

Current Affairs

January 2015

GoSarkari.com

Useful for UPSC Civil Services, State Civil Services, SSC, IBPS PO, IBPS Clerical, SBI, NDA, Afcats, FCI and others

Table of Contents:

Topic	Page No.
National	03
International	09
Economy	12
Appointments	14
Sports	15
Science and Technology	17
Reports and Surveys	17
Defence	19
Regional	21
Books and Authors	23
Obituary	24
Awards	26
Important Days	29
Committees	30
Environment	31
Government Schemes	33

National

Hyderabad to host World Congress on Information Technology in 2018:

- Hyderabad will host the World Congress on Information Technology (WCIT) in 2018. This will be the first WCIT to be held in India and the theme of the 2018 WCIT will be **Future of enterprises**.

The hosting of WCIT will give a big push to the information technology industry in Telangana and is expected to create opportunities for business worth 2 trillion US dollars, besides helping brand building of Hyderabad.

In 2014, the 19th WCIT was held in Guadalajara in Mexico. The theme was **Building the Digital Age Together**.

- The first WCIT was held in 1978 and it is held since then every two years

Former PM Manmohan Singh adopted Pachim Bekeli Gaon Panchyat under Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana:

- Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on 17 January 2015 adopted Pachim Bekeli Gaon Panchyat under Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojna (SAGY). Pachim Bekeli Gaon Panchyat is located in Kamrup district of Assam.
- Manmohan Singh represents Assam in the Rajya Sabha. Almost 125 MPs have adopted a village under SAGY since the announcement of the Yojana by PM Narendra Modi on 15 August 2014. Some of the MPs and the villages adopted by them are:
 - Prime Minister Narendra Modi: Jayapur village in Varanasi, Uttar-Pradesh
 - Hema Malini: Raval village, Uttar Pradesh
 - Sachin Tendulkar: Puttamraju Kandrika village, Andhra

Pradesh

- **Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana**
Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 15 August 2014 announced Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana. It aims to cover 2500 villages by 2019. Under the project, each Member of Parliament (MP) will take up the responsibility of providing infrastructure and developing three villages by 2019.
- The objective of the project is to create a holistic development of all adopted villages by the MPs in all aspects —human, personal, social, economic and environmental development, including provision of basic amenities, services, security and good governance.

NHRC issued notice to UP Government over Hooch Tragedy:

- National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on 19 January 2015 issued notice to Uttar Pradesh Government over hooch tragedy in Malihabad near Lucknow and its bordering Unnao district.
- **Hooch Tragedy**
The hooch tragedy occurred on 12 January 2015 in Kharta and other villages in Malihabad area of Lucknow and Talasarai village in Hasanganj area of Unnao district.

The hooch tragedy has so far claimed 49 lives and more than 100 people are still undergoing treatment in various hospitals. The condition of over a dozen patients, who consumed spurious liquor, continues to remain serious and they have been put on life support systems.

Many victims have also lost their eyesight permanently. The state government ordered a magisterial enquiry into the incident and

Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav also ordered the suspension of 20 officials including Administrative, Police and Excise Officials.

India signed MoU with South Africa for developing Youth Enterprises:

- **Highlights of the agreement**
 - The agreement was signed for developing youth owned enterprises in South Africa.
 - The MoU, besides cooperation in MSME sector, also focuses on BBC's efforts to economically empower the marginalized group in South Africa through NSIC's Rapid Incubation Programme.
 - BBC plans to establish 5 Rapid Incubation Centres in South Africa in cooperation with NSIC.

India-South Africa

India-South Africa cooperation is about sharing knowledge and expertise, exchange of best practices, supporting innovation and building capacity and skills.

Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojna made it to Guinness World Records:

- Indian Banks opened 11.50 crore accounts under the Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana in a short span of five months. The feat was commended by the Guinness Book of World Records.
- PMJDY was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in August 2014. The scheme was launched for opening the most bank accounts—about 1.80 crore—in one week as part of the financial inclusion campaign.

India signed an agreement on transfer of sentenced persons with Hong Kong:

- Under the agreement, the two sides will exchange sentenced prisoners in each other's jurisdiction. The agreement will mostly apply to Indian prisoners as there are very few Hong Kong residents in Indian prisons.

66th Republic Day celebrated across the Nation:

- Main theme of 2015 Republic Day Parade was **Women Empowerment (Nari Shakti)**.
- US President Barack Obama was the Chief Guest at the 66th Republic Day parade.
- For the first time the Republic Day parade witnessed an all-women contingent of Indian Army, Navy and Air Force.
- • For the first time, the President of United States attended the parade as Chief Guest.
- • For the first time, the President of India Pranab Mukherjee and the chief guest, US President Barack Obama arrived in different motorcades, a departure from the standard practice of arriving together.
- • US President was honoured by the Guard of Honour at the Rashtrapati Bhavan. The Guard of Honour was led by Wing Commander Puja Thakur who became the first woman to give Guard of Honour to a visiting major foreign dignitary at the Rashtrapati Bhavan.
- **Facts about Republic Day**
- • The first Chief Guest of Republic Day Parade was President of Indonesia Sukarno in 1950.

- During 1950–1954, Republic Day celebrations were organised at different venues. From 1955, the parade was started at Rajpath. In 1955, the then Governor General of Pakistan Malik Ghulam Muhammad became the chief Guest of Republic Day Parade.
- Parade starts when prime minister of the India offer garland at the Amar Jawan Jyoti at the India Gate. It is done to commemorate all the sacrifices of the Indian army soldiers while saving their country.
- The military salute is taken by the President of India during the parade whereas military salute is taken by the state governors in the state capitals.

Union Cabinet approved MoU on Tourism between India and Oman:

- The MoU will strengthen cooperation in the field of tourism between tourism ministries of both the countries.
- Oman is an important tourism source market for India in the West Asian region.

Union Ministry of Defence announced 2015 Republic Day Parade Awards:

The awards were announced in the following category:

Services category: Brigade of Guards Regiment and Sikh Regiment jointly adjudged the best marching contingents in the Republic Day Parade 2015.

Para-Military Forces: Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) contingent was awarded the best contingent.

Tableaux Category: First position won by Maharashtra Tableau, which depicted Wari to Pandharpur (the pilgrimage to Pandharpur). While

Jharkhand tableau on Maluti Temples won the second best and the third position went to Karnataka Tableau based on famous Channapatna Toys.

Competitive category of school children items: Daang Dance of Gujarat presented by West Zone Cultural Centre, Udaipur (Rajasthan) won the award. A Consolation Prize was awarded to South Central Zone Cultural Centre, Nagpur (Maharashtra) for their beautiful portrayal of Lezim Dance of Maharashtra.

The Tableau presented by the CPWD giving a majestic floral depiction of Gaumukh was also selected for a Special Prize by the Jury.

Wing Commander Puja Thakur became first lady officer to lead Inter-Service Guard of Honour:

- The Guard of Honour was inspected by the US President Barack Obama.
- Puja Thakur leading the Inter-Service Guard of Honour was in line with the theme of Nari Shakti (Women Power) chosen for the 2015 Republic Day parade.

Union Government released Commemorative Postage stamps with Swachh Bharat Mission as theme:

- The Swachh Bharat Mission was launched by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 2 October 2014, on the occasion of Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi

Union Government divested 10 percent stake in Coal India Limited:

- This was the largest ever disinvestment among Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) and the stake sale exceeds the previous record of over 15000 crore rupees realized in 2010 through the initial public offering (IPO) of CIL.
- Coal India Limited (CIL) is a Maharatna company.

18th National Conference on e-Governance held in Gujarat:

- The main Theme of the Conference was Digital Governance – New Frontiers. The focus sector was Skill Development & Employability.

International

Nissan and NASA partnered to Jointly Develop and Deploy Autonomous Drive Vehicles:

- Under this contract the two organisations will jointly develop and deploy advance autonomous vehicle systems and prepare them for commercial application. First such vehicle will be tested by end of 2015.
- Nissan Motor is second-largest automotive company of Japan with its headquarters in Yokohama, Japan.

Haiti president announced formation of new government under Prime Minister Evans Paul:

- Haitian President Michel Martelly on 18 January 2015 announced the formation of new government that will be led by newly elected Prime Minister Evans Paul.
- The new cabinet was announced amid the political unrest against Martelly's rule on the impoverished Caribbean country. Martelly has been in power since 2011, but he has failed to end Haiti's long-

running political turmoil and protesters have called on street protests aimed at resignation of Martelly.

EU decided to lift ban on import of mangoes from India:

- India will be able to start the export again after a new EU legislation is formally adopted and published by the European Commission.

The decision to lift the ban was made after India, the world's biggest producer of Mangoes made significant improvements in plant health controls and certification system.

- The Commission's Food and Veterinary Office in India in September 2014 carried out an audit and showed significant improvements in the phytosanitary export certification system.

However, imports of four other products namely aubergines, bitter gourds, snake gourds and patra leaves, remain suspended subject to sustained improvements in plant pest control.

Why Indian mangoes were banned in European Union?

European Union issued a temporary ban on import of Indian mangoes on 1 May 2014 after fruit flies and other quarantine pests were found in 207 consignments. The consignment infested with fruit flies were found by authorities in Brussels. The ban was supposed to be effective till December 2015.

The ban was imposed as they feared that the fruit flies could damage European salad crops of tomato and cucumber.

The EU accounts for more than 50 percent of total exports of fruits

and vegetables from India. The UK is the main destination, followed by the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium.

Dubai's Maze Tower listed in Guinness World Records:

- The 55-storey tall Maze Tower is located near the Sheikh Zayed Road in the Dubai Financial District.
- Dubai's Maze Tower was on 21 January 2015 listed in the Guinness World Record for being the world's largest vertical maze.

Former Thailand Premier Yingluck Shinawatra impeached:

- Yingluck is the first Prime Minister to be impeached by parliament in Thailand's history.
- The impeachment was a result of an allegation for failing to stop corruption in rice-pledging scheme.

Alexis Tsipras sworn in as PM of Greece:

- He is the head of Greece's far-left SYRIZA party.
- He fought the elections with campaign **Hope is Coming**.
- He became the first prime minister in Greek history to be sworn in without the traditional oath on a Bible and blessing of basil and water from the Greek Archbishop.
- He became first to take a civil rather than a religious oath of office.
- He also became the youngest Prime Minister of Greece since 1865.

Churches in England opposed Mitochondria Donation Technique to produce babies:

- The Churches of England in fifth week of January 2015 opposed the proposed changes to the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act, 1990 that would allow IVF babies to be born with DNA from three different people. This would be done through a technique called mitochondrial donation.
- The Church of England and the Catholic Church in England and Wales are opposing the technique because they are not sure that the technique of adding a donor woman's mitochondria to another woman's egg was safe or ethical.
- The proposed mitochondrial donation technique developed in Newcastle University involves addition of healthy mitochondria from donor women to an egg from another. Then it is fertilized with one man's sperm. In this process, mitochondria are passed to a child from the mother.

The technique in practice since 2007 is admired internationally and has affected families by providing healthy children.

- Mitochondria are tiny compartments found within cells within the body and create energy rich molecules for the cells. These are known as the powerhouse of the cell as their most crucial role is to convert energy locked in food into energy the cell can use. Currently, about one baby in every 6500 is born with mitochondrial disease

Economy

HDFC Bank featured among world's 50 most valuable banks in 2014:

- The list of 66 largest banks in the world by market capitalisation as on 31 December 2014 was compiled and released in January 2015 by Relbanks. The top ten banks include 4 US banks, 4 Chinese

banks, 1 bank of each United Kingdom (UK) and Australia. **These top ten banks are** Wells Fargo & Co. of US with market cap of 284.39 Billion US dollar

- Industrial & Commercial Bank of China (ICBC) of China with market cap of 269.70 Billion US dollar
- JP Morgan Chase & Co. of US with market cap of 233.94 Billion US dollar
- China Construction Bank of China with market cap of 213.18 Billion US dollar
- Bank of America of US with market cap of 188.14 Billion US dollar
- Agricultural Bank of China with market cap of 187.34 Billion US dollar
- HSBC Holdings of UK with market cap of 181.24 Billion US dollar
- Bank of China with market cap of 177.65 Billion US dollar
- Citigroup Inc of US with market cap of 163.93 Billion US dollar
- Commonwealth Bank of Australia with market cap of 112.37 Billion US dollar

Apple Inc recorded the highest-ever profit of 18 billion US dollars in corporate history worldwide:

- Apple now has a cash pile up of 178 billion US dollar which is enough to buy IBM or the equivalent to pay 556 US dollar to every American.

CCEA approved HDFC Bank's proposal to raise foreign holding limit to 74 per cent:

- The decision will enable inflow of around 10000 crore rupees into the country from overseas investors. HDFC Bank would raise the fund through issuing of equity shares to non-resident Indians

(NRIs) or foreign institutional investors (FIIs) or foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) subject to aggregate foreign shareholding not exceeding 74 per cent of the post issue paid up capital.

Zomato Media Pvt Ltd acquired Turkey-based firm Mekanist:

- Mekanist is an online restaurant search and discovery platform based in Turkey.

ErosNow tied up with RailTel to provide Streaming Services to Rail Passengers:

- RailTel Corporation of India is a PSU under the Ministry of Railway which focuses on providing broadband and VPN services.
- It was formed in September 2000 with the objective of creating nation-wide broadband, telecom and multimedia network to modernize Indian Railways.

Appointments

Pahlaj Nihalani appointed as Chairman of Censor Board of Film Certification:

UN Secretary–General appointed Saraswathy Menon in peace-building panel

K Durga Prasad appointed as the Special DG of CRPF:

- It was established in 1939 and is the largest Central Armed Police Forces in India that operates under Union Ministry of Home Affairs.
- It is called as the Peace Keeper of the Nation .
- At present, Prakash Mishra is the Director General of CRPF

S Jaishankar appointed as the Foreign Secretary of India

- He as the Ambassador to the US is credited for rebuilding India-US ties after the Devyani Khobragade incident.
- Jaishankar as Ambassador to China is credited for his deft handling of tensions between New Delhi and Beijing over the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in 2013.
- He is the India's longest serving Ambassador to China.

Steve Easterbrook appointed as CEO of McDonald's Corporation

Shekhar Sen appointed as Chairman of Sangeet Natak Akademi:

- Shekhar Sen will succeed Leela Samson who resigned from the position on 5 September 2014.
- The Sangeet Natak Akademi was created by the then Union Ministry of Education through a resolution dated 31 May 1952.

Krishna Chaudhary appointed as the Director General of ITBP.

Hanumanthu Purushotham took charge as CMD of NRDC

About NRDC:

- The NRDC was established in India in 1953 to help develop and promote technologies developed at various National Research & Development institutions.

Sports

South Africa's AB de Villiers hit fastest century in ODIs:

- The 30-year-old South African captain scored the century in just 31 balls.

He achieved the feat in second ODI match of the 5-match ODI series played at the Wanderers in Johannesburg against West Indies.

- **Fastest ODI centuries**
 - **AB de Villiers of South Africa** – in 31 balls against West Indies in Johannesburg on 18 January 2015
 - **Corey Anderson of New Zealand** – in 36 balls against West Indies in Queenstown on 1 January 2014
 - **Shahid Afridi of Pakistan** – in 37 balls against Sri Lanka in Nairobi on 4 October 1996
 - **Mark Boucher of South Africa** – in 44 balls against Zimbabwe in Potchefstroom on 20 September 2006
 - **Brian Lara of West Indies** – in 45 balls against Bangladesh in Dhaka on 9 October 1999

•
[Stephen Constantine appointed as head coach of India's men football team](#)

[Argentine playmaker Juan Roman Riquelme retired from Football](#)

[Saina Nehwal won women's single of Syed Modi Grand Prix Gold Badminton Tournament 2015](#)

[Sean Abbott of Australia named as the Bradman Young Cricketer of the Year 2015](#)

[India to host ICC Twenty20 World Cup in 2016.](#)

[ICC lifted the five-year ban imposed on Pakistan's fast bowler Mohammad Amir.](#)

[Paul van Ass appointed as coach of National Men's Hockey team:](#)

- He succeeded Terry Walsh of Australia.

Serena Williams of US won the women's single title of Australian Open 2015:

- The world number one American defeated Maria Sharapova, the world number two from Russia 6-3, 7-6(5) in Melbourne, Australia.

Science and Technology

Year 2014 ranked as Earth's hottest year since 1880:

- The year 2014 was ranked as the Earth's hottest year since 1880 as per the two separate analyses done by National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) scientists and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) scientists.

Reports and Surveys

ILO released a report titled World Employment and Social Outlook – Trends 2015:

- The report warned that unemployment will continue to rise in the coming years, as the global economy has entered a new period combining slower growth, widening inequalities and turbulence.

NTCA released report on Status of Tigers in India, 2014:

- The latest report on Status of Tigers in India, 2014 showed 30 percent increase in tiger population to 2226 from 1706 in 2010.
- India now has 70 per cent of the tiger population in the world.

- The Mudumalai-Bandipur-Nagarahole-Wayanad complex holds the world's single largest tiger population currently estimated at over 570 tigers.
- The tiger population had increased in Karnataka, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.
- Odisha reported a fall in number.

UNCTAD released Global Investment Trends Monitor Report:

- The report highlights that Global Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows declined by 8 percent in 2014 to an estimated 1.26 trillion US dollars due to the fragility of the global economy, political uncertainty and geopolitical risks.
- In 2014, China was the largest recipient of FDI with an increase of 3 percent FDI. As largest recipient of FDI, China replaced the US, a position that was held by it since 1980s.

Among the top five FDI recipients in the world, four are developing economies, the rankings is:

- China with 128 billion US dollar
- Hong Kong with 111 billion US dollar
- The United States with 86 billion US dollar
- Singapore with 81 billion US dollar
- Brazil with 62 billion US dollar
- In 2014 FDI flow in India increased by 26 percent to an estimated 35 billion US dollar with maximum growth in the services sector, despite the decline in global Foreign Direct Investment inflows.

Defence

First set of RIC readers handed over to Chiefs of Indian Navy and Coast Guard:

- These RIC readers will be used by maritime security agencies to check identity cards of the residents of coastal area issued under RIC Scheme.

As per RIC Scheme under the National Population Registrar, government had issued these identity cards to more than 65 lakh residents of coastal villages. Apart from this, the Union government is also preparing the National Population Registrar (NPR) in 3331 coastal villages under the said scheme.

- **Resident Identity Card (RIC) and Scheme**
 - The scheme aims at strengthening coastal security measures in 9 states and 4 Union Territories that shares their borders with sea-line
 - The scheme of preparing RICs for residents of coastal areas is being implemented by the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, an office under the Union Home Ministry
 - Cards issued under the scheme will help the coastal security agencies to authenticate an individual's demographic and biometric authentication without using Internet services
 - These RIC cards are manufactured indigenously by Indian technology firms-- Ms ITI Limited and Ms Electronics Corporation of India Limited (ECIL)
 - These cards can be read only when the key present in the RIC is authenticated by the Verification Authentication card
 - RIC reader is temper-proof and self-destructs itself if it is opened in an unauthorized manner

Initially, these card readers are issued to the Navy and Coast Guard but later they will be issued to the Maritime Police stations and State Governments as well.

Indigenously-built Light Combat Aircraft Tejas handed over to IAF

- **Characteristics of Tejas**
 - Tejas is a Light Combat Aircraft that uses fourth generation technologies
 - It is built from CFC materials and has unstable aerodynamics
 - It is equipped with a quadruplex digital fly-by-wire flight control system to ease handling by the pilot
 - It incorporates an advanced glass cockpit that comprises all the round dialed electro-mechanical instruments
 - It is fitted with the coherent pulse-Doppler Multi Mode Radar that is designed to operate equally effectively in the Air to Air and Air to Surface domains.
 - It is fitted with Open Architecture Computer (OAC)
- **LCA Tejas**

LCA Tejas is a lightweight multi-role jet fighter developed by India under a project that commenced in 1983 and had cost 17000 crore rupees to the exchequer. It is a tailless, compound delta wing design powered by a single engine. It came from the LCA programme that was initiated to replace the ageing MiG-21 fighters in Indian Air Force's combat.

Four ICG vessels commissioned at Mormugao Port of Vasco:

- Union Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar on 19 January 2015 commissioned four Indian Coast Guard (ICG) vessels at

Mormugao Port of Vasco in Goa. The launched vessels include two fast patrol vessels namely ICG Amogh and ICG Ameya and two interceptor boats Charlie 413 (C-413) and Charlie 414 (C-414).

These boats will be mainly used for patrolling and interception and will also be used for the purpose of research and rescue by the agency.

- The two fast patrolling vessels have been built by Cochin Shipyard Ltd and have a displacement of 290 tons and can hit maximum speed of 33 knots. On the other hand, the smaller interceptor boats have been built by Larsen & Turbo shipyard Ltd. Hazira and have a displacement of 106 tons and can hit a maximum speed of 45 knots.

India successfully test-fired canister-based ICBM Agni-5 missile:

- Agni-5 missile is a three stage solid propellant missile with strike range of over 5000 kilometer and capable of carrying nuclear warhead of over one tonne.
- It was tested from Wheeler's Island off Odisha coast.

Regional

[Netherlands, Thailand inked MoU with Sikkim to help in development of floriculture:](#)

- **Features of the MoU**
 - Governments of the Netherland and Thailand will provide expertise and technology to develop hybrid Sikkim's Cymbidium and other orchids and also cut flowers
 - They will help the state in marketing and transportation of

flowers

Floriculture in Sikkim

Geographical and environmental conditions of Sikkim are quite conducive for development of floriculture at a higher altitude. Apart from this, Sikkim's model of organic farming and cultivation gives longevity of up to 90 days to orchid flowers and up to 10-20 days in case of cut flowers.

Kerala to get first International Institute of Music:

- It will be the first international institute in India that is dedicated to music.
- A Trust headed by Sarod Maestro Ustad Amjad Ali Khan has been entrusted with the responsibility to set up the Institute.

Goa to host Indo-Russian Musical Festival ZimaFest

Chandigarh launched a smart city app named Smart Chandigarh:

- The app was launched to create awareness on consumer rights and responsibilities and provide all types of citizen-centric and public utility services and information to the residents.

Maharashtra approved field trials for GM (Genetically modified) food:

- With this permission, Maharashtra became the fourth state after Punjab, Delhi and Andhra Pradesh to approve open field trials in GM crops.

Purple Tea can be produced in Assam: Experts:

- Purple Tea that is grown only in Kenya was in news in January 2015. It was in news because experts at Tocklai Tea Research Institute (TTRI) Assam claimed that Longai area of Cachar district in the Barak Valley and the hilly forested areas of Karbi Anglong district of Assam have potential to produce Purple Tea.
- Till date, Kenya is the only known place in the world that produces this health-rich purple tea. This tea is three to four times expensive in comparison to black tea.
- Assam is the largest producer of tea in India, while China is the largest producer of tea in the world and is followed by India, Kenya, Sri Lanka and Turkey.

Books and Authors

[Book on Sonia Gandhi titled The Red Sari written by Javier Moro released in India:](#)

The Red Sari: written by Spanish author Javier Moro

- The Red Sari, an unauthorized biography of Congress Party President Sonia Gandhi, was released by Roli Books in India on 16 January 2015. The book has been written by Spanish author Javier Moro.
- The English version of the book was not allowed to release in India in 2010 because it was argued by the Congress Party and Sonia Gandhi's lawyers that the book is full of untruths, half-truths, falsehoods, defamatory statements, completely imaginary and invented conversations.

Hindi Novel Farishta authored by Kapil Isapuri

- **Farishta: Kapil Isapuri**

Hindi novel Farishta was in news in the fourth week of January 2015 after its author Kapil Isapuri accused the makers of film PK of plagiarism. The book was published in 2013.

Obituary

Veteran freedom fighter Ghelubhai Naik passed away:

- Legendary social activist and freedom fighter Ghelubhai Naik passed away on 16 January 2015 following a brief illness in Dang District, Gujarat. He was 90.
- **Ghelubhai Naik**
 - Ghelubhai was close to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and started his activity in Dang District as a Sarvodaya worker in 1948.
 - He was famously known for his Gandhian acts and had also set up Swaraj ashram for pioneering the education activity for the upliftment of the tribal people.
 - Naik was also known for changing the names of thousands of tribal people, who were earlier bearing names like Ravio, Thagio, Nariyo etc.

Saudi Arabia King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz died:

- The new crown prince is Muqrin bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. Both Salman and Muqrin are younger brothers of Abdullah.

Legendary cartoonist R K Laxman died:

- He started his career with Free Press Journal where he remained for a brief period
- He joined Times Group in 1947 and with the Group till the end of his life
- He created the popular mascot for the Asian Paints group called Gattu in 1954
- His sketches were included in television adaptation of Malgudi Days, which was written by his elder brother RK Narayan and directed by Shankar Nag
- He was born in the then Mysore State (now part of Karnataka) on 24 October 1921
- Popular comedy programme for the national television Wagle Ki Duniya's characters were created by R K Laxman which narrated the issues of common middle-class Indian man

Hockey Olympian Jaswant Singh Rajput died:

- He was part of Indian hockey team that won gold medal in 1948 London and 1952 Helsinki Olympics.

Australian golfer Kelvin David George Nagle died

Malayalam actor Mala Aravindan died.

Subhash Ghising, the President of Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF), died:

- He was the person who gave birth to the Gorkhaland movement (GNLF) in the 1980s for a creation of a separate Gorkhaland State by carving out North Bengal's Darjeeling district.
- His demand led to formation of Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC), a semi-autonomous governing body for the hills. DGHC

was formed after Union, State Government and GNLF signed an agreement on 23 August 1988.

Awards

Amitabh Bachchan presented with Social Media Person of the Year award 2015

Actor Amitabh Bachchan was on 13 January 2015 presented with the Social Media Person of the Year Award 2015 by the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI).

J & K selected for the National Award of e-Governance for Best District Level initiative:

- e-Panchayat project was launched in 2013-14 in Jammu and Kashmir to strengthen 147 Panchayats. Under the project, a decentralised regime of Panchayats has been established with service delivery shifted from block level to Panchayat level.

Miss Colombia Paulina Vega crowned Miss Universe 2014:

- She was crowned at the final of 63rd edition of Miss Universe held in Miami, US on 25 January 2015. Vega,

President approved conferment of Padma Awards 2015 on 104 persons:

- **Padma Vibhushan**
- Lal Krishna Advani
- Amitabh Bachchan
- Prakash Singh Badal

- Dr. D Veerendra Heggade
- Mohammad Yusuf Khan alias Dilip Kumar
- Jagadguru Ramanandacharya Swami Rambhadracharya
- Malur Ramaswamy Srinivasan
- Kottayan K. Venugopal
- Karim Al Hussaini Aga Khan (Foreigner)
-
- **Padma Bhushan**
- Rajat Sharma
- Professor Manjul Bhargava
- (NRI/PIO)
-
- Bill Gates (Foreigner)
- Melinda Gates (Foreigner)
- Saichiro Misumi (Foreigner)
- Dr. Subhash C. Kashyap
-
- **Padma Shri**
- Sanjay Leela Bhansali
- Dr. Randeep Guleria
- Tarak Mehta
- P. V. Sindhu
- Huang Baosheng (Foreigner)
- Sardara Singh
- Professor Jacques Blamont
- (Foreigner)
- Jean-Claude Carriere (Foreigner)

- Padma Awards are one of the highest civilian Awards of the country that are conferred in three categories Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri.
 - The awards are announced on the occasion of Republic Day every year. The Awards are given in various fields of activities including art, social work, public affairs, science, trade, medicine, literature and education, sports, civil service, etc.
 - Padma Vibhushan is awarded for exceptional and distinguished service; Padma Bhushan is awarded for distinguished service of high order and Padma Shri is awarded for distinguished service in any field.

Major Mukund Varadarajan, Naik Neeraj Kumar Singh posthumously awarded with Ashok Chakra:

- Ashok Chakra is India's highest peacetime military decoration awarded for valor, courageous action or self-sacrifice away from the battlefield.
- The decoration is awarded either to military or civilian personnel and can be awarded posthumously

Arundhathi Subramaniam won Khushwant Singh Memorial Prize for Poetry:

- Poetess Arundhathi Subramaniam on 24 January 2015 won the inaugural Khushwant Singh Memorial Prize for Poetry at Jaipur Literature Festival.
- She was awarded for her work **When God is a Traveller.**
- She is the author of numerous books, namely
 - a) Where I Live published
 - b) Sadhguru: More Than a Life
 - c) The Book of Buddha
 - d) On Cleaning Bookshelves

Important Days

67th Army Day observed on 15 January:

- India on 15 January 2015 observed the 67th Army Day. The day is celebrated to commemorate the day, when Lieutenant General (later Field Marshal) K M Cariappa on 15 January 1949 became the first Indian Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army post Independence. He had succeeded General Sir Francis Butcher, the last British Commander-in-Chief of India.

National Immunization Day for the year 2015 observed on 18 January:

- Every year, India observes National Immunisation Day in January to mark the launch of pulse polio programme. India has been implementing the Pulse Polio Programme since 1995. In India, the last case of wild polio was reported on 13 January 2011.

National Girl Child Day observed on 24 January:

- This celebration was started to offer more supports and new opportunities to the girls in the country.

Anti-Leprosy Day observed to focus Attention on Disease:

- Anti-Leprosy Day was observed on 30 January 2015 nationwide to focus attention on the disease which is also known as the Hansen's disease.
- The day is celebrated in the memory of Mahatma Gandhi in order to re-memorize his selfless efforts and care for the people affected by the infectious disease leprosy.

- Leprosy also known as Hansen's disease (HD), is a chronic infection caused by the bacteria Mycobacterium leprae and Mycobacterium lepromatosis.

Committees

Committee on setting up of Semiconductor Wafer FAB projects

- The Union Cabinet on 28 January 2015 reconstituted the Empowered Committee on setting up of Semiconductor Wafer Fabrication (FAB) manufacturing facilities in the country. The reconstituted committee will be headed by NITI Aayog member V K Saraswat.

RBI constituted High Powered Committee headed by R Gandhi on Urban Cooperative Banks:

- The eight-member committee will be chaired by R Gandhi, the Deputy Governor of Reserve Bank of India
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on 30 January 2015 constituted a High Powered Committee to re-examine and recommend appropriate set of businesses, size, conversion and licensing terms for the Urban Cooperative Banking (UCB) Sector.

Environment

Critically endangered Forest Owlet sighted in Betul, Madhya Pradesh:

- Forest Owlet (Athene blewitti or Heteroglaux blewitti) is an owl and is endemic to the forests of central India. The species that belongs to the typical owls' family, Strigidae is on the verge of extinction.

Periyar Tiger Reserve won NTCA biennial award:

The Periyar Tiger Reserve of Kerala on 20 January 2015 won the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) biennial award. It was awarded for encouraging local public participation in managing the reserve.

NTCA released report on Status of Tigers in India, 2014:

- The latest report on Status of Tigers in India, 2014 showed 30 percent increase in tiger population to 2226 from 1706 in 2010. India now has 70 per cent of the tiger population in the world. The report was released by National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA).
- The largest increase was recorded in the Western Ghats Landscape complex comprising Kerala, Karnataka, Goa and Tamil Nadu with 776 tigers (up from 402 in 2006).
- In 2006, the number of tigers in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka were 76, 46 and 290 respectively. In 2014, the number of tiger increased to 229, 136 and 406 in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka respectively.
- The Mudumalai-Bandipur-Nagarahole-Wayanad complex holds the world's single largest tiger population currently estimated at over 570 tigers.
- Goa now has a persistent tiger presence with three to five animals. The tiger population had increased in Karnataka, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Odisha reported a fall in number.
- The population had increased at the rate of six per cent per annum in India from 2006 while the world lost 97 per cent tigers in the last 50 years in 13 countries. The main reasons for this increase were effective tackling of poaching, and the positive attitude of the wildlife services.

- The latest round of assessment used state-of-the art technology of double sampling, using camera traps to estimate the assessment and distribution of tigers in 47 reserves in 18 States.

Bhagabatpur Crocodile Project in Sunderbans got a fresh start with expert assistance:

- It was in news because it got a fresh start with the help of renowned experts in herpetology who introduced global best practices in crocodile conservation.
- The project was started in mid-1970s with an aim to increase the number of saltwater crocodiles, a Schedule-I species under Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. The project is situated next to the uninhabited Lothian Island, far from the mainland in the Sunderbans archipelago.

PETA announced to create India's first fenced elephant sanctuary near Bengaluru:

- Buckley and it will come up in an area of 49.5 hectare within the Biological Park which is an extension of the Bannerghatta National Park.

Government Schemes

Union Government launched two schemes to support Scheduled Castes:

- These schemes are Venture Capital Fund for Scheduled Castes and Green Business scheme.
- **Venture Capital Fund for Scheduled Castes**
The Venture Capital Fund for Scheduled Castes scheme was

launched with an initial capital of 200 crore rupees. Under the scheme, financial assistance of 15 Crore rupees for a period of 6 years will be provided to 30 SC entrepreneurs in a year.

IFCI Limited will be the Sponsor, Settler and Asset Management Company or Nodal Agency to operate the scheme. It will contribute 50 crore rupees which would comprise 5 crore rupees as sponsor and 45 crore rupees as investor.

The objectives of the Venture Capital Fund scheme are:

- To promote entrepreneurship amongst the Scheduled castes who are oriented towards innovation and growth technologies.
- To provide concessional finance to the Scheduled Caste (SC) entrepreneurs, who will create wealth and value for society and at the same time will promote profitable businesses.
- To develop SC entrepreneurs economically.
- To enhance direct and indirect employment generation for SC population in India.

Green Business Scheme

Under this Scheme, loan for unit cost up to 1 lakh rupees at concessional rate of interest will be provided to Scheduled Castes for activities such as e-rickshaw, Solar Pump and Solar energy powered implements, poly house etc.

Green Business Scheme for providing financial assistance has been launched keeping in focus climate change.

PM Narendra Modi launched Sukanya Samridhi Yojana under BBBP campaign:

- Sukanya Samridhi Yojana will enable parents to open bank accounts of girls who are under 10 years of age.

- Sukanya Samridhi Account will fetch an interest rate of 9.1 percent and provide income tax rebate.
- Sukanya Samridhi Account can be opened at any time from the birth of a girl child till she attains the age of 10 years with a minimum deposit of 1000 rupees.
- A maximum of 1.5 lakh rupees can be deposited during the financial year. The account can be opened in any post office or authorised branches of commercial banks.
- The account will remain operative for 21 years from the date of opening of the account or marriage of the girl child after attaining 18 years of age.
- To meet the requirement of higher education expenses, partial withdrawal of 50 percent of the balance amount will be allowed after the girl child has attended 18 years of age.

Union Government launched National Heritage Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY):

- HRIDAY seeks to promote an integrated, inclusive and sustainable development of heritage sites, focusing on maintenance of monuments and on advancement of the entire ecosystem.
- In the initial phase of HRIDAY, 12 heritage cities have been identified which will be rejuvenated and developed. Union Government will provide 500 crore rupees to these 12 cities.
- The scheme will be completely funded by union Government to create infrastructure and provide facilities around the heritage sites to attract more tourists.
- **Amount allocated to 12 cities based on city population:**

Cities	Amount
Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh)	89.31 crore rupees

Amritsar (Punjab)	69.31 rupees	crore
Warangal (Telangana)	40.54 rupees	crore
Ajmer Ajmer (Rajasthan)	40.04 rupees	crore
Gaya (Bihar)	40.04 rupees	crore
Mathura (Uttar Pradesh)	40.04 rupees	crore
Kanchipuram (Tamil Nadu)	23.04 rupees	crore
Vellankini (Tamil Nadu)	22.26 rupees	crore
Amaravati (Andhra Pradesh)	22.26 rupees	crore
Badami (Karnataka)	22.26 rupees	crore
Dwaraka (Gujarat)	22.26 rupees	crore
Puri (Orissa)	22.54 rupees	crore