

**GENERAL AWARENESS UPDATES:- (1<sup>st</sup> February – 10<sup>th</sup> February, 2018)**

- India has slipped to 42nd place on an annual Global Democracy Index according to the data compiled by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU). India has moved down from 32nd place last year. Norway tops the list.
- The government and World Bank signed a \$100 million (about Rs 6,40 crore) loan agreement to promote rural economy in selected blocks of Tamil Nadu across 26 districts, benefiting over 4 lakh people. Jim Yong Kim is the 12th President of the World Bank Group. World Bank Headquarters are in Washington DC, USA.
- Lt. Gen Anil Chauhan took charge as the new Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) of the Indian Army. General Bipin Rawat is the present Chief of Army Staff.
- The world's oldest man Francisco Nunez Olivera has died just over a month after celebrating his 113th birthday.
- India has joined Ashgabat Agreement on the establishment of an International Transport and Transit Corridor between the Iran, Oman, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.
- The United Arab Emirates has made a record by opening the world's longest zip line, measuring 2.83 km in length. Guinness World Records officials certified the zip line in Ras al-Khaimah.
- Rwanda has become the first low-income country to provide universal eye care for its 12 million population.
- The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) appointed its joint secretary Vikram Singh Sisodia as the Chef-de-Mission for the upcoming Commonwealth Games to be held, from April 4 to 15, in Gold Coast, Australia.
- Magahi writer Shesh Anand Madhukar, who has been working extensively for the development of the language, was honoured with this year's Sahitya Akademi Bhasha Samman award. He is the second writer of Magahi language to be given the award. Some of the important works of Shesh Anand Madhukar in Hindi are "Magahi Kavita Ke Bimb", "Eklavya", and "Bhagwan Birsa".
- The five-time World Champion MC Mary Kom claimed the gold medal in the India Open International Boxing tournament at Thyagraj Indoor Stadium in New Delhi. She defeated Josie Gabuco from the Philippines.
- The Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs Mr Arun Jaitley launched CriSidEx, India's first sentiment index for micro and small enterprises (MSEs) developed jointly by CRISIL & SIDBI. CriSidEx is a composite index based on a diffusion index of 8 parameters and measures MSE business sentiment on a scale of 0 (extremely negative) to 200 (extremely positive).
- India has defeated Australia to lift the Under 19 World cup for the fourth time. The Men in Blue defeated the three-time champions Australia at Bay Oval, New Zealand. Manjot Kalra was declared Man of the Match. Shubman Gill was declared Player of the Tournament. India was the earlier winner in 2000, 2008 and 2012.
- The Maharashtra government has approved Ghodazari in Chandrapur district as a new wildlife sanctuary in the state. The sanctuary, in the North East of Tadoba, will include 159 sq km of Brahmapuri forest.

- Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) has signed a project agreement with the World Bank for Jal Marg Vikas Project on river Ganga. The World Bank entered into a USD 375 million loan agreement with the Department of Economic Affairs, Union Ministry of Finance for Jal Marg Vikas Project (JMVP).
- The book penned down by PM Narendra Modi named 'Exam Warriors' was launched to reach out to the students across the country ahead of their exams. 'Exam Warriors' is published by Penguin India, which runs into 208 pages.
- The World Cancer Day was observed on 4th February to raise awareness about cancer, its treatment and to encourage methods of its prevention. The theme for WCD 2016-18 is 'We can, I Can'.
- The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) launched the world's smallest rocket with the ability to put a tiny satellite into orbit. It carried a microsatellite TRICOM-1R, a three-unit CubeSat weighing about 3 kilograms.
- Cyprus President Nicos Anastasiades has won re-election for a second term.
- India Open is a badminton event held annually at the Siri Fort Sports Complex, New Delhi. In women's singles defending champion P V Sindhu was defeated by American Beiwen Zhang to finish runner-up at the India Open Super 500 tournament.
- Indian cricketers Jasprit Bumrah and Harmanpreet Kaur as well India women's hockey team goalkeeper Savita Punia and shooter Heena Sidhu are among Forbes India 30 Under 30 list. Bumrah finished the year 2017 as the third highest wicket-taker in ODIs with 39 scalps in 23 matches. In December 2016, Harmanpreet became the first Indian woman cricketer to play in Australia's Big Bash League (BBL).
- Cab-hailing startup Ola and the Government of Assam have signed an MoU to pilot an app-based river taxi service in Guwahati. The river taxis will be machine-operated boats and users will be able to book the rides through Ola's app.
- Mumbai Airport became world's busiest single-runway airport. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International airport of Mumbai sets record with 980 flights in 24 hours or almost one flight every minute.
- Uttar Pradesh State government in association with the United Nations International Children's Education Fund (UNICEF) has launched massive door to door campaign DASTAK to eradicate deadly Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) and Japanese Encephalitis (JE) disease in the state. The war cry of DASTAK is '*Darwaja Khatkatao, AES aur JE ko bhagao*'.
- Sweden commits record \$370m of aid to UN World Food Programme (WFP). The contribution for the period 2018-2021 is the biggest ever made by a donor within a WFP Strategic Partnership Agreement.
- The Maldives president, Abdulla Yameen, has declared a state of emergency in the country.
- Jerome H Powell was sworn in as the 16th Chairman of the Federal Reserve for a four-year term. Mr Powell has succeeded Janet Yellen, the first woman to lead the US central bank in its 100-year history. The Federal Reserve System is the central banking system of the United States.

- Shubhankar Sharma has emerged as the best Indian golfer in the world, grabbing the 72nd position in the Official World Golf Ranking (OWGR). Dustin Johnson from the USA is currently the World Number 1 in Official World Golf Ranking.
- The President of India Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated the 88th Mahamastakabhisheka Utsav of Lord Gomateshwara in Hassan district of Karnataka. Mahamastakabhisheka of Gommateshwara, who is also known as Bahubali takes place once in 12 years. It is an important Jain pilgrimage centre and lakhs of tourists visit Shravanbelagola to see 57 feet tall monolithic stone statue.
- The Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) has been ranked the top environment policy think tanks in India while it has secured the 16th position in global rankings.
- Google and National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) signed a pact to integrate a course on 'Digital Citizenship and Safety' in information and communication technology curriculum. It was signed on the occasion of Safer Internet Day (06th February).
- Safer Internet Day (SID) 2018 was celebrated on Tuesday, 6 February 2018 with a theme of "Create, connect and share respect: A better internet starts with you".
- The US-based SpaceX has successfully launched the world's most powerful operational rocket Falcon Heavy towards Mars. The rocket, carrying a Tesla Roadster car, will revolve around the Sun in a way that will repeatedly bring it close to the Earth and Mars.
- The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) decided to keep the policy repo rate under the liquidity adjustment facility (LAF) unchanged at 6.0%. Consequently, the Reverse Repo Rate (RRR) under the LAF remains at 5.75%, and the Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) rate and the Bank Rate at 6.25%.
- Kathakali maestro Madavoor Vasudevan Nair collapsed on stage and died while performing at Agasthyacodu Mahadeva Temple, Kerala. He was the Padma Bhushan award recipient.
- Indian women's cricket team pacer Jhulan Goswami has become the first woman in the world to take 200 wickets in ODI cricket. Goswami achieved the feat playing in her 166th ODI against South Africa. Goswami had become the leading wicket-taker in women's ODI in May 2017, overtaking former Australian pacer Cathryn Fitzpatrick's record of 180 wickets.
- The Hindustan Aeronautics Limited has developed the first flight of Hawk-i with indigenous Real Time Operating System (RTOS). Hawk-i is the first indigenous RTOS developed in India from scratch and certified by Center for Military Airworthiness and Certification (CEMILAC).
- The first ever of its kind in the country, a chat-based job search mobile app 'Empzilla' is launched.
- Dubai International Airport has held on to its No 1 ranking as the world's busiest airport for international travel. Dubai International Airport first surpassed London Heathrow as the world's busiest airport for international traffic in 2014.
- Bermuda has become the first country to legalise and then repeal same-sex marriage.

- Business magazine Forbes has released its first-ever Crypto Rich List, comprising 20 wealthiest people in the cryptocurrency space. The list was topped by Ripple Co-founder Chris Larsen.
- The Reserve Bank of India will link the base rate with the MCLR from 1st of April 2018 to ensure expeditious transmission of its policy rate to borrowers. The RBI had introduced the Marginal Cost of Funds based Lending Rates (MCLR) system with effect from 1st April 2016, the Central bank observed that a large proportion of bank loans continue to be linked to Base Rate.
- The Reserve Bank of India announced setting up ombudsman for addressing customer grievances in the non-banking finance companies.
- India has increased “substantially” its score in the International Intellectual Property (IP) Index, ranking 44th among 50 nations. Last year, India ranked 43rd out of 45 countries in the Index. The top 3 countries on the list are- The USA, The United Kingdom and Sweden.
- The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) will start a pilot project called "pay as you use" on the Delhi-Mumbai Highway. The project to be run for one year involves implementing a satellite-based electronic toll collection system running on GPS/GSM technology for around 500 commercial vehicles on the Delhi-Mumbai National Highway.
- The South Central Railway (SCR) has become the first railway zone in the country to complete 100% LED lighting at all the stations under its jurisdiction. Piyush Goyal is the present Railways Minister of India. John Mathai was the first railway Minister of Independent India.
- The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has imposed a fine of around Rs.136 crores on search engine major Google for unfair business practices in the Indian market for online search. The penalty is being imposed on Google for infringing anti-trust conduct. It was alleged that Google is indulging in abuse of dominant position in the market for online search through practices leading to search bias and search manipulation, among others.
- IndusInd Bank launched its new Sonic Identity, which is essentially a musical logo called 'MOGO', as part of its branding initiatives. The objective for associating to a sonic identity is building the Bank's brand imagery with the strategic use of music and sound for brand experiences and audience connection.
- PepsiCo Chairman and CEO Indra Nooyi has been appointed as the International Cricket Council's (ICC) first-ever independent female director. Nooyi will join the cricket body in June 2018 for a 2-year term. ICC Chairman- Shashank Manohar, Headquarters- Dubai, The UAE.
- The first Khelo India School Games concluded in New Delhi with Haryana topping the overall medal tally. The state won 102 medals which include 38 gold and 26 silver.
- NITI Aayog has released the ‘Healthy States, Progressive India Report’. Kerala, Punjab and Tamil Nadu have ranked top among the larger states in terms of overall performance. Jharkhand, Jammu and Kashmir and Uttar Pradesh are at the top in the terms of annual incremental performance. Among smaller states, Mizoram ranked first followed by Manipur and Goa in terms of annual incremental performance. Among Union territories, Lakshadweep showed best overall performance as well as highest annual incremental performance. The National Institution for Transforming India, also called NITI

Aayog, was formed via a resolution of the Union Cabinet on January 1, 2015. Dr Rajiv Kumar is the present Vice Chairman of NITI Aayog, and Amitabh Kant is NITI Aayog CEO.

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi was conferred the 'Grand Collar of the State of Palestine' by President of Palestine Mahmoud Abbas, recognising his key contribution to promote relations between India and Palestine.
- The 23rd Olympic Winter Games officially kicked off with a colourful ceremony at Pyeongchang in South Korea.
- Eminent litterateur Chandrasekhar Rath passed away. He was recently nominated for Padma Shri by the Union government this year for his contribution towards Odia literature.