

# FINANCE, TAXATION & THE INDIAN ECONOMY



An Autonomous Institution of Government of Kerala



## Public Finance

### Ministry of Finance says overall credit disbursement to Priority Sectors jumped 85% from 2019 to 2024

The Ministry of Finance reported an 85% increase in credit disbursement to priority sectors like Agriculture, MSME, and Social Infrastructure by banks from Rs 23,01,567 crores in 2019 to Rs 42,73,161 crores in 2024, with a steady positive growth in agriculture sector lending. The total disbursement to the sector rose from Rs 8,86,791 crore in 2019 to Rs 18,27,666 crore by 2024. (*Business Standard*)

### Ajit Pawar to present Maharashtra 2025-26 budget on March 10, his 11th as Finance Minister

Maharashtra's Deputy Chief Minister and Finance Minister, Ajit Pawar, is set to present the State Budget for 2025-26 on March 10, 2025. This marks the first budget for the newly-formed Mahayuti government and Pawar's 11th budget as a Finance Minister. The Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) praised Pawar's financial discipline and balance between people-friendly and development decisions. During the COVID-19 crisis, his focus was on development projects and infrastructure. (*The Hindu*)

### Removing high-cost debt has lowered borrowing cost: FM Sitharaman

Sitharaman's comments were in the backdrop of the government's target of bringing down the debt-to-GDP ratio to 50 per cent by 2030 from 57 per cent at present. The FM highlighted that for prudent fiscal management, about ₹85,000 crore of government securities were bought back, and about ₹99,000 crore redemption of 91 days T-bills was undertaken. (*Business Standard*)



## Taxation

### Personal income tax surged to 3.5% of GDP in FY24

Collection from personal income tax (PIT) as a share of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) surged 140 basis points in Fiscal Year 2023-24 against 2.1 per cent in Fiscal Year 2014-15, the Finance Ministry informed the Lok Sabha on Monday. Figures under PIT include taxes paid by an individual, Hindu Undivided Family, Firms, associations of persons, body of individuals, local authorities and artificial juridical persons. However,

the government has replaced the term 'personal income tax' with 'non-corporate tax.' (*BusinessLine*)

### **MSMEs undertaking defence R&D slapped with 18% GST notices**

Private start-ups and other MSMEs are receiving notices to pay 18 per cent taxes under the CGST Act on funding received from the Ministry of Defence for research and development (R&D). Government officials say this amounts to "taxing innovation" as it disincentives Prime Minister Narendra Modi's focus on 'Aatmanirbharta' in the military sector. Government research associations, universities, colleges and other entities, registered under the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR), have been exempted from the tax by the GST Council through a notification issued on October 8, 2024. (*BusinessLine*)

### **Can GST rate rationalisation make India's tax system truly simple?**

In December 2018, Arun Jaitley, the late finance minister, proposed a future roadmap for the country's indirect tax reform. He suggested a single standard rate instead of two standard rates of 12% and 18%, with a midpoint between the two. This would take time as the tax would rise significantly. The ultimate goal is a GST with slabs of zero, 5%, and a standard rate, with luxury and sin goods as exceptions. (*Business Standard*)

### **New TDS rules from April 1: Higher limit for tax deduction on FD interest, lottery winnings**

The Union Budget 2025, presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, has introduced major revisions to the tax deducted at source (TDS) rules, aimed at providing financial relief to taxpayers, especially senior citizens, investors, and commission earners. Here's a breakdown of the key changes effective from April 1, 2025. (*The Economic Times*)

### **Advance tax deadline March 15, 2025: These salaried individuals don't need to pay the advance tax unless circumstances changed**

Advance tax has to be paid by taxpayers who have a total tax liability above Rs 10,000 in a given financial year. However, salaried individuals whose employer deducts the correct amount of TDS from salary don't need to pay advance tax. The stress is on the word "correct", because experts say many salaried individuals struggle with huge interest under Section 234C and 234B (in some cases) due to non-payment of advance tax on time, and this may happen despite TDS being deducted by the employer. (*The Economic Times*)



### **Income levels of salaried class have stagnated in recent years**

While employment is increasing, real wages for regular salaried jobs have not kept up with inflation over the last seven years. Real wages refer to the income a worker earns that is adjusted for inflation. They reflect actual purchasing power. An analysis of the earnings data for salaried workers, casual labourers, and self-employed persons from Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) reports shows that when adjusted for inflation, wages for salaried workers in India have stagnated since 2019. (*The Hindu*)

### **Progressive social policies, robust infra, placed TN on economic growth trajectory: Economic Survey**

Tamil Nadu's progressive policies and infrastructure have driven significant economic growth, contributing 9.21% to the national GDP in 2023-24. The state's GSDP reached Rs 27.22 lakh crores, with a nominal growth rate of 13.71% and a real growth rate of 8.33%. Employment generation and robust sectoral growth have created economic resilience amidst global challenges. (*The Economic Times*)

### **Tamil Nadu likely to maintain over 8% growth: first economic survey**

The global economy posted a real growth of 3.33% in 2023. India's economy recorded a growth of 7.61% in 2022-23, 9.19% in 2023-24, and 6.48% in 2024-25. Building on a strong foundation of inclusive policies, Tamil Nadu has demonstrated remarkable economic resilience, consistently achieving a growth of 8% or more since 2021-22. (*The Hindu*)

### **Congress MP files motion in LS on manufacturing crisis, China trade deficit**

Manickam Tagore sharply criticized the government's flagship initiative, Make in India, which was intended to boost domestic manufacturing and employment opportunities. He pointed to the declining share of manufacturing in India's GDP, which has fallen from 15 per cent in 2014 to just 12.8 per cent in FY24. Also, "The trade deficit with China has tripled, rising from \$35.2 billion in 2013 to \$105.8 billion in 2023, as Chinese goods flood the Indian market." Absolute poverty virtually eliminated, says Niti Aayog's Arvind Virmani (*Business Standard*)

### **Absolute poverty virtually eliminated, says Niti Aayog's Arvind Virmani**

The World Bank came up with the definition of absolute poverty as people earning less than \$1 per day, which would be \$1.9 per day adjusted for inflation today. Similarly, those earning under \$2 per day (or \$3.2 today) were classified as vulnerable. Share of those falling under the "vulnerable" category has dropped to 15 per cent from over 50 per cent

12 years ago, he said. The economist said that this number will also be eliminated over the next seven years. (*Business Standard*)

### **Himachal growth improves to 6.7pc in 2024-25, per capita income rises by 9.6 pc: Survey**

Himachal Pradesh's economy is expected to grow by 6.7 per cent in 2024-25. The state's per capita income will increase by 9.6 per cent. The tertiary, secondary, and primary sectors contribute significantly. The industrial sector is expected to grow by 8.1 percent. Tourist arrivals nearly reached pre-pandemic levels. Inflation dropped in rural and urban areas. (*The Economic Times*)

### **Improved outlook: Higher food grain output will help in managing inflation**

The consumer price index-based inflation rate declined to 3.61 per cent in February, the lowest since July last year. Meanwhile, the food inflation rate softened to 3.75 per cent, the lowest since May 2023. The food inflation rate has been softening since October last year, when it rose sharply to 10.87 per cent. A higher food inflation rate was driving the headline inflation rate for quite some time, creating policy complications for the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). (*Business Standard*)

### **Income levels of salaried class have stagnated in recent years**

The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) reports indicate that wages for salaried workers in India have stagnated since 2019, with real wages being 1.7% lower in the 2024 June quarter compared to the pre-pandemic 2019 quarter. The real wages increased by 2% in June 2020, but then dropped by 6% in June 2021 and 1% in June 2022. (*The Hindu*)



## **Banking and Monetary Policy**

### **Inflation eases, but RBI may not go for aggressive rate cuts: Economists**

A softer inflation print in February is unlikely to prompt the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) rate-setting body to opt for deeper cuts, especially when system liquidity remains in deficit and the full transmission of the 25-basis-point (bp) rate cut in February is yet to take place, economists said. India's headline CPI inflation eased to 3.61 per cent in February — the lowest since July 2024 — on the back of a sharp decline in food inflation, mostly due to lower vegetable prices. In January, headline inflation stood at 4.3 per cent. According to UBS Securities, headline CPI inflation is expected to average 4.2 per cent in 2025-26. (*Business Standard*)

### **Rupee gains as dollar drops to four-month low amid global uncertainty**

The rupee closed at 87.2125 against the US dollar, up 0.1 per cent on the day. The currency had declined to 87.3850 earlier in the session, as dollar bids spurred by the maturity of positions in the non-deliverable forwards

(NDF) market exerted pressure. The dollar index was down 0.5per cent at 103.3 while Asian currencies rose, with the offshore Chinese yuan leading gains, up 0.4per cent on the day. (*Business Standard*)

### **With inflation under control, RBI likely to cut interest rates further by up to 75 bps**

The latest retail inflation print has brought good news not just for consumers, but also borrowers. India's CPI (consumer price index) inflation eased to a seven month low of 3.61 per cent in February, below Reserve Bank of India's 4 per cent target, aided by declining vegetable prices. This, analysts say, will firmly set the RBI to cut interest rates by up to at least 75 basis points in the coming months. (*The Economic Times*)

### **Acceptable contrast A buoyancy in the real economy could provide long-term relief**

The RBI's February 7 0.25 basis point repo rate cut, from 6.50% to 6.25%, after a gap of five years, signalled the central bank's intent to raise capital flows in the real economy, to spur economic activity while continuing to focus on inflation moderation. Amid the ₹1.7 trillion liquidity squeeze in the banking system due to the flight of foreign portfolio and institutional investors, the RBI conducted two tranches of dollar/rupee swap auctions, with another one slated for later this month. This is expected to inject over ₹2 trillion into the banking system to address long-term liquidity concerns. (*The Hindu*)

### **Nabard, co-op credit institutions to create ₹1,000-cr venture to boost customer services**

The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Nabard) and entities in the short-term Rural Co-operative Credit (RCC) ecosystem plan to collectively invest about ₹1,000 crore to float a shared services entity as part of an ambitious plan to ensure that RCCs' customer services are on a par with commercial banks. The new entity will provide technology support services to short-term co-operatives in the three-tier RCC ecosystem, comprising State Co-operative Banks (StCBs), District Central Co-operative Banks (DCCBs) and Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACs). (*BusinessLine*)

### **India's situation on tariffs not same as China, Mexico, Canada, says govt**

The Indian government's stance on US tariff threats is based on the absence of any concrete measures against India and the US's openness to negotiations on the Bilateral Trade Agreement. Commerce Secretary Sunil Bartwal stated that the US has not imposed any India-specific tariffs and India's situation is not comparable to those of Canada, Mexico, or China, which have been subject to specific US measures.. (*BusinessLine*)

### **RBI net sold over \$36 billion during June-December to support rupee**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) was the net seller of over \$36 billion between June and December to support the rupee, showed the

government's written responses in the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday. Written replies by Minister of State in the Finance Ministry Pankaj Chaudhary revealed that gross sales during 7 months of the current fiscal, starting June, by the RBI were over \$53 billion while gross purchases were over \$16.5 billion. This means that net sales were over \$36 billion. However, this was not sufficient to stop the steep fall in the rupee. (*BusinessLine*)

### **RBI may go beyond a 25 bps rate cut in April, say experts**

Foreign banks and brokerages predict that India's recent soft inflation print could lead to further Reserve Bank of India policy rate cuts, with some even predicting a larger, non-standard 35-basis point cut in the April 9 MPC meeting. Some foreign banks also expect a sub-4 percent inflation print, laying the ground for additional 50-bp cuts this year. The fall in headline CPI inflation was driven by a 2 percentage point decline in food inflation, reaching 3.8% year on year. (*BusinessLine*)

### **RBI tweaks banks' lending norms, pushes NBFCs to modify funding strategy**

Indian non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) are expected to adjust their funding strategies in the upcoming financial year due to the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) decision to ease lending regulations. The RBI has reduced the risk weight on consumer microfinance loans by 25 percentage points to 100%, restoring the earlier risk weight framework. This adjustment is expected to free up capital for banks, allowing them to lend more to NBFCs, making bank funding a more attractive option for these firms. (*Business Standard*)



## **External Sector**

### **US tariffs may force electronic vendors to shift base to other nations**

Amid uncertainty over reciprocal tariffs by the US, electronics manufacturers in India, including iPhone-maker Apple's vendors, worry about shifting base to other favourable nations like Taiwan or Vietnam and losing opportunity to export to the US market. (*BusinessLine*)

### **India working on improved tariff-cut offers for the US**

The Commerce Ministry is working on improved offers for import tariff cuts for the US to be tabled in the next round of consultations with Washington DC, as the initial proposals discussed by Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal last week with his American counterparts were considered inadequate, sources have said. (*BusinessLine*)

### **India and Ireland to set up a joint panel on economic issues**

India and Ireland have agreed to establish a Joint Economic Commission (JEC) to coordinate on trade and international economic issues, including those related to the World Trade Organization (WTO). The JEC is expected to meet once in two years and a formal agreement is expected

later this year. The announcement follows a visit by the European Union's College of Commissioners, where India and Ireland agreed to finalize their Bilateral Trade Agreement by the end of 2025. (*The Hindu*)

### **India emerges as top source of foreign direct investment into Dubai**

India has become the top source country for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into Dubai, as the city retains its top position as a Global FDI Destination in 2024. The UAE has been ranked the world's No. 1 destination for Greenfield FDI projects for the fourth consecutive year, with India accounting for 21.5% of FDI in 2024. The UAE, along with the US, France, and the UK, has been the top destination for greenfield FDI projects in the region. (*The Hindu*)

### **India working on improved tariff-cut offers for the US**

India's Commerce Ministry is working on improved proposals for import tariff cuts for the US, as initial proposals discussed with US counterparts were deemed inadequate. The ministry may revisit the US with improved offers based on feedback from Washington DC. The US has expressed a desire for more than India initially had in mind, and India needs to make stronger offers before April 2, when President Trump threatens countries with reciprocal tariffs. (*BusinessLine*)

### **US eyeing a 'mega trade deal', including agri, 'tough for India'**

Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal wrapped up his week-long trade meetings with his American counterparts in Washington DC on Thursday to advance the proposed mutually beneficial India-US bilateral trade agreement. But American expectations of a "macro, large-scale, broad-based trade agreement" that would also include agriculture, may make the going harder for New Delhi as talks progress. India draws a line on agriculture and maintains tariffs at a level that cushions farmers from being swamped by imports. (*BusinessLine*)

### **India's edible oil imports hit 4-year low due to depleting inventories**

India's edible oil imports in February reached their lowest level in four years, mainly due to declines in soybean and sunflower oil imports. This has led to inventories at their lowest level in three years. This could force India to increase purchases, potentially supporting Malaysian palm oil prices and US soybean futures. The Solvent Extractors' Association of India reported a 35.7 percent increase in palm oil imports from January to 373,549 metric tonnes. (*Business Standard*)

### **India's trade deficit likely narrowed to USD 21.5 Bln in February from USD 23 Bln in January: UBI Report**

India's trade deficit is expected to decrease to USD 21.5 billion in February, down from USD 23 billion in January, according to a report by the Union Bank of India. However, geopolitical risks, particularly tariff concerns, will continue to impact trade dynamics. The decrease in the merchandise trade deficit is attributed to a moderation in the Non-Oil-Non-Gold segment and seasonal factors. (*The Economic Times*)

## **Want to consolidate trade ties with India: Italian Agriculture Minister**

Italian Agriculture Minister Francesco Lollobrigida has urged for the strengthening of reciprocal trade relations with India, highlighting the strong relationship between the two nations. Speaking at the 'Vinitaly' trade promotion fair India Roadshow, Lollobrigida emphasized the platform for Italian wine companies and others to meet and discuss topics related to industry development, highlighting the importance of strengthening trade relations. *(The Economic Times)*

## **Ex-post facto approval granted to India-Qatar MoU on financial-economic cooperation**

India has granted an ex-post facto approval to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the finance ministries of India and Qatar in February 2025. The MoU aims to enhance financial and economic cooperation between the two countries. The agreement was signed during the visit of Amir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, to India in February 2025. Baldeo Purushartha, Joint Secretary of the Department of Economic Affairs, and Mohammed Hassan Jabir Al-Jabir, Ambassador to Qatar, signed the MoU. *(ThePrint)*



## **Agriculture and Rural Economy**

### **Tur procurement under Price Support Scheme reaches 1.31 lakh tons: Agriculture Ministry**

The Centre has procured 1.31 lakh tonnes of tur under the Price Support Scheme for the 2024-25 Kharif season, benefiting over 89,000 farmers across five states. Procurement will commence soon in other regions, with approvals for masur and urad as well. This initiative aims for self-sufficiency in pulses by 2029. *(The Economic Times)*

### **Govt ready to include farmers in PM Kisan Samman Nidhi who are not part of it yet: Agri minister**

Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan announced that the government is prepared to offer Rs 6,000 annual cash benefit under the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi to all eligible farmers not yet included. State governments are urged to help identify these farmers and ensure they receive the benefit without delay. *(The Economic Times)*

### **Govt considers increasing MGNREGS funds as rural work demand rises**

The finance ministry is evaluating a proposal to release additional funds for the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) in the ongoing fiscal year, beyond the revised estimate of Rs 86,000 crore, to accommodate higher-than-expected demand for work, according to a report by The Economic Times. *(Business Standard)*

### **Scientists, progressive farmers told to explore waterbodies suitable for 'Makhana' cultivation**

District Collector Ch. Nagarani has asked floriculture scientists and progressive farmers to identify suitable waterbodies to explore the potential for the cultivation of 'Phool Makhana' (Lotus seeds) in West Godavari district. The farmers, scientists and other stakeholders here on Wednesday gathered for a training session on the cultivation of high-valued flower varieties and value-added products, export and domestic market opportunities. *(The Hindu)*

### **India produced record rice, wheat, maize in 2024-25, estimates Centre**

India achieved record rice, wheat, and maize production in the 2024-25 kharif season, according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare's second advance estimates. Kharif foodgrains production reached 1,663.91 lakh tonnes, while rabi foodgrains amounted to 1,645.27 lakh tonnes. These estimates provide significant insights into the country's agricultural output for major crops. *(The Economic Times)*

### **CottonConnect to launch pilot project on Kasturi Cotton in western India**

CottonConnect, a pioneering social enterprise committed to transforming global textile supply chains through sustainability, farmer capacity building, and women's empowerment, will soon launch a pilot project on Kasturi Cotton in western parts of the country (Gujarat or Maharashtra). *(BusinessLine)*

### **90% of rural women entrepreneurs save, 56% opt for bank deposits: survey**

A recent DBS Bank India survey found that 90% of rural women entrepreneurs save a portion of their monthly income, with 33% saving between 20% and 50%. The survey, conducted across Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan, included 411 women entrepreneurs and 402 members of Self-Help Groups. The research aimed to understand the unique financial needs and behaviors of rural women, providing insights into their financial management and entrepreneurship approach. *(Business Standard)*

### **Parliamentary panel asks Centre to spend more on agriculture, rename Ministry**

The Standing Committee of Parliament on Agriculture, headed by former Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi, has recommended a change in the name of the Union Agriculture Ministry to reflect the importance of farm workers, too. The panel, in its report tabled in Parliament on Wednesday (March 12, 2025), has also demanded a comprehensive crop insurance plan for small-holding farmers. *(The Hindu)*



### **Current Government Initiatives Strengthen India's Position in Global Medical Tourism**

India, a global hub for medical tourism, has a \$9 billion industry worth attracting patients for advanced treatments in cardiology, orthopedics, oncology, and organ transplants. The country's skilled doctors, internationally accredited hospitals, and advanced medical technology attract patients worldwide. Recent government policies have emphasized promoting medical tourism, acknowledging its growing impact on the healthcare sector, a move appreciated by experts and service providers. *(Business Standard)*

### **As imports of semiconductor chips rise, India eyes local production**

India's Minister of Electronics and Information Technology, Ashwini Vaishnaw, announced the launch of India's first domestically manufactured semiconductor chip at the World Economic Forum. The move aims to reduce India's increasing import dependency. Five manufacturing facilities, supported by the Semicon India Programme, are under construction for chip manufacturing and assembly, including the Tata Semiconductor Assembly and Test facility in Morigaon. *(The Hindu)*

### **Data Protection rules: Industry bodies flag concerns over compliance costs**

With Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Rules expected to be finalised within the next couple of months, consumers and industry bodies have expressed concerns about the compliance costs and administrative burden on businesses, owing to certain provisions of the draft rules like processing of children's data, user consent mechanisms and transfer of personal data. Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS) International, a think tank invested in inclusive digital economy, has asked the government to conduct a regulatory impact assessment (RIA) with a cost-benefit analysis. *(BusinessLine)*

### **Despite innovation boom, India's R&D investments lag**

Despite India's strides in innovation, supported by its scientific manpower, robust IT and pharmaceutical sectors, and a thriving start-up ecosystem, the country continues to lag in research and development (R&D) investment. The gross expenditure on R&D (GERD) in India has increased from approximately ₹60,196 crore in FY11 to about ₹1,27,381 crore in FY21. However, this remains at just 0.64 percent of GDP — far lower than many global counterparts. *(BusinessLine)*

### **Real money gaming industry bodies jointly adopt a code of ethics**

Industry bodies representing online real money gaming companies have jointly signed a "code of ethics", which their member companies will

adopt for promoting user safety and responsible gaming practices, including KYC verification, spending limit, etc. The industry bodies include the All India Gaming Federation (AIGF), the Federation of Indian Fantasy Sports (FIFS), and the E-Gaming Federation (EGF), who jointly signed the code in this week. ([BusinessLine](#))



## News on Kerala

### **Adani's Vizhinjam port gets environment clearance for next phases: Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan**

Vizhinjam International Seaport has received clearance from the Union Environment Ministry for its next two development phases, aiming for completion by 2028. Developed by the Adani Group, the port is India's first deep-water container transshipment and automated port. It is poised to significantly enhance India's maritime trade, reducing dependency on Colombo, Dubai, and Singapore for transshipment. ([The Economic Times](#))

### **No cut in welfare pension, govt considering hike, says Kerala Finance Minister**

Kerala Finance Minister K N Balagopal assured that there is no reduction in welfare fund pensions and the state is considering increasing them. Despite financial challenges, the government is handling the welfare boards effectively. Opposition claims significant delays and pending arrears, affecting millions of workers. Following the minister's statement, the opposition staged a walkout in protest. ([The Economic Times](#))

### **Unfavourable weather in Kerala pulls tea production down in January**

The country's tea production in January declined marginally by 2.13 per cent to 17.03 million kg (mkg), mainly on lower output in Kerala, which was affected by unfavourable weather. Tea output in the same period a year ago stood at 17.40 mkg. Per the provisional data released by the Tea Board, the production declined by 7.94 per cent in Kerala to 4.87 mkg — down from 5.29 mkg in January 2024. Elusive rain in Kerala, coupled with the prevailing low humidity levels, is seen impacting the output in Kerala during February and March. ([BusinessLine](#))

### **Preserving paddy fields needed for food security, groundwater: Kerala govt**

The Kerala government on Wednesday said it intends to protect and preserve the existing paddy lands in the state at any cost and will not allow them to be converted for other purposes. The announcement was made in the state assembly by Kerala Agriculture Minister P Prasad in response to a query during question hour on whether the government intends to preserve existing paddy fields. The minister stressed the need to preserve the existing paddy fields from the perspective of ensuring food security and recharge the groundwater table. ([Business Standard](#))

## **Drinking water polluted in 74 locations across Kerala? Ministry of Water**

### **Resources reveals data**

A parliamentary committee from the Ministry of Water Resources has revealed that drinking water in 74 locations across 10 districts in Kerala has been contaminated. The affected districts in Kerala include Alappuzha (12 areas), Idukki (3 areas), Kannur (21 areas), Kasaragod (2 areas), Kozhikode (15 areas), Malappuram (8 areas), Palakkad (2 areas), Thiruvananthapuram (1 area), Thrissur (2 areas), and Wayanad (8 areas). [mathrubhumi.com](http://mathrubhumi.com)

### **ASHA workers will get enhanced pay, says Union Minister**

Union Health Minister J. P. Nadda announced that Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) will receive enhanced remuneration, following widespread demand for better pay. The Mission Steering Group recommended the increase, and the government will proceed with it. ([The Hindu](#))

### **Start-ups foster innovation in Kerala's tourism sector**

Cashing in on the thriving start-up ecosystem in Kerala, travel and tourism start-ups have grown exponentially in the State in recent years, fostering innovation and generating jobs. According to the statistics available with the Tourism department, 156 start-ups have been operating in the hospitality sector of the State. Of these, 102 started operations in the past three years. ([The Hindu](#))

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