



February 18, 2025 – Tuesday

Economy

Inflation to ease further; call for another rate cut in April gains traction

With India's retail inflation for January easing to 4.31 per cent, dropping significantly from 5.22 per cent in December, Barclays said that the Q4 CPI inflation may average at 3.8 per cent, materially lower than RBI MPC's 4.4 per cent YoY estimate. This, it added, reinforces the projection of another rate cut by 25 bps in the April policy meeting.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/policy/economy-inflation-to-ease-further-with-q4-cpi-expected-to-tank-below-rbis-estimates-cementing-another-rate-cut-call-for-april-3752051/>

Predatory pricing: CCI releases draft regulations on cost of production

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has released the draft Competition Commission of India (Determination of Cost of Production) Regulations, 2025, seeking stakeholder input to modernise its approach to determining predatory pricing under competition law. The draft regulations are open for public consultation from February 17, 2025, to March 19, 2025. The move comes as part of the broader regulatory overhaul initiated by the Competition (Amendment) Act, 2023, which introduced several reforms to align India's competition framework with evolving global practices.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/predatory-pricing-cci-releases-draft-regulations-on-cost-of-production/article69229913.ece>

Indian economy delivering good returns on investments: FM Sitharaman

The Indian economy is currently delivering good returns to investors who are booking profits, which partly explains the outflows observed in the equity market by foreign institutional investors (FIIs), Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said here on Monday at a post-Budget press conference. Additionally, the finance minister highlighted that India is looking to be an investor-friendly country. Therefore, the government has taken several measures in the past few years for rationalisation of Custom duties.

https://www.business-standard.com/finance/news/indian-economy-delivering-good-returns-on-investments-fm-sitharaman-125021700863_1.html

Finance

RBI allows matching of PM-GAH transactions on NDS-OM, CCIL settlement

Transactions between a Primary Member (PM) and its own Gilt Account Holder (GAH) or between two GAHs of the same PM can now be matched on both the anonymous Order Matching (NDS-OM) segment and the Request for Quote (RFQ) segment of NDS-OM, with such transactions being cleared and settled through the Clearing Corporation of India Limited (CCIL), the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said in a notification on Monday. Additionally, the facility of clearing and settlement through CCIL is extended, on an optional basis, to bilaterally negotiated transactions between a PM and its own GAH, or between two GAHs of the same PM, provided they are reported to NDS-OM.

https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/rbi-allows-matching-of-pm-gah-transactions-on-nds-om-ccil-settlement-125021701069_1.html

Govt considering raising deposit insurance limit above current Rs 5 lakh: Official

The government is considering increasing the deposit insurance limit beyond Rs 5 lakh, following the New India Co-operative Bank scam. This proposal is being actively reviewed, with a final decision pending. The scam revealed a Rs 122 crore shortfall due to embezzlement. The RBI is handling the situation, emphasising the cooperative banking sector's overall strength despite isolated incidents.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/banking/finance/banking/govt-considering-raising-deposit-insurance-limit-above-current-rs-5-lakh-official/articleshow/118330211.cms>

Market regulator Sebi panel to discuss MF-insurance combo product

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has initiated discussions on a proposed combination product integrating mutual funds (MFs) and insurance. The regulator's MF committee will discuss the matter at its next meeting. Sebi Chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch revealed that the Association of Mutual Funds in India has submitted recommendations to the market regulator. Sebi's advisory committee on MFs has already reviewed these suggestions once.

https://www.business-standard.com/markets/news/market-regulator-sebi-panel-to-discuss-mf-insurance-combo-product-125021700907_1.html

ICSI, ICAI demand expansion of accountant's definition in I-T Bill

Apex bodies of company secretaries and cost accountants have urged the government to include these professionals under the definition of 'accountant' in the Income Tax Bill, 2025. The Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI) and the Institute of Cost Accountants of India (ICAI), both set up under Acts of Parliament, have demanded that their members be treated as accountant in the bill. They come under the corporate affairs ministry.

https://www.business-standard.com/finance/news/icsi-icmai-demand-expansion-of-accountant-s-definition-in-i-t-bill-125021700731_1.html

Govt asks private insurers to increase free look period to one year

The government has asked private insurance companies to increase the free look period for policyholders from one month to one year, M Nagaraju, secretary, Department of Financial Services (DFS), said at a press conference on Monday. The free look period is the length of time during which a customer can cancel an insurance policy without paying surrender charges. Last year, the insurance regulator increased the period to 30 days from 15 days.

https://www.business-standard.com/finance/insurance/govt-asks-private-insurers-to-increase-free-look-period-to-one-year-125021700930_1.html

Industry

Ashwini Vaishnaw to launch IndiaAI portal, 10 firms to provide 14,000 GPUs

The central government is set to introduce the IndiaAI Compute Portal, allowing key stakeholders, including central ministries and state governments, to request compute capacity through the platform. As part of this initiative, the IndiaAI Compute Pillar has issued a memo to all Union ministries, departments, and chief secretaries detailing subsidised rates for compute capacity, network, and storage services.

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/indiaai-compute-portal-ashwini-vaishnaw-gpu-artificial-intelligence-jio-125021700245_1.html

AI can be used to automate attacks, implement strict access control measures: Government advisory on cyber threats in Satcom

The government has sent out an advisory on cybersecurity threats and best practices for satellite communications saying, with satellites deeply integrated into essential daily operations — from navigation to transaction synchronisation — any disruption can lead to widespread repercussions.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/ai-can-be-used-to-automate-attacks-implement-strict-access-control-measures-government-advisory-on-cyber-threats-in-satcom/article69230648.ece>

Govt, Intel partner to launch AI for Entrepreneurship initiative for youth

The Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship and American chip maker Intel on Monday announced the launch of 'AI for Entrepreneurship' micro-learning module for young innovators across India, aiming to skill 1 lakh youth through the programme. The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), a public-private partnership (PPP) organisation under the administrative control of the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, is also a part of the initiative.

https://www.business-standard.com/companies/news/govt-intel-partner-to-launch-ai-for-entrepreneurship-initiative-for-youth-125021700752_1.html

Luxury car segment like a growing startup, may hit 5% of car sales

Luxury car segment in India, which currently accounts for 1 per cent of the overall car sales in the country, is like a growing startup and it could become decent in size only when it crosses the 5 per cent mark, Audi India head Balbir Dhillon said on Monday. He also said that the company is expecting to do better in sales performance this year after witnessing a dip in volumes in the previous year on account of supply chain issues.

https://www.business-standard.com/companies/news/luxury-car-segment-like-a-growing-startup-may-hit-5-of-car-sales-audi-125021700531_1.html

Boosted by PLI scheme, India's smartphone exports hit record Rs 1.5 trn

Setting a new record, India's smartphone exports reached Rs 1.55 trillion during the April-January period, according to a report in *The Financial Express*. Boosted by the government's production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme, exports surpassed Rs 1.31 trillion in FY24. January (2025) alone recorded the highest-ever monthly exports at Rs 250 billion, marking a 140 per cent increase over January 2024.

https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/india-smartphone-exports-pli-scheme-foxconn-iphone-ashwini-vaishnaw-125021700193_1.html

Agriculture

Cane non-availability forcing mills to close earlier; sugar production down 12% so far

Net sugar production this season (October 2024-September 2025) is expected to be 27 million tonnes (mt) - 4.9 mt lower than the 31.9 mt produced in the 2023-24 season (October-September), National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories (NFCFSF) said in a statement. The association of cooperative-owned sugar mills had earlier projected this year's sugar production to be 28 mt.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/as-cane-non-availability-forces-mills-to-close-earlier-sugar-production-down-12-so-far/article69229608.ece>

Decline in castor seed production in India: 2024-25 survey insights

Castor seed cultivation in India has decreased by 12% for 2024-25, with total area projected at 8.67 lakh hectares. Despite a 5% increase in yield due to favorable weather, overall production is estimated to decline by 8% to 18.22 lakh tonnes. Major producing state, Gujarat, also shows significant reductions in both acreage and production.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/decline-in-castor-seed-production-in-india-2024-25-survey-insights/articleshow/118324446.cms>

Sugar production falls 12% to 197 lakh tonnes this marketing year: Isma

India's sugar production fell 12 per cent to 197 lakh tonnes till February 15 of the current marketing year ending September mainly due to lower output in Maharashtra and Karnataka, according to industry body ISMA dat. Sugar marketing year runs from October to September. The data of sugar production is after diversion of sweetener for ethanol making.

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/sugar-production-falls-12-to-197-lakh-tonnes-this-marketing-year-isma-125021700814_1.html

Government credit guarantee scheme of ₹1,000 crore to push e-NWR adoption: NeRL

National e-Repository expects the Government move to allocate ₹1,000 crore towards Credit Guarantee Scheme for e-NWR (electronic-Negotiable Warehouse Receipts) based Pledge Financing to be a game changer in adoption of warehouse receipts and post-hard credit finance in agriculture market.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/government-credit-guarantee-scheme-of-1000-crore-to-push-e-nwr-adoption-nerl/article69229743.ece>

Centre approves continuation of PM-AASHA scheme till 2025-26; tur procurement starts in many states

The Centre has approved the continuation of the PM-AASHA scheme until 2025-26, aiming to provide remunerative prices to farmers and control price volatility. The procurement of Tur, Urad, and Masur under the Price Support Scheme will be up to 100% of the state's production for the 2024-25 procurement year.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/centre-approves-continuation-of-pm-aasha-scheme-till-2025-26-tur-procurement-starts-in-many-states/articleshow/118331817.cms>

Infrastructure

SWAMIH touches 50,000 mark as FM Sitharaman hands over keys to homebuyers

Special Window for Affordable and Middle Income Housing (SWAMIH) Fund achieved a major milestone on Monday by completing 50,000 homes since its inception in 2019, as finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman handed over keys to homebuyers from select projects in Mumbai. The fund is designed to provide last-mile funding for stressed housing projects.

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/swamih-touches-50-000-mark-fm-sitharaman-hands-over-keys-to-homebuyers-125021701092_1.html

Global aerospace firms turn to India amid Western supply chain crisis

Leading aerospace firms like Airbus, Collins Aerospace, Pratt & Whitney, and Rolls-Royce are increasing parts sourcing from India. This is boosting India's aerospace sector with companies such as Hical Technologies and JIG Aero experiencing significant growth. The shift is driven by supply chain challenges and rising air travel demand, alongside substantial aircraft orders from IndiGo and Air India.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/transportation/airlines/-aviation/global-aerospace-firms-turn-to-india-amid-western-supply-chain-crisis/articleshow/118326299.cms>

Flexible office space gains momentum in India

India's flexible office space segment captured 19.8% of the leasing market in 2024, driven by the post-pandemic surge and managed space expansion. Flex leasing exceeded 15 million sq ft, with Delhi NCR leading at 42%, followed by Pune and Bengaluru. The sector's growth supports sustainability goals with green-certified buildings.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/services/property/-cstruction/flexible-office-space-gains-momentum-in-india/articleshow/118333647.cms>

Energy

India's solar share to soar, Renewables set to power 27% of energy mix by 2027: IEA

India's renewable energy share is set to grow from 21 per cent in 2024 to 27 per cent by 2027, with solar PV leading the expansion, rising over 28 per cent between 2025 and 2027, according to the International Energy Agency.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/indias-solar-share-to-soar-renewables-set-to-power-27-of-energy-mix-by-2027-iea/article69228635.ece>

NTPC plans to spend \$62 billion on 30 GW of nuclear power, sources say

Indian state power company NTPC plans to build 30 gigawatts of nuclear power capacity over 20 years, tripling its original target after the government opened the sector to foreign and private investment. This \$62 billion project aims to lead India's nuclear power expansion, addressing land acquisitions and local resistance, with potential collaborations from international partners.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/power/indias-ntpc-plans-to-spend-62-billion-on-30-gw-of-nuclear-power-sources-say/articleshow/118329510.cms>

Telecom

COAI asks TRAI not to penalise telecom operators for spam calls

Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) has asked the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) not to penalise telecom operators for unsolicited calls and messages to consumers. A recent amendment by the TRAI stated that anyone who does not register with telecom companies to send commercial communication and still sends out commercial messages will be treated as a spammer by the regulatory watchdog.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/coai-asks-trai-not-to-penalise-telecom-operators-for-spam-calls/article69229336.ece>

Govt should provide separate network authorisation for telecom infra: Trai

The Centre should grant network authorisations under the Telecommunications Act, 2023, instead of entering into agreements with telecom entities, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) has recommended. To be provided under Section 3(1)(b) of the Act, the detailed terms and conditions of each authorisation should be prescribed through separate rules, TRAI said on Monday.

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/govt-should-provide-separate-network-authorisation-for-telecom-infra-trai-125021701059_1.html

States

Odisha CM presents Rs 2.90 trn Budget for FY26, focuses on agri, irrigation

Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Monday presented a Rs 2.90-lakh crore state budget for the 2025-26 fiscal (FY'26) with a focus on agriculture and irrigation. Noting that around 48 per cent of the state's workforce depends on agriculture and 80 per cent of people live in rural areas, Majhi, who also holds the finance portfolio, said that his government allocated Rs 37,838 crore for the farm and allied sector in the budget.

https://www.business-standard.com/budget/news/odisha-cm-presents-rs-2-90-trn-budget-for-fy26-focuses-on-agri-irrigation-125021700784_1.html

Maharashtra govt constitutes panel to study, implement MSP schemes

The Maharashtra government on Monday issued an order to form a committee to study and implement minimum support price (MSP) schemes under the Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan (PM-AASHA). As per the order, the committee will submit a detailed report within one month, including suggestions and recommendations for the government on effectively implementing the MSP schemes across the state.

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/agriculture/maharashtra-govt-constitutes-panel-to-study-implement-msp-schemes-125021700440_1.html

From Bimaru state to investment powerhouse: Madhya Pradesh turns the scale

Once considered a BIMARU state, Madhya Pradesh has pivoted into a key destination for investment as its single-minded focus on infrastructure creation together with investor friendly policies and ease of doing business draws domestic and international firms, Chief Minister Mohan Yadav said.

https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/from-bimaru-state-to-investment-powerhouse-madhya-pradesh-turns-the-scale-125021700653_1.html

Rajasthan approves Rs 5,120 cr to improve drinking water supply in state

The Rajasthan government will soon implement the central government's ambitious scheme, Amrut 2.0, and has approved around ₹5,120 crore to provide over 800,000 new drinking water connections in the cities and towns across the state, benefiting over 3.5 million people, an official of the Public Health Engineering Department (PHED), which provides potable water to people in the state, said.

https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/rajasthan-approves-rs-5-120-cr-to-improve-drinking-water-supply-in-state-125021700650_1.html

Healthcare

India should seek key concessions from US to boost pharma exports: Pharma industry

India could seek an exception in the US on the over 55 per cent domestic component rule for federal imports.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/india-should-seek-key-concessions-from-us-to-boost-pharma-exports-pharma-industry/article69229950.ece>

External

India's merchandise trade deficit widens to \$23 billion in January

India's merchandise trade deficit widened to nearly \$23 billion in January, compared to \$16.5 billion a year ago, as exports grew at a slower pace amid softening global petroleum prices and economic uncertainties around the world. Exports contracted 2.4 per cent year-on-year to \$36.43 billion in January, data released by the commerce department showed. On the other hand, imports witnessed a sharp increase of 10 per cent, reaching \$59.4 billion, raising concerns in the trade sector owing to the depreciating value of the Indian rupee.

https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/india-s-merchandise-trade-deficit-widens-to-23-billion-in-january-125021701052_1.html

Inter-ministerial talks soon to frame rules under export promotion mission

An inter-ministerial consultation will be held soon to finalise schemes for exporters under the export promotion mission, announced in the Union Budget for 2025-26, a senior official said on Monday. Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) Santosh Kumar Sarangi said that after the preparation of the scheme details, the ministry will seek the approval of the union cabinet.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/inter-ministerial-talks-soon-to-frame-rules-under-export-promotion-mission/articleshow/118330875.cms>

India, US to finalise broad contours of trade agreement: Commerce Ministry

India and the US will sit together in the next couple of weeks to decide on the nature of the proposed trade agreement and finalise its broad contours, a senior official said on Monday. During the recent visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Washington, India and the US announced to more than double the two-way commerce to USD 500 billion by 2030 and negotiate the first tranche of a mutually beneficial, multi-sector bilateral trade agreement (BTA) by fall of 2025.

https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/india-us-to-finalise-broad-contours-of-trade-agreement-commerce-ministry-125021700701_1.html

India, EU to hold next round of talks on proposed FTA from March 10

India and the European Union will hold the next round of talks on the proposed free trade agreement (FTA) from March 10 to 14, a senior government official said on Monday. Additional Secretary in the Department of Commerce L Satya Srinivas said that before the round the entire delegation of the European Commission will be in India from February 28.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/india-eu-to-hold-next-round-of-talks-on-proposed-fta-from-march-10/articleshow/118336117.cms>

India, Qatar to discuss ways to boost trade, investments

India and Qatar on Tuesday will discuss ways to further promote bilateral trade and investments. The issues will be discussed between Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and his Qatari counterpart Sheikh Faisal bin Thani bin Faisal Al Thani, an official statement said on Monday.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/india-qatar-to-discuss-ways-to-boost-trade-investments/articleshow/118334019.cms>

India sends first trial shipments of pomegranate to Australia via sea route

India has initiated its first commercial sea route shipments of pomegranates to Australia, following the initial air shipment to assess market demand. The first sea shipment departed in December 2024 and arrived in Sydney in January 2025, with subsequent shipments continuing to optimize cost efficiency.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/india-sends-first-trial-shipments-of-pomegranate-to-australia-via-sea-route/articleshow/118326720.cms>