



February 13, 2025 – Thursday

## Economy

### India's industrial production growth slows to 3.2% in December from 5.2% in November

India's industrial output saw a growth of 3.2 per cent in December 2024, down from 5.2 per cent in November 2024, according to MoSPI data. The manufacturing sector's output increased by 3.0 per cent, while mining production and power output rose by 2.6 per cent and 6.2 per cent respectively.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/indias-industrial-production-growth-at-3-2-in-december-2024-from-5-2-in-the-month-before/articleshow/118175347.cms>

### India's retail inflation eases to a five month low of 4.31% in Jan as food prices moderate

India's retail inflation eased to 4.31% in January 2025, down from 5.22% in December, primarily due to slowing food price rises. This decline was better than the Reuters poll estimate of 4.6% and offers relief to households heavily impacted by food costs. Cooling vegetable prices and a healthy kharif crop output significantly contributed to the moderation.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/indias-retail-inflation-eases-to-4-31-in-jan-as-food-prices-moderate/articleshow/118149921.cms>

### Govt, RBI, FC should work together to enforce fiscal discipline in states: NCAER

The Union government, RBI and Finance Commission must collaborate to enforce fiscal discipline in states, offers a research paper from NCAER. It suggests limiting RBI's market interventions, revising horizontal tax devolution, and possibly providing debt relief to heavily indebted states in return for central oversight.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/govt-rbi-fc-should-work-together-to-enforce-fiscal-discipline-in-states-ncaer/articleshow/118176479.cms>

### MS Ahluwalia favours smaller states to drive urbanisation, economic growth

Economist Montek Singh Ahluwalia advocates for splitting large states like Uttar Pradesh to spur urban growth and creating 'near-Metros' from tier-2 towns. He points out challenges in achieving 8% annual growth and the complexities of initiating reforms in a fragmented global scenario.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/infrastructure/ms-ahluwalia-favours-smaller-states-to-drive-urbanisation-economic-growth/articleshow/118173102.cms>

## Finance

### New UPI rule on automatic acceptance, rejection of chargebacks from Feb 15

The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has released new guidelines for Unified Payments Interface (UPI) transactions, outlining the automatic acceptance or rejection of chargebacks based on Transaction Credit Confirmation (TCC) and returns. A chargeback is the reversal of a completed UPI transaction due to disputes, fraud or technical error. The new policy will take effect from February 15, according to a circular by NPCI.

[https://www.business-standard.com/finance/personal-finance/new-upi-rule-on-automatic-acceptance-rejection-of-chargebacks-from-feb-15-125021200820\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/finance/personal-finance/new-upi-rule-on-automatic-acceptance-rejection-of-chargebacks-from-feb-15-125021200820_1.html)

### **New Income Tax Bill 2025 proposes 'tax year' concept, easier terminologies**

The new Income Tax Bill, expected to be introduced in the Lok Sabha on Thursday, introduces a new concept of 'tax year'—a 12-month period starting from April 1. This replaces the existing term 'previous year' used in the Income Tax Act, 1961, and removes the concept of the assessment year. If passed, it will take effect from April 2026.

[https://www.business-standard.com/finance/personal-finance/new-income-tax-bill-2025-proposes-tax-year-concept-easier-terminologies-125021200657\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/finance/personal-finance/new-income-tax-bill-2025-proposes-tax-year-concept-easier-terminologies-125021200657_1.html)

### **SFBs get RBI nod to provide credit lines on UPI**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved small finance banks (SFBs) to offer credit lines on the Unified Payments Interface (UPI), in accordance with the regulator's announcement made during the December 2024 monetary policy committee meeting. This product empowers individuals and small businesses to obtain pre-sanctioned credit lines from banks, which can be utilised immediately for transactions through UPI. It facilitates availability and frictionless usage of credit lines, overdrafts and retail loans. "Banks may, as per their Board-approved policy, stipulate terms and conditions of use of such credit lines. The terms may include, among other items, credit limit, period of credit, rate of interest," the RBI said.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/money-and-banking/sfbs-get-rbi-nod-to-provide-credit-lines-on-upi/article69211998.ece>

### **MCA extends dematerialisation deadline for private firms to June 2025**

The Centre has given private companies —other than Producer companies—more time to comply with an earlier diktat to dematerialise their shares. As against the earlier specified deadline of September 30, 2024, these companies can now fulfil the dematerialisation requirement by June 30 this year, according to a notification issued by the Corporate Affairs Ministry (MCA).

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/policy/mca-extends-dematerialisation-deadline-for-private-firms-to-june-2025/article69211408.ece>

### **EPFO may keep interest on deposits near 8.25%**

The EPFO is likely to maintain the interest rate on provident fund deposits at over 8% for 2024-25, close to the 8.25% declared for the previous year. Despite higher returns and increased subscribers, there's also been a significant rise in claim settlements. The final proposal needs finance ministry approval before notification.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/epfo-may-keep-interest-on-deposits-near-8-25/articleshow/118187647.cms>

### **Equity fund inflows dip marginally in Jan, sectoral funds rule the roost**

Domestic investors continued to invest into the equity-oriented mutual funds in the month of January, taking correction in the market as an opportunity to build their exposure further. This logged the 47th consecutive month of net inflows into the segment. "In January, investors pumped in Rs 39,688.78 crore into equity-oriented mutual funds. Though this was marginally lower than the net inflow of Rs 41,155.91 crore in December, it was meaningful in absolute terms, nonetheless," said Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director-Manager Research, Morningstar Investment Research India, commenting on the AMFI data for January 2025.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/money/equity-fund-inflows-dip-marginally-in-jan-sectoral-funds-rule-the-roost-3747266/>

### **SEBI's new proposal eases compliance burden on Research Analysts**

In a major relief to research analysts, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has proposed easing regulations regarding the collection of advance fees from clients, extending the restriction to a year from one quarter. The proposal, open for public comment until February 27, also mandates refunds for unexpired periods if clients terminate services early.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/markets/sebis-new-proposal-eases-compliance-burden-on-research-analysts/article69212302.ece>

## Industry

### Modern trade growth in slow lane as q-comm rises

The convenience factor in shopping within urban areas is beginning to hurt modern trade hard as consumers switch to q-commerce platforms. Data from market research agency NielsenIQ show that the October-December 2024 period saw a volume decline of 1.1% in modern trade, the first time in 10 quarters.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/business/industry-modern-trade-growth-in-slow-lane-as-q-comm-rises-3747585/>

### Distributors to meet FMCG cos, retailers for higher margins

To combat the competition from quick commerce and e-commerce players, reduce the impact on their businesses and ensure a level playing field, distributors are preparing to approach fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) and retail companies to enhance their margins. A delegation of members of the distributor and retailer associations is expected to meet companies in April.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/companies/distributors-to-meet-fmccg-cos-retailers-for-higher-margins/article69206477.ece>

### SIDBI and AFD, France ink \$100 million deal to boost green finance for Indian MSMEs

Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) and AFD, France have signed a \$100 million credit facility agreement (CFA) to scale up green finance solutions for Indian micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). The partnership aims to support sustainable growth and drive the transition towards a low-carbon economy. Under this agreement, AFD will provide credit line of \$100 million to SIDBI to deploy the funds to expand access to affordable financing for MSMEs investing in energy-efficient technologies, renewable energy solutions, and climate-friendly business practices.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/sidbi-and-afd-france-ink-100-million-deal-to-boost-green-finance-for-indian-msmes/article69211501.ece>

### AI revolution in Indian IT: Firms bet on domain-specific LLMs and reskilling

Leading Indian IT firms are deepening their AI capabilities by integrating large language models (LLMs), focusing on domain-specific applications, and upskilling employees to meet the growing demand for AI-driven solutions. Nikhil Malhotra, Chief Innovation Officer & Global Head of AI and Emerging Technologies at Tech Mahindra, said the company pioneered building LLMs in India with Project Indus, a foundational model it built from the ground up. An independent study conducted by The Assam Kaziranga University in Jorhat compared various models and demonstrated that Indus outperforms many counterparts in tokenization efficiency, he shared.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/info-tech/ai-revolution-in-indian-it-firms-bet-on-domain-specific-llms-and-reskilling/article69210770.ece>

### India's electronics industry pushes for boosting US trade ties

The Indian electronics industry seeks enhanced trade ties with the US aiming for \$750 billion in bilateral trade by 2032, including \$100 billion in electronics. They highlight opportunities created by policies like the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme and call for favorable trade concessions and technology partnerships from the US.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/indias-electronics-industry-pushes-for-boosting-us-trade-ties/articleshow/118188873.cms>

## Agriculture

### Centre preparing roadmap for development of national federations of cooperatives, says Amit Shah

The Centre has been preparing a roadmap for development of national federations of cooperatives, while primary cooperatives (at village levels) have started offering railway ticket booking and soon will start flight ticket booking. Chairing the first meeting of the Parliamentary Consultative Committee of the Ministry of Cooperation on Tuesday, Cooperation Minister Amit Shah briefed the members about achievements of his Ministry as well as shared updates on some of the ongoing projects.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/centre-preparing-roadmap-for-development-of-national-federations-of-cooperatives-says-amit-shah/article69211580.ece>

## Infrastructure

### **Mega ports to begin operations in 2029: Sarbananda Sonowal**

Union Ports, Shipping, and Waterways Minister Sarbananda Sonowal said work is gathering steam at Vadhavan with shore protection works worth Rs 1700 crore already being awarded. The International Container Transshipment Port (ICTP) at Great Nicobar is in an advanced stages of appraisal and approvals, with environmental clearance already in place, he said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/transportation/shipping/-/transport/mega-ports-to-begin-operations-in-2029-sarbananda-sonowal/articleshow/118187665.cms>

### **Housing sales in top 15 tier-II cities rise 20% to Rs 1.53 trn: PropEquity**

Housing sales across 15 top tier-II cities rose 20 per cent in value terms last calendar year to more than Rs 1.52 lakh crore on higher volume and price appreciation, according to PropEquity. These 15 cities are -- Ahmedabad, Surat, Vadodara, Gandhi Nagar, Nashik, Jaipur, Nagpur, Bhubaneswar, Mohali, Visakhapatnam, Lucknow, Coimbatore, Goa, Bhopal and Trivandrum. As per the data, housing sales rose the most in Coimbatore at 36 per cent and fell maximum in Visakhapatnam by 21 per cent in 2024.

[https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/housing-sales-in-top-15-tier-ii-cities-rise-20-to-rs-1-53-trn-propequity-125021200553\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/housing-sales-in-top-15-tier-ii-cities-rise-20-to-rs-1-53-trn-propequity-125021200553_1.html)

### **NMP 2.0 likely to depend more on roads, railway and coal sectors**

Roads, railways, and coal together are likely to account for close to 70 per cent of the government's takings from the upcoming second edition of the National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP), set to run from FY26 to FY30. In comparison, these three sectors are estimated to have contributed around 66 per cent in the first edition of the NMP-- FY22 to FY25.

[https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/nmp-2-0-likely-to-depend-more-on-roads-railway-and-coal-sectors-125021201660\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/nmp-2-0-likely-to-depend-more-on-roads-railway-and-coal-sectors-125021201660_1.html)

## Energy

### **India must free gas pricing, unbundle marketing, transportation biz: IEA**

International Energy Agency (IEA) on Wednesday asked India to free up its pricing of natural gas and unbundling of marketing and transportation business to help increase usage of the fuel in the economy. As India targets raising the share of relatively cleaner natural gas in its energy basket to 15 per cent by 2030 from just above 6 per cent currently, IEA prescribed a set of policy reforms to usher in its greater use.

[https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/india-must-free-gas-pricing-unbundle-marketing-transportation-biz-iea-125021200560\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/india-must-free-gas-pricing-unbundle-marketing-transportation-biz-iea-125021200560_1.html)

## Telecom

### **Trai intensifies crackdown on pesky calls, prescribe fines up to Rs 10 lakh**

Telecom regulator Trai on Wednesday intensified its crackdown on pesky calls and messages with new rules that prescribe fines ranging from Rs 2 lakh to Rs 10 lakh for recurring and repeated instances of violation, in cases where telcos misreport the count of such spams. The regulator has mandated all telecom operators to analyse call and SMS patterns based on parameters such as unusually high call volumes, short call durations, and low incoming-to-outgoing call ratios to flag potential spammers in real-time.

[https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/trai-intensifies-crackdown-on-pesky-calls-prescribe-fines-up-to-rs-10-lakh-125021201562\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/trai-intensifies-crackdown-on-pesky-calls-prescribe-fines-up-to-rs-10-lakh-125021201562_1.html)

## States

### **Centre to reimburse tomato storage, transport costs for MP farmers**

In view of falling tomato prices, the Centre on Wednesday said it will reimburse the storage and transportation cost of tomato in Madhya Pradesh under the market intervention scheme through cooperative NCCF. Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has approved the implementation of transportation component of market intervention scheme (MIS) for tomato in the state through NCCF. "NCCF is preparing to start transportation operations from Madhya Pradesh soon," an official statement said.

[https://www.business-standard.com/industry/agriculture/centre-to-reimburse-tomato-storage-transport-costs-for-mp-farmers-125021201655\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/industry/agriculture/centre-to-reimburse-tomato-storage-transport-costs-for-mp-farmers-125021201655_1.html)

### **Groundwater in Punjab, Haryana contaminated with uranium, arsenic: Report**

Several districts in Punjab and Haryana have excessive levels of uranium, nitrates, arsenic, chloride, and fluoride – surpassing permissible limits – in their groundwater, according to the recently-released Annual Ground Water Quality Report-2024. The report, compiled by the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB), adds that exposure to uranium beyond this threshold can lead to severe health complications, including kidney damage and urinary tract cancer.

[https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/groundwater-punjab-haryana-contaminated-uranium-arsenic-agri-fertiliser-125021200701\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/groundwater-punjab-haryana-contaminated-uranium-arsenic-agri-fertiliser-125021200701_1.html)

## **Healthcare**

### **Govt extends Schedule M implementation deadline till year-end for small, medium pharma firms**

The implementation of revised Schedule M for good manufacturing practices has been conditionally extended to December 31, 2025, for small and medium pharmaceutical firms with turnover of Rs 250 crore or less. These firms must submit an upgrade plan by February 11, 2025, to qualify for the deadline extension. The updated regulations aim to enhance product quality and global competitiveness.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/healthcare/biotech/pharmaceuticals/govt-extends-schedule-m-implementation-deadline-till-year-end-for-small-medium-pharma-firms/articleshow/118182949.cms>

### **Chemists' association seeks meeting with NPPA over price display issue**

The chemists' lobby, representing almost 1.2 million pharmacists in the country, has sought a meeting with National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) over the issue of displaying the drug price list at chemist shops, terming it as "mammoth task" to compile the prices of hundreds and thousands of brands. They are also preparing to send a memorandum to the national pharma pricing regulator. The NPPA, in an office memorandum (OM) dated February 4, had directed medicine retailers as well as online pharmacies to "conspicuously" display current drug price list according to the Drug Price Control Order (DPCO) 2013.

[https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/chemists-association-seeks-meeting-with-nppa-on-price-display-issue-125021201545\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/chemists-association-seeks-meeting-with-nppa-on-price-display-issue-125021201545_1.html)

## **External**

### **Indian refiners work to build sanctions-proof supply chain for Russian oil**

Oil refiners in India — eager to keep importing cheap crude from Russia — are working with merchants, shippers and other middlemen to rebuild supply chains as tougher US sanctions come into effect. Speaking on the sidelines of India's flagship energy gathering in Delhi, executives said the existing networks were being reconfigured with selling entities, tankers and insurance providers that are not on Washington's blacklist. Some are existing outfits that have not been impacted by the punitive measures, while others are newly created, replacing those that are now off-limits, they said.

[https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/indian-refiners-work-to-build-sanctions-proof-supply-chain-for-russian-oil-125021201649\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/indian-refiners-work-to-build-sanctions-proof-supply-chain-for-russian-oil-125021201649_1.html)

### **India weighs temporary tax on cheap Chinese steel import, minister says**

India may implement a temporary 15%-25% tax on Chinese steel imports within six months to protect domestic manufacturers from cheap imports. The investigation into safeguard duties began in December and could last up to two years, aiming to ensure fair competition amidst rising imports from China.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/indl-goods/svs/steel/india-weighs-temporary-tax-on-cheap-chinese-steel-import-minister-says/articleshow/118175846.cms>

#### **Sugar exporters struggle to fulfil 1 mn tonnes export quota allowed by govt**

India has exported up to 500,000 metric tons of sugar so far this season, but the pace is already slowing, and it may struggle to fulfil the one million tons allowed by the government, trade and industry sources said on Wednesday. "There are fears that the one million (ton) quota could actually be reduced," Prakash Naiknavare, managing director of the National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories, told Reuters on the sidelines of the annual Dubai Sugar Conference.

[https://www.business-standard.com/industry/agriculture/sugar-exporters-struggle-to-fulfil-1-mn-tonnes-export-quota-allowed-by-govt-125021201126\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/industry/agriculture/sugar-exporters-struggle-to-fulfil-1-mn-tonnes-export-quota-allowed-by-govt-125021201126_1.html)

#### **Application filing procedure laid out for allocation of TRQ of gold bullion under India-UAE FTA**

The Indian government has outlined the procedure for filing applications to import gold bullion at a reduced tariff rate under the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with the UAE for 2025-26. India can import up to 200 metric tonnes of gold annually with a 1 per cent tariff concession. Applications must be submitted by February 28, 2025.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/application-filing-procedure-laid-out-for-allocation-of-trq-of-gold-bullion-under-india-uae-fta/articleshow/118186223.cms>