

GENERAL AWARENESS UPDATES : - (18th February, 2017 to 24th February, 2017)

- The implementation of the regional air-connectivity scheme, UDAN, will see the number of operational airports in the country shoot up by over 50, while the cost of travelling will come down to as low as ₹2,500 for up to an hour of air journey. There are 75 small operational airports in the country, and this number will increase to over 125 with the successful implementation of UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) — the new scheme through which the government hopes to make flying viable to Tier II and III cities.
- In Madhya Pradesh 'Mil Banche' programme was held in all the primary and middle government schools. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, his minister colleagues, public representatives and other dignitaries took classes in these schools to motivate children.
- The Union government has increased the Cash Credit (CC) limit for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to 30% of turnover from the existing 20% to encourage them to conduct business digitally. Presently, the taxes for MSMes are calculated at 8% for revenue of up to Rs.2 crore. With digital transaction, tax liability will be reduced from 8% to 6%.
- Bangalore based Public sector Canara Bank has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Human Resource Development (HRD) Ministry to operationalize the Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA). Through this MoU, HRD Ministry and Canara Bank will jointly promote the HEFA with an authorised capital of Rs.2,000 crore.
- Malaysia-based low-cost airline AirAsia has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Odisha government to start two-way direct international flights from Bhubaneswar to Kuala Lumpur.
- Mangalore based public sector lender Corporation Bank was awarded the 2017 National MSME Excellence Award. The award is instituted by the Federation of Industry, Trade and Services (FITS).
- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has successfully ground tested its indigenously developed Cryogenic Upper Stage engine for GSLV Mark III at its Liquid Propulsion Complex at Mahendragiri in Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu. The C25 stage is the most powerful upper stage developed by ISRO and uses Liquid Oxygen and Liquid Hydrogen propellant combination.
- Renowned Hindi litterateur and playwright Surendra Verma has been selected for 2016 Vyas Samman for his novel Kaatna Shami Ka Vriksha Padma Pankhuri Ki Dhar Se. This novel was published in the year 2010.
- National Regulatory Authority of India (NRAI) has been given the maximum ratings by the World Health Organisation for vaccine regulations.
- Jharkhand government and Microsoft India has inked an MoU for the state government to explore cloud, machine learning and mobile based solutions to improve citizen services and provide better facilities in the fields of education and agriculture.
- The Indian Navy's second sailboat 'Tarini' was inducted into service at a ceremony in Goa. The vessel is slated to be the platform for the first Indian all-women global circumnavigation by the Indian Navy to begin in August.

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi greeted people of Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram on their 31st statehood day (20 February 2017).
- Ending more than two weeks of standoff with Nagaland Tribes Action Committee (NTAC), Nagaland chief minister T R Zeliang resigned from his post. Nagaland People's Front (NPF) president Shurhozelie Liezeitsu will be sworn in as the state's eleventh Chief Minister.
- India has sanctioned a soft loan of 340 million US dollar to Nepal for various infrastructure development programmes.
- Oriental Bank of Commerce (OBC) has launched mobile wallet 'Oriental Batuaa'.
- AirAsia became the first foreign airline to begin its operations from Srinagar international airport in Jammu and Kashmir. Srinagar has The Sheikh-ul-Alam International Airport since last five years, but no foreign airlines had yet operated services from there.
- Indian Cinema movie Newton directed by Amit Masurkar was honored with the Art Cinema Award in the Forum Segment at the 67th Berlin International Film Festival held from February 9-18, 2017 in Berlin, Germany.
- Virat Kohli became the first Indian sports personality to strike a Rs.100-crore endorsement deal with a single brand. Kohli signed an eight-year deal with sports apparel brand Puma worth Rs.110 crore.
- Following the path of Indian boxing sensation Vijender Singh, Olympic quarter-finalist boxers Akhil Kumar and Jitender Kumar are also stepping up to enter professional boxing.
- Bharat QR code, the world's first inter-operable payment acceptance solution, was launched as part of efforts to move towards less-cash economy at an insignificant cost. Payment networks such as MasterCard and Visa have joined hands with NPCI to launch Bharat QR, a common Quick Response (QR) code that would enable seamless digital payments without card swiping machines. This Bharat QR code is expected to be convenient for those who are into mobile banking and do not want to use debit or credit cards for small ticket payments.
- UNESCO celebrated International Mother Language Day (IMLD) on February 21, 2017 under the theme "Towards Sustainable Futures through Multilingual Education".
- Cash purchases of jewellery will attract 1% TCS (Tax Collected at Source) from April 1, 2017 if the amount exceeds Rs.2 lakh, as against the current threshold of Rs.5 lakh.
- According to a report released by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) India emerged as the world's largest importer of major arms during 2012–16. As per the report, India accounted for 13% of the global total sales. Major arms suppliers to India include Russia, USA, European states, Israel and South Korea.
- Country's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) has rebranded its corporate website as "bank.sbi" from the earlier sbi.co.in. Bank.sbi is the highest domain protocol, known as generic top level domain (gTLD). The adoption of gTLD enables an organisation to use its corporate name as their website's top-level identifier instead of using a more traditional ".com" or ".co.in" domains.

- Tata Sons Chairman-designate Natarajan Chandrasekaran will also hold the chairmanship of the group's crown jewel Tata Consultancy Services.
- J & K Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti has declared 2017 as 'Year of Apple' to promote the famed Kashmiri apples in domestic and foreign markets.
- The Telangana Government led by K. Chandrashekar Rao signed an Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with NABARD for a loan of Rs 874 crore . This loan will be used for Horticulture Development Corporation to cover 3.15 lakh acres under Micro Irrigation scheme for 2016-17 and 2017-18.
- Justice Abhay Manohar Sapre has been appointed the chairman of Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (CWDT). He was nominated for the post by Chief Justice J.S. Khehar.
- American professional golfer Dustin Hunter Johnson has claimed No 1 Position in Official World Golf Ranking for the first time in his career.
- Karnataka Bank has bagged two 'IBA-Banking Technology' awards. The bank was the winner in 'Best financial inclusion initiatives (small bank)' category, and was runner-up in 'Best use of digital and channels technology (small bank)' category.
- The National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) announced that India will be hosting the Combined World Cup for shooting in 2019. Combined World Cup will be a qualifying event for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. It will comprise all the three categories shotgun, rifle and pistol.
- The ninth BRICS Summit will be held in China's Xiamen city from September 3 to 5, 2017. The theme of this year's event is 'BRICS: Stronger Partnership for a Brighter Future'.
- India signed an agreement with Japan on enhancing railway safety in the Indian Railways with focus on railway track and rolling stock safety.
- Global payments network Visa signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Andhra Pradesh government to help transform Vishakhapatnam into India's first 'less cash' city.
- The Kerala government will launch the country's first sex offenders' registry which will contain all identification details of sex offenders and would be kept in public domain.
- Off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin broke Kapil Dev's Indian record of most Test wickets in a domestic season. Ashwin, the fastest in the world to reach 250 Test wickets, took his tally of wickets in the current home season to 64 in 10 Test matches, breaking Kapil Dev's record who took 63 wickets in 13 Tests.