



Public Finance

Pickup in public expenditure may keep growth steady: Finance ministry

After witnessing contraction in the first quarter of the current financial year (Q1FY25), the government is expecting public expenditure to pick up in the remaining quarters, even though there is a need for monitoring automobiles and fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) sales due to slowdown seen in Q1, the finance ministry (FinMin)'s Monthly Economic Review for August said. (*Business Standard*)

Centre notifies NaBFID as a public financial institution

The government has notified the National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID) as a public financial institution under the Companies Act. This will help the government fortify the nation's infrastructure finance structures. In a notification issued on September 10, the Corporate Affairs Ministry said that in exercise of the powers, Section 2 of the Companies Act, 2013, the Central Government, in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India, hereby notifies National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development as a "public financial institution". (*The Economic Times*)

Bid to promote green funding: Centre reviews proposals to promote transition finance

The government is considering recommendations to promote transition finance for high carbon-emitting industries. A proposed fund by state-run financial institutions aims to help smaller companies scale up green operations with lower-cost credit. The government will develop a taxonomy for climate finance within seven to ten months, as announced in the budget. (*The Economic Times*)

Centre to borrow Rs 6.6 lakh crore in H2, stays within FY25 Budget target

The Indian government plans to borrow ₹6.61 lakh crore through dated securities in the second half of this fiscal year, maintaining its full-year target of ₹14.01 lakh crore. This move aims to manage repayments from the pandemic period and includes raising ₹20,000 crore via sovereign green bonds. (*The Economic Times*)



Taxation

Compensation cess, rationalisation of GST rates under discussion: FM

The GST Council is seriously discussing rate rationalisation, going through rates "item by item", Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in an interaction with journalists of The Hindu group of publications on Saturday. Discussions have been going on in the GST Council on questions such as whether there should be four rates (5, 12, 18 and 28 per cent) and which items should attract what rate. (*BusinessLine*)

Health, life insurance premiums need a tax cut? GoM to meet on October 19

A ministerial panel will meet on October 19 to discuss reducing GST on health and life insurance premiums, currently at 18 per cent. The 13-member group, led by Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary, will submit its report by October-end. A final decision is expected in November. *(The Economic Times)*

Most GST notices due to data mismatches, CBIC to deploy tech to address pain points

A majority of show-cause notices issued to taxpayers under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime last year pertained to 'data discrepancies' in tax return filings, and efforts are underway to use technology to resolve such mismatches and mitigate the resultant disputes as well as 'pain points for taxpayers'. *(The Hindu)*

Drive to curb tax disputes begins as SC disposes of 573 appeals

Following the Budget move to revise the monetary limit for filing appeals in tax litigation matters, the Supreme Court on Tuesday disposed of 573 direct tax cases where the tax effect is less than ₹5 crore, the Finance Ministry said. *(The Hindu)*

New scheme to settle pending tax disputes from Oct 1:

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has recently released notification, saying the Direct Tax Vivad Se Vishwas Scheme 2024 will come into effect from October 1, 2024. This scheme seeks to minimise income tax litigation by offering taxpayers the opportunity to settle ongoing income tax appeals, writs, and petitions pending before various appellate authorities, including the Supreme Court and high courts, as of July 22, 2024. *(Business Standard)*

GoM meet in Goa: No further exemption in GST for long term land lease

The Group of Ministers meeting in Goa decided against further GST exemptions on long-term land leases by private entities and sector-specific exemptions like tourism. Various issues related to the real estate sector were discussed, with some requiring further deliberation and data collection from states before final decisions are made. *(The Economic Times)*

Fake registration drive: GST officers detect 10,700 bogus firms, over Rs 10k cr evasion

Tax officers have detected around 10,700 fake GST registrations involving Rs 10,179 crore in evasion. Aadhaar authentication for GST registration is expanding to more states. The government is taking targeted action, including physical verification and potential restrictions on new taxpayers, to curb fraud. *(The Economic Times)*



National Accounts and State of the Economy

India focused on urban infrastructure, e-mobility, and renewable energy for growth: FM Sitharaman

Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs, Nirmala Sitharaman, emphasized the urgent need for sustainable and resilient infrastructure, especially in light of the global challenges posed by climate change and geopolitical tensions. The minister highlighted

this during her address at the Governors' Business Roundtable at the 9th Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) in Samarkand on Wednesday. *(The Economic Times)*

Growth to hold steady, but global risks Remain: FinMin

The finance ministry on Thursday said economic growth would remain steady in the coming quarters as public expenditure gathers pace after the general election and the rural economy strengthens, but navigating continuing global uncertainties, especially the fallout of likely rate cuts by advanced economies, would remain a challenge. *(The Economic Times)*

Chief economists bullish on India, cautious optimism for global recovery: WEF survey

Chief economists express cautious optimism about the global economy, highlighting India's strong performance in South Asia. The World Economic Forum's survey points to easing inflation and robust global commerce but raises concerns over elevated debt levels affecting both advanced and developing economies, potentially limiting future investments in essential sectors. *(The Economic Times)*

ADB retains India's growth forecast at 7%; govt spending, agriculture to boost economy

The Asian Development Bank has maintained India's growth forecast at 7% for the current fiscal year, citing improved farm output and higher government spending. The economy is expected to accelerate in the coming quarters, with robust industry and services performance. *(The Economic Times)*

India Sept business growth at nine-month low as demand eases, PMI shows

Growth in India's business activity slowed to a nine-month low in September amid a slight cooling in demand and an uptick in costs, according to a survey that also showed services sector jobs rose at the fastest pace in two years. India's business activity growth slowed to a nine-month low in September due to cooling demand and rising costs, according to an HSBC survey. Despite this, services sector jobs rose at the fastest pace in two years. *(The Economic Times)*

Working-age Indian population rising; expected at around 64% in next census: SBI Research

India's working-age population has been rising since 1971 and is projected to reach 64.4% in the upcoming Census, according to SBI Research. It will further increase to 65.2% by 2031. The elderly population is also growing, expected to reach 10.7% in 2024 and 13.1% by 2031. *(The Economic Times)*

Unemployment rate remains unchanged in 2023-24 at 3.2%: PLFS

India's unemployment rate in 2023-24 remained steady at 3.2%, with rural areas seeing a slight increase to 2.5% and urban areas experiencing a decline to 5.1%. Female labour force participation rose to a seven-year high of 41.7%, while male participation also reached a seven-year high at 78.8%. *(The Economic Times)*



Banking and Monetary Policy

WACR climbs to 6.69% amid banking system liquidity deficit

The weighted average call rate, reflecting banks' overnight borrowing costs, rose to 6.69%, surpassing the Reserve Bank of India's repo rate of 6.50%. This increase is due to deficit liquidity conditions caused by advance tax payments and GST outflows. The RBI conducted short-term variable rate repo auctions to ease liquidity pressures. *(The Economic Times)*

HDFC Bank board clears HDB Financial's ₹2,500-cr. IPO plan

The board of HDFC Bank has cleared a proposal of its subsidiary HDB Financial Services Ltd. to raise ₹2,500 crore in fresh equity and offer for sale through an Initial Public Offering (IPO), as per regulatory filings with the BSE. HDBFS is a non-deposit taking Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) with Assets Under Management (AUM) of ₹90,000 crore, as per the firm's annual reports for FY24. HDBFS lends to consumers and enterprises while also providing BPO services. *(The Hindu)*

NBFC sector resilient under scale-based regulations framework: RBI bulletin

The non-banking financial companies (NBFC) sector in India continues to demonstrate resilience within the scale-based regulations (SBR) framework, improving in asset quality and diversifying funding base, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) officials said. *(The Hindu)*

Indian Bank board approves raising ₹5,000 cr. via bonds

The board of directors of Indian Bank has approved raising an additional ₹5,000 crore through long-term infrastructure bonds, the public sector lender said in a filing. The amount will be raised in one or more tranches during the current or subsequent financial year based on the requirement for financing/refinancing of infrastructure and affordable housing in compliance with applicable RBI guidelines and other applicable laws, rules and regulations. *(The Hindu)*

FinMin, RBI to take a call on sovereign gold bonds this week

The Finance Ministry and the Reserve Bank of India will take a call on the fate of sovereign gold bonds (SGB) during the week starting September 23. As of now, there is very distinct possibility of a fresh issuance of SGBs during the current fiscal. The meeting will decide on market borrowings for second half of the current fiscal, starting October 1. *(BusinessLine)*

Deposit growth outpaces Credit Growth in last 8 months: CARE Ratings

Banking system deposit growth has outpaced credit growth in the last 8 months, data compiled by rating agency CARE showed. In absolute terms, over the last 8 months, credit expanded by Rs. 10.9 lakh crore to reach Rs. 170.5 lakh crore as of September 6, 2024. While deposits have expanded by Rs. 14.7 lakh crore over the last 8-months to reach Rs 215.5 lakhs crore. *(The Economic Times)*

IDBI Bank announces scheme for one time settlement of retail NPAs

IDBI Bank has announced a special Scheme "Sugam Rinn Bhugtan Yojana (SUGAM)", to boost its recovery efforts through one time settlement of Retail NPAs up to March 31, 2021. *(The Economic Times)*



External Sector

External debt in comfort zone and better than many others, says FM Sitharaman

India's external debt-to-GDP ratio is at 18.7%, with a debt service ratio of 6.7% and foreign exchange reserves-to-external debt ratio at 97.4%. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman emphasized that India's external debt remains sustainable and prudently managed, highlighting the country's strong position compared to many middle-income countries. *(The Economic Times)*

Aim to increase FDI inflows to \$100 billion a year: DPIIT Secy

New Delhi is receiving USD 70-80 billion in foreign direct investments annually and aims to reach USD 100 billion per year. The government is easing norms in sectors like defense, railways, insurance, and telecom to attract more investments. FDI inflows have significantly increased over the past decade. *(The Economic Times)*

India, Korea discuss upgrading of existing trade pact; promoting investments

India and Korea discussed upgrading their free trade agreement, balancing commerce, and promoting investments. Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal met with his Korean counterpart Inkyo Cheong in Laos. They focused on achieving balanced trade, addressing non-tariff barriers, and boosting exports of Indian products like steel, rice, and shrimp. The review aims to strengthen economic ties and address India's growing trade deficit with Korea. *(The Economic Times)*

India, Myanmar discuss ways to promote trade through local currencies

India and Myanmar discussed promoting bilateral trade using local currencies, rupee and kyat, during a meeting between Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and Myanmar's Minister Kan Zaw. The talks also covered cooperation in areas like lentils, diesel, gasoline, and electric vehicles. India-Myanmar bilateral trade stood at USD 1.75 billion in 2023-24. *(The Economic Times)*

India's coal import rises 41% to 25.23 MT in July, shows data

India's coal imports surged by 40.56% to 25.23 million tonnes in July, up from 17.95 million tonnes a year earlier, according to mjunction services. The April-July period saw imports rise to 100.48 million tonnes from 89.11 million tonnes last year, driven by increased demand for non-coking coal amid falling prices. *(The Economic Times)*

IPEF talks' secrecy, limited public input key concerns: GTRI

The Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) negotiations have raised concerns about whether member countries, including India, could protect their interests. Issues include potential restrictions on tax policy, trading critical materials, and clean energy standards. Think tank GTRI stresses the need for flexibility to support local industries and avoid rigid international commitments. *(The Economic Times)*

Export of gems and jewellery drops over 18% in August amid global consumption slowdown

India's gem & jewellery exports in August fell by 18.79% to USD 2012.51 million compared to last year. The decline is due to global consumption slowdown amid geopolitical tensions. Exports of cut and polished diamonds, lab-grown diamonds, gold jewellery, and coloured gemstones also saw significant drops. *(The Economic Times)*

Top exporters body seeks 5 yrs for export credit scheme

The Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) has urged the government to extend the interest equalisation scheme for five years to boost credit flow amid a 13-month decline in goods exports. The scheme, aiding MSME exporters, is set to end on September 30. FIEO also signed an MoU with Stenn to enhance SME financing. *(The Economic Times)*

Need lower tariffs, harmonisation of norms to boost Indo-US agri trade: Experts

Industry experts at the Indo-US Economic Summit called for lower tariffs and harmonisation of local norms to boost India-US agricultural trade. Key concerns include supply chain disruptions, absence of a free trade agreement, and local quality norms. Experts also emphasized sustainability, technology integration, and private sector participation to enhance productivity and export growth. *(The Economic Times)*

Dairy is sensitive sector; no plans to open up in any FTAs: Piyush Goyal

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal stated that India's dairy sector will not receive duty concessions under any Free Trade Agreements due to its sensitivity involving small farmers' livelihoods. He emphasized that even with recent agreements like EFTA, dairy remains protected. Talks with Australia also highlighted this stance. *(The Economic Times)*

Indian steelmakers seek higher tariffs as Chinese imports surge

India's steelmakers have urged the government to double tariffs on steel imports to 15% to counter a surge in cheaper shipments from China. The Indian Steel Association expressed concerns about the impact of these imports on local producers and requested additional measures to protect the industry. *(The Economic Times)*

India, Egypt identify international trade settlement, digital payments as focus areas

India and Egypt have identified key areas for collaboration, including international trade settlement, digital payments, and investment in the Suez Canal Economic Zone. They also discussed market access issues on agricultural products and agreed to resolve them promptly. Both countries aim to increase trade and investment, with the next Joint Trade Committee meeting scheduled for 2026 in Egypt. *(The Economic Times)*



Agriculture and Rural Economy

Govt pushes for scalable food security measures, local crop promotion

India aims to integrate scalable food security measures into existing government programmes while promoting local crop varieties. Agriculture Secretary Devesh

Chaturvedi flagged the need for a focused approach and suggested involving Farmer Producer Organizations. *(The Economic Times)*

India's foodgrain production hits record 332.22 MT in 2023-24: Govt

India's foodgrain production reached a record 332.22 million tonne in the 2023-24 crop year ended June, driven by bumper wheat and rice output, the agriculture ministry said on Wednesday. The final estimate for 2023-24 shows an increase of 2.61 million tonne from the previous year's 329.6 million tonne, the ministry said in a statement. *(The Economic Times)*

TNAU will collaborate with Australian varsities to develop crop varieties suiting climate change: Agriculture Minister

Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) will, in collaboration with Australian universities, undertake research to come out with crop varieties that would withstand the impact of climate change, Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare M.R.K. Paneerselvam said on September 26, 2024 (Thursday) *(The Hindu)*

Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan holds first meeting with farmers

Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan held his first dialogue with a delegation of 50 farmers and farm union leaders on Tuesday. During the meeting with Chouhan, the delegation raised a raft of issues ranging from a fair price for all crops, a solution to the stray cattle menace, rejigging of the crop insurance scheme to benefit small growers, and steady availability of cheap and authentic seeds. *(Business Standard)*

Agriculture 4.0: How urban farming is shaping the future of food security in smart cities

As urban populations grow, cities are embracing innovative solutions to ensure fresh, sustainable food for all. Enter Agriculture 4.0 — a dynamic evolution in farming that blends advanced technologies with the increasing demand for local food sources in bustling urban environments. Powered by smart innovations such as the Internet of Things (IoT), vertical farming, and hydroponics, this new era of agriculture is creating exciting opportunities for cities to meet their food needs sustainably and efficiently. *(BusinessLine)*

ADB highlights need for measuring women's empowerment in agriculture sector

Prioritizing measuring women's empowerment in agrifood systems can help design and evaluate projects aimed at improving gender equality and resource access, ADB said while listing four ways to measure such empowerment. Women face significant gender disparities in agrifood systems due to entrenched gender inequalities which is a major barrier to progress on sustainable development goals, an blog by the organisation read. *(ThePrint)*

India, US should aim to enhance agricultural productivity: ITC official

India and the US should aim to enhance agricultural productivity, improve food distribution system, and ensure the usage of sustainable practices to strengthen ties in the agri sector, a senior ITC official said. *(Business Standard)*

ADB retains India's growth forecast at 7%; govt spending, agriculture to boost economy

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Wednesday (September 25, 2024) retained India's growth forecast for the current fiscal at 7% and said that the economy is expected

to accelerate in the coming quarters on improved farm output, and higher Government spending. In its Asian Development Outlook (ADO) update of September, the ADB said exports in the current fiscal will be higher than earlier projected, led by larger services exports. *(The Hindu)*

Corteva launches initiative to support 2 million women farmers by 2030

Global agriculture company Corteva Agriscience on Tuesday unveiled a programme aimed at empowering two million women farmers across India's agri-value chain by 2030. *(Business Standard)*

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Govt approaches NITI for 25% ethanol blending road map, may hike sugar MSP

With the target of 20 per cent ethanol blend with petrol on track, the food ministry has now approached the NITI Aayog to prepare a road map for 25 per cent blending, Food Minister Pralhad Joshi said on Thursday. *(Business Standard)*

Around 15% of tomatoes go waste at the farm level, 12% at retail: Study

Around 15 per cent of tomatoes are lost or wasted at the farm level while 12 per cent meet the same fate at the retail level, a study on the tomato supply chain of Madhya Pradesh, one of the major growing states for the commodity shows. The main reason for the losses at the farm gate levels as per the respondents to the study were poor production, harvesting, and postharvest practices (such as harvesting time and method, packaging, and temporary storage). *(Business Standard)*



Industry, Manufacturing, Services and Technology

Raghuram Rajan wants India to do more to create jobs and boost manufacturing

Former RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan commends India's progress in infrastructure over the past decade but stresses the need for further efforts in local manufacturing and job creation. He highlights the importance of easing business operations and addressing policy criticisms to strengthen the 'Make in India' initiative, aiming for sustained economic growth. *(The Economic Times)*

Loans to MSMEs register 13.3% growth this fiscal: RBI data

Indicating a positive trend, loans to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) showed an uptick on a year-on-year (y-o-y) basis so far in the current fiscal compared with the year-earlier period. As per the latest Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data, advances to micro and small enterprises registered 13.3% y-o-y growth, while that for medium enterprises stood at 17.2%. *(The Hindu)*

'Commercialisation of health services can be a recipe for disaster'

A few days ago, Sujatha Rao, former Union Secretary of the Health Ministry, quit the Lancet Citizens' Commission on Reimagining India's Health System. In 2020, the Union government intensified its efforts to privatise health care in India when NITI Aayog proposed and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced in her budget speech that district hospitals will be attached with private medical colleges in a public-private partnership (PPP) mode. *(The Hindu)*

Strive for scientific disposal of waste: CM Patel to industry leaders

Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel on Thursday urged industry leaders to aim for "100 per cent" disposal of chemical waste in a scientific manner while stressing on the need to protect the environment. Patel made the appeal while addressing industrialists and other stakeholders at the 'Chemical & Petrochemical Conclave' organised here by the Associated Chambers of Commerce & Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) Gujarat Council. *(Business Standard)*

Qapitol QA Releases Q2 Update for its State of the Industry Report on Quality Engineering in Tech-funded Startups for FY24

This update builds on the Q1 report, integrating the latest data and providing fresh insights into the evolving landscape of quality engineering within high-growth startups. This latest edition addresses the pressing challenges startups face today, including the increasing reliance on automation, the expanding role of Artificial Intelligence in quality engineering, and the complexities of maintaining regulatory compliance. *(Business Standard)*

Semiconductors on agenda of 1st Quad Commerce and Industry meeting: WH

Quad member countries' ministers of commerce and industry are set to meet for the first time in the months ahead, and on the agenda will be critical topics such as semiconductor supply chains and emerging technologies, a White House official said on Monday. *(Business Standard)*

Incentives, local support at state can boost biogas sect, says industry

Additional financial assistance, easy access to finance and local support mechanisms are some of the measures that the state governments can take to promote the biogas sector which can help them save Rs 50,000 crore in various means, Indian Biogas Association (IBA) has suggested. *(Business Standard)*

India-Asean FTA talks: Goyal calls for addressing local industry's concerns

India on Friday called for addressing the concerns of its domestic industries affected by the existing free trade agreement (FTA) with the 10-nation bloc Asean as the two regions negotiate a review of the pact. Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal has also emphasized the need to rectify the inequitable tariff liberalization under the agreement. *(Business Standard)*

Sebi allows mutual fund industry to buy, sell credit default swaps

Sebi allows mutual funds to buy, sell credit default swaps New Delhi, Sep 20 (PTI) Markets regulator Sebi on Friday allowed mutual funds to both buy and sell Credit Default Swaps (CDS), a move aimed at increasing liquidity in the corporate bond market. This flexibility to participate in CDS would serve as an additional investment product for mutual funds, Sebi said in a circular. *(Business Standard)*

Boost domestic consumption of tea for industry survival: Cochin tea trade body

The Tea Trade Association of Cochin has called upon its members to work cohesively for the survival of the industry and urged to find ways to improve the brew's prices. The tea industry in general is facing lot of challenges such as unfavourable weather conditions due to climate change, low export demand and high freight cost due to geopolitical situations and various other factors, said Anil Mathew, the outgoing chairman of the association." (*BusinessLine*)

Restaurant industry body demands fair play from food delivery platforms

The war between restaurants and delivery platforms is heating up. The National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI) has expressed its perturbation over the way food delivery platforms are dictating terms related to pricing, commissions and customer engagement, making it challenging for many restaurants to maintain profitability. (*BusinessLine*)

Diamond polishing industry revenue may fall to 10-year low: Report

Hit by fall in demand, revenue of the natural diamond polishing industry may drop to decadal low after expected fall of 27 per cent to \$12 billion this fiscal. The muted demand in the US and China has led to fall in exports even as diamond prices have dipped 10-15 per cent amid oversupply. (*BusinessLine*)

India's manufacturing share set to rise to 25% of GDP by 2047: Piyush Goyal

The mood about India across the world is phenomenal in terms of investment interest, and the country's manufacturing share is set to increase to 25 per cent of the GDP over the next two decades as it proceeds towards becoming a developed nation, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal has said. (*BusinessLine*)

Steel prices may continue to languish despite low global output

The steel industry is not expecting a respite in domestic and global prices anytime soon even as global production of the alloy has slipped to its lowest level on a monthly basis in 2024. Only a combination of further production cuts and higher consumption from China could aid a recovery in steel prices from here on, industry experts said. (*The Economic Times*)

Warehousing demand from manufacturing companies up in H1

India's emergence as a global manufacturing hub is fuelling warehousing demand from manufacturing-related sectors with multinationals setting up factories in the country. Demand from these sectors climbed to 25% of total domestic warehousing demand in the first half of calendar 2024 from 15% in 2019 led by factors like adoption of the China plus one strategy by multinationals and supportive Indian government policies such as the production linked incentive (PLI) scheme, which currently covers 14 sectors. (*The Economic Times*)

Hardening rubber prices to put pressure on tyre makers' margin: Crisil

Tyre makers are headed for a rough patch as the price of natural rubber has increased more than 33% on-year in just the first five months of this fiscal year amid strong demand and crunched supply, which could strain their profitability, Crisil Market Intelligence and Analytics (MI&A) said. Domestic prices of natural rubber closed August at Rs 238 per kg on an average, way above the trend in the past decade. (*The Economic Times*)

EV industry in India is not relevant without incentives: Bernstein

The journey of shifting to electric mobility is not going to be easy for automakers as it is tough to generate profitable margins and get scale in the electric vehicles (EVs) segment, says a research report by Bernstein. The report noted that generating sufficient margins and scaling up in the EV space is difficult, even with significant financial incentives. (*The Economic Times*)

Deposit growth outpaces Credit Growth in last 8 months: CARE Ratings

Banking system deposit growth has outpaced credit growth in the last 8 months, data compiled by rating agency CARE showed. In absolute terms, over the last 8 months, credit expanded by Rs. 10.9 lakh crore to reach Rs. 170.5 lakh crore as of September 6, 2024. While deposits have expanded by Rs. 14.7 lakh crore over the last 8-months to reach Rs 215.5 lakhs crore. (*The Economic Times*)



News on Kerala

Study says Finance Commissions' skewed criteria cost Kerala dearly

Kerala witnessed a massive drop in local body grants during the 14th and 15th Finance Commissions (FCs) which adopted skewed criteria, according to a study by the Gulati Institute of Finance and Taxation (GIFT). In a marked departure from previous FCs, population and geographical area were the only criteria considered to make recommendations on the distribution of grants among states. (*The New Indian Express*)

Salary challenge for Wayanad landslide: Govt extends timeline for staff to provide consent letter

The state government has extended the timeline for the government staff to provide consent for salary challenge to raise funds for landslide-hit Wayanad. The timeline has been extended for one more month. In the latest order issued by the state Finance Department, those government staff who couldn't contribute a portion of their August salary towards CMDRF (Chief Minister's Distress Relief Fund) have been given sanction to deduct a portion of salary for the month of September if the staff place such a request (*Onmanorama*).

Centre approves Kerala's revised Coastal Zone Management Plan; Panchayats to get more relaxations

The Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change under the Union Government has approved the Coastal Zone Management Plan (CZMP), which introduces relaxations in construction limits along Kerala's sea and backwater shores. This move provides coastal local bodies across the state with more flexibility to undertake development projects and their construction activities (*Onmanorama*).

Kerala tops FSSAI's State Food Safety Index for second consecutive year

For the second time in a row, Kerala has topped the State Food Safety Index (SFSI), an annual report evaluating the food safety performance of Indian states and union territories. The SFSI 2024 was released on Friday, at the Second Edition of Global Food Regulators Summit 2024 hosted by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) (*Onmanorama*).

3 years on, Railway yet to sanction new MEMU trains in Kerala

For the past three years, the Railway has not allocated Mainline Electric Multiple Unit (MEMU) services for short-distance travel in Kerala, leading to overcrowding on existing routes. The passengers argue that the introduction of three-phase MEMUs could provide a more comfortable travel option for more passengers (*MathrubhumiEnglish*).

To address backlogs, Kerala govt to directly manage RC, licence printing

The Kerala government has decided to directly handle the printing of registration certificates (RC) and driving licences, bypassing the existing contract system. This move comes in response to the recent halt in printing operations, which had disrupted the delivery of the documents. The printed materials will be distributed through Kerala State Road Transport Corporation's (KSRTC) parcel service (*MathrubhumiEnglish*).

Kerala announces ambulance tariffs ranging from Rs 600 to 2500

Kerala has made history by becoming the first state in India to establish a comprehensive tariff system for ambulances, a move announced by Motor Vehicle Department Minister KB Ganesh Kumar. The new pricing structure aims to bring clarity and transparency to ambulance services while ensuring patient safety. (*MathrubhumiEnglish*).

Kannur airport to receive 'point of call' status soon, discussion held with PM: Kerala CM

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has expressed optimism that Kannur International Airport Limited (KIAL) will soon receive the 'Point of Call' status for foreign airlines. Speaking at the 15th annual general meeting of KIAL (Kannur International Airport Limited), Vijayan said, "We have discussed this matter with the Prime Minister. As per his suggestion, a meeting with the Union Minister for Civil Aviation will be held soon. We are in talks with airlines to increase services at Kannur" (*MathrubhumiEnglish*).

Urgent financial support needed to continue free water supply to BPL consumers, KWA tells State government

The Kerala Water Authority (KWA) has sought "urgent" State government support for continuing water supply free of charge to below poverty line (BPL) families with a monthly consumption of up to 15,000 litres, citing a surge in applications triggered by the roll-out of the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) in rural Kerala (*The Hindu*).

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