

## **GENERAL AWARENESS UPDATES:- (31<sup>st</sup> October – 9<sup>th</sup> November, 2017)**

- The Government of India and the World Bank signed a \$200 million Loan Agreement for the Assam Agribusiness and Rural Transformation Project. Jim Yong Kim is the President of World Bank. The World Bank headquarters is in Washington, D.C., United States.
- Iran's key strategic port of Chabahar became operational with the maiden shipment of wheat from India to Afghanistan. It was flagged off from Kandla port in Gujarat. This is a major push for India's Afghan outreach bypassing Pakistan for the first time under the 2016 Indo-Afghan-Iran trilateral pact.
- Saudi Arabia to Allow Women into Sports Stadiums from 2018
- The 17th edition of FIFA U-17 World Cup took place for the first time in India. It is a biennial international football tournament of men's under-17 national teams organized by Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA). The official Mascot for the FIFA U-17 World Cup 2017 was clouded leopard named 'Kheleo'. The official ball for Under-17 football World Cup is called 'Krasava'. The final match of the event was held in Salt Lake Stadium, Kolkata. This was the first time India hosted U-17 FIFA World Cup. Highlights:
  1. England has won the FIFA U-17 World Cup by defeating Spain by 5-2.
  2. Phil Foden of England has been adjudged tournament's best player and has been awarded 'Golden Ball'.
  3. Rhian Brewster from England has scored the most goals in the tournament (8 goals) and has been awarded, 'Golden Boot'.
  4. Gabriel Brazao the goalkeeper of Brazil's national football team has won the 'Golden Glove'.
  5. Brazil has won the Fair Play Award.
  6. Switzerland's Esther Staubli became the first female football referee to officiate a match.
  7. Jeakson Singh creates history by scoring India's first ever goal in FIFA World Cup.
- Yonex French Open 2017 Badminton tournament was held in Paris. Indian shuttler Kidambi Srikanth became the first Indian to win the men's singles title at French Open badminton tournament.
- India broke into the top 100 in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business rankings. The rise to the 100th position from 130 last year made India one of the top 10 best-improved countries.
- India tops list of new Tuberculosis cases in 2016, according to a new report by the World Health Organisation. TB is a disease which in humans is usually caused by bacteria called Mycobacterium tuberculosis (M. tuberculosis). Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus is the WHO's Director General. WHO Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.
- The state government of Haryana has announced lifetime monthly pension of Rs 10,000 for 'Hindi Satyagrahis' and those from the state who were jailed during the Emergency.

- The government set up a ministerial panel, led by finance minister Arun Jaitley, to consider and oversee mergers among the country's 21 state-run banks. Members of the panel on PSU bank consolidation include railway and coal minister Piyush Goyal, and defence minister Nirmala Sitharaman.
- The Joint Indo-Russia Tri-Services Exercise INDRA-2017 was successfully conducted at Vladivostok in Russia. The name of the exercise INDRA has been derived from INDia and RussiA.
- India celebrates October 31 as Rashtriya Ekta Diwas (National Unity Day). This day marks the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, who played an instrumental role in the integration of princely state with Indian Union post-independence.
- The Ministry of Finance increased the maximum age of joining the National Pension System (NPS) from the existing 60 years to 65 years under NPS - Private Sector (i.e. all citizen and corporate model).
- Goa is safest for girls, and Bihar least safe, according to a newly-formed Gender Vulnerability Index (GVI) by NGO Plan India.
- India slipped 21 places on the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap index to 108 due to less participation of women in the economy and low wages, according to the WEF Global Gender Gap Report 2017. Iceland tops the list.
- Assam government has MoUs and Terms of Reference (ToR) with Singapore for skilling youth of the state.
- Indiana, a State in the US, and Karnataka have signed an agreement to establish sister-state ties for cooperation in economic, educational and cultural fields.
- A 45 member contingent of the Indian Air Force had left for Israel to participate in exercise 'Blue Flag-17'. Blue Flag is a bi-annual multilateral exercise which aims to strengthen military cooperation amongst participating nations. The exercise is being conducted at Uvda Air Force Base in Israel.
- The ninth edition of CMS Vatavaran - an international film festival on environment and wildlife - began in New Delhi. The theme of the fest is "Conservation 4 Water".
- China-sponsored Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) approved USD 2 million loan (Rs. 13,000 crores) for five projects in Andhra Pradesh. The five projects include two roads and buildings department, one each for rural safe drinking water department, municipal and urban development department and Panchayat Raj department. Jin Liqun is present president of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). Beijing, China is headquarters of AIIB.
- Noted Malayalam Poet and literary critic, K Satchidanandan, has been selected for Ezhuthachan Puraskaram 2017. This is Kerala government's highest literary honour.
- Five Indian women led by ICICI Bank chief executive officer (CEO) and managing director (MD) Chanda Kochhar and including Bollywood star Priyanka Chopra, have featured on the list of the world's 100 most powerful women compiled by Forbes. The list was topped by German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Kochhar was ranked 32, while HCL Corp. CEO Roshni Nadar Malhotra took the 57th position. Priyanka Chopra was at 97.

- A fourteen-day joint training exercise “PRABAL DOSTYK – 2017” between the Indian Army and the Kazakhstan Army commenced with the Opening Ceremony at Bakloh, Himachal Pradesh.
- Uttar Pradesh cabinet decided to make India's first conservation reserve for blackbuck in Allahabad's Meja.
- Yes Bank, unveiled a payment wallet service, BHIM Yes Pay. The freshly updated application, BHIM Yes Pay, integrates three other products of National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI)– RuPay Virtual Card, BharatQR and Bharat Bill Payment Service (BBPS) in addition to other payment infrastructures like UPI and IMPS.
- Almost a year after it reopened, The Royal Opera House has been awarded the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Award for Cultural Heritage Conservation.
- Renowned Hindi litterateur Krishna Sobti has been chosen for 53rd Jnanpith Award for the year 2017. Jnanpith Award is India’s highest literary honour.
- Fake news, a term popularised by U.S. President Donald Trump, has been named the word of the year by Collins dictionary due to its widespread use around the world.
- The Indian Air Force, along with the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully tested an indigenously developed lightweight ‘Glide’ bomb in Chandipur in Odisha. Named SAAW (Smart Anti Airfield Weapon), it was dropped from an IAF aircraft at the Integrated Test Range (ITR).
- AU Small Finance Bank has received Reserve Bank of India (RBI) approval to operate as Scheduled Commercial Bank. This bank's name has now been included in the Second Schedule of Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934. Now AU Small Finance Bank will be able to do borrowing and lending with RBI under Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF) and Marginal Standing Facility (MSF). Sanjay Agarwal is the MD & CEO, AU Small Finance Bank.
- The World Tsunami Awareness Day was observed across the world on 5 November. The theme for 2017 WTAD is 'Reduce the Number of Affected People'.
- The Goa government signed a trilateral MoU with the Department of Bio-Technology, Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India (GoI) and Nobel Media, Sweden to hold the ‘Nobel Prize Series — India 2018 (Science Impacts Life)’ to be held from February 1-28, 2018 in Goa along with a month-long exhibition brought from Nobel Museum, Sweden. The Nobel series has earlier been organised in Gujarat.
- Five-time world champion and Olympic bronze medalist MC Mary Kom has been named as the ambassador of the upcoming AIBA Women's Youth World Championships. The event, which is being hosted in Guwahati, Assam is scheduled to be held from November 19 to 26.
- India has defeated China 5-4 via shootout to win the women’s Asia Cup hockey title 2017. With this, India also qualified for World Cup 2018 as Continental champion. Savita Punia was adjudged Goalkeeper-of-the-Tournament while Monica won the Woman-of-the-Match award. The Championship was held in Kakamigahara, Japan.
- Minister of Communications Shri Manoj Sinha launched a Pan India scholarship program for school children called Deen Dayal SPARSH Yojana to increase the reach of Philately. Under the scheme of SPARSH (Scholarship for Promotion of Aptitude & Research in Stamps as a Hobby), it is proposed to award annual scholarships to children of Standard

VI to IX having good academic record and also pursuing Philately as a hobby. The amount of Scholarship will be Rs. 6000/- per annum @ Rs. 500/- per month. Philately is the hobby of collection and study of Postage stamps.

- The Supreme Court has ruled that technical education like engineering cannot be provided through correspondence courses.
- The annual 'Balijatra' festival was inaugurated by Health and Law Minister Pratap Jena at Gadagadia ghat in Odisha on the banks of river Mahanadi.
- A memorandum of understanding (MoU) of Rs 10,000 Crore was signed between the Government of India (GoI) and Patanjali at the World Food India 2017.
- ICICI Bank teams with Apple to launch India's first voice-based international remittance service to enable non-resident Indians (NRIs) to send money to any bank in India.
- The India Pavilion at Conference of Parties (COP) 23 was inaugurated by Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Dr. Harsh Vardhan at Bonn in Germany. India's theme for COP 23 is "Conserving Now, Preserving Future". (COP 22 was held in Marrakesh, Morocco.)
- Army personnel of India and Bangladesh are going to take part in a joint training exercise 'Sampriti-7' in Meghalaya and Mizoram.
- The Indian shooting contingent finished the Commonwealth Shooting Championship 2017 (in Brisbane, Australia) with the best tally of 20 medals. Indian shooters won a total of six gold, seven silver and seven bronze medals in the competition. Ace Indian shooter Heena Sindhu has bagged gold in women's 10m Air Pistol event.
- The Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple of Srirangam in Tamil Nadu won UNESCO Asia Pacific Award of Merit 2017 for the cultural heritage conservation program.
- M.C. Mary Kom (48kg) notched up her fifth gold medal at the Asian Women's Boxing Championships in Vietnam. She has defeated North Korea's Kim Hyang Mi.
- H.S Prannoy defeated World No 2 Kidambi Srikanth to claim the men's singles title at the 82nd Senior National Championship, in Nagpur, Maharashtra.
- Assam's famed one-horned rhino was unveiled as the official mascot of the 2017 AIBA Youth Women's World Boxing Championship in Guwahati, Assam. This is India's first youth world boxing championship, to be held from November 19 to 26. The official mascot, named Guppy, is a female version of Assam's one-horned rhino. The World Championship's official anthem is 'Make Some Noise'. It is composed by Shaan and rendered by renowned singer Sunidhi Chauhan.
- Twitter has officially increased the number of characters in tweets from 140 to 280 for the majority of users. Twitter CEO is Jack Dorsey, and Headquarters is in California, USA.
- Indian short film 'The School Bag' has won the 'Best Short Film Award' at the South Asian Film Festival of Montreal (SAFFM). The movie is directed by Dheeraj Jindal. Actress Rasika Dugal plays the mother in the short film.
- Chennai is the third Indian city to be included in the list of UNESCO Creative Cities list after Jaipur and Varanasi.

- A Financing Agreement for IBRD loan of US\$ 119 million (equivalent) for the “Odisha Higher Education Programme for Excellence & Equity (OHEPEE) Project” was signed with the World Bank.
- Shri Piyush Goyal, Union Minister of Railways & Coal has launched ‘Grahak Sadak Koyla Vitaran App’ benefitting customers of Coal India Limited (CIL) lifting coal through road mode.
- World number 11 Saina Nehwal became the national champion for the third time, defeating world number 2 PV Sindhu in the women's singles final of Senior National Badminton Championships, in Nagpur, Maharashtra.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bangladeshi counterpart Sheikh Hasina jointly inaugurated the long-awaited direct train-service between Kolkata and Khulna through video-conferencing. The new train service is called Bandhan Express.
- Kerala government launched “She Pad,” a scheme to distribute free sanitary napkins to girl students from classes VI to XII in government and aided private schools affiliated to the state school board.
- India has slipped in 'business optimism' index to the 7th position in the September quarter, from the 2nd slot in the previous three months, as per Grant Thornton's International Business Report (IBR). Indonesia is at the top.
- HDFC Bank has announced the launch of its SmartUp Zone in Kochi, an exclusive area inside the branch dedicated for start-ups.
- Hong Kong remains the world's most visited city by international travelers.
- The Delhi government announced that the odd-even scheme will be reintroduced in the national capital from November 13 to November 17.