



May 2, 2024 – Thursday

## Economy

### Work demand under rural jobs scheme dips in April

Work demand under the government's flagship rural jobs scheme eased for the sixth straight month in April underscoring improved economic activity. About 30.21 million individuals sought work in April under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), a 4.9% decline from a year earlier, according to preliminary data compiled by the rural development ministry.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/work-demand-under-rural-jobs-scheme-dips-in-april/articleshow/109762759.cms>

## Finance

### Bank deposit rates rise, but yet to fully reflect repo hike

While the regulator and the market may not agree on the extent of transmission of policy rates to lending and deposit rates, central bank data show that the full transmission of the 2.5-percentage-point hike in the benchmark repo rate since May 2022 is still not complete, except in the case of fresh term deposits. While they don't reflect the full impact of the policy rate hike, lending and deposit rates on both fresh and outstanding deposits rose in the last fiscal year, putting pressure on banks' interest margins.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/banking/finance/banking/bank-deposit-rates-rise-but-yet-to-fully-reflect-repo-hike/articleshow/109763143.cms>

### Sebi makes nominations optional for jointly-held mutual fund accounts

Capital markets regulator Sebi on Wednesday made the nomination optional for jointly-held mutual fund accounts in a bid to promote ease of doing business. Additionally, Sebi allowed fund houses to have a single fund manager to oversee commodity and foreign investments. This would reduce the cost of managing the fund. These came after a working group constituted by Sebi reviewed mutual fund regulations and recommended measures to promote the ease of doing business.

[https://www.business-standard.com/markets/news/sebi-makes-nominations-optional-for-jointly-held-mutual-fund-accounts-124050100289\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/markets/news/sebi-makes-nominations-optional-for-jointly-held-mutual-fund-accounts-124050100289_1.html)

### Small finance banks to seek RBI clarification on loan book diversification

Small finance banks (SFBs) are likely to seek clarification from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on loan portfolio diversification, as the regulator has not specified the extent of diversification that should be seen as desirable. In the recent glide path provided by the RBI for the voluntary transition of SFBs to universal banks, the regulator said "eligible SFBs having diversified loan portfolios will be preferred".

[https://www.business-standard.com/finance/news/small-finance-banks-to-seek-rbi-clarification-on-loan-book-diversification-124050100855\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/finance/news/small-finance-banks-to-seek-rbi-clarification-on-loan-book-diversification-124050100855_1.html)

### NaBFID expects cumulative loan sanctions to top ₹2-lakh cr in FY25

The Government-owned National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID) expects its loan sanctions pipeline to swell to about ₹2 lakh crore by March-end 2025 against about ₹1 lakh crore as of March-end 2024. Plans to mop up about ₹53,000 crore via bond market, bank and multilateral credit lines.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/money-and-banking/nabfid-expects-cumulative-loan-sanctions-to-top-2-lakh-cr-in-fy25/article68129049.ece>

#### **UPI transactions dip marginally in April to Rs 19.64 trn; grow Y-o-Y**

Unified Payment Interface (UPI) transactions declined in volume and value in April by 1 per cent and 0.7 per cent, compared to March 2024. Transactions stood at Rs 19.64 trillion in value terms, down from Rs 19.78 trillion in March. There were 13.3 billion transactions in April, compared to 13.44 billion in March. "UPI volumes and values continue to grow year-on-year (Y-o-Y), reflecting the ongoing focus on digital adoption across the country and the convenience that UPI offers. The month-on-month reduction is not a comparable factor, given that March typically sees higher volumes during the year, hence April 2024 figures are lower than those of March 2024," said Vive Ayer, partner at Grant Thornton Bharat.

[https://www.business-standard.com/finance/news/upi-transactions-dip-marginally-in-april-to-rs-19-64-trn-grow-y-o-y-124050100310\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/finance/news/upi-transactions-dip-marginally-in-april-to-rs-19-64-trn-grow-y-o-y-124050100310_1.html)

#### **GST revenue collection hits record high of Rs 2.10 lakh cr in April**

India's Gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections hit a record high of Rs 2.10 lakh crore in April, growing 12.4 per cent on year-on-year basis, the Finance Ministry said in a statement on Wednesday. GST collection in March stood at Rs 1.78 lakh crore. Previously, the highest-ever GST collection figure stood at Rs 1.87 lakh crore in April 2023. The growth was driven by a 13.4 per cent growth in domestic transaction and 8.3 per cent growth in imports, the ministry said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/gst-revenue-collection-hits-record-high-of-rs-2-10-lakh-cr-in-april/articleshow/109748102.cms>

### **Industry**

#### **Domestic PV sales rise by just 1.76% due to high base effect, elections**

Domestic passenger vehicle sales in April rose by only 1.76 per cent year-on-year (YoY) to 338,341 units, impacted by a high base effect, the ongoing general elections and low demand for small cars. "We have started on a very high base this year, considering the industry numbers. Other thing is that the country is going through the election process. So, there is a code of conduct. Till the month of June, things (sales) would be more or like this. After June, you may see a revival in the market," said Partho Banerjee, senior executive officer, Marketing & Sales, Maruti Suzuki India Limited (MSIL) at a press conference.

[https://www.business-standard.com/industry/auto/domestic-pv-sales-rise-by-just-1-76-due-to-high-base-effect-elections-124050100780\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/industry/auto/domestic-pv-sales-rise-by-just-1-76-due-to-high-base-effect-elections-124050100780_1.html)

### **Agriculture**

#### **Open market sales help reduce food subsidy by Rs 20,000-cr**

The government has managed to reduce food subsidy outgo by around Rs 20,000 crore, because of record sales of 10 million tonne (MT) of wheat in the open market by the Food Corporation of India (FCI) in 2023-24. Sources said that in FY24, out of the total food subsidy of Rs 2.12 trillion (revised estimate), Rs 1.4 trillion was routed through FCI. Actual expenses of FCI were Rs 1.6 trillion, but the transfers to the corporation was less, thanks to gains from open market sales, a source said. The subsidy would have been higher than the RE had open market sale not reduced net economic costs of grain.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/policy/economy-open-market-sales-help-reduce-food-subsidy-by-rs-20000-cr-3473239/>

#### **Sugar production beats estimates with late pick up in rains raising output**

India's sugar production has been higher than expected this year after the completion of cane crushing at most of its mills, industry officials said on Wednesday, with a late pick-up in rains raising output. With the majority of India's sugar mills having now completed crushing for the 2023/24 season, output so far stands at 31.59 million metric tons, according to the National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories Ltd (NFCFSF).

[https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/sugar-production-beats-estimates-with-late-pick-up-in-rains-raising-output-124050101030\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/sugar-production-beats-estimates-with-late-pick-up-in-rains-raising-output-124050101030_1.html)

### **Digital crop survey on cards to fine-tune farm statistics**

A mobile application of the digital crop survey and relevant web applications will be used by nodal officials of states to gather data on crop sowing. The farm ministry aims to create a robust crop survey system that uses the latest technological advancements such as visual and advanced analytics, GIS-GPS technologies and AI/ML (machine learning) to lend accuracy to the sowing estimates.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/digital-crop-survey-on-cards-to-fine-tune-farm-statistics/articleshow/109762770.cms>

## Infrastructure

### NHAI set to incorporate wayside amenities into design of highways

In a shift in strategy, National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) is set to incorporate wayside amenities into the design of upcoming greenfield access-controlled highways, aiming to elevate the overall travel experience. As per the plan under discussion, these amenities could be used for landing drones, building helipads and to open retail outlets for selling local handicrafts and fresh farm produce. NHAI is targeting 1,000 wayside amenities over the next five years--one at every 50 km along national highways--against 600 envisioned earlier in partnership with the private sector, a senior government official told ET.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/transportation/roadways/nhai-set-to-incorporate-wayside-amenities-into-design-of-highways/articleshow/109738137.cms>

### Railways provides record rakes for ferrying coal to power plants in March

In preparation for the peak electricity demand season from April to June, Indian Railways, on an average, provided more than 297 rakes per day to the power sector during March 2024, an all-time high. The economy's power demand is growing at around 7 per cent per annum, which translates into more demand for coal.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/railways-provides-record-rakes-for-ferrying-coal-to-power-plants-in-march/article68127876.ece>

## Energy

### India's power consumption rises 11 pc to 144.89 billion units in April

India's power consumption rose around 11 per cent to 144.25 billion units (BU) in April as compared to the year-ago period, mainly due increase in temperatures. In April 2023, the power consumption stood at 130.08 BU, a government data showed. The highest supply in a day (peak power demand) also rose to 224.18 GW in April 2024 as against to 215.88 GW in April 2023. The power ministry has estimated around 260 GW of peak demand during summer.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/power/indias-power-consumption-rises-11-pc-to-144-89-billion-units-in-april/articleshow/109753286.cms>

### Coal India production rises 7% in April

State-owned CIL on Wednesday said its production increased 7.3 per cent to 61.8 million tonnes (MT) in April. The company had produced 57.6 MT of coal in the corresponding month of the previous fiscal, Coal India Ltd (CIL) said in a filing to the BSE. CIL accounts for over 80 per cent of domestic coal production. The company's coal offtake also registered a rise of 3.2 per cent to 64.3 MT last month, over 62.3 MT in the year-ago period.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/indl-goods/svs/metals-mining/coal-india-production-rises-7-in-april/articleshow/109752338.cms>

### Southern India can Lead India's pursuit of 500GW renewable target by 2030: Experts and industry players

India is poised to lead the transition towards a sustainable future with its abundance of renewable resources and a growing interest in e-mobility. Leveraging these resources, South India can play an important role in reducing carbon footprint, drive economic growth, and enhance energy security, renewable energy experts and industry players say.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/renewables/southern-india-can-lead-indias-pursuit-of-500gw-renewable-target-by-2030-experts-and-industry-players/articleshow/109693163.cms>

## Telecom

### EC urges telecom operators to boost voter turnout with SMS campaigns

The Election Commission of India is encouraging telecom operators to send SMS messages to voters, aiming to increase voter turnout in the ongoing general election. However, telcos have expressed capacity concerns, citing they can handle only about 20 million SMSes daily, despite the ECI's request for 100 million. The push for increased messaging comes after a decline in polling percentages in the first two phases compared to previous elections. The ECI plans to send these messages before the third phase of polling on May 7.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/telecom/telecom-news/ec-urges-telecom-operators-to-boost-voter-turnout-with-sms-campaigns/articleshow/109737516.cms>

## States

### **Raj govt to hold tourism festival 'Great Indian Travel Bazaar' from May 5-7**

The tourism department of Rajasthan will host the thirteenth Great Indian Travel Bazaar (GITB) in Jaipur from May 5-7 to promote tourism in the state. The department is organising the event jointly with the Centre's tourism ministry and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (Ficci). The state government plans to showcase its tourism infrastructure during the event. "The state would showcase cultural events based on art, tourism and history of Rajasthan," a state tourism department official said.

[https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/rajasthan-to-hold-tourism-festival-great-indian-travel-bazaar-in-jaipur-124050100663\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/rajasthan-to-hold-tourism-festival-great-indian-travel-bazaar-in-jaipur-124050100663_1.html)

## External

### **Developing e-com hubs to boost exports may figure in ministry's 100-day agenda of new govt: Official**

Developing e-commerce hubs in the country to further promote India's exports through online medium are expected to figure in the commerce ministry's 100-day agenda roadmap for the new government, an official said. The commerce ministry's arm DGFT is already working with the RBI and concerned ministries, including the finance ministry, on several steps to promote exports through e-commerce medium as huge export opportunities are there in the sector.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/developing-e-com-hubs-to-boost-exports-may-figure-in-ministrys-100-day-agenda-of-new-govt-official/articleshow/109750690.cms>

### **India, Nigeria agree to early conclusion of local currency settlement system agreement**

India and Nigeria have agreed to conclude a local currency settlement system agreement to strengthen economic ties. The agreement, signed during a joint session of the India-Nigeria Joint Trade Committee, aims to promote the use of the Indian Rupee and Nigerian Naira for cross-border transactions. The agreement will enhance bilateral trade and mutually beneficial investments in sectors such as crude oil, natural gas, pharmaceuticals, power, renewable energy, agriculture, education, transport, railway, aviation, and MSMEs development.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/india-nigeria-agree-to-early-conclusion-of-local-currency-settlement-system-agreement/articleshow/109750160.cms>

### **Quality concerns could threaten over half of India's spice exports; needs urgent attention: GTRI**

India needs to address the quality issue with regard to its spice exports with urgency and transparency as the ongoing quality concerns could threaten over half of the country's spice shipments, a report said on Wednesday. Economic think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said that every day new countries are raising concerns about the quality of Indian spices. This issue demands urgent attention and action to uphold the storied reputation of India's fabled spice garden, it said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/quality-concerns-could-threaten-over-half-of-indias-spice-exports-needs-urgent-attention-gtri/articleshow/109755614.cms>

### **Govt unlikely to impose export curbs on low-grade iron ore, says report**

India is unlikely to impose tariffs on exports of low-grade iron ore for now despite rising overseas sales to China, a source with direct knowledge of the matter said, turning down requests from small steel producers. China typically accounts for more than 90% of overall shipments of iron ore from India which is the world's fourth-largest producer of the steel-making ingredient. The Ministry of Steel was considering an export tax on iron ore after India's small and secondary steel producers earlier this year petitioned the government to curb rising exports.

[https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/govt-unlikely-to-impose-export-curbs-on-low-grade-iron-ore-says-report-124050100444\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/govt-unlikely-to-impose-export-curbs-on-low-grade-iron-ore-says-report-124050100444_1.html)

#### **India, Maldives hold talks to enhance bilateral trade cooperation**

India on Wednesday said it looked forward to strengthening bilateral economic cooperation with the Maldives as its envoy held discussions with a senior minister of the archipelagic nation. Mohamed Saeed, Maldives' Minister of Economic Development and Trade, met with Munu Mahawar, Indian High Commissioner to the archipelago nation on Tuesday.

[https://www.business-standard.com/external-affairs-defence-security/news/india-maldives-hold-talks-to-enhance-bilateral-trade-cooperation-124050100719\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/external-affairs-defence-security/news/india-maldives-hold-talks-to-enhance-bilateral-trade-cooperation-124050100719_1.html)

#### **Spices Board issues guidelines to exporters to prevent ethylene oxide contamination**

The Spices Board has come up with detailed guidelines for exporters on preventing Ethylene Oxide (ETO) contamination in spices after Singapore and Hong Kong recalled some packaged spice products exported from India while the US and Australia are also examining the matter.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/spices-board-issues-guidelines-to-exporters-to-prevent-eto-contamination/article68129184.ece>