

CURRENT AFFAIRS OF MARCH 2015

Awards

The internationally acclaimed filmmaker who has been awarded the second Bishwaratna Dr Bhupen Hazarika International Solidarity Award by Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi – **Adoor Gopalakrishnan**

The Indian novelist whose book The Family Life has been chosen for the 2015 Folio Prize sponsored by the Folio Society – **Akhil Sharma**

The renowned Hindi poet who has been awarded the first Kavi Pradeep Samman by the Madhya Pradesh government – **Gopaldas Neeraj**

The scientific organisation which has been chosen for the Gandhi Peace Prize for 2014 for its contribution to the country's development through space technology and satellite-based services – **Indian Space Research Organisation**

The Chinese dissident artist and American folk singer, who have been jointly chosen for the Amnesty International's Ambassador of Conscience Award for 2014 – **Ai Weiwei and Joan Baez**

The noted Hindi film producer and actor who has been chosen for the prestigious Dada Saheb Phalke award for 2014 – **Shashi Kapoor**

The renowned Indian ecologist who has been chosen for the prestigious 2015 Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement, (instituted in 1973) along with noted American marine ecologist Dr. Jane Lubchenco for their work in changing policy and specifically for their leadership and engagement in the development of conservation and sustainability policies in the United States, India and internationally – **Madhav Gadgil**

The Indian environmental activist popularly known as Water Man who has been chosen for the prestigious Stockholm Water Prize this year for his innovative water restoration efforts and courage to empower communities in Indian villages by the Stockholm International Water Institute in – **Rajender Singh**

The Union HRD Minister who was named Young Global Leader from India by World Economic Forum – **Smriti Irani**

The former Union Minister who has been awarded the KK Birla Foundation's Saraswati Samman for 2014 for his work Ramayan Mahanveshanam – **Veerappa Moily**

The airport which has been awarded 'Best Regional Airport in Central Asia' by SKYTRAX World Airport Awards 2015 held in Paris – **Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru**

The President of Namibia who has been chosen for the prestigious 2014 Mo Ibrahim Prize for Outstanding Achievement in African Leadership – **Mr. Hifikepunye Pohamba**

Banking

The bank in collaboration with which IRCTC has launched the prepaid RuPay card to enable its users to book railway tickets – **Union Bank of India**

The percentage to which the Indian government has decided to bring down its holding in public sector banks in a phased manner to ensure that capital needs of banks are taken care of – **52%**

The mobile application launched by HDFC bank in partnership with MobME to allow its customers to instantly transfer money to any contact in their phone book is named – **Chillr**

The two India public sector banks whose local and foreign currency deposit ratings have been reduced by Moody's to BA1 and BAA3, anticipating low level of support from the government to these banks – **Central Bank of India and Indian Overseas Bank**

Defence

The beyond visual range air-to-air missile which was successfully launched from Sukhoi-30 fighter aircraft to hit a simulated target at the Integrated Test Range, Chandipur in Odisha (the missile was tested to prove the manoeuvring capability against a simulated target) – **Astra**

Pakistan's first indigenously developed drone which was successfully test-fired laser guided missile Burq is named – **Burraq**

The Indian built patrol vessel exported to Mauritius in 2014, which has been commissioned by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi in Port Louis during his visit to the country – **Barracuda**

The para-military force in which the Government has decided recruit women officers for the first time – **Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)**

The middle-eastern country which has become the world's largest arms importer surpassing India in 2014 according to defence analysis by IHS Jane's – **Saudi Arabia**

The Japanese World War II battleship (it sank in October 1944 in the Sibuyan Sea during the battle of Leyte) whose wreckage has been discovered by Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen and his research team – **Musashi**

Persons

The presidential candidate of All Progressives Congress who has won the presidential elections in Nigeria defeating incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan of the People's Democratic Party – **General Muhammadu Buhari**

The contestant from Delhi who has been crowned Femina Miss India 2015 at the beauty pageant in Mumbai – **Aditi Arya**

The author of Q & A, (the film Slumdog Millionaire is based on the novel) who has been chosen to be the spokesperson of Ministry of External Affairs – **Vikas Swaroop**

The former Chief of the Sri Lankan Army who has been promoted to the rank of Field Marshall by Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena – **Sarath Fonseka**

The Indian artist whose self-portrait has sold for \$2.92 million in Sotheby's New York auction, setting a new record for an Indian woman artist – **Amrita Sher-Gil**

The Indian industrialist who has been chosen to head the Innovative Council of Indian Railways called Kaya Kalp – **Ratan Tata**

The present Indian ambassador to France who has been appointed as the next Indian Ambassador to the United States succeeding Mr. S Jaishankar – **Arun Singh**

The candidate of People's Democratic Party who has taken over as the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir – **Mufti Mohammad Sayeed**

Places

The state in the USA which has become the first U.S. State to reinstate execution of criminals sentenced to death by firing squad when no lethal injection drugs are available – **Utah**

The place in Chhattisgarh where India's first National Skill Development University will be opened as announced by the Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Rajiv Pratap Rudy – **Raipur**

The three Africa nations which have signed an initial agreement on sharing water from the River Nile which runs through the countries – **Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia**

The Oceanic island nation which has been severely affected by Cyclone Pam, which is being the considered the strongest cyclone historically in the region – **Vanuatu**

The island in Seychelles which the country has agreed to lease to India for tourism and infrastructure development – **Assumption Island**

The place at which the first Kisan Call Centre of the north-east India was launched by Chief Minister of Tripura, Mr. Manik Sarkar – **Agartala**

The US state which has become the first in country to allow execution of death row inmates using nitrogen gas – **Oklahoma**

States

The state which has decided to start the excavation of mythical Saraswathi river at Adi Badri the point from where it is said to have originated – **Haryana**

The Indian state which has become the first in the country to launch an e-ration card service to cut down on corruption and delay in delivery of ration to the beneficiaries – **Delhi**

The Indian state which has become the first in the country to fix a minimum educational qualification for contesting elections to the Panchayati Raj institutions by passing a legislation (Class VIII pass for the post of Sarpanch except in tribal reserved areas where it is Class V. Class X for Zilla Parishad or Panchayat Samiti elections) – **Rajasthan**

The Indian state which has enacted a law to ban the slaughter, trading and unauthorised transportation of camels – **Rajasthan**

The state which has launched the Aapki Beti Humari Beti scheme under which a sum of Rs 21,000 would be deposited by the State in the account of every new born girl so that she may get Rs 1 lakh on turning 18 – **Haryana**

Space

The launch vehicle aboard which the Indian Space Research Organisation has launched IRNSS 1D, the fourth in the series of seven navigation satellites from Sriharikota – **PSLV C27**

The place from which NASA has launched Magnetospheric Multiscale spacecraft (four identical spacecraft) aboard Atlas rocket to study the explosive give-and-take of the magnetic fields of Earth and the sun – **Cape Canaveral**

The NASA spacecraft which has become the first spacecraft to enter an orbit around the dwarf planet Ceres lying between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter – **Dawn**

The place from which SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket was launched with ABS 3A and EUTELSAT 115 West B all-electric satellites on 01 Mar 2015 – **Cape Canaveral, Florida**

Sports

The Indian badminton player who has won the Swiss Grand Prix Gold championship title defeating Viktor Axelsen of Denmark in men's singles final in Basel, Switzerland. – **K Shrikanth**

The former Indian hockey player and member of three Olympic gold medal winning teams who has been honoured with Major Dhyan Chand Lifetime Achievement Award at the inaugural Hockey India Awards – **Balbir Singh Senior**

The team Indian women's hockey team defeated to win the Hero women's Hockey World League Round 2 at the Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium – **Poland**

The team which has won the 69th Santosh Trophy football championship defeating Punjab in the finals at Guru Nanak Stadium in Ludhiana – **Services**

The Welsh professional snooker player who has won the second Indian Open Snooker World Ranking Tournament defeating Ricky Walden in the finals at Mumbai – **Michael White**

The team which has won the Ranjhi Trophy cricket championship for the 8th time defeating Tamil Nadu in the finals at Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai – **Karnataka**

The Chinese badminton player who has won the All England Badminton Championship men's title defeating Denmark's Jan O Jorgensen in the finals – **Cheng Long**

The Spanish badminton player who has won the All England Badminton Championship women's title defeating Saina Nehwal of India in the finals – **Carolina Marin**

The new chairman of Board of Control for Cricket in India who has been elected for the post for the third time – **Jagmohan Dalmiya**

The Indian golfer who has won the inaugural Golconda Masters golf championship in Hyderabad defeating Shamin Khan in the finals – **Harendra Gupta**

Miscellaneous

Delhi's first South-Asian festival held from 28.03.15 to 31.03.15 with participation from SAARC nations is named – **SASSIAN Journey**

The Germanwings Airbus A320 flight 4U 9525 which crashed in the French Alps killing 150 people on board was flying from – **Barcelona to Dusseldorf**

The controversial section of Information Technology Act 2000, introduced in 2009, which has been quashed by the Supreme Court terming it "vague" and "unconstitutional" (in the Shreya Singhal v. Union of India case) – **Section 66A**

The nine-foot bronze statue of Gandhiji which was unveiled by Union Finance Minister, Shri Arun Jaitley at the Parliament Square in London on 14 March was sculpted by – **Phillip Jackson**

The political party led by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu which has scored a resounding victory over rivals Zionist Union in the recent elections – **Likud**

The co-creator of animated television series **The Simpsons** along with Matt Groening and James L Brooks, who has died on 08.03.2015 – **Sam Simon**

India's first indigenously developed rotavirus vaccine which was launched by the Prime Minister recently has been developed by – **Bharat Biotech**

The theme of International Women's Day observed on March 8, 2015 – **Make it Happen**

The solar powered plane founded by André Borschberg and Bertrand Piccard, which took off on its first attempt to fly around the world from Al Bateen airport in Abu Dhabi – **Solar Impulse**

The veteran journalist and editorial chairman of the Outlook group who died on 08 March 2015 (He was awarded the Yash Bharati Samman by the Uttar Pradesh Govt in February 2015) – **Vinod Mehta**

The UNESCO world Heritage Site near Baghdad in Iraq which has been reportedly destroyed by the militants of Islamic State – **Hatra**

The Anil Ambani group company which has acquired management control in Pipavav Defence and Offshore Engineering company Limited – **Reliance Infrastructure Ltd.**

The programme launched by the Election Commission of India to make the electoral roll totally error free and authenticated by linking with Aadhar data of UIDAI – **National Electoral Roll Purification and Authentication Programme**

The Lucknow Delhi bus service exclusively for women, introduced by the Uttar Pradesh government has been named – **Pink Express**

Recent Geographical Indication Tags approved

Item	State	Item	State
1. Chengazhikodan Nendran Banana	Kerala	7. Queen Pineapple	Tripura
2. Bangalore Rose Onion	Karnataka	8. Khasi Mandarin	Meghalaya
3. Naga Tree Tomato	Nagaland	9. Kachai Lemon	Manipur
4. Arunachal Orange	Arunachal Pradesh	10. Birds Eye Chilli	Mizoram
5. Sikkim Large Cardamom	Sikkim	11. Tezpur Litchi	Assam
6. Karbi Anglong Ginger	Assam		

Yonex Sunrise India Open Badminton tournament

Held from - 24.03.2015 to 29.03.2015

Held at - New Delhi

Prize money - \$ 2,75,000

Men singles - K. Srikanth (India) defeated Viktor Axelsen (Denmark)

Women Singles - Saina Nehwal (India) defeated Ratchanok Intanon (Thailand)

Mens Doubles - Chai Biao and Hong Wei (China) defeated Mads Conrad Petersen and Mads Pieler Kolding (Denmark)

Womens Doubles - Misaki Matsutomo and Ayaka Takahashi (Japan) defeated Luo Ying and Luo Yu (China)

Mixed Doubles - Liu Cheng and Bao Yixin (China) defeated Joachim Fischer Nielsen and Christina Pedersen (Denmark)

World Cup 2015 - Points to Remember

1. Hosted by Australia and New Zealand
2. Held from 14 February to 29 March 2015.
3. Winners - Australia (5th win for the nation)
4. Final match between Australia and New Zealand played at Melbourne Cricket Ground
5. Man of the Final match - James Faulkner (Australia)
6. Man of the tournament - Mitchell Starc (Australia)
7. Most runs scored by - Martin Guptill (New Zealand) - 547 runs
8. Double centuries scored by - Martin Guptill (New Zealand) and Chris Gayle (West Indies)
9. Most wickets taken by - Mitchell Starc (Australia) and Trent Boult (New Zealand) - 22 each

World Cup Records created

10. Highest team score - Australia - 417 for 6 against Afghanistan
11. Highest individual score - Martin Guptill (New Zealand) - 237 runs
12. Fastest double century - Chris Gayle (West Indies) - 138 balls
13. Fastest 50 - Brendon McCullum (New Zealand) - 18 balls
14. Most centuries in one tournament - Kumar Sangakarra (Sri Lanka) - 4 centuries
15. Highest partnership - 372 by Chris Gayle and Marlon Samuels (West Indies) against Zimbabwe (an ODI record)
16. First double century in a World Cup match - Chris Gayle (215) against Zimbabwe

Indian Performance at World Cup 2015

17. Highest team score - 307/7 against South Africa
18. Most runs scored - Shikhar Dhawan - 412
19. Highest individual score - Shikhar Dhawan and Rohit Sharma (137)
20. Most wickets - Umesh Yadav - 18
21. Centuries scored by - Shikhar Dhawan, Rohit Sharma, Suresh Raina and Virat Kohli
22. Centuries scored on two occasions by - Shikhar Dhawan

Go India Smart Card - Points to Remember

1. The card has been launched on pilot basis on two sectors A. New Delhi - Mumbai and New Delhi - Howrah.
2. The smart card can be used at nominated Unreserved Ticketing System (UTS)/Passenger Reservation System (PRS) counters and at Automatic Ticket Vending Machines (ATVMs) on these two sectors for issuing tickets.
3. Initially the card can be obtained by paying Rs. 70/- where the passenger will get Rs. 20/- balance.
4. The card can be recharged for Rs. 20/- or in multiples of Rs. 50/- upto Rs. 5000/-.
5. Maximum limit on Go-India smart card is Rs. 10,000/-.
6. The card has life time validity. The card is temporarily deactivated if it is not used for 6 months, but can be activated again by paying Rs. 50/- as activation fee.
7. The scheme is intended to reduce the transaction time at the booking counters for the convenience of passengers as it facilitates cashless transaction.

Lee Kuan Yew - First Prime Minister of Singapore

Born - 16 September 1923

Died - 23 March 2015

Also regarded as the founding father of modern Singapore.

Prime Minister of Singapore - From 03 June 1959 to 28 November 1990

Books written - From Third World to First: The Singapore Story: 1965-2000, Keeping My Mandarin Alive and Singapore's Bilingual Journey

Founder of - People's Action Party (PAP)

Narayan Desai - Noted Gandhian

Born - 24 December 1924

Died - 15 March 2015

Son of - Mahadev Desai, Mahatma Gandhi's personal secretary and biographer.

Awards - Sahitya Akademi Award for Gujarati in 1993, Jamnalal Bajaj Award in 1999, 18th Moortidevi Award for the year 2004, given by Bharatiya Jnanpith, for his famous work "Maroon Jeewan Aj Mari Vaani"

Founder of - Sampurna Kranti Vidyalaya in Surat

Solar Impulse

What is it? - Swiss long-range experimental solar-powered aircraft

Mission - To achieve the first circumnavigation of the Earth using only solar power.

Project leaders - André Borschberg and Bertrand Piccard

Flight to accomplish the mission began on - 09 March 2015

Mission starting point - Abu Dhabi, UAE

First stop - Muscat, Oman

Stops in India - Ahmedabad and Varanasi

Stop after leaving Varanasi - Mandalay, Myanmar

62nd National Film Awards for 2014

The following are awards in some important categories of National Film Awards.

Name of the Award	Film	Awardee
1. Best Feature Film	Court (Marathi, Hindi, Gujarati, English)	Producer - Vivek Gomber - Director - Chaitanya Tamhane
2. Indira Gandhi Award for Best Debut Film of a Director	Asha Jaoar Majhe (Bengali)	Producer - Sanjay Shah, Aditya Vikram Sengupta Director - Aditya Vikram Sengupta
3. Best Popular Film providing wholesome entertainment	Mary Kom (Hindi)	Producer- Sanjay Leela Bhansali Director - Omung Kumar
4. Special Jury Award	Khwada (Marathi)	Director - Bhaurao Karhade
5. Best Film on Social Issues	Chotoder Chobi (Marathi)	Producer - Shree Venkatesh Films Director - Kaushik Ganguly
6. Best Children's Film	Kaakkaa Muttai (Tamil) Elizabeth Ekadashi (Marathi)	Director - M. Manikandan Director - Paresh Mokashi
7. Best Direction	Chotushkone (Bengali)	Srijit Mukherji
8. Best Actor	Nanu Avanalla Avalu (Kannada)	Vijay
9. Best Actress	Queen (Hindi)	Kangana Ranaut
10. Best Supporting Actor	Jigarthanda (Tamil)	Bobby Simhaa
11. Best Supporting Actress	Pagdi The Honour (Haryanavi)	Baljinder Kaur
12. Best Child Artist	Kaakkaa Muttai (Tamil)	J Vignesh and Ramesh
13. Best Male Playback Singer	Haider (Hindi)	Sukhwinder Singh for the song "Bismil"
14. Best Female Playback Singer	Saivam (Tamil)	Uttara Unnikrishanan for her song 'Azhagu'

Man Booker Prize 2015 Finalists

1. César Aira (Argentina)
2. Hoda Barakat (Lebanon)
3. Maryse Condé (Guadeloupe)
4. Mia Couto (Mozambique)
5. Amitav Ghosh (India)
6. Fanny Howe (United States of America)
7. Ibrahim al-Koni (Libya)
8. László Krasznahorkai (Hungary)
9. Alain Mabanckou (Republic of Congo)
10. Marlene van Niekerk (South Africa)

Abbreviations in news

NERPAP - National Electoral Roll Purification and Authentication Programme

PMKVY - Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana

SFURTI - Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries