Important Days

- 1st February - Indian Coast Guard Day
- 2nd February - World Wetlands Day
- 4th February - World Cancer Day
- 4th February - Independence Day of Sri Lanka
- 6th February - International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation
- 6th February - Safer Internet Day
- 9th February - Safer Internet Day
- 9th February - 69th 'Nowshera Day'
- 10th February - National Deworming Day
- 11th February - World Day of the Sick
- 11th February - International Day of Women and Girls in Science
- 12th February - Darwin Day
- 13th February - World Radio Day
- 16th February - Chinese New Year (year of the Dog)
- 20th February - World Day of Social Justice
- 21st February - International Mother Language Day
- 22nd February - Twins day
- 22nd February - World Thinking Day
- 23rd February - World Rotary Day
- 24th February - Central Excise Day
- 28th February - National Science Day
- Last Day of February - Rare Disease Day

New Appointments

- Abdul Hamid - President, Bangladeshi
- Abhilasha Kumari - Chief Justice, Manipur High Court
- Amitabh Bachchan - Brand Ambassador, Muthoot Group
- Amitabh Kant - CEO, NITI Aayog
- Andrew Kovacs - Global Head of Communications, SoftBank
- Anil Chauhan - Director General of Military Operations (DGMO), Indian Army
- Antony Dominic - Chief Justice, Kerala
- Arvind P. Jamkhedkar - Chairman, Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR)
- Ashok Das - India's new Ambassador to Brazil
- B A Chopade - Vice-Chancellor, Banaras Hindu University ( BHU)
- Biswamohan Mahapatra - Non-Executive Chairman, National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)
- Chandrashekhar Kambar - President, Sahitya Akademi
- Cora - 1st Digital Human Employee of Royal Bank of Scotland
- Cyril Ramaphosa - President, South Africa
- Debashish Mukherjee - Executive Director, Canara Bank
- Dinesh Srivastava - Chief Executive Officer, Nuclear Fuel Complex (NFC)
- Errol D'Souza - New Director, IIM, Ahmedabad
- Hardayal Prasad - MD & CEO, SBI Card
- Haruhiko Kuroda - Governor, Bank of Japan
- Indra Nooyi - 1st Ever Independent Female Director, International Cricket Council (ICC)
- John L. Hennessy - Chairman, Alphabet
- Krishna Kumari - 1st Female Hindu lawmaker in Pakistan
- K P Sharma Oli - Prime Minister, Nepal
- K S Dwivedi - Director General of Police (DGP), Bihar
- Lt Gen Paul Nakasone - Director, National Security Agency and US Cyber Command
- M. Subbarayudu - India's new Ambassador to Bolivia
- M. M. Murugappan - Executive Chairman, Murugappa Group
- Madhav Kaushik - Vice President, Sahitya Akademi
- Michael McCormack - Deputy Prime Minister, Australia
- Mukul Asthana - Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Air)
- Murali Ramaswami - Executive Director, Vijaya Bank
- Naba Kumar Nayak - Election Commissioner, Odisha
- Neelam Kapoor - Director General (DG), Sports Authority of India (SAI)
- Nicos Anastasiades - President, Cyprus
- Pradeep Kumar Rawat - India's new Ambassador to Timor-Leste
- Rahul Mahajan - Editor-in-Chief, Rajya Sabha TV
- Rajendra Trivedi - Speaker, Gujarat Legislative Assembly

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FEBRUARY 2018 QUICK REVIEW

- Rakesh Singh - Private Banking Head, HDFC Bank
- Sachin Tendulkar - Brand Ambassador, T20 Mumbai League
- Samina Baig - National Goodwill Ambassador for Pakistan (by UNDP)
- Smriti Mandhana - Brand Ambassador, Power (Bata’s sport wear brand)
- Sudeep Lakhtakia - Director General, National Security Guard (NSG)
- Sudhir Tripathi - New Chief Secretary, Jharkhand
- Syed Mahmud Hossain - Chief Justice, Bangladesh
- Thanglura Darlong - India’s new Ambassador to Romania
- Vidit Gujrathi - Brand Ambassador, All India Chess Federation for the Blind (AICFB)
- Vinod Kumar Jain - Vice Chancellor, Tezpur University

Deaths

- Asma Jahangir - Human Rights Activist, Pakistan
- Bevan Congdon - Former New Zealand cricketer
- Chandrasekhar Rath - Noted Odia author
- Didier Lockwood - Noted French jazz violinist
- Fidel Castro Diaz-Balart - Eldest son of late Cuban revolutionary leader and President Fidel Castro
- Francisco Nunez Olivera - World’s oldest man
- Gundu Hanumantha Rao - Tollywood Actor
- Jayendra Saraswati Swamigal - Kanchi Shankaracharya (69th pontiff of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam)
- Johann Johannsson - Noted Golden Globe awardee Icelandic musician
- John Gavin - Noted American Actor
- John Mahoney - Noted American Actor
- Kalamandalam Geethanandan - Noted Ottanthullal (A dance form of kerala) artist
- Kanakalata Mohanty - Noted Odia writer
- Kunhiraman Panoor - Noted Malayalam writer
- Kunwar Bai - Mascot of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan
- Lakshmi Devi - Noted Telugu actor
- Louis Zorich - Noted American Actor
- M S Anantharaman - Noted violinist

Awards & Honors

- Madavoor Vasudevan Nair - Noted Kathakali maestro.
- Muzaffar Hussain - Noted Scribe, writer and journalist
- Nanette Fabray - Noted America Actress. She had won 3 Emmy awards and received SAG Life Achievement Award in 1987
- Neelabh Mishra - Noted senior journalist
- Parbati Ghose - First female filmmaker of Odisha
- Penny Vincenzi - Noted British novelist
- Ram Swarup Sharma - Padma Shri Awardee from UP for Folk Art Rasa Lila
- Rev. Billy Graham - Noted Christian evangelist
- Ruud Lubbers - Longest serving prime minister of Netherlands
- Sri Devi - Noted Bollywood & South Indian Actress
- Sudha Karmarkar - Pioneer of Children’s Theatre
- T.S.R. Subramanian - Former Cabinet Secretary

- Aadhaar - Best Government Emerging Technologies Award
- Asha Bhosle - Yash Chopra Memorial Award
- Ellen Johnson Sirleaf - Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership
- Milkbasket - Startup of the Year 2017 Award
- Odisha Government - Geospatial World Excellence Award-2018
- Ramesh Sippy - 1st Raj Kapoor Award for Excellence in Cinema
- Reliance Industries (RIL) - Golden Peacock Award 2017
- Sanjiv Bajaj - EY Entrepreneur of the Year 2017 Award
- Shesh Anand Madhukar - Sahitya Akademi Bhasha Samman Award
- Shyam Benegal - V. Shantaram lifetime achievement Award
- Sophia Alexandra Duleep Singh - Royal Mail stamp of the UK
- Soumitra Chatterjee - France’s highest civilian award, Legion d’Honneur
2018 BAFTA Awards Complete Winners List

- **Best Film** - Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri
- **Best Director** - Guillermo Del Toro, The Shape of Water
- **Best Actress** - Frances McDormand, Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri
- **Best Actor** - Gary Oldman, Darkest Hour
- **Outstanding British Film** - Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri
- **Best Supporting Actress** - Allison Janney, I, Tonya
- **Best Supporting Actor** - Sam Rockwell, Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri
- **Best Cinematography** - Roger Deakins, Blade Runner 2049
- **Original Screenplay** - Martin McDonagh, Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri
- **Adapted Screenplay** - James Ivory, Call Me by Your Name
- **British Short Film** - Cowboy Dave British Short Animation - Poles Apart
- **Outstanding Debut By A British Writer, Director Or Producer** - I Am Not a Witch, Rungano Nyoni (writer/director), Emily Morgan (producer)
- **Special Visual Effects** - Blade Runner 2049
- **Best Animated Film-** Coco
- **Best Film Not in The English Language** - The Handmaiden
- **Best Documentary** - I Am Not Your Negro
- **Best Production Design** - Paul Austerberry, Jeff Melvin, Shane Vieau, The Shape of Water
- **Best Editing** - Jonathan Amos, Paul Machliss Baby Driver
- **Best Sound** - Dunkirk
- **Best Original Music** - The Shape of Water
- **Best Costume Design** - Phantom Thread
- **Best Make Up &Hair** - Darkest Hour
- **The Ee Rising Star Award** - Daniel Kaluuya

2018 Directors Guild Award winners

- **Feature Film** - “The Shape of Water,” Guillermo del Toro
- **First-Time Feature Film** - “Get Out,” Jordan Peele
- **Documentary** - “City of Ghosts,” Matthew Heineman
- **Dramatic Series** - “The Handmaid’s Tale”: “Offred,” Reed Morano
- **Comedy Series** - “Veep”: “Chicklet,” Beth McCarthy-Miller
- **Movies for Television and Mini-Series** - “Big Little Lies,” Jean-Marc Valee
- **Variety/Talk/News/Sports – Regular** - “Saturday Night Live,” Don Roy King
- **Variety/Talk/News/Sports – Specials** - “The 89th Annual Academy Awards,” Glenn Weiss
- **Reality Programs** - “Master Chef,” Brian Smith
- **Children’s Programs** - “Anne With an E,” Niki Caro
- **Commercials** - Martin de Thural
- **Honorary Life Member Award** - Michael Apted
- **Frank Capra Achievement Award** - Dwight Williams
- **Franklin J. Schaffner Achievement Award** - Jim Tanker

71st British Academy Film Awards / BAFTA Awards Winners

- **Best Film** - Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri
- **Best Director** - Guillermo del Toro (for The Shape of Water)
- **Best Actor in a Leading Role** - Gary Oldman (for Darkest Hour)
- **Best Actress in a Leading Role** - Frances McDormand (for Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri)
- **Best Actor in a Supporting Role** - Sam Rockwell (for Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri)
- **Best Actress in a Supporting Role** - Allison Janney (for I, Tonya)
- **Best Documentary** - I Am Not Your Negro
• **Best Original Music** - Alexandre Desplat (for The Shape of Water)
• **Best Non English Film** - The Handmaiden (South Korea)
• **Best Animated Film** - Coco
• **Best Short Film** - Cowboy Dave
• **EE Rising Star Award** - Daniel Kaluuya

**Complete Winners List of Laureus World Sports Awards 2018**

• **Sportsman of the Year** - Roger Federer
• **Sportswomen of the Year** - Serena Williams
• **Comeback of the Year** - Roger Federer
• **Exceptional Achievement** - Francesco Totti
• **World Action Sportsperson of the Year** - Armel Le Cleac’h
• **Sport for Good** - Active Communities Network
• **Team of the Year** - Mercedes F1
• **World Breakthrough of the Year** - Sergio Garcia
• **World Sportsperson of the Year with a Disability** - Marcel Hug
• **Sporting Inspiration Award** - J.J. Watt
• **Best Sporting Moment** - Chapecoense (Eternal Champions)
• **Lifetime Achievement** - Edwin Moses

**Complete winners List of Swis Open 2018**

• **Men's Singles** - Sameer Verma (India)
• **Women's Singles** - Sayaka Takahashi (Japan)
• **Men's Doubles**:
  - Mathias Boe (Denmark)
  - Carsten Mogensen (Denmark)
• **Women's Doubles**:
  - Ayako Sakuramoto (Japan)
  - Yukiko Takahata (Japan)
• **Mixed Doubles**:
  - Mark Lamsfuß (Germany)
  - Isabel Herttrich (Germany)

**RBI’s 6th bi-monthly monetary policy review highlights**

• Key lending rate (repo) unchanged at 6 percent.
• Reverse repo rate remains at 5.75 percent and marginal standing facility (MSF) rate and Bank Rate at 6.25 percent.
• Monetary policy's stance neutral.
• Petrol and diesel prices rose sharply in Jan, reflecting lagged pass-through of past increases in global crude prices.
• Retail inflation estimated at 5.1 percent in Q4 this fiscal and 5.1-5.6 percent in H1 of FY2018-19.
• Inflation likely to ease to 4.5-4.6 percent in H2 of FY19.
• Gross Value Added (GVA) growth for FY18 seen at 6.6 percent.
• GVA growth for 2018-19 projected at 7.2 percent.
• GST stabilising, which augurs well for economic activity.
• Early signs of revival in investment activity.
• RBI seeks pick-up in credit growth due to recapitalisation of PSBs and resolution proceedings under IBC.
• Export growth expected to improve further on account of improving global demand.
• RBI says focus of Union Budget on rural and infrastructure sectors a welcome development.
• Five members voted in favour of status quo in interest rate; one member voted for increase of 0.25 percent.
• The RBI had last reduced the benchmark lending rate by 0.25 percentage points to 6 percent last August, bringing it to a 6-year low.
• Next meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is on 4 and 5 April.

**Current RBI Rates (as on 7th February 2018)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No</th>
<th>Rates / Reserve Ratios</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Bank Rate</td>
<td>6.25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Repo Rate</td>
<td>6.00%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Reverse Repo Rate</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Marginal Standing Facility (MSF)</td>
<td>6.25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Books & Authors

- **Becoming** - Michelle Obama
- **Even When There is A Doctor** - Yashwant Amdekar
- **Exam Warriors** - Prime Minister Narendra
- **Hari Singh Nalwa: Champion of the Khalsaji (1791-1837)** - Vanit Nalwa
- **Hisaab Kitaab** - Anjana Sukhani
- **Mere Sapnon ka Bharat** - Tarun
- **The Diary of Domestic Diva** - Shilpa Shetty

The 2018 Winter Olympics concluded in Pyeongchang, South Korea. Highlights:

- **Norway** ended the event as the top medal-winning nation with 14 gold, 14 silver, and 11 bronze medals.
- **Germany** ended the event at the second position with 14 gold, 10 silver, and seven bronze medals.
- **India** was represented by two male athletes, who competed in the luge and cross-country skiing events.
- India’s first woman International Olympic Committee member Nita Ambani presented medals to the top two finishers of Alpine Skiing team event.

Important Details of Winter Olympics 2018

- **Motto**: Passion, Connected.
- **Officially Opened by**: Moon Jae-in (President of South Korea)
- **Participated Nations**: 92
- **Total Events**: 102
- **Total Sports**: 15
- **Starting Date**: 9th February
- **End Date**: 25th February
- **Top MedalWinning Nation**: Norway

India was ranked 81st among 180 countries in Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index (CPI) 2017

Top 5 in the List:

1. New Zealand
2. Denmark
3. Finland
4. Norway
5. Switzerland

According to a global traffic scorecard published annually by Inrix, a company that aggregates and analyzes traffic data collected from vehicles and highway infrastructure, the Top 10 most congested cities in the world are:

1. Los Angeles
2. New York City (tie)
3. Moscow (tie)
4. Sao Paulo, Brazil
5. San Francisco
6. Bogotá
7. London
8. Atlanta
9. Paris
10. Miami

The company also published the list of Top 10 most congested countries. They are:

1. Thailand
2. Indonesia
3. Colombia
4. Venezuela
5. United States (tie)
6. Russia (tie)
7. Brazil (tie)
8. South Africa (tie)
9. Turkey
10. United Kingdom

India has been ranked 44 out of 50 nations in the latest International Intellectual Property index released by the US Chambers of Commerce.

Top 3 in the List:

1. US
2. UK
3. Sweden

India has slipped to 42nd place in recently released Global Democracy Index (GDI) 2017 amid “rise of conservative religious ideologies” and increase in vigilantism and violence against minorities as well as other dissenting voices. Last year India ranked 32nd.
Top 10 countries in GDI 2017

1. Norway,  
2. Iceland,  
3. Sweden,  
4. New Zealand,  
5. Denmark,  
6. Ireland,  
7. Canada,  
8. Australia,  
9. Finland  
10. Switzerland

February 2018 - Highlights (One-Liners)

- 13th February 2018 was observed as World Radio Day with the theme “Radio and Sports”.
- 21st National Conference on e-Governance was held in Hyderabad (Telangana). Theme of the Conference: ‘Technology for accelerating Development’.
- 17-year-old snowboarder Redmond Gerard won the 1st gold medal for the United States at this year's Winter Olympics, with his victory in the snowboarding slopestyle competition.
- 18 years and 86 days old Prithvi Shaw, has become the youngest-ever captain to win an ICC Under-19 World Cup final.
- 20th February 2018 was observed as the World Day of Social Justice with the theme "Workers on the Move: the Quest for Social Justice".
- 20-time Grand Slam champion Roger Federer (36) has become the oldest-ever men’s singles world number one tennis player.
- 20-time Grand Slam champion Roger Federer and 23-time Grand Slam champion Serena Williams won the Laureus Sportsman and Sportswoman of the Year awards respectively.
- 21st February 2018 was observed as the International Mother Language Day with the theme "Linguistic diversity and multilingualism count for sustainable development".
- 28th February (Last Day of February) was observed as Rare Disease Day with the theme 'research'.
- 28th February 2018 was observed as National Science Day with the theme "Science and Technology for a sustainable future."
- 2nd edition of ‘Nobel Prize Series India 2018’ held in Panaji (Goa). Its a month-long Nobel Science Exhibition in which Nobel laureates interact with school children and teachers. Theme of Nobel Prize Series India 2018’ is Science Impacts Life.
- 2nd February 2018 was observed as World Wetlands Day. This day marks adoption of Convention on Wetlands (also called as Ramsar Convention) in 1971 in Ramsar (Iran). Theme for 2018 "Wetlands for a Sustainable Urban Future".
- 41st Indian Coast Guard Day was observed on 1st February 2018.
- 4th February was observed as World Cancer Day with the Theme 'We can. I can'.
- 10th February 2018 was observed as National Deworming Day.
- 4-time champions Pakistan will participate in the upcoming Hockey World Cup which will be hosted in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, later this year.
- 5th Edition of South Asia Region Public Procurement Conference was held in New Delhi. Theme of this Conference: “Public Procurement and Service Delivery”.
- 6th edition of World Government Summit (WGS) 2018, a global platform dedicated to shaping future of government worldwide, was recently held at Madinat Jumeirah in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE). India is the guest country at this year’s event.
7 Indian boxers, including five-time world champion Mary Kom, won gold medals in the India Open International Boxing Tournament.

A Bangladesh court sentenced Opposition leader and two-time ex-PM Khaleda Zia to five years in jail for corruption.

A ‘Gender park’ open exclusively to women and children will be set up in Kerala’s Kottayam.

A total of 225 Indian athletes will participate in 15 sports of this year’s Commonwealth Games, which will be held in Australia from April 4 to April 15. The Indian basketball teams would be participating at the Commonwealth Games after a gap of eight years.

According to a recently released report by UK-based wireless coverage mapping company OpenSignal, India has recorded the lowest 4G LTE speed in the world at an average of 6.07 Mbps. Singapore topped the list with an average 4G speed of 44.31 Mbps, followed by the Netherlands and Norway.

According to a recently released UNICEF study, every year in India, at least 6,00,000 newborns die within 28 days of their birth. The study also revealed that Pakistan is the riskiest country to be born in as it accounted for the world’s highest newborn mortality rate.

According to a report released by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), the CM of Andhra Pradesh, Chandrababu Naidu is the richest Chief Minister in India with declared assets worth over ₹177 crore. Naidu is followed by Arunachal Pradesh CM Pema Khandu with assets worth over ₹129 crore and Punjab's Amarinder Singh with ₹48 crore.

According to latest government data, women constitute only 7.28% of India’s police force.

According to recently released Global Passport Index 2018, South Korea and Singapore have the most powerful passports in the world with a visa-free score of 162. India has been ranked 73rd.

Actor Kamal Haasan launched his political party 'Makkal Needhi Maiam' and hoisted a flag carrying the party's symbol in Tamil Nadu's Madurai. The flag of Makkal Needhi Maiam Party depicts 6 hands holding onto each other with a six-pointed star in the middle.

Airtel Payments Bank reduced its interest rate by 175 basis points to 5.5 % per annum from 7.25 % per annum earlier.

Amazon has launched it’s own food retail venture titled Amazon Retail in Pune. With this, Amazon has become the first foreign e-commerce firm to start its own food retail venture in India.

An all-woman crew started operating the Gandhinagar Railway Station in Jaipur, in a first for Rajasthan. This is India’s second railway station with an all-woman crew, with the first being Matunga Railway Station in Mumbai.

An Indian consortium led by ONGC has agreed to pay $600 million (over ₹3,850 crore) for a 10% stake in an offshore oilfield in UAE’s Abu Dhabi. This marks the first time Indian oil companies have been given a stake in Abu Dhabi’s hydrocarbon resources.

As part of the Vision 2030 social program launched by Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman, the Saudi Arabia’s General Security division allowed women aged between 25 and 35 to apply for the rank of soldier.

Australia’s Brisbane Airport has announced that it will become the world's first airport to let travellers pay with cryptocurrency like Bitcoin and Ethereum at its terminal shopping areas.

Bank of Baroda is going to exit the South African market amid allegations that politically connected Gupta family used its network for illicit transactions.

Bermuda has become the world’s first country to abolish same-sex marriages, almost a year after it had allowed the same in May 2017.

Bihar Government has banned sale of loose cigarettes in the state.

Bollywood Actress Shilpa Shetty has released her second book titled 'The Diary of a Domestic Diva'

Britain’s Prince Charles has launched a new 10-million-dollar Development Impact Bond (DIB) to help improve education for over 200,000 children in India. It is the largest bond of its type in South Asia.
• 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, who is estimated to have a crypto net worth of $7.5-8 billion.

• Cab-hailing startup Ola and the Government of Assam have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to pilot an app-based river taxi service in Guwahati.

• Canada's Upper House of Parliament has passed a bill to modify the country's National Anthem in a bid to make it gender-neutral. The words "thy sons command" in the second line of the anthem will be replaced with "all of us command".

• Canadian PM Justin Trudeau arrived in India for his 7-day state visit. His visit is aimed at meeting government and business leaders and strengthening the "close friendship" between the two nations.

• Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) were crowned as champions of the 8th Hockey India Senior Women National Championship 2018 (B Division) after they defeated Kerala Hockey by a margin of 7-0 in the final match held at Ranchi (Jharkhand).

• Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Dr Raman Singh presents Budget for the financial year 2018-2019. With an outlay of Rs. 83,179 crore, the budget focuses on infrastructure, school education and agriculture.

• China is going to host Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit 2018 at Qingdao, eastern Shandong Province in June 2018. Kazakhstan (Astana) hosted the last year’s summit during 8-9th June 2017.

• China was elected as vice chair of Financial Action Task Force (FATF), a global body mandated to combat terror financing and money laundering.

• Citibank India has banned the use of its credit and debit cards towards purchase or trading of cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin.

• Czech Republic’s Ester Ledecka became the first woman to claim gold medals in two sports at a Winter Olympics after claiming her second one in a snowboarding event at the PyeongChang Winter Games.

• Digital payments startup Paytm has launched 2 insurance companies, Paytm Life Insurance and Paytm General Insurance.

• Dubai has opened the tallest hotel in the world (356-metres) titled Gevora Hotel.

• E-commerce major Amazon India has launched its ad-free music streaming service, Amazon Prime Music, for the Prime members, at no extra-cost.

• Elon Musk-led space exploration startup SpaceX has successfully launched its Falcon 9 rocket, which carried two test satellites for its planned Global Internet Broadband Service.

• Elon Musk-led 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.

• Environment Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan launched Green Good Deeds campaign in New Delhi. Aim of this campaign: To sensitize people and students, in particular about climate change and global warming.

• Facebook-owned messaging service WhatsApp has started rolling its Payments feature on both Android and iOS operating systems in India. The feature will allow users to instantly transfer money via the Unified Payments Interface (UPI).

• Fast bowler Bhuvneshwar Kumar has become the 1st Indian bowler to take a five-wicket haul in all three formats in international cricket.

• Finance Minister Arun Jaitley has ruled out privatisation of public sector banks as a response to the $1.77-billion PNB fraud.

• Finance Minister Arun Jaitley was on a two-day official visit to Saudi Arabia. During this visit, he co-chaired the 12th India-Saudi Arabia Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) which was held during 18th and 19th February 2018 at Riyadh.

• Flipkart’s payments platform PhonePe has signed a partnership with Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) to deploy its recently launched Point of Sale (POS) devices at IOCL retail outlets.
• Following the PNB fraud, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has asked banks to integrate SWIFT interbank messaging system with Core Banking Solution (CBS) by April 30. SWIFT network is used by financial institutions worldwide to securely transmit information and instructions using a system of codes.

• For safe keeping of astronauts, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has started working towards developing ‘igloos’ on Moon, called the lunar habitats.

• For the first time, Pakistan is going to send transgenders to Saudi Arabia to serve as volunteers during 2018 Haj pilgrimage.

• Former Australian spinner Shane Warne has been appointed as the mentor of Rajasthan Royals for this IPL season.

• Former England captain Kevin Pietersen has announced that he is going to retire.

• Former Finance Minister P Chidambaram’s son Karti Chidambaram was arrested by the CBI for not cooperating in the investigation of the INX Media money laundering case.

• Former Pakistani fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar has been appointed as the Brand Ambassador of Pakistan Cricket Board.

• Goa Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar is going to launch 20 bike ambulances to deal with casualties in the state's tourism belt.

• Goa CM Manohar Parrikar presented the Rs 17,123-crore budget for 2018-19, an increase of 6.84 per cent over the ongoing fiscal, with a stress on education and job creation.

• Google announced that users can now pay utility bills with its Unified Payments Interface-based payment app 'Tez', without any transaction charges.

• Google-spinoff Waymo has become the first company to receive approval to launch a driverless commercial ride-hailing service in the US.

• Government has constituted an Empowered Expert Committee (EEC) to select 20 Institutions of Eminence from among 104 institutions (public or private) that have applied for the status. Head of this Committee: N Gopalaswami (Former Chief Election Commissioner (CEC))

• Government has signed second Loan Agreement with New Development Bank (NDB) for financing of Rajasthan Water Sector Restructuring Project for the Desert Areas.

• Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani launched the maiden flight of Bhubaneswar-based airline Air Odisha, connecting Ahmedabad and Mundra.

• Hong Kong has voted to ban ivory sales by 2021.

• In a strategic move to expand its footprint in the Indian Ocean region, India has secured access to the key Port of Duqm in Oman for military use and logistical support.

• In an initiative to improve India’s weather forecasting, the Ministry of Earth Science (MoES) launched a high performance computer (HPC) system named Mihir.

• In his budget speech, the Finance Minister Arun Jaitley has announced that the Indian government does not consider cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin a legal tender and will take all possible measures to curb their use for illegal activities.

• In its 6th Bi-Monthly Policy Review, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has kept the Repo rate, the rate at which banks borrow from RBI, steady at 6% for the third time in a row.

• In order to take on Apple Pay, the technology giant Google has launched a new payments app called Google Pay. The platform includes features like the ability to pay at checkout counters with a smartphone, or pay for public transportation.

• In what could be biggest banking fraud in India, state-owned Punjab National Bank (PNB) announced it has detected a USD 1.77 billion scam.

• India and Canada have agreed to work together against Sikh terror outfits Babbar Khalsa International and the International Sikh Youth Federation (ISYF).
India and Germany have inked MoU for “Implementation Agreement in Sustainable Urban Development and Smart Cities in India.

India defeated Australia by 8 wickets to win their ICC Under-19 World Cup. This is the 4th time India won ICC Under-19 World Cup (2000, 2008, 2012 and 2018) the most for any nation.

India has been ranked 47th out of 86 countries on the Inclusive Internet Index by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), which was commissioned by Facebook. Sweden took the first place, followed by Singapore and the US.

India has been ranked 81st in the Global corruption perception index for 2017, released by Transparency International. New Zealand and Denmark were placed the highest in the list.

India has contributed $1 million aid to Tonga for rehabilitation efforts after the Island nation was hit by Tropical Cyclone Gita which caused massive destruction across the pacific ocean archipelago.

India has contributed additional $1 million to India-UN Development Partnership Fund, earmarked for South-South cooperation.

India has inked memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Canada’s International Development Research Centre (IDRC) for supporting its ‘programme based research support in addressing current and future global and local developmental challenges.

India has joined the Ashgabat Agreement which plans to facilitate trade between Central Asia and the Persian Gulf by creating a transport and transit corridor.

India is going to host the 1st International Solar Alliance (ISA) Summit in March 2018 at New Delhi.

India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) has announced that it will start pan-India roll out of its network from April this year. All 1.55 lakh post office branches will operate as access points and 650 payments bank branches will provide them back-end support.

India Signs Second Loan Agreement with New Development Bank for USD 100 Million for Rajasthan Water Sector Restructuring Project for Desert Areas

India started nationwide Tiger census 2018. This is the largest survey of wildlife anywhere in the world.

India successfully conducted the first night trial of indigenously developed nuclear-capable surface-to-surface ballistic missile Prithvi-II.

India successfully test-fired indigenously developed nuclear-capable Prithvi-II missile. The surface-to-surface missile, which has a strike range of 350 km, is capable of carrying 500-1,000 kg of warheads.

India successfully test-fired the indigenously developed nuclear-capable Agni-1 ballistic missile from the Abdul Kalam Island off Odisha coast.

India will host the World Environment Day 2018 on June 5 with the theme ‘Beat Plastic Pollution’.

India’s biggest electricity producer NTPC Ltd has won tender to supply 300 megawatts (MW) of electricity to power-starved Bangladesh for 15 years.

India’s indigenous light transport aircraft SARAS has been successfully test flown for a second time. This was the second of the 20 test flights planned for SARAS PT1N, before freezing the production version.

Indian Air Force officer Avani Chaturvedi has become the country’s first woman to fly a fighter jet solo, as she operated Russian-made MiG-21 aircraft in her first training sortie.

Indian boxer Vikas Krishan won a Gold medal and was named the best boxer of the tournament at the 69th Strandja Memorial boxing tournament in Bulgaria.

Indian captain Virat Kohli has become the first Indian batsman to go past 900 points in the ICC ODI rankings.

Indian cricketers Jasprit Bumrah and Harmanpreet Kaur have been named in Forbes India 30 Under 30 achievers list. The list also includes women’s hockey team goalkeeper Savita Punia and shooter Heena Sidhu.

Indian Golpher Shubhankar Sharma has won the Maybank Championship in Malaysia.

Indian gymnast Shubhankar Sharma has won the Maybank Championship in Malaysia.

Indian gymnast Aruna Budda Reddy has become the 1st Indian to win an individual medal at the Gymnastics World Cup.
Indian off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin has been named the Captain of Kings XI Punjab ahead of the upcoming season of IPL.

Indian Railways in collaboration with General Electric (GE) has inducted two Digitally Enabled Locomotives based on state of art insulated-gate bipolar transistor (IGBT) technology.

Indian Railways signed Memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Department of Posts for setting up of Passenger Reservation System counters at Post Offices.

Indian shutter Sameer Verma clinched the Men's singles title at the $150,000 Swiss Open Super 300 tournament.

Indian women's cricket team pacer Jhulan Goswami has become the first woman in the world to take 200 wickets in ODI cricket.

India's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) cautioned its cardholders of potential legal, financial and other risks associated with Bitcoin and other Cryptocurrencies. However, the bank did not ban the use of its cards for such investments.

India's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) has the highest amount of wilful defaults amounting to ₹27,716 crore till December, 2017.

India's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) reported a loss of ₹2,416.4 crore for the December quarter, marking its first quarterly loss in at least 17 years.

Indonesia's Health Ministry has announced that it has listed homosexuality as a mental disorder and will publish a medical guide stating the same.

IndusInd Bank launched its new Sonic Identity, which is essentially a musical logo, as part of its branding initiatives.

Infosys Foundation, the philanthropic arm of IT major Infosys, has signed a MoU with the Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation for a grant to create a child-friendly village towards improving children's health, providing education and creating a non-violent environment.

Iran is planning to launch its own national cryptocurrency. This cryptocurrency would help Iran evade the potential US sanctions.

Iran President Hassan Rouhani arrived in India for a three-day visit. This is his 1st visit after assuming office in 2013.

Karnataka has won the Vijay Hazare Trophy by defeating Saurashtra by 41 runs in the finals.

Karnataka's Kishan Gangolli has won the National 'A' Chess Championship for Blind for the fifth consecutive time.

Kerala has made vaccination compulsory for school admissions from next academic year onwards. Parents will have to show details of shots given to children at the time of enrolment in schools.

Madhya Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel inaugurated the 44th edition of Khajuraho Dance Festival 2018 at Khajuraho temple, a UNESCO world heritage site in Chhatarpur district, Madhya Pradesh.

Ministry of Defence (MoD) constituted 13-member Raksha Mantri Advisory Committee on Ministry of Defence Capital Projects (RMCOMP). Head of this committee: Vinay Sheel Oberoi.

Mobile payments company Paytm and Alibaba Group-owned AGTech Holdings Ltd have formed a joint venture to launch Gamepind, a gaming platform aimed at mobile users in India.

Mr. Khalid Bin Abdulaziz Al-Falih, Minister of Energy, Industry and Mineral Resources of Saudi Arabia visited India.

Mumbai Indians have appointed IPL history's leading wicket-taker and their former player Lasith Malinga as the bowling mentor ahead of the 2018 season.

Nepal's last monarch Gyanendra Shah has arrived in Odisha to attend the International Gau Sambardhana Mahotsav as Chief Guest.

Pakistan senate has approved declaration of Mandarin (the main language spoken in China), as one of the official languages of the country.
- 'Paschim Lehar', a tri-service maritime exercise was held at India's western coast. Objective: To build interoperability.
- Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) has identified 21 banks (6 Public sector banks, 14 Regional Rural Banks and 1 Cooperative Bank) as Makers of Excellence under Atal Pension Yojana (APY) Outreach Programme as the number of current APY subscribers crosses 86 Lacs mark.
- President Ram Nath Kovind hosted 'LPG Panchayat' at Rashtrapati Bhavan. Aim of LPG Panchayat: To provide a platform for LPG consumers to interact with each other, promote mutual learning and share experiences.
- President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated 88th Mahamastakabhisheka of Lord Gomateshwara by unveiling an idol of Bahubali at Shravanabelagola in Hassan district, Karnataka.
- President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated the annual Udyanotsav of the Mughal Gardens of Rashtrapati Bhavan.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the 'Magnetic Maharashtra' Convergence Summit 2018 at the MMRDA grounds at Mumbai's Bandra Kurla Complex. It was run with the tagline #MadeForBusiness.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched the first 'Khelo India' school games at Delhi's Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 'UP Investors Summit 2018' in Lucknow. This is the first such event to be organised by UP's Yogi Adityanath government. The 2-day event is aimed at showcasing investment opportunities and potential across various sectors in the state.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the World Sustainable Development Summit 2018 in New Delhi. The three-day event has been organized by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI).
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation for Abu Dhabi's first Hindu temple via video conferencing.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched subsidised Amma two-wheeler Scheme for working women in Tamil Nadu, on the occasion of former Chief Minister Jayalalithaa's 70th birth anniversary.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi became the 1st Indian Prime Minister to visit Palestine after he arrived in Ramallah as part of his three-nation tour. Aim of this visit: Strengthening India's ties with the Gulf and West Asian region.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi embarked on a 4-day visit to Jordan, Palestine, UAE and Oman.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi's book on Exam stress titled 'Exam Warriors' was launched by External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Human Resource Development Minister Prakash Javadekar.
- Private sector lender Axis Bank has opened an Off-shore Banking Unit at the International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) at Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City).
- Professional table tennis player of Tamil Nadu, Sharath Kamal beats top-seed Anthony Amalraj to win the Men's singles title for the 8th time, equalling the feat of Kamlesh Mehta at the 11Even Sports Senior Table Tennis Nationals in Ranchi.
- Pune-based swimmer Rohan More (32) became the youngest in the world and first Asian to complete the Ocean Seven Challenge, which involves crossing seven of the world's toughest ocean channels covering a distance of around 200 km.
- Reigning Commonwealth Games champion Parupalli Kashyap won the Men's singles title in the Austrian Open International Challenge 2018 by defeating Malaysia's June Wei Cheam.
- Rio Olympic silver medallist PV Sindhu finished as runner-up in India Open Super 300 badminton tournament after losing to America's Beiwen Zhang in the final.
- Russian space agency Roskosmos has successfully launched Progress MS-08, an unmanned cargo spacecraft for the International Space Station (ISS).
- Rwanda has become the 1st low-income country to provide universal eye care to its entire 1.2 crore population.
- Saudi Arabia has temporarily banned imports of live birds, hatching eggs and chicks from India over an outbreak of a bird flu virus in the state of Karnataka.
Search Engine giant Google and National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has signed an agreement to integrate a course on ‘Digital Citizenship and Safety’ in information and communication technology (ICT) curriculum.

Singapore is going to impose a ‘Carbon Tax’ from 2019 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in an effort to fight climate change.

Singapore is going to pay its citizens aged 21 and above a one-off 'SG Bonus' of up to S$300 each as the 2017 budget included a surplus of Singapore $10 billion.

South Korean electronics giant Samsung has started manufacturing hardware specialized for Bitcoin mining.

Spiritual leader Prince Karim Aga Khan visited India, during this visit he held talks with Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu.

Star India Pvt. Ltd has won the rights for audio-visual production services for the Indian Premier League (IPL) and BCCI domestic cricket for the 2018-19 season.

Sweden has signed Strategic Partnership Agreement with United Nations for committing record $370 million dollars to UN World Food Programme.

Swiss tennis ace Roger Federer has won his career's 97th title by winning the Rotterdam Open, two days after becoming the oldest world number one men’s player.

Taking prime minister Narendra Modi’s Digital India initiative forward, a chat based job search mobile app 'Empzilla', first ever of its kind in the country, is being launched.

Tamil Nadu beat Manipur 2-1 to lift their maiden title in 23rd edition of Senior Women's National Football Championship 2017-18 at Barabati Stadium in Cuttack.

Tanzanian President John Magufuli has announced that the country will pull out of the UN's "comprehensive refugee response framework", which provides lasting solutions for refugees, including integration into host communities, citing security reasons and lack of funds.

Taxi aggregator Ola has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Assam to pilot a one-of-its-kind app-based river taxi service in Guwahati.

Technology giant Apple is going to open a data centre in China by 2020 with an investment of $1 billion.

The ‘1st Pelican Bird Festival-2018’ was held at Atapaka Bird Sanctuary located at Kolleru lake in Andhra Pradesh.

The 1st edition of Khelo India School Games (KISG) was recently held during 31st January to 8th February, 2018 at Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium in New Delhi. Haryana had emerged as overall champions, finishing with 102 medals (38 gold, 26 silver and 38 bronze medals) followed by Maharashtra (111 medals) and Delhi (94 medals).

The 1st sale of Electoral Bonds will start from March 1, 2018 for period of 10 days at four main branches of State Bank of India (SBI) in Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata and New Delhi.

The 2 day International conference on Sustainable Biofuels was held in New Delhi. Aim of this Conference : To provide common platform to Government policy makers, industry, investors and research community to exchange experiences and challenges related to development and scaling of advance biofuels.

The 32nd edition of Surajkund International Crafts Mela was recently held at Faridabad, Haryana. Theme state of 2018 : Uttar Pradesh. Partner Nation of 2018 : Kyrgyzstan.

The 7th Meeting of Eminent Persons Group (EPG) on Nepal-India relations was recently held at Kathmandu. Next meeting of the group will be held in New Delhi.

The 9 member committee constituted by Karnataka government has submitted it's report recommending separate state flag. The committee has recommended new tricolour having yellow (at top), white (in middle) and red (at bottom) colors, with state's emblem Gandaberunda (a two-headed mythological bird) in centre.

The Andijan Region of Uzbekistan and India have signed an agreement for cooperation in the pharmaceutical industry.

The Assam Assembly will introduce Digital budget in its next session, doing away with the traditional printed booklet form practice.
The Cabinet has approved a proposal to redefine Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), based on their annual turnover. The move, which replaces earlier classification based on investment in plant and machinery, is expected to improve ease of doing business.

The Centre has announced that Karnataka's Hampi monuments will be among the 10 destinations selected as 'Iconic Tourism' sites. Other selected sites include the Taj Mahal, Konark Sun Temple, and Ajanta and Ellora caves.

The Davis Cup, in existence since 1900, is going to be converted into a 'World Cup of Tennis' from next year.

The European Commission (EC) has announced that Serbia and Montenegro could join the European Union (EU) in 2025 as part of the EU enlargement plan for the Western Balkans.

The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) has entered into partnership with Department of Science and Technology (DST) to implement and execute the ASEAN India Research Training Fellowship (AIRT).

The flag carrier airline of India, Air India is going to get a one-time grant of €750,000 (approximately ₹6 crore) from Israel for launching direct flights between New Delhi and Tel Aviv.

The government has made Permanent Account Number (PAN) mandatory for any entity conducting financial transactions of ₹2.5 lakh or more.

The government is going to assign four crore milk-producing cows in the country an Aadhaar-like cheap, Unique Identity Card (UID).

The government is going to issue tamper-proof degree certificates secured using blockchain technology from the 2019 academic year.

The Indian contingent won a silver medal and two bronze medals at the Asian Para-Cycling Championships held in Naypyidaw, Myanmar.

The Indian Navy has unveiled the Integrated Automatic Aviation Meteorological System (IAAMS) at INS Garuda, naval air station located in Kochi, Kerala.

The Indian Navy launched the third Scorpene class submarine Karanj.

The Indian Railways has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Maharashtra government to set up a ₹600-crore metro coach factory in Latur district.

The Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) and Rewa Ultra Mega Solar Limited (RUMSL) signed a sub-loan agreement for financing the shared infrastructure of two solar power projects in Madhya Pradesh.

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is going to send the Chandrayaan-2 on the world's first-ever mission to soft-land near the Moon's south pole.

The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) inked pact with the World Bank for Jal Marg Vikas Project to enhance navigation on National Waterway-1 from Varanasi to Haldia.

The International Conference on Unani Medicine was held in New Delhi. Theme of this conference: "Integration of Unani System of Medicine in main stream healthcare".

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has approved the Cricket Canada's maiden venture 'Global T20 Canada', which is going to be held in July 2018.

The Jharkhand government has banned the Popular Front of India, claiming its members were "internally influenced by the ISIS".

The King and Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia Salman bin Abdulaziz along with Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj, have inaugurated the 32nd edition of Saudi Arabia's National Heritage Festival in Janadriyah village, Riyadh. India is guest of honor country for the year 2018.

The Madhya Pradesh education department has decided to implement a uniform dress code for government teachers to check their personality differences.

The Madhya Pradesh government has launched a mobile application titled 'Pollution Metre' to spread awareness against pollution in the western part of the state.
• The Maharashtra government has decided to set up a Transgender Welfare Board to protect their Constitutional and human rights.

• The Ministry of Commerce & Industry has launched the 3rd version of the Government e-Marketplace (GeM 3.0). GeM is an Online Market platform to facilitate procurement of goods and services by various Ministries and agencies of the Government.

• The Ministry of Defence (Department of Defence Production) constituted a 17 member task force to study use and application of Artificial intelligence (AI) in military. Head of this Task force : N Chandrasekaran (Chairman, Tata Sons)

• The Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs is going to introduce ranking system for National Sports Federations (NSFs). It is aimed at inculcating healthy competition between sports bodies.

• The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has given consent to launch WhatsApp BHIM UPI beta with limited user base of 1 million and low per transaction limit.

• The Nigerian Army has declared victory over the Boko Haram militant group after capturing the militants' stronghold Camp Zairo under counter-insurgency operation DEEP PUNCH II.

• The owner of Rotomac Pens, Vikram Kothari, has been accused of allegedly fleeing with loans of more than ₹800 crore from state-owned banks.

• The Punjab National Bank (PNB) has announced that the amount of fraudulent transactions, involving Nirav Modi and Mehul Choksi, could be over ₹1,300 crore more than the current estimate of ₹11,400 crore.

• The Punjab National Bank (PNB) has signed an agreement for information utility with National e-Governance Services Limited. The objective of the agreement is to augment the information infrastructure in India.

• The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced setting up ombudsman for addressing customer grievances in the Non-Banking Finance Companies (NBFCs).

• The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced that it will link the base rate for loans with the marginal cost of funds-based lending rate (MCLR) from 1 April to improve monetary policy transmission.

• The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has constituted an expert committee to look into the entire gamut of issues relating to classification of bad loans, effectiveness of audits and rising incidents of frauds. Head of this Committee : Y H Malegam (Former member of Central Board of Directors of RBI).

• The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has raised exposure limit under Exchange Traded Currency Derivatives (ETCD) trading for residents and Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) to $100 million across all currency pairs involving Indian rupee.

• The state government of Odisha is going to sponsor India’s national men’s and women’s hockey teams for the next 5 years.

• The UK’s Lloyds Banking Group has banned its customers from buying cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin using credit cards as it fears their falling value could leave it with huge debt.

• The Union Budget 2018-19 was presented by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley in the Parliament on 1st February 2018. In a break from tradition, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley has presented the Union Budget 2018 in both Hindi and English.

• The Union Cabinet has approved Cooperation Agreement between India and Moroccan National Railways Office (ONCFM) to develop long-term cooperation and partnership in different areas of railway sector.

• The Union Cabinet has approved implementation of Prime Minister’s Research Fellows (PMRF) Scheme for doctoral students pursuing research in areas related to technology. To realize importance of innovation and technology for progress and development of the nation.

• The Union Cabinet has approved the implementation of 'Prime Minister’s Research Fellows' scheme at a cost of ₹1,650 crore for a period of seven years starting 2018-2019. Under the scheme, students pursuing PhD in IITs and IISc will be offered fellowships worth ₹70,000-80,000 per month for five years.
The Union Government has announced Rs.1.4 lakh-crore Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahaabhiyan (KUSUM) scheme for promoting solar farming i.e. decentralised solar power production of up to 28,250 MW to help farmers.

The Union Government has inked $84 million loan agreement with Asian Development Bank (ADB) for improvement and expansion of water supply in Bhagalpur and Gaya towns in Bihar.

The Union Government is developing a tool titled Soft Power Matrix. Aim of Soft Power Matrix : To calibrate effectiveness of India’s soft power outreach and foster better diplomatic traction in India’s immediate neighbourhood and beyond.

The Union Health Ministry has passed a proposal that makes it mandatory for Indian students to clear National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) to obtain an eligibility certificate for applying to medical colleges abroad.

The Union Ministry of Women and Child Development is going to establish National Women Entrepreneurship Council (NWEC). NWEC will promote entrepreneurship as it would be the umbrella organization for socio-economic gender parity, financial inclusion and economic empowerment of women in India.

The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has announced that it is going to introduce a blue-coloured 'Baal Aadhaar' card for the children below the age of five years.

The United States has announced that it will open its embassy to Israel in Jerusalem on May 14 this year, coinciding with Israel's 70th Independence Day.

The US Citizenship and Immigration Services has dropped the phrase 'Nation of Immigrants' from its mission statement.

The US state of Indiana has passed a resolution recognising the contributions of Sikhs across the state and the country.

To bring greater efficiency and accountability in functioning of the Revenue Department, Punjab government has notified 6-member Revenue Commission. Head of this Commission : SS Saron.

To create awareness around Internet safety, the search engine giant Google has launched '#SecurityCheckKiya' campaign in India.

To generate public awareness on protection of one-horned rhinoceros (pachyderm), the Assam government will be observing September 22nd as Rhino Day.

To guide road engineers and policy makers about road expansion, the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways has released India's first ever Highway Capacity Manual named Indo-HCM.

To preserve the ecosystem, the Uttar Pradesh government has inaugurated the state's 1st ever Butterfly Park in Kanpur.

To protect domestic producers, the Indian government has imposed an anti-dumping duty on import of ceramic tableware and kitchenware from China for five years starting June 2017.

To provide cheap sanitary pads to school girls and women, the Maharashtra government is going to roll out a scheme titled Asmita Yojana on the International Women’s Day (March 8, 2018).

To provide healthy, nutritious and hygienic food at affordable prices to all poor and needy persons, the Haryana government has opened subsidised canteens in four districts under the ‘Antyodaya Aahaar Yojana’.

To tackle ever-deepening crisis of depleting groundwater level, the Union Government has formulated ambitious water conservation scheme Atal Bhujal Yojana (ABY).

Top US banks like JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America and Citigroup have announced that they are halting the purchases of cryptocurrencies on their credit cards.

Under its new Wealth Order law, the UK will seize assets held by foreign criminals and corrupt politicians.

Union Human Resource Development Minister Prakash Javadekar announced that the NCERT syllabus will be reduced to half from the 2019 academic session.

United Kingdom and India have launched joint research projects on ‘Water Quality Research’ and ‘Energy Demand Reduction in Built Environment’.
US Air Force Chief of Staff General David L Goldfein became the 1st foreign military chief to fly a sortie in the made-in-India Tejas light combat aircraft.

US-based Virgin Hyperloop One has signed an MoU with Maharashtra government for a Hyperloop between Mumbai and Pune.

Uttar Pradesh State government in association with UNICEF launched massive door to door campaign titled DASTAK, to eradicate deadly Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) and Japanese Encephalitis (JE) disease in the state.

Venezuela and Libya were suspended from voting in United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 2018-19 session for not paying dues to 193-member world body.

Venezuela has launched its own crypto currency titled Petro backed by oil, gas, gold and diamond reserves to circumvent US-led financial sanctions. With this, Venezuela has become 1st sovereign country to officially launch its own cryptocurrency.

Venezuela formally launched a pre-sale of its state-backed cryptocurrency 'Petro' in a bid to recover from its worst financial crisis. 'Petro' is the world's first state-issued cryptoasset.

Vice President Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated the 1st International Kala Mela in New Delhi.

Vice President Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated the 8th Theatre Olympics at Red Fort in Delhi. Theme of 8th Theatre Olympics: 'Flag of Friendship'.

Virat Kohli became the first Indian batsman to score 100 runs by running in an ODI innings, achieving the feat during his 160*(159) against South Africa.

Virat Kohli received the ICC Test Championship mace on behalf of Team India for the second consecutive year for being the number one Test team.

West Bengal became the 1st state to opt out of Centre's National Health Protection Scheme (NHPS) announced in Union Budget 2018-19.

With a total of 14 medals, Norway's Marit Bjoergen became the most successful athlete in Winter Olympics history after winning bronze for USA in cross country skiing's women's team sprint free.

With a total wealth of $950 billion, India's financial capital Mumbai has been ranked as the 12th richest city globally by South Africa-based market research group New World Wealth. The list was topped by New York with $3 trillion wealth.

Women in Saudi Arabia can now open their own businesses without the consent of a husband or male relative, as the kingdom pushes to expand a fast-growing private sector.

World's first robot citizen Sophia made a public appearance in India at a global technology event in Hyderabad.

World's first robot ski competition was held in South Korea.

Yogi Adityanath govt in Uttar Pradesh presented its first full-fledged budget for Rs. 4,28,384.52 cr for financial year 2018-19.

Yuki Bhambri became 1st Indian to reach quarter-finals of Chennai Open ATP Challenger Tennis tournament.

Union Budget 2018 Highlights

Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley on 1st February 2018 presented the Union Budget 2018 in Parliament. This budget, Jaitley's 5th, is the last full budget of this NDA government before India goes to polls for the General Elections in 2019. This is the first budget after big-ticket economic reforms like the Goods and Services Tax (GST), Dynamic Fuel Pricing, mega PSU bank recapitalisation etc. Here are the important highlights of Union Budget 2018.
Key Focus Areas of Union Budget 2018:

- **Agriculture** and **Health** dominated Jaitley’s two-hour Budget speech. **Employment** and **Education** are also the main focussed areas.

**Winners**

- **Farmers**: MSP raised, Heavy investment in Agricultural Markets.
- **Health Care Providers**: National Health Protection Scheme.
- **Transport Companies**: Record infrastructure spending on roads and railways.
- **Consumer Companies**: Boosted spending on India’s vast hinterland.
- **Airports**: Regional Airport construction.
- **Jewelers**: Boosting rural and farm incomes.

**Losers**

- **Mobile Phones**: Custom duty hike.
- **Salaried Class**: 10% LTCG tax on gains above 1 Lakh and No change in income tax rates.
- **Bond Investors**: India missed its fiscal deficit target of 3.2 percent, saying its targeting a 3.5 percent target for fiscal 2019.
- **Defence Sector**: There was no indication of a huge boost to defense spending.
- **Consumers**: Increased existing health and education levy to 4 percent from 3 percent.

**Major Highlights of Arun Jaitley’s Budget Speech 2018**

- 10 tourist cities to be developed into iconic tourist destinations.
- 10% tax on distributed income of equity oriented mutual funds.
- 100% tax deduction for farmer production firms with 100 cr turnover..
- 142 cities have got investment grade ratings.
- 150 km additional suburban railway network at the cost of Rs. 40,000 cr.
- 2 major initiatives as part of Ayushman Bharat program.
- 24 new govt medical college & hospitals.
- 24 Public Sector Units to be divested.
- 4% health and education cess; currently it’s 3%.
- 5 lakh WiFi spots for benefit of 5 crore rural citizens.
- 600 railway stations to be redeveloped.
- 8 crore rural women to get free gas connection through Ujjwala yojana.
- Airport capacity to be hiked to handle 1 billion trips per year.
- All trains to increasingly have WiFi &amp; CCTVs.
- Allocation for national livelihood mission: Rs. 5750 crore.
- Automatic revision of MPs’ emoluments every 5 yrs indexed to inflation.
- Bank recap to help banks lend additional Rs. 5 lakh crore.
- Benefit of reduced corporate rate of 25% to firms with 250 cr turnover.
- Cash payments of over Rs. 10,000 by trusts, institutions to be disallowed.
- Contribution from women to EPF to be brought down from 12% to 8%.
- Credit for agricultural activities: From 10 lakh cr to 11 lakh cr.
- Customs duty increased on mobile phones from 15% to 20%.
- Customs duty on raw cashew cut form 5% to 2.5%.
- Disinvestment target of Rs. 80,000 crore for 2018-19.
- Effective tax payers now 8.27 crore.
• Eklavya schools for tribal children.
• Excess revenue collected from personal income tax amounts to 90,000 cr.
• Fiscal deficit target for next fiscal: 3.3%.
• Fiscal deficit target of 3.5% in 2017-18.
• For SCs: 279 programs, allocation of Rs. 52,719 crore.
• For senior citizens, no TDS on FD, Post Office interest upto Rs. 50,000.
• For senior citizen, limit for investment in LIC schemes doubled to Rs. 15 lakh.
• For STs: 305 programs, allocation of Rs. 32,508 crore.
• Global economy is transforming into digital economy.
• Government to take all steps to eliminate use of cryptocurrencies.
• Govt will contribute 12% of wages of new employees to EPF for 3 yrs.
• Govt will expand coverage under Pradhan Mantri jan dhan yojana.
• Health cover of up to 5 lakh per family per year for poor & vulnerable.
• In last 3 years, number of steps for generation of employment.
• Kisan credit card to be extended to fisheries, animal husbandry farmers.
• Long term capital gains (LTCG) over Rs. 1 lakh to be taxed at the rate of 10%.
• Moving from blackboard to digital board.
• National health protection scheme to benefit 50 crore people.
• National health protection scheme to cover 10 cr poor families.
• National program to direct efforts in Artificial Intelligence.
• New electronic assessment scheme to eliminate person-to-person contact.
• No change in personal income tax.
• Operation Green allocation Rs. 500 crore.
• Over 3600 km railway track renovation targeted in current year.
• Over Rs. 1.48 lakh cr to be allocated for railways in next fiscal.
• President’s emolument raised to Rs. 5 lakh, VP’s to Rs 4 lakh.
• Proposal for railway university in Vadodara.
• Regional air connectivity scheme shall connect 56 unserved airports.
• Relief for salaried taxpayers: Standard deduction of Rs. 40,000.
• Rs. 1 lakh crore over 4 years for initiative for infra in education.
• Rs. 10,000 cr for fishery development fund and animal husbandry fund.
• Rs. 1200 crore for health and wellness centres.
• Rs. 1290 crore allocation for bamboo sector.
• Rs. 600 crore for nutritional support to all TB patients.
• Rs. 7148 crore allocation for textile sector.
• Senior citizens can claim 50,000 cr for general medical expenditure.
• Smart City mission: 99 cities selected with outlay of Rs. 2.04 lakh crore.
• Special scheme to address air pollution in NCR region.
• Standard deduction for transport, medical reimbursement.
• Standard deduction to benefit 2.5 crore people.
• Standard deduction to benefit pensioners also.
• System of toll payment by cash being replaced by electronic payments.
• Target of Rs. 3 lakh crore for lending under PM MUDRA Yojana.
• Training for 50 lakh youth by 2020.
We have exceeded our disinvestment target this year..
Will establish dedicated affordable housing fund.
Will treat education holistically without segmentation.

Sector wise Highlights of Union Budget 2018

Custom duty/Cess

- Imported electronics, including phones and TVs, will now get more expensive as government proposes to increase custom duty on mobiles from 15% to 20% and on some other mobile parts to 15%, and some parts of TVs to 15%.
- Proposal to increase the health and education cess to 4%.

Personal/Corporate Tax

- Personal Income Tax: No change
- Relief to salaried tax: Standard deduction increased for transport and medical reimbursement to Rs 40,000 from Rs 15,000
- Rs 50,000 additional benefit to senior citizens for investment in mediclaim.
- Propose to tax long term capital gains (LTCG) exceeding Rs 1 lakh in listed stock at 10%.
- 100% tax exemption for the first five years to companies registered as farmer producer companies with a turnover of Rs. 100 crore and above.
- 41% more returns were filed this year, which shows that more people have joined the tax net.
- Demonetisation was received by honest taxpayers as ‘Imaandaari ka utsav’.

Fiscal Situation

- Fiscal deficit is 3.5% of GDP at Rs 5.95 lakh crore in 2017-18. Projecting fiscal deficit to be 3.3% of GDP in the next fiscal
- Rs 21.57 lakh crores transferred as net GST to states as against projection of Rs 21.47 lakh crores

Telecom

- Government proposes to set up 5 lakh wifi-hotspots that will provide internet to five crore rural citizens in 2018-19.
- Government provided Rs10,000 crore for creation and augmentation of telecom infrastructure in 2018-19.
- Department of Telecom will support the setting up of indigenous 5G centre at IIT Madras.
Government doesn’t consider cryptocurrencies as legal tender or coins. Will take all measures to prevent use of crypto-assets to finance illegitimate activities.

**Rail Budget**

- Rs 1,48,528 crore is the capital expenditure for the Indian Railways for 2018-19... All trains to be progressively provided with WiFi, CCTV and other state-of-the-art amenities.
- All railways stations with more than 25,000 footfall to have escalators.
- 12,000 wagons, 5160 coaches and 700 locomotives being procured. There is significant achievements of physical targets by Railways.
- Focus will be on safety, maintenance of railway tracks, increase in use of technology and fog safety devices.
- Redevelopment of 600 major railway stations has been taken up; Mumbai transport system is being expanded; suburban network of 160 km planned for Bengaluru.
- Foundation stone of the bullet train was laid in September 2017. An institute is coming up in Vadodara to train the manpower required for the high speed railway projects.
- 36,000-km of rail track renewal targeted in coming year.

**Agriculture/Farm**

- Agri-Market Development Fund with a corpus of Rs 2000 crore to be set up for developing agricultural markets.
- Rs. 1290 crore allocation for bamboo sector.
- Grameen Agricultural Market (GRAM) will provide farmers a means to sell directly to buyers.
- The focus is on low-cost farming, higher MSP. Emphasis is on generating farm and non-farm employment for farmers.
- Minimum support price has been set at 1.5 times the production cost for kharif crops.
- The government will ensure payment of full MSP even if farmers sell below MSP.
- The Minimum Support Price of all crops shall be increased to at least 1.5 times that of the production cost.

**Health**

- About 10 crore poor and vulnerable families will be targeted under healthcare protection scheme, which will offer up to Rs 5 lakh per family. This will be the world largest government-aided programme.
- As per the national health policy 2017, health and wellness centres will be launched. Around 1.5 lakh centres will provide free essential drugs, maternal and child services. The finance ministry allocated Rs1200 crore for this flagship programme.
- TB patients will get Rs 500 per month for nutritional support.
- At least 24 new government medical colleges and hospitals will be set up by upgrading existing district hospitals.
• Rs 1,200 crore for the flagship programme in health wellness centres.

**Women**

• Contribution of 8.33% to EPF for new employees by the govt for three years and 12% govt contribution to EPF in sectors employing large number of people.
• 76% of MUDRA loans for women.
• Government proposes to increase the target of providing free LPG connections to 8 crore to poor women.

**Education**

• 4 new government medical colleges and hospitals to be set up by upgrading existing district hospitals.
• One medical college per every three Parliamentary constituencies.
• 1,000 best BTech students to be made PM research fellows — to do PhDs in IITs and IISc. They will spend few hours every week teaching in technical institutions.
• Eighteen new schools of planning and architecture will be set up. Proposal of railway university in Vodadara.
• Government to launch ‘Revitalising Infrastructure and Systems in Education by 2022.
• Integrated B.Ed programme to be initiated for teachers, to improve quality of teachers.
• Technology will be the biggest driver in improving education.
• Budget 2018 will work with states to provide more resources to improve quality of education.

**Startups**

• VCFs, angel investors to get new measures for growth and new tax rules to increase funding of startups.

**Banking**

• Recapitalisation will pave the way for public banks to lend an additional Rs 5 lakh crore.

**Industries**

• Rs 7,148 cr allocated for textile sector

**India growth**

• Indian economy is on course to achieve high growth of 8%. Economy to grow at 7.2-7.5% in second half of 2018-19.
• India grew at an average of 7.5% in the first three years since 2014. It is now a $2.5 trillion economy.
• Indian economy has performed very well since our government took over in may 2014. It is now the seventh largest in the world.
Government moves to remove stamp duty from financial transactions.

**Infrastructure**

- To spend 14.34 trillion Indian rupees ($225.50 billion) on rural infrastructure.
- NHAI would transfer the road projects into special purpose vehicles to use innovative structures such as infrastructure trusts for fund mobilisation.
- Government to use select InvITs for infrastructure funding.

**For poor, backward and vulnerable**

- By 2022, every block with more than 50% ST population and at least 20,000 tribal people will have ‘Ekalavya’ school at par with Navodaya Vidyalas.
- Allocation of Rs. 56,619 crore for SC welfare and Rs. 39,135 crore for ST welfare.

**Connecting India**

- Bharatmala project approved for better road connectivity at Rs 5.35 lakh crore.
- UDAN will connect 56 unserved airports in India.
- Airports Authority of India now has 124 airports, this will be expanded by 5 times. Aim of 1 billion trips a year.

**Other proposals**

- Total 187 projects sanctioned under the Namami Gange programme.
- The govt aim that by 2022, all poor people have a house to live in.
- Government plans to construct 2 crore more toilets under Swachh Bharat Mission.
- Air Pollution in Delhi-NCR is a cause for concern, special scheme will be implemented to support governments of Haryana, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi-NCT to address it and subsidise machinery for management of crop residue.
- Proposal to develop 10 prominent tourist destinations as Iconic tourism destinations.
- AMRUT programme will focus on water supply to all households in 500 cities. Water supply contracts for 494 projects worth 19,428 core awarded.
- Emoluments of the President to be revised to Rs 5 lakh per month & emoluments of the Vice-president to be revised to Rs 4 lakh per month.
- Government is proposing changes in refixing salaries of MPs. Law will provide automatic revision of emoluments of the MPs every 5 years indexed to inflation.

All the Best 😊