



## Public Finance

### **Southern states urge 16th FC to address cess and surcharge impact**

As the 16th Finance Commission, headed by Arvind Panagariya, takes feedback from stakeholders, some states have complained to it that the Centre is increasingly taking recourse to cess and surcharge to circumvent its recommendations on tax devolution. Southern states have again raised the issue of giving more weight to the criterion of population control in deciding the transfer of central taxes to the states or else revert the population yardstick to the 1971 Census against the 2011 one considered by the 15th Finance Commission. (*Business Standard*)

### **States' budgeted revenue mop-up in 2024-25 to beat pre-Covid level: PRS report**

States are expected to surpass pre-Covid revenue levels by 2024-25 due to better own revenue streams and central transfers. However, fiscal deficits and increased pension costs may pose challenges. States' own revenue collection and SGST revenues have already exceeded the 2018-19 levels. (*The Economic Times*)

### **India's April-October fiscal deficit at Rs 7.51 lakh crore, widens on-year to 46.5% of FY25 aim**

India's fiscal deficit for April to October, or the first seven months of this fiscal year, was at 7.51 lakh crore rupees, equivalent to 46.5% of annual estimates, marginally widening from the previous year's 45%. The government aims to narrow the fiscal gap to 4.9% of GDP in this financial year from 5.6% a year earlier. (*The Economic Times*)



## Taxation

### **December meeting of GST Council likely to consider GST on natural gas**

The GST Council, at its December 21st meeting in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan, may consider fixing the date on applying GST on natural gas. It is expected that this will be included in the agenda for the upcoming meeting of the Council. A provision in the 101st Constitution Amendment Act says the GST Council will recommend the date on which the goods and services tax be levied on petroleum crude, high speed diesel, motor spirit (commonly known as petrol), natural gas and aviation turbine fuel. (*BusinessLine*)

### **Granular GST data will yield major policy lessons**

Despite its vast potential, the full capabilities of GST data remain largely unrealised. While aggregate data provides a broad overview of tax performance and health of the Indian economy, disaggregated sector-wise information is crucial for evidence-based policymaking. The emerging questions, such as below-par revenue performance, significant differences in revenue performance across States, poor compliance issues

related to IGST settlement, delays in filing, and input tax credit, could be addressed using disaggregated data. (*BusinessLine*)

### **Choose correct ITR to report foreign assets, 200k return filed: CBDT**

As many as two lakh Income Tax Returns (ITRs) containing details of foreign assets and income have been filed during the current assessment year till now, according to the tax department which urged Indian residents for tax purposes to ensure they file the right form and revise their returns if they submitted the wrong form. (*Business Standard*)

### **Holistic new tax code needed for Viksit Bharat, say experts ahead of Budget**

There is a need for a holistic new Tax Code with a focus on lower rates, widening base, improved collections and compliance for a Viksit Bharat, experts said ahead of Budget. A new philosophy of keeping it FLAT, with Fewer and lower tax rates, Litigation reduction, an All-inclusive wider tax base, and Tax collection without withholding it, is urgently needed to increase net tax revenues while energising the economy and realising the vision of a Viksit Bharat by 2047, they said. (*Business Standard*)



## **National Accounts and State of the Economy**

### **India's GDP growth slows in Q2 FY25 to 5.4% amid weak consumption**

India Q2 GDP FY25 Data: India's economic growth slowed to 5.4% in the second quarter of FY25. This decline is from 7.6% last year and 6.7% in the first quarter. Economists cite weaker consumption and bad weather as reasons. Retail food inflation surged, and corporate earnings fell. The RBI maintained its growth forecast but showed caution due to inflation. (*The Economic Times*)

### **Include coking coal in the list of critical minerals: NITI Aayog report**

NITI Aayog recommends adding coking coal to the critical minerals list. This move aims to boost domestic production and secure coking coal supply for the Indian steel industry. The proposal includes setting up two special purpose vehicles to expedite coal mining and logistics projects. NITI Aayog also suggests amending the Coal Bearing Areas Act for smoother private sector participation. (*The Economic Times*)

### **Inflation outlook benign: FinMin**

Amid a mixed outlook for the world economy, India quietly holds its ground and economic activity has firmed up in October after a brief moderation over the monsoon months, and food inflation which spiked consumer prices at a 14-month high pace of 6.2% last month is expected to cool off in coming months, the Finance Ministry said. (*The Hindu*)

### **India's falling wages hit economy as consumers cut back on everything**

Indian wages contracted last quarter for the first time since the pandemic, curbing the economy's breakneck speed as consumers cut spending and corporate profits slump. Inflation-adjusted employment costs for listed non-financial companies — a proxy for real urban wages — declined 0.5 per cent in July to September from a year ago, also show a steady slowdown in wage growth, alongside a spike in inflation — pointing to financial stress for India's urban middle class despite optimistic data showing the economy grew more than 8 per cent last fiscal year. (*Business Standard*)

### **India's gig economy may add 90 million jobs, contribute 1.25% to GDP**

The gig economy market is expected to grow at a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 17 per cent to reach a gross volume of \$455 billion by 2024, according to a white paper by the Forum for Progressive Gig Workers. Its contribution to India's gross domestic product (GDP) is estimated to be substantial, with the potential to add 1.25 per cent to GDP by 2030, and create 90 million jobs in the long term. The gig economy supports sectors such as e-commerce, transportation, and delivery services, among others. *(Business Standard)*

### **India's cooperative sector may create 55-56 mn self-employment jobs by 2030**

India's cooperative sector can generate nearly 55-56 million self-employment opportunities by 2030, from around 30 million as of 2018, if it manages to maintain a healthy growth rate of 5-6 per cent per annum, a report released by Primus Research showed. The sector has the potential to contribute 3-5 per cent to the country's GDP by 2030. It could go up to 10 per cent, if both direct and self-employment are taken into account, the report added. *(Business Standard)*

### **Madhya Pradesh receives investment proposals worth Rs 60,000 crore in UK**

The central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh has secured investment proposals worth Rs 60,000 crore from the United Kingdom during Chief Minister Mohan Yadav's recent visit to that country. Yadav, at the conclusion of his UK tour, stated that substantial investments were secured across sectors, including healthcare, industry, mining, services, and agriculture, where significant interest was shown. *(Business Standard)*

### **Govt mulls change in base year to 2022-23 from 2011-12 for computation of GDP**

The government plans to change the base year for GDP computation to 2022-23 starting February 2026, reflecting a more accurate economic picture, according to MoSPI Secretary Saurabh Garg. This revision, first in over ten years, will incorporate new sectors and consumption patterns, with an advisory committee expected to complete the task by early 2026. *(The Economic Times)*



## **Banking and Monetary Policy**

### **RBI injects ₹6,956 crore as liquidity turns to deficit**

India's banking system faced a cash crunch. The Reserve Bank of India added funds to ease the situation. This followed negative balance of payments and foreign investor outflows. The RBI sold dollars to bolster the rupee. Trade deficit widened, and deposit growth slowed. These factors contributed to the liquidity deficit. Borrowing costs for banks and companies increased. *(The Economic Times)*

### **Speed bump ahead for NBFCs**

A combination of factors, including rising interest rates, regulatory action and funding scarcity, could moderate growth in the non-banking financial company (NBFC) sector from 18 per cent in 2024 to 13-15 per cent in the coming year, according to rating agency ICRA. The assets under management (AUM) in the NBFC sector is seen rising from ₹47 lakh crore in March 2024 past the psychological milestone of ₹50 lakh crore in FY25. *(BusinessLine)*

### **Adani group loans: Indian lenders kick off a review**

Indian banks are reviewing their Adani exposure and whether they need to tighten due diligence, eight bankers said on Thursday, after the group's billionaire founder Gautam Adani was indicted by U.S. authorities over an alleged \$265 million bribery scheme. Adani Group's listed stocks, which at one point saw as much as \$34 billion wiped off their market value, meanwhile recovered ground as some partners and investors rallied behind it. *(The Hindu)*

### **Private sector banks securitise ₹40,000 cr of loans this fiscal**

Private sector banks, led by HDFC Bank, have sold close to ₹40,000 crore of loans this fiscal - for the first time in more than two decades - to boost liquidity and balance their books amid slow deposit growth. This marks a significant shift as banks like HDFC Bank, IDFC First Bank, and RBL Bank use loan sales via pass-through certificates and direct assignments to manage credit-deposit ratios effectively. *(The Economic Times)*

### **PSBs gear up to scan digital play for MSME loans**

State-run banks are preparing to offer loans up to Rs 25 lakh for micro and small enterprises based on the new credit assessment model, which will consider digital transactions and cash flows such as salaries paid to employees, electricity bills, municipal taxes and contributions towards employee provident funds rather than traditional parameters such as tax returns and other collateral. *(The Economic Times)*

### **SBI raises ₹50,000 crore via bonds in FY25**

The State Bank of India (SBI) has raised ₹50,000 crore through domestic bonds so far during FY25, the lender said in a filing. The issuances include ₹30,000 crore in long-term bonds, tier 2 bonds worth ₹15,000 crore and AT1 bonds of ₹5,000 crore. The issues were oversubscribed by more than two times against the base issue size. Provident and pension funds, insurers, mutual funds and banks were among the investors. *(The Hindu)*

### **SBI's business may hit Rs 100 trillion in FY26, says Chairman CS Setty**

State Bank of India – the country's largest lender – is poised to touch the Rs 100 trillion mark in total business in the next financial year, provided it maintains the current rate of 14-16 per cent loan growth and 10 per cent growth in deposits, said SBI Chairman CS Setty. *(Business Standard)*

### **Cooperative banks expected to be digitised by March 2025: Nabard chairman**

National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Nabard) Chairman Shaji K V on Tuesday said cooperative banks are expected to be digitised by March 2025 with a view to streamline operations and enhance the efficiency of these financial institutions. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has mandated all cooperative banks to adopt the Core Banking Solution (CBS) marking a significant step towards modernisation. *(Business Standard)*

### **PSBs to launch new products in 3-4 months to ramp up credit growth**

Financial Services Secretary M Nagaraju on Tuesday said public sector banks will unveil new products in the next few months to improve credit growth. Public sector banks are going to launch new products in the next 3-4 months to push credit for all sectors, including MSME, he said. *(Business Standard)*

### High cost deposits up to 69 percent in September

Indian banks saw a rise in high-cost deposits in the September quarter. This may squeeze profit margins. Public sector banks lent more but gathered fewer deposits than private banks. Term deposits grew faster than savings accounts. Loans to private companies and working capital loans also increased. The share of loans to women borrowers continued to rise. *(The Economic Times)*

### Term deposits outpace CASA growth in September

Indian banks saw a shift towards term deposits. These deposits grew to 61.4% of total deposits by September 2024. Attractive interest rates above 7% fueled this growth. Overall bank deposits grew by 11.7%. However, loan growth slowed down to 12.6%. Metropolitan branches led deposit growth but lagged in lending. Credit to private companies grew faster than overall lending. *(The Economic Times)*



## External Sector

### India's forex reserves drop by \$1.31 bn to \$656.58 bn as of Nov 22

India's forex reserves fell by \$1.31 billion to \$656.582 billion for the week ending November 22, according to RBI data on Friday. For the previous week, India's foreign exchange reserves dipped by \$17.7 billion to \$657.89 billion as of November 15, according to data shared by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). *(The Economic Times)*

### Next round of India, ASEAN FTA review talks in Feb'25

India and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have scheduled the next round of talks concerning their free trade agreement for February 2025 in Jakarta. The two economic groups concluded their fourth round of negotiations earlier this month. Separately, India is working with the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) to implement a free trade deal reached in March. *(The Economic Times)*

### 'China plus one' opportunity opening up for India; Tamil Nadu doing its best to attract FDI: Arvind Subramanian

'China plus one' opportunity is opening up for India and Tamil Nadu is doing its best to take the state's competitive advantage in attracting foreign direct investments, former chief economic adviser Arvind Subramanian said on Thursday. Addressing an event organised by the Centre for Social and Economic Progress, Subramanian further said India was not able to attract FDI like China, Taiwan and Vietnam, due to which the domestic firms have not been able to integrate with global value chain. *(The Economic Times)*

### Adani charges to test Trump's desire to keep India in US orbit

The arrest of Indian billionaire Gautam Adani on bribery charges has created a diplomatic dilemma for incoming US President Donald Trump, who seeks closer ties with India to counter China. While Trump's personal relationship with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi might encourage intervention, the case highlights the global reach of US law and India's strategic balancing act between major powers. *(The Economic Times)*

### **India, Japan relatively shielded from US tariff risks, says Morgan Stanley**

Morgan Stanley's analysis suggests India and Japan are relatively insulated from President-elect Trump's tariff threats, with Japan particularly well-positioned. While India faces greater exposure, the impact on growth is estimated to be moderate. However, broader tariff implications for Asia remain a concern, emphasizing the need for diversified trade partnerships. *(The Economic Times)*

### **India-Russia trade hits USD 66bn in 2024; target of USD 100bn by 2030 on track: Russian envoy**

Russia and India achieved record-breaking bilateral trade of USD 66 billion in 2024. This represents a fivefold surge in five years. The countries aim for USD 100 billion in trade by 2030. Collaboration is expanding in sectors like railways, IT, and pharmaceuticals. Indian businesses have new opportunities in Russia. A proposed trade desk in Kolkata will further boost trade relations. *(The Economic Times)*

### **US tariffs on China: India could get hurt most, says Crisil**

As the US escalates tariffs on Chinese imports, Crisil warns this could lead to an increase in diverted exports to nations like India. While India-US trade has surged, India's trade deficit with China has widened, highlighting stark imbalances despite overall trade growth. *(The Economic Times)*



## **Agriculture and Rural Economy**

### **Uttar Pradesh green plan: Use technology to help boost agriculture**

The state has been a leader in agriculture in several respects, but after years of neglect and apathy, the current state administration under the leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is putting special emphasis on the sector that employs no less than 68 per cent of the state's population. With such a large section of farmers who own small land parcels, uplifting them will automatically push up the state's GSDP (gross state domestic product) and pitch rural recovery. *(Business Standard)*

### **National Seed Congress: Farmers must get high-quality seeds, fertilizers, says Agriculture Minister**

The 13th National Seed Congress, a three-day conclave of policymakers, scientists, and farmers that began in Varanasi on Thursday (November 28, 2024), is seeking transformative solutions, especially in the wake of climate change and increasing diseases in various crops. The main organisers of the seed congress are the Union Agriculture Ministry, the Uttar Pradesh Agriculture Ministry, the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), the National Seed Research and Training Centre, and the Federation of Seed Industries of India (FSII). *(The Hindu)*

### **Over 1.69 lakh service connections for agriculture provided in three years, says Electricity Minister**

The Tamil Nadu government provided 1.69 lakh new agriculture service connections during the past three years, Electricity Minister V. Senthilbalaji said on Thursday. In a statement, the Minister pointed out that only 1.38 lakh new agriculture service connections were provided during the five years of the AIADMK government. During

2010-11, over 77,000 new connections were provided within a year under then Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi, he recalled. *(The Hindu)*

### **SC panel highlights rising debt, stagnant yields in agricultural crisis**

The high-powered committee, constituted on September 2 under former Punjab and Haryana High Court judge Nawab Singh to resolve the grievances of farmers agitating at the Shambhu border, also suggested solutions including examining the possibility of giving legal sanctity to Minimum Support Price and offering direct income support. The panel said the debt on farmers and farm workers increased manifold in recent decades. *(Business Standard)*

### **MGNREGS funding likely to remain unchanged in FY26 amid rural recovery**

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), a vital safety net for the rural poor, is unlikely to receive increased funding in the FY26 budget. Allocations are likely to remain at FY25 levels, reflecting the government's confidence in a recovering rural economy, two people aware of the matter said. The scheme's funding, closely tied to India's rural economic health, saw a spike in FY24 when economic challenges led to higher demand for work. *(Mint)*

### **FCI to offer 25 LMT of wheat in the open market sale till March 25**

The government will offload 25 LMT of wheat in the open market to bulk buyers like flour millers from its buffer stock with the Food Corporation of India (FCI) next till March 31 2025, said the food ministry in a statement. The move is aimed at curbing any possibility of a rise in prices in the next few days. Last year, the FCI had commenced open market sale operations from June and had offloaded a record 10 MT for bulk purchasers. *(The Economic Times)*

### **Export demand, rainfall delay, damage keep onion prices firm**

Onion prices are staying firm at a five-year high as a combination of strong export demand and delayed and damaged kharif crop due to prolonged monsoon rainfall has impacted an expected fall in prices post-Diwali season. Onion prices are expected to return to comfortable levels by mid-December, trade insiders said. *(The Economic Times)*

### **Meat production rises 5 pc to 10.25 mn tonnes in FY24; egg output up 3 pc: Government data**

India's meat production rose nearly 5 per cent to 10.25 million tonnes in the last fiscal, according to the government data released on Tuesday. "The total meat production in the country is estimated as 10.25 million tonnes during 2023-24 and registered a growth of 4.85 per cent over the past 10 years as compared to the estimates of 6.69 million tonnes in 2014-15. *(The Economic Times)*



## **Industry, Manufacturing, Services and Technology**

### **India's core sector output increases by 3.1% in October**

India's eight core sectors saw a 3.1% growth in output in October 2024, up from 2% in September, according to government data. The sectors of coal, refinery products, steel, cement, electricity, and fertilizers reported positive growth. *(The Economic Times)*

### **BS Samridhi 2024: 'UP has largest investment portal in the country'**

The Uttar Pradesh government is further strengthening its already robust single window clearance system, which is aimed at improving ease of doing business (EODB) and ease of living for the state's residents. It is also at work to link its micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and its start-up ecosystem with big industries and manufacturers to achieve its objective of becoming a trillion-dollar economy. *(Business Standard)*

### **India now should focus on having its own pharmaceutical standards: FM**

India now should focus on having its own pharmaceutical standards, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said while inaugurating a two-day India Ideas Conclave. The FM further said India should use its quick commerce innovations to brand itself as destination of innovative solutions. *(The Hindu)*

### **Flash PMI signals India's private sector activity at three-month high in November**

Activity levels across India's private sector are seeing a modest uptick this month, even as cost pressures have surged to a 16-month high for both services and manufacturing players, compelling them to raise prices charged to customers at a pace not seen since February 2013, as per the HSBC Flash India Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI). However, manufacturing sector growth slipped lower this month, while services growth ticked upwards. *(The Hindu)*

### **Government making continuous effort to promote IT industry in small cities and towns**

The Government of India is making continuous efforts to promote IT industry in smaller cities and towns and has initiated multiple schemes and programmes for growth of IT industry in this regard. The Software Technology Park (STP) is the one of the most important scheme in this effort. Under this scheme, Software Technology Parks have been established in 65 cities across India with 57 centres in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities like Bhagalpur, Indore, Rourkela, Madurai, Kohima etc. *(Business Standard)*

### **Paper industry body flags below-cost imports, demands level playing field**

Indian Paper Manufacturers Association (IPMA) has expressed concerns over rising imports of virgin fibre paperboard from countries like China and Chile, saying that below-cost shipments are hitting local producers and threatening their investments. The IPMA said that imports of virgin fibre paperboard (VFP), mainly used as packaging material for pharma, FMCG, and cosmetics products, have grown more than three-fold to 21,233 tonnes per month in the first six months of 2024-25 compared to the average 6,337 tonnes per month in 2021-22. *(Business Standard)*

### **Moody's, Fitch take negative rating actions on Adani group**

In a torrid Tuesday for the Adani group, hit by a U.S. Court indictment of promoter Gautam Adani and group employees along with civil charges from the U.S. market watchdog, Fitch Ratings and Moody's took negative rating actions on Adani firms in quick succession, while all its listed entities lost ground on the bourses. *(The Hindu)*

### **IT Ministry likely to seek Cabinet's nod for Rs 40,000 crore package to boost electronic components' manufacturing**

The IT ministry is likely to seek the Union Cabinet's approval next month for a Rs 40,000 crore package to boost local manufacturing of electronic components, industry executives and government officials aware of the development told E.T. *(The Economic Times)*

### **60% FMCG companies say e-commerce is critical platform for sales**

More than half of FMCG companies (60%) have indicated that e-commerce is their most critical sales platform with almost three-fourth of mid-sized companies favouring e-commerce as their top sales channel, as per a latest study by NielsenIQ. The study notes that emerging manufacturers are achieving 1.5 times higher growth in e-commerce compared to category averages in noodles, refined oil, biscuits, coffee, and packaged atta. *(The Economic Times)*

### **Testing facilities for energy storage systems needed for India's energy transition: NITI Aayog member**

India must establish nationally accredited testing facilities for battery energy storage systems to support its ambitious clean energy transition goal, suggested NITI Aayog member V K Saraswat on Thursday. According to a statement, speaking at FICCI's Energy Storage Conference 2024, he highlighted the significant gap in testing and certification infrastructure as India aims to deploy over 238 gigawatt hours of battery storage capacity by 2030 to balance its expanding renewable energy network. *(The Economic Times)*

### **Mines Ministry launches first-ever tranche of 13 offshore mineral blocks for auction**

The Ministry of Mines on Thursday launched India's first-ever tranche of 13 mineral blocks for auction in offshore areas. This marks India's entry into the exploration and development of undersea mineral resources within its offshore territories. The auction was launched by Mines Minister G Kishan Reddy and other officials of the ministry. *(The Economic Times)*

### **India's iron ore production rises 4 pc in Apr-Oct**

Iron ore production in the country rose 4.1 per cent to 158.4 million tonnes (MT) in the April-October period of the ongoing fiscal year, the government said on Thursday. As per provisional data, iron ore production was 152.1 MT in the year-ago period. Continued growth in production of iron ore in the current financial year shows the robust demand conditions in the user industry. *(The Economic Times)*

### **Over 90% of Indian businesses raised sustainability investments over last year: Report**

A Deloitte report reveals 91% of Indian CXOs increased sustainability investments in the last year, driven by climate change concerns. Climate change surpasses AI and economic outlook as their top priority, with many expecting significant business impacts within the next three years due to shifting consumer preferences and operational disruptions. *(The Economic Times)*



## **News on Kerala**

### **Kerala to form Senior Citizens' Commission, ordinance to be issued soon**

Kerala will promulgate an ordinance to form the Kerala State Senior Citizens' Commission. The decision was taken at the Cabinet meeting on Wednesday and announced by higher education-social justice minister R Bindu. "The ordinance will be promulgated to urgently address the growing concerns of senior citizens, including neglect, exploitation and

abandonment, and also to put in place the framework necessary for the creation of the Commission," the minister told reporters on Wednesday (*Onmanorama*).

### **No more unauthorised drone flying: Police to deploy GPS Spoofing**

In response to the rising use of drones in restricted zones and during VVIP visits, the Kerala police are set to acquire a GPS spoofing system to enhance security. The GPS spoofing system works by emitting stronger radio frequency signals to intercept unauthorised drones, redirecting them to a designated location. By mimicking GPS signals and altering coordinates in real-time, this technology allows the police to take control of rogue drones (*Onmanorama*).

### **Pension age to remain unchanged as Kerala Cabinet rejects proposal to raise to 60**

The Cabinet has rejected the Administrative Reforms Commission's recommendation to increase the pension age to 60. Instead, the Cabinet approved, with amendments, the suggestions of the secretarial-level committee chaired by the Chief Secretary, which had been tasked with reviewing the recommendations of the Fourth Administrative Reforms Commission (*MathrubhumiEnglish*).

### **Shocking finding: 1,458 Kerala govt staff, including teachers, illegally receive welfare pensions**

In a shocking development, it has been discovered that as many as 1,458 government employees in Kerala are unlawfully receiving welfare pensions. This malpractice was identified during an audit conducted by the Information Kerala Mission, as per the directives of the Finance Department. The report states that even gazetted officers, including college assistant professors and higher secondary teachers, are among those fraudulently claiming the pensions (*MathrubhumiEnglish*).

### **Reduced stamp duty for under-valued land registrations: Pay half amount and settle cases**

In a significant move to provide relief to those who undervalued their land during registration, the Kerala Government has announced that they can settle their cases by paying 50% of the stamp duty, thereby avoiding legal consequences. In addition to the 50% concession on stamp duty, the registration fee will be completely waived. This applies to documents registered between April 1, 2017 and March 31, 2023 (*MathrubhumiEnglish*).

### **Affordable, informative, and fun! KSRTC rolls out exciting industrial visits for school students**

Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) is taking a bold step to blend education and travel with its newly announced Industrial Visit Program for school students. With a pocket-friendly cost of less than ₹500, including lunch, this initiative offers an enriching day trip where students can gain firsthand insights into industrial operations. Transport Minister K B Ganesh Kumar revealed plans to extend this innovative service to college students in the near future (*MathrubhumiEnglish*).

### **Good news for Kerala Government employees; Medical reimbursement restored**

In a welcome move, the Kerala government has reinstated the medical reimbursement facility for its employees and teachers for treatments at private hospitals. This benefit, which had been discontinued following the introduction of the MEDISEP insurance scheme, has now been brought back by the Finance Department, addressing a long-standing demand from employees (*MathrubhumiEnglish*).

### **Centre mulls separate notification for ecologically sensitive zones in Kerala**

Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav informed on Monday that the Centre would consider issuing a Kerala-specific final notification for the Ecologically Sensitive Zone (ESZ) of the Western Ghats. The Kasturirangan Committee, officially known as the High-Level Working Group (HLWG) on the Western Ghats, was constituted in 2012 to revise and reconsider the recommendations of the earlier Gadgil Committee or Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP) report ([MathrubhumiEnglish](#)).

### **EPF to ensure savings for contract and daily wage workers under MGNREGA scheme**

Workers employed on a contract or daily wage basis under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) in Kerala will now be eligible for Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) benefits. The Local Self-Government Department announced the inclusion of these workers at village, block, district, and state levels, subject to specific conditions ([MathrubhumiEnglish](#)).

### **Policy on plantation sector soon: P. Rajeev**

The State government will formulate a comprehensive policy based on the study report submitted by the Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode (IIM-K) on the plantation sector within three months, Industries Minister P.Rajeev has said. The report touches upon steps to maintain the existing plantation area and setting up a new buffer zone ([The Hindu](#)).

### **Investments in cooperative societies safe, says Kerala CM**

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has reassured investors that their deposits in State's cooperative societies are safe. Speaking at the inauguration of Kerala Bank's year-long action plan in Kannur on Monday (November 25), he stressed that the State government guarantees the stability of the cooperative sector ([The Hindu](#)).

GULATI INSTITUTE OF FINANCE AND TAXATION  
GIFT Campus, Chavadi Mukku,  
Sreekariyam, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala - 695017  
Phone : 0471 2596970, 2596980, 2590880, 2593960  
Fax : 0471 2591490  
Email : [giftkerala@gmail.com](mailto:giftkerala@gmail.com)



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