



Public Finance

Odisha tops Fiscal Health Index by NITI Aayog, praised for effective debt management and revenue mobilization

Odisha has achieved the top rank in fiscal health for FY 2022-23, as per NITI Aayog's Fiscal Health Index. With a score of 67.8, it excels in debt management and sustainability. The state's commendable fiscal discipline is highlighted by effective revenue mobilization and significant investment in social sectors like health and education. *(The Economic Times)*

Lower budget borrowing may add to India cash boost cheer

India will likely reduce its net borrowings for the second consecutive year, which may extend the rally in Indian bonds as the government aims to adhere to its fiscal consolidation path. The central bank's measures have brought bond yields to a three-year low, with major purchases expected to ease cash deficits and support the financial market. *(The Economic Times)*

The Budget pipeline and India's foreign policy ambitions

When the Union Budget is presented every year, most of the public attention often centres on taxation, infrastructure, and defence. In this, however, the budget for India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) deserves closer scrutiny. Last year, the MEA budget saw a rare 23% spike, up from the modest 4% annual increase between 2017 and 2023. Despite efficient Budget utilisation, exceeding 96% of the revised estimates, the MEA remains one of the least-funded Ministries. *(The Hindu)*

The Union Budget as a turning point for climate action

All eyes will be on Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman when she takes centre stage on February 1 to present the Union Budget. As the nation grapples with increasingly frequent extreme weather events and mounting pressure to meet its climate commitments, the FY26 Budget carries the weight of both urgency and opportunity. With just five years left to achieve India's first interim Net-Zero target, the Budget must take decisive steps to protect those on the frontlines of climate change. *(The Hindu)*

Telangana tops in own tax revenue during Apr-Nov last year: Economic Survey

Telangana leads in own tax revenue at 88%, followed by Karnataka and Haryana at 86% each. Additionally, Telangana excels with 86% irrigation coverage in its cropped area. The state's WE Hub initiative has significantly supported women entrepreneurs, raising Rs 177 crore and incubating 6376 startups and SMEs. *(The Economic Times)*

India's April-December fiscal deficit at Rs 9.14 lakh crore, widens on-year to 56.7% of FY25 aim

India's fiscal deficit for April to December, or the first nine months of this fiscal year, was at 9.14 lakh crore rupees, equivalent to 56.7% of annual estimates, widening from the

previous year's 55%. 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

No GST on penal charges levied by banks, NBFCs: CBIC

GST will not be charged on penal charges levied by banks and NBFCs, as clarified by the CBIC. This exemption is due to such charges being deemed as breaches of contract terms. Additionally, GST exemption applies to Payment Aggregators for transactions up to Rs 2,000, but not to Payment Gateway services. *(The Economic Times)*

Budget 2025: Mutual funds industry calls for tax breaks on debt schemes

Ahead of Union budget, the \$800 billion mutual funds industry has urged the government to introduce a more favourable dispensation of taxation for debt mutual funds in India. This is a must if investors have to make right asset allocation and a proper retirement security is to be created for the 1.4 billion people, Navneet Munot, Chairman, Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI), told businessline here in an interview. "Budget should restore a favourable dispensation of tax treatment for debt fund schemes in India," Munot said. *(BusinessLine)*

Finance Bill may amend CGST Act to target evasion-prone goods

The Finance Bill 2025 may include an amendment in the CGST Act 2017 to empower the government to implement a track and trace mechanism to put a check on evasion prone commodities. Annual report of Directorate General of GST Intelligence for 2023-24 has noted five top evasion prone good(s) as iron, copper, scrap and alloys, pan masala, tobacco, cigarette and bidi, plywood, timber and paper, electronic items and marble, granite and tiles. However, officials say the proposed amendment is likely to focus more on tobacco-related products. *(BusinessLine)*



National Accounts and State of the Economy

India needs 8% growth for two decades to achieve 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047, says Economic Survey 2024

India aims to become a developed nation, 'Viksit Bharat,' by 2047, requiring an average growth rate of 8% for the next two decades. The Economic Survey emphasizes the importance of navigating global challenges and enhancing domestic policies, infrastructure, technology, and human capital to achieve this ambitious goal. *(The Economic Times)*

New GDP series to include data on informal sector

The ministry of statistics and programme implementation is exploring new data sources for estimating the informal sector within the revised GDP series, with a base year of 2022-23. Sectors such as agriculture, certain manufacturing, construction, and trade, among others, are identified for their significant informality. The initiative will consider data sources like GST and digital payments. *(The Economic Times)*

Urban-rural spending gap narrows in FY24

The Household Consumption Expenditure Survey for 2023-24 indicates a decline in spending inequality between rural and urban areas and among social categories. The rural-urban spending gap has narrowed, with higher spending growth observed in scheduled tribes, scheduled castes, other backward classes, and casual labour. *(The Economic Times)*

Private sector activity slides to a 14-month low in January: Flash PMI

Hopes of a recovery in the manufacturing sector took a fresh hit as factory activity levels in India's private sector stumbled to a 12-month low in December from an already weak November performance, with both new orders and output levels slipping to the lowest through 2024, as per a private survey-based index. *(The Hindu)*

Eco Survey projects 6.3-6.8% growth for 2025-26

The Economic Survey for 2024-25 projects real growth between 6.3% and 6.8%, stressing the need for 8% growth to achieve the 'Viksit Bharat' vision by 2047. Key factors include deregulations, structural reforms, and sustained investment, amid global economic uncertainties. Modi's government has reduced compliances to ease business operations. *(The Economic Times)*

Economic Survey highlights Northeast states' 0.7% share in industrial GVA

The Economic Survey 2024-25 reveals that six Northeastern states, excluding Sikkim and Assam, contribute only 0.7% to industrial GVA, urging focus on tailored industrial strategies for these regions. It also highlights that four states, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu, generate 43% of the total industrial output. *(The Economic Times)*

Inflation to align with target progressively: Economic Survey

India's Economic Survey notes that inflation will progressively align with the target of 4%, aided by easing global commodity prices and improved agricultural practices. Key measures include developing climate-resilient crops, reducing crop damage, and enhancing yield to tackle production deficits and manage food inflation. *(The Economic Times)*

Self-employed workforce rising in India; reflects shift towards entrepreneurship: Eco Survey

The Economic Survey 2024-25 reveals a rise in self-employment among India's workforce from 52.2% in 2017-18 to 58.4% in 2023-24, highlighting increased entrepreneurial activity and preference for flexible work. Programs like Mudra Yojana and Skill India have supported this shift. The number of casual workers also decreased, indicating more structured self-employment forms. *(The Economic Times)*



Banking and Monetary Policy

RBI to cut rates to 6.25% in Feb, followed by one more cut next qtr: Poll

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is set to cut its main policy rate on Feb 7 followed by just one more cut next quarter, according to economists polled by Reuters, who have kept

their views largely unchanged from a month ago. The steady outlook comes despite recent data showing economic growth slowed to an annual 5.4 per cent in the July-September quarter, well below the 8.2 per cent seen in the last fiscal year. *(Business Standard)*

Reserve Bank of India's \$5 billion swap shakes up rupee and bond markets

The forward premium on the USD/INR one-month contract declined by 35 basis points (bps), while the one-year forward premium fell by 10 bps to 2.19 per cent following the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) announcement of a USD/INR buy/sell swap auction worth \$5 billion for a six-month tenor, scheduled for January 31. Market participants observed that traders adjusted their positions in response to the expected liquidity impact of the auction. *(Business Standard)*

RBI's Rs 1.5 trillion liquidity booster raises Feb rate cut hopes

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Monday announced a three-pronged measure to address tight liquidity conditions in the banking system, just 10 days before the six-member Monetary Policy Committee's decision on the repo rate. These steps, according to bankers, are expected to inject about Rs 1.5 trillion into the system, reducing the likelihood of further cash reserve ratio (CRR) cuts. Following the policy review in December, the RBI had already lowered the CRR by 50 basis points, infusing Rs 1.16 trillion. *(Business Standard)*

CBI officials, CVOs of public sector banks to meet regularly to discuss pending loan fraud cases

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Chief Vigilance Officers (CVOs) of public sector banks will henceforth have regular meetings on the cases of bank loan fraud for enhanced cooperation and resolution of issues, if any. The decision was taken at a coordination meeting on Thursday (January 30, 2025) in Mumbai. *(The Hindu)*

RBI announces steps to inject liquidity in banking system

The Reserve Bank of India on Monday said it will purchase government securities worth ₹60,000 crore in three tranches and announced several other steps to inject liquidity into the banking system. As part of measures to manage liquidity conditions, the central bank also announced a USD/INR Buy/Sell Swap auction of \$5 billion for a tenor of six months to be held on January 31, 2025. *(The Hindu)*

RBI Governor asks banks to have robust systems to curb digital frauds

Flagging the rising digital frauds, RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra on Monday urged banks to put in place robust and proactive systems to curb such misdoings as well as enhance their oversight of third-party service providers to mitigate the risks. In his remarks, the RBI chief expressed concern over the rise in digital frauds and advised banks to establish robust and proactive systems to thwart such attempts. *(The Hindu)*

RBI expresses concerns over small finance banks: Mergers suggested to mitigate risks

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is learnt to have developed 'supervisory discomfort' with a couple of small finance banks (SFBs) due to high concentration risks and rising asset quality stress. The banking regulator has also told these banks to explore mergers to gain scale and minimise concentration risks, three executives tracking the sector said. *(The Economic Times)*

Indian banks facing margin pressure amid high interest rate and declining loan growth: S&P Global

Indian banks are facing margin pressure as loan growth slows amid high interest rates, according to a report by S&P Global Market Intelligence. The report highlighted that the aggregate loan growth of six of India's largest banks--both private and state-owned--is expected to decline to 12.3 per cent in the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025. This is a sharp slowdown from the 22.5 per cent growth recorded in the previous fiscal year. *(The Economic Times)*

Cred joins RBI's digital currency project; first fintech to give access to CBDC

Tiger Global and Peak XV backed Indian firm Cred has become the first fintech platform to roll out access to India's central bank digital currency, the company said on Tuesday. The Reserve Bank of India had started a pilot for the e-rupee, which is a digital alternative to the physical currency, in December 2022. *(The Economic Times)*

UPI dominates digital payments, sees explosive growth over five years

The United Payments Interface (UPI) has become the dominant force in India's digital payments landscape, accounting for 83% of the total payment volume by the end of 2024, according to the Payments System Report by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). This is a massive increase from just 34% at the end of 2019. *(The Economic Times)*

Digital payments rise 11.1 pc at Sept-end 2024: RBI data

Digital payments in India saw an 11.11% year-on-year rise as of September 2024, with RBI's Digital Payments Index reaching 465.33. The growth was driven by improvements in payment infrastructure and performance across the country. The index, initiated in March 2018, is published semi-annually. *(The Economic Times)*

Credit growth moderates in personal loan segment in December: RBI data

Bank credit to the personal loan segment slowed to 14.9% year-on-year in December 2024, largely due to reduced growth in 'other personal loans', 'vehicle loans', and 'credit card outstanding'. Non-food bank credit growth also moderated, with significant deceleration in the infrastructure segment and services sector, notably in 'non-banking financial companies' and trade credits. *(The Economic Times)*



External Sector

Economic Survey: Why local factors are going to be more important for India than global ones from now

The Economic Survey released on January 31 made a key observation about the road-ahead for Indian exports, saying that "domestic growth levers will be relatively more important than external ones in the coming years." The era of rapid growth for world trade is over, and India's foreign trade playbook must now be seen in that context, the survey underlined. *(The Economic Times)*

Planters raise concerns over inferior tea imports and rule violation in re-export

KOLKATA: Resentment is brewing in the tea industry as planters and exporters are alleging that "inferior quality" imported tea is being blended with the Indian crop and exported without multi-origin tag by a few stakeholders, which is not only "undermining

prices" but also "posing a threat" to the reputation of the country's tea in overseas market. They also claimed that low priced tea, being imported from Kenya, Nepal, Vietnam and Iran, is also made available in the domestic market, which, they (*The Economic Times*)

Guwahati: Duty-free imported tea being re-exported as Indian Tea by exporters, says Tea Association of India

Guwahati: Tea Association of India has stated that there is re-exporting duty free imported tea as Indian Tea by Exporters. a statement the TAI, President Sandeep Singhania stated that a gross mismatch in respect of tea imported into India and the figure published by Tea Board of India is noted in the Industry circles. Tea (Distribution & Export) Control Order, 2005, mandates that any tea exported as "Indian Tea" or as any growing area name in India must contain 100% Indian name, which has been produced and manufactured in that particular tea producing areas in India. (*The Economic Times*)

Govt removes curbs on import of certain kinds of boats, vehicles

The government on Wednesday removed import restrictions on certain kinds of patrol boats and vehicles with immediate effect, according to a notification. The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) said the import policy of patrol or surveillance boats, air-cushion vehicles, and remote-operated vehicles is "revised from restricted to free with immediate effect". Import of these items stood at USD 0.46 million in April-November this fiscal. They are mainly imported from France, Germany, Hong Kong and the UK. (*The Economic Times*)



Agriculture and Rural Economy

Union Budget 2025: What Economic Survey says about the agriculture sector

India's agriculture sector continues to perform above trend levels, according to the Economic Survey 2024-25, presented in Parliament on Friday by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. The survey highlighted that in the second quarter of FY25, the agriculture sector grew by 3.5 per cent, reinforcing its critical role in the Indian economy. (*Business Standard*)

Agriculture ministry urges states to get more GI tagged unique products

To help farmers secure premium pricing and gain access to global markets for their unique products, the agriculture ministry has urged states to take proactive measures. These include setting up nodal agencies at the state and district levels to identify and register more products, creating specialised marketing platforms, and exploring financial assistance through various central sector schemes. (*Financial Express*)

India needs to develop climate-resilient crop varieties: Economic Survey

India needs to develop climate-resilient crops and improve yields for pulses, oilseeds, tomatoes, and onions to stabilize prices and ensure food security. Focused research, best practices, and improved data collection are essential. Training farmers and upgrading agricultural techniques are also necessary. The Reserve Bank of India and International Monetary Fund forecast inflation to align with the target in fiscal 2025-26. (*The Economic Times*)

Govt may consider giving agri subsidies via direct benefit transfer: Shivraj Singh Chouhan

Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan announced potential policy changes to simplify agriculture, suggesting subsidies for fertilisers and farming equipment through direct benefit transfer. The government is also considering covering transportation costs for agricultural produce to support farmers. These measures aim to make agriculture more efficient and reduce costs for consumers, while informing farmers about existing schemes. *(The Economic Times)*

India still among top four reserves holders despite a steep fall

India's foreign exchange reserves are robust, enough to cover 90% of its external debt and 10.9 months of imports. Despite a slight decrease from their peak, the reserves position remains strong, supported by positive capital inflows and a significant collection of foreign currency assets and gold. *(The Economic Times)*



Industry, Manufacturing, Services and Technology

India's power generation grows 5.4% in FY25 on higher demand

India's power generation went up 5.41% in April-December of the current financial year to 1,378.42 billion units, as compared with 1,307.64 billion units in the year-ago period, according to data from the Central Electricity Authority (CEA). This assumes importance given that energy consumption, especially that of electricity and refinery products, is typically linked to overall demand in the economy. *(Mint)*

Industrial & logistics leasing reaches all-time high in 2024, with Delhi-NCR, Bengaluru, and Kolkata leading

The Industrial and Logistics (I&L) sector in India experienced a record-breaking leasing volume in 2024, reaching an all-time high of 39.5 million square feet across the top eight cities, according to CBRE South Asia Pvt. Ltd.'s report. The growth in leasing activity was accompanied by a strong supply addition of 38.6 million square feet throughout the year, signalling a robust demand for industrial and logistics space across the country. *(Mint)*

Protectionist measures can shield steel sector from dumping: Industry players ahead of Budget

Domestic steel makers said they are expecting protectionist measures in the upcoming Budget to safeguard the sector from dumping. AMNS India CEO Dilip Oommen said he expects the government to continue its focus on infrastructure development while enhancing the ease of doing business. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will present the Union Budget for the 2025-26 financial year in Parliament on February 1, 2025. *(Mint)*

Gold trade slumps ahead of Budget and Trump tariffs

Sale of gold in Zaveri Bazaar, the largest gold market in the country, has come to a near halt ahead of the budget and US President Donald Trump's expected tariff announcement. Traders are wary of a possible increase in import duty on gold in the budget to put a leash on the widening trade deficit, said two industry executives. The import duty on gold was brought down to 6% from 15% in the budget for 2024-25 in July last year. *(The Economic Times)*

Telecom Disputes Settlement & Appellate Tribunal stays Trai penalties on telcos over spam menace

The Telecom Disputes Settlement & Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT) has stayed the telecommunications regulator's levy of financial penalties totalling more than '141 crore on Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea for not being able to curb spam. In its order, the TDSAT restrained the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) from taking any coercive action against the telecom operators till the next hearing, scheduled for February 13. *(The Economic Times)*

Realtors seek priority sector tag for Senior Living projects

Developers executing senior living projects have urged the government to give it a priority sector status so that the builder can finance the project at a lower interest rate ultimately making the house affordable for seniors. The sector has also urged GST rationalization for assisted living centers and bring such centers under the same GST bracket as hospitals. *(The Economic Times)*

How Indian real estate can lead the renewable energy revolution

The way we build our cities will define India's future. Real estate is more than just concrete and glass; it is the backbone of economic growth, urban expansion, and evolving lifestyles. Today, as energy demand rises and global priorities shift, the sector has an opportunity to lead a transformation that will benefit developers, homebuyers, and the nation as a whole. *(The Economic Times)*

Global tech cos may move court against govt's 6GHz decision

Technology majors such as Google, Facebook, Microsoft and Cisco, smarting from a bitter defeat in India in their bid to gain access to the coveted 6GHz airwaves, are open to challenging the government's decision in court. India recently approved the auction of low-frequency 6GHz spectrum band for use by telcos to offer wireless telephony services using technologies like 5G and 6G, rejecting tech companies' claims to these airwaves. *(The Economic Times)*

DoT seeks 'Time-Bound' switch by telcos to authorisation rule

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) wants all telecom licence holders to migrate to an authorisation regime in a time-bound manner so that existence of two separate frameworks, leaving room for potential litigation, could be avoided. "We are finalising the structure of the authorisation regime based on the recommendations of the regulator, and will try to implement it in a time-bound manner," an official told ET, without sharing further details. *(The Economic Times)*

OpenAI, maker of ChatGPT, questions jurisdiction of Indian courts in copyright case

OpenAI Global LLC, the maker of ChatGPT, repeated an argument in the Delhi High Court on Tuesday that it cannot be sued for copyright infringement in Indian courts, as its terms of use bind users to pursue either arbitration or legal action in the courts of California. The hearing came as two industry bodies — the Federation of Indian Publishers (FIP) and the Digital News Publishers Association (DNPA) — intervened in the case filed by the news agency Asian News International. *(The Hindu)*

DeepSeek AI model jolts global tech landscape

The impact reverberated across global markets as tech and AI stocks plummeted. Though the sell-off steadied on Tuesday, the low-cost Chinese AI model continues to be popular globally. Commenting on the development from China, U.S. President Donald Trump said:

“The release of DeepSeek AI from a Chinese company must be a wake-up call for our industries as we need to be laser focused on competing to win.” Mr. Trump said DeepSeek was a positive development for the U.S. tech industry as they “will be doing that too and won’t be spending that much to get the same results”. *(The Hindu)*

Indian space programme breaks into 2025 in ‘mission mode’

Just as 2024 was the year India developed a vision for its space programme, 2025 is likely to have the programme in mission mode. The PSLV-C60 mission, underway as the year began, laid the foundations for Chandrayaan-4 and the Bharatiya Antariksh Station. Forthcoming test flights will move India closer to human spaceflight, soon to receive a helping hand from a third launch pad approved for construction at Sriharikota, continuing work on the Next-Generation Launch Vehicle (NGLV), and a change of guard at ISRO. *(The Hindu)*

MCG scheme for MSMEs to boost investment, manufacturing, exports: Exporters

The launch of a new credit guarantee scheme for the MSME sector covering loans up to Rs 100 crore will help attract more investments, promote manufacturing and boost the country's exports, exporters say. They said that the exporting community's lack of adequate financing for capital investments has long been a challenge for MSMEs, restricting their ability to scale and compete in global markets. *(The Hindu)*

Unincorporated manufacturing jobs stay below 2010-11 level, shows NSO data

Employment in the unincorporated manufacturing sector remained below the 2010-11 levels in the October-September period of 2023-24, according to an analysis of the latest Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises data released on Wednesday, alongside the comparable 67th National Sample Survey round conducted in 2010-11 by the National Statistics Office (NSO). *(The Hindu)*

Union Budget 2025 expectations highlights: "Will Budget 2025 boost EV growth and manufacturing?"

Swarup Bose, founder and CEO, Celcius Logistics, said, "We are optimistic that the Union Budget will prioritise the development of cold chain infrastructure and the integration of advanced technologies within the logistics sector. India's cold chain industry, valued at approximately \$35 billion, is vital for ensuring the quality of perishable goods. The sector is set to experience transformative growth, with projections indicating it will reach \$50 billion by 2027." *(The Hindu)*

Core sector growth slows to 4% in December

India's core sector output growth moderated to 4% in December 2024 from 5.1% a year ago, with natural gas production seeing negative growth. Seven of the eight core industries recorded positive growth, supported by government capital expenditure and increased power demand due to winter. *(The Economic Times)*



News on Kerala

E Way Bill now mandatory for movement of gold, precious metal within Kerala

Kerala has become the first state to introduce E-Way Bill (EWB) for transportation of gold. This has been made mandatory for the movement of gold and precious stones costing ₹10

lakh and above within the state (intra state) with effect from January 20. "A new option for generating E-Way Bills (EWB) for gold has been introduced in the EWB system, effective from January 20, 2025. This feature has been made available to facilitate taxpayers in Kerala State to generate EWB for goods classified under Chapter 71, excluding Imitation Jewellery, for intrastate movement, in compliance with the notification issued by the Government of Kerala," an advisory posted on GST portal said. *(BusinessLine)*

Kerala facing financial difficulties due to absence of GST compensation: Governor Rajendra Arlekar in policy address

The 13th session of the 15th Kerala Legislative Assembly began with Governor Rajendra Arlekar's policy address. He emphasized financial challenges due to reduced central grants and GST compensation cessation. The state plans to focus on infrastructure, education, and healthcare while addressing disaster management and adhering to constitutional values. *(The Economic Times)*

Kerala will ink MoUs that are realistic, says Industries Minister Rajeeve

Kerala reaches out to global investors at Davos after two decades, showcasing its improved business-friendly environment and emphasizing responsible industrialization. The state aims to attract substantial foreign investment at its upcoming Kochi meet, focusing on technology and medical device manufacturing while preserving ecological sensitivity. *(The Economic Times)*

Kerala to launch rare disease patient registry, treatment clinic this year

A registry for rare disease patients in the state will become a reality this year, State Health Minister Veena George said on Friday. Speaking after inaugurating a workshop for experts in rare disease treatment here, George said the government aims to prevent rare diseases as its primary objective. She said a rare disease treatment clinic will be established in Kozhikode this year. The government is making efforts to bring affected children back to life, the minister said. "The registry for rare disease patients in the state will become a reality this year," George said. *(Business Standard)*

Wayanad's 'man-eater' tiger dead; hair, earrings of mauled woman found in its stomach

A tiger that killed a woman in Wayanad, Kerala, was found dead with evidence of her belongings in its stomach. The tiger died due to fresh wounds from a territorial fight. The woman's death had led to widespread protests, prompting intense efforts by wildlife officials to track and capture the animal. *(The Economic Times)*

Mission Food, Fodder, and Water to tackle human-wildlife conflict in Kerala

The Kerala Forest department has announced a special campaign to ensure water and food availability in forests during January-May, the period when increase in human-wildlife conflict is noted, Minister for Forests A.K. Saseendran said on Wednesday. The campaign is part of the measures designed to tackle the challenges of human-wildlife conflict in areas bordering the forest regions of the State. Christened 'Mission Food, Fodder, and Water' (Mission FFW), the campaign will have three phases with Phase 1 scheduled to be completed before February 10, Mr. Saseendran said after a meeting held to review the activities undertaken in connection with the incidents related to the human-wildlife conflict in Wayanad. *(The Hindu)*

Kerala Food Commission warns ration traders over strike, asks to withdraw

The State Food Commission on Saturday warned of legal action against ration traders on their proposed indefinite strike in Kerala from January 27. Legal action will be taken against anyone obstructing ration cardholders from receiving their entitled share of food grains, according to an official release issued by the Commission. "It is the responsibility of the State Food Commission to ensure that the food rights guaranteed under Section 16 (6) (b) of Chapter II of the National Food Security Act, 2013, are upheld and made available to consumers through the public distribution system." (*Business Standard*)

Health department issues warning on rising temperature

The Health department has asked the public to take necessary precautions to protect themselves against the rising temperature in many parts of the State. People should avoid being in the sun between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. The elderly, pregnant women, children, and those with chronic diseases should take special care to ensure that they are not dehydrated. Increasing atmospheric heat can lead to dehydration, heat stroke or other complications and hence people should ensure that they drink plenty of water. (*The Hindu*)

Sabarimala airport: committee recommends measures for rehabilitation of displaced

The expert committee reviewing the Social Impact Assessment (SIA) report for the proposed Sabarimala greenfield international airport in Erumely has submitted its findings to the State government, recommending stringent measures for rehabilitating those affected by the project. Chaired by Prathapan, former Additional Director at the Social Justice department, the committee highlighted that the financial and social benefits of the airport outweigh its adverse impact. It also proposes a special compensation package for workers employed at Cheruvally Estate, which is set to be acquired for the project. (*The Hindu*)

Not even a drop of groundwater will be extracted for brewery, says Minister

Excise Minister M.B. Rajesh on Saturday (January 25, 2025) reiterated that not even a drop of groundwater would be extracted for the purpose of the ethanol and liquor manufacturing facility in Palakkad. Addressing a press conference in Palakkad, the Minister said that the Opposition, aided by a section of the mainstream media, was continuing to run a propaganda on groundwater extraction, despite being aware of the truth. (*The Hindu*)

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