

GENERAL AWARENESS UPDATES:- (24th December – 31st December, 2017)

- India's first home-grown high purity gold reference standard - the Bharatiya Nirdeshak Dravya (BND-4201) - was launched at the India Government Mint, Mumbai. BND-4201, which is the reference material for gold of '9999' fineness (gold that is 99.99 per cent pure), will be beneficial to the consumers and public at large to ensure purity of gold.
- Vijender Singh defended his WBO Oriental and Asia Pacific super middleweight titles against Ghana's Ernest Amuzu at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium in Jaipur.
- Sushil Kumar was sold to Delhi Sultans, ahead of the new season of Pro Wrestling League (PWL), for a whopping amount of Rs 55 lakh. Sushil is now the most expensive player in the history of the tournament.
- Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's birthday was celebrated as Good Governance Day across the country on 25th December.
- Mumbai has got India's first ever AC suburban local train. The first service of the 12-coach EMU will commence between Borivali and Churchgate. This will be the first train with automatic doors in the suburban system.
- The world's longest glass bridge has been opened in China to the public. Located in Shijiazhuang, the magnificent bridge lies 218 meters above hanging between the two cliffs in Hongyagu Scenic Area in Pingshan county. The bridge is 488 meters long and two meters wide.
- India is all set to get its first runway on a 'sea bridge', as the Airports Authority of India (AAI) has been given a nod to extend Lakshadweep's Agatti Airport.
- Karnataka's capital city Bengaluru has become the first Indian city to have its own logo after the state government launched it. With this, Bengaluru joins a select group of global cities like New York City, Melbourne and Singapore to have a tourism logo of its own.
- To enhance standards of cleanliness on beaches, the environment ministry has launched a pilot project 'Blue Flag' for its clean-up and development. The 'Blue Flag' is a certification by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) that a beach, Marina or sustainable boating tourism operator, meets its stringent standards.
- Bad loans of Public sector banks (PSBs) stood at Rs 7.34 lakh crore by the end of second quarter this fiscal. Among the major government-owned banks, State Bank of India had the highest level of NPAs. Up to end-September, among private banks, ICICI Bank had the most amount of NPAs.
- Vijay Rupani was sworn in as the Chief Minister of Gujarat state. Om Prakash Kohli is the Present Governor of Gujarat.
- Smartphone manufacturer Samsung launched its 'Bill Payments' on its flagship payments service, Samsung Pay in partnership with Axis Bank.
- Jai Ram Thakur took oath as the 6th Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh. Governor Acharya Devvrat administered the oath of office and secrecy to Mr Thakur.
- The Government of India, the Government of Tamil Nadu and the World Bank signed a \$318 million loan agreement for the Tamil Nadu Irrigated Agriculture Modernization

Project to promote climate resilient agriculture technologies, improve water management practices, and increase market opportunities for small and marginal farmers.

- The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has allowed Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL)- manufactured Dornier 228 to be used for civilian flights. The 19-seater aircraft has, till now, been used by defence forces and is the first plane to be made in the country for commercial flights.
- Actress Anushka Sharma has been named PETA's Person of the Year by animal rights organisation People for Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA).
- Vin Diesel has been named the top-grossing actor of 2017 by Forbes, with \$1.6 billion in global ticketing receipts from his film 'The Fate of the Furious'.
- Saudi Arabia is hosting a world chess tournament for the first time. The tournament has been named as the King Salman World Rapid and Blitz Chess Championships.
- According to the country's largest lender SBI, its board has approved raising Rs 8,000 crore through various sources, including masala bonds, to meet Basel III capital norms. Masala bonds are rupee denominated specialised debt instruments that can be floated in overseas markets only to raise capital. SBI Chairman- Rajnish Kumar, Headquarters- Mumbai, Established on- 1st July 1955.
- India's largest mobile-first financial services platform, Paytm announced that its app has crossed the 100 million milestone on Google Play Store in the second week of December 2017. This makes Paytm the country's first payments app to cross the 100 million downloads mark.
- Veteran singer K S Chitra has been selected for prestigious 'Harivarasanam' award 2017, instituted by the Kerala government.
- Bob Givens, one of the animators behind designing the iconic characters Bugs Bunny and Elmer Fudd, has died.
- The Lok Sabha passed the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriages) Bill 2017 making instant triple talaq (in any form spoken, in writing or by electronic means such as email, SMS and WhatsApp) illegal with up to three years in jail for the husband. The bill now needs to be passed by the Rajya Sabha before it is forwarded to the President for signing it into law.
- An agreement for IBRD Credit of USD 40 Million from World Bank for “U.P. Pro-Poor Tourism Development Project” was signed between India and the World Bank.
- The government slashed interest rates on small savings schemes, including National Savings Certificate (NSC) and Public Provident Fund (PPF), by 0.2 percentage point for the January-March period from the rates applicable in the previous quarter.
- India has the highest level of non-performing assets (NPA) among BRICS countries and is ranked fifth on a list of countries with the highest levels of NPAs, as per the report by CARE Ratings. The only countries ranked higher than India on the list are Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Ireland. All these countries, along with Spain, are commonly referred to as PIIGS and have been victims of sovereign debt crises in recent years.
- The two-week long eighth edition of the Indo-Maldives joint military exercise, 'Ekuverin', came to an end at Belagavi, Karnataka. 'Ekuverin' means 'friends' in the Maldivian language.

- Markets regulator SEBI stated that cross-holding in credit rating agencies (CRAs) will be capped at 10 percent and also decided to raise the minimum net worth requirement to Rs.25 crore from the current Rs.5 crore.
- Cryptocurrency dealer 'Pluto Exchange' announced the launch of India's first mobile application for transacting in virtual currencies. Bharat Verma is the founder and Chief Executive of Pluto Exchange.
- India's ace chess player Viswanathan Anand won the World Rapid Chess tournament title in Saudi Arabia by beating Russia's Vladimir Fedoseev. The women's title was won by China's Ju Wenjun.
- Former football star George Weah has been elected as Liberia's president.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi stated that Republic Day celebration in 2018 would be "remembered through the ages" because the government for the first time in India's history would host leaders of 10 ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) countries as chief guests on 26th January 2018.