



Public Finance

Bengal budget gives more funds for social welfare, women, govt. staff

West Bengal's Finance Minister, Chandrima Bhattacharya, presented a ₹3.89-lakh crore State budget for the pre-poll financial year 2025-26, focusing on social welfare schemes and increased funds for women. The budget includes ₹1,500 crore for rural road improvements under the Pathasree scheme and ₹200 crore for the Nodi Bandhan scheme to combat river erosion. It also allocates ₹200 crore for smartphones for 70,000 ASHA and anganwadi workers. (*The Hindu*)

Budgeting for a gender-inclusive 'Viksit Bharat'

The Union Budget 2025-26 aims for inclusive development, balanced growth, and prioritizing the well-being of the poor, youth, farmers, and women. The Finance Minister presents a holistic vision for Viksit Bharat, focusing on zero poverty, universal quality education, skilled labor, and women's participation in economic activities. This includes women as a priority group. (*The Hindu*)

Elector surge in Maharashtra and Delhi polls is par for the course

The surge in electors during the recent Assembly elections in Maharashtra and Delhi is not unusual, according to an analysis of Election Commission data. However, the surge in electors in Maharashtra became controversial after Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, raised the issue. Between the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections, there was a net addition of 39.6 lakh electors in Maharashtra, while between the elections in 2019, there was only 32.2 lakh electors. (*The Hindu*)

CBIC operations crippled for four days due to network failure

The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has been halted for four days due to a network failure of its 'eOffice' application, causing concerns about potential data compromise. The CBIC acknowledges the failure in the NIC/RailTel Data Centre and has no estimated timeline for restoration. The eOffice platform is hosted on RailTel data, and NIC offers applications to the CBIC's eOffice. (*BusinessLine*)

Govt may use reserve oil funds to finance fertiliser subsidy gap

The Indian government is expected to use the Oil Industry Development Fund (OIDF) to finance a part of its fertiliser subsidy program for 2025-26. The finance ministry has allocated ₹ 23,000 crore in the FY26 Budget for net additional resources from dedicated reserve funds, including the OIDF, Agriculture Infrastructure and Development Fund, and Universal Service Obligation Fund. This move could help reduce the fiscal deficit while maintaining transparency. (*Business Standard*)



Budget benefits the rich too, says Chidambaram

Congress MP P. Chidambaram has criticized the Union Budget's income tax proposals, claiming they benefit not only the middle class but also the rich and the world's richest. He stated that 80-85 lakh taxpayers will be out of the tax net next year, while 2.5 crore taxpayers will benefit from the new tax proposals, including 2,27,315 individuals with income over ₹1 crore. *(The Hindu)*

Public Accounts Committee asks Centre to review toll tax rule for National Highways

The Public Accounts Committee of Parliament, led by Congress leader K.C. Venugopal, has directed the government to review the rules determining toll tax on National Highways. The current toll taxes are based on the base rate of fee per kilometer, prescribed by the NH Fee Rules, 2008. The panel has directed the Secretary of Road Transport and Highways, V. Umashankar, and National Highways Authority Chairperson Santosh Kumar Yadav to review the rules. *(The Hindu)*

A 11-year high of 55% urban residents report stagnant income in 2025

India's urban consumers experienced a five-month low in retail inflation in January, easing household expenses. However, concerns about employment and stagnant income levels continued to impact them. In January, 55% of urban consumers reported their income levels remained unchanged compared to the same period last year, the highest share in nearly 11 years. The Reserve Bank of India's Consumer Confidence Survey revealed that a growing share of urban consumers remained pessimistic about the broader economic outlook. *(The Hindu)*

Zero-tax filers make up two-thirds of ITR submissions

The number of income tax return filers with zero tax liability nearly doubled in FY25 compared to FY20, according to data presented in the Lok Sabha. The number of filers increased from 6.48 crore in FY19-20 to 8.39 crore in the current fiscal. In FY20, the number of filers with zero tax liability was 2.9 crore, representing 44.75 per cent of the total filers. In FY25, the number and share of filers with zero tax liability are 5.58 crore and 66.5 per cent, respectively. *(BusinessLine)*

Old tax regime to continue along with new one, tax tabulation for FY25 to be done under existing Act

The new Income Tax Bill has ended speculation that the old tax regime will end. The bill will be introduced to the Standing Committee on Finance and retains all provisions from the Income Tax Act, 1961, eliminating redundant sections and outdated clauses. Amit Maheshwari, Tax Partner at AKM Global, stated that the old tax regime will continue to operate alongside the new system, providing taxpayers with flexibility in choosing the best-suited system. *(BusinessLine)*

New IT Bill streamlines tax laws, not a mere amendment: FM Sitharaman

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has dismissed claims that the new Income Tax Bill is merely a mechanical change. She introduced the Bill in the Lok Sabha and requested a Select Committee to examine it. The new Bill will replace the Income Tax Act 1961,

which has been amended 65 times. The bill proposes eliminating redundant provisions and reducing its length by nearly half. The drafting style is straightforward, with over 57 tables compared to 18 in the 1961 Act. Sub-sections and clauses are used instead of provisos and explanations for exceptions and carve-outs. *(BusinessLine)*

New Income Tax Bill 2025 eases NRI worries, enhances clarity and compliance

The Income Tax Bill 2025 aims to create a transparent and efficient tax environment for Non-Resident Indians (NRIs), addressing challenges and promoting engagement with India's economic growth. The bill aims to improve readability and confidence for NRIs, simplifying the tax framework and addressing specific concerns. It aims to make tax compliance more straightforward and reduce ambiguities that previously affected NRIs. *(BusinessLine)*

Tobacco industry to come under Union Govt. control

New Delhi, Feb. 9: The tobacco industry will be brought under the control of the Union Government and a cess will be levied on the entire production of virginia tobacco and on exports of all types of tobacco to finance the proposed tobacco board. Provisions to this effect are contained in the Tobacco Board Bill that has been introduced in the Lok Sabha at its last session. The Bill is expected to come up for consideration and adoption in the budget session. *(The Hindu)*



National Accounts and State of the Economy

Modi arrives in France for AI summit, talks with Macron

Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in France on a three-day visit during which he will co-chair an AI Action Summit with French President Emmanuel Macron and hold bilateral talks with him. Representing the Global South in the Paris AI Action Summit, broadening consular and diplomatic ties, and nuclear research are some of the items on the agenda of Mr. Modi's visit to France, an official statement said on Monday. *(The Hindu)*

Economy on speedy rebound, India to remain fastest growing nation: FM

India's Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman, has announced a "speedy rebound" in the country's economy, citing the Union Budget 2025-26 as a response to global uncertainties. The budget aims to increase liquidity, boost household sentiment, encourage private sector investments, and accelerate growth. Sitharaman highlighted that the economy grew by an average of 8% in the three years prior to 2024-25, with strong economic foundations causing a rapid rebound. *(The Hindu)*

India's retail inflation cools to five-month low of 4.31% in Jan.

India's retail inflation reached a five-month low of 4.31% in January, down from 5.22% in December 2024 and 5.1% a year ago. Food prices have decelerated to 6%, but edible oils and fruits have increased sharply. Urban consumers' inflation rose to 3.87%, while rural consumers' rice prices remained above the median target at 4.64%. *(The Hindu)*

States, ministries to get inflation data every month for speedy fix

The central government has set up a mechanism to share data on inflation-fuelling factors with the state governments and ministries to ensure speedy redressal. The effort, being spearheaded by the statistics ministry, seeks to tackle high volatility in inflation, particularly food inflation, adding that information is shared through this mechanism on a monthly basis. *(The Economic Times)*

West Bengal's growth driven by fiscal discipline, says Economic Review

The Economic Review for 2024-25 presented by the West Bengal government in the assembly on Wednesday said that the state had achieved growth over the years through fiscal discipline. The review said that in the last 13 years, the West Bengal economy has witnessed tremendous growth. The size of the economy, measured in terms of nominal gross state domestic product (GSDP) has reached a level of Rs 18,15,010 crore in 2024-25. In the same fiscal, the state economy is estimated to grow by 6.80 per cent in real terms. *(Business Standard)*



Banking and Monetary Policy

Govt will continue taking measures to ensure inflation doesn't hurt citizens: Sitharaman

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday said the government will continue to take measures to check inflation and ensure that citizens are not burdened. Replying to the discussion on the Union Budget in the Rajya Sabha, the minister said the retail inflation based on Consumer Price Index (CPI) reduced to 4.31 per cent in January from 5.22 per cent in December and is moving towards the 4 per cent target given to the Reserve Bank of India. *(The Economic Times)*

India needs to add USD 4 tn in bank capital to meet 'Viksit Bharat' GDP target: Report

India's banking sector needs to raise USD 4 trillion in capital over the next two decades to achieve its goal of becoming a developed economy, or "Viksit Bharat," by 2047, according to a report by HSBC Mutual Fund. The report suggests that financial and banking assets must grow faster than India's GDP, which is projected to grow nearly nine times to USD 30 trillion by 2047. *(The Economic Times)*

India can certainly achieve 7% plus growth rate: RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra

Reserve Bank Governor Sanjay Malhotra on Friday said India can certainly achieve over 7 per cent growth rate and the nation should aspire for that. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in its bi-monthly monetary policy has projected 6.7 per cent growth for financial year 2025-26, up from 6.4 per cent estimated for the current fiscal. *(The Economic Times)*

RBI lowers GDP growth projections for first two quarters of FY26 amid global trade concerns

The Reserve Bank of India has lowered its GDP growth projections for the first and second quarters of the fiscal 2025-2026 amid the concerns over the protectionist trade policies by US president Donald Trump. The central bank has projected the first quarter

gross domestic product (GDP) growth at 6.7%, two basis points lower than an earlier projection of 6.9%. Similarly, it has revised the second quarter GDP growth outlook at 7% from 7.3% made in the previous policy review. *(The Economic Times)*

Bond market participants expect more OMO purchases to aid liquidity

Bond market participants predict that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will increase its Open Market Operation (OMO) purchases in the coming weeks due to a liquidity deficit of around ₹2 trillion in the system. They suggest that the RBI could double the scheduled OMO purchase amount for the next auction, increasing it from ₹20,000 crore to ₹40,000 crore, to provide additional liquidity. *(Business Standard)*

RBI-NBFC meet: Shadow banks seek new funding as bank credit tightens

In a meeting with the top management of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), including Governor Sanjay Malhotra, on Thursday, the chiefs of select non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) recommended several measures to enhance funding access for the sector. Bank funding to NBFCs has declined over the past year after the regulator increased risk weights on bank loans to the sector in November 2023.

(Business Standard)

RBI bars New India Co-operative Bank from offering fresh loans, deposits

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) today barred New India Co-operative Bank from granting or renewing loans, accepting fresh deposits, make investment, disbursing any payment for its liabilities or selling any of its properties due to supervisory concerns emanating from the recent material developments in the bank, and to protect the interest of depositors of the bank, the regulator said in a statement. *(BusinessLine)*

Govt keeps eye on rate transmission

The government is closely monitoring lenders to ensure they pass on rate cuts announced by the central bank. A senior government official said they will hold discussions with banks if such transmission is not reflected in the next few weeks. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) last week announced a quarter-percentage-point rate cut, the first in five years, which may lead to interest rates on home loans and other borrowings coming down. *(The Economic Times)*

Banks breathe easy as RBI goes soft on provisioning, LCR rules

Reserve Bank India governor Sanjay Malhotra's assertion that none of the new regulations on project finance provisions, liquidity coverage ratio (LCR) and expected credit loss (ECL) will be implemented in a hurry is a relief to banks battling tight liquidity, shrinking margins and rising bad loans from the unsecured portfolio. Bankers are relieved with Malhotra's emphasis on a consultative approach with minimum disruption to the financial system. *(The Economic Times)*

Softening CPI inflation boosts foreign banks' bet on April RBI rate cut

A lower-than-expected CPI inflation print in January 2025 is likely to give RBI MPC further policy room for another 25 bps rate cut on April 9, the next policy review meeting, said economists at various foreign banks and research outfits. This will be on top of the February 7 policy rate cut of 25 basis points, the first cut in nearly five years. Prior to that RBI had kept policy rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent since February 2023, they said. *(BusinessLine)*

Interest rate cut, tax stimulus to revive demand, investments'

India is preparing for a consumption recovery and reviewing capacity utilization rates following the Budget's push for consumption and the central bank's interest rate cut. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman believes this could lead to a durable recovery in private investment in 2025-26. She believes good coordination between the Reserve Bank of India and the Centre will ensure growth impulses are met, with the new Governor and RBI team working together. *(The Hindu)*



External Sector

Govt to focus on 20 countries, six focus sectors to boost exports

The government has identified 20 countries such as Australia, Brazil, China, and France, and six focus sectors each in commodities and services to further increase India's exports, Parliament was informed on Tuesday. In a written reply to the Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Jitin Prasada said a meeting with the officers of the commercial wings of Indian Missions in these 20 countries was organised last month to enhance exports. *(Business Standard)*

China top import source for India during Apr-Oct, exports to China dip 9%

China was India's top import source with \$ 65.89 billion, a 9.8 per cent year-on-year increase, worth of inbound shipments during the April-October period of this fiscal, according to the commerce ministry data. Exports to China, however, dipped by 9.37 per cent to \$ 8 billion. During the period, the US emerged as the top export destination for the country with outbound shipments increasing by 6.31 per cent to \$ 47.24 billion. *(Business Standard)*

India's exports dip 1.2% to \$33.98 bn in July, imports up by 7.45%

India's merchandise exports in July dipped 1.2 per cent to \$33.98 billion from \$34.39 billion in the year-ago month, according to government data released on Wednesday. Imports increased by about 7.45 per cent to \$57.48 billion in July against \$53.49 billion a year ago. The trade deficit, or the gap between imports and exports, during the month under review stood at \$23.5 billion. *(Business Standard)*

US likely to increase coal exports to India due to trade war with China

The United States is expected to boost coal exports to India after China imposed tariffs on energy imports from the US, five industry officials said, potentially eroding Australia and Russia's market shares in the Indian market. China's Finance Ministry last week said it would impose levies of 15 per cent on imports of US coal, which the officials said could push US miners to ship to India - the world's second-largest coal importer behind China. *(Business Standard)*

Donald Trump's metal tariffs put India exports at risk, spark glut fears

Trump plans to impose a 25% tariff on steel and aluminium imports, potentially reducing India's shipments to the US and leaving the country vulnerable to surplus supplies. He also plans to introduce reciprocal tariffs on imports from other countries to match US tariffs. *(Business Standard)*

Govt imposes export ban on raw human hair priced below \$65 per kg

The government on Monday imposed export ban on raw human hair if the prices are below USD 65 per kg, according to a notification. In January 2022, the government imposed restrictions on these exports. "The export policy of raw human hair is amended from restricted to prohibited. However, export shall be free if FOB (Free on Board) value is USD 65 or above per kilogram," the directorate general of foreign trade (DGFT) said in a notification. *(Business Standard)*

India's aluminium exports to US may fall due to Trump's tariff hikes

India's aluminium shipments to the US are expected to decrease due to proposed tariffs by US President Donald Trump. This move is part of a larger trade policy overhaul, with Trump introducing 25% tariffs on steel and aluminium imports into the US. Industry executives and a government source predict that producers will consider other markets like Europe. *(Business Standard)*

India's trade deficit likely to narrow to \$20.88 bn in Jan from \$21.94 bn in Dec: Union Bank of India

India's merchandise trade deficit is expected to have narrowed to USD 20.88 billion in January 2025, down from USD 21.94 billion in December 2024, according to a report by Union Bank of India. The report suggested that this improvement was primarily due to a decline in gold imports amid rising prices and the conclusion of the festival and wedding season. *(The Economic Times)*

Countries may divert steel shipments to India after US tariffs affecting local prices

The Indian steel market may face pressure from diverted shipments following the US administration's 25% tariff on steel and aluminium imports. The measures could affect the domestic steel industry by affecting deliveries from Asian suppliers like Japan and South Korea, which had preferential market access, and potentially impacting high-growth markets like India. *(The Economic Times)*

India weighs temporary tax on cheap Chinese steel import, minister says

India may impose a temporary 15%-25% tax on Chinese steel within six months due to the "serious challenge" faced by domestic producers from cheap imports, according to Steel Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy. The rising Chinese steel imports, often facilitated by unfair trade practices, pose a significant threat to Indian manufacturers.. *(The Economic Times)*

India may cut tariffs on 30 items imported from US to prevent higher reciprocal tariffs: Nomura

India is considering reducing tariffs on more than 30 items and increasing its purchases of US defence and energy products to prevent higher reciprocal tariffs from the United States, according to a report by Nomura. The report highlights that the country has been working to avoid trade disputes with the US. In its recent Union Budget, the government reduced import duties on a range of products, including electronics, textiles, and high-end motorcycles.

(The Economic Times)

US coal exports to India expected to rise due to China tariffs

The United States is expected to boost coal exports to India after China imposed tariffs on energy imports from the US, five industry officials said, potentially eroding Australia and Russia's market shares in the Indian market. China's Finance Ministry last week said it would

impose levies of 15% on imports of US coal, which the officials said could push US miners to ship to India - the world's second-largest coal importer behind China. *(The Economic Times)*

Energy booster from US on menu in runup to PM Modi's visit

Ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's meeting this week with US President Donald Trump, India is weighing how much more energy it can import from that country. Oil ministry officials and executives at state-run oil and gas companies have held multiple discussions on current energy imports from the US, the possibility of increasing them significantly and the challenges in doing so, people familiar with the matter said. *(The Economic Times)*

Trump's steel tariffs to hit Indian exports, intensify domestic competition

US President Donald Trump's decision to impose new 25% tariffs on steel and aluminium imports is set to create challenges for Indian steel producers, increasing competition in global markets and adding pressure on domestic prices. On Sunday, Trump said he will impose new 25% tariffs on all steel and aluminium imports into the US, adding to existing duties and further escalating his trade policies. *(The Economic Times)*

Indian steel producers to face challenges in exports once US hikes tariffs: Moody's

Moody's Ratings on Monday said Indian steel producers will face increased challenges in exporting their products following the US decision to impose an additional 25 per cent tariff on all steel and aluminium imports as announced by President Donald Trump. Over the past 12 months, high steel imports into India have already dampened prices and earnings of steel producers in India, said Hui Ting Sim, assistant vice president at Moody's Ratings.

(The Economic Times)



Agriculture and Rural Economy

Agri-Boom 2025: 6 High-Growth Investment Opportunities in India's \$400B Agriculture Revolution

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman unveiled a vision for India's agriculture sector, highlighting its role as a key driver of development. The sector is expected to grow at a robust CAGR of 4.5% over the next five years, creating a fertile ground for investors to cultivate wealth. Listed agri-sector companies, with a combined market capitalization of ₹2.5 trillion, are at the heart of this growth, brimming with potential. *(Mint)*

Agriculture set to flourish

Budget 2025-26 has rightly prioritised structural, medium- to long-term issues in the farm sector. These reforms can ensure that the farm sector remains a key engine of growth, raising average farm income progressively while entrenching food and nutrition security. *(BusinessLine)*

Agriculture in Union Budget 2025-26: balancing continuity with change

The Union Budget 2025-26, the first after the 2024 elections, presents government priorities and focuses on continuity. It includes updates on last year's announcements, initiatives for lagging districts, and a reduction in the gap between Revised and Budget Estimates of several programs, indicating improvement or moderation of ambition. *(Business Standard)*

Farm facelift: Budget offers hope for agri, but is it enough to modernise?

The Budget announced significant increases in budgetary allocation for agriculture and allied sectors, indicating a somewhat agriculture-centric focus. The Ministry of Agriculture's allocation rose by 3.88% from FY25's Budget Estimates and 6.60% from FY25's Revised Estimates to ₹127,290.16 crore (approximately ₹1.27 trillion). However, the agriculture and allied sectors received a budgetary allocation of ₹171,437 crore (₹1.7 trillion), a 22% increase from FY25's Revised Estimates and 13% increase from FY25's Budget Estimates. *(Business Standard)*

Andhra Pradesh aims for 30% growth rate in agriculture-related sectors in next five years

Agriculture, Cooperation, and Marketing Minister Kinjarapu Atchannaidu announced the government's goal of achieving a 30% growth rate in agriculture-related sectors over the next five years. At a review meeting, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu made key decisions to achieve significant growth in these sectors. The current growth rate in the primary sector is 15.86%, with a goal to increase it to 20% in the first phase and 30% over the next five years. *(The Hindu)*

Tea producers demand minimum sustainable price and 100% auction

Tea producers in India held a meeting in Kolkata to discuss the minimum sustainable price of made tea and a 100% auction of tea. The meeting highlighted the challenges faced by tea farmers due to climate change and associated volatility, similar to those faced by farmers in the agriculture sector. The producers aimed to achieve sustainable pricing and auctions. *(The Hindu)*

Govt says 2.05 cr farmer IDs created under Digital Agriculture Mission

More than 2.05 crore farmer IDs have been generated under the Digital Agriculture Mission, Parliament was informed on Tuesday. Minister of State for Agriculture Ramnath Thakur, in his written reply to the Lok Sabha, said the State Farmer Registry under the Digital Agriculture Mission covers all landholder farmers, including women farmers. Farmers Registry application also has the provision to onboard the tenant and lessee farmers. A state can decide to include such farmers in the Farmers Registry as per the state's policy. *(The Economic Times)*

Agri ministry revises guidelines of Market Intervention Scheme to encourage states for implementation

The agriculture ministry has revised guidelines for the Market Intervention Scheme (MIS), increasing the procurement limit of crops from 20% to 25%. The MIS is implemented for procurement of perishable agricultural/horticultural commodities, such as tomato, onion, and potato, with a minimum support price reduction of at least 10% in states/UTs compared to the previous normal season. *(The Economic Times)*

Govt to upgrade e-NAM platform to promote inter-state and inter-mandi trade: Chouhan in Rajya Sabha

The Centre plans to upgrade the e-NAM platform to enable logistic service providers to onboard, addressing logistical challenges in inter-state and inter-mandi trade. Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan stated that an inter-state trade worth Rs 65.48 crore has been recorded on the platform till December 2024. Chouhan noted that agricultural marketing is a state subject and APMCs are regulated by the respective Act. *(The Economic Times)*



Industry, Manufacturing, Services and Technology

What has the Budget offered scientists?

The budget allocates ₹20,000 crore for the Department of Science & Technology and private sector research, part of a ₹1 lakh crore corpus fund to boost R&D in deeptech and sunrise sectors. The National Geospatial Mission is allocated ₹100 crore for FY 2025-2026 to develop geospatial infrastructure and data. *(The Hindu)*

Ceenik Exports (India) reports standalone net loss of Rs 12.36 crore in the December 2024 quarter

Net Loss of Ceenik Exports (India) reported to Rs 12.36 crore in the quarter ended December 2024 as against net loss of Rs 1.09 crore during the previous quarter ended December 2023. There were no Sales reported in the quarter ended December 2024 and during the previous quarter ended December 2023. *(Business Standard)*

India's pharma exports set for 10x growth, targeting \$350 billion by 2047

India's pharmaceutical industry exports are projected to reach \$350 billion by 2047 — an estimated 10-15 times increase from the current levels. The nation, already a global leader in generic drug supply, is expected to move up the value chain by focusing on specialty generics, biosimilars, and innovative pharmaceutical products. *(Business Standard)*

Govt. mulls roadmap for local aerospace manufacturing

The Indian government is planning a "national roadmap" to boost aerospace manufacturing, seeking industry suggestions for 10- and 20-year plans. The first meeting was held at the Ministry of Civil Aviation, chaired by Minister Ram Mohan Naidu, and included Secretary V. Vualnam. Naidu agreed to an industry proposal for a detailed aerospace roadmap over the next 10 and 20 years, with goals to be achieved by 2047, when India celebrates 100 years of independence. *(The Hindu)*

India's electronics industry pushes for boosting US trade ties

The electronics industry in India is advocating for the government to boost bilateral trade with the US to \$750 billion by 2032, including \$100 billion worth of electronics. The industry believes existing policies and incentive frameworks, such as Press Note 3 and Production Linked Incentive schemes, have created opportunities for US firms to participate in the Indian market in a non-Chinese supply chain environment.

(The Economic Times)

Namdhari Seeds acquires 100% stake in US-based Axia's open-field vegetable seed business

Namdhari Seeds has acquired a 100% stake in Axia's open-field vegetable seed business, which includes tomatoes, peppers, melons, cucumbers, squash, and eggplant. The business is marketed under the US Agriseeds brand in North America, South America, the Middle East, Africa, and Europe. Namdhari Seeds will continue using the US Agriseeds brand in these markets with existing customers and distributors. Catalyst Seeds, New World Seeds, and California Hybrids will also be part of Namdhari Seeds.

(The Economic Times)



No big-ticket sops; push for infra, economic growth 1 of 3: Presenting his fifth Budget, K.N. Balagopal chooses to paint an optimistic picture of State economy.

The 2025-2026 Kerala Budget, presented by Finance Minister K.N. Balagopal, includes a 50% land tax hike, plans to transform the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board into a revenue-generating entity, and announcements to boost investment-friendly infrastructure. Balagopal aims to present an optimistic picture of a state economy that has overcome fiscal constraints. (*The Hindu*)

State Budget earmarks funds for health infra sans human resource

The Kerala Budget 2025-26 allocates funds for more cath labs, dialysis units, intensive care units, and stroke units in medical colleges and public hospitals. This will make Kerala the only state with cath labs in all districts and the first state with dialysis units in all district/general/taluk headquarter hospitals. However, healthcare workers argue that more infrastructure doesn't necessarily lead to better care. (*The Hindu*)

Kerala govt standardises ambulance rates; concession for cancer patients, children, BPL families

The Kerala government has introduced a unified fare structure for ambulance services across the state, addressing concerns over unregulated and excessive charges. The new rates, issued through an official notification, set fixed hire and waiting charges for different categories of ambulances. The government has also introduced special concessions for cancer patients and children under 12 years, with a discount of Rs 2 per km. Additionally, those belonging to the Below Poverty Line (BPL) category will receive a 20% discount on total charges for ventilator-equipped ICU ambulances (*Onmanorama*).

Jal Jeevan Mission: 32.40 lakh families still waiting for water connections

Nearly 32.40 lakh families in the state are still waiting for water supply under the Jal Jeevan Mission, the flagship scheme designed to provide tap connections to every household. With contractors halting work indefinitely due to mounting unpaid dues, it now seems unlikely that these families will receive water connections before the upcoming summer. The government had set a target of providing 70.79 lakh (70,79,554) water connections across the state. However, the project has stalled after achieving only 54.23 per cent of the target. (*Onmanorama*).

CM uncovers KIIFB Plan B: Impose user fee and free it from state support

Chief Minister Pinarayi on Wednesday officially unveiled Plan B to keep the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB) alive. "User fee" will be imposed, and KIIFB will gradually wean away from its dependence on Kerala Budget in such a way that it can be fully transformed into a self-sustainable revenue-earning entity (*Onmanorama*).

World Bank-funded Kerala's health system revamp mission to be implemented at Rs 3,464 cr

The state government has given administrative sanction for the World Bank-funded Kerala Health System Improvement Programme (KHSIP), which will be implemented at a cost of Rs 3464 crore. The project is proposed to be implemented in all 14 districts of Kerala with a project duration of 5 years, starting from 2025 to 2030 (*Onmanorama*).

10,950 hectares of paddy land converted in 6 yrs in Kerala, Revenue dept collects Rs 1606 cr fee

Over 10,000 hectares of paddy land were converted in Kerala for residential and other non-agricultural purposes in six years, fetching the revenue department a total revenue of Rs 1606.9 crore as land conversion fee, according to the figures furnished in the assembly. Thrissur recorded the highest number of conversions; 2150.58 hectares in seven taluks followed by Ernakulam where 1649.86 hectares of land were converted between 2018-19 and 2024-25 (*Onmanorama*).

Kerala launches India's first all-women scuba diving team

India's first all-women scuba diving team has been launched in Kerala on Tuesday. The 17-member team, part of the state's Fire Department, aims to make rescue operations in water-related accidents more efficient. The team was selected from 100 women fire and rescue officers appointed by the Fire Department in 2024 and was trained at the Water Safety Expert Training Center under the Kerala Fire and Rescue Service. (*Onmanorama*).

Kerala regulates outdoor work hours to prevent sunstroke amid rising temperatures

In light of the abnormal rise in daytime temperatures and the risk of sunstroke, the state government has issued an order rescheduling the working hours of labourers engaged in outdoor work. The order issued by the Labour Commissioner directed that the labourers should be granted a rest period from 12 pm till 3 pm

(*Mathrubhumi English*)

Kerala announces financial relief for snakebite deaths and wildlife property damage

The executive committee of the Disaster Management Authority has approved new guidelines for granting financial assistance from the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) in cases related to human-wildlife conflict. The revised criteria aim to provide support to victims and those affected by such conflicts, ensuring a more comprehensive response (*Mathrubhumi English*).

Kerala receives additional ₹124.25 cr. under AMRUT scheme

Kerala has received an additional ₹124.25 crore under the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) scheme. The amount was sanctioned for the State as a special incentive for capital investment. Kerala received the incentive as the recognition for the excellent innovations made by the State in urban planning reforms. (*The Hindu*).

GULATI INSTITUTE OF FINANCE AND TAXATION
GIFT Campus, Chavadimukku,
Sreekariyam, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala - 695017
Phone : 0471 2596970, 2596980, 2590880, 2593960
Fax : 0471 2591490
Email : giftkerala@gmail.com



An Autonomous Institution of Government of Kerala

Disclaimer: This compilation on important news items relating to Finance, Taxation and Indian economy by GIFT from various newspapers and e-resources aims at providing an update to our esteemed readers. GIFT does not guarantee the accuracy or validity of the information provided. It is not a commercial product and all the copyrights remain with those of the respective copyright holders. Images are sourced from the web.