



February 20, 2025 – Thursday

Economy

GDP growth during current fiscal estimated to be 6.3%: SBI research

The State Bank of India (SBI), in its research, has estimated GDP growth during the current financial year (2024-25) to be 6.3 per cent, assuming that the NSO does not make major revisions to the erstwhile first and second quarter estimates. The report said that leveraging 36 high-frequency indicators, the estimated GDP growth for the third quarter of the current financial year should be between 6.2 per cent and 6.3 per cent.

https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/gdp-growth-during-current-fiscal-estimated-to-be-6-3-sbi-research-125021900487_1.html

RBI article signals economic momentum rise in H2FY25 amid strong demand

High frequency indicators, like vehicles sales, air traffic, steel consumption and GST E-way bills, point towards a sequential pickup in momentum of economic activity during the second half of the fiscal 2024-25 and sustain moving forward, RBI Bulletin said on Wednesday.

https://www.business-standard.com/finance/news/rbi-article-signals-economic-momentum-rise-in-h2fy25-amid-strong-demand-125021901160_1.html

Committed to 70% female workforce participation goal by 2047: Labour secy

India is committed to achieving 70 per cent female workforce participation by 2047 as the government has extended maternity leave, creche facilities, and equal pay provisions for them, a top official said. Addressing the first G20 Employment Working Group Meeting 2025 under South African Presidency, Union Labour Secretary Sumita Dawra also stated that India's increasing participation of women in high-growth sectors like IT, R&D, and engineering was noted as a critical driver of economic growth.

https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/committed-to-70-female-workforce-participation-goal-by-2047-labour-secy-125021901041_1.html

Amid global uncertainty, salaries in India to rise by 9.2% in 2025: Aon

Salary increments in India are expected to stabilise in 2025 and set to rise by 9.2 per cent, amid global uncertainty and softening growth, according to the Annual Salary Increase and Turnover Survey 2024-25 India by Aon plc, a leading global professional services firm. The rise in the salary is a slight decline from the increase of 9.3 per cent in 2024.

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/salaries-in-india-set-to-rise-by-9-2-in-2025-to-vary-across-sectors-aon-125021900501_1.html

Around 4000 Indian companies report strong EBITDA growth in Q3FY25: SBI

Indian companies exhibited a strong recovery in Q3FY25, with revenue, EBITDA, and PAT showing significant growth compared to the previous year. The report highlights improving consumer sentiment and economic productivity, which have driven demand-led growth across various industries.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/company/corporate-trends/around-4000-indian-companies-report-strong-ebitda-growth-in-q3fy25-sbi/articleshow/118403998.cms>

Finance

FinMin to discuss hiking deposit insurance limit with PSBs on March 4

Department of Financial Services (DFS) Secretary M Nagaraju will chair a review meeting with managing directors (MDs) and chief executive officers (CEOs) of public sector banks (PSBs) on March 4 to discuss several issues, including raising the deposit insurance limit, potentially up to ₹15 lakh, according to a senior government official. DFS is a part of the Ministry of Finance.

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/banking/fin-min-to-discuss-hiking-deposit-insurance-limit-with-psbs-next-month-125021901017_1.html

Financial markets on edge over fears of potential impact of tariffs, RBI says

The RBI voices concerns over global economic uncertainty impacting financial markets, citing slowing disinflation and tariff threats. Despite challenges for EMEs like India, India reports positive economic indicators and a supportive Union Budget, though Trump's tariff threats against India remain a key risk.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/financial-markets-on-edge-over-fears-of-potential-impact-of-tariffs-rbi-says/articleshow/118391635.cms>

Irdai asks insurers to provide ASBA facility for premium payments

Insurance regulator Irdai has asked life and health insurers to provide Bima-ASBA, a facility wherein a policyholder blocks the amount towards premium in his or her bank account which gets debited only when the policy is issued. According to Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai) norms, premium is required to be paid only after the insurer communicates the decision of acceptance of the proposal to customer.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/banking/finance/insure/irdai-asks-insurers-to-provide-asba-facility-for-premium-payments/articleshow/118391210.cms>

RBI should focus on liquidity if it wants to support growth

If the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) goal is to ease financial conditions, which will consequently lead to higher credit offtake and support growth, it should focus on alleviating the persistent tight liquidity conditions rather than cutting the policy rate, said Neelkanth Mishra, chief economist, Axis Bank. "If the objective is to ease financial conditions and support growth, which is what the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has stated, my prescription will be to focus on liquidity first, because at this stage, cutting rates is not helping," Mishra, who is also a part-time member of the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council.

https://www.business-standard.com/finance/news/rbi-should-focus-on-liquidity-if-it-wants-to-support-growth-mishra-125021801060_1.html

AI-powered fintech the next big bet

Despite an overall rise in startup investments, the fintech sector saw a 33% drop in funding last year. While digital lending platforms continue to dominate in terms of attracting capital, the next wave of innovation is emerging in AI-driven financial infrastructure. This includes AI-powered underwriting, risk assessment, and embedded finance solutions. According to Kabir Narang, founding general partner at B Capital, the investment landscape in fintech is shifting. "While lending remains a key part of the ecosystem, it is increasingly a balance-sheet-heavy play, making it more suited for private equity and structured credit investors," he told FE.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/business/sme-ai-powered-fintech-the-next-big-bet-3753295/>

Industry

E-recycling sector to reach \$198.5 mn by 2032 at CAGR of 13.52%: Ind-Ra

The domestic industry can look forward to increased business opportunities in the e-recycling sector, which is expected to grow at a CAGR of 13.52 per cent, reaching \$198.52 million by 2032, India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) said in a report on Wednesday. The report also underlined the need for a strong reverse logistics network for e-

waste procurement to ensure contract fulfilment and technical expertise to gain extended producer responsibility (EPR) revenue.

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/e-recycling-sector-to-reach-198-5-mn-by-2032-at-cagr-of-13-52-ind-ra-125021901049_1.html

Urban demand slowdown in India is going to be around for some more months

Urban slowdown is expected to persist until Q1FY26, with improvements starting Q2FY26. High rental inflation and slow wage growth are key factors, but fiscal measures in the union budget and RBI rate cuts anticipated to aid recovery. Rural markets show stronger growth, benefiting companies with a higher rural presence like Dabur and Berger Paints.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/urban-demand-slowdown-in-india-is-going-to-be-around-for-some-more-months/articleshow/118378103.cms>

AI implementation in healthcare requires tailored approaches: ISB Study

AI implementation in healthcare requires tailored approaches considering factors such as regional infrastructure differences and training programmes. As per the findings of a study by researchers at the Max Institute of Healthcare Management at the Indian School of Business on 'Understanding Providers' Attitude Toward AI in India's Informal Health Care Sector,' 93.7 per cent of providers believed AI could improve TB diagnosis accuracy, while only 69.4 per cent were willing to adopt the technology.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/info-tech/ai-implementation-in-healthcare-requires-tailored-approaches-isb-study/article69237947.ece>

In FY26, auto-makers see low single-digit growth

Passenger vehicle (PV) makers including Maruti Suzuki India, Hyundai Motor India, Kia India, Tata Motors and Mahindra & Mahindra (M&M) have estimated market growth in the next financial year (FY 2025-26) to be in single lower digit. In fact, the PV industry growth may decline in the next financial year as compared to the current financial year during which the growth is around four per cent year-on-year (y-o-y).

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/companies/automakers-fear-lower-single-digit-growth-in-car-sales-in-2025-26/article69238864.ece>

Govt mulls including charging infrastructure in EV investment mandate

The government is discussing a proposal to include investments in building a charging infrastructure network so that global players can easily meet its investment eligibility criteria under a policy announced last year. Under the policy, they were required to invest \$500 million over three years in setting up a manufacturing plant. In return, they would receive concessional duty for importing electric vehicles (EVs) into the country.

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/auto/govt-mulls-including-charging-infrastructure-in-ev-investment-mandate-125021901108_1.html

Agriculture

Wheat prices shoot up in govt auction after hike in individual limit

Wheat prices at the government's weekly auction on Wednesday spiked abruptly in most of the States, industry sources said. They attributed it to the relaxation granted to individual processors to lift a higher quantity. Out of 4 lakh tonnes (lt) wheat offered at the auction as much as 3,99,940 tonnes were sold out on Wednesday against 2,93,110 tonnes out of 3 lt on February 12.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/wheat-prices-shoot-up-in-govt-auction-after-hike-in-individual-limit/article69239106.ece>

Groundnut purchases at MSP tops 13.38 lakh tonnes

Telangana has attracted new investment proposals worth ₹3.25 lakh crore in the last three, according to a study conducted by the MSME Export Promotion Council. During the period, the private sector announced new investment projects of ₹62,500 crore.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/telangana-attracted-325-lakh-cr-investments-in-3-years-msme-export-promotion-council/article69238866.ece>

Energy

New solar projects to have two-hour energy storage systems

In a significant move aimed to boost renewable energy adoption, the government has asked all future solar project tenders to include energy storage systems with a minimum of two hours of storage capacity, ensuring grid stability. This initiative, aligned with India's 2030 renewable energy goals, aims to deploy approximately 14 GW of storage-backed solar projects, benefiting from declining battery prices.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/renewables/new-solar-projects-to-have-two-hour-energy-storage-systems/articleshow/118396820.cms>

India surpassing key climate goals, can grow faster with clean energy: UN

India is already meeting and exceeding key climate targets and has a real opportunity to grow even faster, using clean energy and industry, UN climate change chief Simon Stiell has said. In an email interview with PTI, Stiell emphasised that India's unique geography and huge population means huge numbers of people are vulnerable to climate impacts. And therefore, he said, the need to invest in ensuring people, communities, infrastructure and businesses are resilient is clear.

https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/india-surpassing-key-climate-goals-can-grow-faster-with-clean-energy-un-125021900702_1.html

India needs \$700 bn in power sector to meet net-zero target: Moody's

India's power sector - the biggest carbon emitter - will need massive \$700 billion investment over the next 10 years to help the country achieve its 2070 net-zero pledge, Moody's Ratings said on Wednesday. Stating that the power sector accounts for around 37 per cent of carbon emissions in the country, the rating agency said the investments required by the power sector during fiscal 2026-51 to be of the order of 1.5 per cent to 2 per cent of GDP (around 2 per cent for the next 10 years), which is manageable for India.

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/india-needs-700-bn-in-power-sector-to-meet-net-zero-target-moody-s-125021900887_1.html

ONGC plans foray into ethane carrier business, seeks partner

India's ONGC is seeking joint venture partners to build very large ethane carriers for transporting feedstock to its petrochemical plant. The partnership will involve companies with experience in managing large gas and LNG carriers. The VLECs will be locally and globally funded, with the last date for submitting interest on March 27.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/oil-gas/ongc-plans-foray-into-ethane-carrier-business-seeks-partner/articleshow/118386487.cms>

Coal ministry plans to offer additional incentives in underground mine auctions

The Coal Ministry is planning incentives to boost underground coal block auctions in line with sustainable coal production. Currently, 37 of 113 auctioned mines are underground. New incentives are in advanced discussion and will apply prospectively. Production from commercial and captive mines is set to increase from 157 million tonnes to 210 million tonnes by 2025-26.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/indl-goods/svs/metals-mining/coal-ministry-plans-to-offer-additional-incentives-in-underground-mine-auctions/articleshow/118386270.cms>

States

Govt committed to make state \$350 bn economy: Rajasthan dy CM Diya Kumari

Rajasthan Deputy Chief Minister Diya Kumari on Wednesday presented the Budget for the financial year 2025-26 and announced that the government is committed to make the state a \$350 billion economy. She announced that as many as 2 lakh new houses will be provided with drinking water connections and on this initiative Rs 400 crore will be spent. She said that nine greenfield expressways will be constructed.

https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/govt-committed-to-make-state-350-bn-economy-rajasthan-dy-cm-diya-kumari-125021900369_1.html

Bengaluru led city-wise box office revenue and footfalls in 2024: Report

Bengaluru and Hyderabad emerged as the top contributors to GBOC, while Mumbai and Chennai continued to have disproportionately high percentages of moviegoers, according to a report released by GroupM India titled Profiling Cinemagoers, based on primary research conducted among cinemagoers in India's top five metro cities.

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/bengaluru-led-city-wise-box-office-revenue-and-footfalls-in-2024-report-125021901127_1.html

Telangana attracted ₹3.25 lakh cr investments in 3 years: MSME Export Promotion Council

Telangana has attracted new investment proposals worth ₹3.25 lakh crore in the last three, according to a study conducted by the MSME Export Promotion Council. During the period, the private sector announced new investment projects of ₹62,500 crore.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/teLANGANA-attracted-325-lakh-cr-investments-in-3-years-msme-export-promotion-council/article69238866.ece>

Healthcare

Higher tariffs not to blunt India's competitive edge in US pharma market: Industry

The threat by US President Donald Trump to impose "25% or higher" import duties on pharmaceutical products for countries across the board is unlikely to have a major adverse impact on India, as the country is the lowest cost supplier with nearly unbeatable competitive advantage, industry sources and analysts said. The optimism is despite the fact that the US is the largest overseas market for India's branded generics, and accounts for a more than a fourth of the country's exports of medicines and vaccines.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/business/healthcare-higher-tariffs-not-to-blunt-indias-competitive-edge-in-us-pharma-market-industry-3754476/>

Govt asks IVD kit makers to report adverse events; aims to collate info

The Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC), which sets standards for all drugs that are made, sold and consumed in India, has come out with a draft format for reporting of adverse events due to in-vitro diagnostic (IVD) medical devices -- such as pregnancy test kits and blood glucose test kits. It would be useful for rapid identification and rectification of device failures, felt industry. The IPC has asked all IVD manufacturers, regulatory authorities, healthcare professionals, and other stakeholders to provide their feedback and comments on the draft proposal by March 5.

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/govt-asks-ivd-kit-makers-to-report-adverse-events-aims-to-collate-info-125021900995_1.html

External

US reciprocal tariffs to have limited impact on Indian economy: S&P

S&P Global Ratings on Wednesday said the impact of the US reciprocal tariff will be limited on India as the economy is domestically oriented with less reliance on exports. YeeFarn Phua, Director, Asia-Pacific S&P Global also said India will clock a 6.7-6.8 per cent GDP growth over the next two years. He said the fiscal 2025-26 budget will boost growth for the next few years, largely by domestic demand through tax cuts for households and GDP growth is now normalising to a more "sustainable level".

https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/us-reciprocal-tariffs-to-have-limited-impact-on-indian-economy-s-p-125021900513_1.html

US tariff hike may hit India's GDP growth by up to 0.6pp: Goldman Sachs

The increase in average effective tariff rate imposed by the United States (US) on Indian exports could potentially impact India's gross domestic product (GDP) growth by 0.1-0.3 percentage points, according to Goldman Sachs

report on Wednesday. This forecast considers various scenarios, including the US government's planned reciprocal tariffs in early April and the price elasticity of US demand for Indian exports.

https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/us-tariff-hike-may-hit-india-s-gdp-growth-by-up-to-0-6-pp-goldman-sachs-125021901104_1.html

Jaishankar to visit South Africa for G20 foreign ministers' meeting

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will be on a two-day visit to South Africa beginning February 20 to participate in the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting, the MEA announced on Wednesday. The minister is expected to hold a few bilateral meetings on the margins of the meet.

https://www.business-standard.com/external-affairs-defence-security/news/jaishankar-to-visit-south-africa-for-g20-foreign-ministers-meeting-125021900296_1.html

India-Qatar potential FTA must be approached with caution, says GTRI

India should tread cautiously on a potential free trade agreement (FTA) with Qatar, particularly in the petrochemical sector as both countries are strong in this segment, economic think tank GTRI said on Wednesday. The Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) added that India should ensure that tariff concessions on petrochemicals and energy-related imports do not undermine domestic industries.

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/india-qatar-potential-fta-must-be-approached-with-caution-says-gtri-125021900729_1.html

India, Malaysia expand defence ties, advance Su-30 upkeep cooperation

India and Malaysia on Wednesday moved forward towards enhancing cooperation between the Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) in exchanging expertise and best practices for maintaining their respective Russian-origin Sukhoi-30 (Su-30) combat aircraft fleets, while also enhancing cooperation in the defence industry, maritime security, multilateral engagements, and other key emerging areas during Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh's visit to Kuala Lumpur.

https://www.business-standard.com/external-affairs-defence-security/news/india-malaysia-expand-defence-ties-advance-su-30-upkeep-cooperation-125021901148_1.html

India, Argentina sign agreement to explore lithium, other critical minerals

India and Argentina on Wednesday signed an agreement for deeper collaboration in exploration and resource development of critical minerals, particularly lithium, an official statement said. Both sides discussed expanding cooperation in the mining sector, particularly in lithium exploration and investment opportunities, the Ministry of Mines said in a statement.

https://www.business-standard.com/external-affairs-defence-security/news/india-argentina-sign-agreement-to-explore-lithium-other-critical-minerals-125021900953_1.html

India-Russia trade via INSTC doubles in past year

Trade between India and Russia via the INSTC has doubled in the past year, significantly reducing delivery times and costs. Bilateral trade reached a record USD 66 billion in 2024, with plans to achieve USD 100 billion by 2030. Pharmaceuticals are among the key sectors for further trade diversification.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/india-russia-trade-via-instc-doubles-in-past-year/articleshow/118394381.cms>

India's mobile phone exports surge 50% driven by record iPhone production

India's mobile phone exports jumped nearly 50% in the first ten months of this fiscal year (April-January), reaching an estimated Rs 1.5 lakh crore, up from Rs 1 lakh crore during the same period last year. Apple's increased iPhone production in India drove this surge. Apple has established major manufacturing hubs in India, similar to its operations in China. iPhone exports from India are estimated at almost Rs 1 lakh crore between April and January, compared to Rs 60,000 crore in the same period the previous year.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/cons-products/electronics/indias-mobile-phone-exports-surge-50-driven-by-record-iphone-production/articleshow/118387520.cms>

Demand outlook remains strong for Indian textile sector: Report

Domestic cotton prices in India remain higher than international prices, but demand for the Indian textile sector is improving. Indian textile companies have shown healthy growth, aided by stable cotton prices and favorable forex rates. Government initiatives and customs duty hikes on fabric imports are expected to benefit the sector. However, capacity constraints in garment manufacturing pose challenges.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/cons-products/garments-/textiles/demand-outlook-remains-strong-for-indian-textile-sector-report/articleshow/118376527.cms>

Govt eases norms for import of vintage cars

The government has eased import norms for "vintage motor vehicles" by actual users. Previously limited to cars manufactured before January 1, 1950, imports are now allowed for broader vintage classifications. However, these vehicles must comply with the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, if used on public roads.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/govt-eases-norms-for-import-of-vintage-cars/articleshow/118393676.cms>