



## Public Finance

### **Govt gets Parliament nod for Rs 2.01 lakh crore additional spending in FY26**

Parliament on Tuesday approved the second batch of supplementary demands for grants, allowing the government to spend an additional Rs 2.01 lakh crore in the current fiscal, with the Rajya Sabha returning the Appropriation Bill 2026 to the Lok Sabha. Through the second batch of supplementary demands, the government had sought Parliament's approval for spending a gross of Rs 2.81 lakh crore extra in the current fiscal year. *(The Economic Times)*

### **Pensioners' demands echoed: Parliamentary panel seeks hike in minimum EPS payout, say Rs 1000 insufficient**

A Parliamentary panel on Tuesday recommended an urgent, comprehensive review of the Rs 1,000 minimum monthly pension under the Employees' Pension Scheme, 1995, to raise it to a more realistic and dignified level. This assumes significance in view of pensioners' demand to raise the pension to Rs 7,500 per month, as Rs 1,000 is not sufficient to make both ends meet. *(The Economic Times)*

### **Telangana's way to generate revenues: Tap Centrally Sponsored Schemes, plug leakages, rationalise taxes where possible**

The top bureaucratic and political team of the Telangana government acknowledges that there are many challenges and financial pressure before the State for meeting the 2026-27 Budget proposal presented by Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu, who also holds the Finance portfolio. The Budget reflects a dual strategy – ensuring inclusive development through welfare while promoting growth through infrastructure investment. *(BusinessLine)*

### **FM Sitharaman says ₹57,381 crore allocated for Economic Stabilisation Fund**

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, replying to the debate on the Appropriation Bill, 2026 in Rajya Sabha on Tuesday, said that the government has allocated ₹57,381.84 crore toward the Economic Stabilisation Fund as part of a broader strategy for budget disbursement and fiscal management. *(BusinessLine)*



### **New I-T rules notified; new Act to ease compliance, cut litigation, says FM**

CBDT on Friday notified the I-T Rules, 2026, which will come into effect on April 1, 2026, as part of the new I-T Act, 2025. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the new tax framework would significantly ease compliance for small taxpayers and bring down litigation. (*Business Standard*)

### **India's tax coffers swell as direct tax collections cross ₹22.8 lakh crore, up 7.2%**

India's net direct tax collections grew 7.19% year-on-year to ₹22.80 lakh crore as of March 17, 2026, according to the latest provisional data released by the tax department. The overall net direct tax mop-up includes net corporate tax of ₹10.91 lakh crore, non-corporate tax of ₹11.32 lakh crore and STT of ₹55,717 crore. (*The Economic Times*)

### **GST cuts cooled prices of durables, not of essentials: NIPFP Study**

Reducing GST rates last year has not translated into lower consumer prices for several frequently consumed items, a new working paper by the NIPFP, which used the revised all-India CPI series for its analysis. However, the study has found that most durables such as motor vehicles, bicycles and air conditioners, among others, witnessed a decline in price, suggesting relatively effective price transmission in discretionary and high-value goods. (*Business Standard*)

### **HCs tighten scrutiny of GST enforcement actions amid due process concerns**

High courts are increasingly tightening scrutiny over coercive GST enforcement measures like registration suspensions and bank account attachments, with tax experts saying the trend could push authorities towards greater procedural discipline. The Bombay High Court's recent order in the case of Bi-Chem India Pvt Ltd is being seen as part of this wider judicial push. The court on March 11 directed authorities to restore the company's GST registration after the government informed the Bench that the suspension would be withdrawn and that further action would follow due process, including granting a hearing on the showcause notice. (*Business Standard*)



### **India's privatisation drive derails because of weak investor interest**

India is considering shelving three planned privatisation sales amid weak investor appetite, two government sources said, a slump that has already derailed its attempt to sell a stake in IDBI Bank and is a fresh blow to the government's flagship divestment programme. The privatisation plan, delayed for years, is now facing fresh setbacks that include dwindling interest in state-run firms such as Shipping Corporation of India and HLL Lifecare, besides the collapse of the IDBI Bank stake sale last week after bids fell short of the government's minimum price. (*Business Standard*)

### **India ranks 116th in World Happiness Report 2026**

India ranked 116th in the World Happiness Report 2026 published Thursday, two notches up from the 118th position last year but behind Nepal and Pakistan. The World Happiness Report is released each year around March 20, coinciding with the International Day of Happiness, and combines well-being data from over 140 countries with analysis by world-leading researchers from a range of academic disciplines. *(The Economic Times)*

### **No severe shocks despite crises, says Sitharaman as she highlights India's economic strength**

India's economic might, shaped by prudent policy-making over the past decade, enables it to effectively tackle unforeseen circumstances, including the ongoing war in West Asia that has posed newer challenges, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Tuesday. Replying to a discussion on the Appropriation Bill 2026 in the Rajya Sabha, Sitharaman said the government's deft economic management has ensured there are "no severe shocks" despite fresh external challenges occurring almost regularly since the 2020 pandemic outbreak. *(The Economic Times)*

### **Panel calls for Centre-state board to oversee rollout of four labour codes**

The Parliamentary standing committee on Labour, Textiles and Employment recommended setting up a permanent Centre-State Coordination and Interaction board on a priority basis to oversee the implementation of the four Labour Codes. In its report on the demand for grants of the Ministry of Labour and Employment for 2026-27, the panel said that the proposed board could also monitor the implementation of central schemes that require action by states. *(Business Standard)*

### **Cabinet clears ₹2,585 crore scheme for small hydro power projects**

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved a scheme for small hydro power plants with a total outlay of ₹2,585 crore for five years ending 2031. The scheme, applicable to plants with less than 25 megawatt capacity, will help set up 1,500 MW capacity projects and also attract a total investment of ₹15,000 crore, the Union Cabinet said in a statement. *(Business Standard)*

### **India growth outlook dims as oil tops \$100, gas crisis deepens**

A war raging thousands of miles away is tightening its grip on India's economy, as surging oil prices and acute gas shortages ripple from kitchens to factory floors, threatening growth and stoking fresh inflation fears. India—among the most exposed major economies to the West Asia crisis—imports about 90% of its crude oil and nearly half of its liquefied petroleum gas (LPG). *(The Economic Times)*

### **Wholesale price inflation at 11-month high of 2.13%; higher crude prices to push WPI higher**

Wholesale price inflation rose to a 11-month high of 2.13% in February, driven by an uptick in prices of food and non-food articles, even though vegetable prices eased on a month-on-month basis, government data showed on Monday. This is the fourth straight month of rise in Wholesale Price Index (WPI)-based inflation. It was 1.81% in January and 2.45% in February last year. *(The Hindu)*

### **LPG consumption slumps 17% in March on war-related shortages**

Cooking gas LPG consumption in India fell by a steep 17.7% in the first half of March on the back of supply disruptions due to war in West Asia, preliminary industry data showed. LPG consumption fell to 1.147 million tonne during the first fortnight of March, 17.3% lower than 1.387 million tonne consumed in the same period last year and 26.3% lower than 1.557 million tonne demand in the first half of February. *(The Hindu)*

### **NITI Aayog proposes National Job Skilling Policy to strengthen India's skilling ecosystem**

A NITI Aayog working paper has proposed framing of a National Job Skilling Policy with focus on integrating employment and skill development ministries, launching an Annual Skills and Employment Survey with a data bank and portal, projecting skill demand, and creating course material and teaching aids in line with the industry needs to strengthen India's skilling ecosystem. *(The Economic Times)*

### **Parliamentary panel urges a 'golden share' strategy to protect PSU autonomy if state stakes fall below 51%**

A parliamentary panel on Tuesday asked the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management to finalise a clear legal strategy, incorporating a 'golden share' or indirect control model, to safeguard strategic autonomy in PSUs where state shareholding may drop below 51 percent. A parliamentary panel on Tuesday asked the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management to finalise a clear legal strategy, incorporating a 'golden share' or indirect control model, to safeguard strategic autonomy in PSUs where state shareholding may drop below 51 percent. *(The Economic Times)*

### **Union Govt writes to States, UTs for speedily approving pending, new gas pipeline projects**

The Union Government has written to State governments and Union Territories urging them that pending applications for laying of city gas distribution pipelines (CGD) be given deemed approval and new applications be accorded approval within twenty-four hours, Sujata Sharma, Joint-Secretary at the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG) told reporters here in an inter-ministerial briefing here Tuesday (March 17, 2026). *(The Hindu)*

### **Unemployment dips marginally to 4.9% in February, shows govt survey**

Overall unemployment among persons aged 15 years and above fell marginally to 4.9 percent in February from 5 per cent in January this year, according to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) released on Monday. After an increase in January 2026, the urban unemployment rate (UR) among persons aged 15 years and above declined to 6.6 percent in February 2026, falling below the December 2025 level (6.7%), the survey stated. *(Business Standard)*



## Banking and Monetary Policy

### **Govt launches ₹20,000 crore credit guarantee scheme to boost MFIs**

With microfinance institutions (MFIs) facing higher risk provisions and writeoffs, the government on Friday launched for them a ₹20,000 crore credit-guarantee scheme, aimed at easing liquidity tightness and increasing credit flow. The scheme will take effect on March 20 and remain active until June 30 or when cumulative-guarantee coverage reaches ₹20,000 crore, whichever is earlier. *(Business Standard)*

### **RBI approves transition plan after HDFC Bank chairman's resignation**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said it has taken note of the recent developments in HDFC Bank, where its part-time chairman Atanu Chakraborty had resigned. It said a transition arrangement as requested by the Bank has been approved as regards the position of part-time chairman of the Bank. *(The Hindu)*

### **Bank-NBFC co-lending pacts may be expanded to aid MSMEs**

A parliamentary standing committee on finance has recommended expanding structured co-lending arrangements between banks and non-banking financial companies to bridge a \$530-billion formal credit gap faced by micro and small medium enterprises, or MSMEs, and lower their cost of capital. *(The Economic Times)*

### **SBI raises ₹6,051 crore through issue of bonds**

State Bank of India (SBI) said it has raised ₹ 6,051 crore at a coupon rate of 7.05% through its second Basel III-compliant Tier 2 bond issuance for the current financial year. The bonds are issued for 10 years, with a call option after 5 years and each anniversary date thereafter and are rated AAA with stable outlook from CRISIL Ratings and India Ratings and Research. *(The Hindu)*

### **PHDCCI urges RBI to boost MSME credit, fix LoC rules**

Industry body PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry has urged the Reserve Bank of India to boost credit flow to small businesses and address operational issues such as inconsistent handling of discrepancies in letter of credit (LoC) documents by issuing banks and alleged unfair practices by rating agencies. *(The Economic Times)*

### **RBI's likely to raise liquidity to keep 'short' rates in check**

India's central bank is likely to boost liquidity ahead of the fiscal year end, economists said, as it seeks to restrain short-term rates from spiking and offset the impact of its currency-market interventions that sought to arrest the rupee's precipitous slide since the start of the Iran war. The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) liquidity-enhancing arsenal includes open market operations (OMOs) for bond purchases, or dollar-rupee buy-sell swaps, bankers and economists said. *(The Economic Times)*

### **SBI gets Rs 6,337 crore tax demand for AY24, to challenge order**

The State Bank of India has received an income tax demand of Rs 6,337 crore (including interest) for the assessment year 2023–24 and will challenge the order, the bank said in a regulatory filing. The bank informed exchanges that it has received an order dated March 19, 2026, from the Income Tax Department under relevant provisions of the Income Tax Act following scrutiny assessment proceedings. *(The Economic Times)*

### **India plans next-gen reforms for regional rural banks to boost efficiency, tech adoption**

The government is working on a reform agenda for regional rural banks, modelled on an ongoing initiative for public sector banks, to scale up their operations and position them as the front-end for their sponsor banks. "The key focus areas will be technology upgradation, product diversification, and collaboration among RRBs. The idea is to prepare them for next-generation reforms," a government official aware of the developments told ET. *(The Economic Times)*

### **Banks write off loans worth Rs 9.75 lakh cr in last 11 years**

Banks have written off loans worth Rs 9.75 lakh crore in the last 11 financial years, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said on Monday. The write off peaked in FY20 at Rs 1.59 lakh crore, and since then it has been declining to Rs 47,568 crore in FY25. *(The Economic Times)*

### **India's banks, NBFCs to face rising credit costs, liquidity strain if conflict drags: Report**

India's banks and non-bank lenders will face rising credit costs, tighter liquidity and pressure on corporate and household borrowers if the Middle East conflict prolongs, CreditSights said in a report assessing the impact of an elongated disruption through the Strait of Hormuz. *(The Economic Times)*

### **Banks recorded higher credit and deposits growth in the fortnight to February 28**

Bank credit grew 14.5% year-on-year at the fortnight ending February 28 while deposits grew at 11.9% rate, data from Reserve Bank of India showed. The pace of growth for both credit and deposits accelerated in the fortnight under review as compared to the preceding 14-day period. Bank credit had grown at 13.6% year-on-year at the fortnight ending February 15 while deposits growth was seen at 11.2%. *(The Economic Times)*



## **External Sector**

### **India's goods exports slip 0.8% to \$36.61 billion in Feb amid continued global turmoil**

Goods exports declined a marginal 0.81% year-on-year in February to \$36.61 billion amid global uncertainties, but March is set to be even more challenging due to the West Asia crisis and logistical bottlenecks, according to the Commerce Department. Imports increased 24.11% to \$63.71 billion in February, which widened the trade deficit to \$27.1 billion, almost double of \$14 billion in February 2025. *(BusinessLine)*

### **India's garment exports slip in February, but April–February growth stays positive**

RMG export sector declined 8.6% in February 2026 to \$1.40 billion as against \$1.53 billion in Feb 2025. However, the cumulative exports for the period April 2025 to Feb 2026 stood at \$14.53 billion, up from \$14.46 billion, reflecting a marginal growth of 0.51%, said A Sakthivel, Chairman, AEPC, in a press release. The RMG sector continues to demonstrate resilience despite persistent global economic uncertainties and supply chain disruptions. *(BusinessLine)*

### **Iran war impacts Indian oilmeal exports**

The Solvent Extractors' Association of India (SEA) has said that the escalating conflict between Iran and the US/Israel has significantly disrupted India's oilmeal exports, particularly to West Asia and Europe, due to instability around the Strait of Hormuz and the Red Sea. BV Mehta, Executive Director of the SEA, said shipping companies are avoiding the Red Sea and the Strait of Hormuz, causing detours that increase transit times and costs, which threaten the continuity of oilmeal exports to West Asia and Europe. *(BusinessLine)*

### **Prolonged West Asia crisis deals multiple blows to Indian exporters**

The prolonged West Asia crisis and the near-halt of traffic through the Strait of Hormuz and other Gulf shipping lanes have triggered widespread disruption for Indian exporters, with industry estimates suggesting that nearly 70% of outbound shipments have been affected. Shipping delays, freight rates surging by as much as 300%, cargo stranded at ports and in transit, and gas shortages have created severe stress across export sectors. *(BusinessLine)*

### **Tamil Nadu surpasses Gujarat, Maharashtra to become top textile exporter**

Tamil Nadu has emerged as India's top state in textile exports, recording shipments worth \$7,997.17 million for the fiscal year 2024-25, which is an increase of 29.12% over the last four years, the government said. The state has witnessed a 29% increase in export value in the last four years, an official release said. *(Business Standard)*

### **India to sign U.S. deal only after clarity on tariff rates**

India and the U.S. announced a trade deal on Feb 2 and a joint statement on the finalisation of a framework for the deal was released on Feb 7. Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal had said that the deal would be signed in March. The U.S. Supreme Court on Feb 20 ruled against the validity of U.S. President Donald Trump's use of the IEEPA to levy reciprocal tariffs on America's trade partners. Now with the Supreme Court judgement on IEEPA tariffs, the tariffs per se don't exist. *(The Hindu)*

### **U.S. launches fresh investigation into India, 59 other economies on forced labour charges**

The U.S. has launched a fresh investigation into 60 countries, including India, to look into whether these countries have failed to ban the import of goods made using forced labour, the office of the U.S. Trade Representative announced late on March 12. The new investigation is under Section 301(b) of the Trade Act, 1974. This is the same section under which the USTR launched a different investigation on March 11 on India and 15 other nations to examine whether they use excess manufacturing capacity to export to the U.S. to the detriment of American firms. *(The Hindu)*

### **Government announces ₹497 crore RELIEF scheme for exporters impacted by West Asian crisis**

The government on Thursday launched the ₹497 crore Resilience & Logistics Intervention for Export Facilitation (RELIEF) scheme to provide credit insurance cover for exporters whose goods are stranded due to the West Asia crisis, or who are planning to export to the Gulf over the next few months. The insurance premia under this scheme would be at pre-conflict rates and the focus would be MSME beneficiaries. *(The Hindu)*

### **Gem & Jewellery export rises 4% in Feb. despite tariff impact**

The overall gross exports of gems and jewellery in February grew 3.86% (8.37% in rupee terms) year-on-year (YoY) to \$2.68 billion (₹24,340.05 crore), as per data from the Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC). For the period April 2025 to February 2026, the overall gross exports of gems and jewellery marginally grew 0.07% (4.34% in rupee terms) YoY to \$25.93 billion (₹2,28,230.06 crore). The data comes as a relief as the sector could do well despite the heavy tariff imposed by U.S. President Donald Trump. *(The Hindu)*

### **China overtakes Netherlands as India's third-largest export market**

China overtook the Netherlands to become India's third-largest export destination in February, according to commerce department data. Exports to seven of India's top 10 destinations contracted during the month, with overall exports declining 0.81 percent year-on-year to \$36.61 billion. These 10 countries together account for over 50 percent of India's merchandise exports. Exports to China rose 32.4 percent to \$1.67 billion in February, mainly due to a low base. *(Business Standard)*

### **India recommends \$3,453/MT anti-dumping duty on Chinese DASDA imports**

India trade remedies authority has recommended an anti-dumping duty of \$3,453 per metric ton on imports from China of DASDA, a chemical intermediate used to make brightening agents for textiles and other industries, a government statement said on Thursday. *(Business Standard)*

### **Rupee hits record low of 92.64/\$ on importer demand, thin dollar liquidity**

The Indian rupee fell to a fresh low of 92.64 per dollar on Wednesday, breaching the psychologically important 92.50 mark amid sustained importer demand for dollars. The pressure was compounded by thin dollar liquidity ahead of a bank holiday on Thursday. Concerns over a widening trade deficit also weighed on the currency, dealers said. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) was seen defending the 92.50-per-dollar level, which was breached as the rupee fell 0.28 percent on Wednesday. *(Business Standard)*

### **Israel, GCC trade pact talks lose steam, UK FTA likely to be implemented by May**

A free trade agreement with the UK, signed in July 2025, is expected to be implemented by early May, with officials resolving minor issues. The EU anticipates ratifying its trade pact with India by November for implementation this year. The trade talks with Israel and six-member Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have slowed amid the ongoing conflict in the region. *(The Economic Times)*

## Food security and agriculture issues top India's agenda at WTO meet

At the imminent World Trade Organisation ministerial conference, India is set to bring its perspective to the forefront on critical trading issues. With an agenda that prioritises food security and safeguards against sudden import influxes, India is committed to strengthening the multilateral trading system. The country is also advocating for an effective dispute resolution mechanism alongside fundamental WTO principles. *(The Economic Times)*



## Agriculture and Rural Economy

### Cabinet nod to Rs 1,718 cr MSP funding to Cotton Corp

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs Wednesday approved Minimum Support Price (MSP) funding of Rs 1,718.56 crore to the Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) for the cotton season 2023-24. "This funding aims to provide direct price support to cotton farmers across the country," the government said in a statement. *(The Economic Times)*

### India's horticulture production to increase marginally in 2025-26: First Advance Estimate

India's horticulture production is projected to remain largely flat at 3708.46 lakh tonnes in 2025-26 from 3707.38 lakh tonnes in the previous year, the government's first advance estimate for 2025-26 released on Monday said. Horticulture has emerged as a key driver in boosting farmers' income, with record growth in both area and production, said Shivraj Singh, minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare. *(The Economic Times)*

### Lower maize prices may see Indian farmers switch back to oilseeds, pulses this kharif

A section of Indian farmers is likely to return to cultivating oilseeds and pulses in the upcoming kharif season as growers have realised lower prices this year. The government is confident that there may be some change in the sowing pattern in the kharif season. However, the sowing decision will depend mainly on guaranteed price for oilseeds and pulses as the procurement has highly been insignificant compared with FCI's purchase of rice and paddy, a senior official said. *(BusinessLine)*

### As higher crude pushes up MMF prices, cotton may gain back demand

With prices of man made fibres (MMF) such as polyester moving up in tandem with crude following the ongoing war in West Asia, cotton stakeholders see demand coming back to the natural fibre. Polyester fibre prices have moved up by 10-25 per cent within days of crude moving up. *(BusinessLine)*

### Chicken prices soar in India on bird mortality, reduced weight

With rising temperatures leading to bird mortality and reduced bird weight, chicken prices have surged to record highs in some cities across the country. Prices are ruling in the ₹270-340 per kg range in retail markets, hitting the highest price so far, for chicken across different markets in the country. *(BusinessLine)*

### **CropLife India sounds alarm over pesticide industry risks from West Asia conflict**

CropLife India, which represents research-driven crop protection companies, has said that the disruption in supply chains and key shipping routes due to the West Asia conflict is likely to impact input costs by 20-25 per cent for the crop protection industry, leading to a rise in costs for the farmers accordingly. *(BusinessLine)*

### **SEA says edible oil sector at crucial juncture, urges balanced approach to navigate it**

The Solvent Extractors' Association of India (SEA) has said that the vegetable oil and oil seed sector stands at a crucial juncture shaped by global disruptions, weather uncertainties and domestic fundamentals. In his monthly letter to SEA members on Friday, Sanjeev Asthana, SEA President, said that a balanced approach combining policy support, market intelligence and stakeholder collaboration will be essential to navigate the evolving landscape effectively. *(BusinessLine)*

### **Storage in 40% of India's key reservoirs below 50% of capacity**

Storage in over 40 per cent of India's 166 major reservoirs was less than 50 per cent of the capacity this week, even as the level in all the dams declined to 51 per cent. The situation comes at a time when over 70 per cent of the country has received deficient or no rainfall since the beginning of this year. *(BusinessLine)*

### **India widens efforts to raise domestic fertilizer availability, raises gas supply to plants**

Amid disruption of gas and fertilizer supply after the war against Iran by US-Israel, India has initiated a multi-pronged strategy which includes raising domestic Urea production as well as import of all types of fertilizers to stabilise supply and increase availability ahead of the Kharif 2026 sowing season that begins with arrival of monsoon on the mainland around June 1. *(BusinessLine)*

### **India fast-tracks fertiliser imports to cushion kharif season from West Asia supply shock**

India has fast-tracked fertiliser imports to safeguard supplies for the kharif sowing season as the West Asia crisis disrupts gas shipments, and shipping routes, government sources said on Saturday. India has brought forward a global tender for urea imports and ordered 13.5 lakh tonnes of fertiliser by mid-February. About 90 per cent of this order is expected to arrive by the end of March, the sources said. *(The Economic Times)*

### **Telangana to promote natural farming in 61,125 acres**

With a view to promoting natural farming in the State, the Telangana Government has chalked out a plan to groom over 61,125 farmers in relevant farm management techniques. The Government would develop 489 clusters totalling 61,125 acres across different parts of the state in the upcoming agricultural year. Each cluster would be guided by two 'Krishi Sakhi' (farm guides). *(BusinessLine)*



## Industry, Manufacturing, Services and Technology

### **Core sector output eased to a three-month low of 2.3% in February**

India's core sector growth slowed to a three-month low of 2.3% year-on-year in February, from 4.7% in January, amid subdued electricity generation and continued decline across energy-related industries, official data released Friday showed. Growth stood at 3.4% in February 2025. Aditi Nayar, chief economist at ICRA, noted that the slowdown was broad-based, with year-on-year growth nearly halving sequentially. "Even before the start of the West Asia crisis, the growth of the core sector output in India had slowed," she noted. (*The Economic Times*)

### **₹10,000 crore container scheme under appraisal: Sarbananda Sonowal**

The government's recently announced container manufacturing scheme is currently being appraised, Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal informed Parliament on Thursday. "The Government in Budget Speech 2026-27 has announced a scheme for container manufacturing in India with a budget outlay of Rs 10,000 crore aimed at creating a globally competitive container manufacturing ecosystem in the country through financial incentives to support establishment and expansion of container manufacturing units. The Ministry has initiated the process of appraisal of the scheme," the minister said. (*Business Standard*)

### **Gujarat clears new Tata Power deal to resume long-term supply**

The Gujarat government has approved a revised power supply pact with Tata Power, clearing the way for the company to resume long-term supply from its 4-gigawatt Mundra plant, according to a government document seen by Reuters. The imported coal-fired plant has not operated for the past six months after the government last year withdrew the emergency clause that compensates companies for generating power using expensive imported coal. (*The Hindu*)

### **India achieves one billion tonne coal production for 2nd consecutive year**

India has achieved 1 billion tonne (BT) coal production for the second consecutive year amid heightened uncertainties in global energy markets due to the West Asia crisis. "With sustained and coordinated efforts across the coal sector and the invaluable contribution of all stakeholders, the country has successfully achieved the landmark of 1 billion tonne (BT) coal production on March 20, 2026 for the second year in a row," the coal ministry said in a statement. (*The Hindu*)

### **Amid Middle East war-related supply disruptions, govt emphasis on improving logistics ecosystem**

With the West Asia conflict disrupting the global supply chain, the government has given maximum emphasis on improving the logistics ecosystem of the country and its cost, which is estimated to be 7.97 percent of GDP or approximately Rs 24.01 lakh crore. Officials said India's logistics ecosystem has entered a phase of structural transformation, driven by coordinated policy reforms, institutional realignment, digital platforms and large-scale infrastructure planning. (*The Economic Times*)

### **Cabinet approves ₹33,660 crore BHAVYA scheme to develop 100 industrial parks**

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved a new industrial parks scheme, with an outlay of ₹33,660 crore, providing plug-and-play infrastructure for 100 industrial parks, in a push to strengthen manufacturing, attract investments and create jobs. The Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojna (BHAVYA) aims to create world-class industrial infrastructure and unlock India's manufacturing potential, while generating about 15 lakh direct jobs, according to Ashwini Vaishnaw, Minister for Information and Broadcasting. *(BusinessLine)*

### **India plans ₹600 crore war chest to boost LNG supply for fertiliser units**

The government is building a war chest exceeding ₹600 crore to immediately augment gas supplies to fertiliser plants from spot markets, sources indicated. This comes when many gas-based urea units have advanced the dates of closure for annual maintenance in view of the shortage in liquefied natural gas (LNG). *(Business Standard)*

### **India's semiconductor market to reach \$300 billion by 2035: Deloitte report**

India's semiconductor market is projected to nearly triple to \$120 billion by 2030 and reach \$300 billion by 2035, driven by the exponential adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI), automotive growth, and data centre expansion, according to a report by Deloitte. India, which currently imports more than 90% of its semiconductor needs, is poised for a structural shift as local production is expected to meet more than 60% of domestic demand by the end of 2035, the report titled 'Technology, Media, and Telecommunications Predictions 2026' said. *(The Hindu)*



## **News on Kerala**

### **13th annual conference of Kerala Economic Association begins**

The two-day 13th annual conference on the Kerala Economic Association (KEA) which began at the Gulati Institute of Finance and Taxation (GIFT) here on Friday featured sessions on labour laws and 'teaching economics.' Prof. Sumangala Damodaran spoke on the recent changes in Indian labour laws. S. Harikumar presided over the round table discussion on 'teaching economics.' *(The Hindu)*

### **Animal Husbandry department launches digital platform for livestock and pet trading**

The Animal Husbandry department has officially launched the State's first online marketplace dedicated to the trading of livestock and pets, marking a significant milestone in the digitalisation of the sector. This platform, inaugurated on Wednesday by the Minister for Animal Husbandry and Dairy Development, J. Chinchurani, allows users to directly view and purchase a wide variety of animals and birds through a secure digital system. Named LAPTOP, the mobile application is designed to streamline the marketing of high-quality livestock while bridging the gap between farmers and potential buyers. *(The Hindu)*

### **Jal Jeevan Mission: Cabinet nod to Kerala Water Authority for availing ₹4,000 crore more as loan from NABARD**

The State Cabinet has cleared a Kerala Water Authority (KWA) proposal for taking ₹4,000 crore more as loan from the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) for completing rural water supply works under the Centrally assisted Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM). The Cabinet also decided to award JJM works worth ₹153.37 crore on the condition that the State would meet their expense if the Central share was not issued on time. They include four works in Thiruvananthapuram district, three in Ernakulam district, and one each in Pathanamthitta, Malappuram, and Idukki districts. *(The Hindu)*

### **Paid menstrual pain leave may cost women their careers, Supreme Court apprehends**

The Supreme Court on Friday expressed apprehensions that a law making paid leave during menstrual pain compulsory may damage the careers of young women and deprive them of equal opportunities. “The moment you introduce this as a law and make it a compulsory condition, you may not be able to assess the amount of damage you may do to their career. Nobody may give them big responsibilities. In judicial services, people may not assign trials to them,” Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, heading a Bench comprising Justice Joymalya Bagchi, voiced doubts. *(The Hindu)*

### **Kerala launches comprehensive programme for managing paediatric renal issues**

The Health department has launched an initiative for the early detection and comprehensive management of renal diseases, which has been on the rise amongst children. The initiative—Paediatric Renal Assessment, Treatment and Intervention in Kerala (Pratiksha)—has been formulated for identifying renal diseases in children early and for minimising the adverse impact of the disease by ensuring early intervention and timely treatment of the condition. Health Minister Veena George launched the initiative on World Kidney Day on Thursday at SAT Hospital here. *(The Hindu)*

### **Kerala achieves milestone in AMR control efforts**

The State has achieved a milestone in its antimicrobial resistance (AMR) control efforts with 83 hospitals in the State earning the status of antibiotic-smart hospitals and five panchayats being declared antibiotic-literate panchayats, having fulfilled all prescribed criteria for the same. Among the 83 antibiotic-smart hospitals, 73 are primary care-level hospitals, four secondary-level hospitals, and one tertiary-level hospital. Under the KARSAP, the State had conceptualised the ideas of antibiotic smart hospitals and antibiotic-literate local self-government institutions, as part of strengthening antimicrobial resistance control initiatives. *(The Hindu)*

### **Centre discusses rare-earth corridor sites in Andhra, Odisha and Kerala**

The Union government has discussed potential sites for setting up rare earth corridor projects across four states and the likely regulatory hurdles to be cleared in line with this year's Budget announcement. The virtual discussion held earlier this month, anchored by the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), discussed potential sites such as Gopalpur in Odisha, the Kochi-Thiruvananthapuram belt in Kerala, and the Vizag-Srikakulam belt in Andhra Pradesh, according to a senior executive who attended the meeting. Emails sent to the DAE did not elicit any response. *(Business Standard)*

## **Kerala govt approves universal health coverage for wider healthcare access**

Kerala Health Minister Veena George on Sunday said the state government has issued an order approving the implementation of Universal Health Coverage to ensure health protection for all sections of society. In a Facebook post, the minister said the scheme was formulated to provide health coverage to people who are not included in existing programmes such as the Karunya Arogya Suraksha Padhathi (KASP), Karunya Benevolent Fund, MEDISEP and other insurance schemes. (*Business Standard*)

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