

December 19, 2025 – Friday

Economy

Labour codes to formalise employment, inspectors to be facilitator: Mansukh Mandaviya

New labour codes aim to formalise employment in India. Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya assures inspectors will act as facilitators, not obstructers. The reforms expand rights and safety for women, including night shifts. All workers, including gig and platform workers, will receive social security benefits. Minimum wages and timely payments are mandated. Fixed-term employees gain equal benefits to permanent workers.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/labour-codes-to-formalise-employment-inspectors-to-be-facilitator-mansukh-mandaviya/articleshow/126054633.cms

Finance

FinMin unveils single brand logo for Regional Rural Banks nationwide

The Finance Ministry on Thursday unveiled a new logo for Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) to signify a single and unified brand identity. On the principle of 'One State One RRB', the Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance, has consolidated 26 Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) across 11 states/UTs, effective from May 1, 2025. The reform marks a crucial step toward building stronger and more efficient RRBs. Presently, 28 RRBs continue to serve the nation through an extensive network of over 22,000 branches in more than 700 districts.
https://www.business-standard.com/finance/news/finmin-unveils-single-brand-logo-for-regional-rural-banks-nationwide-125121800843_1.html

SEBI allows sale of debt securities at lower face value of ₹10,000

Markets regulator SEBI on Thursday relaxed rules to allow issuers to sell debt securities at a lower face value of ₹10,000 even if they are zero-coupon instruments, provided they have a fixed maturity and no structured obligations. As a result, issuers can now issue debt securities at a reduced face value that are either interest-bearing or zero-coupon in nature, according to a circular issued by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).
https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/markets/sebi-allows-sale-of-debt-securities-at-lower-face-value-of-10000/article70412569.ece

MFs expect minimal impact due to revamped fee structure

The capital market regulator SEBI's move to cut expense ratios of asset management companies (AMCs) will have minimal impact on the mutual fund industry as it prepares to rework its costs before the new norms come into force from April 1, 2026. However, the reduction in brokerage charges for equity cash and derivatives transaction will impact the broking firms. SEBI has reduced the brokerage cap on cash market transactions to 0.06 per cent from 0.09 per cent and on derivatives trading, it was cut to 0.02 per cent (0.04 per cent).
https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/markets/mfs-expect-minimal-impact-due-to-revamped-fee-structure/article70411664.ece

Indian Inc's ECB registrations at 2 year low

Indian companies have slowed down their fund raising through external commercial borrowings (ECBs) amid higher hedging costs, said experts. Registrations by Indian firms for ECBs dropped to $2.2 billion in October, the lowest in 23 months, as per the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data released on Thursday. On a monthly basis, the filings were down 21.4%. Filings for ECBs have declined steadily since June, when companies sought to raise $3.5 billion.
https://www.financialexpress.com/business/news/indian-incs-ecb-registrations-at-2-year-lownbsp/4081688/

Insurance companies must switch to 1600-series numbers by Feb 15: Trai

All entities regulated by the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India must use the designated numbering series for customer service and transaction-related calls, Trai said in a direction issued on Tuesday. The deadline was set in consultation with the insurance regulator.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/telecom/telecom-policy/insurance-companies-must-switch-to-1600-series-numbers-by-feb-15-trai/articleshow/126045145.cms

Irdai proposes allowing insurers to invest up to 20% in infra SPV debt

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai) on Thursday proposed permitting insurers to invest up to 20 per cent of their funds in debt instruments issued by public limited special purpose vehicles (SPVs) operating in the infrastructure sector, provided the project has commenced commercial operations and its cash flows have stabilised. According to the draft proposal, the proceeds from such debt issuances must be used exclusively to refinance existing debt or loans of the SPV. The underlying debt must be classified as standard in the lender's books, and the issued instruments must carry a minimum credit rating of AA to qualify as approved investments.
https://www.business-standard.com/finance/insurance/irdai-proposes-allowing-insurers-to-invest-up-to-20-in-infra-spv-debt-125121801140_1.html

Pension sector set for full foreign ownership as FDI cap rises to 100%

India's pension sector is poised for a structural shift, with the foreign direct investment (FDI) limit set to be raised to 100%, in line with the insurance sector. The move follows Parliament's approval on Wednesday to increase the FDI cap in insurance from 74% to 100%, a reform aimed at attracting higher foreign capital inflows, enabling the adoption of global governance and innovation standards, and deepening insurance penetration across the country.
https://www.financialexpress.com/money/pension-sector-set-for-full-foreign-ownership-as-fdi-cap-rises-to-100-4081637/

Industry

In AI age, upskilling likely to create jobs in new areas: Meity secy

The jobs that rely primarily on cognitive skills are at the highest risk of being replaced by artificial intelligence (AI), leaving white-collar workers vulnerable to being automated out of their positions, said S Krishnan, secretary of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (Meity). He was speaking at Ficci's 6th AI India Conclave. The government, however, is confident that the opportunities for creating new kinds of jobs in new areas arising from AI are far greater, Krishnan said, adding that much of this would occur primarily through reskilling, upskilling, and talent development programmes that involve contributions from the private sector as well.
https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/ai-to-create-more-jobs-than-it-replaces-says-it-secretary-s-krishnan-125121801120_1.html

Parliamentary panel slams states for delaying revised mining scheme norms

A parliamentary panel has strongly criticised states for slow adoption of the revised Pradhan Mantri Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojana (PMKKKY) guidelines, warning that delays are undermining the District Mineral Foundation's (DMF's) objectives in mining-affected areas. The Standing Committee on Coal, Mines and Steel noted that only 10 states have incorporated the 2024 norms into their DMF rules, despite repeated reminders from the Ministry of Mines. It said the lack of compliance was a serious concern that risked creating uneven standards in the implementation of welfare projects across the country.
https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/parliamentary-panel-slams-states-for-delaying-revised-mining-scheme-norms-125121801150_1.html

Auto component-makers see mixed fortunes as product criticality helps protect export orders

More more than three months after the US slapped tariffs on Indian exporters, it has been a mixed bag for the automotive and engineering components sector. Companies with a portfolio of niche/critical parts and entrenched customer relationships and those attracting tariffs rate lesser than 50 per cent have been able to manage the situation better. However, firms making generic parts are seeing diversion of orders to other competing markets, leading to margins erosion and tough financial position.

https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/companies/auto-component-makers-see-mixed-fortunes-as-product-criticality-helps-protect-export-orders/article70411936.ece

Smaller, high-income markets & new-age fibres key to textiles exports: Giriraj Singh

India is embarking on an exciting journey to amplify its textile and apparel exports, with a target of hitting $100 billion in five years. Centering their strategy on partnerships with smaller, wealthier national markets, the initiative emphasizes boosting domestic capabilities in fibre production and textile machinery.

https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/cons-products/garments-/-textiles/smaller-high-income-markets-new-age-fibres-key-to-textiles-exports-giriraj-singh/articleshow/126064286.cms

Agriculture

Parliament panel asks govt to raise budget for agriculture, fill up research posts in time

The parliamentary standing committee on agriculture, animal husbandry and food processing has asked the government to enhance budgetary allocation to the Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare to ensure that agriculture gets its due importance and legitimate share, improving the scalability of the ongoing schemes and making their impact more tangible. The panel has also asked the government to expedite recruitment process in research bodies to fill up vacancies in time.

https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/parliament-panel-asks-govt-to-raise-budget-for-agriculture-fill-up-research-posts-in-time/article70412655.ece

Farmers' federation white paper proposes 4 pillars to future-proof Indian agriculture

A white paper released by the Federation of All India Farmer Associations (FAIFA) has outlined a roadmap for transforming Indian agriculture through a decisive shift from subsistence farming to a resilient, high-value, and export-orientated model. To build a modern and sustainable agriculture sector with empowered farmers, the white paper recommended a four-pillar strategy.

https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/farmers-federation-white-paper-proposes-4-pillars-to-future-proof-indian-agriculture/article70411739.ece

India to tackle sugar surplus with higher exports, ethanol diversion

India aims to shield sugarcane farmers from income losses by managing surplus supplies through exports and diverting more sugar for ethanol production, a senior government official said on Thursday. Higher exports from the world's second-largest sugar producer could pressure benchmark New York and London futures, which are hovering near five-year lows.

https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/india-to-tackle-sugar-surplus-with-higher-exports-ethanol-diversion/article70411328.ece

Copra, coconut oil prices slide on rise in arrivals, subdued demand

After hitting a record high in July, copra and coconut oil prices started moving southward, registering a significant drop over the past few days. The drop in copra prices in Tamil Nadu was ₹5 when the market opened on Thursday morning with its rates declining to ₹172 from ₹177 in the previous day, while coconut oil registered ₹3 drop at ₹243.50 from ₹246.75, traders said.

https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/todays-paper/tp-agri-biz-and-commodity/copra-coconut-oil-price-slide-on-rise-in-arrivals-subdued-demand/article70411158.ece

Infrastructure

Residential real estate price growth likely to moderate further in 2026

As 2025 comes to a close, India's residential housing market is showing signs of transition after several years of strong post-pandemic price growth. While demand and infrastructure-led development have kept prices elevated across major cities — especially in the premium segment — affordability pressures are beginning to influence buyer behaviour. With price momentum expected to moderate in 2026, it becomes important to assess what lies ahead for homebuyers and investors in a market that remains fundamentally strong but increasingly selective.
https://www.business-standard.com/finance/personal-finance/residential-real-estate-price-growth-likely-to-moderate-further-in-2026-125121801151_1.html

Energy

Parliament clears SHANTI Bill, opening India's nuclear sector to private players

Parliament on Thursday passed the Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Bill, marking a significant shift in India's nuclear energy policy by paving the way for private participation in a sector that has so far remained tightly controlled by the State. The legislation, introduced by Minister of State for Science and Technology Jitendra Singh earlier this week, seeks to repeal the Atomic Energy Act, 1962 and the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/parliament-clears-shanti-bill-opening-indias-nuclear-sector-to-private-players/articleshow/126059028.cms

Power ministry working on plan to boost domestic mfg of critical items

The Power Ministry is collaborating with the industry to identify critical electricity sector components, such as subsea cables and high-conductivity copper rods, that rely on imports and require support for local manufacturing. "This initiative has become essential in the current scenario, as the power sector remains reliant heavily on imported advanced components, making it vulnerable to global supply chain risks and price volatility," said the Central Electricity Authority in a communication to Indian Electrical Equipment Manufacturers Association (IEEMA). The authority is an arm of the ministry.
https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/power-ministry-working-on-plan-to-boost-localisation-of-critical-equipment-125121800823_1.html

India's crude oil import bill flat in November despite higher purchases

India saved on crude oil purchases in November, with the import bill remaining flat year-on-year despite an 11 per cent increase in import volumes. The country's oil import bill stood at $9.9 billion in November, unchanged from a year earlier, data from Petroleum Planning & Analysis Cell (PPAC) showed. India imported 21.1 million tonnes (MT) of crude oil in the month, much higher than 18.9 MT imported in the same period last year.
https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/india-s-crude-oil-import-bill-flat-in-november-despite-higher-volumes-125121801170_1.html

India's coal production likely to remain flat in 2025, says IEA

Coal production in India is expected to be flat in 2025 calendar year as early and prolonged rains impacted mining activity with output declines at both Coal India (CIL) and Singareni Collieries Company (SCCL), which account for more than 80 per cent of the country's mining output for the dry fuel. "Coal production in India is expected to remain flat in 2025, with output projected to settle at 1,089 million tonne (mt), with public companies (CIL and SCCL) declining while commercial and captive blocks increase production," the International Energy Agency (IEA) said.
https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/indias-coal-production-likely-to-remain-flat-in-2025-says-iea/article70410408.ece

Telecom

India's telecom subscriber base hits 1.2 bn in 2025, adds nearly 400 mn 5G users: COAI

India's telecom sector remained a key driver of the country's digital transformation in 2025, with total subscribers touching 1.2 billion and teledensity rising to 86.76 per cent by November, according to a year-end review released

by the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI). Rapid 5G adoption, regulatory reforms and a renewed push for digital trust defined the year for the industry, it said. Citing the Ericsson Mobility Report, COAI said, "Wireless broadband continued to dominate with 954.99 million users compared to 44.82 million wireline connections, supported by rapid 5G adoption that rose to 394 million subscriptions by the end of the year."
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/telecom/telecom-news/indias-telecom-subscriber-base-hits-1-2-bn-in-2025-adds-nearly-400-mn-5g-users-coai/articleshow/126061657.cms

States

Uttar Pradesh paddy procurement injects ₹5,000 crore into rural economy

The Uttar Pradesh government has paid over ₹5,000 crore for paddy procurement in the ongoing kharif marketing season 2025-26 so far. The state has procured around 2.14 million tonnes (Mt) of paddy this season, out of its target of 6 Mt. The minimum support price (MSP) for paddy this season is ₹2,369 per quintal for common variety, and ₹2,389 per quintal for Grade A. If the purchase target is met, the institutional paddy procurement will translate into a farm income of more than ₹14,000 crore.
https://www.business-standard.com/industry/agriculture/uttar-pradesh-paddy-procurement-injects-5-000-crore-into-rural-economy-125121801022_1.html

Chhattisgarh Assembly passes its biggest supplementary budget of ₹35K cr

The Chhattisgarh Legislative Assembly has passed the record largest supplementary Budget in the state's history. The ₹35,000 crore supplementary Budget for 2025-26 was presented by Finance Minister O P Choudhary in the Assembly during the winter session, which started on December 14. On Tuesday, the House passed the historic supplementary Budget, which, according to Choudhary, underlined the government's commitment to development, financial discipline and far-sighted governance.
https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/chhattisgarh-assembly-passes-its-biggest-supplementary-budget-of-35k-cr-125121801124_1.html

Healthcare

Centre weighs new law to regulate medical research

In an ambitious step forward, India is drafting a new law to enhance medical research practices. This forthcoming Bill seeks to establish robust ethical benchmarks while prioritizing safety and quality. At the behest of the Prime Minister's Office, the Indian Council of Medical Research is spearheading this initiative.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/healthcare/biotech/centre-weighs-new-law-to-regulate-medical-research/articleshow/126063552.cms

External

Trade deal: India gets zero-duty access on over 99% exports to Oman

India and Oman on Thursday signed a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (Cepa), giving India zero-duty access to 98.08 per cent of tariff lines, covering 99.38 per cent of shipment. India has offered liberalisation on 77.79 per cent of its tariff lines, covering 94.81 per cent of the country's imp-orts from Oman by value. This is India's first trade deal with a Gulf nation after the agreement with the United Arab Emirates in February 2022.
https://www.business-standard.com/external-affairs-defence-security/news/india-oman-sign-cepa-to-deepen-trade-ties-and-boost-market-access-125121801193_1.html

India consolidating role as global services exporter; EU, China lag: KKR

India is strengthening its position as a global exporter of services, supported by rising incomes among its top consumer groups, even as many countries worldwide struggle to expand their services sector, according to global investment firm KKR. In its report titled 'High Grading-2026 Global Macro Outlook', KKR highlighted that the US and India show that a strong services base can support stable currencies and strong markets, while Europe and China still need major reforms to catch up.

https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/india-services-exports-gdp-growth-economy-income-125121800420_1.html