

Sri Maheshwari CCE

Governor pet VIJAYAWADA Ph: 0866-2432787/2438787

Current Affairs January 2015

The year 2015 has been designated the **International Year of Light** and the **International Year of Soils** by the sixty-eighth session of the **United Nations General Assembly 2005–2015 – Water for Life Decade**, recognized by the UN

Important Days in January

- **Global Family Day - 1 January**
- **Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (Non-resident Indian Day) - January 9**
- **National Human Trafficking Awareness Day - 11 January**
- **National Youth Day (India) - January 12**
- **lohri - January 14**
- **Makar Sankranti - January 15**
- **Indian Army Day - January 15**
- **Desh Prem Divas(Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's Birth anniversary)-January 23**
- **vasant panchami - January 24**
- **National Voters' Day (India) - January 25**
- **Republic Day(India) - January 26**
- **International Customs Day - 26 January**
- **Australia Day - January 26**
- **World Leprosy Day - January 26**
- **International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust- January 27**
- **Martyr's Day (Mahatma Gandhi's Martyrdom Day) - January 30**
- **Street Children's Day - January 31**

International Affairs

- **The Eurasian Economic Union** comes into effect, creating a political and economic union between **Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan**
- **Lithuania** officially adopts the **euro** as its currency, replacing the **litas**, and becomes the nineteenth **Eurozone** country.
- **Thailand's first woman premier Yingluck Shinawatra** was on 23rd January banned from politics for five years and faces criminal charges for negligence that could put in jail for up to 10 years. Ingluck was impeached by the **National Legislative Assembly (NLA)** over a controversial rice subsidy scheme, which, though popular, cost billions of dollars loss to the government.
- **The UN Security Council** has **failed to adopt a Palestinian statehood resolution** that set a deadline for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Palestinian territories by 2017.
- A series of massacres in **Baga, Nigeria** and surrounding villages by **Boko Haram** killed more than 2000 people.
- **The International Monetary Fund (IMF)** has lowered its forecast for **global economic growth for this year and next**. The IMF now expects growth of **3.5%** this year,

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compared with the previous estimate of 3.8% which it made in October. The growth forecast for 2016 has also been cut to 3.7%.

- **Top diplomats from Iran and the United States** held substantive talks aimed at speeding up negotiations for a nuclear deal. The talks between **US Secretary of State John Kerry and his Iranian counterpart Mohammad Javad Zarif** are aimed at easing the tensions between the two countries on nuclear issues.
- **Nepal to join Silk Road Economic Belt through Tibet.** Under the new Silk Route blueprint, the Chinese want to open up the transportation channel from the Pacific to the Baltic Sea, from which would radiate rail and road routes, which would also connect with East Asia, West Asia, and South Asia. China wants to connect with Nepal and South Asia through an extension of the Qinghai-Tibet railway.
- **Dubai** has surpassed **London's Heathrow**, connecting flights between Asia and the West to become the **world's top international travel hub**.
- **China's Three Gorges Power Plant**, the largest hydropower project in the country, generated 98.8 billion kwh of electricity in 2014, bettering the world record for hydropower generation set by **Brazil's Itaipu** hydroelectric plant. **Three Gorges Dam is the world's largest power station in terms of installed capacity**,
- **South Korea launches world's second-biggest carbon market.** The government has set the total amount of allowed emissions for the 2015 to 2017 period at 1.687 million tons of carbon dioxide equivalent. Any company emitting more than they have permits to cover must buy allowances from others in the carbon market.
- **United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon** has confirmed the Palestinians will formally become a member of the **International Criminal Court (ICC)** on April 1
- The United States and Cuba launch talks on 22nd January on restoring diplomatic relations between the two countries.
- **The Swiss National Bank** abandons the cap on the franc's value relative to the euro, causing turmoil in international financial markets.
- After **Houthi forces seize** the presidential palace, Yemeni President **Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi** resigns after months of unrest.
- **Tokyo and Singapore** has topped the list of **safest cities in the world listed** by The Economist. Osaka, Japan and Stockholm, Sweden were ranked at third and fourth spot respectively.
- **World leaders joined nearly 4 million people on the streets of Paris** and around France on 11th January in solidarity with the victims of a terror spree that killed 17 people in the first week of January 2015. This march was organized to show solidarity for the victims of attack on French magazine, '**Charlie Hebdo**'.

Elections

- **Modibo Keita** is appointed as new **Prime Minister of Mali**
- **Maithripala Sirisena** won in the **Srilankan Presidential Election**. These elections were held on 9th January. With this election the 10 year rule of **Mahinda Rajapaksa** came to an end. Sworn-in along with him was his new Prime Minister **Ranil Wickremesinghe**, who till now was the leader of opposition. Elections were held in Sri Lanka on 8 January 2015, two years ahead of schedule. The incumbent President Mahinda Rajapaksa was the **United People's Freedom Alliance's candidate, seeking a third term in office. The United National Party (UNP)-led opposition coalition** chose to field Maithripala

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Sirisena, the former Minister of Health in Rajapaksa's government and general secretary of the **Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP)** – the main constituent party of the UPFA — as its common candidate. Later after his defeat Former president Mahinda Rajapaksa has agreed to hand over **Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP)'s reins to the country's new leader Maithripala Sirisena**, bowing to the demand of party members after his shock election defeat.

- **Beji Caid Essebsi sworn in as President of Tunisia**
- **Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic appointed as first woman President of Croatia**
- **Anti-austerity Syriza party wins Greece's general elections.**In Greece, anti-austerity **Syriza party** has won general election. The head of Greece's far-left Syriza party, **Alexis Tsipras**, has been sworn in as prime minister. **Syriza**, means the **Radical Coalition of the Left**, and was formed in 2004 and is led by **Alexis Tsipras**.

National Affairs

- **A national body** to appoint judges - which will replace the current **collegium system** - came into force on 31st December with the approval from President Pranab Mukherjee. **The National Judicial Appointments Commission** will recommend the appointment, transfer of judges and ensure their ability and merit. The six-member panel will comprise two senior judges, the law minister and two eminent citizens. It will be chaired by the Chief Justice of India. The bill will grant Constitutional status to the NJAC and its composition. Chief Justice of India will head the NJAC.
- **Gyan Sangam**, a two-day retreat took place at **Pune**, it was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, Reserve Bank of India Governor **Raghuram Rajan and chiefs of various financial institutions.**
- **The 65-year-old Planning Commission was 1st January replaced by a new body, NITI Aayog or National Institution for Transforming India.**The NITI Aayog will have a governing council comprising.....
 - All state Chief Ministers
 - Lieutenant Governors
 - The body will have a CEO and a Vice Chairperson, to be appointed by the Prime Minister
 - In addition to some full-time members and
 - Two part-time members
 - Four union ministers would serve as ex-officio members.
- **In Haryana, India's first CNG train has started running between Rewari and Rohtakon** 13th January.
- **The latest report on global cost of living index** reveals that India has the **lowest Consumer Price Index (CPI) making it the cheapest place to live in the world.**
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the nationwide '**Beti Bachao-Beti Padhao**' or **save girl child and educate her campaign at Panipat in Haryana.** The Prime Minister Modi also launched **Sukanya Samridhi Yojana** to make the girl child economically stronger. **Haryana** has been chosen to launch the nation-wide **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao** initiative because of the **falling sex ratio in the state.** It has one of the lowest child sex ratio which stands at **879 girls per 1,000 boys as against the national child sex ratio of 918 girls per 1000 boys.**

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- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 22nd January launched the '**Sukanya Samridhi Yojana**' which will enable parents to open bank accounts of girls under 10 years of age. Giving away the passbooks and other documents to five small girls during the function to launch the nationwide 'Beti Bachao-Beti Padhao' (save girl child and educate her) campaign from Panipat in Haryana, the prime minister said the **Sukanya Samridhi Yojana** was aimed at providing social security for girls. **This is for girls under 10 years of age. Parents can deposit any amount from Rs.1,000 to Rs.1.5 lakh.** There will be more interest (by banks) in this scheme compared to others. No income tax will be levied. When the girl is 21 years old, she will get the entire amount.
- Annual **Pravasi Bharatiya Divas** conference took place in **Gandhinagar, Gujarat.**
About Pravasa Bharatiya Divas
 - ✦ **Pravasi Bharatiya Divas**, is celebrated in India on **9 January** each year to mark the contribution of the overseas Indian community to the development of India.
 - ✦ **The day commemorates the return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa** in Bombay on 9 January 1915. Established in 2003, it is sponsored by the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs of the government of India and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the Ministry of Development of the North Eastern Region of India.
 - ✦ A celebratory event is held on **7-9 January each year in an Indian city** and a forum for issues concerning the Indian Diaspora is organized and the **Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards** are given.
 - ✦ **Microsoft CEO Satyanarayan Nadella and Guyana President Donald Rabindernauth Ramaotar** are among 15 prominent NRIs who will receive 'Pravasi Bhartiya Samman' award for their contribution in various fields on the concluding day of Pravasi Bhartiya Diwas convention on 9th December.
- **Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyan (RGPSA)** is a **Rural Innovation Project** launched recently to strengthen Gram Panchayats in Karnataka.
- The **Agni-V** was test launched from a canister in **Wheeler Island**, suitable for road or rail mobile launch vehicles.
- The Government on 21st January launched the **National Heritage Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY)** under which **12 cities from the country** were sanctioned funds for the first phase. The scheme seeks to promote development of heritage sites and to revitalize the heritage cities of **Amritsar, Ajmer, Gaya, Kanchipuram, Mathura, Varanasi and Vellankani.** **National Institute of Urban Affairs** has been designated as **National Project Management Unit** for the scheme. The duration of the scheme is **four years**, from December 2014 to March 2018.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 3rd January dedicated a **digital village named Akodara** to the nation. **The digital village has been developed by ICICI bank** and was launched at an event to commemorate 60 years of ICICI Group. Villagers from Akodara in **Sabarkantha district of north Gujarat** will now be able to use technology in various aspects of their life including banking, education, payments, health care and more.

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Committees

- **The D K Mittal Committee**, formed to suggest ways and means to **raise the revenue of Indian Railways**.
- The government has accepted the recommendations of **Bezbaruah committee** that has suggested immediate measures to ensure the **safety of people from India's northeast in Delhi and other major cities**.
- **Shanta Kumar committee on restructuring of Food Corporation of India** has recommended reduction in coverage of population from 67 per cent to 40 per cent under the National Food Security Act. Briefing reporters about the recommendations of the committee, kumar said the legal entitlement of food grains should be raised from 5 kilograms to 7 kilograms per person per month.
- **The Reserve Bank of India has set up a High Powered Committee** to look into the matters of businesses that can be permitted for Urban Co-operative Banks in line with other commercial banks and the necessary requisites for UCBs in terms of size of business, capital requirement, regulatory regime, etc. The committee, which will be chaired by **R Gandhi, Deputy Governor, RBI**. The committee will also determine the modalities of implementing the suggestion of the **Malegam Committee (on Licensing of New UCBs)**

Economy

- **The Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE)**, Asia's oldest stock exchange, will establish an **international exchange in GIFT SEZ-IFC, a multi-services Special Economic Zone (SEZ) being developed as the country's first International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) by Gujarat International Finance Tec-City Company Ltd (GIFTCL), in Gandhinagar**.
- **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows to India increased 26 per cent to \$35 billion in 2014**. According to a **United Nations conference on trade and development (UNCTAD) report** on global investments **China became the largest recipient of FDI in the world in 2014** with inflows of \$128 billion. And USA fell to the third place with FDI inflows of \$86 billion.
- **The Reserve Bank of India** on 8th January said its revised guidelines on **the leverage ratio framework for banks will come into effect from April 1, 2015**. The **leverage ratio under the Basel III regulatory framework for banks** is defined as their capital measure divided by their exposure measure, with this ratio expressed as a percentage. Capital measure for the leverage ratio is the **Tier-1 capital and exposure measure is the sum of on-balance sheet exposures, derivative exposures, securities financing transaction exposures and off-balance sheet items**. Currently, the banking system is operating at a leverage ratio of more than **4.5 per cent**. The final minimum leverage ratio will be stipulated taking into consideration the final rules prescribed by the Basel Committee by end-2017, the RBI said. Banks operating in India are required to make disclosure of the leverage ratio and its components from April 1, 2015 on a quarterly basis.
- **India to grow gradually to 6.3% in 2016** with its GDP expected to reach 5.9 per cent this year. According to **United Nations World Economic Situation and Prospects 2015 (WESP) report**, India's economy expanded by an estimated 5.4 per cent in 2014, an

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improvement from growth of 5.0 per cent recorded in 2013 but it will see a gradual growth acceleration with its GDP Expected to reach 5.9 per cent this year and 6.3 per cent in 2016.

- **According to World Bank Chief Economist and Senior Vice-President Kaushik Basu**, India will catch up with **China's growth at 7 percent** in the year 2016-17, the World Bank has forecast, saying India's economy has recovered in the wake of the economic reform measures taken by the new Indian govt, falling oil prices and lower interest rates. India will catch up with China's growth in the year 2016 and 2017.
- **World Bank projects 6.4% economic growth in India during 2015.**
- **The International Monetary Fund (IMF)** on 20th January predicted that India is on track to outpace China in the next few years and become the world's fastest growing large economy. In its latest update to its **World Economic Outlook (WEO) report**, the IMF said India is likely to grow 6.5 per cent in 2016-17, higher than 6.3 per cent for China.
- The Centre has decided to raise the **Fair and Remunerative Price** of sugarcane payable by millers to farmers to Rs. 230 per quintal for the 2015-16 sugar seasons as against Rs. 220 per quintal set for the previous sugar season. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by the Prime Minister approved the proposal.
- **European Investment Bank to lend € 100m to SBI**
- **Country's largest thermal power producer NTPC** has signed a term loan agreement of **Rs 10,000 crore with State Bank of India (SBI)** for partially funding its capital expenditure. NTPC has signed a term loan agreement for Rs 10,000 crores with State Bank of India.
- According to new directive from government Companies can collaborate with each other for **corporate social responsibility (CSR)**. The ministry of corporate affairs has issued a notification to amend the CSR provision in the new Companies Act, allowing two companies to collaborate with each other on their own, or through their holding, subsidiary or associate companies. According to the **Companies Act, 2013**, any company with a net worth of **Rs 500 crore or a turnover of Rs 1,000 crore or net profit of Rs 5 crore needs to spend at least two per cent of its average net profit** in the preceding three financial years on CSR activities.
- **Unemployment rate in India rises to 4.9 % in 2013-14**
- **Udupi district in Karnataka achieves 100% coverage under Prime Minister's Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY).**
- **Country's largest private sector bank ICICI** has announced launching of India's first contactless debit and credit cards, enabling its customers to make electronic payments by just waving the cards near the merchant terminal in lieu of dipping or swiping them. **The cards have been introduced in Hyderabad market along with two other towns -- Gurgaon and Mumbai.** These cards are based on the **Near Field Communication (NFC) technology.**
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ambitious initiative financial inclusion scheme Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojna (PMJDY)** has made its way into the Guinness World Records for opening the highest number of bank accounts in the least time. Launched by PM Modi on August 28, 2014, the government had given banks the deadline of January 26, 2015 to open 10 crore accounts. However, banks had achieved the target set by the government a month before the January 26 deadline. 99.74 percent households in the country have been covered by **Jan Dhan Yojana.**

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- **Two Indian banks, HDFC Bank and State Bank of India (SBI), now figure in a list of the top 50 global banks in terms of market capitalization.** HDFC Bank, India's second-largest private lender in terms of asset size, ranks 45th, with a market capitalization of \$39 billion, Bloomberg data show. With a market capitalization of \$38 billion, SBI is ranked 46th. ICICI Bank, ranked 53rd, is the only other Indian entity to figure in the list of the 100 most valued global banks.
- **The Union Cabinet on 28th January decided not to challenge a Bombay High Court ruling that said Vodafone was not liable to pay a tax demand of Rs. 3,200 crore in a transfer pricing case.** The Cabinet also decided not to appeal against similar verdicts in other cases against taxpayers.
- The Union Cabinet on 28th January approved a reserve price of **Rs 3,705 crore per megahertz (MHz) for the March 4 auction of the 3G spectrum** – which can fetch at least Rs 17,555 crore from this band.

Awards

Padma Awards, one of the highest civilian Awards of the country, were announced on Sunday. The awards are conferred in three categories, namely, **Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri**. The Awards are given in various disciplines/ fields of activities, viz art, social work, public affairs, science and engineering, trade and industry, medicine, literature and education, sports, civil service, etc. '**Padma Vibhushan**' is awarded for exceptional and distinguished service; '**Padma Bhushan**' for distinguished service of high order and '**Padma Shri**' for distinguished service in any field. The awards are announced on the occasion of **Republic Day every year**. These awards are conferred by the President of India at ceremonial functions which are held at **Rashtrapati Bhawan** usually around March/ April every year. This year the President of India has approved conferment of Padma Awards to 104 persons. The list comprises of **9 Padma Vibhushan, 20 Padma Bhushan and 75 Padma Shri Awardees**. 17 of the awardees are women and the list also includes 17 persons from the category of foreigners, NRIs, PIOs and 4 posthumous awardees.

Padma Vibhushan Awardees List

1.	Shri L. K. Advani	Public Affairs	Gujarat
2.	Shri Amitabh Bachchan	Art	Maharashtra
3.	Shri Prakash Singh Badal	Public Affairs	Punjab
4.	Dr. D. Veerendra Heggade	Social Work	Karnataka
5.	Shri Mohammad Yusuf Khan alias Dilip Kumar	Art	Maharashtra
6.	Shri Jagadguru Ramanandacharya Swami Rambhadracharya	Others	Uttar Pradesh
7.	Prof. Malur Ramaswamy Srinivasan	Science and Engineering	Tamil Nadu
8.	Shri Kottayan K. Venugopal	Public Affairs	Delhi
9.	Shri Karim Al Hussaini Aga Khan (Foreigner)	Trade and Industry	France/UK

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Padma Bhushan

1.	Shri Jahnu Barua	Art	Assam
2.	Dr. Vijay Bhatkar	Science and Engineering	Maharashtra
3.	Shri Swapan Dasgupta	Literature and Education	Delhi
4.	Swami Satyamitranand Giri	Others	Uttar Pradesh
5.	Shri N. Gopalaswami	Civil Service	Tamil Nadu
6.	Dr. Subhash C. Kashyap	Public Affairs	Delhi
7.	Dr. (Pandit) Gokulotsavji Maharaj	Art	Madhya Pradesh
8.	Dr. Ambrish Mithal	Medicine	Delhi
9.	Smt. Sudha Ragunathan	Art	Tamil Nadu
10.	Shri Harish Salve	Public Affairs	Delhi
11.	Dr. Ashok Seth	Medicine	Delhi
12.	Shri Rajat Sharma	Literature and Education	Delhi
13.	Shri Satpal	Sports	Delhi
14.	Shri Shivakumara Swami	Others	Karnataka
15.	Dr. Kharag Singh Valdiya	Science and Engineering	Karnataka
16.	Prof. Manjul Bhargava(NRI/PIO)	Science and Engineering	USA
17.	Shri David Frawley (Vamadeva)(Foreigner)	Others	USA
18.	Shri Bill Gates(Foreigner)	Social Work	USA
19.	Ms. Melinda Gates (Foreigner)	Social Work	USA
20.	Shri Saichiro Misumi(Foreigner)	Others	Japan

- India's highest Gallantry awards have also been announced on the occasion of Republic Day. **Ashok Chakra to be conferred to Late Major Mukund Varadarajan , Naik Neeraj Kumar Singh.**
- **M. N. Rai, a colonel in the Rashtriya Rifles and Sanjeev Kumar Singh**, a head constable in the Special Operations Group, died in a gun battle in Tral in Pulwama district. Two militants were also killed. M. N. Rai had been awarded the **Yudh Seva medal** on 26 January.
- **M.Y.S. Prasad**, director of Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota Range (SHAR), has been selected for the Vikram Sarabhai memorial award to be presented by the **Indian Science Congress Association (ISCA)**

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- **72nd Golden Globe Awards**
 - ✦ **Best film (Musical or Comedy):** The Grand Budapest Hotel
 - ✦ **Best Director-** Richard Linklater
 - ✦ **Best actress (Musical or comedy)**
 - ✦ **Amy Adams:** Big eyes
- **Amitabh Bachchan** has been honored with the **Social Media Person of the Year** award by **Internet and Mobile Association of India**.
- **An eminent Indian-American entrepreneur and philanthropist Frank Islam** has been presented with the prestigious **Martin Luther King Jr Award** in recognition of his contribution to the legacy of the civil rights pioneer through his efforts in international service and civil engagement.
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi and actor Rekha**, who both follow a vegetarian diet, have been crowned 'hottest vegetarian celebrities' by animal rights organisation **PETA India**
- **Reserve Bank of India Governor Raghuram Rajan** is the '**Governor of the Year**' in the **Central Banking Journal Awards for 2015**. Rajan was one of three individuals to be honored this year, **with former IMF MD Jacques de Larosière winning the lifetime achievement award. The Reserve Bank of New Zealand (RBNZ) won the prize for Central Bank of the Year.**

Notable Deaths

- **King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia**
- **Mrunalini Devi Puar**, academician and educationist
- **Vasant Gowariker**, scientist and **ISRO chairman**
- **Chitresh Das**, Kathak dance instructor and choreographer
- **Subhas Anandan**, Indian-origin Singaporean criminal lawyer, notable for representing **Quan Yi Fong** and others
- **Jasodhara Bagchi**, women's rights activist
- **Rameshwar Thakur** politician, Governor of Odisha (2004–2006), Andhra Pradesh (2006–2007) and Karnataka (2007–2009)
- **Ghelubhai Nayak**, social activist and freedom fighter
- **Rajni Kothari**, political scientist
- **Sarojini Mahishi**, translator and politician.
- **R. K. Laxman**, cartoonist
- **José Pereira**, Indian-origin American Sanskrit scholar, theologian and artist from **Goa**
- **Mala Aravindan**, Malayalam theatre and film actor
- **Jaswant Singh Rajput**, field hockey player, part of Olympic gold medal winning team in 1948) and 1952
- **Subhash Ghisingh**, founder of the **Gorkha National Liberation Front** in the **Gorkhaland** movement

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Sports

- **Open water swimmer Bhakti Sharma** established a record by swimming 1.4 miles in 52 minutes in 1 °C waters in the Antarctic Ocean.
- **Sania Mirza and Bethanie Mattek-Sands** won the women's doubles title at the **Sydney International**.
- **Serena Williams** beat **Maria Sharapova** to win her **sixth Australian Open and 19th Grand Slam title**.
- **South Africa batsman AB de Villiers** hit a century off 31 balls to record the **fastest ever one-day international ton**. De Villiers set the new landmark during an innings of 149 against the West Indies in Johannesburg on 18th January.
- **Hashim Amla** became the **fastest player to notch up 5000 one-day international runs**
- **Luke Ronchi and Grant Elliott** put on a **world record 267-run partnership for the 6th wicket** as New Zealand recovered from 93-5 to thump Sri Lanka by 108 runs in the fifth one-day international in Dunedin, New Zealand.
- **West Indies record highest run chase against South Africa in T-20 history.**
- **Kumar Sangakkara** becomes **quickest batsman to score 12000 Test runs**
- **Australia has won 2014-15 Gavaskar-Border trophy against India with 2-0**. The total number of tests were 4, Australia has won 2 where as other two were drawn. **Steve Smith (Australia)** is the **Man of the match for last match and also Man of the series**.
- **35th National Games** began in Kerala. Former cricket player **Sachin Tendulkar** is the **goodwill ambassador for the games**. The mascot of the **35th National Games** is "**Ammu**", The Great Hornbill, or the Great Indian Hornbill, the State bird of Kerala. There are 33 sports disciplines in games. **Yachting** is newly included item. Aquatics (50 disciplines) and Athletics (44 disciplines) are the biggest and most popular events.
- **The 60th National School Games** were started in New Delhi on 2nd January and was declared open by **Delhi's Brand Ambassador and two-time Olympic Games medalist Sushil Kumar**.
- **Ace Indian shutter Saina Nehwal** has retained her title by winning the final of Women's Singles tournament in 1, 20,000 US dollars' **Syed Modi International Grand Prix Gold Badminton Championship in Lucknow**.
- **India has been confirmed as host for the 2016 Twenty20 World Cup**, scheduled to be held from March 11 to April 3, the ICC announced after ratifying its decision in the Board meeting in Dubai on 29th January. **This will be the first time that India will be hosting a World T20 tournament.**
- Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports recognised **Boxing India (BI)** as the **governing body for representing boxing in India**.
- **Sean Abbott** has been named Australia's young cricketer of the year.
- **19th National Youth Festival** began in **Guwahati** on 8th December.