

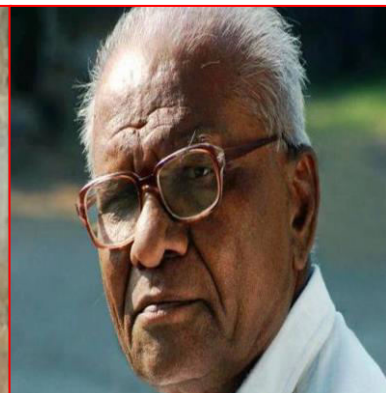
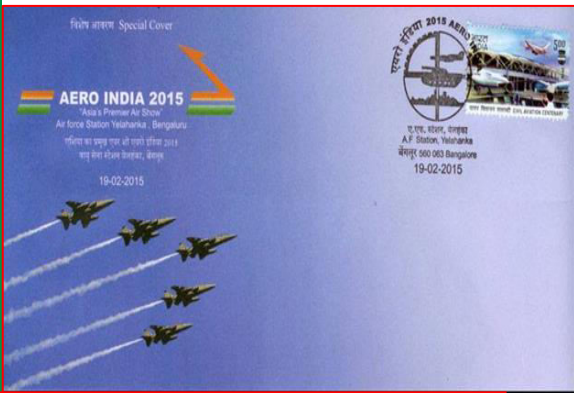
Affairs Cloud

Learn and Lead.

Current Affairs PDF Capsule February 2015

Published By www.AffairsCloud.com

Look Inside



AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

Nasrin Ejner: Presented with Bharat Gaurav award by the Indian International Friendship Society

Social worker, Nasrin Ejner has been presented with the Bharat Gaurav award by the Indian International Friendship Society (IIIFS). The award was given to her on January 16, 2015 for tirelessly working towards strengthening the ties between India and Kuwait, for many years now.

The International Friendship Society has been presenting the Bharat Gaurav Award to the NRIs for their contribution in social work. It was started in 1977.

Vinod Mehta conferred with Yash Bharti Award by the government of Uttar Pradesh

The acclaimed Journalist Vinod Mehta on February 9, 2015 was awarded the Yash Bharti Samman 2015 by the government of Uttar Pradesh. The award was given by the Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav to Mehta's family as he could not attend the function due to a medical problem. This award is given by the UP government for excellence in literature, fine arts, folks, sports and classical music.

60th Filmfare Awards – An Overview

The Filmfare Awards are presented annually by The Times Group to honour the professionals in the Hindi film industry of India. It is one of the oldest and most prominent film events in India since 1954. The Clares was the original name of the award ceremony, named after The Times of India critic Clare Mendonca. The winners of the 60th Filmfare Awards are ..

Best Actor (Male)	Shahid Kapoor for Haider
Best Actor (Female)	Kangana Ranaut for Queen
Best Film	Queen
Best Director	Vikas Bahl for Queen
Best Film (Critics)	Ankhon Dekhi
Best Actor (Critics)	Sanjay Mishra for Ankhon Dekhi
Best Actress (Critics)	Alia Bhatt for Highway
Best Supporting Actor (Male)	Kay Kay Menon for Haider
Best Supporting Actor (Female)	Tabu for Haider
Best Story	Rajat Kapoor for Ankhon Dekhi
Best Dialogue	Rajkumar Hirani and Abhijat Joshi for PK
Best Screenplay	Rajkumar Hirani and Abhijat Joshi for PK

Best Debutant (Female)	Kriti Sanon for Heropanti
Best Debutant(Male)	Fawad Khan for Khoobsurat
Best Music Director	Shankar-Ehsaan-Loy for 2 States
Best Lyrics	Rashmi Singh for Muskurane Ki Wajah(CityLights)
Best Playback Singer (Male)	Ankit Tiwari for Galliyan (Ek Villain)
Best Playback Singer (Female)	Kanika Kapoor for Baby Doll(Ragini MMS 2)
Best Choreography	Ahmed Khan for Jumme Ki Raat for Kick
Best Action	Sham Kaushal for Gunday
Best Cinematography	Bobby Singh and Siddharth Diwan for Queen
Best Background Score	Amit Trivedi for Queen
Best Editing	Abhijit Kokate and Anurag Kashyap for Queen
Best Production Design	Subrata Chakraborty and Amit Ray for Haider
Best Sound Design	Anilkumar Konakandla and Prabal Pradhan for Mardaani

Dr. Zakir Naik wins King Faisal International Award 2015

Indian Islamic scholar, **Dr Zakir A.Naik**, has won the Saudi Arabia's "**King Faisal Award 2015**" for his services to **Islam**. He is an international preacher of Islam.

The award comprises a prize amount of 7.5 Lakh Saudi Riyal. Along with him four others were chosen for the prestigious award for their services to Islam.

Venue: Riyadh

Hindol Sengupta's book Shortlisted for Hayek Prize

Indian Journalist-writer **Hindol Sengupta's** book has been shortlisted for the United States' prestigious Hayek Prize. Sengupta's *Recasting India: How Entrepreneurship is Revolutionizing the World's Largest Democracy* is the only book from an Indian among the six books in race for the \$50,000 prize awarded by the Manhattan Institute. The book was published by **Palgrave Macmillan Trade** and it encapsulates the real stories of extraordinary enterprise of common people. The winner will be announced in late February.

Marathi writer Bhalchandra Nemade chosen for Jnanpith Award

Famous Marathi Novelist **Bhalchandra Nemade** has been selected for **2014 Jnanpith Award**, the highest literary honour in India. Nemade is the fourth Marathi writer to win the literary honour.

Nemade was born on May 27, 1938 in *Sangavi village in Khandesh, Maharashtra*. He was graduated from Ferguson College in **Pune** in 1959. He completed his Master's degree in Linguistics from Deccan College in Pune. He did his PhD and D Lit degrees from North Maharashtra University.

Nemade's debut novel was *Kosala*. This novel established him as one of the great writers in Marathi literary world. His other famous works include *Hool*, *Bidar* (1967), *Zarila* (1977) and *Zhool* (1979). Nemade was accolade with Sahitya Akademi award in 1991 for his volume of criticism, *Teeka Swayamvara*, and Padma Shri in 2011.

68th British Academy Film Awards (BAFTA)

The **68th British Academy Film Awards** were held on 8 February 2015 at the Royal Opera House in London, to honour the best British and international contributions to film in 2014.

Winners of the 68th Annual BAFTA Awards

- **Best Film:** Boyhood.
- **Outstanding British Film:** The Theory of Everything.
- **Best Director:** Richard Linklater (Boyhood).
- **Best Actor:** Eddie Redmayne (The Theory of Everything).
- **Best Actress:** Julianne Moore (Still Alice).
- **Best Supporting Actor:** K. Simmons (Whiplash).
- **Best Supporting Actress:** Patricia Arquette, Boyhood
- **Best Original Screenplay:** The Grand Budapest Hotel.
- **Best Adapted Screenplay:** The Theory of Everything.
- **Best Editing:** Whiplash.
- **Best Cinematography:** Emmanuel Lubezki (Birdman).
- **Best Production Design:** The Grand Budapest Hotel.
- **Best Costume Design:** The Grand Budapest Hotel.
- **Best Original Music:** The Grand Budapest Hotel.
- **Best Makeup and Hair:** The Grand Budapest Hotel.
- **Best Sound:** Whiplash.
- **Best Visual Effects:** Interstellar.
- **Best Film Not in the English Language:** Ida.
- **Best Animated Film:** The Lego Movie.
- **Best Documentary:** Citizenfour.



- **Outstanding Debut by a British Writer, Director, or Producer:** Stephen Beresford (Writer) and David Livingstone (Producer).
- **Best British Short Film:** Boogaloo and Graham.
- **Best British Short Animation:** The Bigger Picture.
- **The EE Rising Star Award:** Jack O'Connell.
- **Outstanding British Contribution to Cinema:** BBC Films.
- **Most awards:** The Grand Budapest Hotel (5).
- **Most nominations:** The Grand Budapest Hotel (11).

Charleston-EFG John Maynard Keynes Prize 2015

Eminent Indian economist and Nobel laureate **Amartya Sen** has been conferred with the newly established **Charleston-EFG John Maynard Keynes Prize 2015** in United Kingdom. Professor Sen will receive *7500 British pounds* to commission a work of art. He will give the annual Charleston-EFG Keynes Lecture at the Charleston Festival in the United Kingdom, on 23 May 2015. Sen was being honoured for his ground-breaking work which had had a huge impact on the formation of development policy all over the world.

57th Annual Grammy Awards

The **57th Annual Grammy Awards** were held on February 8, 2015, at the Staples Center in Los Angeles, California. A total of 83 Grammy Awards were presented.

A **Grammy Award** is an accolade by the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences of the United States to recognize outstanding achievement in the music industry.

This year two Indians have won Grammy Awards. They are

- **Ricky Kej** won the Best New Age Album Trophy for his collaborated album *Winds of Samsara*
- **Neela Vaswani** won award in **Children's Album** category for her album *I Am Malala: How One Girl Stood Up For Education And Changed The World (Malala Yousafzai)*.

Indian-Origin Scientist Wins USD 500,000 Research Award

The prestigious USD 500,000 National Science Foundation (NSF) CAREER award was won by Gurpreet Singh, assistant professor of mechanical and nuclear engineering at Kansas State University.

Singh will use the award to develop ultrathin metal sheets that can help produce better rechargeable batteries, supercapacitors and catalysts for photoelectrochemical hydrogen production.

This CAREER award will help him to study large-scale production of ultrathin sheets, a few atoms thick and several micrometres wide using transition metal dichalcogenides (TMDs).

- Gurpreet Singh is assistant professor of mechanical and nuclear engineering at Kansas State University.
- National Science Foundation CAREER award is given by US National Science Foundation as part of Faculty Early Career Development Programme.

Rohit Sharma Gets Espncricinfo Award

Indian Cricketer Rohit Sharma has been named as the best ODI batting performance in 2014 by ESPNcricinfo for his record breaking 264 against Sri Lanka. Rohit Sharma had bagged the same prize for his first double ton in 2013. The Espncricinfo awards also honored Lasith Malinga (Sri Lanka) and Mitchell Johnson (Australia) for their stand out bowling efforts. New Zealand batsman Brendon McCullum's 302 against India was adjudged the best batting performance.



The winners were selected by a jury comprising legendary cricketers such as Rahul Dravid, Ian Chappell, Michael Bevan, Daryll Cullinan, Mark Nicholas, Graeme Smith, Ricky Ponting..etc.

Wipro won seven awards at the CIO Choice Honour and Recognition 2015

Wipro won seven awards at the third annual edition of the CIO Choice Honour and Recognition 2015. The awards were given to Wipro to recognize the customer satisfaction and endorsement by the CIO community. Wipro won the award in the categories of *Managed IT Services, Managed Security Services, Enterprise Infrastructure Automation Services, Systems Integrator, Network Maintenance Services, Service Assurance Program, and Application Managed Services*. This is the third consecutive time that Wipro has been recognized by the CIO Choice Honor and Recognition.

AIFF Presents Player of the Year Awards 2014

National Men's team Captain Sunil Chhetri has been presented with All India Football Federation's 2014 Player of the Year award. This was the fourth time he received the award having earlier won it in 2007, 2011 and 2013.

National women's team striker Bala Devi, who scored 47 goals in 2014, including 18 in International matches, was presented with 2014 AIFF Women's Footballer of the Year.

Others to be honoured with AIFF awards 2014, include

- 2014 Player of the year (Men): **Sunil Chhetri**
- 2014 Player of the year (Women): **Bala Devi**
- 2014 Emerging Player of the Year: **Sandesh Jhingan**
- 2014 Best Referee: **Santosh Kumar**

- 2014 Best Assistant Referee: **Sappam Kennedy**
- Best Grassroots Programme: **Western India Football Association (WIFA)**
- Long Time Contribution to Indian Football: **Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC)**

Sourav Ganguly awarded “Honorary Life Membership” by MCC

Former Indian captain Sourav Ganguly has been awarded the honorary life membership of the prestigious Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC). Ganguly, who has also been a member of the MCC World Cricket committee since July 2014, averaged over 40 in Tests and One Day Internationals for India and took 132 wickets across 424 matches. Ganguly, affectionately called Dada and the Prince of Calcutta, retired from all forms of international cricket in 2012 after playing for India for 16 long years.

Himachal Pradesh received National Award for Renewable Energy Popularisation

Himachal Pradesh has received **National Award** in recognition of its remarkable contribution in the field of **renewable energy**. The award was presented to **Power minister Sujan Singh Pathania** during **RE-INVEST 2015** by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Himachal Pradesh has been implementing various programmes such as small hydroelectric projects, solar water heaters and photo-voltaic lights to popularize the renewable energy sources. A 200 kilowatt solar power plant was successfully installed at **Baru Sahib University** in Sirmour district of Himachal Pradesh. More than 51,000 solar lights have been installed in the snowbound and hard areas of the state.

Indian researcher Srikanth Jagabathula awarded with 500,000 Dollars

Srikanth Jagabathula, an Indian-origin researcher has been awarded with 500,000 Dollars for developing data-driven modelling and learning techniques. Jagabathula currently works as Assistant Professor of Information, Operations and Management Sciences (IOMS) at New York University (NYU) Stern School of Business and was awarded on February 15, 2015.

Recently, he was also recognized by the National Science Foundation (NSF) with its Faculty Early Career Development Award (CAREER).

Tessy Thomas and Geeta Varadan receives Y Nayudamma Memorial Award

Two women scientists, Tessy Thomas and Geeta Varadan have been presented with the Y Nayudamma Memorial Award for the year 2014, for their contribution in the fields of missile technology and remote sensing.

The winners will receive the awards by Shanta Sinha, the former head of National commission for Protection of Child Rights and recipient of Ramon Magsaysay Award. The function will be held on March 1, 2015 at Tenali, Andhra Pradesh.

87th Academy Awards

The 87th Academy Awards ceremony honored the best films of 2014 at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood, Los Angeles. The Awards are presented by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

‘How I Met Your Mother’ star Neil Patrick Harris (Barney Stinson) hosted the Oscar Award ceremony for the first time.

Complete List of Winners

Category	Winner
Best Picture	Birdman
Best Director	Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu (Birdman)
Best Actor	Eddie Redmayne (The Theory of Everything)
Best Actress	Julianne Moore (Still Alice)
Best Supporting Actor	J.K. Simmons (Whiplash)
Best Supporting Actress	Patricia Arquette (Boyhood)
Achievement in Costume Design	Milena Canonero (The Grand Budapest Hotel)
Achievement in Makeup and Hairstyling	Frances Hannon and Mark Coulier (The Grand Budapest Hotel)
Best Foreign Language Film	Ida (Pawel Pawlikowski)
Best Live Action Short Film	The Phone Call (Matt Kirkby and James Lucas)
Best Documentary Short Subject	Crisis Hotline: Veterans Press 1 (Ellen Goosenberg Kent and Dana Perry)
Original Screenplay	Birdman
Achievement in Sound Mixing	Whiplash (Craig Mann, Ben Wilkins, Thomas Curley)
Achievement in Sound Editing	American Sniper (Alan Robert Murray Bub Asman)
Achievement in Visual Effects	Interstellar (Ian Hunter, Scott Fisher, Andrew Lockley and Paul Franklin)
Best Animated Short	Feast (Patrick Osborne and Kristina Reed)

Best Animated Movie	Big Hero Six (Don Hall, Chris Williams and Roy Conli)
Achievement in Production Design	The Grand Budapest Hotel (Adam Stockhausen and Anna Pinnock)
Achievement in Cinematography	Birdman (Emmanuel Lubezki)
Achievement in Film Editing	Whiplash (Tom Cross)
Best Documentary Feature	Citizen Four (Laura Poitras, Mathilde Bonnefoy and Dirk Wilutzky)
Best Original Song	Glory (John Stephens and Lonnie Lynn)
Best Original Score	The Grand Budapest Hotel (Alexandre Desplat)
Best Adapted Screenplay	The Imitation Game (Graham Moore)

Purnendu Dasgupta conferred with J. Calvin Giddings Award

Indian American **Purnendu Dasgupta** has been conferred with the 2015 **J Calvin Giddings Award** by *American Chemical Society Division of Analytical Chemistry* for his environment friendly field analyser, which can be used for measuring toxic arsenic levels in water. He is currently working as a professor of chemistry at the *Texas University, Arlington*. The Award comprises a plaque and cash prize.

Dasgupta's research area includes,

- Methods for environment-friendly analysis of arsenic in drinking water.
- Rapid analysis of trace heavy metals in the atmosphere.
- Iodine nutrition in women and infants and the role of the chemical perchlorate.
- Development of a NASA-funded ion chromatograph for testing extraterrestrial soil.

Dasgupta has authored more than 400 scientific papers and book chapters and holds 25 US patents. His work has earned more than USD 18 million in research grants.

Nagesh Kukunoor's film Dhanak bagged "The Grand Prix of the Generation Kplus International Jury" at 65th BIFF

Nagesh Kukunoor's film "Dhanak" on February 15, 2015 bagged The Grand Prix of the Generation Kplus International Jury for the best feature-length film and received a special mention at the 65th Berlin International Film Festival. The filmmaker was endowed with euro 7,500 by the Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk. The members of the Generation Kplus International Jury were Bettina Blumner, Tom Hern and Michal Matus.

The Film 'Dhanak' is about the relationship between a 10-year old girl Pari and Chotu, her 8-year old visually challenged brother who live in a picturesque village. Pari promises him that his vision will return before his next birthday. This leads to a journey through Rajasthan. The film stars Hetal Gada and Krrish Chhabria.

Forbes Honors 50 Powerful Businesswomen in Asia

American Business Magazine Forbes honors 50 Powerful Businesswomen in Asia in its fourth annual Asia's Power Businesswomen list. To get listed, the candidates should be active in the upper echelons of the business world in Asia, should have significant power and must have access to financial resources.

The image shows the word "Forbes" in a large, blue, serif font, centered within a white rectangular box that has a subtle drop shadow.

Indian Women in Top 50 are,

- State Bank of India Chairman – Arundhati Bhattacharyya
- Biocon Founder – Kiran Mazumdar Shaw
- ICICI CEO – Chanda Kochchar
- Managing Director of Shriram Life Insurance/Shriram Capital – Akhila Srinivasan
- Managing Director and CEO of Axis Bank – Shika Sharma
- Managing director of Life Insurance Corporation of India – Usha Sangwan

Ratan Tata Honored with Doctorate of Automotive Engineering

Indian businessman and Chairman Emeritus of Tata Sons, Ratan Tata has been awarded with an honorary doctorate by the Clemson University in the United States at the South Carolina Automotive Summit for his contribution to the Automotive Industry.

INDIAN AFFAIRS

Madhya Pradesh won the 10th National Award for excellence in MGNREGA

Madhya Pradesh won the 10th National Award for excellent work in Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 (MGNREGA).

The award was given to Panchayat and Rural Development Minister Gopal Bhargava of Madhya Pradesh by the Union Rural Development Minister Virendra Singh at the MGNREGA summit held at New Delhi.

Madhya Pradesh is leading in the construction of permanent assets through MGNREGA convergence in the country. The construction of 74 per cent permanent assets has been done through MGNREGA in the state.

CM Manohar Lal Khattar launches e-registration of properties in Haryana

The government of Haryana launched the electronic registration (e-registration) of properties in all the 130 tehsils and sub-tehsils of the state. The function was inaugurated by CM Manohar Lal Khattar on the 100th day of his government in power. However, the electronic stamping of property registration in the state will begin from March 15, 2015.

The new concept is likely to make the system faster, transparent and error prone. All deputy directors are directed to get the system implemented by June 2015.

Chhattisgarh CM declares Valentine's Day as 'Matru-Pitru Diwas'

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Raman Singh has announced February 14 as 'Matru-Pitru Diwas' or 'Parents' Worship Day' instead of Valentine's Day across the state.

This ritual was started two-years ago in Government Schools in Chhattisgarh. It began after Asaram Bapu suggested Singh to replace Valentine's Day as "Matru-Pitru Diwas".

XIII Ishara International Puppet Festival

The XIII Ishara International Puppet Festival to be held in Gurgaon at Epicenter. The festival will be from February 3, 105 to February 11, 2015. The motive of the festival is to entertain the people with modern and traditional form of puppet of all kinds.



Various artists from Afghanistan, Portugal, Iran, Taiwan and United Kingdom will participate in the event, along with Indian artists. The international puppeteers also stress to renew the art of puppet in their respective countries.

Highlight performance will include Taiwan's Puppet Beings Theatre Company that would showcase 'The Paper Play' to encourage creativity and imagination in the viewer's eyes.

Beta version of 'Digital Locker' launched by the DEITY

A beta version of the 'digital locker' has been launched by the department of electronics and information technology (DEITY). The beta version allows the citizens to keep all their certificates including birth certificate to university degree, in digital format online. This can be accessed using their Aadhar numbers. This is one of the most ambitious aspects of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Digital India programme. To access this, a user needs to create a login account at its website using his/her Aadhar card or Unique Identification (UID) number.

The Delhi Sustainable Development Summit

The 15th Sustainable Development Summit was held from February 5 to February 7, 2015. It gave the stakeholders a platform to freely discuss the international development agenda ahead of the UN summit on Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) in September and formulate ideas to promote sustainable growth and prosperity globally.

Issues like the mitigation in energy supply sector, generating financing for projects focusing on sustainable and holistic growth, educating the youth about sustainable development were also raised during the summit. The summit was organised by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) with its theme being **Sustainable Development Goals and Dealing with Climate Change**.

Udyanotsav inaugurated by President Pranab Mukherjee at Rashtrapati Bhavan

The event "Udyanotsav" was inaugurated by President Pranab Mukherjee on February 13, 2015 at Rashtrapati Bhavan. Every year the nature lovers in the city wait for spring to walk through the magnificent Mughal Gardens. The garden will remain open to the public from February 14, 2015 to March 15, 2015. The timings will be from 9:30am to 4:30pm. The garden will be closed every Monday for maintenance. The Spiritual Garden, Herbal Garden, Bonsai and Bio-diversity Park can be also be visited by the visitors which is within the President's Estate.

18th National Conference on e-Governance concludes in Gujarat

The **18th National Conference on e-Governance** was concluded in **Gandhinagar, Gujarat**. The conference was organized for two days. Important topics such as *Skill Development and Employability, Partnership with Industry, New Business Model and Service Delivery* were discussed in the conference. The Conference was inaugurated by Chief Minister of Gujarat, **Anandiben Patel**.

The Organizers are,

- Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DARPG)
- Department of Electronics & Information Technology (DEITY)
- Government of India in collaboration with the Department of Science & Technology
- Government of Gujarat.

Theme of this conference was **Digital Governance-New Frontier**

IRCTC introduces Cash on Delivery for Train Tickets

Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation has initiated **cash on delivery (CoD)** system for rail ticketing. Now passengers can book train tickets online and it will be delivered to the booker's home. The CoD scheme has launched on pilot basis the service will be available in more than 200 cities. Passengers can book a rail ticket 5 days prior to commencement of journey.

For each Sleeper Class ticket, IRCTC charges extra forty rupees and each AC class ticket, the charge is sixty rupees. **Anduril Technologies** via their website and their mobile application – *BookMyTrain.com* is authorised for providing CoD services.

Kolkata becomes India's First Wi-Fi Metro City

The Capital city of West Bengal, **Kolkata** becomes **India's first Wi-Fi enabled metro city**. It was inaugurated by West Bengal **Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee** in the City's **Park Street Area**. Mamta announced that High speed 4G Wi-Fi services will be available in Park Street along with the adjoining areas from today (February 5' 2015) evening.

Kolkata and Salt Lake will be Wi-Fi enabled in next two months. Plans have been laid for covering 2,000 km in the city with WiFi.

Justice MM Das to probe the Chit Fund Scam in Odisha

The state Government of Odisha has appointed **Justice Madan Mohan Das** as Chairman of the Commission of Inquiry probing **chit fund scam** in **Odisha**. This post was previously held by Justice **Radha Krushna Patra**, who dies on January 28, 2015. The one-man Commission of Inquiry headed by Justice RK Patra was constituted on July 2013. Madan Mohan Das has served as Judge of the High Court for almost ten years.

Micromax overtakes Samsung in Indian Market

According to the Research Firm **Canalys**, the budget smartphone maker **Micromax** overtook **Samsung Electronics** as the leading supplier in India's smartphone market. According to the reports, Micromax accounted for **22%** of smartphone sales in India in the fourth quarter (ie Oct – Dec 2014), ahead of Samsung's **20%**. India has the world's second-highest number of mobile phone accounts after China.

Low-priced smartphones are the top sellers in India. The third position goes to **Karbons** mobiles, which has a market share of **9%**.

No change in Nuclear Liability Law : External Affairs Ministry

The **Ministry of External Affairs** made it clear that India's **Nuclear liability law** will not be amended. As per the report, in case of a nuclear accident, an individual victim cannot sue the **Foreign suppliers** of the reactors. But they can be held liable by the **operator** ie **Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd.**

The liability in case there is a nuclear incident will be capped at \$300 million SDRs or Rs. 2610 crores. The operator NPCIL is only liable up to Rs.1500 crores, and the Union government would pay the remaining RS 1110 crores. On the India Nuclear Insurance Pool, a risk transfer mechanism formed by **General Insurance Company Re** and four other **Public Sector Units** will together contribute Rs.750 crores out of a total of Rs.1,500 crore. The balance would be contributed by the government.

First Governing Council Meeting of NITI Aayog

In the first Governing Council Meeting, Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** has chaired a meeting of Chief Ministers of the states to discuss the form and functions of **NITI Aayog**, the newly instituted planning panel. In the meeting, Narendra Modi has promised more funds to states with greater powers and also he asked to address issues delaying projects.

Key Announcements

- A sub-group of Chief Ministers would be set up under NITI Aayog to look into rationalisation of the 66 centrally sponsored schemes, for which Rs 3,38,562 crore was provided in 2014-15, to states.
- Setting up of two more such sub-groups
 - - one for skill development and creation of jobs within states
 - - other to create an institutional framework to make 'Swachh Bharat (Clean India)' a continuous initiative.
- Model of "co-operative and competitive federalism" to eliminate poverty.
- 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas' – To bring the spirits of all the states together.
- Two task forces to help the country get out of problem of poverty and increase agricultural production.
- PM said jobs cannot be created and poverty cannot be eliminated without growth. He insisted all the states that "First and foremost we should aim at a high rate of growth."

Indian Coastal Guard Commissioned ICGS Amogh

The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) at Paradip Port (Odisha) commissioned **ICGS Amogh**, a fast patrol vessel (FPV), to enhance coastal security. The vessel was built by the Kerala-based **Cochin Shipyard Limited**. Amogh is 50-metre long and it can achieve a **maximum speed of 35 knots** (63 kmph).

Delhi Assembly Election : Huge win for Aam Aadmi Party

In a clean sweep, the *Aam Aadmi Party* (AAP) led by **Arvind Kejriwal** has defeated the *Bharatiya Janata Party* (BJP) and the *Congress Party* by recorded a historical victory, securing 67 of the 70 seats in the Delhi assembly elections. The party has a win percentage of more than 90, a feat achieved only twice before in Sikkim and Bihar.



This victory has created many **FIRSTS**. They are,

- Highest tally ever in Delhi.
- BJP reduced to one digit.
- First time a party has got more than 50 seats.
- Non-Congress and Non-BJP in power.
- Congress duck in any poll.

The AAP polled 54% of the total votes while the BJP got 32.4% and the Congress 9.4%. Kejriwal will take oath as chief minister on 14 February at the Ramlila Ground, New Delhi.

India ranks 136 in World Press Freedom Index 2015

India has ranked 136th position out of 180 nations in the recently released World Press Freedom Index (WPFI), released by The Reporters Without Borders (RWB). The WPFI is produced by France-based international non-governmental organization Reporters Without Borders or Reporters Sans Frontières. WPFI aims to promote and defend freedom of information and freedom of the press.

Top 10 countries:

- 1 Finland
- 2 Norway
- 3 Denmark
- 4 Netherlands
- 5 Sweden
- 6 New Zealand
- 7 Austria
- 8 Canada
- 9 Jamaica
- 10 Estonia

In 2014, India was ranked in 140th position in the list of 180 countries.

Infosys to Acquire Automation Technology Provider “Panaya”

Infosys Ltd has agreed to acquire **Panaya Inc.** for an enterprise value of about \$200 million — It’s first major step to execute chief executive Vishal Sikka’s vision to boost productivity by automating tasks since he took charge on 1 August.

It’s a second largest acquisition so far. The largest was of Zurich, Switzerland-headquartered management consulting firm Lodestone for \$345 million (Rs 1,930 crore) in September 2012.

Panaya Inc Founded in 2006, the California, US-headquartered Panaya provides cloud-based services for large-scale enterprise software management. The company, with a little over 400 active accounts from clients such as GE, Coca-Cola, Mercedes-Benz, Apple and Johnson & Johnson, has so far raised about \$59 million from private equity players such as Benchmark Capital, Hasso Plattner Ventures, Battery Ventures and Israel Growth Partners. Most of its 156 employees are in Israel.

Anti-Dumping Duty imposed on import of Graphite electrodes

The Finance Ministry of India has imposed **anti-dumping duty** on all imports of **graphite** electrodes from China based on recommendations of the *Directorate General of Anti-Dumping Duty* (DGAD) for the next five years.

Graphite electrodes are mainly used for melting of steel. The petition seeking anti-dumping duty on graphite electrodes imports from China was filed by HEG Ltd and Graphite India Ltd.

HEG is the leading manufacturer and exporter of Graphite Electrodes in India. Imposing anti-dumping duty is considered as a step to protect the domestic industry from below-cost shipments. The duty ranges between \$ 278.19 and \$ 922.03 per tonne on imports of a product used in steel plants.

Aero India 2015 show begins in Bengaluru

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the 10th Aero India show at the Yelahanka Air Force Station, Bengaluru. Modi has asked defence contractors winning bids to supply India not only the equipment but also the technology behind the equipment.

Modi declared Aero India 2015 as Asia’s largest air show. He also used the occasion to make a pitch for “Make in India” programme.



The Prime Minister called on the international defence firms to set shop in India so that the country becomes part of their global supply-chain.

The Aero India Show is organized by Defence Exhibition Organisation under the aegis of Ministry of Defence. The first edition of the air show was held in 1996.

VANAJ – National Tribal Festival 2015 concludes in New Delhi

India's first National Tribal Festival '**VANAJ**' was concluded on 18 February 2015 in New Delhi. The week long festival was inaugurated by **Jual Oram** (Union Minister of Tribal Affairs) on 13 February 2015 at the Indira Gandhi National Center for Arts. The festival ended after a series of colorful presentations depicting the spring time tribal festivals of *Phagu, Phagua and Phagun Parab*.

The festival also showcased India's unique *Tribal culture, art, painting, music, dance, tribal medicine, tribal food, and a special attraction- tribal cuisine*. More than **900 folk and tribal artists** from many Indian states participated in it. A tribal market has been recreated for visitors to purchase rural crafts, herbs and medicines.

EPF Organization launches help desk to trace inoperative accounts

The Employees Provident Fund Organization of India has introduced an online help desk to help customers trace their inoperative or dormant accounts.

The provident fund organization will also assist the customers in claiming the money lying in their accounts after systematic verification of documents.

The provident fund accounts which remain inactive for 36 continuous months and fail in making contributions to the retirement fund body are classified as inoperative accounts. These accounts are not credited with interest ever since from the date on which they become inoperative.

The EPFO has halted crediting interest in the inoperative accounts from April 1, 2011. A massive 27,500 crore rupees of provident fund money is lying with the Employees Provident Fund Organization in dormant accounts as of March 2014.

Make in India : Israel offers Technological Support

In a high level meeting, the defence minister of Israel *Moshe Ya'alon* has offered all help and technology to make Modi's '**Make in India**' initiative a huge success. Ya'alon said "*Our relations with India have become strong because of common values, interests and respect. Both countries have found ways to cooperate on security and defense behind the scenes*".

India is now close to finalizing the contracts for two additional Phalcon AWACS and four aerostat radars, together worth well over \$1.5 billion.

Modi launches 'Soil Health Card' scheme for farmers

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched a “**Soil Health Card scheme**” in *Suratgarh, Rajasthan*. This scheme is an attempt to check *deteriorating soil quality* and *spruce up farm productivity*. The Union Government has planned to target over 14 crore farmers in the next three years to check the excessive usage of fertilizers. The card, to be issued after testing soil, would help them save up to Rs 50,000 in 3 acres of land. The card will carry crop-wise recommendation of fertilizers required for farm lands. The card will also assist farmers to identify the health of soil and judiciously use soil nutrients.

Modi asked farmers to take up farming in three parts. They are,

1. *Use more scientific and modern techniques in agriculture along with the traditional method.*
2. *Grow more trees on the boundaries of farm fields.*
3. *Take up poultry, fisheries, dairy and other allied activities to raise the income.*

Aqua Aquaria India 2015

The third edition of 'Aqua Aquaria India', the largest aquaculture-cum-aquariculture show in Asia, is held in **Vijayawada Andhra Pradesh**.

The three-day event, to be inaugurated by Chief Minister **N Chandrababu Naidu**, is going to be the biggest in the series with a target of 300 plus stalls and 20,000 delegates.

Leena Nair, Chairperson of the **Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA)** which is organising the event, told reporters the conference and exhibition will be attended by at least 20,000 delegates and 300 institutions will display their products at stalls.

The event is aimed at exposing the aqua farmers and farmers growing ornamental fish to use the latest technologies in the sector across the globe. Special field visits by the experts practices were also arranged. '**Aqua Aquaria**' is one of the best expos on the marine products across the globe as 30 international experts will be the part of the event to share their knowledge and skills with the fish farmers.

Hyderabad International Auto Show 2015

Hyderabad hosted its annual Hyderabad International Auto Show (HIAS). It is the flagship event under the Vista Entertainments, which was established in the year 2008. It is a three day show where globally renowned luxury cars and bikes are exhibited. The event is expected to be inaugurated by Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao at Hitex, Madhapur.

About 40 automobile companies are participated in the three day show in Hyderabad. Nearly 150 cars and bikes were displayed to showcase their luxuries and latest products.

PM Narendra Modi Flags off Arunachal Pradesh – Delhi Train

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** has flagged off the first ever express train from **Naharlagun to New Delhi**. He participated in the **State's 29th foundation day** (February 20' 2015) at Itanagar and expressed pride while inaugurating the rail connectivity from *Naharlagun to New Delhi and to Guwahati*.

Modi said "AC express train is an 'anmol nazrana' for the State of Arunachal Pradesh on the occasion of its 29th birthday".

Modi commended **Arunachal Pradesh** government for the '**Gati**' (speed) and '**Urja**' (energy) shown by the state in recent years. The Prime Minister has assured more progress for the state in coming 5 years than the state have seen in last 28 years.

Government of India Launches a New Portal : Madad

The Government of India on February 21, 2015 launched a new portal (website) known as '**Madad**'. This website will provide a platform for Indian citizens living abroad to file consular grievances online. This concept will introduce transparency, clarity and a high degree of accountability in the process of grievance redressal.

The portal 'Madad' was launched at the **Ministry of External Affairs** or MEA headquarters in Delhi by External Affairs Minister **Sushma Swaraj**, who said the grievance monitoring facility would enhance "accessibility" for people and fix greater "accountability and responsibility" on officials.

The primary objective of this portal is to completely transform the linear process adopted to post grievances from the originator of the grievance to the concerned official. This will also reduce the time required for grievances to be sent from Delhi to our citizens living abroad and vice-versa.

- The logo and tagline for 'Madad' was selected through an online competition on www.mygov.in & Competition Price is " **1 Lakh Rupees** "
- The logo represents the image of two persons holding hands, side by side, forming, the letter 'M' of the 'Madad', written in blue, and the tagline is '**Because You Are Us**'.

Third Tortoise Festival Organized in Assam

The third Tortoise Festival was organized by Assam's Dima Hasao Environment and Forest Department on the banks of Hajong lake. The festival is celebrated to create awareness among the people of the neighboring villages about the safety of the endangered tortoise species available in the area.



Hajong lake is a unique and only natural tortoise habitat situated in Assam. In these areas some endangered species of tide-water tortoise of north-east India are still living. At present, around 400 to 500 tortoises are reportedly dwelling in the Hajong lake.

Indian Army signs MoU with State Bank of India

The Indian Army has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the State Bank of India on the Defence Salary Package. The first MoU was signed in 2011 and was valid for a period of three years. Many changes have been made in the revised MoU by the team of experts.

Features of MoU

- Number of free/concessional services like free drafts, free cheque books.
- Free funds transfers to any bank in India through RTGS/NEFT, free ATM cards and others.
- Nepal Express Remittance Scheme – Enables instant fund transfers to Nepal for the benefit of the Nepal based Gorkha Soldiers serving in the Indian Army.
- Personal Accident Insurance was enhanced and linked to the Savings account instead of the debit card.

Union Cabinet gives approval for 15000 MW grid-connected solar projects

Union Cabinet has approved the implementation of the solar scheme for setting up of 15,000 Mega Watt Grid-connected Solar Photo Voltaic Power projects under the National Solar Mission. This decision was taken at Union Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The scheme will be implemented under the National Solar Mission through state-run National Thermal Power Corporation Limited and its subsidiary NTPC Vidyut Vyapar Nigam Limited.

HADR Exercise conducted by Indian Navy

A large scale **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR)** exercise was conducted on the **Lakshadweep Islands** (Karavati, Aggatti, Kalpeni and Androth). In the exercise, more than 20 ships from the Western and Eastern Fleet of the Indian Navy were involved. Many aircraft were involved in the training operation too.

The HADR Exercise simulated a major cyclone striking the Lakshdweep Islands and disrupting essential services, causing widespread destruction of property, loss of life and dislocation of personnel, and was designed to validate the Indian Navy's capability to provide immediate succor and relief to the affected populace.

The Exercise also involved setting up of medical camps, provision of food, shelter from the elements, restoration of basic facilities and limited restoration work till the situation stabilized.

The Indian Navy has the inherent capacity and capability to reach outlying islands and coastal areas, with relief and rehabilitation material and continuously prepares for this task.

Talkathon : Modi government launched live chat sessions with people

Narendra Modi government launched an initiative to hold live chats with people on social media. The initiative named 'talkathon' was launched on February 16, 2015. The talkathon will be held fortnightly and will address live and spontaneous questions from the people on social media including YouTube.

The first Talkathon was organised by the Information and Broadcasting ministry of India on February 16 in which minister Piyush Goyal (Minister of State with Independent Charge for Power, Coal and New and Renewable Energy) held a 30-minute long conference and answered 20 questions on issues like electricity, coal allocation, energy and on pressures of being a minister in Modi's cabinet.

Union Cabinet gives nod to BRICS' New Development Bank

In a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Union Cabinet approved the creation of the proposed 5-Nation BRICS bank – the New Development Bank (NDB) and the BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA) to mobilize the resources for developmental projects and also to provide short-term liquidity to the emerging economies in case of any payment crisis.

Zoological Society of London signed MoU with Gujarat Forest Department

The Zoological Society of London (ZSL) has signed an MoU with Gujarat Forest Department for the conservation of Asiatic lion and its habitat. The ZSL will provide Technical assistance to forest department to manage rescue and treatments centres. It will also help to manage Sakkarbaug Zoo in Junagadh. State Forest Department will use smart software jointly developed by the ZSL and the Gujarat forest department for tracking the movement of their staff and even the lions.

Indian Navy Concludes TROPEX Exercise Successfully

The Indian Navy concluded its month-long annual Theatre Level Readiness and Operational Exercise (TROPEX) in the Arabian Sea and Northern Indian Ocean. The exercise witnessed around 50 ships and submarines in action along with over 70 aircraft from three naval commands encompassed all dimensions of maritime warfare. The warships involved in TROPEX include nuclear submarine Chakra, P8I Long Range Maritime Reconnaissance aircraft, Guided missile destroyer Kolkata and anti-submarine warfare corvette Kamorta.

During TROPEX, the Indian Navy had deployed two Carrier Task Forces simultaneously at sea, with both Viraat and Vikramaditya operating with their integral flights in an operational scenario.



IMPORTANT APPOINTMENTS

Ashton Carter named as the 25th US secretary of defence

Ashton Carter has been named new US secretary of defence on February 12, 2015, after receiving 90 votes of the Senate. The votes have put the Pentagon veteran in charge of the US military at a time of violent crises in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Carter who is 60 years old will be the 25th U.S. Secretary of Defence after Chuck Hagel who quit the post in November 2014.

Dr. Nandita Chatterjee appointed as new Secretary of HUPA

M Venkaiah Naidu bid farewell to outgoing Secretary Anita Agnihotri as Dr Nandita Chatterjee took over as the new secretary in the Ministry of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation (HUPA). She has served in the Government of India in the Ministries of Rural Development and Environment & Forests. She also has served in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and World Health Organization (WHO).

Suvarna Raju appointed as the Chairman of Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd

Suvarna Raju T was appointed as the Chairman of the state-run **Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL)**. He will be succeeding his predecessor **R.K. Tyagi**. Suvarna Raju has a master's degrees in business administration and in defence and strategic studies. Currently, Raju is the Chairman of the Bangalore chapter of the *Aeronautical Society of India*.

Raju drafted the company's first R&D policy and spearheaded India's self-reliance in producing 25 kN (kilo Newton) turbofan engines. Raju played an instrumental role in establishing a production line of *Hawk Mk 132 aircraft* and also *Mirage 2000 aircraft* maintenance project.

Veteran Politician Sergio Mattarella elected Italian president

The lawmakers of Italy have elected **Sergio Mattarella** as the country's new President. He was a constitutional court judge and veteran centre-left politician of Italy. This victory gave a big political boost to Prime Minister **Matteo Renzi**, because he nominated Mattarella. After three inconclusive rounds of voting, Renzi's candidate Mattarella was elected in the fourth round, when the required quorum fell to a simple majority.

LC Goyal appointed as new India's new Home Secretary

Union Rural Development Secretary **LC Goyal** has been appointed as the new **Home Secretary** of India, following the resignation of Anil Goswami. Goyal was a 1979-batch IAS officer of Kerala cadre and served in the home ministry as joint secretary (*Internal Security*).

The Government has asked **Anil Goswami** to resign from the home secretary post, as he was allegedly involved in an attempt to stall the arrest of **Saradha scam** accused former Congress Minister **Matang Sinh**.

MO Garg takes charge as Director General of CSIR

MO Garg has been appointed as the **Director General** of the **Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR)**. He will replace **PS Ahuja**. Garg was a **Chemical Engineer** and he served as Director of CSIR-Indian Institute of Petroleum (CSIR-IIP), Dehradun, for the past 11 years.

As of now, Garg is the author for at least **245 papers** published in high impact scientific journals and also he has **33 national and international patents** to his credit.

Obama appoints Indian CEO Ajaypal Singh Banga to a key administrative post

US President Barack Obama has appointed top **Indian-American CEO Ajaypal Singh Banga** as member of the **Advisory Committee for Trade Policy and Negotiations**. This post is a key administrative position tasked with providing policy advice on international trade matters. Banga was an MBA from IIM-Ahmedabad.

MCX appoints Balasubramaniam Venkataramani as MD & CEO

Balasubramaniam Venkataramani has been appointed as new MD & CEO of Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX). The top post at MCX has been lying vacant since May last year when the then MD & CEO Manoj Vaish resigned.

DJ Patil named as the First United States Chief Data Scientist

The White House has named **Dhanurjay Patil** as its first ever **Chief Data Scientist** and **Deputy Chief Technology Officer for Data Policy**. US President Barack Obama has recruited him personally, and Patil will work in the Office of Science and Technology Policy.

DJ Patil has planned to focus on four activities. They are,

- *Providing vision on how to provide maximum social return on federal data.*
- *Creating nationwide data policies that enable shared services and forward-leaning practices to advance US' leadership in the data age.*
- *Working with agencies to establish best practices for data management and ensure long-term sustainability of databases.*
- *Recruiting and retaining the best minds in data science for public service to address these data science objectives and act as conduits among the government, academia, and industry.*

Patil served as the VP of Product at *RelateIQ*. He also worked at *LinkedIn*, *Greylock Partners*, *Skype*, *PayPal*, and *eBay*. He holds a bachelor's degree in mathematics from the *University of California* and a PhD in applied mathematics from the **University of Maryland**.

Maheshwar Sahu appointed as Independent Director on board of RIL

Maheshwar Sahu was on 20 February 2015 appointed as an Independent Director on the board of Mukesh Ambani led **Reliance Industries Limited (RIL)**. He is a retired IAS officer. With Sahu's appointment, the board of RILBSE -3.12 % now has 14 members that include eight independent directors.

Sahu is popularly known as the man behind the success of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's brainchild event- Vibrant Gujarat summit.

Arvind Kejriwal sworn-in as Chief Minister of Delhi

Aam Aadmi Party national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday became the seventh person to be sworn in as the Delhi chief minister at Ramlila Maidan in the national capital. He took oath as chief minister along with six other AAP MLAs appointed as Cabinet ministers.

Scientist Tapan Misra appointed as Director of ISRO's SAC

Eminent scientist **Tapan Misra** has been appointed the Chief of **ISRO's Space Applications Centre (SAC)**, Ahmedabad, Gujarat. Mr Misra who is the Deputy Director, Microwave Remote Sensing Area in SAC, succeeds AS Kiran Kumar, who was appointed as the Chairman of the ISRO on January 2015.

Nitish Kumar Takes Oath as Bihar Chief Minister for Fourth Time

Senior Janata Dal (United) leader **Nitish Kumar** sworn in as the Chief Minister of Bihar. This will be his **fourth** stint as the Chief Minister. He was administered the oath of office and secrecy at the Raj Bhawan in Patna by Governor Keshari Nath Tripathi.

West Bengal Chief Minister **Mamata Banerjee**, Assam Chief Minister **Tarun Gogoi** attended the ceremony. The ceremony was also attended by Kumar's predecessor, Jitan Ram Manjhi, who had stepped down on Friday after a lengthy battle to hang on to the chief minister's post. Along with Nitish, **22 ministers** took oath.



Rashad Hussain appointed as the Special Envoy and Coordinator for CSCC

Indian-American Rashad Hussain has been appointed as the Special Envoy and Coordinator of Centre Strategic Counter-terrorism Communications. According to the state department of US, the appointment will expand the global engagement and partnerships of the US in order to counter violent extremism. Hussain is currently the US special envoy to Organization for Islamic Countries.

Indian-origin Punit Renjen to be the next CEO of US-based Deloitte Global

India-born Punit Renjen has been appointed as the new chief executive officer (CEO) of US-based accounting company Deloitte Global Operations. Renjen, who is currently working as the chairman of the board of Deloitte US, will take position as the CEO of the company from June 1, 2015. With this, Renjen will become the first India-born senior executive to head one of the Big Four consultancies. The Big Four are PwC, KPMG, EY and Deloitte. He has been working with Deloitte for the last 27 years.

Renjen will be replacing Barry Salzberg as the global CEO.

Takahiro Hachigo named as new President and CEO of Honda

World's leading automobile manufacturer **Honda** has officially announced **Takahiro Hachigo** as the Company's new *President and CEO*. By June, Hachigo will replace **Takanobu Ito**, who is stepping down after six years from the post. Ito faced many struggles such as global financial crisis, natural disasters, and damaging recalls during his tenure as the CEO.

Hachigo joined Honda in 1982 and has worked across research and development, procurement and manufacturing in different parts of the world.

Ravi Chaudhary appointed as Executive Director at FAA

Indian-American Ravi Chaudhary has been appointed as the **Executive Director** for Regions and Center Operations at the **Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)**, which regulates American civil aviation. As the Director, he is responsible for leadership and execution of aviation operations in nine different regions, as well as the *Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center* of FAA.

Justice Amitava Roy appointed as Supreme Court judge

Justice Amitava Roy has sworn in as a Judge of the Supreme Court. He will have a tenure of three years. He worked as Chief Justice of Orissa High Court. He was appointed as judge of SC through collegium system rather than newly created National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC). After his appointment, the strength of the SC judges has gone up to 29 out of total sectioned strength of 31 judges.

Gopinath Pillai appointed as Special Envoy to Andhra Pradesh by Singapore government

Singapore government appointed Gopinath Pillai as its special envoy to Andhra Pradesh. Pillai, a senior policy strategist, was appointed to speed up construction of new capital in the state. The appointment was announced by Singapore's Minister for Foreign Affairs and Law K. Shanmugam and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu at the secretariat in capital Hyderabad.

Singapore government will present its first-phase of draft master plan of the new capital of Andhra Pradesh in June 2015. Currently Andhra Pradesh and newly created state Telangana shares Hyderabad as joint capital.

FINANCE AND BUSINESS

RBI Doubles the FOREX Remittance Limit

The Reserve Bank of India has doubled the eligibility limit for **FOREX remittances** to **\$250,000** per person per year under the **Liberalised Remittance Scheme** (LRS), which allows residents to acquire and hold shares, debt instruments or other assets outside India without prior approval of the RBI. The eligibility limit for FOREX remittances under the LRS was USD 75,000 in 2013 and USD 125,000 in June 2014.

India's foreign exchange reserves touched a new life-time high at **\$322.135 billion** in mid-January 2015. According to the report, Foreign funds had been pumping more and more dollars into Indian equities ever since **Narendra Modi's** Government took charge in May.

Reserve Bank of India slashed SLR; Interest rates remains unchanged

The **Reserve Bank of India** keeps the key interest rates unchanged in its sixth bi-monthly policy review. The RBI reduced the **statutory liquidity ratio** (SLR), by 50 basis points to 21.5 percent of their **net demand and time liabilities** (NDTL). The reduction in SLR will encourage banks to lend more to productive sectors on competitive terms so as to support investment and growth.

Current Reserve Rates are,

- Bank rate - 8.75%
- CRR - 4%
- SLR - 21.5%
- Repo rate - 7.75%
- Reverse repo rate - 6.75%
- Marginal Standing facility rate - 8.75%

Government to infuse Rs 6,990 crore in nine Public Sector Banks

The government of India has decided to infuse **Rs 6,990 crore** in nine public sector banks (PSBs) out of the current year's budget to strengthen their capital base. The government had allocated Rs 11,200 crore in the Budget for 2014-15 for capital infusion.

The beneficiaries are,

- State Bank of India – Rs 2,970 crore
- Bank of Baroda – Rd 1,260 crore
- Punjab National Bank – Rs 870 crore
- Canara Bank – Rs 570 crore
- Syndicate Bank – Rs 460 crore
- Allahabad Bank – Rs 320 crore
- Indian Bank – Rs 280 crore
- Dena Bank – Rs 140 crore and
- Andhra Bank – Rs 120 crore

The Capital Infusion is being done on the basis of new efficiency parameters such as **return on assets and return on equity**. The government had infused a capital of,

- Rs 12,000 crore in 2011-12
- Rs 12,517 crore in 2012-13
- Rs 14,000 crore in 2013-14

ICICI Bank launches e-wallet Pockets for Mobile Users

The Industrial Credit and Investment

Corporation of India (ICICI) Bank launched a mobile payments wallet for Android phones called **Pockets**, which integrates a digital wallet, a physical prepaid card and a basic savings bank account.



This e-Wallet Pockets can be topped up with money from any bank account for making phone-based payments. The bank has announced that the wallet will be introduced for iOS and Windows Phone devices soon.

The app can be installed with basic personal details like name, mobile number and email ID and funded by any existing debit/credit card or bank account. There is no *know your customer* documentation required if the transactions per month are below **ten thousand rupees**. Customers with non-ICICI Bank accounts will be charged NEFT transaction fees.

Apple Inc becomes First Company worth over \$700 bn in Global Market Value

Apple set a record by becoming the first company to be valued at \$700bn. The iPhone maker was already the world's most valuable business, but in early trading its shares rose nearly 1% to \$119.75, giving it a market capitalisation of \$701.7bn. This is higher than the GDP of all but the top 19 countries in the world.

Apple's shares have risen around 60% this year, with the success of its iPhone 6 and iPhone 6 Plus one of the main reasons behind the surge. Last month it announced that it had sold a record 39.3m iPhones in its third quarter, and predicted that its latest products would help it boost sales by at least 10% over the forthcoming holiday period. It expects to sell more in the Christmas quarter this year than it did in the whole of 2010.

- CEO Tim Cook said Apple was 'hitting its stride
- Shares rose 1.9% to close at \$122.02 lifting Apple's market value to \$710bn
- Company investing \$850 million to help build a solar farm in California
- Microsoft was the first company to close with a \$600bn valuation in 2000

India's Foreign Exchange Reserves hit Record High at USD 333 billion

As per the latest data released by the **Reserve Bank of India**, the foreign exchange reserves of India has raised to **USD 333.169 billion** in second week of February. The data confirmed that India's FOREX reserve has risen USD 14 billion in seven weeks since Jan 2, 2015 to \$319 billion. The record high FOREX Reserve was helped by a pick-up in exports, surge of liquidity in *Europe, China and Japan* and also the reduction in India's import bill due to the plunge in crude oil prices (\$57/Barrel on Feb third week). India saves about \$1 billion for every \$1 drop in global crude oil prices. India's reserve position with the International Monetary Fund increased to USD 1.639 billion.

FDI in India doubles to 2.16 Billion USD in December 2014

India's Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) was doubled to **2.16 Billion USD** in December 2014 compared to **1.10 Billion USD** in December 2013. In 2013-14 fiscal, India's FDI stood at 24.29 billion dollars as against 22.42 billion dollars in 2012-13. The continuous inflow of foreign investments into the country helps in balancing the domestic salary structure and stabilizing the value of Indian currency. The top sectors which received the maximum FDI are,

- *Telecom Industry – 2.67 billion dollars*
- *Services – 2.29 billion dollars*
- *Automobile – 1.58 billion dollars*
- *Pharmaceuticals – 1.21 billion dollars*
- *Software – 971 million dollars*

India received maximum FDI from,

- *Mauritius – 5.89 billion dollars*
- *Singapore – 4.31 billion dollars*
- *Netherlands – 2.57 billion dollars*
- *United States – 1.48 billion dollars*
- *Japan – 1.42 billion dollars*

RESIGNATION

Odisha CIC Tarun Kanti Mishra resigned

The Chief Information Commissioner (CIC) of Odisha Tarun Kanti Mishra on 12 February 2015 resigned from his position.

Mishra, a 1975-batch IAS officer, was appointed as CIC in November 2010, three months after retiring as state chief secretary. His tenure as CIC would have come to an end on August 1 this year.

He was the Home secretary of Odisha during communal violence in Kandhamal and other parts of the state during the aftermath of killing of VHP leader Laxmanananda Saraswati on 23 August 2014.

Bihar CM Jitan Ram Manjhi Resigns

The Chief Minister of Bihar Jitan Ram Manjhi resigned on February 20 ahead of a crucial trust vote to be held in the assembly. Today he met the governor of Bihar, KN Tripathi and submitted his resignation one hour prior the beginning of assembly proceedings.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

China Launches its First Cruise Liner on Maritime Silk Road

China's first cruise liner was launched to sail via its ambitious transcontinental initiatives Maritime Silk Road (MSR) on its maiden voyage. The cruise will visit three South-East Asian nations including Malaysia and Vietnam. The cruise liner is scheduled to stop in Vietnam, the Gulf of Thailand and Malaysia before reaching Kauntan Port in Malaysia. It was set off from Beihai port in southwest China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. The cruise liner is 135-metre long and 20-metre wide, which can accommodate about 400 people. It also provides wireless internet access.

BRICS hoping to set up a new fund known as the Green Fund

The BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) are planning to form a new fund known as the 'Green Fund' under the New Development Bank to undertake green projects and promote environmental prosperity and development throughout the world.

This will be the main topic of discussion in the BRICS summit to be held in Russia in the month of April as the environmental ministers of the organization will discuss green economy and ways to promote sustainable development through the use of green technology.

Singapore to host 14th International Conference on Tamil language computing and Tamil Internet

Singapore is all set to host a three day conference on Tamil language computing and Tamil Internet (Tamil Internet 2015) by the end of May 2015. The 14th International Conference on Tamil Internet is scheduled from May 30, 2015 to June 1, 2015. More than 500 delegates are expected to attend the conference. The experts have started to work for the event. They are working on translations based on English word meaning to that of in Tamil as an online dictionary and speech to text.

Britain Declares to contribute 50 million dollars to IMF Ebola relief Fund

The British government declared that it would contribute more than 50 million dollars to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Out of this sum, nearly 35 million pounds will be used for the new Ebola fund to help facilitate proper treatment in Ebola affected nations like Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

The IMF's Catastrophe Containment and Relief trust was launched to help Ebola hit nations combat debts and help them in spending more money on public health and disease control schemes, to systematically phase out the disease.

Pakistan successfully test fires Cruise Missile Ra'ad

Pakistan has successfully test fired the **Air-Launched Cruise Missile Ra'ad**, which means *Thunder* in Arabic. Ra'ad has a range of **350 kilometers**. The success of this missile gives Pakistan Air Force a strategic *standoff capability on land and at sea*. It has low detection probability due to stealth design and materials used in its construction.



Ra'ad is highly capable of delivering nuclear and conventional warheads with pin-point accuracy. The low altitude missile's accuracy is reported to be comparable to Babur cruise missile, a first land attack **cruise missile** to be inducted by Pakistan.

China and Russia supports India for seat on UN Security Council

India secured greater support from **China** and **Russia** for its bid for a permanent membership on the **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)** and anti-terrorism plans at the ministerial-level Russia, India, China (**RIC**) summit in Beijing.

External Affairs Minister *Sushma Swaraj*, *Wang Yi* of China, and *Sergey Lavrov* of Russia called for all countries to converge under the United Nations to **combat terrorism** which is a "threat" to international peace and security.

The two big countries of Asia – Russia and China also agreed to support a larger role for India in **Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)** and the **Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)**.

India Ranked Second last in Global Intellectual Property Index

The US Chambers of Commerce has released the **International Intellectual Property index** for the year 2015. The annual IP index evaluates a total of 30 countries and India occupies **29th position**. Actually India has moved up one position, after being ranked last for two consecutive years. The only country which is behind India is **Thailand**. The index is calculated on the basis of 30 criteria such as *patent, copyright and trademark protections, engagement in international treaties*.. etc. The top rankers are the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, and Singapore.

Britain Lawmakers allow 'three-parent' IVF babies

Britain becomes the first country in the world to allow a **"three-parent" In Vitro Fertilization (IVF)** technique. According to the Scientists, this three-parent IVF technique can be used to prevent a range of incurable maladies known as mitochondrial disease.

The treatment is known as “three-parent” IVF, because the babies, born from genetically modified embryos, would have DNA from a mother, a father and from a female donor. The DNA from the second female replaces the egg’s defective **mitochondrial DNA**. It results in babies with less than 1% of their DNA from the second woman. It is a permanent change that would be passed down the generations.

This treatment is considered as the stopping point for genetic diseases. We all know that Mitochondria is known as the *power house of the cell*. In this treatment, a faulty mitochondria is removed and it is replaced with the healthy one from another donor. A faulty mitochondria can cause diseases such as *fatal heart problems, liver failure, brain disorders, blindness and muscular dystrophy*.

The mitochondrial DNA is completely different from the **DNA found in the cell nucleus**. The former one does not affect human characteristics such as hair or eye colour, appearance or personality traits.

Volcanic Eruptions in Mexico’s Colima

Mexico’s Colima Volcano has erupted more than 14 times and the **Popocatepeti volcano** has erupted more than 60 times. The volcanoes spewed large plumes of ash and gas into sky. One of the eruptions is reported to have reached more than 1,000 metres into the air.



The Colima volcano is also referred as the **Volcano of Fire** and also it is the most active volcano in Mexico. As of now the eruptions are not considered to be dangerous and no evacuations have been necessary. The Colima volcano stands between the border of *Colima* and *Jalisco* states, 430 miles west of Mexico City.

Zoe Konstantopoulou – Youngest President of Greece’s Parliament

Syriza MP **Zoe Konstantopoulou** has been voted as the new **Greek Parliament President**. She received a record **235 votes out of 293 votes**. She will be the youngest and second woman to preside over the Greek House after Anna Psarouda-Benaki in 2004. She will be replacing **Mr. Vangelis Meimarakis**. Konstantopoulou was born in Athens on December 1976. Professionally she is a lawyer, member of the Athens and New York Bar Associations. She was specialized in National, European and International Criminal Law and Human Rights.

India and Sri Lanka signed agreement on Cultural and Civil Nuclear Cooperation

Indian Government has signed a **Civil Nuclear Agreement** with **Sri Lankan Government** during the island country's President Maithripala Sirisena's visit to India. As per the agreement, India will assist Sri Lanka to build its nuclear energy infrastructure. India could also sell *lights-small-scale nuclear reactors* to Sri Lanka which wants to establish 600 MW of nuclear capacity by 2030. The agreement was signed in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Sirisena.

Other than the historical Nuclear Agreement, the leaders have witnessed the signing of agreements on,

- *Agricultural cooperation*
- *Memorandum of understanding on Nalanda University*
- *Agreement on cultural co-operation.*

Under Sea Quake caused minor Tsunami in Japan

The Northern shores of **Japan** were hit by a minor tsunami as a strong undersea earthquake struck off the coast. Waves up to 20 cm was recorded in **Kuji, eastern Iwate**. The Japan Meteorological Agency has warned that waters were still on a slight rise in Kuji, although ruling out any danger of their swelling too much further. This quake is assumed as an aftershock of the 2011 quake that hit the Tohoku region. The residents on these areas are warned from entering the ocean for some days.

Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic sworn in as first woman President of Croatia

Kolinda Grabar -Kitarovic was sworn in as the first woman president of Croatia. She pledged to revive the ailing economy by working towards it in a systematic and a planned manner. The former foreign minister and an eminent NATO official defeated her rival Ivo Josipovic in an election which was held on January 11, 2015. In the polls Kolinda Grabar secured 50.74 per cent votes hence winning by a healthy margin.



UNICEF partnered with Airtel to provide Education Content in Africa

India's Bharti Airtel has partnered with **UNICEF** to provide health, education and youth-focused content to its customers in 17 African countries. By this partnership, the information related to health and education will be made available to Airtel customers for free across the 17 African countries. With improved connectivity, Africans will have free access to mobile applications and services developed by UNICEF, such as **eduTrac, mTrac and U-report**.

The partnership covers 17 countries – *Kenya, Malawi, Madagascar, Rwanda, Seychelles, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Burkina Faso, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Congo, Gabon, Ghana, Niger, Nigeria and Sierra Leone.*

India-Myanmar Joint Trade Committee Meeting

The fifth Joint Trade Committee meeting between India and Myanmar was held in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar on 17th February, 2015. The meeting was co-chaired by Nirmala Sitharaman (Minister of Commerce & Industry) and Myanmar Union Minister of Commerce U Win Myint.

In the meeting, both nations have agreed to work together to remove the bottlenecks hampering the bilateral trade and investment such as lack of good connectivity, lack of banking arrangement both for regular and border trade. To promote the bilateral trade between the two countries, India offered to support subsidized direct shipping links. The two ministers have also agreed to jointly inaugurate the land custom station in Zawkhatar, Mizoram. The next Joint Trade and Investment Forum will be held in Chennai.

Tropical Cyclones 'Lam' and 'Marcia' hit Australia

Two tropical cyclones **Marcia** and **Lam** hit Australia on 20 February 2015. This is the first time that two cyclones have hit Australia at one time.

- The tropical cyclone Marcia smashed the Queensland coast between St Lawrence and Yeppoon. The storm arrived with little warning as a category-V storm, which has now been reduced to category-II.
- Other Cyclone Lam is a category IV storm which made landfall in the Northern Territory.

Chrisantha de Silva new Sri Lanka Army chief

Major General Chrisantha de Silva was on Friday appointed as the new Sri Lankan Army Chief by President Maithripala Sirisena, who also reinstated several loyalists of former Army chief Sarath Fonseka.

Major General Silva will succeed Lieutenant General Daya Ratnayake with effect from February 22, Mr. Sirisena's office said in a statement. Mr. Sirisena also reinstated several loyalists of Mr. Fonseka, who led the Army to defeat the Tamil Tigers in 2009.

Russia and Cyprus signed a pact to permit Russian navy ships to use Cypriot ports

Russia and Cyprus signed an agreement to give Russian navy ships access to Cypriot ports in the Mediterranean Sea. Russian ships that will dock at Cypriot ports would mostly be used in counter-terrorism and anti-piracy efforts. The agreement was signed in Moscow after talks between Russian President **Vladimir Putin** and Cypriot President **Nicos Anastasiades**. The military deal also included the possibility of Russia using an air base on Cyprus for humanitarian relief missions.

A Unified Common Market for ASEAN Countries

Similar to the European Union, the **Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN)** is all set to form a unified market by the end of 2015. Efforts are being made to reduce trade barriers and pave the way for easy investments as well as the free flow of goods, services, products and skilled labour across nations.

Some of the issues related to form a Unified Market are,

- *The member countries are on different stages of progress as per the GDP*
- *Distinct cultures and values*
- *Different Languages*
- *Currencies and a History of political mistrust.*

The formation of ASEAN Economic Community will definitely open up new opportunities for trade and business in these countries.

India and United States held the first ever bilateral dialogue on UN

India and the **United States** held their first ever bilateral dialogue on the **United Nations** and multilateral issues in Washington. The dialogue was held in the spirit of the "*Delhi Declaration of Friendship*" to strengthen the relationship between the two countries.

According to the US state department, the bilateral dialogue focused on crucial topics such as

- *International peace and security*
- *Peacekeeping operations*
- *Counter-piracy and the Post 2015, Development Agenda,*
- *UN Human Rights Council*

The Indian delegation was led by **Vikas Swarup**, Joint Secretary in Minister of External Affairs Ministry, whereas the US delegation was led by **Sheba Crocker**, Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs.

Exercise Surya Kiran – Joint India-Nepal Military Exercise Commences

Exercise Surya Kiran – The VIII India-Nepal Battalion level Combined Military Training, commenced on February 23rd at **Integrated Army Training Centre, Saljhandi in Nepal**. The opening ceremony was very impressive and begins with the unfurling of the National Flags of both countries. The Indian side was represented by an Infantry division from a Mountain Brigade and the Nepalese Contingent was represented by a Battalion from an Infantry Division of Nepalese Army. The Indian soldiers were welcomed by **Major General Padam Villas Karki** of Nepalese army.



The joint military exercise will continue for two weeks during which the military forces of both countries will hone their tactical and technical skills to deal with counter insurgency and terrorism.

The Indo-Nepal battalion forces were provided with advanced equipment for surveillance, tracking and closely monitoring activities across the borders. Both sides will engage in training, planning and executing a series of well developed combined tactical drills for neutralization of any kind of threats.

Google Acquires Facebook Marketing Start Up Toro

Google acquired **Facebook** mobile marketing startup **Toro**, which is best known for its Facebook ad campaigns. Toro is led by **Amitt Mahajan** and **Joel Poloney**. The company used to go by the name of **Red Hot Labs**. The acquisition will shift Toro's focus away from Facebook. Toro will continue to optimize campaigns and update dashboards for existing marketing customers.

Toro is based in *San-Francisco, USA*. It offers services and tools to help the developers to market their apps on social media platforms like **Facebook** or **Twitter**. The Founders **Amitt Mahajan** and **Joel Poloney** previously co-founded **MyMiniLife**, which played a key role in the creation of **FarmVille** (acquired by **Zynga**).

China opened largest overseas diplomatic mission in Islamabad

China has announced its 'all weather friendship' with Pakistan by opening its largest overseas diplomatic mission in Islamabad. The new embassy was opened on February 13, 2015 in Islamabad. China also maintains large diplomatic missions including Washington, New York and New Delhi. Over 300 personnel are there in its mission in New Delhi. China is set to construct two 1,100 nuclear reactors along with four medium size reactors.

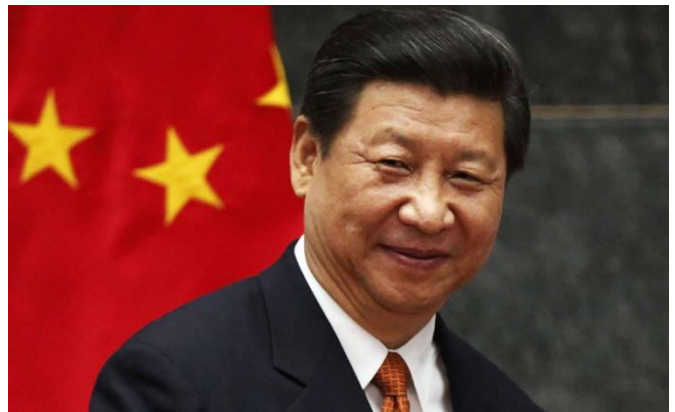
Jamaica Decriminalizes the use and possession of Marijuana

The Government of Jamaica has decriminalized the possession of marijuana up to 57 grams for personal, medical, and scientific use. Jamaica is the biggest Caribbean exporter of marijuana also known famously as the Ganja and the Cannabis to the United States. The measures to decriminalize the possession were approved by the Jamaican cabinet last month and from its senate in February 2015.

China's President Xi Unveils 'Four Comprehensives' Slogans

Xi Jinping, the President of China has revealed his new political theory, comprising four slogans known as the "four comprehensives". They are,

- Comprehensively build a moderately prosperous society
- Comprehensively deepen reform
- Comprehensively govern the nation according to law
- Comprehensively strictly govern the Party



US announces to provide work permits to spouses of H-1B visa holders

The United States has announced to provide work permits to spouses of H-1B visa holders from 26 May 2015. Under existing US laws, spouses of H-1B visa holders are not eligible to work. This announcement is expected to benefit thousands of talented and professional spouses who have settled in US but are unable to work.

As per new rules, US Citizenship and Immigration Services will begin accepting applications for work visas of H-1B spouses from 26 May 2015. In this regard H-1B visa holders spouse has to submit Form I-765 to USCIS. Once this form is accepted by USCIS, H-4 dependent spouse will be granted an Employment Authorisation Card to start working in US. This move is going to benefit more than 1.79 lakh in the first year and 55,000 annually in subsequent years especially Indians.

FBI announced 3 million US dollar award for information on Evgeniy Mikhailovich Bogachev

Evgeniy Mikhailovich Bogachev is one of the world's most prolific cyber criminal from Russia. The US Department of Justice and Federal Bureau of Investigation announced a reward of 3 million US dollars for information on him.

Bogachev is alleged for his involvement in a major cyber racketeering enterprise in which he played a role of administrator for the GameOver Zeus botnet. It is believed that he is responsible for the theft of more than 100 million US dollar from businesses and consumers in the US and around the world.

The reward will be offered under the auspices of the State Department's Transnational Organized Crime Rewards Programme, established by Congress in 2013. The programme was established as a tool to assist the US government in identifying and bringing to justice members of significant transnational criminal organizations.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Japan successfully launched a new Spy Satellite

Japan successfully launched a back-up spy satellite with the help of its H-IIA carrier rocket from the **Tanegashima Space Centre**. Japan initiated the **Information Gathering Satellite** programme, after North Korea fired a mid-range ballistic missile over the Japanese mainland and into the western Pacific in 1998. The satellites are constructed by Mitsubishi Electric and launched by **Mitsubishi Heavy Industries**. As of now, a total of four Japanese intelligence satellites are currently in orbit — *two optical satellites and two radar satellites*. The backup satellite will supplement the two radar satellites.

NASA successfully launched the Earth Observing Satellite

NASA has launched a rocket called **Delta 2** (Earth observing mission) from Vandenberg Air Force base in California, for measuring water moisture in soil. The successful launch of Delta 2 will make weather forecasts more accurate with its Earth Observing Satellite. **The Soil Moisture Active Passive satellite** (SMAP) unit on board will measure moisture levels in top 2 inches (5 cm) of soil on Earth. This will help to track weather systems, predict droughts and floods, and the changing climate for three years. SMAP is one of five Earth-monitoring satellites originally scheduled for launch in 2014.

II Prototype of Naval Version of LCA-Tejas tested Successfully

Hindustan Aeronautical Limited (HAL) has successfully tested the II prototype of naval variant of **Light Combat Aircraft** (LCA)-**Tejas** in Bengaluru. The Naval Prototype 2 (NP2) is indigenously developed and the success of NP2 is definitely a significant milestone in the India's indigenous carrier borne aircraft development programme.

The HAL Spokesperson said that NP-2 incorporates most avionics hardware components promised to the Indian Navy. NP-2 has been customized to incrementally accept modifications for carrier landings. NP-2 is the lead aircraft for arrestor hook integration, Derby Beyond Visual Range missile and tactical data link.

Facebook and Reliance Communication bring Internet.org to India

Reliance Communications and Facebook have partnered together to bring **Internet.org** to India. Internet.org is Facebook Founder Mark Zuckerberg's initiative to provide free internet to mobile phone users in developing countries. The motto of Internet.org is "**Internet for All**".

The app, Internet.org is aimed at low income and rural users. It will offer access to more than 30 web services such as *Facebook, job listings, healthcare, News and education sites*, which are available to **Android users**. These services will be available in several Indian languages including *English, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Gujarati and Marathi*.

In India, Internet.org and the services mentioned above are only available to Reliance customers. In the first phase this service has gone live in states such as *Mumbai, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Chennai and Kerala*. In second phase, this service will be launched across India by May 2015.

SpaceX Falcon 9 Rocket Launches from Cape Canaveral

SpaceX's Falcon 9 Rocket has been successfully lifted off from the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station on its third attempt. Problems with an Air Force tracking radar and poor weather conditions had previously forced the postponement of the launch. The rocket is carrying the **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Deep Space Climate Observatory** or **DSCOVR satellite**.

The satellite, a partnership with NASA and the US Air Force, will travel one million miles from Earth. There it will observe the Earth and detect solar winds from the sun, which impacts power grids, communication systems and satellites.

India Successfully test-fires BrahMos Missile from INS Kolkata

India successfully test-fired the supersonic cruise missile **BrahMos** on 14 February 2015 from the destroyer **INS Kolkata**, the navy's most powerful and newest warship, in Arabian sea. The launch off the Goa coast was flawless as the missile met all its designed parameters.

Key Points of BrahMos Missile

- BrahMos supersonic cruise missile & top speed Mach 2.8 to 3.0 and it has pinpoint accuracy [1m] on enemy target.
- It is the world's fastest cruise missile in operation & which makes it about three times faster than the U.S. subsonic Tomahawk cruise missile
- Launching variants submarines, ships, aircraft and land-based mobile launchers. "The Aircraft version is in final stage of trial."
- The BrahMos missile has a range of 290 kilometers (180 miles) and can carry a conventional warhead of up to 300 kilograms.
- Future missile is hypersonic version namely BrahMos II with speed of Mach 7 & above, presently under development.
- Indo-Russian joint venture BrahMos Aerospace was founded in 1998. Missile's name has been derived from the names of two rivers, India's Brahmaputra River and Russia's Moskva River.
- Sudhir Kumar Mishar is CEO & MD of Brahmos Aerospace.



27 Indian satellites are currently operational : Government of India

The Government of India has announced that a total of 27 Indian satellites are currently operational. It was announced by Minister of State for Prime Minister Office (PMO) & Department of Space Jitendra Singh. Of the 27 operational satellites, 11 are communication satellites, 12 are earth observation satellites, 3 are navigational satellites and 1 is Mars orbiter mission.

Union Government also announced one more satellite will be launched in March 2015, while 3 more are in the pipeline. India is also taking leading role in launching satellites for the SAARC nations. With successful launch of five satellites in June 2015, India has entered the area of commercial satellites.

India Successfully test-fires Prithvi II Missile

India successfully test-fired its indigenously developed surface-to-surface missile Prithvi II from a test range at Chandipur in Odisha. The nuclear capable Prithvi-II missile test was carried out from a mobile launcher from launch complex-3 of the Integrated Test Range. According to the DRDO scientists, the missile hit the pre-designated target point in the Bay of Bengal with a high degree of accuracy. The missile carried a dummy payload weighing 500 kg and met all the mission objectives.

SAFAR AIR – Mobile App to Measure City's Air Quality

SAFAR Air – a new mobile app jointly developed by Pune-based Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology and the Indian Meteorological Department is now available in Google Play Store. With this App it is possible for the people of Pune and Delhi to find out exactly how toxic the air in their neighborhood is. The app will be available to users in Mumbai by April, followed by Ahmedabad, Chennai and Kolkata. The app allows users to access on-the-go, real-time information about the pollution levels within their cities. Users can also share the information from the app on Twitter, Facebook, and by email.

Ebola : WHO Approves First Rapid Test Kit

The **World Health Organization** (WHO) has approved a rapid test kit for Ebola virus, which can deliver the result in just fifteen minutes. Rather than testing the nucleic acid, this test detects the Ebola protein. The kit is made by **Corgenix** in the US and named as **ReEBOV Antigen rapid test kit**, which now has approval from WHO. The trials have shown that it can perfectly identify about 92% of Ebola-infected patients and around 85% of those not infected with the virus.

Even though the previous tests are highly accurate, the time taken to deliver the result is too much. It requires well established laboratories and fully trained professionals to do that.

The Ebola outbreak has killed more than **8,500 people**, mainly in *West Africa*. Right now, there is no cure for Ebola. Scientists are working to put experimental drugs into clinical trials.

World's First 3-D Printed Jet Engine

Australian researchers have developed the world's first ever 3-D jet engines. Researchers from Monash University and Deakin University have developed two engines. It is believed that this breakthrough will lead to cheaper, stronger, lighter, and highly fuel efficient jet engines for the future.

OBITUARY

Veteran Yakshagana artiste Arate Manjunatha dies aged 73

Veteran Yakshagana artiste Arate Manjunatha died at his house at Gavali Village near kundapur. Manjunatha was regarded as one of the finest artistes who had donned the roles of women in both the Tenku and the Badagu Thittu schools of Yakshagana. He was only 13 when he began his career with comic roles in the Maranakatte troupe.

He also won many awards such as Janapada Academy award, Kannada Sahitya Parishat, professor BV Acharya award from Yakshagana Kalaranga in Udupi, Nittoor Bojappa Suvarna award and many others.

Former Indian football player Peter Gomes passed away in New Delhi

Peter Gomes, former Delhi State football player passed away in New Delhi. Gomes, who was 60-year-old, suffered a sudden heart attack that caused his death. Gomes began his career in 1980 in Delhi's famous Buddhist Blue Star, as a forward player. He later on switched to Shimla Youngs FC. In 1990s, he represented Delhi state team in the Senior National Football Championship (SNFC) for Santosh Trophy.

Renowned sculptor Mrinalini Mukherjee passed away at 65

Renowned sculptor Mrinalini Mukherjee passed on February 2 in New Delhi. She was suffering from a prolonged lung problem and was hospitalised in the last week of January. The 65 years old Mrinalini was best known for her sculptures using knotted hemp fibre and cast bronzes.



Eminent photojournalist Krishna Murari Kishan dies aged 63

Eminent Photo Journalist Krishna Murari Kishan died on February 2, 2015 after suffering multi-organ failure. Kishan, was rushed to a private hospital in New Delhi last week after suffering cardiac arrest. His body was brought back to Patna by a service plane after he passed away. Last rites would be performed today at the Gulbi Ghat.

Senior journalist Diptosh Majumdar dies in New Delhi

Senior journalist Diptosh Majumdar died in private hospital in New Delhi. Diptosh was diagnosed with acute myelocytic leukemia (AML), a type of blood cancer. He was in ICU for the last four-five days and passed away in afternoon on February 8. He started his career with The Statesman newspaper and later with The Telegraph and The India Express. Earlier he was a national affairs editor at CNN-IBN. Since 2013, he had been Managing Editor of INX News Pvt. Ltd. He also served as a National Editor of Jagran TV and employed at DNA as well.

Eminent Cartoonist Rajinder Puri Passed Away

Veteran cartoonist and famous political activist **Rajinder Puri** has passed away at the age of 80 in New Delhi following a brief illness. He was associated with various newspapers such as **The Hindustan Times**, **The Guardian** and **The Statesman** as a cartoonist and writer.

Rajinder Puri was born on 20 September 1934 in Karachi, now in Pakistan.

Books Penned by Puri

- *India 1969: a crisis of conscience*
- *India, the wasted years: 1969-1975*
- *Government that works– and how!*
- *Recovery of India*
- *Bull's Eye*
- *A tale of two countries: chronicles of a columnist*

Senior Communist Party leader Govind Pansare passes away

Senior communist party leader Govind Pansare who was shot in Kolhapur passed away at Breach Candy hospital in Mumbai on February 20, 2015.

Pansare a Communist leader as well as anti-toll activist was going for a morning walk last Monday along with his wife Uma (70) when he was shot by two bike born assailants who came asking for directions. Pansare's wife Uma also suffered injuries when she tried to fight off the assailants. However Uma is currently recovering in the hospital.



D. Ramanaidu: Multilingual film producer dies in Hyderabad

Veteran film producer Daggubati Ramanaidu dies on February 18, 2015 in Hyderabad after suffering from prostate cancer. In January 2014, the producer was diagnosed with prostate cancer and was undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Hyderabad. His death has shocked many across the globe.

D. Ramanaidu was a multilingual Indian film producer. He holds the Guinness Book of World Records for the most films produced by an individual. He has produced over 150 films in 13 Indian languages. Ramanaidu had received the Dada Saheb Phalke Award, the highest cinema award in India, in the year 2009 and Padma Bhushan in 2012 for his contribution to Telugu Cinema. He served as the member of parliament of Guntur District for the Bapatata constituency in the 13th Lok Sabha from 1999-2004.

Bollywood actor Ashraf-ul-Haq dies aged 45

Assam-born actor Ashraf-ul-Haq passed away at the age of 45 due to Myelodysplastic Syndrome. He was suffering from the disease for the past two years. Ashraf-ul-Haq took his last breaths in Mumbai.

Renowned Odia filmmaker and director Nirad Mohapatra dies aged 67

Renowned Odia filmmaker and director Nirad Mohapatra died at a private hospital in Mumbai. He was 67 years old and is survived by wife, two sons and a daughter. He was operated twice within a month due to suspected cancer.

Nirad Mohapatra was a multi-faced personality who attained international fame with his first Odia feature film "Maya Miriga" in the year 1984. The film was considered to be the best third world film at Mannheim-Hiedelberg International Film Festival in West Germany.

Michele Ferrero, creator of Nutella chocolate died

Michele Ferrero, the creator of Nutella chocolate and hazelnut spread dies on February 14, 2014 in Montecarlo. He was the world's richest chocolatier whose chocolates and spreads were famous all around the world. The 89 year old Michele was not keeping well for several months. He is survived by his wife and a son.

Physicist Ernest Sternglass passed away

Physicist Ernest Sternglass dies on February 12, 2015 after suffering from heart failure in Ithaca, New York. He was 91-year-old and is survived by a son, a daughter and four grandchildren.

The research by the renowned personality had made it possible for the world to see the first moon walk. His research had helped to create a sensitive television camera tube which captured the low-light lunar actions during the 1969 moon landing and the first steps of US astronaut Neil Armstrong.

Adya Sharma : Pioneer of mobile theatre in Assam passes away

Adya Sharma a cultural icon and an eminent pioneer of mobile theatre in Assam passed away on February 22, 2015. Sharma will always be remembered for bringing innovations in the technical aspect of mobile theatre. Adya Sharma made his foray into mobile theatre in 1966 through the well known Purbajyoti Theatre.

Justice Rana Bhagwandas : The first Hindu Chief Justice of Pakistan passes away

Rana Bhagwandas a senior judge and a former acting Chief Justice (CJ) of the Supreme Court of Pakistan (CJP) passed away on February 23, 2015 in Karachi. He was the first Hindu and second non-Muslim to head the reputed Supreme Court of Pakistan.

Veteran Tamil director R.C Sakthi died aged 75

75 year old Tamil Director R.C. Shakthi died in Chennai on February 23, 2015. He is known to have introduced Kamala Hasan in a lead role in his directorial "Unarchigal". He had directed 17 films overall in his career.

Veteran Cinematographer Aloysius Vincent passed away

Veteran cinematographer of South India, Aloysius Vincent passed away at the age of 86. He was born in 1926 in Kozhikode. He was fondly addressed by the film fraternity as 'Vincent Master'. He worked as a cinematographer in more than 150 films in different languages. He worked on several blockbuster Telugu movies like Annamayya, Allari Priyudu, Nari Nari Naduma Murari, Adavi Ramudu, Bhaktha Pahlada, etc.

In 2003, Indian Society of Cinematographers conferred him an honorary membership. He was awarded with Filmfare Best Cinematographer Award for Prem Nagar in 1974.

Former Haryana CM Hukam Singh Passed Away

Hukam Singh, the former Chief Minister of Haryana has passed away at the age of 86 in Gurgaon. He was suffering from chest pain and breathing difficulties. The government of Haryana has announced a three day mourning for the loss of the veteran leader. Hujam Singh was associated with the Janta Dal Party. He served as the CM of Haryana for a short period of 248 days in 1990-91.

SPORTS

India to host International Equestrian Tent Pegging Championship in Noida

In March 2015, India will hold the International Equestrian Tent Pegging Championship. It will be held from March 10 to 15 by the Equestrian Federation of India. The event will take place at the Noida Sports Stadium.

A total of 17 nations have confirmed their participation in the event. The participating nations are Great Britain, Russia, USA, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Egypt, Jordan, UAE, Iran, India, Iraq, Pakistan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Kazakhstan and Qatar.



World Ice and Snow Sailing Championship to be held in the United States

The World Ice and Snow Sailing Championship, an international sailing competition is being held in eastern Wisconsin on the frozen Lake Winnebago on February 14. Enthusiastic ice and snow sailors from 11 countries will participate in the championship to compete in three disciplines: kites, wings and sails. This is the third time the event is being organised in the United States of America in past 35 years.

35th National Games

Host State: Kerala

Next Hosting State: Goa

Official Mascot: Ammu (The Great Horn Bird, State Bird of Kerala)

Brand Ambassador: Sachin Tendulkar

Official Song: Run Kerala Run

Motto: Get Set Play

Opening Ceremony: Greenfield Stadium, Karyavattam, Tiruvanandapuram

Best Performing State: Kerala Team

Raja Bhalendra Singh Trophy: Services Team

Best Performing Men: Sajin Prakash (Kerala), Swimmer

Best Performing Women: Aakanksha Vora (Maharashtra), Swimmer

National Record: Rajinder Singh makes national record in the men's javelin throw with a massive throw of 82.23m.

Medals Tally	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
First Place: SSC	91	33	31	159
Second Place: Kerala	54	48	60	162
Third Place: Haryana	40	40	27	107

People's XI list for World Cup 2015

Virat Kohli became the only Indian player named in the People's XI list for World Cup 2015. The 11-member team comprising of five batsmen, two all-rounders, one wicketkeeper and three bowlers was selected by more than 34,000 people from across the world.

Complete list of People's World Cup XI

1. Hashim Amla - South Africa
2. Brendon McCullum - New Zealand
3. Kumar Sangakkara - Sri Lanka
4. Virat Kohli - India
5. AB de Villiers - South Africa
6. Steve Smith - Australia
7. Shakib Al Hasan - Bangladesh
8. James Faulkner - Australia
9. Mitchell Johnson - Australia
10. Dale Steyn - South Africa
11. Lasith Malinga - Sri Lanka

Cristiano Ronaldo voted the best player ever to have played in the Premier League

Cristiano Ronaldo has bagged yet another award for football. He was voted as the best player ever in premier league history, for his six seasons for Manchester United during which he scored 84 goals in 196 matches in the league helping the team win three titles in a row. He also helped Man-United to claim the 'Champions League' title in the 2007-08 Season. In the voting, Ronaldo got 24 per cent votes followed by Thierry Henry and Ryan Giggs who got 18 and 13 per cent votes respectively.

Novak Djokovic beats Andy Murray in Australian Open men's final

Siberia's **Novak Djokovic** reclaimed the **Australian Open** title 7-6, 6-7, 6-3, 6-0 winner over the Scottish **Andy Murray**. It's the fifth Australian Open triumph for the 27-year-old Serbian and his eighth Grand Slam overall. Djokovic has established himself as the premier men's tennis player on the hard courts, having walked away with the **Norman Brookes trophy** in 2008, 2011-13 and again this year.

Paes and Hingis wins Australian Open mixed doubles title

India's **Leander Paes** and Switzerland's **Martina Hingis** beat French-Canadian pair of **Kristina Mladenovic and Daniel Nestor** in straight sets in the mixed doubles final in Melbourne. Previously Hingis won her mixed doubles title with Mahesh Bhupathi in 2006. Paes, the 41-year-old Indian, won the mixed double titles with Martina Navratilova at Melbourne Park in 2003.

France wins the 5th World Handball Title

France defeated **Qatar** (25-22) in *World Handball Final* match held in **Qatar** and become world champions for the fifth time. It is important to note that France is European as well as Olympic Champions in Handball. After this win, France has become the only country in handball history to win five World Championships.

Malaysia's Nicol David sets new World record in Squash

Datuk Nicol David of Malaysia has created a new world record in Squash. She topped the world rankings as world number one for straight 106 months. She became World Number One in January 2006. The previous record was 105-month record by New Zealand's Susan Devoy.



Nicol has earned a total of 3,446 points while Egyptian Raneem El Welily was world number two with 2,580 points and England's Laura Massaro is in third place with 2,145 points.

Sports Ministry revised Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puruskar scheme

The **Union Sports Ministry** has revised the **Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puruskar** scheme, which was launched in 2009 by UPA Government to popularize the involvement of corporate and institutional boards in sports.

The award will now be given for four different categories. They are,

- *Identification and nurturing of budding talent*
- *Encouragement of sports through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)*
- *Employment of sports persons and sports welfare measures*
- *Sports for development*

The companies can now spend the money allocated for CSR on promotion and development of sports. The fourth category ie Sports for development is exclusively for Non-Governmental Organizations.

Reliance Communications offers free Twitter for the ICC World Cup

Reliance Communications has partnered with **Twitter** to provide Reliance customers free ICC World Cup coverage without any data charges till March 31. The RCom customers can engage with players, commentators and celebrities and also they can view exclusive pictures and videos from the match for free. Customers who do not have a Twitter account can also access cricket-related Tweets by logging on to www.rcom.co.in/cricket via their mobile phones.

The service also allows you to follow some popular Twitter accounts of

- *Board of Control for Cricket in India (@BCCI)*
- *Harsha Bhogle (@harshabhogle)*
- *MS Dhoni (@msdhoni)*
- *Virat Kohli (@imvkoqli)*

Reliance has come up with a Cricket Portal wherein RCom customers can download exciting content related to the event like match highlights, commentary, and behind the scenes images. All a customer has to do is go to ICCCWC2015.rcom.co.in.

Fastest 50 in ICC Cricket World Cup by Brendon McCullum

New Zealand's Captain **Brendon McCullum** recorded the fastest-ever World Cup fifty, by reaching the landmark against *England* in just **18 balls**. McCullum beat his own World Cup record, having made a fifty off 20 balls against *Canada* in the 2007 World Cup in West Indies.



This fifty is now the third fastest in all one-day internationals. The record holders in fastest fifty are

- *South Africa's* **AB de Villiers** – 16 balls
- *Sri Lanka's* **Sanath Jayasuriya** – 17 balls

Anirban Lahiri lifts Indian Open Golf Title

Indian Golfer **Anirban Lahiri** clinched the Hero Indian Open title after a spectacular fight at the play-off with **SSP Chowrasia** at the prestigious Delhi Golf Club on Sunday (February 22). This win is Lahiri's second European Tour title in two weeks. He had won the **Maybank Malaysian Open** earlier this month. Lahiri became the **VIII Indian** to win the tournament since the event was first played in 1964.

Somdev Devvarman retains the Delhi Open Title

Somdev Devvarman retained the Delhi Open title of Tennis and pocketed 100,000 USD by defeating **Yuki Bhambri** by 3-6, 6-4, 6-0 in the final match held in Delhi. The Delhi Open doubles title was won by Belarus' **Egor Gerasimov** and Russia's **Alexander Kudryavtsev** against Italy's **Riccardo Ghedin** and Japan's **Toshihide Matsui**.

Chris Gayle hits First Double Century in World Cup

West Indies opening batsman Chris Gayle became the first batsman to score a double century in a World Cup. He reached this remarkable feat against Zimbabwe in a Pool B clash in Canberra. He reached 200 runs in just 138 balls. At the end of the innings he scored 215 runs from 147 deliveries, which includes 16 sixes and 10 fours.



Gayle became the first non-Indian player to score a double century in ODIs after Sachin Tendulkar, Sehwag, and Rohit Sharma. Gayle's double ton is the fifth one in all ODI Cricket.

ICC World Cup 2015: Virat Kohli becomes first Indian batsman to score century in a World Cup against Pakistan

Virat Kohli became the first Indian batsman to score a century in a World Cup game against Pakistan on February 15, 2015. Kohli, who scored 107, was also declared as the Player of the Match. The fourth match of the ICC Cricket World Cup 2015 series between India and Pakistan was played at Adelaide Oval Stadium in South Australia and was won by India by a total of 76 runs. Indian Cricket Team took over Pakistan for the sixth consecutive time in the ICC Cricket World Cup.

World Cup 2015 : Ab de Villiers records Fastest 150 in ODI History

AB de Villiers, the Number one ranked ODI batsman in the world, smashed 162 runs from 66 balls against West Indies to record fastest ever ODI 150 (in 64 balls) at Cricket World Cup 2015. De Villiers now holds the record for fastest 50 (16 balls), fastest century (31 balls) and fastest 150 (64 balls). Australia's Shane Watson held the previous record for the fastest 150 in ODIs (83 balls). AB de Villiers' super knock includes 17 fours and 8 sixes.

AB de's knock helped the team to reach 408 runs in 50 overs, the second highest total in World Cup history, only behind India's 413/5 against Bermuda in 2007 World Cup. He also becomes the quickest Captain to reach 3000 runs (in 60 innings). Previous record was by MS Dhoni, who reached 3000 runs in 70 innings.

IMPORTANT DAYS IN FEBRUARY

February 1 2015

Remembered Day: 38th Indian Coast Guard Day

Organized: India

Purpose: To protect India's maritime interests and enforce maritime law, with jurisdiction over the territorial waters of India, including its contiguous zone and exclusive economic zone.

February 2 2015

Remembered Day: World Wetland Day

Purpose: To raise public awareness of wetland values and benefits and promote the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

Theme: Wetlands for Our Future.

February 4 2015

Remembered Day: World Cancer Day

Organized: Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) & UN

Purpose: To raise awareness of cancer among the people and to encourage its prevention, detection, and treatment.

Theme: 'Not beyond us'

February 06 2015

Remembered Day: International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation

Organized: UN

Purpose: The day is being observed to make the world aware of female genital mutilation (FGM) and to promote its eradication.

Theme: Mobilization and Involvement of Health Personnel to Accelerate Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation.

February 10 2015

Remembered Day: National Deworming Day

Organized: India

Purpose: Focused on reducing the threat of parasitic worm infections in India.

February 13 2015

Remembered Day: World Radio Day

Organized: UNESCO

Purpose: To promote greater participation of youth in radio, not only as listeners, but as producers and broadcasters.

Theme: Youth and Radio

February 20 2015

Remembered Day: World Day of Social Justice

Organized: International Labour Organization & UN

Purpose: to promote efforts to tackle issues such as poverty, exclusion and unemployment.

Theme: Ending human trafficking and forced labour

February 21 2015

Remembered Day: International Mother Language Day (IMLD)

Organized: UNESCO & UN

Purpose: To promote awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism.

Theme: Inclusion in and through education: Language counts

February 24 2015

Remembered Day: Central Excise Day

Organized: India

Purpose: To encourage the employees of excise department to carry out the central excise duty all over the India in better way in order to prevent the corruption in goods manufacturing business as well as implement other rules to carry out best possible excise services.

Theme: Year of Tax Payers

February 28 2015

Remembered Day: National Science Day

Organized: India

Purpose: To spread the message of importance of science and its application among the people.

Theme: Science for Nation Building

Remembered Day: Rare Disease Day

Purpose: To raise awareness for rare diseases and improve access to treatment and medical representation for individuals with rare diseases and their families

Theme: Day-by-Day, Hand-in-Hand

All the Best for your Exams. Feel free to contact us at AffairsCloud@gmail.com and SenDhil@affairscloud.com

AffairsCloud Specials – Check Out Our Pages

Current Affairs Sections

- [Current Affairs Today](#)
- [Current Affairs Monthly PDF](#)
- [Current Affairs Daily Quiz](#)
- [Current Affairs Monthly Quiz Competition & Mock Test](#)
- [Study Materials PDF](#)

Subject-Wise Quiz Sections

- [Reasoning Quiz](#)
- [Quantitative Aptitude Quiz](#)
- [English Quiz](#)
- [Computer Quiz](#)

Study Guide Sections

- [General Aptitude](#)
- [Reasoning](#)
- [Letter Writing](#)
- [Math Tricks](#)
- [Computer Awareness](#)

All the Best