



January 01, 2025 – Wednesday

## Economy

### India's core sector output increases by 4.3% in November

India's core sector output rose 4.3% year-on-year in November, driven by robust construction activity, according to government data released on Tuesday. In October, infrastructure output, which accounts for 40% of the country's industrial production, grew by a revised 3.7%. Cement production surged 13% in November, up from during April to November, 2024-25 over corresponding period of the previous year, while steel output grew 4.8%, slightly lower than the revised 5.2% increase the previous month.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/indias-core-sector-output-up-4-3-in-november/articleshow/116828825.cms>

### India's April-November fiscal deficit at Rs 8.47 lakh crore, widens on-year to 52.5% of FY25 aim

India's fiscal deficit for the first eight months of this fiscal year through November stood at 8.47 lakh crore rupees, or 52.5% of annual estimates, government data showed today. The fiscal deficit widened from 50.7% reported in the comparable year-earlier period. Total receipts stood at 18.94 lakh crore rupees, while overall expenditure in April to November was at 27.41 lakh crore rupees. They were 59.1% and 56.9% of this fiscal year's budget target.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/indias-april-november-fiscal-deficit-at-rs-8-47-lakh-crore-widens-on-year-to-52-5-of-fy25-aim/articleshow/116828521.cms>

### Budget 2025: FISME urges Nirmala Sitharaman to rework on framework for revival of stressed MSMEs

Prominent MSME representative body Federation of Indian Micro and Small & Medium Enterprises (FISME) has urged the government for a comprehensive policy response to the existing Special Mention Account (SMA) framework to help revive MSME accounts with incipient stress. In its recommendations for the upcoming budget, FISME said the SMA framework should not stop just at the identification of stressed accounts and halting of banking operations of the accounts but must also posit suitable guidelines for their revival.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/budget/budget-2025-fisme-urges-nirmala-sitharaman-to-rework-on-framework-for-revival-of-stressed-msmes-3704260/>

### ILO agrees to reassess India's social protection

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has agreed to India's request to reassess its social protection coverage by considering financial implications of in-kind benefits under the public distribution system (PDS), such as free ration, and state-level social security schemes. "This will give a more comprehensive picture of India's social protection for its people," labour secretary Sumita Dawra told ET. This adjustment could increase India's social protection coverage to over 57% of its population from 48.8% in ILO's Social Protection Report 2024-26, official estimates show. ILO did not respond to an email query from ET till press time Tuesday.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/ilo-agrees-to-reassess-indias-social-protection/articleshow/116843434.cms>

### **NSO begins process to empanel survey institutions**

The Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI) on Tuesday said that the National Statistics Office has initiated the process to empanel survey institutions for conducting sample surveys on socioeconomic indicators. The Survey Wing of the National Statistics Office (NSO) conducts large scale sample surveys in diverse fields on pan-India basis, a MoSPI statement said. Primarily data is collected through nation-wide household/ enterprise surveys on various socio-economic subjects. The NSO has launched a Request for Proposal (RFP) on December 12, 2024 to empanel private survey institutions or agencies in a bid to expand its outreach and increase the scope of its surveys. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/nso-begins-process-to-empanel-survey-institutions/articleshow/116824018.cms>

### **India's CAD projected at 1 pc of GDP for FY2025: CRISIL**

India's current account deficit (CAD) is to remain in a safe zone at approximately 1 per cent of GDP for fiscal 2025, up from 0.7 per cent in the previous year, according to a report by CRISIL. While geopolitical risks will require close monitoring, the strong financial inflows and a steady services trade surplus are expected to provide stability. India's current account deficit (CAD) remained largely stable at USD 11.2 billion, or 1.2 per cent of GDP, in the second quarter (Q2) of fiscal 2025, compared with USD 11.3 billion (1.3 per cent of GDP) in the same period last year. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/indias-current-account-deficit-cad-projected-at-1-pc-of-gdp-for-fy2025-crisil/articleshow/116819359.cms>

## **Finance**

### **NPCI extends proposed 30% UPI market share cap deadline to end-2026**

The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has extended the deadline for Unified Payments Interface (UPI) providers to adhere to its 30% market share limit by two more years to December 31, 2026. The move comes as a temporary relief for the Walmart-owned PhonePe and Google Pay, which together have more than 85% share of the UPI payments market, and gives them additional time to implement the limit. The process of lowering one's market share to comply with the new norms has been especially tough for the Bengaluru-headquartered PhonePe which boasts of nearly 50% of the UPI market. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/tech/technology/npci-extends-upi-volume-cap-timeline-by-2-more-years/articleshow/116829131.cms>

### **I-T Department extends belated, revised ITR filing deadline to Jan 15**

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) on Tuesday extended the deadline for filing belated and revised Income Tax Returns (ITRs) for the Assessment Year (AY) 2024-25 to January 15. This extension applies exclusively to resident individual taxpayers, offering them a valuable opportunity to cross-verify their income declarations, ensuring no discrepancies are reported in their ITRs, and to file revised returns in case of any errors. This measure is expected to significantly reduce the quantum of notices to be issued against the taxpayers for income mismatches between the Annual information statement and ITRs [https://www.business-standard.com/finance/personal-finance/i-t-department-extends-belated-revised-itr-filing-deadline-to-jan-15-124123100563\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/finance/personal-finance/i-t-department-extends-belated-revised-itr-filing-deadline-to-jan-15-124123100563_1.html)

## **Industry**

### **Centre to mediate high state taxes stifling mining operations**

The Centre plans to hold consultations with states to devise measures to prevent overburdening of mining operations amid concerns over unchecked taxation by state governments, officials said. The move comes in the backdrop of a Supreme Court verdict, allowing states to levy additional taxes on mining operations in their territory. This decision seems to have opened a Pandora's box with states such as Karnataka deciding to impose fresh levies on mining operations, hoping to generate additional revenue of roughly ₹4,700 crore from the sector. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/indl-goods/svs/metals-mining/centre-to-mediate-high-state-taxes-stifling-mining-operations/articleshow/116843493.cms>

### **Appliances industry expects 15% growth in 2025 on back of premiumisation**

The appliances and consumer electronics industry expects 10-15 per cent growth in 2025 on the back of premiumisation trend, which is driven by rising incomes, changing preferences towards energy-efficient, and connected products with innovative features such as AI and increasing desire for global quality products.

[https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/appliances-industry-expects-15-growth-in-2025-on-back-of-premiumisation-124123100171\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/appliances-industry-expects-15-growth-in-2025-on-back-of-premiumisation-124123100171_1.html)

### **Govt widen ambit of quality control for steel**

The steel ministry has firmed up a plan to bring all steel grades consumed in the country – whether domestically manufactured or imported – under strict quality control norms, official sources said. The move is with the twin objectives of improving the quality of infrastructure and assorted hardware manufactured in the country, and putting curbs on cheap imports that hit domestic producers across the steel value chain. The plan, once implemented, will bring 1,000 more grades of steel under the quality control order (QCO), in addition to 1,376 items currently under the norms.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/business/industry-govt-widen-ambit-of-quality-control-for-steel-3704572/>

### **Electric two wheelers, premium bikes set to dominate market in 2025**

The Indian automotive market is gearing up for major launches and electrification trends in the electric two-wheeler (e2W) segment in 2025. Leading manufacturers like Honda, TVS, Royal Enfield, Hero MotoCorp, and KTM are set to unveil models, encompassing both electric scooters and premium motorcycles. Honda is expecting to kick off January 2025 with the highly anticipated launch of Activa e: and QC1 electric scooters. The vehicle is expected to be priced between Rs 1 lakh and Rs 1.3 lakh (ex-showroom) and will be available in key cities such as Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru. Although Honda has not disclosed its price and booking, it was revealed that the Activa Electric scooter will be launched at the India Mobility Global Expo 2025 in January.

[https://www.business-standard.com/industry/auto/electric-two-wheelers-premium-bikes-set-to-dominate-market-in-2025-124123100745\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/industry/auto/electric-two-wheelers-premium-bikes-set-to-dominate-market-in-2025-124123100745_1.html)

## **Agriculture**

### **Govt allocates more sugar for January compared to December**

The government has announced 22.5 lakh tonnes (lt) of sugar quota for sales in the open market during January 2025, which is 50,000 tonnes higher than the quota allocated for December 2024. However, compared with the quota in the year-ago period, the current allocation is 50,000 tonnes less. Industry sources termed the decision as a correct one based on the current demand.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/govt-allocates-more-sugar-for-january-compared-to-december/article69047448.ece>

### **Fertilizer industry hopeful of direct cash transfer of subsidy as Ministry prepares pilot**

The fertilizer industry hopes that 2025 will be a year of reform as the Fertilizer Ministry prepares to launch a pilot for direct cash transfer of subsidy in select districts, for which it is currently believed to be developing a module. However, the details of the plan are yet to be discussed with the industry while officials are tight-lipped.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/fertilizer-industry-hopeful-of-direct-cash-transfer-of-subsidy-as-ministry-prepares-pilot/article69046761.ece>

## **Infrastructure**

### **Indian Railways gears up for Maha Kumbh 2025 with 3,000 special trains, enhanced facilities**

Upendra Chandra Joshi, General Manager of North Central Railway, highlighted the preparations during a press conference, revealing that 560 ticketing points are being established at nine major stations in Prayagraj, such as Prayagraj Junction, Subedarganj, Naini, and Prayag Junction. These ticketing counters, along with points in the fair area, are set to handle the issuance of around 10 lakh tickets daily, supported by a new facility allowing passengers to book tickets 15 days in advance.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/business/railways-indian-railways-gears-up-for-maha-kumbh-2025-with-3000-special-trains-enhanced-facilities-3704035/>

## Energy

### Indian refiner boosts Mideast oil imports as Russian flows slow

One of India's largest refiners has been forced to seek alternative and more expensive crude cargoes from the Middle East to make up for lower supplies from Russia, putting a spotlight on shifting export patterns as traders focus on the global market's prospects in 2025. "We are short of three, four Russian cargoes for January-loading and February-delivery," Bharat Petroleum Corp. Finance Director Vetsa Ramakrishna Gupta said. "We issued tenders and have secured alternate grades from Iraq, UAE and others, he said, referring to nations including the United Arab Emirates.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/oil-gas/indian-refiner-boosts-mideast-oil-imports-as-russian-flows-slow/articleshow/116822173.cms>

### India at high table of clean energy superpowers with over 200 GW capacity; investments to double in 2025

As barren arid land gets covered with solar panels and giant windmills dot the coastline, India made it to the high table of clean energy superpowers with installed capacity crossing 200 gigawatts and projections of investment doubling to over USD 32 billion in 2025. According to the International Energy Agency, India's annual renewable capacity additions through 2030 are expected to increase more quickly than any other major economy, including China. It seeks India's capacity addition more than quadrupling from 15 GW in 2023 to 62 GW in 2030. By the end of 2024, its installed capacity touched 205 GW.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/renewables/india-at-high-table-of-clean-energy-superpowers-with-over-200-gw-capacity-investments-to-double-in-2025/articleshow/116818375.cms>

### Power sector's share in overall natural gas consumption during November lowest in two years

The share of natural gas consumption by the power sector during November 2024 was the lowest in almost two years due to lower electricity generation by gas-based power plants on account of a decline in power demand. According to the Petroleum Planning & Analysis Cell (PPAC), the power sector's share in natural gas consumption last month slipped to 9 per cent which is also the lowest in the current calendar year. Analysts and power sector players anticipate that the share in consumption during December 2024 will go down further and could be in the range of 6-8 per cent.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/power-sectors-share-in-overall-natural-gas-consumption-during-november-lowest-in-two-years/article69047268.ece>

## States

### Centre approves Rs 676 cr for development of Odisha's education institutes

The Union government has approved Rs 676.70 crore for infrastructural development of various universities and colleges in Odisha under Pradhan Mantri Uchcharat Shiksha Abhiyan (PM-USHA), state Higher Education Minister Suryabanshi Suraj said here on Tuesday. The fund has been approved under different components, including Multi Disciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERU), Grants to Strengthen Universities (GSU), Grants to Strengthen Colleges (GSC) and Gender Inclusion and Equity Initiatives (GIEI), and Management Monitoring Evaluation and Research (MMER), he said.

[https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/centre-approves-rs-676-cr-for-development-of-odisha-s-education-institutes-124123100630\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/centre-approves-rs-676-cr-for-development-of-odisha-s-education-institutes-124123100630_1.html)

## Healthcare

### Erring drug companies to face stricter action as rules to improve mfg standards come into effect today

Drugmakers may have to face stricter enforcement as the revised Schedule M-which outlines quality standards for pharmaceutical products in the country-comes into effect on January 1. The government may soon initiate audits and risk-based inspections of drug-making units to ensure compliance with the new standards. The industry was expecting the government to extend the implementation of the new standards. But the "government has not given any extension notice yet, which means the industry will have to comply with the provisions or face action," a senior

government official said. The industry now has to comply with the newly notified Schedule M norms for manufacturing practices and requirements of premises, plants and equipment for pharmaceutical products, with provisions for annual product quality review, quality risk management, and pharmaceutical quality system.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/healthcare/biotech/pharmaceuticals/erring-drug-companies-to-face-stricter-action-as-rules-to-improve-mfg-standards-come-into-effect-today/articleshow/116843180.cms>

#### **NATHEALTH urges strategic reforms, demands increase in allocation and reduction in GST input slabs**

Ahead of Union Budget 2025, NATHEALTH – Healthcare Federation of India has laid out a bold and strategic framework to reshape the future of India's healthcare ecosystem. In its recommendations, NATHEALTH emphasizes the intrinsic link between national wealth and health. It urges the Honorable Finance Minister to prioritize significant financial commitments in the 2025-26 Budget to address the growing burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases, compounded by longstanding challenges, in alignment with the vision for "Visit Bharat 2047."

<https://www.financialexpress.com/business/healthcare-budget-2025-nathealth-urges-strategic-reforms-demands-increase-in-allocation-and-reduction-in-gst-input-slabs-3704584/>

#### **CRISIL SME tracker: Hospitals to grow in single digits through FY26**

The revenue of small and medium (SME) hospitals — with annual revenue of less than Rs 250 crore — is expected grow a sedate 3-5 per cent year-on-year and 5-8 per cent in financial year 2025 and 2026, respectively. The key reason is patients continuing to favour large hospital chains on the back of pan-India insurance penetration increasing to 38-40 per cent from 23 per cent in FY15 (according to CRISIL MI&A Research). The segment's operating margin is projected to contract 50-80 bps Y-o-Y 14-15 per cent in FY25, owing to rising employee costs and medicine expenses, and price caps on treatments under Ayushman Bharat. But in FY26, margins are expected to recover 50-100 bps, supported by higher average revenue per occupied bed and bed occupancy levels.

[https://www.business-standard.com/industry/sme/crisil-sme-tracker-hospitals-to-grow-in-single-digits-through-fy26-124123101030\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/industry/sme/crisil-sme-tracker-hospitals-to-grow-in-single-digits-through-fy26-124123101030_1.html)

#### **External**

#### **South Africa-India in 2024: 30th anniversary of resumed diplomatic ties**

At the launch of the India-SA Chamber of Commerce (ISACC), South Africa's Trade, Industry and Competition Minister Parks Tau said his country is committed to strengthening trade and investment. With the India Business Forum, representing the 150 Indian companies with a presence in South Africa, we started sector-specific meetings to have more focused engagements with Indian businesses in South Africa," he added.

[https://www.business-standard.com/external-affairs-defence-security/news/south-africa-india-in-2024-30th-anniversary-of-resumed-diplomatic-ties-124123100239\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/external-affairs-defence-security/news/south-africa-india-in-2024-30th-anniversary-of-resumed-diplomatic-ties-124123100239_1.html)

#### **Indian govt closely monitoring backlash against H-1B visa holders in US**

The Indian government is actively monitoring the challenges faced by Indian H-1B visa holders amid a surge in backlash and profiling of IT and management professionals by far-right groups in the United States. The ministries of external affairs, commerce, and IT have initiated collaborative measures to safeguard the interests of Indian workers legally employed in the US. The IT ministry, in coordination with Nasscom and leading software firms, is gathering ground-level feedback to address concerns effectively.

[https://www.business-standard.com/external-affairs-defence-security/news/indian-govt-h1b-visa-holders-us-backlash-124123100201\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/external-affairs-defence-security/news/indian-govt-h1b-visa-holders-us-backlash-124123100201_1.html)

#### **Indian companies eye Mongolia for coking coal and copper opportunities**

At least six Indian companies have been directed by the Centre to investigate potential ventures, including sourcing coking coal and critical minerals such as copper, in Mongolia. Some of company names include Vedanta (including Sterlite), Adani and Hindalco for copper ore and concentrates; while JSW and SAIL are exploring opportunities around coking coal. Multiple officials from key ministries told businessline that suggestions have been made to tap third-party logistics partners for ensuring transport of copper and coking coal from the land-locked central Asian nation, that shares borders with Russia and China. Coking coal is a key steel-making feedstock, with India — the

world's second largest crude steel-maker — being a major importer. In case of copper, the demand for which is seen as a key economic indicator, the country is heavily reliant on imports again. And Mongolia is one of the major copper exporters globally; while coking coal exports from it are mostly to China.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/india-explores-investment-and-sourcing-opportunities-in-mongolia-for-coking-coal-and-copper/article69047110.ece>

#### **India's goods, services exports likely to cross USD 800 bn in 2024: GTRI**

India's overall exports of goods and services in 2024 has estimated to cross USD 814 billion, an increase of 5.58 per cent, according to a report by economic think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI). In 2023, the country's merchandise and services exports stood at USD 768.5 billion. This year, the report estimated that in 2024, merchandise exports are expected to reach USD 441.5 billion, showing a modest 2.34 per cent increase over USD 431.4 billion in the previous year. In contrast, the services exports are estimated to grow by 10.31 per cent to USD 372.3 billion, up from USD 337.5 billion in 2023.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/indias-goods-services-exports-likely-to-cross-usd-800-bn-in-2024-gtri/articleshow/116836590.cms>