



Public Finance

[Uttar Pradesh Finance Minister Suresh Kumar Khanna tables ₹8,09 lakh crore Budget](#)

Uttar Pradesh Finance Minister Suresh Kumar Khanna presented a ₹8,08,736 crore budget for the 2025-26 financial year, focusing on research, development, and Information Technology. The budget allocates 22% for development, 13% for education, 11% for agriculture, and 6% for health. Khanna also highlighted the ongoing Maha Kumbh, a cultural and religious event symbolizing India's ancient faith and cultural integrity. *(The Hindu)*

[Union budget prudently manages fiscal consolidation and growth objectives: RBI paper](#)

The Reserve Bank of India reports that Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's Union Budget effectively manages fiscal consolidation and growth objectives. The budget includes measures for agriculture, MSMEs, investment, and exports, while focusing on capex and consumption support. With a fiscal deficit target of 4.4% of GDP, the budget aims for inclusive and long-term economic growth. *(Business Standard)*

[UP Budget 2025-26: Infra, welfare remain Yogi's focus; key announcements](#)

Uttar Pradesh's government presented its ninth budget for 2025-26, with a budget of Rs 8,08,736.06 crore, a 9.8% increase from the previous year. The budget focuses on infrastructure, education, health, social security, and economic growth, with specific allocations for various sectors. The total budget is Rs 8.08 trillion, with a capital expenditure share of 20.5%. *(Business Standard)*

[PM must interfere in federalism's interest, release SSA funds to TN: CM](#)

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin has urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to release Rs 2,152 crore of Samagra Shiksha funds for the state, stating that linking the two Centrally sponsored SSA and PM SHRI Schools initiatives is unacceptable. Stalin urged Modi to intervene for cooperative federalism and the welfare of lakhs of students and teachers. *(Business Standard)*

[FM Sitharaman dispels gloom over capex cut worries, says no govt programme will suffer](#)

The Indian government is increasing its capex target for this fiscal year by 10.2% compared to the previous year, according to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. The effective capital expenditure is projected at 15.48 lakh crore, up from 13.18 lakh crore in the revised estimates of 2024-25. This includes grants for capital asset creation in states. *(The Economic Times)*

[Budget allocation for Census and other surveys 57 per cent lower than revised estimate for FY25](#)

The delay in doing the latest round of census has been a matter of much debate. But the Budget allocation for 'Census, survey and statistics/ registrar general of India' received allocation of just ₹574 crore for FY26. This is just 6.5 per cent of the government's recent projections for cost of conducting census and also down 57 per cent from the revised estimate of ₹1,341 crore in FY25. (*BusinessLine*)



Taxation

Maintain tax audits as core expertise of CAs: ICAI chief

President of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) Charanjot Singh Nanda told the media here tax audits were among the core expertise of chartered accountants and emphasised on maintaining their forte. The statement comes in the context of company secretaries' body the Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI) recently seeking inclusion of company secretaries into the definition of 'accountant' in the proposed new Income Tax Bill, 2025. (*The Hindu*)

Ficci, Assocham demand input tax credit for real estate under CGST

Industry bodies Ficci and Assocham have demanded that real estate developers should be allowed to claim Input Tax Credit (ITC) under the Central Goods and Services Act (CGST) on commercial assets constructed for leasing purposes. The associations have written letters to the finance ministry and have urged the latter to permit availing of the ITC where the immovable property is constructed for the provision of leasing services. (*Business Standard*)

'Matter of survival': Volkswagen to court in \$1.4 bn tax demand case

Volkswagen unit Skoda Auto Volkswagen India was fined \$2.8 billion by Indian authorities for breaking down imports of VW, Skoda, and Audi cars into individual parts for lower duty. The company, which employs 6,000 people in India, may not survive if all taxes and penalties are paid. (*Business Standard*)

Foreign companies' tax burden hits record low in India, shows CMIE data

Foreign companies now pay less tax relative to their earnings than at any time in more than three decades. Foreign private companies paid 24.36 per cent of their pre-tax profit as tax in 2023-24, show numbers from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE). (*Business Standard*)

Experts intrigued by inclusion of electoral bonds in new Income-Tax Bill

Experts are intrigued by the new Income Tax Bill, 2025 retaining provisions related to electoral bonds, which were rendered unconstitutional by the Supreme Court last year, saying it could be because of legislative oversight or the government's intention to bring it back in some other form. Electoral bonds have been mentioned in the new Income Tax Bill's Schedule VIII which deals with 'Income not to be included in the total income of political parties and electoral trusts'. (*Business Standard*)

Unregistered persons can now generate e-Way Bill for GST compliance

The Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN) has introduced a new feature in the E-Way Bill (EWB) portal through which unregistered persons (URPs) can generate an e-Way Bill without taking out a GST registration. This feature has been enabled from February 11, 2025 and requires filing of ENR-03 form. (*The Economic Times*)



National Accounts and State of the Economy

India's GDP growth likely rebounded to around 6.4% in Q3FY25: Poll

India's economic growth is expected to rebound to around 6.4% in December 2025 due to a revival in rural demand, increased central government capital expenditure, and increased industrial production, according to a poll of 12 forecasters. The previous quarter saw a 5.4% GDP growth due to industrial slowdowns and investment demand. Forecasts for Q3 of FY25 range from 6.2% to 6.7%, with the Reserve Bank of India estimating 6.2% growth. (*Business Standard*)

In 10 years, Telangana's GDP increased by 196.9 per cent

Telangana's Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) rose by 190.69% from Rs 5.05 lakh crore in 2014-15 to Rs 15.01 lakh crore in 2023-24, making it the second highest in non-special category states. The state's economy reached Rs 15.01 lakh crore in 2023-24, with service sectors contributing significantly. Agriculture and allied sectors employ 45.8% of the population, contributing 15.4% to GSDP, while the service sector accounts for 66.8% of the state's value added. (*Business Standard*)

US tariff hike may hit India's GDP growth by up to 0.6 pp: Goldman Sachs

Goldman Sachs predicts that an increase in the US tariff rate on Indian exports could potentially impact India's GDP growth by 0.1-0.3 percentage points. The forecast considers various scenarios, including planned reciprocal tariffs and price elasticity of US demand for Indian exports. The potential GDP growth impact could be higher if additional tariffs are imposed on all countries, as India's domestic activity exposure to US final demand is twice as high. (*Business Standard*)

GDP growth during current fiscal estimated to be 6.3%: SBI research

The State Bank of India predicts a 6.3% GDP growth for the 2024-25 financial year, assuming no major revisions to the National Statistics Office's estimates. The report also suggests that the third quarter's GDP growth should be between 6.2% and 6.3%, based on 36 high-frequency indicators. The report highlights the importance of a healthy rural economy for stability and momentum in other sectors. (*Business Standard*)

Past capex and robust rural demand will propel India's economic growth: SBICap

New Delhi: India's economic growth over the next 15 months may benefit from the lagged impact of past capital expenditure and strong rural demand amid slowing consumer spending, SBI Capital Markets Ltd (SBICap) said in a report on Wednesday. India's gross domestic product (GDP) growth slowed to 5.4% in July-September (the second quarter of 2024-25), the slowest in seven quarters. The government's first advance estimate projects India's GDP growth in FY25 at 6.4%, the weakest in four years. (*Mint*)

High frequency indicators point at sequential pickup in economic activity: RBI bulletin

The RBI Bulletin predicts a sequential increase in economic activity during the second half of fiscal 2024-25, driven by high frequency indicators like vehicle sales, air traffic, steel consumption, and GST E-way bills. However, a strong dollar could exacerbate capital outflows from emerging economies, increase risk premiums, and intensify external vulnerabilities. Rural demand is expected to benefit from robust agriculture sector performance, while urban demand is expected to recover due to inflation decline and income tax relief. *(The Economic Times)*



Banking and Monetary Policy

RBI halts New India Co-op Bank operations: How to secure your savings

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has restricted New India Co-op Bank from issuing new loans, making investments, or accepting fresh deposits without prior approval, effective February 13. The bank has been directed not to allow withdrawal of any amount from savings or current accounts or any other account of a depositor. *(Business Standard)*

Federal Bank Strengthens NRI Banking Proposition - Unveils Prospera, a New NRE Savings Account Variant

Federal Bank, one of India's leading private sector banks, unveiled a new NR Savings account variant - Prospera. The Prospera NRE Savings Account offers an impressive suite of benefits designed for the emerging affluent NRI segment which includes Complimentary Insurance Benefits up to Rs. 60 Lakh, complimentary airport lounge access, special rewards for debit card spends and other banking benefits. As an introductory offer, the Bank is providing discount of up to 24% on flight and hotel bookings on select travel platforms using Prospera Debit Card. *(Business Standard)*

State Bank of India opens 0.63 mn accounts under Har Ghar Lakhpati scheme

State Bank of India, the country's largest lender, has opened 0.63 million accounts under its Har Ghar Lakhpati scheme, a recurring deposit product, in about 45 days from the date of its launch, according to its chairman, C S Setty. Lakhpati is a pre-calculated recurring deposit (RD) scheme designed to help customers accumulate Rs 1 lakh or multiples thereof and develop a savings habit. *(Business Standard)*

Finance Ministry likely to increase deposit insurance limit from ₹5 lakh

The Finance Ministry is considering raising the current limit of ₹5 lakh for deposit insurance, according to M. Nagaraju, Secretary to the Department of Financial Services. The increase is under active consideration and will be announced once the government approves. The move comes after the Reserve Bank of India placed curbs on the Mumbai-based New India Cooperative Bank for lack of liquidity, following the embezzlement of ₹122 crore by General Manager and Head of Accounts Hitesh Mehta. *(The Hindu)*

Rate cut not helping drive growth, focus should be on liquidity measures: Axis Bank economist

The Reserve Bank should focus on making liquidity easier rather than cutting rates if the intent is to drive growth, Axis Bank's chief economist Neelkanth Mishra said on Tuesday. Mishra, who is also a part-time member of the Economic Advisory Council to the PM, said the rate cut announced earlier this month or even the subsequent ones if they were to

come will not end up increasing borrowings as the scarce liquidity will hamper transmission. (*The Economic Times*)

Provisioning for NPAs up 20% in December, driven by sharp rise in private sector bank provisions

ET Intelligence Group: Aggregate provisioning toward nonperforming assets (NPAs) for a sample of 29 banks increased sharply by 20% year-on-year in the December quarter to Rs 23,298 crore, driven by a near doubling in such provisions by private sector lenders, pointing to what could possibly emerge as an area of concern. (*The Economic Times*)

New India Cooperative Bank collapse and its ripple effect on UCBs across India

Following the regulatory action against New India Cooperative Bank, the urban cooperative banking space has returned to the limelight, with depositors in these banks turning anxious. Atmadip Ray presents a snapshot of the UCB sector, highlighting its strengths and weaknesses. (*The Economic Times*)

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

The government is "actively considering" raising the deposit insurance limit beyond the current Rs 5 lakh, a top finance ministry official said on Monday. Days after the New India Co-operative Bank scam came to light, Department of Financial Services Secretary M Nagaraju announced that such a proposal is in the works. "The point about increasing insurance... that is under active consideration. As and when the government approves, we will notify it," he told reporters at a press conference in the presence of Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. (*The Economic Times*)

Pick up in private capex to improve loan growth from H2FY26: Report

Despite witnessing tough conditions in the third quarter, loan growth will improve from the second half of Financial Year (FY) 2026, driven by a recovery in the unsecured segment and a gradual pickup in private capital expenditure (capex), according to a report by Mirae Asset Sharekhan. The report added that the expectations are supported by better liquidity and rate cuts by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). (*The Economic Times*)

Govt should bear higher premium for increased deposit insurance: AIRBEA

The government should pay the additional premium if it goes ahead with its proposal to increase the insurance cover of bank deposits, the All India Reserve Bank Employees Association (AIRBEA) has said, while pointing out that commercial banks are well-regulated and their failures are rare. The employees' union said that the government should pay this additional premium from the higher returns they are getting from the banking sector. (*Business Standard*)



External Sector

Agricultural protectionism pushes up India's import tariff

Tariffs levied on imports into India are five times higher than what the United States levies on its imports. The average duty levied by India was 17% in 2023, compared to 3.3% levied by the U.S. Also, the average tariff levied by India was the highest among comparable economies, especially BRICS countries. India was followed by Brazil (11%),

and South Africa and China (more than 7%). The average tariff levied by Russia was 6.6% and that by the European Union was 5%. (*The Hindu*)

Gems, jewellery exports dip 7% in Jan on weak demand

Gems and jewellery exports slipped 7 per cent in January to \$2.23 billion against \$2.40 billion logged in the same period last year due to the economic uncertainty in view of the newly-elected US President Donald Trump. In rupee terms, it was down three per cent to ₹19,302 crore from ₹19,995 crore, according to data released by the Gems and Jewellery Export Promotion Council. Overall, gems and jewellery imports were down 38 per cent to \$1.42 billion (\$2.29 billion) as most of the wedding demand was met by domestic jewellery manufacturers. (*BusinessLine*)

Oilmeals export decline by over 9.34% in Apr-Jan 2024

A decline in the export of rapeseed meals and castorseed meals led to a 9.34 per cent decline in the total export of oilmeals during the April-January period of the current fiscal. India exported 36.03 lakh tonnes (lt) of oilmeals during the first 10 months of 2024-25 against 39.74 lt in the corresponding period of the previous fiscal. During April-January 2024-25, the export of rapeseed meals decreased to 15.42 lt (18.95 lt in April-January 2023-24), and castorseed meal exports declined to 2.58 lt (3.27 lt). (*BusinessLine*)

Trade deficit widens to \$22.99 billion in January 2025 as exports dip 2.38%

India's trade deficit increased to \$22.99 billion in January 2025, up from \$16.56 billion the previous year, due to a 2.38 per cent drop in goods exports to \$36.43 billion, primarily due to a sharp drop in petroleum products exports. Imports increased by 10.28% to \$59.42 billion, driven by increased inbound shipments of electronic goods, gold, non-ferrous metals, iron & steel, and chemicals. (*BusinessLine*)

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

The Pharmaceuticals Exports Promotion Council, Indian Pharmaceutical Association, and Indian Drug Manufacturers Association are urging India to seek US concessions to boost pharma exports. They suggest that India could seek an exception in the US on the over 55% domestic component rule for federal imports, as exceptions exist for WTO GPA members, which India is not currently part of. (*BusinessLine*)

Export sector face uncertainty as Trump threatens reciprocal tariffs

US President Donald Trump's threat to impose reciprocal tariffs from early April is feeding anxiety in India's export sectors from autos to agriculture, with Citi Research analysts estimating potential losses at about \$7 billion a year. Government officials waiting to learn how the tariffs will be calculated before they can assess their full economic impact, say they are readying plans to counter them as well as working on a proposal for a US trade deal to cut tariffs and grow two-way trade. (*Business Standard*)

Hyundai India aims to be production hub for exports to emerging markets

Hyundai Motor India is looking to position itself as a manufacturing hub for exports for emerging markets like Africa and neighbouring nations, according to a top company executive. The company, which is looking to diversify its export markets as it continues to face challenges regarding shipments to regions like the West Asia due to the Red Sea and other geopolitical issues. (*Business Standard*)

India-Russia trade via INSTC doubles in past year

Trade between India and Russia via the INSTC has doubled in the past year, significantly reducing delivery times and costs. Bilateral trade reached a record USD 66 billion in 2024, with plans to achieve USD 100 billion by 2030. Pharmaceuticals are among the key sectors for further trade diversification. *(The Economic Times)*

Govt eases norms for import of vintage cars

The government has eased import norms for "vintage motor vehicles" by actual users. Previously limited to cars manufactured before January 1, 1950, imports are now allowed for broader vintage classifications. However, these vehicles must comply with the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, if used on public roads. *(The Economic Times)*

India-Qatar trade agreement must be approached with caution: GTRI

India is considering a free trade agreement with Qatar, but economic caution is advised, particularly in the petrochemical sector. The Global Trade Research Initiative highlights the need for careful evaluation to ensure domestic industries and trade balances are not adversely impacted. *(The Economic Times)*

India, UAE trade up 21.35% to \$80.51 billion during April-January in FY25

India and the UAE's bilateral trade increased by 21.35 per cent to USD 80.51 billion during April-January. India's exports rose to USD 30 billion, while imports increased to USD 50.51 billion. The free trade agreement implemented in May 2022 boosted the trade significantly. Non-oil trade accounted for more than half of the total trade. *(The Economic Times)*



Agriculture and Rural Economy

Rural demand and tax relief to drive the Indian economy, RBI says

The RBI's monthly bulletin indicates rising rural and urban demand, fueled by tax relief and robust agricultural performance. Urban consumption is expected to recover due to lower inflation and increased disposable incomes. GDP growth is projected to slow before recovering in 2025, with a growth rate of 6.7%. "Strong rural demand is expected to receive a further fillip from the robust performance of the agriculture sector," the central bank noted, highlighting how rural areas are set to contribute significantly to the overall economic expansion. *(The Economic Times)*

Sugar mills make a case for hike in minimum selling price

Sugar mills in India are requesting a price hike for sugar due to rising production costs and cane payment arrears. The Indian Sugar & Bio Energy Manufacturers Association (ISMA) reported that the retail price of sugar has remained stable for the past two years, but the fair and remunerative price (FRP) paid to farmers and conversion costs have increased. The production cost is nearly ₹41 a kg, and the price of ethanol has not been revised for sugar mill supplies. *(The Hindu)*

Farmer producer companies can make farmers self-reliant

Deputy Commissioner of Mandya, Dr. Kumara, has called for an increase in farmer producer companies to enable farmers to market their produce independently and set suitable prices. He highlighted the importance of value-adding to make farming

sustainable and emphasized the need for proactive and relevant information provided by these companies to farmers. The Deputy Commissioner's initiative follows a recent training program for the heads, executive officers, and resource persons of farmer producer companies in Mandya district. *(The Hindu)*

Artificial insemination can help farmers improve livestock productivity, says study

A study by the Tata-Cornell Institute for Agriculture and Nutrition (TCI) has recommended the need to raise awareness, improve infrastructure, and offer subsidies to increase the use of artificial insemination for livestock. *(BusinessLine)*

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. The state Cooperation, Marketing and Textile Department issued the government resolution (GR) on Monday. *(Business Standard)*

Smart foodgrain management helps Centre keep subsidy bill under control

For the second year in a row, the Union Budget that was presented in Parliament has pegged the food subsidy at about Rs 2 trillion. The Budget Estimate (BE) for food subsidy in FY25 was Rs 2.05 trillion, while the Revised Estimate (RE) for the same year was about Rs 1.97 trillion. The BE for FY26 has been estimated at Rs 2.03 trillion, a shade lower than the BE for FY25. *(Business Standard)*

Pay a bribe or face delays: The dark side of Tamil Nadu's paddy procurement

Farmers in the Cauvery Delta region of Tamil Nadu are facing stress due to a bribery culture at the Direct Procurement Centres of the Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation (TNCSC). They are being forced to pay ₹1 per kg of paddy procured from them, and are worried about openly complaining. P.R. Pandian, president of the Coordination Committee of All Farmers Associations of Tamil Nadu, believes bribery is a localized and unspoken practice, and farmers are desperate to avoid conflicts with DPC officials. *(The Hindu)*

Wheat prices shoot up in govt auction after hike in individual limit

Wheat prices at the government's weekly auction on Wednesday spiked abruptly in most of the States, industry sources said. They attributed it to the relaxation granted to individual processors to lift a higher quantity. Out of 4 lakh tonnes (lt) wheat offered at the auction as much as 3,99,940 tonnes were sold out on Wednesday against 2,93,110 tonnes out of 3 lt on February 12. *(BusinessLine)*



Industry, Manufacturing, Services and Technology

Tie-ups in AI, semiconductors and biotech may soften US tariff blow

India's \$254-billion technology outsourcing industry, which generates more than 70% of its revenues in North America, will likely be able to offset the impact of reciprocal tariffs with collaboration in new revenue streams such as artificial intelligence, semiconductors,

quantum, and biotechnology. India's technology outsourcing industry, despite concerns about US reciprocal tariffs, is optimistic about collaboration in areas like AI, semiconductors, and biotechnology. The industry, which heavily relies on the US market, aims to contribute to doubling bilateral trade to \$500 billion by 2030 through initiatives like the US-India TRUST program. *(The Economic Times)*

Centre revamps websites, creates multilingual AI hub for better scheme outreach

The Union government has begun revamping its official websites and is working on an artificial intelligence hub to distribute information on government initiatives. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) released a Digital Brand Identity Manual on Tuesday, seeking to create a standard design language for government websites. *(The Hindu)*

Bangalore's Interior Design Industry Gaining Global Recognition

Bangalore (Karnataka) [India], February 20: Bangalore, renowned as a global tech hub, is rapidly emerging as a key player in the international interior design industry. With a deep talent pool, competitive pricing, and a growing reputation for design innovation, the city is attracting global clients seeking world-class interior solutions. *(Business Standard)*

Japanese electronics firm Murata to set up manufacturing unit in Tamil Nadu

Adding to the electronics sector boom in Tamil Nadu, Japanese electronics component giant Murata Manufacturing Company has entered the state through a factory at OneHub Chennai Industrial Park to manufacture multilayer ceramic capacitors. State industries minister TRB Rajaa on Wednesday said the Kyoto-based company, renowned for its multilayer ceramic capacitors (MLCCs), is the latest company to enter the state after Corning and Jabil. *(Business Standard)*

Centre weighs single law for online gaming Move to end maze of laws, bring clarity on taxation, attract investments

The Centre plans to bring India's online gaming companies under a single regulatory framework, eliminating the patchwork of state-level laws that currently governs the sector, two people aware of the development said.

The home ministry has formed a committee comprising its officials, legal and policy experts and gaming industry executives to discuss the way forward, the people cited above said on the condition of anonymity. *(Mint)*

Govt to sweeten deal for global EVmakers

The government introduced steep tax breaks about a year ago to lure global electric vehicle (EV) manufacturers to set up shop in India. Apart from indications that Elon Musk's Tesla Inc. might be preparing to sell its cars in India, EVmakers haven't taken the bait. Now, the Indian government is considering expanding the scheme to cover investments in charging infrastructure to make the policy more attractive to global EV manufacturers, people familiar with the matter said. *(Mint)*

Major auto component firms likely to invest up to Rs 30K cr next fiscal: ICRA

Major auto component firms in India plan to invest Rs 25,000-30,000 crore next fiscal for capacity expansion and localisation, focusing on electric vehicle parts. ICRA projects revenue growth to slow to 7-9% this fiscal and 8-10% in FY2026, driven by demand from domestic OEMs, premiumisation of components, and replacement demand.

(The Economic Times)

Age group of 25-35 taking highest insurance claims: Policybazaar Report

A report by Policybazaar for Business reveals that the age group of 25-35 has the highest insurance policy claims, with a significant portion attributed to maternity coverage. Claims from women account for 60%, while claims from men make up 40%. Corporates are customizing age-specific health benefits, as industries with young workforces adopt comprehensive healthcare plans. (*The Economic Times*)

'Announcement of U.S. trade pact gives relief to businesses'

The announcement to negotiate a bilateral trade agreement between India and the U.S. has boosted business confidence in both countries, as it can help further strengthen economic ties by leveraging their competitive strengths, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Sunday. During the recent visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Washington, India and the U.S. announced to more than double the two-way commerce to \$500 billion by 2030 and negotiate the first tranche of a mutually beneficial, multi-sector bilateral trade agreement (BTA) by fall of 2025. (*The Hindu*)

Govt mulls including charging infrastructure in EV investment mandate

The Indian government is considering a proposal to include investments in building a charging infrastructure network to meet investment eligibility criteria under a policy that required global players to invest \$500 million over three years in setting up a manufacturing plant and receive concessional duty for importing electric vehicles. The policy, which was seen as an attempt to woo Tesla, failed to attract potential carmakers, prompting the Ministry of Heavy Industries to initiate fresh discussions with stakeholders. (*Business Standard*)



News on Kerala

Focus on State-centric policies at Kerala Economic Conference

The Kerala Economic Conference 2025, underscored the need for collaboration between the government and policy-making bodies to formulate economic strategies suited to Kerala's unique socio-economic landscape. The conference was organised by the Kerala Economic Association (KEA). Kerala's distinct social and economic conditions require customised policies rather than general economic strategies, the organisers of the conference said in a statement. It highlighted the importance of considering these unique aspects while shaping the State's financial roadmap. (*The Hindu*)

To boost investment, Kerala govt. plans to grant industry status to its tourism sector

The Kerala government is planning to grant "industry status" to its tourism sector, a long-pending demand of the State's tourism and hospitality sector. Granting industry status will encourage more investment and development in the sector, which contributes around 10% of the Gross Domestic Product of the State. Though an announcement in this regard was expected during the Budget presentation, Finance Minister K.N. Balagopal mentioned such a plan during the discussion on the Budget in the Assembly. (*The Hindu*)

Kerala among highest spenders on higher education per youth, says NITI Aayog report

Kerala remains among the highest spenders on higher education per youth, according to a NITI Aayog report on India's higher education state. The report highlights Kerala's innovative digital-learning initiatives as a 'State good practice'. Despite the 14th Finance Commission's recommendation for increased tax devolution, the report shows a decline in both expenditure on higher education and the share of education spending by states between 2005-06 and 2019-20. *(The Hindu)*

182 LSGIs lag in meeting waste management goals

With 40 days remaining for the completion of the Malinya Muktham Navakeralam (garbage-free new Kerala) campaign of the State government to address waste management issues, 182 local self-government institutions (LSGIS) are lagging behind in meeting the targets set under the campaign, Minister for Local Self-Governments M.B. Rajesh has said. *(The Hindu)*

Kerala govt allocates additional Rs 300 crore for integrated healthcare scheme

The Kerala government has increased funding for the Karunya Arogya Suraksha Padhathi (KASAP) by an additional Rs 300 crore, raising the total allocation to Rs 978.54 crore. This scheme aims to provide health coverage of Rs 5 lakh annually to approximately 64 lakh poor and vulnerable people in Kerala, available across 565 hospitals. With this additional allocation, the total amount earmarked for the flagship scheme in the present financial year has gone up to Rs 978.54 crore, state Finance Minister K N Balagopal said in a statement on Sunday. *(The Economic Times)*

Kerala to launch first ever project on collection, disposal of expired medicines

Kerala's Drugs Control Department is set to launch the 'nPROUD' project, a first in the country, to collect and dispose of expired and unused medicines from homes. The initiative aims to prevent environmental pollution and health risks by following Biomedical Waste Management protocols, starting February 22 in Kozhikode. *(The Economic Times)*

Digital watermarking technique to enhance image security

A collaborative study involving Digital University Kerala has introduced an advanced digital watermarking technique that embeds device-specific watermarks into digital images, offering strong protection against machine learning-based attacks. The model holds promise for applications in intellectual property protection, secure image transmission and IoT device authentication to enhance digital security. *(The Hindu)*

Invest Kerala Summit to begin Friday; state eyes big-ticket investments

Kerala aims to secure significant investments during the Invest Kerala Global Summit, which will take place in Kochi, with over 3,000 delegates expected to attend. Union ministers Nitin Gadkari, Piyush Goyal, and Jayant Chaudhary are expected to address the opening session. Major investments are expected to come from sectors such as life sciences, food processing, and logistics. *(Business Standard)*

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



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