



January 23, 2024 – Tuesday

## Economy

### **Budget 2024: Rural jobs scheme may get 47% higher outlay of Rs 88,000 crore**

The government will likely allocate about ₹88,000 crore for the rural employment guarantee scheme in the interim budget for FY25 to be presented on February 1, as compared with ₹60,000 crore budgeted for this fiscal, a person aware of the details told ET. The government will allocate more should the demand exceed its initial expectation under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), which is a demand-driven programme.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/budget-2024-rural-jobs-scheme-may-get-47-higher-outlay-of-rs-88000-crore/articleshow/107061271.cms>

## Banking and Finance

### **Govt expands scope of financial services that can be taken up at IFSC**

The government has expanded the scope of activities that can be undertaken at the International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) by including services such as book keeping, and accounting. As per a gazette notification issued by the Ministry of Finance, various services, including book-keeping, accounting, taxation, and financial crime compliance, have been included as part of financial services.

[https://www.business-standard.com/finance/news/govt-expands-scope-of-financial-services-that-can-be-taken-up-at-ifsc-124012200881\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/finance/news/govt-expands-scope-of-financial-services-that-can-be-taken-up-at-ifsc-124012200881_1.html)

### **Banks to go in for big ATM push in the next 12-18 months**

Banks are likely to see a big ATM refresh-cum-addition cycle in the next 12-18 months, involving replacement of about 40,000 ageing ATMs, and expansion of network by about 10,000, per industry estimates. All scheduled banks collectively added 4,452 ATMs (automated teller machines) in FY23, with their network standing at 2,19,513 as at March-end 2023, per RBI data. White label ATM operators expanded their ATM network by 4,292 ATM's in FY23 to 35,791 as of March-end 2023. "There will be a lot of churns in the ATM estate because many machines are ageing. They have to be refreshed. There are lot of regulations around ATM hardware and software now. So, it is making the banks change the old ATMs quickly," Manjunath Rao, President - Managed Services, CMS Infosystems, said.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/money-and-banking/banks-to-go-in-for-big-atm-push-in-the-next-12-18-months/article67765862.ece>

## Industry

### **Govt evaluating 9 proposals on semiconductor manufacturing: MoS IT**

Crediting the Micron investment for sparking manufacturing interest in India, Minister of State for IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar on Tuesday said that at least nine semiconductor manufacturing proposals were undergoing the analysis stage in the Ministry. "We have received two fab proposals, four OSAT proposals and three proposals for compound fabs, and all of them are very high-quality proposals which are currently undergoing an analysis," said Chandrasekhar.

[https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/govt-analysing-around-10-semiconductor-manufacturing-proposals-mos-it-124011600906\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/govt-analysing-around-10-semiconductor-manufacturing-proposals-mos-it-124011600906_1.html)

### **EVs adoption key for transition to low carbon economy by 2047: DPIIT secy**

The vision to make India a developed nation by 2047 includes a major shift towards electric vehicles, supported by tax incentives, production linked incentive schemes, and the mandatory provision of charging infrastructure, a top government official said on Monday. Secretary in the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) Rajesh Kumar Singh said that the development and adoption of Electric Vehicles (EVs) play a pivotal role in India's transition to a low-carbon economy.

[https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/evs-adoption-key-for-transition-to-low-carbon-economy-by-2047-dpiit-secy-124012200276\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/evs-adoption-key-for-transition-to-low-carbon-economy-by-2047-dpiit-secy-124012200276_1.html)

### **Two-wheelers drive back to the future, the electric way**

Some of India's two-wheeler makers are revisiting the past. Encouraged by the electric-powered rebirth of the Bajaj Chetak - which has been a runaway success - and a thriving domestic electric two-wheeler market, two more iconic 70s brands are electrifying their yesteryear favourites. Kinetic is looking to address the needs of 'Bharat' (rural and semi-rural areas) with its e-Luna, a step-thru (cross between a motorcycle and cycle). LML, meanwhile, has positioned its upcoming feature-packed Star electric scooter in the mass premium segment.

A total of 859,000 electric two-wheelers were sold in India in calendar 2023, up 36% year-on-year, according to the Federation of Automobile Dealers Association.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/renewables/two-wheelers-drive-back-to-the-future-the-electric-way/articleshow/107064360.cms>

## **Agriculture**

### **Record wheat output may ease supply concerns; Rabi production seen at 114 MT**

Amid concerns over wheat stocks plummeting to a seven-year-low, the government expects the current rabi crop to be robust, and yield and all-time output of 114 million tonne. This allays fears about shortage of the grain pushing the retail prices higher. Wheat prices have remained elevated for more than year now, although the prices have eased a tad in the last couple of months due to a series of steps taken by the government, including aggressive open market sales, and imposition of stock limits.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/policy/economy-record-wheat-output-may-ease-supply-concerns-rabi-production-seen-at-114-mt-3370848/>

### **Govt may increase agri-credit target to Rs 22-25 lakh crore**

The government is likely to announce in the upcoming interim Budget a substantial increase in the agricultural credit target to Rs 22-25 lakh crore for the next fiscal and ensure every eligible farmer has access to institutional credit, according to sources. The government's agri-credit target is Rs 20 lakh crore for the current fiscal. Currently, the government provides interest subvention of two per cent on short term agri-loans of up to Rs 3 lakh for all financial institutions. This means farmers are getting a farm loan of up to Rs 3 lakh at a concessional rate of 7 per cent per annum.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/interim-budget-govt-may-increase-agri-credit-target-to-rs-22-25-lakh-crore/articleshow/107054759.cms>

## **Infrastructure**

### **Delhi airport to Noida airport in 80 minutes; UP govt approves Rs 16,000 crore rapid rail corridor**

The upcoming Noida Airport is likely to have direct connectivity with Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport. The Uttar Pradesh government has approved a Rs 16,000 crore rapid rail corridor that will connect the two airports along with other parts of Delhi. The National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC) is working on a detailed project report which will be completed by March. After the project is started it will take four years to complete, Shailendra Bhatia, Uttar Pradesh government's Nodal Officer at Noida International Airport Limited said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/transportation/airlines/-aviation/delhi-airport-to-noida-airport-in-80-minutes-up-govt-approves-rs-16000-crore-rapid-rail-corridor/articleshow/107061784.cms>

### **Global investments in Indian real estate sector dip due to high inflation**

Foreign investments in the Indian real estate sector, led by the US, experienced a decline in 2023 due to high inflation and geopolitical concerns. Notably, office spaces emerged as the most favoured investment asset. Investments from American institutions in the Indian real estate market fell by 39 per cent in 2023 to \$1.35 billion amid global uncertainties, according to JLL India. Despite this, foreign institutional investors continued to be the largest contributors in the Indian realty sector, growing by 14 per cent over the previous year and holding a 63 per cent share of total investments in 2023.

[https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/global-investments-in-indian-real-estate-sector-dip-due-to-high-inflation-124012200924\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/global-investments-in-indian-real-estate-sector-dip-due-to-high-inflation-124012200924_1.html)

## **Energy**

### **Centre notified mineral auction rules to cap upfront payments**

The centre has notified changes to the Mineral auction rules which cap the upfront payment at Rs 500 crore while also barring affiliates from bidding for the same block. Bids placed by affiliates of companies who have explored a block being auctioned will be made public to ensure a level playing field for other bidders. These rules also make way for granting exploration licenses (EL) by state government. EL can also be bid out by the state and centre. Performance security for an exploration license has been fixed at Rs 2 crore for area more than 500 square kilometres (sq km) but less than or equal to 1000 sq km.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/indl-goods/svs/metals-mining/centre-notified-mineral-auction-rules-to-cap-upfront-payments/articleshow/107057544.cms>

### **Domestic coal-based power generation rises 7% to 872 bn units in Apr-Dec**

Domestic coal-based power generation increased 7.14 per cent to 872 billion units (BU) in the April-December period of the current fiscal. The rise in domestic coal-based electricity generation reflects an ample supply of coal to meet the growing energy demand in the country, the coal ministry said in a statement. Coal-based power generation in the country registered a growth of around 10.13 per cent during April-December period of FY'24, as compared to the corresponding period of previous year while overall power generation grew 6.71 per cent during the same period, the ministry statement said.

[https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/domestic-coal-based-power-generation-rises-7-to-872-bn-units-in-apr-dec-124012200622\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/domestic-coal-based-power-generation-rises-7-to-872-bn-units-in-apr-dec-124012200622_1.html)

### **Govt targets to install rooftop solar on 1 crore houses: PM Modi**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said that the Centre has set a target of installing rooftop solar on one crore households under the Pradhanmantri Surodaya Yojna. The Prime Minister in a tweet on X (formerly Twitter) said the first decision that he has taken after returning from Ayodhya is that the government will launch the "Pradhanmantri Suryodaya Yojana" with the target of installing rooftop solar on 1 crore houses. On the auspicious occasion of the consecration ceremony of the Ram Janmabhoomi temple in Ayodhya, Modi said that his resolve has been further strengthened that the people of India should have their own solar rooftop systems on their houses. This will not only reduce the electricity bill of the poor and middle class, but will also make India self-reliant in the field of energy, he added.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/govt-targets-to-install-rooftop-solar-on-1-crore-houses-pm-modi/article67766025.ece>

## **Telecom**

### **Government panel to look into 5G deployment at airports**

A panel headed by principal scientific adviser Ajay Kumar Sood has been tasked with resolving the contentious issue of rolling out 5G services in and around airports amid aircraft and passenger safety concerns. Senior officials aware of the move told ET that a wider panel has been formed "to work on the 5G matter" as no consensus was reached

around timelines for replacing obsolete aircraft radio altimeters—a key device that provides vital altitude information to flight crews and on-board aircraft systems during landings in low visibility conditions. While the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) have been holding discussions with telcos, airline operators and aircraft manufacturers, the issue has been in limbo for more than a year.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/telecom/telecom-news/government-panel-to-look-into-5g-deployment-at-airports/articleshow/107062366.cms>

## States

### **MHA sanctions nearly 1022 kms of roads under village programme for Arunachal Pradesh: CM Pema Khandu**

Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu said recently Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has sanctioned about 1022 kms of roads under Vibrant Villages Programme (VVP) programme for the state. In a public meeting, he said that the communities residing in the northern most part of the district that shares international border with Tibet-China have been living peacefully since ages and that there shouldn't be any issue that disturbs this relationship of brotherhood.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/infrastructure/mha-sanctions-nearly-1022-kms-of-roads-under-village-programme-for-arunachal-pradesh-cm-pema-khandu/articleshow/107059827.cms>

## External

### **Free trade agreement talks between India, EFTA bloc at advanced stage**

Negotiations for a free trade agreement between India and the four-nation EFTA bloc are at an advanced stage as both sides have reached a shared understanding on key issues, a senior official has said. The European Free Trade Association (EFTA) members are Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland. India and the EFTA have been negotiating the pact, officially dubbed as Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA), since January 2008 to boost economic ties. "Following extensive negotiations, a shared understanding has been achieved on key issues during the ministerial meeting. Ongoing efforts are now focused on shaping the convergence that has emerged," the official said.

[https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/free-trade-agreement-talks-between-india-efta-bloc-at-advanced-stage-124012200906\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/free-trade-agreement-talks-between-india-efta-bloc-at-advanced-stage-124012200906_1.html)

### **Govt should not cut import duties on parts used in making smartphones: GTRI**

The government should not cut import duties on electronic components used in making smartphones in the forthcoming Budget as the current tariff structure has already proven successful and changing them could harm local manufacturing, a GTRI report said on Monday. The Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said that maintaining the current rates would help balance industry growth and long-term development in India's growing smartphone market.

[https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/govt-should-not-cut-import-duties-on-parts-used-in-making-smartphones-gtri-124012200326\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/govt-should-not-cut-import-duties-on-parts-used-in-making-smartphones-gtri-124012200326_1.html)

### **India's electronics exports surpass \$20 billion, iPhone dominates surge**

India witnessed a 22.24 per cent surge in electronics exports, surpassing the \$20 billion milestone within the nine months of the financial year 2023-24 (FY24). This was spearheaded by surging smartphone shipments, especially Apple's iPhone, according to a report by The Economic Times (ET). Mobile phone exports, accounting for 52 per cent of total electronics exports, reached \$10.5 billion between April and December 2023. Notably, iPhones emerged as the primary driver of exports, contributing 35 per cent of the total electronics exports and a staggering 70 per cent to the country's overall mobile exports during this period. In December 2023 alone, iPhone exports exceeded \$7 billion.

[https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/india-s-electronics-exports-surpass-20-billion-iphone-dominates-surge-124012200147\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/india-s-electronics-exports-surpass-20-billion-iphone-dominates-surge-124012200147_1.html)