



Public Finance

Delhi govt to fund ₹1,03,700 crore budget via revenue, RBI market borrowing

The Delhi government will finance its highest-ever budget, tabled by Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Tuesday, through its own revenue pegged at ₹74,000 crore and ₹16,700 crore market borrowing through the RBI. The Budget Estimates in 2026-27 of ₹1,03,700 crore is ₹3,700 crore higher than the ₹1,00,000 crore BE in 2025-26, an increase of 3.7 percent. It will be the first time that the Delhi government will source budget funds through market borrowing. (*Business Standard*)

Centre allocates Rs 450.53 cr for 'Modernisation of State Police Force' scheme in FY27

The Centre has allocated Rs 450.53 crore for the next fiscal under the 'Modernisation of State Police Force' scheme, Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai said in the Rajya Sabha. Replying to supplementary queries during Question Hour, the minister said the budget estimate for this scheme for 2025-26 was Rs 540 crore, while the revised estimate has been pegged at Rs 225 crore for the current fiscal. The expenditure till February 2026 stood at Rs 120.68 crore. Rai, however, said the expenditure is expected to increase following the review meeting with states and Union territories. (*The Economic Times*)

FM Sitharaman defends Centre's right to levy cess, says Constitution allows it

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday (March 25, 2026) emphatically reiterated the Centre's right to collect cesses and surcharges, saying the Constitution allowed it and the Centre would continue to use this provision. However, she also added that, over the last six years, the government has spent on the States 105% of what it had collected through cesses and surcharges. That is, its spending has exceeded its collections. (*The Hindu*)

State Budget presented at 'auspicious' time owing to pressure from officers and family, admits CM

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Wednesday defended his 17th State Budget in the Assembly, asserting that the government had maintained fiscal discipline while prioritising welfare and development. Replying to the debate on the budget that went on for 24 hours and 45 minutes with participation from 50 members, the chief minister said the budget reflects a balance between social justice and economic growth, while emphasising that borrowing was within permissible limits and necessary for development. (*ThePrint*)

Gujarat loses 45% of central grants in FY25: CAG report

Gujarat's annual grants from the Centre plunged 45 per cent to ₹14,127 crore in FY25, largely on account of the phase-out of GST compensation, along with steep declines in Finance Commission transfers and centrally sponsored scheme grants, the latest CAG report tabled in the Gujarat Assembly on Wednesday shows. The shortfall was widespread. An analysis of the Grants-in-Aid received from the Government of India showed that Finance Commission transfers declined 21 per cent to ₹4,160 crore in FY25 from ₹5,258 crore in FY24, while centrally sponsored scheme grants fell 9 per cent to ₹8,624 crore in FY25 from ₹9,468 crore a year ago. *(BusinessLine)*



Taxation

GST reforms have boosted economy, says FM Sitharaman in Lok Sabha

Countering the Opposition's criticism, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday said reductions in goods and services tax (GST) rates had supported economic activity. She cited a sharp rise in demand for automobiles, along with higher cement output. The GST rate rationalisation, implemented in September 2025, reduced tax slabs for several items, particularly in the consumer durables segment. *(Business Standard)*

No formal study on GST rate rationalisation's inflation impact: Govt

The government has not undertaken any assessment of the revenue and inflationary implications of Goods and Services Tax (GST) rate rationalisation, the Lok Sabha was informed on Monday. In a written reply to a question, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary stated that no formal study on the inflationary implications of GST rate rationalisation has been conducted. *(Business Standard)*

Investors turn to tax-loss harvesting amid market volatility

Heightened market volatility and a late-March push to optimise tax outgo are prompting a growing number of equity investors to adopt tax-loss harvesting, a strategy that involves realising losses to offset gains and reduce tax liability, according to tax practitioners and wealth advisers. A Delhi-based entrepreneur, who asked not to be identified, said he rebalanced his portfolio after several holdings breached key price levels. *(BusinessLine)*

Property gifts above Rs 45 lakh to face tighter scrutiny under Income-tax Rules 2026

Under Rule 237 of the Income-tax Rules, 2026, high-value immovable property gifts will be reported in the Statement of Financial Transactions (SFT) by property registrars, enabling the Income-tax Department to undertake data-driven monitoring and enforcement. Non-reporting of taxable gifts in the income tax return, or entering into non-genuine transactions, may attract penalties, interest and exposure under the Prohibition of Benami Property Transactions Act, 1988. *(The Economic Times)*



National Accounts and State of the Economy

India's GDP growth above 7% in FY27 despite global headwinds: Assocham

India's economy is expected to maintain growth of above 7 per cent in 2026-27 (FY27), supported by strong domestic consumption and investment, even as global growth could slip below 3 per cent amid geopolitical tensions. India's purchasing managers' index stood at 56.9 for manufacturing and 58.1 for services in February 2026, the highest among major economies, including the United States, China and Germany, the industry body noted. Additionally, India's total exports rose to \$791 billion during April–February of FY26, up from \$748 billion in the same period a year earlier. *(Business Standard)*

Growth of eight core sectors halved to 2.3% in February, before West Asia crisis began

India's core industrial growth slowed sharply even before the West Asia crisis began with government data showing growth in the eight core sectors slowing to a three-month low of 2.3% in February. The sequential halving in year-on-year growth from 4.7% in January was relatively broad-based with only two sectors viz. cement and steel eking out a year-on-year rise that was above 3.5%. *(The Hindu)*

India raises clean-energy ambition with 60% non-fossil fuel power goal by 2035

Updating its climate goals, India has pledged that by 2035, 60% of its installed electric capacity will comprise non-fossil sources. It also aims to reduce by 47% the intensity of emissions per unit of GDP from 2005 level and to increase its carbon sink to 3.5 billion tonnes—4 billion tonnes. *(The Hindu)*

Govt asks RBI to target retail inflation at 4% till Mar 2031

The Union government, in consultation with the RBI, hereby notifies the inflation target for the period beginning April 1, 2026, and ending on March 31, 2031, a Gazette notification issued by the Department of Economic Affairs dated March 25 said. According to the notification, the inflation target is 4% with an upper tolerance level of 6% and a lower tolerance level of 2%. India adopted the inflation-targeting framework and formally tasked the central bank with it in 2016. *(The Hindu)*

Rajasthan introduces industrial park policy 2026 to boost jobs, investment

The policy envisages the development of industrial parks through four models, including fully private development, hybrid land-sharing arrangements and public-private partnership (PPP) mode. A minimum area of 50 acres and at least 10 industrial units have been made mandatory for private parks. To promote green and sustainable development, provisions have been made for 50 percent reimbursement of expenditure on Common Effluent Treatment Plants (CETP), subject to a cap, along with capital subsidies for infrastructure development. *(Business Standard)*

70% of women save, but only 40% invest beyond FDs, gold: Report

The report is based on a survey of over 2,000 women across metros and emerging cities, including Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Pune, Ahmedabad, Lucknow, Jaipur, Nagpur, Ranchi, Bhopal, Guwahati and Mysore. Nearly 70 percent of Indian women save regularly, but only 40 percent invest beyond traditional instruments. A woman's life stage, not her city, is the biggest determinant of her investment behavior. (*Business Standard*)



Banking and Monetary Policy

RBI scraps treasury bill sale to support banking liquidity

India's central bank rejected all bids at a treasury bill auction on Wednesday, its first such move in 13 months, in a step expected to support banking system liquidity ahead of the financial year-end on March 31. The government had planned to raise ₹350 billion (\$3.72 billion) through the sale of 91-day, 182-day and 364-day treasury bills, but the Reserve Bank of India did not accept any bids. The latest move is expected to boost the liquidity surplus by ₹350 billion. (*The Hindu*)

RBI's Central Board assesses emerging global and domestic economic scenario

The Central Board of Directors of the Reserve Bank of India on Friday assessed the emerging global and domestic economic scenario, including evolving geopolitical developments and their impact on financial markets, along with associated challenges. The meeting comes in the backdrop of Brent crude oil prices vaulting over the \$100 per barrel mark amid the West Asia war and the rupee depreciating beyond 93/US dollar. Given the aforementioned backdrop, economists said the economy faces challenges on three fronts: imported inflation via the energy route, possibility of widening current account deficit and rising fiscal deficit. (*BusinessLine*)

Rupee's continuing decline takes real effective exchange rate to 12-year low

The rupee, which has been on a weak wicket since last year, is taking a further hit due to the ongoing West Asia crisis, losing almost 9 per cent over the past 12 months. This decline, along with the cooling inflation in India, has taken the rupee's broad-based real effective exchange rate (REER) at the end of February 2026 to its lowest since July 2014. While, at moderate levels, this improves the export competitiveness of the rupee, experts say that continuous depreciation will soon begin hurting the domestic economy. (*BusinessLine*)

Rupee closes at new record low

The rupee closed at a record low against the US dollar on Wednesday in the backdrop of rising crude oil prices due to the ongoing geopolitical tensions in West Asia and FPI outflows from equity markets, even as the RBI's intervention ensured that it did not breach the 94 mark. The rupee ended at 93.9775 per dollar, against the previous close of 93.87. (*BusinessLine*)

RBI injects ₹55,837 crore in banking system through 3-day VRR auction

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Tuesday injected ₹55,837 crore transient liquidity into the banking system through three-day variable rate repo (VRR) auction. The RBI injected the funds at cut-off and weighted average rates of 5.26 per cent, the central bank said in a release. The liquidity injected was much lower than the notified amount of ₹1 trillion, despite the sharp drop in surplus liquidity in the banking system due to advance tax payments. Currently, liquidity in the banking system is estimated to be in surplus of about ₹26,196.36 crore as on March 23. *(Business Standard)*

RBI injects Rs 79,256 cr into banking system via overnight variable rate repo auction

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Monday infused Rs 79,256 crore transient liquidity into the banking system through overnight variable rate (VRR) auction. The RBI injected the funds at cut-off and weighted average rates of 5.26 per cent, the central bank said in a release. The liquidity injected was much lower than the notified amount of Rs 1 lakh crore, despite the sharp drop in surplus liquidity in the banking system due to advance tax payments. *(Business Standard)*

Banking liquidity in deficit after 2 months tax outflows, GST payments

The net liquidity in the banking system fell into deficit mode after two months on the back of advance tax outflows and GST payments estimated to be around ₹3 trillion. The last time the banking system liquidity was in deficit was on January 21 of the current year. The net liquidity was in a deficit of ₹65,395 crore on Sunday, the latest data by the Reserve Bank of India showed. *(Business Standard)*

Banking system liquidity surplus shrinks to ₹16,875 cr, lowest since Jan 22

The net liquidity surplus in the banking system fell to ₹16,875 crore on Thursday, the latest data by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) showed, the lowest since January 22. Even as there was tepid demand in Friday's three-day variable rate repo auction, the central bank announced another such overnight auction on Monday (March 23) for a notified amount of ₹1 trillion. The weighted average call rate settled at 5.34 per cent on Friday, against the previous close of 5.29 per cent. *(Business Standard)*



External Sector

West Asia conflict to strain India's FY27 fiscal math: ICRA

A surge in global crude oil and natural gas prices amid the West Asia conflict is likely to complicate India's fiscal position in FY2027, potentially increasing subsidy burdens and pressuring revenues, ratings agency ICRA said. Crude prices have more than doubled from pre-crisis levels, raising input and logistics costs and disrupting supplies, including key fertiliser inputs, the agency said. This could lift the government's fertiliser and LPG subsidy outgo while weighing on corporate tax collections, refining margins and dividend receipts. *(BusinessLine)*

OECD cuts India's growth forecast to 6.1% in FY27

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on Thursday cut India's growth forecast for the next fiscal by 10 basis points to 6.1 percent. This is 1 percentage point lower than S&P Global's estimate of 7.1 percent. Meanwhile, industry chamber ASSOCHAM said it expects growth to be above 7 per cent during next fiscal. "Decline in tariffs should support growth in India, though gas rationing will disrupt some production activities and fiscal support is expected to fade, with growth easing from 7.6 per cent in fiscal year (FY) 2025-26 to 6.1 per cent in FY 2026-27 and 6.4 per cent in FY 2027-28," OECD said in its 'Economic Outlook, Interim Report March 2026'. *(BusinessLine)*

India, Russia reaffirm \$100 billion trade goal as West Asia simmers

India and Russia have called for strengthening bilateral economic and strategic ties amid the West Asia crisis and shifting geopolitical alignments, reaffirming their commitment to the \$100 billion bilateral trade target by 2030. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, on Monday, said Prime Minister Narendra Modi was expected to visit Russia in 2026 and asserted that there was close foreign policy coordination between the two countries amid the West Asia crisis "provoked" by the US and Israel. As much as 96 per cent of bilateral trade was already happening in national currencies, he said. *(BusinessLine)*

Indian iron ore imports set to hit 7-year high in FY26 on strong demand

India's imports of iron ore, a key raw material in steelmaking, are set to rise to a seven-year high in the fiscal year ending on March 31, driven by a shortage of high-grade ore and demand from JSW Steel, analysts and industry executives said. Overall imports are likely to reach 12 million to 14 million metric tons in 2025-26, more than doubling from a year earlier, analysts and trade officials said. JSW Steel, India's biggest steelmaker by capacity, was a key driver of iron ore imports for its mills in the western state of Maharashtra and the southern state of Karnataka, said Lalit Ladkat, a senior analyst at London-based consultancy CRU. *(Business Standard)*

Freight surge, LPG shortage amid Iran war hit exports from east India

The West Asia crisis has pushed freight costs for Europe-bound cargo up by 60-80 per cent, with exports falling by as much as 50 per cent for some exporters while hundreds of containers got stranded at Kolkata port, industry representatives said on Thursday. Calcutta Customs House Agents Association (CCHAA) president Mannu Choudhary told PTI that freight charges have risen by over 40 per cent due to rerouting through the African route, while war surcharges imposed by shipping lines have taken the total cost escalation to 70-80 per cent for shipments to Europe and the US. *(Business Standard)*

Iranian oil offered to India at premium to Brent after US sanctions waiver

Traders have offered Iranian oil to Indian refiners at a premium to ICE Brent after Washington temporarily removed sanctions to ease the energy crisis caused by the US-Israeli war on Iran, three industry sources said. India, the world's third-biggest oil importer and consumer, has not received a cargo from Tehran since May 2019 after it came under US pressure not to buy Iranian crude. But India has been hit hard by the

disruption of energy shipments via the Strait of Hormuz caused by the war on Iran, which is now in its fourth week. Its refiners have a month to maximise purchases of oil and liquefied petroleum gas from Iran that is geographically close to India, the sources said. *(Business Standard)*

From Indian films to Italian wine, Iran war ripples through global economy

The supply shockwaves from the US and Israel's war in Iran are spreading across the global economy, raising concerns about an inflation hit to companies and consumers that will require policymakers to raise borrowing costs. While President Donald Trump's chaotic tariff campaign took months to filter through supply chains, the spiking prices for oil, gas, aluminium, fertilisers and chemicals since the bombing of Tehran began on Feb. 28 have rapidly been felt by factory managers, farmers and freight carriers. Now the effects are reaching industries that might've seemed insulated from the fallout, or too far away to feel it. *(Business Standard)*



Agriculture and Rural Economy

How agriPV can turn India's farms into dual-purpose powerhouses

In the 2026-27 Budget, the outlay for the PM-KUSUM scheme nearly doubled to ₹5,000 crore, signalling the government's renewed emphasis on increasing solar power production centred on India's farmers. Specifically, the scheme aims to provide energy and water security to farmers, enhance incomes, and decarbonise the farm sector through decentralised solar pumps and power plants. *(The Hindu)*

About 20% of hotel industry's LPG needs will be met daily with immediate effect, says Karnataka Minister

Food and Civil Supplies Minister K.H. Muniyappa on Monday said the Karnataka government would be able to supply 20% of the daily needs of the hotel industry with immediate effect. "On an average, about 45,000 commercial cylinders were being used by hotels in the State. Following a discussion with oil marketing companies today it has been decided that about 10,000 commercial cylinders can be supplied to the hotel industry," he said. *(The Hindu)*

PUSA's IARI enters QS university ranking in agriculture, forestry category

For the first time ever, the 121-year-old Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)'s Indian Agricultural Research Institute also known as IARI has been ranked in the QS world university rankings of 2026 in the agriculture and forestry category. IARI features in the 151-200 band in the subject ranking along with Banaras Hindu University, IIT-Kharagpur, and the University of Delhi. The QS Rankings by Subject category evaluate institutions worldwide on parameters such as academic reputation, employer reputation, research citations, and international collaboration. *(Business Standard)*

India's Pre-seed Ecosystem Enters a New Era: Eximius Ventures Launches 2026 Report on the 'First Cheque' Economy

Gurugram (Haryana) [India], March 23: Eximius Ventures, India's first dedicated pre-seed VC fund, today released its latest report, India's Pre-seed Startup Landscape 2026, offering a comprehensive view of the country's evolving "first cheque" ecosystem. Developed in collaboration with 1Lattice, their research partner, the report is underpinned by robust data and analytical rigor, and captures how early-stage investing is becoming more disciplined, execution-focused, and structurally critical to venture outcomes. *(Business Standard)*

Rajasthan govt plans irrigation upgrade to reduce monsoon dependence

The Rajasthan government plans to make the state a leader in agriculture by enhancing irrigation facilities, a senior agriculture department official said. Most of the state's agriculture depends on the monsoon. "In Rajasthan — a state that has grappled with water scarcity for centuries — the government has embarked on a mission to transform the region into a technology-driven, leading agricultural powerhouse by significantly expanding irrigation facilities," the official said. Extensive development work is currently underway to upgrade irrigation infrastructure, he added. *(Business Standard)*



Industry, Manufacturing, Services and Technology

A multi-fuel path to securing cooking energy

As geopolitical tensions in West Asia continue to unsettle global energy markets, India is once again confronted with a structural vulnerability — dependence on imported cooking fuel. Energy experts and policymakers argue that India must move beyond a single-fuel approach and adopt a diversified, multi-fuel cooking energy strategy one that leverages domestic resources, enhances resilience, and reduces import dependence. *(BusinessLine)*

Ethanol producers urge govt to increase blending

The All India Distillers Association (AIDA), the apex body for ethanol, bio-energy and potable alcohol, has urged the government to enhance ethanol blending from 20 per cent to 30 per cent and promote its wider adoption across transport, including flex-fuel vehicles as well as in domestic and industrial cooking applications. In a representation to the Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari, AIDA has recommended exploring ethanol blending in diesel to contain fuel costs and further strengthen the country's energy security amid rising global uncertainties. *(BusinessLine)*

Centre eases airline stress; lifts fare caps, weighs cut in airport charges

The Centre is mulling a reduction in statutory charges, including airport parking fees, to provide relief to airlines even as it has removed the temporary airfare caps to ease the financial stress in the sector. Gulf routes, which account for a significant share of international flights for most Indian carriers, have been disrupted for close to a month.

Industry stakeholders confirmed that the government is considering additional measures to support Indian carriers. The Centre has removed temporary airfare caps, offering much-needed relief to cash-strapped airlines grappling with surging fuel costs and operational pressures. *(BusinessLine)*

West Asia tensions squeeze India's alcoholic beverage sector as input costs surge

Volatility in crude and fuel prices, along with disruptions in shipping routes due to escalating geopolitical tensions in West Asia, is impacting India's alcoholic beverage industry, which was experiencing sustained cost pressures across its value chain before the Iran war. According to industry bodies like the Confederation of Indian Alcoholic Beverage Companies (CIABC) and Brewers Association of India (BAI), primary inputs have experienced sharp inflation in the last three weeks. Prices of glass bottles have risen by approximately 20 percent, paper cartons by almost 100 per cent, and the cost of materials such as LDPE, BOPP, and adhesives by 20-25 per cent. Freight and logistics costs have also gone up by 10 percent. *(BusinessLine)*

India must aim to become a global aviation hub

India, as the world's third-largest domestic aviation market and projected to become the third largest globally by 2030, has immense potential for growth. Yet much of the value generated by Indian passenger traffic bypasses the national economy, flowing instead into the sophisticated ecosystems of Dubai (DXB), Singapore (SIN), and Doha (DOH). Every year, millions of Indian travellers detour through these cities, enriching their airlines, MRO facilities, fuelling stations, and retail sectors. Given the current geopolitical trends in the Middle East, the time is ripe for Indian aviation firms to swiftly occupy this space and transform India into a global aviation hub. *(BusinessLine)*

India data centre capacity to hit 4 GW by FY30, investment potential at ₹1.5 lakh crore

India's data centre capacity is expected to increase to around 4 GW by FY30, with a large underlying investment potential of ₹1.5 lakh crore over the period ending FY30, according to CareEdge Ratings. The data centre capacity per million internet users remains lower at 1.2 MW per million users, compared with the world average of 5 MW per million users. Digitisation, India's cost competitiveness in building data centres and the increasing adoption of AI are key factors driving growth in data centres. India's share in the global Data Centre market is approximately 4 percent in 2025, with a current capacity of 1.2 GW. *(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. Quoting Ankur Aggarwal, Chairman of CropLife India and Executive Chairman and Managing Director of Crystal Crop Protection Ltd, a media statement said on Friday that the disruptions may lead to a shortage of certain crop protection products during a critical agriculture season, impacting yield and the quality of produce. *(BusinessLine)*

India's refractory production faces risk as LPG shortages hit operations

The refractory industry, a silent enabler of industrial growth, has been facing a serious challenge as disruptions to LPG supply are beginning to strain manufacturing operations. The ongoing disruption has already started affecting refractory manufacturers across India. If the situation persists, it could significantly curtail production, particularly for units that depend heavily on LPG. Steel plants and other high-temperature industries rely on a steady supply of refractories for daily operations, maintenance and relining. In a letter to the Union Ministries of Steel, Petroleum and Natural Gas, the Indian Refractory Makers' Association urged the Central government to prioritise LPG supply for refractory manufacturers alongside domestic consumers. [\(BusinessLine\)](#)



News on Kerala

West Asia conflict: Call for adopting short-and long-term measures to reduce impact of crisis

Kerala's economy, heavily dependent on remittances from Gulf-based NRIs, faces significant vulnerability amid the ongoing West Asian crisis. According to the Kerala Migration Survey (2023), remittances reached a record ₹2.17 lakh crore, marking a 154.9% increase since 2018, with around 3.5 million Keralites residing in Gulf countries. S. Irudaya Rajan warns that the crisis could be more severe than the 1990s Gulf War, comparable to the combined effects of the 2008 financial crisis and COVID-19, and calls for urgent government intervention through a dedicated panel. [\(The Hindu\)](#)

The surging cost of health care in Kerala

Kerala's health-care system reflects a growing paradox where rising corporatisation has led to high out-of-pocket expenditure, even for minor treatments, as seen in costly private hospital care compared to affordable cooperative alternatives. Increasing investments by global private equity firms in major hospital chains, alongside the closure of small rural hospitals, indicate a shift toward profit-driven health care. While this expansion has improved infrastructure and advanced treatment options, it has also raised concerns about affordability, reduced access for poorer patients, and pressure on doctors to meet revenue targets. [\(The Hindu\)](#)

Cooking gas shortage stalls tourism; Tourist buses hit hard as travel plans collapse

A crisis triggered by conflict in the Gulf region and a shortage of cooking gas for commercial use has severely impacted the tourist bus industry. With uncertainty over the availability of food at hotels in tourist destinations, many people have postponed leisure trips, pushing the sector into distress. Pilgrimage travel has also declined. Trips to popular tourist destinations such as Mysuru, Ooty, Munnar, Kodaikanal, Kodagu (Coorg), Wayanad and Alappuzha as well as pilgrimage centres like Velankanni, Malayattoor, Erwadi, Thanjavur, Tiruchirappalli, Kashi and Rameswaram, have come down. [\(mathrubhumi.com\)](#)

Kerala Finance Dept flags ₹5,000 farmers' pension as 'not desirable'

The Kerala Finance Department has proposed scaling down the Farmers' Welfare Fund pension scheme, diluting the pre-election promise of a ₹5,000 monthly pension. It suggested reducing the pension to around ₹2,000, aligning it with existing social welfare pensions, and also cutting the government's contribution from ₹250 to ₹150 due to financial constraints. The department termed the ₹5,000 pension "not desirable," especially for farmers with only five years of contribution. The scheme, announced in 2021 and expected to benefit about 20 lakh farmers, has been delayed and not yet approved by the Cabinet, with very low enrolment so far. (*on manorama*)

Kerala welfare pension: Early payouts to start from March 31 ahead of Elections and Vishu

The Kerala government has decided to advance welfare pension payments for April and begin disbursement from March 31, ahead of the Vishu festival and in the context of upcoming elections. Around 62 lakh beneficiaries will receive pensions, with ₹2,000 per month, meaning many will get ₹4,000 (March and April) together this month. The move is intended to ensure that people have money in hand before the festival despite the state's financial constraints. Payments will be made through bank transfers and doorstep delivery systems. (*mathrubhumi.com*)

Strikes fade, industry rises: Rajeeve pitches new narrative for Kerala

Kerala Industries Minister P. Rajeeve highlighted a shift in the state's economic narrative—from being strike-prone to becoming increasingly industry-friendly. He argued that labour disruptions have significantly declined, improving investor confidence. The government is promoting policies to ease business operations, attract investment, and support MSMEs and startups. Rajeeve emphasized that Kerala now offers a stable industrial climate with skilled labour, better infrastructure, and proactive governance, positioning the state as an emerging destination for industrial growth. (*BusinessLine*)

GULATI INSTITUTE OF FINANCE AND TAXATION
GIFT Campus, Chavadimukku,
Sreekariyam, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala - 695017
Phone : 0471 2596970, 2596980, 2590880, 2593960
Fax : 0471 2591490
Email : giftkerala@gmail.com



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