



Public Finance

With an eye on rating upgrade, Budget likely to focus on fiscal consolidation

The Budget for FY25 is likely to focus more on fiscal consolidation than populist schemes. According to government officials, this is critical in securing a sovereign rating upgrade from at least S&P Global after a gap of 17 years. The interim Budget projected a fiscal deficit of 5.1 per cent for FY25 and reiterated, as announced in the Budget speech for FY22, that the government would continue on the broad glide path of fiscal consolidation to reach a fiscal deficit-to-GDP ratio below 4.5 per cent by FY26. *(BusinessLine)*

Budget may not change 45-day rule on payment to MSMEs

The coming Budget may not make any change to the 45-day pay rule in the income-tax law as the government has amended the Company Law order and notified a new form for reporting by corporates about delay in payment to micro and small enterprise suppliers. *(BusinessLine)*

How better fiscal incentives for pre-NELP, nomination blocks can enhance crude oil production

Better fiscal incentives, such as rationalising the tax structure, for pre-New Exploration Licencing Policy (NELP) and Nomination blocks can aid oil and gas companies in investing more in high-cost oil recovery technologies to improve crude oil production. Pre-NELP and nomination blocks account for around 90 per cent of India's crude oil production, which has been declining consistently since the last 10 years ending FY24. *(BusinessLine)*

Halwa ceremony marks start of final preparations

With the 'Halwa Ceremony' completed on Tuesday, the full Union Budget for Fiscal Year 2024-25 has entered the final stage. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will present first budget of Modi 3.0 Government budget on July 23rd, which will be her sixth consecutive ones. *(BusinessLine)*

Modi under pressure to give more money to Naidu, Nitish? Survey shows spending will be as frugal as before

New Delhi is expected to retain its earlier target of raising 14.1 trillion rupees (\$169 billion) via bond sales in the fiscal year that began in April, according to the median forecast in a Bloomberg survey of economists. Not a single respondent expects the budget deficit to widen, underscoring just how keen officials are to maintain their hard-earned credibility at a time when global investors are piling into Indian debt thanks to its inclusion in JPMorgan Chase & Co indexes. *(The Economic Times)*



GST system reforms panel rejigged

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council has reconstituted a ministerial group tasked with identifying possible sources of revenue evasion, improving coordination between central and State GST authorities, and reviewing the IT systems in place for implementing the indirect tax. These changes have been effected in order to bring in new ministers from the States of Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, and Chhattisgarh where new governments have been installed in recent months, as well as to replace the representative from Haryana. *(The Hindu)*.

Direct tax mop-up rises 19.5% to ₹5.74-lakh cr so far in FY25

Building on the strong show in financial year 2023-24, net direct tax collections have surged 19.54 per cent to ₹5.74-lakh crore till July 11 this fiscal, official data released by the Central Board of Direct Taxes showed. In the same period (up to July 11) last fiscal, the net direct tax collection was ₹4.80-lakh crore. The latest reading of ₹5.74-lakh crore includes corporate income tax (CIT) at ₹2.1-lakh crore (net of refund); personal income tax (PIT) at ₹3.46-lakh crore and Securities Transaction Tax (STT) of ₹16,634 crore (net of refund). *(BusinessLine)*

Uniform IGST rate of 5% for aircraft parts from July 15

The government announced that the implementation of a uniform IGST rate of 5% on all aircraft and aircraft engine parts had come into effect from Monday. Last week, the 53rd GST Council recommended a uniform 5% tax on imports of parts, components, testing equipment, tools and toolkits of aircraft, irrespective of their HSN code with the aim to reduce operational costs, resolve tax credit issues, and attract investment. *(The Hindu)*.

Govt hikes windfall tax on crude petroleum to Rs 7,000 per tonne

The government on Monday hiked windfall tax on domestically produced crude oil to Rs 7,000 per tonne, from Rs 6,000 per tonne. The tax is levied in the form of Special Additional Excise Duty (SAED). The new rates are effective from July 16, an official notification said. India first imposed windfall profit taxes on July 1, 2022, joining a host of nations that tax supernormal profits of energy companies. The tax rates are reviewed every fortnight based on average oil prices in the previous two weeks. *(Business Standard)*

In new regime, MF tax-saving schemes lose sheen

The tax-saving Equity Linked Savings Schemes (ELSS) have registered a net outflow over the past three months despite overall investments in other equity schemes reaching new highs. Once popular with the middle and lower income tax payers, ELSS has been losing appeal to the larger section of investors after the launch of the new tax regime. *(BusinessLine)*



National Accounts and State of the Economy

June food inflation accelerates to 9.4%, highest in 6 months

Costlier vegetables, cereals and fruits spurred the rise in food prices paid by Indian consumers to a six-month high of 9.4% in June, escalating the headline retail inflation pace to a four-month high of 5.08% in June, from a revised 4.8% in May. Rural inflation spiked to 5.66% from 5.3% a month ago, while urban consumers faced a price rise of 4.4% compared with 4.2% in May. Urban India faced a higher food inflation of 9.55% while it was 9.2% for their rural peers. *(The Hindu)*

Naidu, Shinde hold talks on inter-State cooperation

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Sunday met his Maharashtra counterpart Eknath Shinde in Mumbai. The two Chief Ministers discussed the prevailing political landscape and collaboration across sectors such as infrastructure and economics between the two coastal States. They spoke about matters concerning infrastructure development, expanding digital opportunities and other subjects. *(The Hindu)*

Karnataka to release 8,000 cusecs of Cauvery water daily to Tamil Nadu

Karnataka on Sunday decided to release Cauvery water at the rate of 8,000 cusecs daily to Tamil Nadu following a direction from the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC). The panel had directed that the State release 11,500 cusecs of water. The State also decided to go on an appeal to the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) against the CWRC order. The Chief Minister said that the cumulative water storage in all the four reservoirs in the Cauvery basin stood at 63% of the total capacity. *(The Hindu)*

Haryana raises creamy layer ceiling of OBCs, introduces new quota

Ahead of the Haryana Assembly election later this year, the State government on Tuesday raised the income ceiling for creamy layer of Other Backward Classes (OBC) from ₹6 lakh to ₹8 lakh and introduced a 5% reservation for the OBC-B category in Panchayati Raj Institutions and municipalities. Union Home Minister Amit Shah announced the decision at a State-level event, Backward Classes Samman Sammelan, in Mahendragarh. The Haryana government later issued a notification in this regard. *(The Hindu)*

Karnataka halts jobs Bill amid industry uproar

As a draft Bill cleared by the Karnataka Cabinet mandating reservation for locals garnered adverse reactions from industry heads and trade bodies in the State, the government late on Wednesday announced that it had been “temporarily withheld” and a decision would be taken after a review. Announcing the U-turn of his government on social media platform X on Wednesday night, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said the Bill that aimed to provide reservation to Kannadigas in the private sector was “still in an initial stage”. *(The Hindu)*

IMF raises India's GDP growth forecast by 20 basis points to 7% for FY25

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Tuesday raised its projection of growth in India's gross domestic product (GDP) for 2024-25 by 20 basis points to 7 per cent amid a boost in private consumption, especially in rural areas. “The forecast for growth in India has ... been revised upward ... with the change reflecting carryover from upward revisions

to growth in 2023 ...," the update to the IMF's World Economic Outlook (WEO) said. *(Business Standard)*

FICCI survey predicts robust 7% economic growth for FY25

According to the FICCI Economic Survey Results, median GDP growth is estimated at 6.8 per cent and 7.2 per cent in Q1 2024-25 and Q2 2024-25 respectively. The median growth forecast for agriculture and allied activities for 2024-25 has been put at 3.7 per cent, higher than 1.4 per cent recorded in 2023-24. Industry and services sectors, on the other hand, are anticipated to grow by 6.7 per cent and 7.4 per cent respectively in the current fiscal year, the survey has said. *(BusinessLine)*



Banking and Monetary Policy

Indian banks have 'special plans' for offering higher deposit rates

Indian lenders have intensified efforts to garner retail deposits through special plans that offer savers at least 25-30 basis points more than current commitments of comparable tenures, signalling policy interest rates will remain elevated for some time now. *(The Economic Times)*

RBI's bumper payout to limit big ticket divestment; govt to maintain Rs 50k cr target: Report

The record Rs 2.1 lakh crore dividend payout by the Reserve Bank of India will limit the need for big-ticket divestment, a domestic rating agency said on Thursday. Care Ratings said the new government will retain the interim budget's Rs 50,000 crore target on receipts from divestments. *(The Economic Times)*

Digital lending in India witnesses big transformation, thanks to two specific borrower groups

Gen Z and millennials are transforming India's digital lending landscape by driving significant growth in digital loans, ToI reported on July 16. The Gen Z group comprises those aged 18-25, while those aged 26-38 are referred to as millennials. *(The Economic Times)*

PSBs carry Sensex, Nifty to record closing highs

Benchmark Sensex and Nifty closed at new record high levels on Monday following buying in PSU bank shares and fresh foreign fund inflows. Sensex rose 145.52 points to settle at a new high of 80,664.86. Nifty rallied 84.55 points to settle at an all-time closing high of 24,586.70. *(BusinessLine)*

Fraud tag on loans only after hearing borrowers: RBI to banks

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has asked banks to give borrowers at least three weeks to respond before tagging them as fraud accounts. The regulator has also said the decision conveyed to the borrower must contain their submission and reasons for classifying the account as fraud. *(The Economic Times)*

SBI launches 444-day deposit scheme with 7.25% interest

The deposit war among banks has turned intense even as the system liquidity eased this month with higher government spending leading to lower borrowing cost for market players. *(The Economic Times)*

SBI hikes benchmark MCLR rate

State Bank of India (SBI) has hiked its benchmark marginal cost of fund based lending rate (MCLR) by 5 to 10 basis points in majority of tenures effective Monday. *(The Economic Times)*



External Sector

'India and Russia have doubled rupee-rouble payments in 2024'

India and Russia have doubled their payments in national currencies (rupee-rouble) since last year despite sanctions by the U.S. and European Union, says Russia's state-controlled and largest bank, Sberbank, that handles a majority of payments for Indian exports to Russia. Rupee deposits by Indian corporates have also increased multi-fold in 2024. *(The Hindu)*

Piyush Goyal in Switzerland to advance EFTA's \$100 billion investment in India

Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal discussed ongoing WTO negotiations with Director General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala in Zurich. Goyal's visit focused on advancing India's trade interests under the new India-EFTA free trade agreement, promoting collaborations with global firms like MSC Cargo, and engaging with the Indian diaspora to strengthen Indo-Swiss ties and economic growth. *(The Economic Times)*

India seeks to boost exports to Russia after PM Modi's trip

India is intensifying efforts to increase exports to Russia following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to Moscow. Despite a surge in Russian exports to India, reaching \$61.43 billion out of a total \$65.7 billion trade last fiscal year, Indian exports like pharmaceuticals and machinery have seen minimal growth. New Delhi seeks to address non-tariff barriers on exports and promote rupee-rouble trade, despite challenges such as Russia's preference for more widely used currencies. *(The Economic Times)*

EU's carbon tax could cost India 0.05 per cent of GDP: Report

The EU's CBAM taxes 25% on India's energy-intensive exports, impacting 0.05% of GDP, per CSE. Targeted goods: iron, steel, cement, fertilizers, aluminum. Exports to the EU made up 9.91% (2022-23). 26% aluminum, 28% iron, steel were EU-bound. CBAM-covered goods formed one-fourth of global exports. No hydrogen, electricity exported. Debates occur at UN climate conferences. *(The Economic Times)*

Indian Rubber Gloves Manufacturers Association demands ban on import of chlorinated gloves

IRGMA requested banning chlorinated gloves due to bio-waste violations and urged using BIS approved gloves via GEM. The Malaysian Rubber Council noted health risks. CPCB and West Bengal Pollution Boards support bans. CDSCO Gazette from Oct 2, 2022, prohibits

powdered Nitrile gloves. Sunil Patwari and Konda Anindith Reddy from Wadi Surgicals emphasized risks from chlorinated imports. (*The Economic Times*)

Increasing exports, trade in local currency, FTA to boost India-Russia commerce: GTRI

Steps recommended by the think tank GTRI to boost trade between India and Russia include increasing exports, implementing local currency trading, and pursuing a free trade agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union. Despite a growing trade deficit, India benefits from favorable crude oil deals with Russia. The impact of the Ukraine war and US sanctions has reshaped the trade relationship, prompting a push for a bilateral trade target of USD 100 billion by 2030. (*The Economic Times*)

Non-tariff barriers: Centre readies steps to ease exporters' woes

The government is working towards a strategy to tackle non-tariff barriers faced by exporters by setting up a committee and launching a portal, a senior official said. Typically, non-tariff barriers take several years to resolve. The development comes at a time when India is negotiating free-trade agreements (FTAs) with several developed economies, where non-tariff measures related to environment and sustainability have become a cause for concern for Indian exporters. (*Business Standard*)

Growth hat-trick for goods exports; but trade deficit up 9.4% in June

India's merchandise exports grew for the third straight month in June, rising 2.55% to \$35.2 billion, but the import bill climbed by a faster 5% to \$56.2 billion, widening the trade deficit by 9.4% from a year ago, as per quick trade estimates released by the Commerce Ministry. Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal said that total merchandise and services exports have hit a record high of \$200.3 billion in the first quarter of 2024-25, surpassing the previous high of \$197.1 billion recorded in 2022-23. (*The Hindu*).

Malaysia urges India to lift restrictions on sugar & rice exports

Last year, India, the world's biggest exporter of rice and onions and the second-biggest exporter of sugar, had imposed restrictions on shipment of these commodities to keep domestic prices under check. Malaysia on Thursday requested India to lift restrictions on exports of commodities such as rice and sugar, Datuk Seri Johari Abdul Ghani, minister for plantation and commodities said. (*Financial Express*)



Agriculture and Rural Economy

ICAR, Syngenta tie up to promote climate-resilient agriculture

Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), Syngenta Foundation India (SFI), and Syngenta India Pvt Ltd have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to enhance training and capacity-building programmes for farmers and rural youth, focusing on climate-resilient agricultural practices and skill training through ICAR's network of national research institutes, regional stations, krishi vigyan kendras (KVKs), and agricultural universities. (*BusinessLine*)

Agriculture prospects look bright in southern region following excess monsoon rainfall

Agriculture prospects look bright in South India with all States in the region receiving excess or normal rainfall during the current south-west monsoon. According to the India Meteorological Department, the southern region has received 17 per cent excess rainfall so far with Tamil Nadu, which normally receives rains during the north-east monsoon, getting “largely excess” precipitation. *(BusinessLine)*

Google-backed AI startup Cropin wants to predict future of food

Food and agriculture AI startup Cropin Technology Solutions has unveiled a real-time intelligence solution to forecast future yields for 13 vital crops as artificial intelligence helps overcome bottlenecks in the farming industry. *(The Economic Times)*

Heatwave effect: Potato prices likely to remain hot despite monsoon progress

Vegetable prices, especially potatoes, are likely to stay elevated in the near term, despite rapid progress of the monsoon, according to agricultural experts and economists. Heatwaves in several parts of the country this summer damaged crops, causing demand-supply mismatch, they say. Vegetable inflation remains a major concern for policymakers, reaching 29.3% in June, from 27.4% in May. *(The Economic Times)*

Poultry industry demands maize imports at zero duty under OGL

India’s poultry industry, hurt by record-high prices of maize due to its increased diversion for ethanol production, has sought permission to import the commodity at zero duty under open general licence (OGL). A section of the industry has also demanded that the government should supply rice at concessional rates to make up for the shortage of maize. The government has allowed import of about 5 lakh tonnes of maize under tariff rate quota (TRQ) at 15% import duty through state government agencies. *(The Economic Times)*

Government asks retailers to pass on lower wholesale rates of pulses to consumers

The government has warned representatives of top retailers such as Reliance Retail, D Mart, Tata Stores, Spencer’s, RSPG, V Mart among others, of strict action after prices of major pulses – tur, chana and urad, declined marginally in mandis but not in retail market. *(The Economic Times)*

Indian farmers have a chance to make Rs 35,000 per hectare if they shift to..

A recent paper by ICRIER economists led by Ashok Gulati has proposed a direct transfer of Rs 35,000 per hectare to farmers who shift from paddy to pulses, oilseeds, millets, and maize during the kharif season, ToI reported. This recommendation includes procurement of these crops at the minimum support price for five years, aiming to address ecological concerns in Punjab and Haryana through crop diversification. *(The Economic Times)*

No hike in MSP causing problems for sugar industry: Federation official

The sugar industry in the country has been facing problems as the Centre has not increased its Minimum Support Price (MSP) since five years, a sugar units federation representative claimed on Tuesday. Problems like short margins in working capital, debts may arise in the sugar industry again as the central government does not take fast decisions, National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories Limited director Jaiprakash Dandegaonkar told PTI. *(The Economic Times)*

As tomato prices soar over Rs 80/kg, ICAR's hybrids offer hope for market stability

As tomato prices across India touch a staggering Rs 80/kg, two hybrid varieties developed by a Bengaluru-based institute under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research could potentially safeguard against future crises, a top official said on Monday. However, their success hinges on wider adoption and increased cultivation area. *(The Economic Times)*

Govt aims to cover 25pc of kharif paddy area with climate-resilient seeds

In a bid to combat the growing challenges posed by climate change, the government is targeting to bring 25 percent of the total kharif paddy area under climate-resilient seeds, a senior agriculture ministry official said on Monday. The move comes as erratic rainfall patterns have become increasingly common in recent years, threatening rice production in the country. *(The Economic Times)*

Budget 2024: India can use fiscal headroom to support rural economy, suggests FICCI

The Reserve Bank of India's dividend transfer of Rs 2.1 lakh crore has bolstered the Modi government's financial reserves, which can be used to empower the rural economy through increased spending on social sector schemes, said the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) in its latest report. In its Economic Outlook Survey, FICCI also anticipated continuity in policy in the Union Budget 2024-25 and further momentum in reforms already being undertaken by the government. *(The Economic Times)*

IMF predicts 7% growth for India in FY25, citing strong rural consumption

Ahead of the presentation of full Union Budget for Fiscal Year 2024-25, India's economic planners got good news from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which revised the country's growth forecast for current year by 20 bps to 7 per cent. This is higher than World Bank's projection but lower than Reserve Bank of India's estimate. *(BusinessLine)*

Farmers in India face income decline amid rising costs: Madhura Swaminathan

Agricultural income in India continues to decline, leaving rural households barely earning adequate income and farmers facing precarious returns, said Madhura Swaminathan, professor at the Indian Statistical Institute, Bangalore. Delivering the Durgabai Deshmukh Memorial Lecture on "The Agrarian Economy: Perceptions Versus Reality", Swaminathan said despite India being an agrarian economy where 69 per cent of the population lives in rural areas and 90 per cent of rural households participate in agriculture in some way, its share of income and its contribution to the overall economy are both on the decline. *(Business Standard)*



Industry, Manufacturing, Services and Technology

Auto industry demands sops for EVs from upcoming Budget

The auto industry on Friday sought sops to promote electric vehicles (EVs) and suggested that the government bring in additional incentives for scrapping of vehicles in the upcoming Budget. The Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) stressed on a growth-oriented Budget with focus on greater allocation for capital expenditure. *(BusinessLine)*

ISRO has a problem: many rockets, but too few satellites to launch

In June, S. Somanath, Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and Secretary of the Department of Space, said ISRO's launch vehicle capability was three-times the demand. Many experts in the spaceflight sector and beyond interpreted this to mean the space launch market was grim. Mr. Somanath also suggested strong demand was needed for launch vehicles from the domestic Indian market. *(The Hindu)*

India's fintech industry projected to reach \$420 bn by 2029 at CAGR of 31%

The Indian fintech industry is estimated to be around USD 110 billion in 2024 and its projected to reach about USD 420 billion by 2029, Ajay Kumar Choudhary, Non-Executive Chairman and Independent Director, National Payments Corporation of India, said. The sector, he said, is expected to continue to grow due to factors like favourable policies of the government. *(Business Standard)*

Cotton yarn industry expected to spin back to recovery in FY25: ICRA

The domestic cotton spinning industry will recover in FY25, growing 6-8 per cent, rating agency ICRA said on Wednesday. The recovery will be aided by 4-6 percent volume growth and mild-realisation gains, the rating agency said. The estimated recovery would follow two consecutive years of de-growth on the back of subdued domestic demand and falling yarn realisations. *(Business Standard)*

'Arunachal to constitute committee for drafting new industrial policy soon'

Arunachal Pradesh will soon constitute a committee to draft a new industrial policy aimed at attracting investments to the state, Industries Minister Nyato Dukam said. Dukam said inputs will be taken from stakeholders to ensure the policy fully realises the state's industrial potential while maintaining investor-friendly measures. He also called for robust coordination among departments to explore and capitalise on opportunities that will enhance the dynamism and success of these departments. *(Business Standard)*

Indian fintech industry set to soar to \$420 billion by 2029, says NPCI Chairman Choudhary

India's fintech industry is projected to grow at a cumulative annual growth rate of 31 per cent to about \$420 billion by 2029, Ajay Kumar Choudhary Non-Executive Chairman and Independent Director, NPCI, has said. As of 2024, the fintech industry is estimated to be about \$110 billion, Choudhary said at the inaugural session of the 2nd India International Fintech Festival, organised by ASSOCHAM in the capital on Thursday. *(BusinessLine)*

India should aim at \$500 billion in electronics manufacturing by 2030: NITI Aayog

In a report titled 'Electronics: Powering India's Participation in Global Value Chains', the NITI Aayog observed that the global electronics market, valued at \$4.3 trillion, is dominated by countries like China, Taiwan, US, South Korea, Vietnam and Malaysia. *(BusinessLine)*

Semiconductor manufacturing capacity is a matter of resilience for India: S Krishnan

In his keynote address, Krishnan stressed that reliance on semiconductor imports is not sustainable for a country as large as India. The conference has been organized by the Mahratta Chamber of Commerce, Industries, and Agriculture (MCCIA) in partnership with the Software Technology Parks of India (STPI). *(BusinessLine)*



Elephant population in Kerala declines by 7%, highest drop in Wayanad

There has been a near 7 per cent decrease in the wild elephant population in Kerala. While the elephant population is stable in Periyar and Nilambur elephant reserves (ERs), the elephant population in the other two ERs, namely Wayanad and Anamudi, has shown a noticeable decline. The findings were made in the report of the 'Synchronised Elephant Population Estimation - 2024' that was released in Thiruvananthapuram on Tuesday by forest minister A K Saseendran (*Onmanorama*).

Kerala CM announces Rs 13,013 cr development projects as part of state govt's third anniversary

The government in Kerala will implement development projects worth Rs 13,013.40 crore in 100 days as part of its third anniversary, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan announced on Tuesday. The projects, which are part of the fourth edition of the 100-day programmes, are expected to be completed by October 22, he said (*Onmanorama*).

Delay in payment of wages, 108 ambulance staff on strike in Kerala

Drivers and nurses affiliated to Kerala state 108 ambulance employees union - CITU are on a strike citing delay in payment of monthly wages. Around 1200 staff associated with 324 vehicles across the state are taking part in the strike. As part of the strike, the staff have decided not to respond to calls for IFT (inter-facility transfer); shifting of patients requiring specialised care from one hospital to another (*Onmanorama*).

Lack of policy framework and middlemen exploitation stall altruistic organ donation in Kerala

Despite a Kerala High Court order issued seven years ago, the government has failed to establish clear procedures for altruistic organ donations from living donors. The court's directive, issued in November 2017, has seen minimal progress since. Initially committing to action on February 15, 2018, little has been done since then. (*Mathrubhumi English*).

Construction of Kozhikode-Palakkad Greenfield NH gets delayed due to legal issues

The construction of the Greenfield National Highway in Kozhikode, aimed at easing congestion on the Palakkad-Kozhikode national highway, has become embroiled in a legal dispute even before construction commences. Problems have arisen due to the decision to reclaim a significant portion of the funds paid for land acquisition (*Mathrubhumi English*).

Government denies Kerala firefighters' request to increase Rs 200 risk allowance

In a disappointing response to the demands of the Kerala Fire Service Drivers and Mechanics Association, the government has stated that granting a hike in risk allowance is currently unfeasible due to financial burdens (*Mathrubhumi English*).

Kerala emerges 3rd in PM Suryagarh project; Better results in less time

Kerala has benefited from the Prime Minister Suryagarh programme implemented by the Central Government for setting up rooftop solar power plants in states. Kerala ranked third in the country in providing subsidies for solar power plants and Gujarat and Maharashtra are in the first two positions (*Mathrubhumi English*).

Kerala government offices will turn smart with new AI technology

A new Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology is ready to be implemented to make work easier in government offices. The AI software tools, Digi Smart and KELLI, were developed by KELTRON, a technology-driven enterprise that manufactures and markets electronic components, equipment, and systems for communications, defense, industrial, and home applications (*Mathrubhumi English*).

Kerala waives its GST share and royalty for Ernakulam bypass, Kollam-Sengottai NH projects

Giving an impetus to the stalled projects of the 44-km-long Ernakulam bypass, a greenfield national highway (NH) corridor linking Kundannoor on NH-66 bypass with Angamaly on NH-544, and the Kollam-Sengottai stretch on NH-744, the Kerala government has issued a government order waiving the State's share of goods and service tax (GST) and royalty on raw materials for the construction of two road projects (*The Hindu*).

Kerala Finance department sanctions ₹100 crore for market intervention measures

The Finance department has sanctioned ₹100 crore for market intervention measures. The money has been sanctioned to the Kerala State Civil Supplies Corporation for the purpose, Finance Minister K.N. Balagopal said on Monday. The allocation is meant to support Supplyco in ensuring the supply of essential commodities at up to 35% discount to consumers. Additionally, the money will be used to stock adequate supplies ahead of the Onam season (*The Hindu*).

KSEB revenue from EV charging goes up

The Kerala State Electricity Board's (KSEB) revenue from electric vehicle charging stations has witnessed a big jump since 2020-21, show data with the Power department. From ₹6.46 lakh in 2021-22, revenue from fast-charging stations and pole-mounted EV-charging stations jumps to over ₹2.06 crore in 2023-24 according to the data submitted by the Power department in the State Assembly earlier this month (*The Hindu*).

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