



## Current Affairs - December 2017 to February 2018

Month  Type



- ▶ **209** Current Affairs were found in **Last Three Months** for Type - **Banking and Economy**.

(Showing **157** Important Ones)

### Economy

- ▶ 25th Meeting of GST Council held in New Delhi, chaired by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley. Changes made in GST Regime -
  - ▶ Late fee for failure to furnish FORM GSTR-1 (supply details), FORM GSTR-5 (Non-resident taxable person), FORM GSTR-5A (OIDAR) or FORM GSTR-6 (Input Service Distributor) is reduced to 50 rupees / day (20 rupees per day for NIL filers).
  - ▶ Facility for generation, modification and cancellation of e-way bills is provided on trial basis on [ewaybill.nic.in](http://ewaybill.nic.in).
  - ▶ Recommended reduced GST rates for 29 goods and 53 services, to come into force from January 25.
- ▶ A MOU is signed Between Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs and Allahabad Bank to provide a centralized platform for processing interest subsidy to eligible beneficiaries under Self Employment Programme (SEP) component of Deendayal AntyodayaYojana- National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM).
  - ▶ The Portal will -
    - ▶ Enable processing interest subsidy for NULM schemes, which will be credited to Aadhaar linked beneficiary accounts through DBT (Direct Benefit Transfer).
    - ▶ Facilitate on-line validation of loans granted by Banks, through Urban Local Bodies.
  - ▶ Self-Employment Component (SEP) of NULM and Need for Portal -
    - ▶ Under SEP, loans for setting up micro- enterprise are available to individuals (upto 2 lakhs) and groups (upto 10 lakhs). Interest subvention from Ministry is available for amount of interest charged above 7%. Women SHGs are eligible for additional 3% subvention on timely loan repayment.
    - ▶ Currently, interest subvention is processed manually, making it a time taking Process and No mechanism was there to ascertain whether beneficiary has received subsidy or not.
    - ▶ Under Proposed Common centralized IT platform to be managed by Allahabad Bank, Claims will be uploaded by Central/Zonal HQ of banks on portal, concerned States/ULBs will verify the beneficiaries, after which the claim amount will be transferred.
    - ▶ Allahabad Bank will charge a service fee of 1.05% of interest subsidy amount released.
- ▶ AU Small Finance Bank signed MoU with LIC to offer Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY). It will provide life cover of INR 2 lakh, at a premium of Rs 330 per annum.
- ▶ AU Small Finance Bank signed MoU with Sahaj e-Village for providing its banking service in remote areas of India.
  - ▶ Sahaj e-Village Limited is an entity of SREI Infrastructure Finance Limited (SIFL) and works for bridging digital divide between urban and rural India under flagship of National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) of Central Government.
- ▶ According to RBI's *Census on Foreign Liabilities and Assets of Indian Direct Investment Companies 2016-17* -
  - ▶ Mauritius was largest source of foreign investment (FDI) in India (21.8% share at market value) followed by USA, UK, Singapore and Japan.
  - ▶ Singapore (19.7%) was major ODI (Outward Direct Investment) destination, followed by Netherlands, Mauritius, and US.
  - ▶ The census carries information on market value of foreign liabilities and assets of Indian companies arising on account of FDI, ODI and other investments.
- ▶ Aditya Birla Idea Payments Bank Ltd (ABIPBL) started operations, making it 5th payments bank in India.
  - ▶ Other payment banks - Airtel Payments Bank, India Post Payments Bank, Paytm Payments Bank and Fino Payments Bank.

ABIPBL is a JV between Aditya Birla Nuvo Ltd (51 % stake) and Ideal Cellular (49 % stake).

7. ▶ Agri service solutions provider Sohan Lal Commodity Management (SLCM) tied up with HDFC Bank and IndusInd Bank to provide collateral management services, to improve farmers' access to post-harvest credits at affordable interest rates and provide access to scientific storage facilities.
8. ▶ Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Minister Radha Mohan Singh launched Livestock Disease Forewarning –Mobile Application (LDF-Mobile App) developed by ICAR-National Institute of Veterinary Epidemiology and Disease Informatics (Bengaluru).
  - ▶ NIVEDI will use this app and Monthly Bulletin system to send out early warnings related to pertaining livestock diseases.
9. ▶ Airtel Payments Bank reduced its interest rate by 175 basis points to 5.5 % per annum from 7.25 % per annum earlier.
10. ▶ Allahabad Bank signed agreement with National e-Governance Services Limited (NeSL) for utilizing NESL's Information Utility Services envisaged under Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code 2016.
  - ▶ Government owned NeSL is first Information Utility entity registered by Insolvency and bankruptcy Board of India under IBBI (IU) Regulations 2017.
11. ▶ Andhra Pradesh Grameena Vikas Bank (APGVB) operationalised its first desktop ATM in Warangal (Telangana), to facilitate customers to withdraw small amounts.
  - ▶ Desktop ATM has low power requirements and is designed to work in harsh climatic conditions. It is meant for rural customer who typically have small cash needs.
12. ▶ Approved continuation of Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) beyond 12th Plan for 3 years from 2017-18 to 2019-20 with outlay of INR 5500 crores.
  - ▶ PMEGP will aim at creating sustainable estimated employment opportunities for 15 lakh persons in 3 years. Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) is the nodal implementation agency at national level.
  - ▶ Minimum target of 75 project/district is awarded to all districts in country to achieve Inclusive Growth. Higher rate of subsidy (25% to 35%) will be applicable for women, SC/ST, OBC, Physically Disabled, NER applicants in rural areas.
  - ▶ Portal can be accessed at <https://www.kviconline.gov.in/pmegpeportal/prneqphome/index.jsp>.
  - ▶ PMEGP -
    - ▶ It is a major credit-linked subsidy programme being implemented by Ministry of MSME since 2008-09, aimed at generating self-employment opportunities through establishment of micro-enterprises in non-farm sector.
    - ▶ 4.55 lakh micro enterprises have been assisted with a margin money subsidy of Rs 9564.02 crore providing employment to an estimated 37.98 lakh persons till now.
    - ▶ Modifications made in PMEGP Include -
      - ▶ 2nd loan of upto 1 crore to better performing PMEGP units for upgrading with subsidy of 15%.
      - ▶ Merger of Coir Udyami Yojana (GUY) in PMEGP.
13. ▶ As per 2nd Advance Estimates of National Income in 2017-18 and Quarterly GDP estimates for 3rd quarter (Oct-Dec) by Central Statistics Office (CSO) -
  - ▶ India's GDP grew 7.2% in 3rd quarter of 2017-18 (Oct - Dec 2017), more than 6.8% GDP growth rate of China in same period.
  - ▶ Quarterwise GDP Growth Rate in 2017-18 - Q1 (Apr - June) - 5.7 %, Q2 (July - Sep) - 6.5 % (*revised from 6.3 % earlier*), Q3 (Oct - Dec) - 7.2 %.
  - ▶ With such strong GDP Growth in 3rd quarter, India regained status of Fastest growing major economy. Manufacturing grew 8.1% in third quarter and is projected to expand at 5.1% for full year, indicating that factories / companies have come to terms with GST.
  - ▶ Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at constant (2011-12) prices in 2017-18 will remain 130.04 lakh crores, compared to 121.96 lakh crores in 2016-17, showing growth rate of 6.6 % as compared to growth rate of 7.1 percent in 2016-17.
  - ▶ While, Real GVA (Gross value added) at basic constant prices (2011-12) will be 119.64 lakh crore in 2017-18, compared to 112.48 lakh crores in 2016-17. So, growth of real GVA at basic prices in 2017-18 is 6.4 % as against 7.1 % in 2016-17.
  - ▶ Per capita net national income during 2017-18 is estimated to be INR 112764, showing rise of 8.6 % as compared to 103870 during 2016-17.
  - ▶ GDP growth rates for 2017-18 and Q1, Q2, Q3 of 2017-18 at constant (2011-12) and current prices are -

	Constant prices (2011-12)	Current prices
Annual 2017-18 (Second advance)	6.6	9.8
Q1 2017-18(April-June)	5.7	9.2
Q2 2017-18(July-Sep)	6.5	10.0
Q3 2017-18(Oct-Dec)	7.2	11.9

14. ▶ As per RBI, housing loans in up to Rs. 2 lakh slab had the highest level of non-performing assets (NPAs).
  - ▶ For housing loan slab up to 2 lakh, NPAs of Public Sector Banks and HFCs was 10.4 % in FY17 as compared to 9.8 % in FY16.
  - ▶ Lowest NPAs were reported for housing loans in Rs. 25 lakh and above slab.
15. ▶ Asian Development Bank (ADB) approved loan of USD 346 million to fund highway upgradation project in Karnataka, to improve 419 km of state highways by upgrading it to two and four-lane highways.
16. ▶ Asian Development Bank approved \$583 million for developing Reliance Bangladesh Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) and Power Project, including loans and partial risk guarantees for power project being set up for \$1 billion.
17. ▶ Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) approved USD 335 million loan for an Bangalore Metro Rail Project – Reach 6 (R6).
  - ▶ India Became 1st Nation where AIIB has approved 1 Billion USD of Financing.
18. ▶ Axis Bank subsidiary *Axis Securities* became first broking arm of a bank to take membership of a commodity exchange by registering itself with NCDEX.
19. ▶ Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance Company started adoption of digital branch services through its offering *Mosambee*, to add depth to its service offerings.
20. ▶ Bank of Baroda signed MoU with POORTI (*Platform for Online Ordering and Rural Transformation of India*) Agri Services to help farmers buy agricultural inputs like seed, fertilizers and pesticides. POORTI is a platform for buyers and sellers of agricultural inputs.
21. ▶ Bhopal-based Prodigee Finance Limited received Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC-ND) license from Reserve Bank of India (RBI). ND indicates Non-Deposit accepting NBFC.
22. ▶ Bombay Stock Exchange's India International Exchange (India INX) listed Indian Railway Finance Corporation's (IRFC's) green bonds on its debt listing platform, Global Securities Market (GSM). India INX lists IRFC's green bonds, becomes first debt security at IFSC.
  - ▶ Green Bonds: Main difference between regular bond and Green Bond is that funds raised through Green Bonds are used for financing projects/business activities that are environment-friendly.
23. ▶ Bombay Stock Exchange's subsidiary, India International Exchange (India INX) received approval from Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on framework for listing of debt securities. Indian and foreign issuers will now be able to issue Eurobonds, masala bonds and foreign currency bonds from India INX located at International Financial Service Centre (IFSC), Gujarat International Finance Tech (GIFT) city in Gujarat.
24. ▶ Cab *Aggregator Ola* acquired food delivery firm Foodpanda's India business from its German parent Delivery Hero AG in an all-stock deal. Ols will further Infuse \$200 million in Foodpanda's India operations.
25. ▶ Carmaker Maruti Suzuki became India's sixth most valued firm, crossing SBI with market capitalisation of INR 2.74 trillion, marginally ahead of SBI's 2.71 trillion.
  - ▶ Reliance Industries is most valued company with market value of 5.8 trillion, followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, ITC and Hindustan Unilever.
26. ▶ Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) relaxed norms for levy of minimum alternate tax (MAT) for insolvent companies, to make Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code 2016 more effective and minimise hardships faced by companies going in for insolvency resolution.
  - ▶ Minimum alternate tax (MAT) aims is to bring into tax realm the companies who do not pay any tax.
  - ▶ This exemption facility will be available only for companies against whom application for corporate insolvency resolution process has been admitted by the adjudicating authority.
  - ▶ This decision was taken after various hardships were faced by companies against whom application for corporate insolvency resolution process was admitted by Adjudicating Authority due to restriction in allowance of brought forward loss for computation of book profit.
27. ▶ Central Government divested 2.52 % of paid-up capital in National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC) for approx INR 1200 crores.
28. ▶ Central Government has removed income limit for incentive under 'Dr Ambedkar scheme for social Integration through inter caste marriage'.
  - ▶ Scheme was launched in 2013 to provide monetary incentive to at least 500 inter-caste couples (where either the bride or the bridegroom is a Dalit) per year.
  - ▶ Previously, couples whose total annual income does not exceed Rs 5 lakh were eligible to get a one-time incentive of Rs 2.5 lakh from Government, to help them settle down in initial phase of their married life.
  - ▶ Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has now removed max Income limit and now all Dalit couples are eligible for incentive under this scheme.
29. ▶ Central Government recognised Odisha as a 'Champion State' for exports recording highest growth in exports during 2016-17. Exports from Odisha during 2016-17 stood at Rs 40872 crores, marking growth of 114% from Rs 19082 crore in 2015-16.

30. ▶ Central Statistics Office (CSO) revised gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate for 2015-16 to 8.2% from earlier estimates of 8% and kept 2016-17 growth unchanged at 7.1%.
- ✎ Real GDP (*GDP at constant (2011-12) prices*) for 2016-17 and 2015-16 stands at 121.96 trillion and 113.86 trillion INR, showing growth of 7.1% during 2016-17 and 8.2% during 2015-16.
  - ✎ In terms of real gross value added (GVA) at constant (2011-12) basic prices, It grew 7.1% in 2016- 17, as compared to 8.1% in 2015-16.
31. ▶ Chkfake Brand Protection Solutions aunched global app named *Chkfake* to check authenticity of currency notes of all major currencies worldwide.
32. ▶ Commerce and Industry Ministry launched 3 tools to rank States / UTs on basis of measures taken to promote entrepreneurship. Tools are - *start-up-India ranking framework*, *compendium of good practices for promoting startups* AND *Startup India Kit*.
- ✎ *Startup India Compendium of Good Practises* aims at enriching startup ecosystem through ethical behaviours, currently followed by 18 States/UTs. It covers 95 good practises across 7 areas of intervention for evaluating the performance of startup ecosystem
  - ✎ *Startup India Kit* acts as a guide on all Startup India offerings and offers vital information and assistance through stats, tools, templates, events, competitions and a glossary on startup terms.
33. ▶ Commerce and Industry ministry appointed four institutes to interact with stakeholders and suggest measures to push India's ranking in World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index. They are National Institute of Construction Management and Research (NICMAR), Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT), Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI) and Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI).
34. ▶ Competition Commission of India (CCI) approved merger of IndusInd Bank and Bharat Financial Inclusion. It now awaits approval from RBI, Stock exchanges, SEBI, and National Company Law Tribunal.
35. ▶ Competition Commission of India (CCI) imposed fine of Approx INR 136 crores on search engine Google for unfair business practices in Indian market for online search. It was alleged that Google is indulging in abuse of dominant position in market for online search through practices leading to search bias and search manipulation.
36. ▶ Crisil launched *FPI Index*, to measure performance of investments of foreign portfolio investors (FPI) in fixed-income market. It will serve as benchmark for performance of FPI investments in government securities and high rated corporate bonds with maturity greater than three years.
37. ▶ Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP)'s Cell for IPR Promotion and Management (CIPAM), launched IPPrism for university students as a unique Intellectual Property (IP) Competition, in association with ASSOCHAM and ERICSSON India.
- ✎ It aims to foster culture of innovation and creativity in younger generation and invites students to submit films on piracy & counterfeiting under categories of 30 and 60 seconds.
38. ▶ Digital payments firm Paytm registered two 2 insurance units with named *Paytm Life Insurance Ltd* and *Paytm General Insurance Corporation Ltd*, to enter growing Insurance sector.
39. ▶ Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) granted scheduled commuter operator (SCO) permit to Air Deccan, enabling it to operate flights under regional air connectivity scheme *UDAN*.
40. ▶ Economic Survey 2017-18 Presented in Parliament by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, prepared by chief economic adviser Arvind Subramanian.
- ✎ **Goods and Services Tax (GST) -**
    - ✎ GST Regime was launched at midnight on July 1, 2017. This induced Twin Balance Sheet (TBS) problem that was addressed by sending major stressed companies for resolution under Indian Bankruptcy Code and implementing major recapitalisation package to strengthen Public sector banks.
    - ✎ Under GST Regime, there has been 50% increase in number of indirect taxpayers, with 9.8 million GST registrants till Dec 2017. It is more than total Indirect Tax registrants under old system (where many taxpayers were registered under several taxes). After adjusting multiple countings of a single entity, GST has increased number of unique indirect taxpayers by over 50 % (3.4 million).
    - ✎ Business-to-consumer (B2C) transactions account for only 17 % of total, while business-to-business (B2B) and exports are collectively 30-34 % of all transactions.
  - ✎ **GDP Growth** - Economic Survey Predicts 7-7.5 % Growth in 2018-19 and 6.75 % in 2017-18. GDP growth averaged 7.3% for 2014-15 to 2017-18, highest among major economies of the world.
  - ✎ **Sectoral Growth** - Agriculture, industry and services sectors are expected to grow at the rate of 2.1 %, 4.4 %, and 8.3 % respectively in 2017-18.
    - ✎ Facts about **Services** Sector -
      - ✎ Out of the 32 States and UTs, 15 have Services Sector as dominant sector, contributing over half of Gross State Value Added (GSVA).

✎ However, wide variation is seen in terms of share and growth of services GSVA -

✎ In terms of services GSVA share- Delhi and Chandigarh are at top with over 80 % share, while Sikkim is at bottom (31.7 %)

✎ In terms of services GSVA growth - Bihar is at top and Uttar Pradesh at bottom with 14.5 % and 7.0 % growth respectively.

✎ FDI equity inflows to services sector grew by 15.0 % during 2017-18 (April-October), amid number of reforms by govt to ensure that India remains an increasingly attractive investment destination.

✎ During April-September 2017-18, Growth in Services Exports and Services Imports stayed good at 16.2 % and 17.4 % Respectively. India was 8th largest exporter in commercial services in 2016 with share of 3.4 %, double to India's merchandise exports in world at 1.7 %.

#### ✎ **Other Factors -**

✎ Forex Reserves are on an all time high of \$409 Billion.

✎ Fiscal Deficit is on a 4 year low in 2017 - 18, being 3.2% of GDP. It was 3.5 % of GDP in 2016-17.

✎ Inflation - WPI Based Inflation expected to be 2.9 % in 2017-18 (compared to 1.7 % in 2016-17). While, CPI Based Inflation expected to be 3.3 % in 2017-18 (compared to 4.5 % in 2016-17). Economic Survey sees average crude oil prices rising 12% in FY19.

✎ GVA (Gross Value Added) growth seen at 6.1% in 2017-18 vs 6.6% in FY2016-17.

#### ✎ **India's External Sector -**

✎ Exports grew positive during 2016-17 (5.2%) and expected to grow faster in 2017-18 (12.1%).

✎ India's Current Account Deficit (CAD) stayed 1.2 % of GDP in Q2 of 2017-18, less than 2.5 % of GDP in Q1 of 2017-18.

#### ✎ **Notable Points about Indian Economy -**

✎ India's formal sector (formal non-farm payroll) is greater than what it currently is believed to be.

✎ When *formality* was defined in terms of social security provisions like EPFO/ESIC, formal sector payroll was 31 percent of non-agricultural work force.

✎ When formality was defined in terms of being part of GST net, formal sector payroll share was found to be 53 %.

✎ For first time in India's history, data on international exports of states has been dwelt in Economic Survey. It indicates States that export internationally and trade with other states are richer.

✎ There has been addition of 1.8 million in individual income tax filers since November 2016.

✎ India's firm export structure is substantially more egalitarian than in other large countries. Top 1 % of Indian firms account for 38 % of exports, much less than greater share such as 72, 68, 67 and 55 % of exports in Brazil, Germany, Mexico and USA respectively.

✎ Sanitation coverage in rural India increased substantially from 39 % in 2014 to 76 % in January 2018, post launch of Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) on October 2, 2014. So far, 296 districts and over 3.7 lakh villages have been declared Open Defecation Free (ODF).

✎ India is improving in Science and Technology with 14 % growth of annual publications between 2009 to 2014. This increased India's share in global publications from 3.1% in 2009 to 4.4% in 2014 as per Scopus Database.

✎ Relief from embedded state taxes (ROSL) announced in 2016 boosted exports of ready-made garments (but not others) by 16 %.

✎ Indian society exhibits strong son "Meta" preference as Parents continue to have children until they get the desired number of sons.

✎ There is substantial avoidable litigation in tax arena which government action could reduce. Tax department's petition success rate is very low (below 30 %). Note that 0.2 % of cases accounted for 56 % of value at stake; whereas 66 % of pending cases (under 10 lakh) accounted for only 1.8 % of value at stake.

✎ Own direct tax collections by Indian states and local governments are significantly lower than that in other federal countries.

✎ Impact of climate change is evident and extreme weather adversely impacts agricultural yields.

✎ INR 20339 crores approved by Government in 2017-18 to meet various obligations arising from interest subvention being provided to farmers on short term crop loans.

41. ▶ Equitas Small Finance Bank rolled out *selfeSavings*, an interactive digital savings account that can be opened online with Aadhaar, PAN and other basic details. Balance Under INR 10 lakh fetches interest at 6 % and that above INR 10 lakh will get 6.5 % interest.



42. ▶ Federal Bank forayed into investment banking by acquiring 26 % stake in Equirus Capital, to add additional products to its portfolio, including financial solutions for debt and equity capital markets, capital market products, structured finance and advisory.
43. ▶ Federal Bank partnered with *Hedge Equities Ltd* for providing Portfolio Investment Scheme (PIS) services to NRIs.
44. ▶ Federal Bank partnered with Abu Dhabi-based LuLu Exchange to leverage blockchain technology for cross-border remittances.
45. ▶ Finance & Corporate Affairs Minister Arun Jaitley launched India's First Agri-commodity Options in Guar Seed by National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange Limited (NCDEX). It is first-of-its-kind hedging tool in India, as an effort to make agri-economy more efficient and bring huge amount of value for the farmers.
46. ▶ Finance Minister Arun Jaitley launched *CriSidEx* as India's first sentiment index for Micro and small enterprises (MSEs) developed jointly by credit rating body CRISIL and Small Industries Development Bank of India (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).

✎ CriSidEx's readings will flag potential headwinds in production cycles and help improve market efficiencies. It will also offer actionable indicators on foreign trade, by capturing sentiment of exporters and importers.

47. ▶ Finance Ministry approved post of 4th Whole time member in Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI's), whose need was being felt due to increased workload post merger of Forward Markets Commission (FMC) with SEBI in 2015.

✎ SEBI board comprises a chairman (Ajay Tyagi Currently), 1 member each from RBI, Finance Ministry and corporate affairs Ministry.

✎ SEBI's Current 3 whole time members - Madhabi Puri Buch, G Mahalingam and Sanjeev Kaushik.

48. ▶ Finance Ministry extended deadline for linking Aadhaar number with PAN card till 31-03-2018.

49. ▶ Finance Ministry reduced interest rates on Small Saving Schemes for January -March 2018 quarter by 20 basis points (0.2%)as compared to October- December 2017 quarter. New interest rates for January -March 2018 quarter are -

Small Savings Scheme	Annual Interest Rate
Public Provident Fund (PPF)	7.6%
National Savings Certificate (NSC)	7.6%
Kisan Vikas Patra (KVP)	7.3% (11 months maturity)
Sukanya Samridhhi Account	8.1%
5-year Senior Citizens Savings Scheme	8.3% (Unchanged from previous quarter)
Savings Deposit	4.0% (Unchanged from previous quarter)
Term Deposits (1-5 year maturity)	6.6% to 7.4%
5-year Recurring Deposit	6.9%

50. ▶ Fino Payments Bank signed agreement with Rajasthan government's RajCOMP as its corporate business correspondent and will offer banking services to people across state. Now, 55000 e-Mitra points of RajCOMP across Rajasthan will act as banking points of Fino Payments Bank.

51. ▶ From January 1 2018, farmers in Telangana will get 24-hour free power supply, making Telangana first state to do so. Power utilities in Telangana have spent Rs 12610 crore in setting up new power lines, transformers and sub-stations for this purpose.

52. ▶ GDP Forecasts in Feb 2018 -

✎ Moody's Investors Service stated that India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is estimated to grow at 7.6% in 2018 - 19.

53. ▶ Governemnt approved creation of National Urban Housing Fund (NUHF) for INR 60000 crores, in Building Materials and Technology Promotion Council (BMTPC) under Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

✎ NUHF will facilitate raising requisite funds in next four years so that flow of Central Assistance under different verticals Including Beneficiary Linked Construction (BLC), Affordable Housing in Parternership (AHP), In-Situ Slum Redevelopment (ISSR) and Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme (CLSS).

54. ▶ Government infused over Rs. 7500 crore equity capital in six stressed public sector banks (PSBs)-

Bank	Infused Amount
IDBI Bank	Rs. 2729 crore
Bank of India	Rs. 2257 crore
UCO Bank	Rs. 1375 crore
Bank of Maharashtra	Rs. 650 crore
Central Bank of India	Rs. 323 crore
Dena Bank	Rs. 243 crore

55. ▶ Government launched Savings Bonds with 7.75% Interest, commencing from 10th January 2018. Features -

✎ Applications in form of Bond Ledger Account will be received in designated bank branches and SHCIL (numbering about 1600).

✎ Bonds will be issued in multiples of INR 1000 (face value).

✎ Interest on the Bonds will be taxable under Income-tax Act 1961. Bonds will be exempt from Wealth-tax under Wealth Tax Act 1957.

- ✎ Bonds will have a maturity of 7 years carrying interest at 7.75% per annum payable half- yearly (cumulative value of 1000 at end of 7 years will be 1703).
- 56. ▶ Government lowered additional borrowing requirement for current fiscal to INR 20000 crores from previous estimate of 50000 crores, considering revenue receipts and expenditure pattern. Lesser borrowing will enable restricting fiscal deficit within target.
- 57. ▶ Government made amendments in *Prevention of Money-laundering Act 2002 (PMLA)* through Finance Act 2018 to enhance its effectiveness and widen its scope.
  - ✎ Definition of *proceeds of crime* has been amended to include *property equivalent held outside country*.
  - ✎ Applicability of bail conditions has been made uniform to all offences under PMLA.
  - ✎ Section 447 of Companies Act dealing with 'fraud' is being included as scheduled offence under PMLA.
  - ✎ 90 days more time has been given for investigation to Enforcement Directorate, before prosecution is filed.
  - ✎ Special Court has been permitted to consider claims for purposes of restoration of confiscated properties even during trial.
- 58. ▶ Government notified terms of Scheme of Electoral Bonds, to curb flow of illegal money into political activities -
  - ✎ With issuance of electoral bonds, donors can purchase electoral bonds from specific State Bank of India (SBI) branches, and receiving political parties can encash them only through a designated bank account.
  - ✎ Electoral bonds will be available at specified SBI branches for 10 days each in the months of January, April, July and October.
  - ✎ Electoral Bond shall be a bearer instrument in the nature of a Promissory Note (P-notes) and an interest-free banking instrument. Any Donor can buy bonds of any amount among INR 1000 / 10000 / 100000 / 1000000 and 10000000.
  - ✎ Electoral bonds will not carry the name of payee or buyer and will have a life of only 15 days during which it can be used for making a donation to political parties.
  - ✎ To receive the electoral bonds, Political party must have secured over 1% of the votes polled in last general elections.
- 59. ▶ Government proposed merger of Government Savings Certificates Act 1959 and Public Provident Fund Act 1968 with Government Savings Banks Act 1873, to remove ambiguities due to multiple Acts and Rules for Small Saving Schemes, in line with *Minimum Government, Maximum Governance*. This will also bring certain flexibilities for the investors, Including -
  - ✎ Foreclosure of PPF Account - Depositors will be able to withdraw money from their PPF Account before 5 years.
  - ✎ Investment in Small Savings Schemes can be made by Guardian On behalf of minors.
  - ✎ Provisions for differently-abled people - In new umbrella Act, government will allow accounts in name of differently abled persons.
  - ✎ Right of Nominees - As per existing provisions of the Acts, if depositor dies and nomination exists, the outstanding balances will be paid to nominee(s).
  - ✎ Grievance redressal - New act will allow Government to put in place mechanism for redressal of grievances and for expeditious settlement of disputes relating to Small Savings.
  - ✎ No change in interest rate or tax policy.
- 60. ▶ Government signed agreement with ONGC for strategic sale of its 51.11% equity share-holding in HPCL for INR 36,915 crores. After this, ONGC will become India's first vertically integrated 'oil major' company, having presence across entire value chain. However, HPCL will continue to be a Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE).
- 61. ▶ Government stated that from January 1, 2018, customers will not have to pay any transaction charges for payments made through debit card, BHIM app and Aadhaar-enabled payment systems for up to Rs 2000, as Merchant discount rate (MDR) Charges will be borne by Government (costing approx 2500 crores INR). Government will reimburse MDR to banks.
- 62. ▶ Government tasked ICICI Bank with enabling online payments at 470 mandis integrated with national portal of electronic National Agriculture Market (e-NAM).
  - ✎ e-NAM was launched in April 2016 to revolutionise agri markets by bringing in better price discovery and transparency to enable farmers to get better remuneration for their produce.
  - ✎ ICICI Bank will enable Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and BHIM (Bharat Interface for Money) on the e-NAM portal for making cashless payments.
- 63. ▶ Government will infuse INR 88139 crores in 20 public sector banks during current fiscal ending 31st March, to boost lending and revive growth. IDBI Bank is biggest recipient with INR 10610 crores, followed by Bank of India (9232 Crores) and SBI (8800 crores).
- 64. ▶ HDFC Bank partnered with Rajasthan State Government to promote and nurture the start-ups in state, by providing solutions like current accounts, credit cards and other solutions to start-ups in Rajasthan under its SmartUp programme.
- 65. ▶ HDFC has sold its realty brokerage business 'HDFC Realty' and its digital real estate business 'HDFC Red' to online advertisements platform Quikr, for approx 350 crores.
- 66. ▶ Haryana Government will form a non-banking financial company named *Haryana State Financial Services Limited*, for efficient management of funds. It will be in-house treasury manager and will be responsible for efficient management of surplus funds of State

public enterprises. Authorised capital of this NBFC will be Rs.10 crore while the paid up capital will be Rs. 2 crore.

67. ▶ ICICI Bank became first bank to enable customers to open a Public Provident Fund (PPF) account online, eliminating the need for furnishing paper documents.
68. ▶ ICRA Management Consulting Services (IMaCS) launched four fixed income indices, to create more depth in Indian debt market.
  - ▶ Four indices - ICRA Gilt Indices, ICRA Liquid Indices, ICRA Corporate Bond Indices and ICRA Composite Debt Indices. It would help asset managers and financial services companies make objective analysis and provide benchmarking of debt portfolios.
69. ▶ IDBI Bank has disengaged Moody's Investors Services (Moody's) to rate its bond programmes, terminating all contracts with Moody's pertaining to various issues made under its MTN (medium term note) Bond Programme.
70. ▶ India Government Mint (A Unit of *Security Printing and Minting Corp of India*) launched India's first home-grown high purity gold reference standard – Bharatiya Nirdeshak Dravya (BND-4201).
  - ▶ BND-4201 is reference material for gold of '9999' fineness (gold that is 99.99% pure with impurities of only 100 parts-per-million). It will be beneficial to the consumers and public at large to ensure purity of gold.
  - ▶ BND-4201 is developed through collaboration between IGM, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), National Physical Laboratory (New Delhi) and National Centre for Compositional Characterisation of Materials (Hyderabad).
71. ▶ India Index Services and Products Ltd (IISL) launched the Nifty LargeMidcap 250 Index. It will track the performance of 100 large-cap and 150 mid-cap companies listed on National Stock Exchange (NSE). Base date for index is April 1, 2005 and base value is 1000.
72. ▶ India Signed Loan Agreement with Beijing (China) Based New Development Bank for USD 100 Million for Rajasthan Water Sector Restructuring Project for Desert Areas. This is first tranche approved by NDB under Multi Tranche Financing Facility of USD 345 million for this project.
73. ▶ India Signed World Bank loan agreement of USD 250 million for *Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion (SANKALP) Project*.
74. ▶ India signed \$100 million Loan Agreement with World Bank to help Boost Rural Economy of Tamil Nadu.
75. ▶ India signed \$120 million Loan Agreement with World Bank to improve access to Water Supply Services in Uttarakhand.
76. ▶ India signed \$250 million loan agreement with Asian Development Bank (ADB) to finance construction of 6254 kilometres all-weather rural roads in States of Assam, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and West Bengal under Prime Minister's Rural Roads Program (PMGSY).
77. ▶ India signed \$318 million Loan agreement with World Bank for Tamil Nadu Irrigated Agriculture Modernization Project to promote climate resilient agriculture technologies, improve water management practices, and increase market opportunities for small and marginal farmers.
78. ▶ India signed Financing Agreement with world bank for USD 125 million for *Skills Strengthening for Industrial Value Enhancement Operation (STRIVE) Project*.
  - ▶ World Bank also approved USD 825 million loan for Pakistan, for upgrading its energy and public finance sectors.
79. ▶ India signed USD 40 Million Loan agreement with world bank for Uttar Pradesh Pro-Poor Tourism Development Project.
80. ▶ India's YES Bank and European Investment Bank (EIB) released announced co-finance programme of \$400-million for renewable power generation in India (50 - 50 %).
81. ▶ Indiabulls Housing Finance raised INR 1000 crores by selling India's first *Social Bonds*, that are debt instruments issued to raise funds which is to be deployed in financing/re-financing eligible social projects such as affordable housing, water supply, sanitation, transport etc. Yes Bank was sole investor in these bonds with 5 year maturity.
82. ▶ Indian GDP Growth Forecasts in Jan 2018 -
  - ▶ HSBC predicted 6.5 % GDP Growth for India in FY 2017-18 and 7.0 % in 2018-19.
  - ▶ As per government's Central Statistics Office (CSO), Indian economy will grow by 6.5% in 2017-18, as compared to 7.1% in 2016-17. GDP Growth by 5.7 % in Apr - June Quarter and 6.3% in July - September quarter.
  - ▶ 2018 Global Economics Prospect (GEP) report by World Bank has projected India's growth rate to increase to 7.3% in 2018 and 7.5 for 2019 and 2020.
  - ▶ India Ratings and Research projected GDP will improve to 7.1 % in 2018-19 as compared to 6.5 per cent in 2017-18.
  - ▶ International Monetary Fund (IMF) projected Indian GDP to grow at 7.4% in 2018 and 7.8 % in 2019. India's growth rate dropped to 6.7%. In its latest World Economic Outlook update released in Davos (Switzerland).
83. ▶ Indian GDP Growth Projections -
  - ▶ International Rating Agency Fitch lowered 2017-18 growth projection to 6.7%, from 6.9%.
  - ▶ Morgan Stanley predicts Indian economy to witness cyclical growth recovery, with real GDP growth likely to accelerate from 6.4% to 7.5% in 2018 & to 7.7% in 2019.



- ✎ Global investment bank Nomura predicted India's economy to register a 7.5 % growth rate in 2018.
  - ✎ As per *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2018* report by United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)UN, Indian economy will grow by 7.2 % in 2017-18 and will go up to 7.4 % in 2019.
  - ✎ Asian Development Bank (ADB) lowered India's GDP forecast for the current fiscal by 0.3% to 6.7 %. It also revised GDP outlook for next fiscal beginning from March 2018 to 7.3% from 7.4%.
84. ▶ Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA) and India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) signed agreement for training of IPPB employees in area of payment banking.
- ✎ IPPB is Government's attempt to boost *financial inclusion* by providing basic banking services to unbanked population.
85. ▶ Indian Institute of Information Technology and Management-Kerala (IIITM-K) and Blockchain Education Network (BEN) will jointly set up Kerala Blockchain Academy in Thiruvananthapuram, as first of its kind in India and aims to utilise blockchain technology for welfare of public, promote innovations and entrepreneurship with blockchain technology.
86. ▶ Indian Overseas Bank signed MoU with National Housing Bank for Rural Housing Interest Subsidy Scheme (RHISS) of Ministry of Rural Development. RHISS provides subsidy for housing loans taken by those living in rural areas for construction and modifications of their dwelling units. Interest subsidy is 3% for a loan amount of 2 lakh for 20-year tenure.
87. ▶ India's factory output, measured by Index of Industrial Production (IIP) rose to 17 Months high of 8.4% in November 2017, up from 2% in October 2017, due to better performance by manufacturing and capital goods sectors.
88. ▶ India's most-valued Bank *HDFC Bank* crossed INR 5 trillion market capitalisation for first time (Approx 85 Billion USD), making it only 3rd Indian company (after TCS and Reliance) to achieve this milestone.
89. ▶ IndusInd Bank launched its new Sonic Identity, a musical logo called *MOGO*. Its aims to build brand imagery with strategic use of music and sound for brand experiences and audience connection.
90. ▶ IndusInd Bank partnered with Blockchain solution provider Ripple, to facilitate cross border remittances. Through this, IndusInd Bank will leverage Ripple platform based on blockchain technology for global payments as it lowers both costs and transfer time for customers.
91. ▶ IndusInd Bank will introduce India's first battery-powered, interactive payment cards, in association with Dynamics Inc (Pennsylvania(USA) based firm that manufactures intelligent, battery-powered payment cards). New card will have multiple buttons which will allow consumers to pay in multiple ways (through credit points / monthly instalments).
92. ▶ Information and Broadcasting Ministry approved Merger of Direct-to-home (DTH) operators Dish TV India (owned by Zee Group) and Videocon d2h. Merged entity will be *Dish TV Videocon Limited* and will serve combined subscriber base of 29 million users.
93. ▶ International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB) released Financial System Stability Assessment (FSSA) and Financial Sector Assessment (FSA) respectively. Second comprehensive Financial Sector Assessment Program (FSAP) for India too has been conducted during 2017.
- ✎ FSAP is a joint program undertaken by International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) to comprehensively assess and conduct in-depth analysis of a country's financial sector. FSAP has been conducted since September 2010 in 29 countries (including India) at interval of every five years.
94. ▶ International investment firm *KKR & Co* became first foreign investor to fully own an asset reconstruction company (ARC) in India, as it received an approval from Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to start an ARC.
95. ▶ Jammu and Kashmir Bank launched *Sahafat Finance Scheme* as a special financial scheme for journalists of state, to avail financing between 50000 - 3 Lakh for buying cameras, laptops, tablets and books.
96. ▶ Karnataka Government will hold a Blockchain Hackathon for Governance, for students, startups, and other IT professionals. Cloud-based blockchain technology providers will be invited to provide platforms for use in this hackathon. Karnataka is 3rd Indian State (After Andhra Pradesh and Telangana) to announce plans to adopt blockchain for governance.
97. ▶ Maharashtra Government approved Nanaji Deshmukh Krishi Sanjivani Yojna, with expenses of INR 4000 Crores INR. It will be active between 2018-19 to 2023-24.
- ✎ Scheme will be implemented in 5,142 villages across 15 districts, to improve soil quality, develop foodgrain varieties which can sustain climate variations and effect necessary changes in crop pattern as per availability of water.
  - ✎ 70% of cost will be borne by World Bank while state will contribute 30% over six years.
98. ▶ Maharashtra is top contributor in first 5 months since rollout of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime in July 1, 2017. Uttar Pradesh is ranked 2nd in terms of total GST Collection (CGST+IGST+SGST+CESS). Govt has so far received approx 3.7 Lakh Crores as GST Collections till Nov 30, 2017.
- ✎ Also, Central Government has released INR 24500 crore compensation to states to make up for revenue loss on account of Goods and Services Tax (GST) implementation. Karnataka got maximum compensation (Rs 3271 crore) followed by Gujarat (Rs 2282 crore) and Punjab (Rs 2098 crore). This compensation comes from cess (on top of the highest tax rate of 28 %) on luxury, demerit and sin

goods.

99. ▶ Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) will roll out Condonation of Delay Scheme to provide a three-month window for defaulting companies and their director to submit their annual filings. It will be operational from January 1 to March 31, 2018.
100. ▶ Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) directed all NGOs, individuals and business entities receiving foreign funds to open accounts in any of 32 designated banks (including one foreign) within a month, as per MHA powers under Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) 2010.
  - ▶ These accounts will be integrated with central government's Public Financial Management System (PFMS), to provide higher level of transparency and hassle-free reporting compliance.
101. ▶ Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation will revise base years of gross domestic product (GDP), Index of Industrial Production (IIP) and Consumer Price Index (CPI) to 2017-18. While for CPI (retail inflation) it will be 2018.
102. ▶ Mobile payments Firm Paytm and Alibaba Group-owned AGTech Holdings formed a joint venture to launch 'Gamepind' a gaming platform aimed at mobile users in India, with AGTech holding 45% in JV and Paytm owns 55%. Capital invested is \$16 Million.
103. ▶ NBFC *Capital First* has been merged with IDFC Bank. Merged entity will have assets under management of Rs 88000 crore, customer base of over 5 million and branch network of 194.
104. ▶ NITI Aayog recommended setting up independent Debt Management Office for better servicing of loans that will lead to substantial reduction in India's interest payment. Currently, government debt (including market borrowings) is managed by Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
  - ▶ Independent Debt Management Offices will help to resolve issues relating to conflict of interest as RBI decides on key interest rates as well as undertakes buying and selling of government bonds. It will also help in strengthen bond market and help to promote investment.
  - ▶ It will be in pursuance global practice of shifting public debt management from central bank to a debt management office.
105. ▶ NITI Aayog will launch a special cell called *Women Entrepreneurial and Innovation Cell* to support women entrepreneurs and give a boost to their initiatives. It will be headed by Niti Aayog advisor Anna Roy. It will offer women financial support through INR 10000 crores fund of Micro Unit Development and Refinance Agency, or MUDRA micro-loan scheme.
106. ▶ NPA report by by CARE Ratings -
  - ▶ With NPA Ratio of 9.85 %, India is ranked 5th on list of countries with highest non-performing assets (NPA) levels. Only countries with More NPAs than India are Greece (36.67%), Italy (16.35%), Portugal (15.52%), and Ireland (11.85%).
107. ▶ National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) sanctioned Rs 372.51 crore loan assistance to Odisha for irrigation and rural bridge projects, that are to be undertaken during Jan- March 2018 period, under Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF).
108. ▶ National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) created National Highways Investment Promotion Cell (NHIPC) for attracting domestic and foreign investment for highways projects. It will focus on engaging with global institution investors, developers, construction companies and fund managers for building investor participation in road infrastructure projects.
109. ▶ Norway's fertiliser firm *Yara International* acquired India's Tata Chemicals' 1.2 million tonnes per annum production capacity urea plant at Babrala in Uttar Pradesh, for INR 2682 crores. It is first foreign direct investment (FDI) in India's urea sector.
110. ▶ PFRDA identified 21 Banks as Makers of Excellence under Atal Pension Yojana Outreach Programme, with Number of APY subscribers crossing 86 Lacs mark. The list is topped by Canara Bank and it contains 6 Public sector banks, 14 Regional Rural Banks and 1 Cooperative Bank.
111. ▶ PNB Housing Finance tied up with World Bank Group's International Finance Corporation (IFC) to raise \$800 million for green and affordable housing. As per tie-up, PNB and IFC will bring in \$400 million each.
112. ▶ Paytm Payments Bank rolled out Paytm FASTag to enable electronic toll fee collection on highways across the country, in line with the government's move to make FASTag mandatory on every new vehicle sold from December 1. The Paytm FASTag - which is a simple and reusable tag based on radio-frequency identification technology (RFID) that can be placed on a vehicle's windscreen.
113. ▶ Paytm Payments Bank unveiled 3000 'Paytm Ka ATM' outlets that allows customers to open Saving Accounts and deposit/withdraw money from their bank accounts.
114. ▶ Paytm has set up a new entity called *Paytm Money* that will offer investment and wealth management products and will invest close to \$10 million in new entity. Paytm Money is 4th product from One97 Communications, after Paytm Mall, Payments Bank and wallet.
115. ▶ Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) approved expansion of Government's Atal Pension Yojana (APY) through operational Payments Banks and Small Finance Banks in India. Participation in APY builds a pensioned society and adds sustainable fee income to Banks by way of attractive incentive for mobilizing APY @ Rs 120-150 for each Account. Currently, operational Small Finance Banks and Payment Banks are -
  - ▶ Small Finance Bank-

- ✍ Ujjivan SFB
- ✍ Janalakshmi SFB.
- ✍ Equitas SFB.
- ✍ A U SFB.
- ✍ Capital SFB.
- ✍ ESAF SFB.
- ✍ Utkarsh SFB.
- ✍ Suryoday SFB.
- ✍ Fincare SFB
- ✍ Payment Bank
- ✍ Paytm PB
- ✍ Airtel PB
- ✍ India Post PB
- ✍ Fino PB.

116. ▶ Private Bank *Yes Bank* established a Medium Term Note (MTN) programme to raise USD 1 billion by issuing debt securities in international capital markets to eligible investors.
117. ▶ Public Procurement Portal 'MSME Sambandh' has been launched by Giriraj Singh (Minister of State (IC) for MSMEs), aimed at monitoring implementation of Public Procurement from MSEs by Central Public Sector Enterprises.
118. ▶ Public Sector Banks Wrote Off Bad Loans Worth INR 81683 Crores in 2016-2017, led by SBI which wrote off bad loans worth INR 20339 Crores in 2016-17. Loans written off by PSBs in past years are -
- ✍ 2012 - 13 -> 27231 crores
  - ✍ 2013 - 14 -> 34409 crores
  - ✍ 2014 - 15 -> 49018 crores
  - ✍ 2015 - 16 -> 57585 crores
119. ▶ Punjab National Bank (PNB) and National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC) signed MoU to provide financial assistance to Scheduled Caste (SC) families living below Double Poverty Line (DPL).
- ✍ Persons with annual family income below 40000 in rural areas and 55000 in urban areas are considered to be below double poverty line.
120. ▶ Punjab National Bank (PNB) detected fraudulent transactions worth over 11300 crore at its Mumbai branch. Amount is 1/3rd of bank's market capitalisation (36000 crores). It caused sharp fall in PNB's Shares.
- ✍ PNB lodged 2 complaints with Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) against billionaire jewellery designer Nirav Modi and a jewellery company about fraudulent transactions.
  - ✍ Jeweller Nirav Modi allegedly acquired fraudulent letters of undertaking from a PNB branch in Mumbai to secure overseas credit from other Indian lenders.
  - ✍ After This, A K Pradhan has been appointed as Group Chief Risk Officer of Punjab National Bank (PNB).
121. ▶ RBI's 5th Bi-Monthly Policy Review for FY 2017-18 -
- ✍ RBI Kept Key policy rates Unchanged. However, It increased SLR (Statutory Liquidity Ratio) by 50 Basis points, to 20 % (From 19.50).
  - ✍ Current Monetary Policy Rates -
    - ✍ Repo Rate - 6.00 %
    - ✍ Reverse Repo - 5.75 %
    - ✍ Bank Rate - 6.25 %
    - ✍ Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) Rate - 6.25 %
    - ✍ CRR (Cash Reserve Ratio) - 4 %
    - ✍ SLR(Statutory Liquidity ratio) - **20 %** (Increased from 19.5 %)
  - ✍ Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of Reserve Bank of India -
    - ✍ It has 6 Members - RBI Governor Urjit Patel (Chairperson), Viral A Acharya, Michael Patra, Chetan Ghate, Pami Dua, Ravindra H. Dholakia.
  - ✍ RBI also allowed overseas branches of Indian banks to refinance external commercial borrowings (ECB) of AAA-rated private and public sector companies.
    - ✍ Currently, Indian banks are allowed to fund dollar loans but are not allowed to refinance these borrowings abroad.

Due to this, companies sought refinance only through foreign lenders. Now, Indian banks can also participate in refinancing and can earn a higher return on their funds abroad.

This will also benefit the borrowers as improved liquidity in refinance market will reduce cost of borrowing, .

122. ▶ Rajasthan State Government has set up Automatic Service ATMs, 'E-Mitra Plus' at 9900 Atal Seva Kendras and 2500 urban location across state, to enable people to access 380 various government services and over 100 services of private sector.
123. ▶ Rating Agency Fitch placed Punjab National Bank on Rating Watch Negative (RWN), reflecting a possibility of downgrade following recent USD 1.77 billion fraud, biggest ever fraud in Indian banking history.
124. ▶ Rating agency CRISIL upgraded its outlook on 18 Indian public sector banks (PSBs) from "negative" to "stable", after recent news of INR 88139 Crores Infusion by Government into PSBs. Along with capital infusion announcement, Government also unveiled 'Enhanced Access and Service Excellence (EASE)', a six-fold roadmap for reforms in PSBs which will improve the overall functioning of these banks.
125. ▶ Rating agency Standard & Poor's (S&P) classified Indian Banking sector under 'Group 5' of its Banking Industry Country Risk Assessment (BICRA), along with Spain, Italy, Ireland, Panama, Poland, Bermuda, Peru, South Africa, Qatar and UAE.
  - As per S&P, risk of rising economic imbalances for banks in India is 'low' on account of good franchise, extensive branch networks and large domestic savings base.
  - However, issue of massive non-performing assets (NPAs) in Indian banking system needs to be addressed.
126. ▶ Reliance Communications (RCom) unveiled Eagle express submarine cable system to lay a 68000-km undersea cable for carrying data across Europe and Asia, as a *cloud and fiber initiative* which will be laid at a cost of \$600 million. This submarine cable system will connect its base in India with Italy to west and Hong Kong on east. It is expected to be operational by 2020.
127. ▶ Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd will launch its own cyptocurrency based on Blockchain Technology, named JioCoin, led by Mukesh Ambani's son Akash Ambani.
128. ▶ Reserve Bank of India (RBI) directed banks to link SWIFT (Society for World Interbank Financial Telecommunication System platform) with their core banking solutions (CBS) by end of April 2018. It aims to tighten internal controls in banks following Recent Over 12000 crores fraud at Punjab National Bank (PNB).
  - The Mega PNB fraud surrounds around SWIFT technology which was misused by its branch officials to fraudulently issue LoUs (letters of undertaking), kind of Bank guarantees to diamond importer Nirav Modi-linked companies without getting proper approvals and without making entries in CBS. Failure of SWIFT-CBS link led to big fraud at PNB and enabled these transactions to go undetected for over 7 years.
  - SWIFT (Society for World Interbank Financial Telecommunication Systems) is global financial messaging service that enables financial institutions worldwide to send and receive information about financial transactions in secure, standardized and reliable environment.
  - SWIFT was founded in 1973 and is headquartered in La Hulpe (Belgium).
129. ▶ Reserve Bank of India (RBI) imposed INR 3 crore penalty on IndusInd Bank for violation of Income Recognition and Asset Classification (IRAC) norms.
130. ▶ Reserve Bank of India (RBI) imposed penalty of INR 5 crore on Syndicate Bank for non-compliance with its directions on Know Your Customer (KYC) norms, Cheque Purchase or Discounting and Bill Discounting.
131. ▶ Reserve Bank of India (RBI) launched new design chocolate brown ten rupee note, with height 63mm (unchanged) and width 123mm (slightly lesser than 137mm width of existing note). Another difference is that reverse of note will carry a motif of Konark Sun Temple, as compared to images of fauna of India - rhinoceros, elephant and tiger o existing note.
132. ▶ Reserve Bank of India (RBI) raised exposure limit under exchange traded currency derivatives (ETCD) trading for residents and foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) to \$100 million (from \$15 Million Previously) across all currency pairs involving Indian rupee. It aims to help entities engaged in forex transactions to maintain their currency risks in better manner.
  - ETCD is financial instrument that trades on regulated exchange, and whose value is based on value of another asset. They can be used to hedge exposure or speculate on wide range of financial assets like commodities, currencies, equities and even interest rates.
  - Raised exposure limit permits persons resident in India and FPIs to take positions, without having to establish existence of underlying exposure, up to limit of \$100 million equivalent across all currency pairs involving Indian rupees, put together, and combined across all exchanges.
133. ▶ Reserve Bank of India (RBI) rationalised merchant discount rate (MDR) to increase the number of non-cash transactions.
  - Fee charged to a merchant by a bank for providing debit and credit card payment services is referred to as merchant discount rate (MDR).
  - MDR has been rationalised on basis of merchant turnover rather than existing slab rates based on the transaction value.

134. ▶ Reserve Bank of India (RBI) stated that all the 14 designs of Rs 10 coin are valid and legal tender for transactions, as it was observed that some traders and members of public were reluctant to accept INR 10 coins owing to a doubt about its genuineness.
135. ▶ Reserve Bank of India announced setting up ombudsman for addressing customer grievances in non-banking finance companies (NBFCs). RBI will start with deposit-taking NBFCs and widen the scope to cover NBFCs with asset size of INR 100 crore. There are 20 banking ombudsmen across India Currently.
136. ▶ Reserve Bank of India increased limits for investment by foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) for the January-March 2018 quarter by Rs 6,400 crore in Central Government Securities (G-Secs) and Rs 5,800 crore in State development loans (SDLs).
- ✎ From January 1, 2018, revised investment limit for FPIs in G-Secs will be Rs 2,56,400 crore against existing limit of Rs 2,50,000 crore.
  - ✎ RBI also granted license for operating a Prepaid Payment Instrument (PPI) to Global mobile payments company OBOPAY.
137. ▶ Reserve Bank of India relaxed priority sector norms for banks by classifying all loans to micro small and medium enterprises (MSME) as priority sector lending, a long time demand from banks. Till now, loans up to INR 10 crore per MSME borrower was considered for priority sector calculation.
- ✎ Sub-target for lending to micro enterprises is 7.50 % of net credit. Foreign banks will also have to follow 8% sub-target for lending to small and marginal farmers.
138. ▶ Reserve Bank of India will link base rate with MCLR from 1st of April 2018 to ensure expeditious transmission of its policy rate to borrowers.
- ✎ RBI Observed that large proportion of bank loans continued to be linked to Base Rate, even after RBI introduced Marginal Cost of Funds based Lending Rates (MCLR) system in 1st April 2016.
  - ✎ This will enable faster propagation of Effects of RBI Rate Changes to Interest rates of consumer Loans.
139. ▶ Reserve bank of India (RBI) tightened rules for bank loan defaults and asked banks to immediately identify defaults and make disclosures every Friday to the RBI credit registry from February 23.
- ✎ To accelerate resolution of bad loans, RBI abolished several loan-restructuring mechanisms including *Corporate Debt Restructuring Scheme*, *Flexible Structuring of Existing Long Term Project Loans*, *Strategic Debt Restructuring Scheme (SDR)*, *Framework for Revitalising Distressed Assets*, *Change in Ownership outside SD*, *Scheme for Sustainable Structuring of Stressed Assets (S4A)* and *Joint Lenders' Forum (JLF)*.
  - ✎ Revised Framework for Early identification and reporting of stress -
    - ✎ Lenders shall identify stress in loan accounts, immediately on default, by classifying stressed assets as special mention accounts (SMA) as per given categories -
      - ✎ SMA - 01 to 30 days
      - ✎ SMA-1 - 31 to 60 days
      - ✎ SMA-2 - 61 to 90 days
    - ✎ Lenders shall report credit information, including classification of an account as SMA to Central Repository of Information on Large Credits (CRILC) on all borrower entities having aggregate exposure of INR 5 crore or more.
    - ✎ CRILC-Main Report will now be submitted on a monthly basis with effect from April 1, 2018.
    - ✎ Lenders shall also report to CRILC, all borrower entities in default (with aggregate exposure of Rs 5 crore and above), on a weekly basis on Friday, from Feb 23 Onwards.
140. ▶ Retirement fund body Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) reduced interests rate on deposits to 8.55% for 2017-18 from 8.65%. It will affect around 6 crore subscribers and leave EPFO with a surplus of INR 586 crores against INR 695 crores in previous FY.
- ✎ EPFO made it mandatory to file online claims for provident fund withdrawals above Rs 10 lakh, and also made it mandatory to file online claims for withdrawals of above 5 lakh under Employees Pension Scheme 1995.
141. ▶ SBI and NABARD signed agreement with five NGOs in Bengal for promotion of 2,500 joint liability groups (JLGs) in select districts. JLGs are informal groups of 4-10 members engaged in similar economic activities and willing to jointly repay loans taken by group.
142. ▶ SBI reduced base rate and benchmark prime lending rates by 30 basis points each, brining down Base rate to 8.65 % and benchmark prime lending rates to 13.4 %.
143. ▶ SBI will raise INR 8000 crores through various sources, to meet Basel III capital norms.
- ✎ Indian Banks have to comply with global capital norms under Basel III by March 2019, 3 months later than internationally agreed time frame by January 2019.
144. ▶ SEBI capped cross-holding in credit rating agencies (CRAs) at 10 % and also raised minimum worth requirement to INR 25 crore from current 5 crores.



145. ▶ Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) raised investment limit for foreign portfolio investors (FPI) in central government securities to over 1.91 lakh crore from January 2018.
- ✎ Current investment limit for FPIs is 1.89 lakh crore rupees. It aims to push inflow from overseas investors in Indian capital markets.
146. ▶ Singapore Telecommunications (Singtel) invested \$413 million on shares in Bharti Telecom, lifting its stake in Bharti Airtel to 48.9 % and 39.5 % in Bharti Airtel.
147. ▶ State Bank of India (SBI) will do major restructuring of its business in United Kingdom from April, transforming it into subsidiary named *State Bank of India UK Limited* from April 2018, in compliance with wider ring-fencing of capital requirements by Bank of England. All SBI branches in UK will fall under a new UK-incorporated banking entity instead of their status as overseas branches of Indian entity.
148. ▶ State Government Budgets 2018-19 -
- ✎ Kerala -
    - ✎ INR 2000 crores package for restoration works in wake of cyclone Ockhi. Additionally, INR 900 crores investment will be made in coastal areas through Kerala Infrastructure Investment Board (KIIFB).
    - ✎ To shore up revenues, sales tax on IMFL has been increased by 200 % and beer by 100 %.
    - ✎ Allocated INR 2,500 crore to *Livelihood Inclusion and Financial Empowerment (LIFE)* project that ensures housing for all.
    - ✎ 40,000 smart classes will be set up in 4,775 schools.
    - ✎ Women welfare schemes have budget of INR 1250 Crores. It Includes *She Lodges* to be set up in Kochi and *Nirbhaya Homes* for survivors of Sexual Assaults. Financial assistance for unwed mother raised to INR 2000 per month.
    - ✎ A Malayalam University will come up at Tirur.
  - ✎ Uttar Pradesh -
    - ✎ Total budgetary allocation is 4.28 lakh crores (11.4% higher than last fiscal).
    - ✎ 20 new agriculture centres to be opened, with 5500 centres to be opened to procure wheat from farmers.
    - ✎ Startup fund of Rs 250 crore has been created.
    - ✎ INR 7482 crores for cleaning Ganga and keeping it pollution free.
  - ✎ Goa
    - ✎ Goa Govt. presented 17123 crores budget for 2018-19, an increase of 6.84% over the ongoing fiscal.
  - ✎ Gujarat
    - ✎ Gujarat Deputy CM ad Finance Minister Nitin Patel presented state budget 2018-19. Budget size is INR 183666 crores. New scheme named *Mukhyamantri Apprenticeship Scheme* has been announced, under which Youth will get INR 3000 per month with training.
149. ▶ Telangana government's Telangana Industrial Health Clinic Ltd received RBI clearance to function as a non-banking finance company (NBFC). It had won SKOCH Platinum Award earlier under smart governance category in MSME segment.
150. ▶ Telecom services provider Aircel filed for bankruptcy in National Companies Law Tribunal (NCLT), along with its units *Aircel Cellular and Dishnet Wireless*, amid fierce competition and high levels of debt.
- ✎ Aircel is 4th telecom firm after Telenor, Tata Tele services and Reliance Communications to wind up after Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Jio debuted in September 2016. Jio started a disruptive price war in sector with its free voice calls and cheap data.
151. ▶ Uttar Pradesh Government launched 'Prakash hai to vikas hai' Scheme, a free household power connection scheme for the poor in the state.
152. ▶ West Bengal government sold its 10-year-tenure securities for an aggregate amount INR 2000 crores, for several developmental projects, after obtaining consent of central government for this stock sale.
153. ▶ World Bank Group's International Finance Corporation (IFC) will provide \$440 million debt to *Mahindra Renewables Pvt. Ltd, Acme Group and global private equity fund Actis Llp* to build Rewa solar park in Madhya Pradesh.
- ✎ Earlier, three 250MW projects were awarded to *Acme Solar Holdings, Mahindra Renewables and Actis LLP's Solenergi Power*.
154. ▶ World Bank approved a loan worth USD 40 million for a tourism project in Uttar Pradesh (UP).
155. ▶ YES Foundation (*social development arm of YES Bank*) launched 5th *YES! i am the CHANGE' (YIAC)* campaign to inculcate spirit of responsible youth citizenship and drive social impact through the medium of films.
- ✎ Yes foundation invited participation in *YIAC Social Filmmaking Challenge*, to depict stories of change in a three-minute film. Selected entities will receive a grant of Rs 7.5 crore, for scaling up and capacity building and will also receive three-year mentoring for creating onground tangible social impact.
156. ▶ Yes Bank and Nearby tied up to provide Aadhaar- enabled cardless and pinless ATM service through which, customers can deposit or withdraw money at retailers' place, using PayNEARBY mobile application.

157. ▶ Yes Bank listed \$600 million bond issued under its maiden \$1 billion MTN programme on Global Securities Market (GSM) of India INX. Yes Bank's MTN (medium term note) bonds issuance is already listed on London Stock Exchange International Securities Market (LSE ISM) and Singapore Exchange Securities Trading Limited (SGX).

✎ India International Exchange (India INX) is India's first international exchange at IFSC Gujarat International Financial Tech (GIFT) City, Gandhinagar (Gujarat), as a subsidiary of Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE).

✎ It is one of world's most advanced and fastest trading technology platforms with turn-around time of 4 micro seconds. It operates for 22 hours a day.

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