



Public Finance

Finance ministry to vet ongoing schemes for 16th Finance Commission

The government has asked all ministries and departments to furnish additional details for central sector and centrally sponsored schemes that are ending or continuing beyond March 31, 2026, as it prepares to align scheme allocations with the 16th Finance Commission cycle, according to an official memorandum from the Department of Expenditure. The details sought include departmental comments on findings from third-party evaluations, year-wise allocations for proposed schemes over the next five years, and information on components being dropped or modified, along with justifications. (*Business Standard*)

INDIA BONDS-India bonds dip on caution ahead of weekly debt supply

Indian government bonds fell on Thursday, as cautious traders pared positions ahead of the weekly debt supply, while concerns over sticky core inflation and reduced purchases from a key investment category that includes the central bank lingered. The yield on the benchmark 10-year note settled at 6.5161%, compared with Wednesday's close of 6.4955%. Bond yields rise when prices fall. The Reserve Bank of India is set to sell bonds worth 280 billion rupees (\$3.16 billion) on Friday, including a 15-year and a 40-year note. The auction's outcome will be closely watched, particularly as demand for long-term bonds appears to be dwindling, traders said. (*The Economic Times*)

India's next Budget must balance fiscal discipline with growth push

The budgetary process for 2026-27 began in October with the issuing of the circular relating to it and commencement of pre-Budget meetings. With volatility and uncertainty caused by disruptive effects of Trump tariffs and their impact in slowing the world economy and continued international conflicts in spite of the claims by the United States (US) President of having stopped eight wars in the background, the Budget will have to be formulated to deal with formidable challenges. It must continue fiscal consolidation to reduce the fiscal deficit to bring down the ratio of debt to gross domestic product (GDP). (*Business Standard*)

Pre-Budget meetings with govt: Economists urge FM to push capex pedal

India's leading economists are learnt to have urged Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to keep 'pushing the pedal' on capital expenditure in the upcoming Union Budget 2026-27, even if that entails slower progress on fiscal consolidation in light of the global geopolitical situation. This was among the key suggestions made by economists in pre-Budget consultations held by the Finance Ministry on Monday under the stewardship of Minister Sitharaman. (*Business Standard*)

Indian state-run firms set stage for \$1 billion debt blitz as rates soften

Three Indian state-run companies are lining up bond offerings over the coming days, targeting as much as \$1 billion across medium to long tenor bonds, three bankers said on Tuesday. National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID), Power Grid Corp and Housing and Urban Development Corp will raise an aggregate of around 90 billion rupees through five- to 15-year notes, the bankers said. Indian corporate bond yields have eased over the past few days as supply from top-rated state-run companies has dried up and as government bond yields have declined due to suspected bond purchases from the central bank. *(The Economic Times)*

State must redefine its role in the financial sector, reduce footprint: World Bank's India report

India's financial system has become more resilient, diversified and inclusive, with the State still playing a prevalent role, since the Financial Sector Assessment Program (FSAP) in 2017, per the World Bank's latest Financial Sector Assessment (FSA) report. The FSAP, 2024, said the State would need to redefine its role in the financial sector, reducing its footprint to increase efficiency and mobilise private capital. Further, exemptions for state-owned NBFCs (non-banking finance companies) from prudential standards should be eliminated. *(BusinessLine)*



Taxation

CBDT uncovers ₹9,169 crore bogus political donation racket

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has unearthed an organised network involving Registered Unrecognised Political Parties (RUPPs), chartered accountants and intermediaries engaged in laundering money worth ₹9,169 crore that was being passed off as political donations to evade taxes. According to sources privy to the CBDT's co-ordinated action, excess tax deductions of ₹9,169 crore were claimed over two assessment years — 2022-23 and 2023-24 — compared to legally declared political receipts. Of this, ₹6,116 crore pertained to AY2022-23 and ₹3,053 crore to AY2023-24. *(BusinessLine)*

Net direct tax collections grow 7% as refunds fall sharply

Net direct tax collections grew by 7% in this financial year up to November 10, largely driven by a significant contraction in the refunds paid out by the Income Tax Department during this period, official data shows. The direct tax collections data, released by the Income Tax Department on Tuesday, shows that gross collections grew 2.15% to ₹15.35 lakh crore in this financial year up to November 11. Within this, gross corporate tax collections grew 4.6% to ₹ 6.9 lakh crore. *(The Hindu)*

GST reforms to propel India's FY26 GDP growth to 7.4%, says NIPFP

The Indian economy is expected to grow by 7.4 per cent in the current financial year, as the effect of goods and services tax (GST) rate rationalisation kicks in and the US economy performs to its potential, said the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP) in its latest mid-year economic review on Tuesday. *(Business Standard)*

India's FY26 growth to be above 6.8% driven by GST, tax relief: CEA

Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) V Anantha Nageswaran on Friday exuded confidence that economic growth would be upwards of 6.8 per cent in the current financial year driven by consumption boost provided by GST rate cut and income tax relief.

The Economic Survey tabled in parliament in January had projected real economic growth of 6.3-6.8 per cent for FY26. *(Business Standard)*

Health insurance sales up 20% in October on GST relief on premiums

The waiver of Goods and Services Tax (GST) on individual health insurance premiums led to a 20 per cent increase in the sale of health cover in October, the first full month in the new tax regime. Addressing a long-pending demand, the Centre waived 18 per cent GST on individual health and life cover policies, which came into effect on September 22.

(BusinessLine)



National Accounts and State of the Economy

India witnessing fundamental shift in how Indian households save and invest

SEBI's investor survey reflects that investors are motivated by long-term growth, building additional income, and goal-based financial strategies. The numbers speak for themselves. The count of unique investors in the capital market has surged from just over 38 million in FY 2019 to nearly 135 million now. The number of unique mutual fund investors has jumped from 10 million a decade ago to over 56 million now. Household savings channelled into mutual funds grew at a CAGR of 24% between FY21-FY25, far outpacing the 9% growth in bank deposits. This isn't just financialization - we are witnessing democratisation of wealth creation. *(Business Standard)*

Andhra eyeing investments worth ₹40 trn by 2029: N Chandrababu Naidu

Naidu outlines a tech-driven roadmap for the state - from AI data centers and quantum computing to green hydrogen and MSME-led industrial growth. He is expecting investments of around ₹40 trillion by 2029, which is the first phase, including both public and private. As of today, in the public sector itself, Andhra may get ₹20 trillion with an employment of two million. *(Business Standard)*

Mirova invests \$30 mn in Varaha's Kheti soil carbon project in India

The Kheti project aims to support the transition of over 337,000 smallholder farmers across 675,000 hectares in the Indian states of Haryana and Punjab toward regenerative practices, including direct seeding of rice, crop residue management, and reduced tillage. These practices are expected to generate high-quality carbon credits, with a revenue-sharing mechanism ensuring that farmers directly benefit from the sale of credits. The company's digital platform enables real-time monitoring, reporting, and verification (MRV). *(Business Standard)*

MSMEs seek measures to address funding gap

MSMEs need measures to address the funding gap the sector faces, president of the Coimbatore District Small Industries Association M. Karthikeyan said at a pre-budget meeting with MSME associations organised by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in New Delhi on Wednesday. The MSMEs need ₹30 lakh crore, according to a Reserve Bank of India report. The number of new loan accounts has reduced. And, the fund requirement of the MSMEs in the manufacturing sector is higher. *(The Hindu)*

Rupee sees slight dip after record inflation print; opens lower at 88.65/\$

The domestic currency opened 2 paise lower at 88.65 against the greenback on Thursday, according to Bloomberg. The Rupee has risen 0.11 percent this month, while it has fallen 3.58 percent this year, Asia's second-worst performing currency. India's retail inflation eased sharply to a record low of 0.25 percent in October from 1.44 percent in September, thanks to a favourable base effect, a record 5 percent drop in food prices, and the initial impact of GST rates' rationalisation. *(Business Standard)*

Consumer price inflation slides to 0.25%, food prices tumble 5% on year

Year-on-year inflation rate based on All India Consumer Food Price Index (CFPI) for the month of October, 2025 over October, 2024 is -5.02% (Provisional). Corresponding inflation rates for rural and urban areas are -4.85% and -5.18%, respectively. A decrease of 269 basis points is observed in food inflation in October, 2025 in comparison to September, 2025. The food inflation in October, 2025 is the lowest of the current CPI series. Vegetable prices fell around 27% on year. Pulses and products also marked a slide of 16%. *(Business Standard)*



Banking and Monetary Policy

MUFG, HSBC bet big on India's GIFT city in warning to Asia hubs

Global banks are flocking to India's newest finance hub to take advantage of the nation's surging demand for US-dollar denominated debt, taking a key business away from Asia's more established centers such as Hong Kong and Singapore. Banks in the Gujarat International Finance Tec-City disbursed nearly \$20 billion in dollar loans to Indian corporates in the fiscal year ended March, more than a third of the total issued for local companies globally. *(The Economic Times)*

Banks at crossroads as AI costs rise and risks escalate: S&P Report

Global banking sectors are facing growing challenges due to rapid digitalization, adoption of artificial intelligence (AI), climate change, and increasing cyber threats, according to a report released by S&P Global Ratings. The report said that these evolving risks will put pressure on some banks' business models and risk management practices while offering opportunities for others. *(The Economic Times)*

Public sector banks reported over ₹93,000 crore net profit in April-September

Public sector banks reported nearly 10 percent growth in net profit during the April-September period of current fiscal, Finance Ministry data showed. In a review meeting with PSBs on Wednesday, the Ministry stressed the need to sustain momentum in low-cost deposit mobilisation and credit growth, particularly in the MSME (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) and agriculture sectors. *(BusinessLine)*

Sustain low-cost deposit momentum: Finmin to PSBs

The finance ministry on Wednesday urged state-run banks to sustain the momentum in mobilising low-cost deposits and boosting credit flows, particularly to the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) and agriculture sectors. The Centre made these suggestions during a performance review meeting for the first half of FY26, in which public sector banks (PSBs) reported a net profit of ₹93,675 crore. Gross non-performing assets (NPAs) declined to a multiyear low of 2.30%. *(The Economic Times)*

NaBFID raises ₹4,120 cr from long-term bond sale at coupon rates of 6.86%

The National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID) on Wednesday raised ₹4,120 crore through two tranches of bonds maturing in five and 15 years. The development finance institution raised ₹2,460 crore through 15-year bonds carrying a coupon rate of 7.15 percent, against an issue size of ₹2,500 crore. It also mobilised ₹1,660 crore through 5-year bonds at a coupon rate of 6.86 percent. *(Business Standard)*

Reserve Bank of India nudges states to rejig borrowing amid rising yields

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has nudged state governments to reschedule their market borrowings to ease the supply pressure in the bond market, amid the recent rise in yields, sources aware of the development said. The central bank has advised states to defer their debt issuance to periods when yields are softer. *(Business Standard)*

Profitability of banks to improve in coming quarters: Report

The profitability of banks is expected to improve in the coming quarters, driven by improved advances growth and lower interest expenses, according to a report by Systematix Research. The report stated that bank profitability is likely to be supported by four key factors. *(The Economic Times)*



External Sector

India's textile exports growth recorded in 111 countries, shows resilience and diversification

India's Textile & Apparel, including handicrafts exports, demonstrated remarkable resilience in the first half of FY 2025-26 despite global headwinds and tariff-related challenges in major markets. India's global exports of textiles, apparel and made-ups grew marginally by 0.1 percent during April-September 2025, compared to the corresponding period in 2024. According to the release, some of the large export markets for India, which clocked impressive growth rates, were the UAE (14.5 percent),

the UK (1.5 percent), Japan (19.0 percent), Germany (2.9 percent), Spain (9.0 percent), and France (9.2 percent). On the other hand, some of the other markets that recorded higher growth rates were Egypt (27 percent), Saudi Arabia (12.5 percent), Hong Kong (69 percent), etc. (*BusinessLine*)

India CPI Inflation October 2025 Highlights: Retail inflation slows to 0.25% in October, lowest y-o-y inflation in the current CPI series

Retail inflation based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) is expected to dip sharply below 1% in October—possibly as low as 0.2%—marking the lowest reading in the current series. The decline reflects the full-month impact of the GST rate cuts effective from September 22, along with easing food prices. Inflation had stood at 1.5% in September. Economists say the disinflationary trend is being driven by lower prices in perishables, pulses, and cereals, and a broad decline in the food and beverages category. However, experts expect October to mark the bottom of the current inflation cycle, with prices likely to inch up again in the coming months due to base effects and potential food supply disruptions. (*BusinessLine*)

India awaits US' response to its trade proposal

India is waiting for a response from the US to its proposal on the bilateral trade deal being negotiated and does not see the need for additional rounds of negotiations, government, sources said. "India has kept in mind each sensitive sector (and protected them) in the proposal made to the US for the India-US bilateral trade agreement (BTA). The talks are progressing well between both side. India is waiting for US response to its proposal and another round may not be needed," the source tracking the matter closely said. US President Donald Trump said on Monday that trade talks with India had made significant progress and the two sides were reaching a fair and balanced agreement. (*BusinessLine*)

Rupee slips to 88.65: All eyes on crude, US-India trade deal progress

The rupee depreciated 15 paise to 88.65 against the dollar in early trade on Wednesday, weighed down by elevated crude oil prices and foreign fund outflows. Forex traders said renewed optimism over the India-US trade deal supported the domestic unit at lower levels. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 88.61 against the US dollar before dropping to 88.65, down 15 paise from its previous close. On Tuesday, the rupee had settled at 88.50 against the US dollar. Forex traders said the MSCI Review may result in positive foreign fund inflows. (*Financial Express*)

Trade, investment issues figure in 4th round of FTA talks with New Zealand

India and New Zealand successfully completed their fourth round of Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations, focusing on goods, services, investment, and economic cooperation. India and New Zealand wrapped up the fourth round of negotiations on their Free Trade Agreement (FTA) on Friday, focusing on trade, investment, and economic cooperation. "The fourth round of negotiations were focused on goods market access, services, economic and technical cooperation and investment opportunities," Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said. (*Financial Express*)

India's import dependency of cooking oils to continue: Report

In May 2025, the government reduced the effective import duty on edible oils—palm, soybean, and sunflower—to 16.5% from 27.5%, while keeping the basic customs duty on refined oils unchanged at 32.5%, resulting in an effective duty of 35.75%. India's dependence on imported cooking oils is expected to remain elevated in the near to medium term, with edible oil imports likely to decline only marginally in the 2024–25 oil year (November–October), according to consulting firm India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra). “Lower kharif acreage may also impact the country's oilseed production in the 2025–26 oil year, keeping the import dependency high,” the agency stated in its latest report. *(Financial Express)*

Sugar exports to pick up only when global prices rise: Industry

The government's plan to allow 1.5 million tonne (MT) of sugar exports in the 2025-26 sugar season (October-September) would help local mills to rake in profits only if the global prices of the sweetener firm up. Currently, prices in key export markets are ruling below the domestic prices. Reports of the government's nod for the exports came at a time when sugar industry was fearing a rise in stocks amid the prospects of 16% increase in sugar production to 34.35 million tonne (MT) in the 2025-26 season. *(Financial Express)*



Agriculture and Rural Economy

Govt proposes Seeds Bill to curb sale of spurious seeds, seeks comments on draft

The Centre has shared the draft Seeds Bill seeking public comments within a month to take it forward in the forthcoming Parliament session. The draft Bill proposes major reforms, from the process of registration to ensure availability of genuine seeds to farmers and curb sales of spurious seeds by making it an offence with a penalty provision of ₹50,000-₹30 lakh. Asking stakeholders to submit suggestions by December 11, the Agriculture Ministry on Thursday said that the proposed legislation is intended to replace the existing Seeds Act, 1966 and the Seeds (Control) Order, 1983. *(BusinessLine)*

Falling pulses, oilseeds prices hurting farmers

India's food inflation dropped to a 30-month low of -2.28% in September 2025, driven by falling global and domestic prices of major food commodities and a high base effect. While this decline has eased pressure on consumers, it has pushed mandi prices of several crops especially pulses and oilseeds well below MSP due to record imports, high output, weak procurement, and global price slumps, hurting farmers' incomes and discouraging cultivation. Tur, groundnut, soybean and other crops have seen steep deflation, and areas under pulses and oilseeds have stagnated or declined, even as rice acreage continues to rise. The situation underscores the need for stronger MSP-backed procurement in the short run and, in the long run, more efficient market linkages and productivity improvements to ensure remunerative prices and support self-sufficiency in pulses and edible oils. *(BusinessLine)*

Govt crackdown on black marketing, hoarding of fertilizers to improve supply

The Centre, along with State governments, intensified enforcement during the kharif and ongoing rabi seasons to secure fertilizer supplies and curb black marketing, hoarding, diversion and sale of sub-standard fertilizers. Against an estimated rabi demand of 378.73 lakh tonnes, authorities conducted over 3.17 lakh inspections and raids nationwide, issuing 5,119 show-cause notices and cancelling or suspending 3,645 licences, with 418 FIRs filed since April. States such as Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Haryana led the action, with Maharashtra alone undertaking over 42,000 inspections and more than 1,000 licence cancellations. These measures, the government said, helped prevent artificial shortages, ensured timely availability and maintained the integrity of the fertilizer distribution system. (*BusinessLine*)

Maize procurement: Telangana ups per-acre yield limit to 25 quintals

With maize yields surging in several parts of Telangana, the State government has increased the per-acre procurement eligibility from 18 to 25 quintals and plans to buy 8 lakh tonnes through 125 centres, against an expected harvest of 11.5 lakh tonnes from an expanded 2.60 lakh hectares. Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao has sought Central support for maize procurement, while Civil Supplies Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy has urged relaxation of moisture norms for paddy, maize and cotton due to crop damage across 1.1 lakh acres. The State also plans to ask the Centre to raise the cotton procurement yield limit from 7 to 12 quintals per acre to support affected farmers. (*BusinessLine*)

Farmers must benefit from registering ownseed varieties: Agriculture Minister Chouhan

Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan emphasised the need to balance the preservation of traditional seed varieties with the promotion of high-yielding ones, cautioning that farmers may lose interest in registering their innovations if the current system does not offer tangible benefits. Speaking at the Plant Genome Saviour Awards on the 25th anniversary of the PPVFRA Act, he praised farmers for conserving indigenous varieties crucial for nutrition and ecological stability, and noted the Authority's support of up to ₹15 lakh for such efforts. Chouhan urged the PPVFRA to simplify registration procedures, enhance transparency, raise farmer awareness about their rights, act on stakeholder suggestions, and build a strong scientific database to protect traditional seed knowledge. (*BusinessLine*)

Wheat acreage more than doubles on early harvest of Kharif crops

Rabi sowing has made an early and strong start this season, with total sown area rising 27% to over 130 lakh hectares as timely kharif harvests cleared fields quickly, particularly in Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. Wheat acreage has more than doubled to 22.72 lh, supported by favourable temperatures and widespread use of machine sowing, while paddy, maize, barley, and coarse cereals have all registered notable expansions. Pulses area is up to 36.83 lh, driven mainly by a sharp rise in chana sowing, and oilseeds acreage has increased 15% to 54.46 lh, led by mustard. With the government targeting 171.14 mt of rabi foodgrains and 15.07 mt of oilseeds, the early sowing momentum could help achieve normal or higher yields if weather conditions remain favourable. (*BusinessLine*)

Onion growers demand MSP as climate and market turmoil deepens

Onion farmers in Maharashtra's Nashik region are demanding MSP as erratic weather, shifting sowing cycles, damaged export links and extreme price volatility have made onion cultivation increasingly unviable. With production costs around ₹2,000 per quintal and market prices fluctuating between ₹500 and ₹2,200, many growers are unable to recover expenses, especially after heavy rain damaged nearly 80% of the kharif and late kharif crop and delayed rabi sowing. Farmers' organisations warn that inconsistent export policies and weather shocks have pushed many to cut cultivation significantly, urging the government to provide MSP support and policy stability to ensure their survival. *(BusinessLine)*

Wide gap in farmgate prices among key producing States

Mandi prices of major kharif crops are showing unusually wide variations across States compared with all-India averages, reflecting local market conditions, data inconsistencies and weak monitoring, experts say. In October, moong averaged ₹6,617/quintal nationally but ranged from ₹4,973 in Haryana to ₹8,704 in Uttar Pradesh, while maize prices varied from ₹1,580 in Madhya Pradesh to over ₹2,300 in Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. Former officials note that price gaps between producing States have widened in recent years, calling for better data verification and stronger oversight of farm-gate prices to prevent collusion and artificially depressed rates. Some attribute higher prices in Uttar Pradesh to increased competition after allowing direct purchases from farmers. Experts argue that stricter monitoring and enforcing MSP at fair-average-quality standards could reduce anomalies and improve farmer realisations. *(BusinessLine)*



Industry, Manufacturing, Services and Technology

CII proposes India development fund to finance long-term growth

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has proposed setting up an India Development and Strategic Fund (IDSF), a sovereign-backed, professionally managed institution to finance India's long-term growth, resilience, and global economic security. Conceived as a twin-arm national fund, the IDSF would mobilise patient, long-horizon capital to build India's productive capacity at home and secure critical economic interests abroad, it suggested. *(BusinessLine)*

Festival season lights up the automotive sector

The recent festive season was more vibrant than ever for the Indian automotive industry. A confluence of factors including auspicious buying sentiments, pent-up demand, supportive rural output, policy rate cuts, conducive financing environment and, importantly, the well-timed GST reforms made the festive vehicle sales more than a seasonal one. The rate cuts and the drop in vehicle prices have effectively unlocked the deferred demand, notably among first-time buyers and those in Tier-2/3 cities. *(BusinessLine)*

Health insurance sales up 20% in October on GST relief on premiums

The waiver of Goods and Services Tax (GST) on individual health insurance premiums led to a 20 percent increase in the sale of health cover in October, the first full month in the new tax regime. The shift reflects how a supportive policy environment can strengthen insurance penetration and prompt more people to prioritise health-related financial protection, he added. According to the MD & CEO of a major general insurance company, the average growth in sale (premium) of health policies across insurers due to GST waiver was above 20 percent, while the growth percentage could vary from company to company after factoring in the normal growth of the segment. *(BusinessLine)*

Industry bodies call for revision of AI content labelling regulations

Associations like the Business Software Alliance (BSA) and the Internet Freedom Foundation (IFF) have called for a revision of provisions in the recent draft amendment to IT Rules, particularly the definition of synthetically generated information (SGI). They argued that the current definition is too broad and, if kept as is, could muzzle free speech and hinder everyday activities like editing and cropping of content. *(BusinessLine)*

The Net Zero imperative: 'Electrifying' the economy

The comprehensive electrification of the energy system will be key to the global economy and India's ambition to achieve Net-Zero—powered by renewable energy, to decarbonise all constituents of the economy, including electricity, industry, mobility, the built environment, and agriculture. According to a joint report by the Indo-German Energy Forum and the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), the adoption of relevant technologies can facilitate the electrification of 90 percent of India's energy needs, while replacing fossil fuel-based technologies alone can result in an estimated 55 percent reduction in emissions. *(BusinessLine)*

India must safeguard its baryte reserves

China's export restrictions on rare earth magnets since April have illustrated how a country's dominance of strategic resources can confer powerful economic leverage in global trade. China controls over 90 percent of the world's supply of rare earth magnets, vital for all types of advanced electronics, including those in defence systems and electric vehicles. Leveraging this control on the rare earth supply chain strengthened China's leverage in the subsequent trade talks, as we saw in Kuala Lumpur recently. *(BusinessLine)*



News on Kerala

Ease of Doing Business: Kerala best performer

Kerala retained its best performer tag in the Ease of Doing Business (Business Reforms Action Plan+ Reduction of Compliance Burden) rankings. Industries Minister P. Rajeev received an award in the 'fast movers category' from the Union Minister for Industry and Commerce Piyush Goyal on Tuesday. Last year as well, Kerala had topped in two categories of business-centric reforms and seven categories of citizen-centric reforms in the ranking of the Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry. *(The Hindu)*

Kerala finally writes to Centre on freezing PM SHRI roll-out

Kerala has officially communicated to the Union government its decision to pause the implementation of the PM SHRI (Prime Minister's Schools for Rising India) scheme in the State till a decision is made by a Cabinet subcommittee formed to review the agreement. General Education Secretary K. Vasuki on Wednesday sent the communication to the Union government. Minister for General Education V. Sivankutty said the government had consulted the Advocate General to assess the legal implications of the Cabinet decision and then sent the letter. *(The Hindu)*

₹212.63 crore sanctioned to State under STARS education programme

Kerala has been sanctioned ₹212.63 crore under the Centrally sponsored STARS (Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States) scheme for the 2025-26 year. The nod for sanction of fund for construction activities was given at a meeting of the project approval board in New Delhi on Friday. General Education Secretary K. Vasuki and Samagra Shiksha Kerala Project Director Supriya A.R. attended the meeting. The Centre has promised that the funds will be released soon, a statement from the General Education department said. STARS is being implemented by the Education Ministry with World Bank funding. It supports reforms to improve quality and governance of schools education and focusses on pre-primary education, learning assessment, teacher training, and so on. *(The Hindu)*

Kochi makes it to the list of top 10 trending global destinations

Kochi has made it to the list of top 10 trending destinations in the world prepared by Booking.com, a leading travel platform. Kochi is the only destination from the country that made it to the list. Set along the southwestern coast of the country in Kerala, the waterfront city is shaped by centuries of global trade and cultural exchange. Fort Kochi, where colourful colonial-era mansions sit beside hip art cafés and iconic Chinese fishing nets that sway against the Arabian Sea, adds to the city's charm, said the travel platform. *(The Hindu)*

Welfare pensions could have been hiked to ₹3,000 had Centre cooperated: Govindan

Welfare pensions could have been hiked to ₹3,000 had the Union government provided its share for pension contribution on time, Communist Party of India (Marxist) [CPI(M)] State secretary M.V. Govindan has said. Speaking at a meet-the-press programme organised by the Kesari Memorial Journalists' Trust here on Tuesday, he said the financial siege being continued by the Center had forced the State to limit the welfare pension hike at ₹2,000 from ₹1,600. On the other hand, senior Congress leaders such as K.C. Venugopal had been maintaining that the welfare pensions were a means to bribe voters. The Congress leadership should clarify if it subscribed to this view, he said. *(The Hindu)*

Centre for Continuing Education Kerala (CCEK) and Edunet Foundation Sign MoU to Advance Future-Ready Skilling Across Kerala

The Centre for Continuing Education Kerala (CCEK) and Edunet Foundation have formally signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to launch a transformative skilling initiative aimed at empowering youth and faculty across Kerala with high-demand digital competencies. The MoU was signed in the presence of Dr R Bindu,

Hon'ble Minister for Higher Education, Govt. of Kerala and senior officials from the CCEK, Government of Kerala and Edunet Foundation, marking the beginning of a strategic collaboration to deliver industry-aligned training programs in emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, Data Science, Cloud Computing, and Web Development. *(Business Standard)*

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