



February 17, 2025 – Monday

## Economy

### **BITs should capture national interest, signed separately from FTAs: FM Sitharaman**

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman emphasized the need for bilateral investment treaties to capture national interests and guide arbitrators. She highlighted the importance of stand-alone BITs to better regulate powers and attract foreign investment. Sitharaman also noted the significant burden on developing nations due to Investor-State Dispute Settlement cases and the revamped model BIT aims to address these issues.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/bits-should-capture-national-interest-signed-separately-from-ftas-fm-sitharaman/articleshow/118281705.cms>

### **Experts call for building digital infra to tap IT talent in small cities**

With remote IT work expanding opportunities for professionals in Tier 2 & 3 cities, experts have called for investment in digital infrastructure and upskilling to connect talent with global projects. Experts have also hailed the government's move to set up five National Centres of Excellence for Skilling as a strategic move to align youths' capabilities with the demands of both domestic and international markets.

[https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/experts-call-for-building-digital-infra-to-tap-it-talent-in-small-cities-125021600131\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/experts-call-for-building-digital-infra-to-tap-it-talent-in-small-cities-125021600131_1.html)

### **Pick up in private capex to improve loan growth from H2FY26: Report**

Despite witnessing tough conditions in the third quarter, loan growth will improve from the second half of Financial Year (FY) 2026, driven by a recovery in the unsecured segment and a gradual pickup in private capital expenditure (capex), according to a report by Mirae Asset Sharekhan.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/banking/finance/banking/pick-up-in-private-capex-to-improve-loan-growth-from-h2fy26-report/articleshow/118294108.cms>

### **Green cover in India absorbed more carbon than it emitted annually: Study**

The green cover in India has absorbed more carbon than it emitted annually in the last decade, but the rate of sequestration declines during extreme climate events such as drought, a study has revealed. The study by researchers at the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), Bhopal, also stressed the critical role of vegetation in climate change mitigation and adaptation.

[https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/green-cover-in-india-absorbed-more-carbon-than-it-emitted-annually-study-125021600085\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/green-cover-in-india-absorbed-more-carbon-than-it-emitted-annually-study-125021600085_1.html)

### **Parliamentary panel seeks MCA views on NFRA's performance, budget utilisation**

The Standing Committee on Finance, led by BJP MP Bhartruhari Mahtab, has sought detailed written responses from the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) regarding the functioning of the National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA), the country's sole independent audit regulator.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/parliamentary-panel-seeks-mca-views-on-nfras-performance-budget-utilisation/article69226851.ece>

## Finance

### Bank of Maharashtra receives RBI's approval for opening GIFT City branch

State-owned Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) on Sunday said it has received approval from the Reserve Bank of India to set up an International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) Banking Unit at GIFT City. The branch will function as Bank of Maharashtra's first international branch carrying out offshore banking operations from India.

[https://www.business-standard.com/companies/news/bank-of-maharashtra-receives-rbi-s-approval-for-opening-gift-city-branch-125021600208\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/companies/news/bank-of-maharashtra-receives-rbi-s-approval-for-opening-gift-city-branch-125021600208_1.html)

### Bima Vistaar: Decks cleared for the first-ever all-in-one insurance plan

IRDAI, Industry captains agree on a final model product to be rolled out from April. Bima Vistaar is one of the key components of the ambitious project of the IRDAI popularly labelled as the Bima Trinity, comprising Bima Sugam, Bima Vahak, and Bima Vistaar.

[https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/money-and-banking/bima-vistaar-decks-cleared-for-the-first-ever-all-in-one-insurance-plan/article69226132.ece?cx\\_testId=22&cx\\_testVariant=cx\\_1&cx\\_artPos=0&cx\\_experienceId=EX80XMB4HBZD&cx\\_experienceActionId=showRecommendationsEG2NLWRIDEL625#cxrecs\\_s](https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/money-and-banking/bima-vistaar-decks-cleared-for-the-first-ever-all-in-one-insurance-plan/article69226132.ece?cx_testId=22&cx_testVariant=cx_1&cx_artPos=0&cx_experienceId=EX80XMB4HBZD&cx_experienceActionId=showRecommendationsEG2NLWRIDEL625#cxrecs_s)

### SEBI, BIA may launch data benchmarking institutes for InvITs by February-end

Phased rollout begins with five publicly listed InvITs; private ones to follow. These platforms will house all key information and analysis regarding listed InvITs to boost transparency, improve data accessibility, and support better-informed investment decisions in the space.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/markets/sebi-bia-may-launch-data-benchmarking-institutes-for-invits-by-feb-end/article69226093.ece>

### SEBI revises timelines for issuance of consolidated account statements for depositories

SEBI has revised the timelines for the issuance of Consolidated Account Statements (CAS) by depositories to enhance compliance ease. The earlier three-day deadline has been revised to five days for CAS issuance by depositories.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/markets/sebi-revises-timelines-for-issuance-of-consolidated-account-statements-for-depositories/article69225537.ece>

### Fintechs look beyond traditional means to scale up presence of e₹

Non-banking entities such as fintech firms will have to tap into use cases beyond peer-to-peer (P2P) and peer-to-merchant (P2M) transactions to scale up the presence of the retail version of the central bank digital currency (CBDC), which is also known as the e₹, said industry players. These use cases will enable programmable transactions across domains, including the government's direct benefit transfer (DBT) schemes, with subsidies restricted to specific purposes such as food coupons, hospital bills, fertilisers, pesticides, and cross-border remittances.

[https://www.business-standard.com/finance/news/fintech-firms-cracked-upi-but-scaling-up-cbdc-use-cases-demands-more-125021600448\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/finance/news/fintech-firms-cracked-upi-but-scaling-up-cbdc-use-cases-demands-more-125021600448_1.html)

### Private equity funds turn to platform models for scalable growth in India

Private equity (PE) firms in India are increasingly leveraging the platform creation model to consolidate fragmented sectors, achieve economies of scale, and boost operational efficiency. According to industry experts, this approach is gaining traction across various industries, becoming more mainstream in India's PE landscape.

[https://www.business-standard.com/markets/news/private-equity-funds-turn-to-platform-models-for-scalable-growth-in-india-125021600456\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/markets/news/private-equity-funds-turn-to-platform-models-for-scalable-growth-in-india-125021600456_1.html)

### Pre-packs for MSMEs find few takers

Framework for the pre-packaged insolvency scheme demands revamp to fix gaps, boost stakeholder trust. The introduction of the pre-pack insolvency resolution process (PPIRP), under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), is a significant attempt to give insolvent micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) a fresh lease of life.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/specials/current-account/pre-packs-for-msmes-find-few-takers/article69226458.ece>

## Industry

### First 'Made-in-India' chip to be launched by September-October: Vaishnaw

Minister of Information and Broadcasting Ashwini Vaishnaw has said the first 'Made-in-India' chip will come out in September or October this year, reported *The Economic Times*. Addressing the media in Bengaluru on Saturday, Vaishnaw said the government has granted Rs 334 crore to the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, "for new research and development (R&D) in gallium nitride, a technology in semiconductors, which is used in telecom and power." The government will soon come out with a production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for components, he added.

[https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/first-made-in-india-chip-launch-september-october-ashwini-vaishnaw-125021600267\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/first-made-in-india-chip-launch-september-october-ashwini-vaishnaw-125021600267_1.html)

### Japanese firms eye India as part of 'China Plus One' strategy

Post the Covid-19 pandemic, Japanese companies are eyeing India as a base as they adopt the 'China Plus One' strategy to diversify their manufacturing and supply chains to reduce dependence on China, experts from Deloitte said. The strategy involves establishing production facilities in alternative countries, with India emerging as a significant beneficiary.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/sustainable-practices-to-help-boost-castor-oil-exports-to-25-billion-by-2030-sca/article69225830.ece>

### Shift from manual ain't automatic for most Indians as high prices keep buyers in first gear

Indian car buyers are increasingly interested in automatic transmissions due to ease of driving, but premium pricing and additional luxury features are deterring many from opting for automatic variants. Despite a price gap, demand for automatic options, especially in congested metros, is on the rise, pushing automakers to consider more varied transmission options.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/auto/auto-news/shift-from-manual-aint-automatic-for-most-indians-as-high-prices-keep-buyers-in-first-gear/articleshow/118284201.cms>

### PM Modi optimistic about achieving Rs 9 trillion textile exports by 2030

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said he is optimistic that the textile sector will achieve the Rs 9 lakh crore annual exports target ahead of the 2030 deadline. This assumes significance in view of the General Budget 2025 announcement of a five-year Cotton Mission to increase cotton productivity especially of extra-long staple varieties.

[https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/pm-modi-optimistic-about-achieving-rs-9-trillion-textile-exports-by-2030-125021600480\\_1.htm](https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/pm-modi-optimistic-about-achieving-rs-9-trillion-textile-exports-by-2030-125021600480_1.htm)

### Luxury industry is facing an existential crisis after Covid

"Luxury houses have no choice but to change. They can't increase the prices, but there will be an absolute shrinking of distribution. Brands have no choice but to take a hit. You cannot be in a luxury space and be ubiquitous," says Desirée Bollier, the chair and global chief merchant of Value Retail.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/cons-products/fashion/-/cosmetics/-/jewellery/luxury-industry-is-facing-an-existential-crisis-after-covid-desire-bollier-chairperson-value-retail/articleshow/118280729.cms>

### Print advertising records better y-o-y performance over TV medium

Print advertising revenue held its ground in 2024, while TV revenue declined, as per ad marketing reports. Experts attributed the trends to election activity and the ability of print media to create brand awareness.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/print-advertising-records-better-y-o-y-performance-over-tv-medium/article69225555.ece>

### Wearable device market declined in 2024 for the first time: IDC data

India's wearable device market declined for the first time in 2024 by 11.3 per cent year-on-year (y-o-y), according to data released by the (IDC). "The lack of meaningful innovations and technological advancements led to muted consumer demand," IDC said.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/info-tech/wearable-device-market-declined-in-2024-for-the-first-time-idc-data/article69225952.ece>

#### **Tariff cuts on US Bourbon spark protests from Indian liquor industry**

Following the government's decision to reduce customs duty on bourbon whisky from 150 per cent to 50 per cent, the Indian alcoholic beverage industry called for the withdrawal of all state-level excise concessions on imported liquor. According to industry experts, this duty reduction could negatively impact domestic spirits and wine producers.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/business/industry-tariff-cuts-on-us-bourbon-spark-protests-from-indian-liquor-industry-3750734/>

#### **DRDO, MIDHANI sign MoU for special grade steel for aeronautical applications**

Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA), a leading lab of Defence Research and Development Organisation, and public sector undertaking MIDHANI have entered into an MoU for indigenous development of high strength high toughness special grade steel "MDN100" for aeronautical applications including in the development 5th generation Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA).

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/drdo-midhani-sign-mou-for-special-grade-steel-for-aeronautical-applications/article69226820.ece>

### **Agriculture**

#### **No threat to wheat crop as minimum, maximum temperature within tolerance limit**

Wheat crop in north-west India is at different stages in different states depending on the sowing period and the current maximum and minimum temperature is within the tolerance limit of the plant, reducing any risk of lower yield even if there is slight rise in temperature as predicted, experts said.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/no-threat-to-wheat-crop-as-minimum-maximum-temperature-within-tolerance-limit/article69226913.ece>

### **Infrastructure**

#### **Support from govt, industries vital for Indian shipbuilders**

Indian industries should collaborate to strengthen the local shipping and shipbuilding sectors, says Takeshi Hashimoto, CEO of Japan's MOL. He highlights the necessity of government support and a unified industry approach for long-term gains. Hashimoto believes structured policies and industrial collaboration are vital for India to achieve global competitiveness in these sectors.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/transportation/shipping/-/transport/support-from-govt-industries-vital-for-indian-shipbuilders-ceo-of-japanese-co-mol/articleshow/118309549.cms>

### **Energy**

#### **Extend waiver on charges for renewable energy till 2030: Power producers**

Power producers have asked the government to keep the waiver on inter-state transmission charges for renewable energy until 2030 to help clean energy take root more deeply in India's economy. A consultative meeting chaired by Minister for New and Renewable Energy Pralhad Joshi was held on February 5, where Wind Independent Power Producers Association (WIPPA) and other associations shared their concerns and suggestions.

[https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/extend-waiver-on-charges-for-renewable-energy-till-2030-power-producers-125021600261\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/extend-waiver-on-charges-for-renewable-energy-till-2030-power-producers-125021600261_1.html)

#### **India's crude import bill up 3% in April-January**

India's crude import bill rose by 2.7% during the first ten months of FY25, reaching \$113.9 billion compared to \$110.9 billion in the same period of FY24, according to data from the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell. The country imported 200.5 million tonne of crude oil between April and January, marking a 2.7% increase from 195.2 million tonne in the corresponding period last year.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/policy/economy-indias-crude-import-bill-up-3-in-april-january-3751050/>

## Telecom

### **With 6G rollout, aiming for fivefold jump in data speeds to 100 Mbps per customer: Jyotiraditya Scindia**

India is poised to overtake Japan and Germany to become the third largest economy by 2027, communications minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said. The digital highway in India is the most advanced following the 5G rollout in 22 months, among the fastest in the world, covering 99% of the country's districts and 82% of population, Scindia said. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/telecom/telecom-news/with-6g-rollout-aiming-for-fivefold-jump-in-data-speeds-to-100-mbps-per-customer-jyotiraditya-scindia/articleshow/118283577.cms>

## States

### **Assam cabinet approves mega industrial park, new policy for green energy**

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday said the state cabinet has approved a mega industrial park and a new policy for green energy. Addressing a press conference after chairing a cabinet meeting here, Sarma said the state government has resolved to allot 569 bighas of land (over 188 acres) in Morigaon district for a mega industrial park. The cabinet also approved the Assam Integrated Clean Energy Policy, 2025 to promote solar, wind, mini and small hydro, hydrogen and other green energy projects in the state, he added. [https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/assam-cabinet-approves-mega-industrial-park-new-policy-for-green-energy-125021600679\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/assam-cabinet-approves-mega-industrial-park-new-policy-for-green-energy-125021600679_1.html)

### **Kerala govt allocates additional Rs 300 cr for integrated healthcare scheme**

The Kerala government has allocated an additional Rs 300 crore for Karunya Arogya Suraksha Padhathi (KASAP), its integrated health protection scheme designed to provide coverage to over 64 lakh poor and vulnerable people in the state. With this additional allocation, the total amount earmarked for the flagship scheme in the present financial year has gone up to Rs 978.54 crore, state Finance Minister K N Balagopal said in a statement on Sunday. [https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/kerala-govt-allocates-additional-rs-300-cr-for-integrated-healthcare-scheme-125021600196\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/kerala-govt-allocates-additional-rs-300-cr-for-integrated-healthcare-scheme-125021600196_1.html)

### **NABARD pegs Odisha's credit potential for 2025-26 at Rs 2,52,000 cr**

NABARD has projected Odisha's credit potential for 2025-26 fiscal at Rs 2,52,000 crore. This projection is about 20 percent higher than the previous year's Rs 2,10,140 crore. Deputy Chief Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo emphasized the need for increased bank credit for priority sectors and urged banks to support agriculture and innovative projects to enhance farmers' incomes. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/nabard-pegs-odishas-credit-potential-for-2025-26-at-rs-252000-cr/articleshow/118303582.cms>

## Healthcare

### **Pvt hospitals to bolster bed capacity in FY26 for cancer patients**

India's leading private hospitals plan to make oncology a focus area and increase their bed capacity in FY26 after registering stable growth in the average revenue per occupied bed (ARPOB) per day in the past nine months (9MFY25). [https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/cancer-beds-key-focus-area-for-pvt-hospitals-fy26-expansion-plan-125021600207\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/cancer-beds-key-focus-area-for-pvt-hospitals-fy26-expansion-plan-125021600207_1.html)

## External

### **India-US proposed BTA: US may ask for more access to agri products, ethanol**

The United States (US) is likely to ask India for substantial market access in agriculture and dairy products, ethanol, and medical devices under the proposed bilateral trade agreement (BTA) that both countries have agreed to conclude in the next eight months.

[https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/india-us-proposed-bta-us-may-ask-for-more-access-in-agri-products-ethanol-125021600494\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/india-us-proposed-bta-us-may-ask-for-more-access-in-agri-products-ethanol-125021600494_1.html)

**India-US TRUST, IMEC to drive economic, infra cooperation: Experts**

India-US TRUST (Transforming Relationship Utilizing Strategic Technology) will pave the way for economic and technological cooperation between the two countries, while focus on the IMEC framework will deepen collaboration in infrastructure and economic corridors, according to industry experts.

[https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/india-us-trust-imec-to-drive-economic-infra-cooperation-experts-125021600294\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/india-us-trust-imec-to-drive-economic-infra-cooperation-experts-125021600294_1.html)

**Impact of US tariff reciprocity on Indian exports likely to be limited: SBI**

Indian exports to the U.S. are expected to experience minimal impact despite anticipated higher tariffs, according to a State Bank of India report. Even with tariffs up to 20%, the decline in exports is estimated at only 3-3.5%. Strategic export diversification, increased value addition, and improved trade routes are key measures India is employing to counteract any potential negative effects.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/impact-of-us-tariff-reciprocity-on-indian-exports-likely-to-be-limited-sbi/articleshow/118316783.cms>

**EAM Jaishankar, Omani FM discuss trade, investment, energy security**

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Sunday held wide-ranging discussions with his Omani counterpart Badr Albusaidi on bilateral cooperation in trade, investment and energy security.

[https://www.business-standard.com/external-affairs-defence-security/news/eam-jaishankar-omani-fm-discuss-trade-investment-energy-security-125021600319\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/external-affairs-defence-security/news/eam-jaishankar-omani-fm-discuss-trade-investment-energy-security-125021600319_1.html)