Spacecraft from Earth. It was a mystery for these many years. Scientists supposed that the spacecraft had been destroyed in a high-velocity impact during landing.



NASA's **Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter (MRO)** discovered the spacecraft with its HiRISE camera capable of taking high resolution images.

US tech giant Apple reports largest quarterly profit in history

US technology giant Apple, has reported the biggest quarterly profit of 18 billion US dollar. It is the biggest quarterly profit ever made by any public company in World and broke the previous record of ExxonMobil which had earlier topped by making \$15.9 billion profit in 2012.

Apple's revenue had grown to \$74.6 billion in 2014 from \$57.6 billion in 2013 i.e. reporting 30% increase in profit. The main reason for Apple's profit is record sale of iPhones. The company has sold 74.5 million iPhones in quarter ending December 2014 with 39.9% profit per product.

A Mega star with five size planets discovered by astronomers

Astronomers have discovered a star that is 11.2 billion years old and has at least five Earth-size planets. It was discovered by team of astronomer's after analyzing data from NASA's planet-hunting Kepler spacecraft for over four years.

This star is named as Kepler-444. It is 25 percent smaller than our Sun and is 117 light years from Earth. This star has five known planets which have sizes that fall between Mercury and Venus.

Microsoft unveils virtual assistant Cortana for Windows handsets

Microsoft has unveiled virtual assistant called **Cortana** for Windows Phone handsets. Cortana is female voice-controlled application. It uses Microsoft's search engine Bing and data stored on the handsets to make personalized recommendations and carry out tasks. It is named after AI system in the firm's Halo video game franchise.

India's Pride Agni-5 Successfully Test Fired

India successfully test-fired **Agni-5** from **Wheeler's Island** off Odisha coast. Agni-5 is indigenously developed, intercontinental surface-to-surface nuclear capable ballistic missile. The strike range of Agni-5 is more than **5000 kms** and it is capable of carrying nuclear warhead of over one tonne. Agni-5 is about 17 meters long, 2 metres wide and has a launch weight of 50 tonnes.

Unlike other missiles of Agni series, 'Agni-V' is incorporated with advanced technologies such as high accuracy Ring Laser Gyro based Inertial Navigation System, the most modern and accurate Micro Navigation System, a high speed on-board computer, fault tolerant software, etc. After few more trials, Agni-5 will be inducted into the services.

SPORTS

Andy Murray wins ATP World Tennis Championship

Andy Murray won his first title of 2015 after **Novak Djokovic** withdrew from the Mubadala World Tennis Championship final in Abu Dhabi because of illness. Djokovic, the world number one, said he was unfit to play ahead of the final of the exhibition event.



Chennai Open Tennis Title Winners

Switzerland's **Stanislas Wawrinka** won the **Chennai Open title of tennis** by defeating the Slovenian qualifier Aljaz Bedene 6-3, 6-4. This was second consecutive ATP Chennai Open title for Wawrinka and third time since 2011. With this win, Wawrinka won 73400 US dollar and earned 250 ranking points.

One Thousand Wins and still Counting – Roger Federer

Roger Federer secured his 1,000th career victory and collected his 83rd title in the Brisbane International final. He defeated Milos Raonic of Canada 6-4, 6-7 (2), 6-4. Only retired legends Jimmy Connors (1,253 wins) and Ivan Lendl (1,071 wins) have won more than 1,000 matches on the men's tour.

Indian Swimmer Bhakti Sharma sets World Record

Bhakti Sharma has set a world record in swimming by crossing 1.4 miles in 52 minutes in one degree temperature at Antarctic Ocean. Bhakti Sharma is now the youngest person in the world to achieve this record and also she is the first Asian to do so.

Bhakti Sharma is recipient of Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award in 2010. She has been practicing open water swimming for the last 10 years. She has swum in all the five oceans of the world.



Stephen Constantine – Indian Football team's New Head Coach

Englishman Stephen Constantine was appointed as head coach of Indian men's football team for the second time. The All India Football Federation (AIFF) has confirmed the appointment of Constantine as the Head Coach of the Senior Men's National Team of India and he will also be in charge of the India U-23 National Team.

Constantine coached India from 2002 to 2005. Under Constantine, the Indian National Team won the LG Cup 2002 held in Vietnam. Before Constantine, Indian team was under Dutchman Wim Koevoorts.

Sania Mirza and Bethanie Mattek-Sands win Sydney Doubles Title

Indian Tennis Star Sania Mirza and America's Bethanie Mattek-Sands Combo defeated Americans Abigail Spears and Raquel Kops-Jones 6-3, 6-3 to win the women's doubles title of the Sydney International tennis tournament. It was Sania's first doubles title of the season and 23rd of her career. This is the fifth victory for this pair and it will definitely boost their confidence ahead of the Australian Open.

Pankaj Advani wins 7th National Billiards Title

India's star cueist and 12-time world champion, Pankaj Advani lifted his seventh national billiards title by defeating Dhruv Sitwala at the National Billiards Championship. On

September 2014, Pankaj Advani announced his retirement from Snooker and decided to focus on Billiards.

Chk this link to know the → [Difference Between Billiards and Snooker](#).

AB de Villiers of South Africa smashed the Fastest ODI Century

The earlier record of fastest century in ODI was Corey Anderson South Africa batsman **AB de Villiers** hit a century from just 31 balls and created a new world record of fastest one-day international ton. He achieved this record against West Indies. His final score in the match was 149 runs in 44 balls, including 16 sixes and 9 fours.

Anderson's ton from 36 balls. West Indies Player **Chris Gayle's** 100 from 30 balls in the IPL is the fastest century in cricket history.

Saina Nehwal wins Syed Modi Grand Prix Gold championship

Saina Nehwal defeated world champion **Carolina Marin of Spain** and retained the women's singles title at **Syed Modi Grand Prix Gold championship** held at Lucknow. The Championship was named after eight-time National Badminton champion Syed Modi.



India to host Twenty20 World Cup 2016

The International Cricket Council (ICC) Chairman, Narayanaswami Srinivasan has announced that, **India** will be hosting the ICC Twenty20 World Cup in 2016 (11th March to 3rd April). Ireland and Scotland will host the qualifiers between July 6 to July 26' 2015. The other announcements include,

- **England** – 2019 World Cup, 2017 Champions Trophy and 2017 Women's World Cup.
- **Bangladesh** – 2016 Under-19 World Cup and 2019 World Cup qualifiers
- **New Zealand** – 2018 Under-19 World Cup
- **West Indies** – 2018 Women's World Twenty20

Paul van Ass named India Men's Hockey team Coach

Former Dutch national coach **Paul van Ass** has been named as the new coach of the Indian men's hockey team. New Zealand's **Anthony Thornton** was named as the coach of the women's hockey team. Both of them have been awarded a three-year contract till 2018. They will be replacing **Walsh and Hawgood**.

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Serena Williams wins VI Australian Open Singles Women's Title

Serena Williams won her 19th Grand Slam title, continued her unbeaten run in six Australian Open finals and extended her decade-long domination of Maria Sharapova with a commanding 6-3, 7-6 (5) win on Saturday night 31 Jan 2015. She never lost the title when she enter into semifinal and won the title after 4 years long gap.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

Name of the Book: Taj Mahal OR Mummy Mahal: A secret that hide by Shah Jahan
Author: Afsar Ahmed

Name of the Book: The Indian Parliament – A Critical Appraisal
Author: Sudha Pai and Avinash Kumar

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Name of the Book: Neither a Hawk nor a Dove
Author: Khurshid Mahmood Kasuri

Name of the Book: The Red Sari
Author: Javier Moro

OBSERVED DAYS

January 09

Remembered Day: Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (NRI Day)

Organized: India

Purpose: To Mark the contribution of the overseas Indian community to the development of India. The day commemorates the return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa in Bombay on 9 January 1915.

January 10

Remembered Day: World Hindi Day

Organized: India – Ministry of External Affairs

January 12**Remembered Day:** National Youth Day**Organized:** India**Purpose:** To Mark birth anniversary of social reformer, philosopher and thinker Swami Vivekananda**January 15****Remembered Day:** 67th Army Day**Organized:** India**Purpose:** Our Lieutenant General K.M Cariappa take over as the first Commander-in-chief of the Indian Army from Francis Butcher, the last British Commander-in-Chief of India.**January 18****Remembered Day:** National Immunization Day (Polio Day)**Organized:** India**Purpose:** Focusing national efforts on promoting and crying out specific immunization campaigns, such as that for Poliomyelitis.**January 23****Remembered Day:** 118th Birth Anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose / National Day of Patriotism / Desh Prem Divas**Organized:** India**January 24****Remembered Day:** National Girl Child Day**Organized:** India**Purpose:** The National Girl Child Day is celebrated to increase the awareness among people about all the inequalities faced by the girl child in the society.**Theme:** Adolescent Girls: Issues and Challenges**January 25****Remembered Day:** National Voters Day**Organized:** India**Purpose:** To encourage young voters to take part in political process & to mark the Election Commission's foundation day.**2014 Theme:** Easy Registration, Easy Correction**Remembered Day:** National Tourism Day**Organized:** India**Purpose:** To aimed at increase awareness about tourism through a range of activities.

January 26**Remembered Day:** 66th Republic Day**Organized:** India**Purpose:** Honors the date on which the constitution of India came into force on 26 January 1950 replacing the Government of India Act(1935) as the governing document of India.**2014 Theme:** Women Empowerment (Nari Shakti)**Remembered Day:** 63rd International Customs Day (ICD)**Organized:** World Customs Organization**Purpose:** To Recognizes the role of custom officials and agencies in maintaining border Security.**2014 Theme:** Coordinated border management – An inclusive approach for connecting stakeholders**January 27****Remembered Day:** International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust**Organized:** UN**Purpose:** To Remembers the Holocaust that affected many people of Jewish origin during World War II**2014 Theme:** Liberty, Life and the Legacy of the Holocaust Survivors**January 28****Remembered Day:** 150th Birth Anniversary Lala Lajpat Rai**Organized:** India**Purpose:** Born in 1865, Lala Lajpat Rai Played a pivotal role in India's fight for independence and was popularly known as "Punjab Kesari"(Lion of Punjab). He died on October 30 1928.

OBSERVED DAYS December 2014

January 30**Remembered Day:** 67th Death Anniversary Mahatma Gandhi (Martyrs' / Sarvodaya Day)**Organized:** India**Purpose:** Martyrs day was required to salute the martyrdom of soldiers also, who lost their lives defending the sovereignty of the nation.**Remembered Day:** National Cleanliness Day**Organized:** India**Purpose:** To maintain high standards of cleanliness in our homes, work place, road/streets and public places.

Important Weeks Observed on January

January 4th to 10th - Oil Conservation Week

January 10th to 16th - Road Safety Week

January 15th to 21st - Pin Code Week

Dear Readers and Aspirants,

I hope the January issue of Current Affairs capsule provided you with a great deal of information. AffairsCloud.com is a site maintained by Aspirants like you. We strive to continuously offer superior and valuable content to you. Affairscloud.com is the culmination of our dream, which serves as a one point stop for all aspirants aiming to serve our nation. We, a small group of people, work hard to present a wide variety of useful information in a concise and clear way. To take this initiative to the next level, we want to join hands with you. If you have good quality information, tips, question sets that you would like to share with fellow aspirants, please use this website as a platform to reach out.

Any content, however small, will definitely benefit a huge set of people like you. There are several thousands of us. I believe that, if we all help each other, we can dream a better future for us and for our nation.

Let us realize our dreams.

Let our small initiative manifest as 'OUR' big initiative.

If you would like to contribute, please contact us at Arunsathyan.r@affairscloud.com and SenDhil@affairscloud.com

Regards,
AffairsCloud Team.

GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR EXAMS!!!

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