

GENERAL AWARENESS UPDATES:- (21st January – 31st January, 2018)

- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), announced the 'Cyber Surakshit Bharat' initiative in association with National e-Governance Division (NeGD) and industry partners. Cyber Surakshit Bharat will be operated on the three principles of Awareness, Education and Enablement.
- The first Post Office Passport Seva Kendra (POPSK) of Puducherry was inaugurated by Smt. Sushma Swaraj, Minister for External Affairs at Karaikal. The POPSK at Karaikal is the 60th POPSK to have become functional since the launch of the scheme in January 2017.
- The Telangana government had signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Clean Authority of Tokyo in connection with municipal solid waste incineration in Hyderabad.
- The Raipur Municipal Corporation in Chhattisgarh organised the three-day 'Kachra Mahotsav 2018'. It is India's first Garbage Festival. The festival aimed to increase awareness, use the waste generated in the city creatively, and to showcase multiple techniques for reusing things that are labelled as garbage.
- Valletta, the capital of Malta, was officially named European Capital of Culture 2018. Valletta will share the title with Leeuwarden, a city in the Netherlands.
- India was ranked at the 62nd place among emerging economies on an Inclusive Development Index of World Economic Forum (WEF). Norway remains the world's most inclusive advanced economy, while Lithuania again tops the list of emerging economies, according to the report.
- Election Commissioner Om Prakash Rawat was appointed as the chief election commissioner (CEC) of India. Mr Rawat is the 22nd CEC of India. He succeeded Achal Kumar Joti. The government also appointed former finance secretary Ashok Lawasa as an Election Commissioner. 1st Chief Election Commissioner of Independent India was Sukumar Sen.
- Former Gujarat chief minister Anandiben Patel has been named as the new governor of Madhya Pradesh. Ms Patel was the first woman chief minister of Gujarat.
- India beat Pakistan by two wickets to win the Blind Cricket World Cup 2018 for the second time after a thrilling match at Sharjah Cricket Stadium, the UAE. Sunil Ramesh was declared the man of the match.
- The Andhra Pradesh Government and the Canton of Zurich signed a letter of intent, to promote mutual prosperity and development.
- India has emerged as the fifth most attractive market for investments, as per the survey of CEOs by global consultancy PwC. The US remains the top spot for global investment.
- The Public Sector exploration giant Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) has got the consent for acquiring controlling stake in fellow PSU Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL). It has entered into a share purchase agreement with the President of India for acquiring the shares of HPCL (representing 51.11% of HPCL).
- According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), India is projected to grow at 7.4% in 2018 as against China's 6.8%, making it the fastest growing country among the emerging economies. Christine Lagarde is the managing director of IMF.

- Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan was honoured with the 24th Crystal Award, at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, for "his leadership in championing children's and women's rights in India".
- The International Cricket Council (ICC) has announced that the 2018 edition of the Women's World T20 will be hosted by West Indies in November 2018. ICC Chief Executive is David Richardson, and its Headquarters are in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.
- Young Indian shuttler Siddharth Pratap Singh secured his maiden international title, bagging the Swedish Open Junior International Series with a straight-game victory over Denmark's Mads Christophersen in the finals in Uppsala in Sweden.
- Trumpeter, composer and singer Hugh Masekela, affectionately known as the 'father of South African jazz', has died.
- National Girl Child Day was observed on 24th January.
- The Government of India, the Government of Uttarakhand and the World Bank Board signed a \$120 million Loan Agreement which will help increase access to improved water supply services in peri-urban areas in the State of Uttarakhand. Jim Yong Kim is the 12th President of the World Bank Group. World Bank Headquarters are in Washington DC, USA.
- Indian Overseas Bank has signed an MoU with National Housing Bank for the Rural Housing Interest Subsidy Scheme (RHIS) of the Ministry of Rural Development. The aim of the RHIS is to provide subsidy for housing loans taken by those living in rural areas for construction and modifications of their dwelling units. The interest subsidy under the scheme is 3% for a loan amount of Rs.2 lakh for 20-year tenure.
- Reliance Industries (RIL) became the first Indian company to cross the Rs.6-lakh crore mark in market capitalisation.
- ISRO's Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC) director S Somanath has taken charge as the new director of Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC). It is ISRO's lead centre for launch vehicles.
- The Election Commission of India celebrated the 8th National Voters' Day across the country on 25th January for enhanced participation of citizens in the electoral process.
- An MoU was signed between National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation (NHIDCL) under the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, and M/S IL&FS Transportation Networks Ltd for construction of the 14.150 km long, 2-lane bi-directional Zojila Tunnel in Jammu & Kashmir. This would be India's longest road tunnel and the longest bi-directional tunnel in Asia. The construction of this tunnel will provide all-weather connectivity between Srinagar, Kargil and Leh.
- India ranks 177 among 180 countries in the Environmental Performance Index (EPI) 2018, according to a biennial report by Yale and Columbia Universities along with the World Economic Forum.
- The Country celebrated its 69th Republic Day on 26th January in Rajpath, New Delhi. Heads of ten ASEAN countries were the chief guests at Republic Day. The family members of Corporal Jyoti Prakash Nirala (Posthumous) of the Indian Air Force (IAF), who died fighting militants in Kashmir valley, received India's highest peacetime gallantry award, Ashok Chakra.

- India has moved up on a global index of talent competitiveness to the 81st position. Switzerland has topped the list.
- The government has announced 88,139 crore rupees capital infusion in 20 public sector banks, PSBs, during the current fiscal ending 31st March to boost lending and revive growth. IDBI Bank will get the most- Rs.10,610 crore followed by State Bank of India 8,800 crore rupees.
- Kolkata has become the first Indian Metro to get a Floating Market. The market will be located on a water-body with boats doubling up as shops.
- Punjab chief minister Amarinder Singh launched the release of benefits under 'Mahatma Gandhi Sarbat Vikas Yojana' (MGSVY) aimed at the inclusive growth of the distressed sections of the society.
- The Ministry of Finance has announced that "Payments Banks and Small Finance Banks" will offer social security scheme Atal Pension Yojana (APY) to their subscribers. According to the Ministry, currently, there are 11 Payments Banks and 10 Small Finance Banks that have received the license from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to start their operations.
- The President has approved the Padma Awards 2018 for 85 individuals. In sports personalities, former India cricket captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni and multiple world champion cueist Pankaj Advani have been conferred with the Padma Bhushan. The 2017 World Weightlifting Champion Saikhom Mirabai Chanu and former Asian Games gold medallist tennis player Somdev Devvarman have been conferred with the Padma Shri. The awards are announced on the eve of the Republic Day every year.
- FM Jaitley tabled Economic Survey in Parliament. Economic Survey sees FY19 GDP growing 7-7.5% vs 6.75% in FY18.
- The Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh, Jai Ram Thakur launched the 'Shakti' app for women's safety in the state.
- The Australian Open is a tennis tournament held annually in Melbourne Park, Australia. In the 2018 Australian Open, Roger Federer defeated Marin Cilic in the final. In women's' single, Caroline Wozniacki became the first Danish player to win a Grand Slam singles title, defeating Simona Halep in the final.
- Sandeep Lamichhane became the first cricketer from Nepal to land a deal in IPL contract. He was picked by Delhi Daredevils in the player's auction.
- The world no.1 Tai Tzu Ying of Taiwan has defeated Saina Nehwal in the finals of the Indonesia Masters in Jakarta.
- Armies of India and Vietnam have begun a six-day-long military exercise in Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh. The exercise named 'VINBAX' is the first military exercise between the two countries.
- Oxford Dictionaries has chosen 'Aadhaar' as the Hindi word of 2017.
- India is ranked second only to South Africa as the cheapest country to live or retire, according to a recent survey of 112 countries by GoBankingRates.
- Google has introduced a new app named "Bulletin" that allows anybody to submit stories for and about their communities. This is a free, lightweight app for telling a story by

capturing photos, video clips and text right from your phone. Google CEO is Sundar Pichai, Parent organization is Alphabet Inc., and Headquarters are in The USA.

- The Indian Parliamentary Group (IPG) headed by Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan announced that five members of parliament (MPs) have been selected for the Outstanding Parliamentarian Awards. This includes, Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad (2015), Trinamool Congress' Dinesh Trivedi (2016), Manipur's governor Najma A Heptulla (2013), BJP's Lok Sabha member Hukumdev Narayan Yadav (2014) and five-time Rajya Sabha member Bhartruhari Mahatab of the Lok Biju Janata Dal (BJD) (2017). Chandra Shekhar of the Samajwadi Janata Party was the first member to receive this award.
- Bollywood playback singer Asha Bhosle will be given the 'Yash Chopra Memorial Award'. She will be the fifth winner of the award.
- India has been ranked sixth in the list of wealthiest countries. The list was topped by the United States of America, according to a report by New World Wealth.
- Environment Minister Harshvardhan launched a 2.8 PetaFlop capacity high-performance computer system 'Mihir' in Noida. With the launch of the system, India has joined the elite 30 member group of countries which have this advanced technology. Dr Harsh Vardhan has recently dedicated India's fastest and first multi-petaflops supercomputer named 'Pratyush' to the nation in Pune.
- The Asian Development Bank and the Indian Government have signed a 250 million dollar loan to finance the construction of over 6 thousand 2 hundred kilometres all-weather rural roads in 5 states viz Assam, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and West Bengal under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY).
- Melbourne Cricket Ground will host the final of both the men's and women's World Twenty20 when the tournaments come to Australia in 2020.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the first Khelo India School Games at Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium in New Delhi. Talented Under-17 players identified in priority sports disciplines at various levels by a High-Powered Committee will be provided annual financial assistance of Rs. 5 lakh per annum for 8 years.