

GENERAL AWARENESS UPDATES : - (5th March, 2017 to 11th March, 2017)

- A renewed agreement between Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir has been sealed for the completion of the Shahpur Kandi Dam project in Punjab, work on which was halted two years ago following a dispute.
- INS Viraat, the world's oldest aircraft carrier in active service was decommissioned on 6 March 2017 with a ceremonial send-off in Mumbai. INS Viraat retired after serving the country for nearly three decades.
- State Bank of India has decided to reintroduce penalty on non-maintenance of minimum balance in accounts from 1st of April 2017.
- The tallest national flag in the country measuring 360 feet was hoisted at the Attari-Wagah joint check post in Punjab. Earlier, the record was held by the one in Ranchi which is 293 feet high. The flag is 120 feet in length, 80 feet in breadth and is hosted on a pole which is 360 feet high.
- The Assam government led by the Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal decided to make Sanskrit a compulsory language for students up to class 8th in the state.
- The West Bengal government has given an official status to 'Kurukh' language in the state which has been listed as an endangered language by the UNESCO. Kurukh is a tribal language that belongs to the Dravidian family.
- The Centre and States approved the model draft Bills for Centre and Integrated goods and services tax (GST). The Council has also included a revised peak rate of 20 percent under GST, instead of the earlier 18 percent. This would mean that the total incidence of the tax could go as high as 40 percent.
- The Andhra Pradesh State Cabinet approved proposals to rename the Vijayawada Airport and the Tirupati Airport. The cabinet renamed the Vijayawada Airport in Gannavaram as 'Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao (NTR) Amaravati Airport'. The Tirupati Airport at Renigunta has been renamed as 'Sri Venkateswara Airport'.
- Sri Lanka won the 'Most Popular Tourism Destination Award' at the Guangzhou International Travel Fair (GITF) in China.
- India ended their campaign in the International Shooting Sports Federation (ISSF) World Cup (Rifle/ Pistol/ Shotgun) with five medals, including one Gold, two Silver and two Bronze medals at the Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range, New Delhi.
- Former Indian cricketer Akash Chopra authored book titled 'Numbers Do Lie'.
- In an effort to build bilateral military-to-military relations and skills, a 14-day joint defense exercise 'Al-Nagah-II' between the armies of India and Oman begun in Himachal Pradesh.'
- Bhagoria Festival, also known as Bhagoria Haat Festival, celebrated by the tribal people of the Indian state Madhya Pradesh began on March 6, 2017 in Jhabua district.
- The Union Finance Ministry has given its in-principle nod to allow Public Sector Banks (PSUs) to offer stock options to their employees from 2017-18. However, the Employee Stock Option Plans (ESOPs) can only be given by those banks which have earned a substantial profit as well as made a remarkable improvement in managing NPAs.

- Mumbai-headquartered HDFC Bank has launched India's first artificial intelligence based banking chatbot Electronic Virtual Assistant (EVA) for customer services. EVA is India's first AI-based banking chatbot and can answer millions of customer queries across multiple channels instantly.
- The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has announced that mobile manufacturing company Oppo Mobiles India Private Limited will be the new team sponsor of the Indian cricket team from April 1, 2017 for a period of five years. It has replaced Star India.
- International Women's Day was observed globally on 8th March. The theme of International Women's Day (IWD) 2017 campaign is 'Be Bold For Change'.
- A joint military exercise 'Surya Kiran-XI' between India and Nepal began in Pithoragarh area of Uttarakhand.
- GMR group led Rajiv Gandhi Hyderabad International Airport has secured first position in the world in the prestigious Airports Council International (ACI) Airport Service Quality (ASQ) survey in the 5-15 million passengers per annum (MPPA) category for the year 2016.
- Jammu and Kashmir Minister for Food, Civil Supplies, and Consumer Affairs Chowdhary Zulfkar Ali inaugurated the first smart tribal model village 'Habbi' in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir.
- China's banking system has overtaken the Eurozone to become the world's biggest by assets.
- The actor Aishwarya Rai Bachchan who played the character of Sarabjit Singh's sister Dalbir Kaur, has won the Best Actress award for 'Sarabjit' at the International Film Festival and Awards of Australia (IFFAA).
- The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) announced the 'BCCI Annual Awards for 2015-16'. Indian Skipper Virat Kohli was honored with the Polly Umrigar Award for third time. R Ashwin was awarded the Dilip Sardesia Award for the second time for his brilliant performance in test cricket in 2016. He is also the only one to be awarded twice.
- According to the Global Corruption Barometer released by Transparency International (TI), in Berlin for 16 Asia Pacific countries India tops the list for being the most corrupt nation.
- IDFC Bank has launched India's first biometric-based payment system 'Aadhaar Pay'.
- India's Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja have become the first pair of spinners to be jointly top-ranked in the MRF Tyres ICC Player Rankings for Test Bowlers.
- Parliament approved a bill granting women working in the organized sector paid maternity leave of 26 weeks, up from 12 weeks now.
- Eminent Konkani writer Mahabaleshwar Sail has been honored with the Saraswati Samman 2016 for his novel 'Hawthan'.
- Non-Banking Finance Companies (NBFCs) cannot lend more than Rs 25,000 in cash against gold according to RBI. The earlier provision for NBFC was that high-value loans against the gold of Rs 1 lakh and above must only be disbursed by cheque. RBI reduced the amount to Rs 25,000 from the earlier Rs 1 lakh.

- A South African man Chris Bertish has become the first person to cross the Atlantic Ocean on a stand-up paddleboard after completing an epic 4,050-mile voyage alone at sea.