

February 19, 2026 – Thursday

Economy

Niramala Sitharaman pitches India as a growth hotspot to Norwegian CEOs, eyes deeper trade ties

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday highlighted India's expanding trade architecture and said the country provides a durable framework for trade, industrial collaboration and long-term investments. In a roundtable meeting with prominent Norwegian CEOs and investors in Oslo, Sitharaman said her official visit to Norway has witnessed engaging and positive discussions on India as an investment destination and the fastest-growing major economy in the world.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/niramala-sitharaman-pitches-india-as-a-growth-hotspot-to-norwegian-ceos-eyes-deeper-trade-ties/articleshow/128501703.cms

India to be 3rd largest economy by 2027-28, eyes $35 trillion by 2047: Piyush Goyal at GEC

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Tuesday said India is on track to become the world's third-largest economy by 2027 and is working towards building a $30–35 trillion economy by 2047, as he highlighted the country's growing global trade footprint at the Global Economic Cooperation (GEC) Summit in Mumbai. Addressing industry leaders and global stakeholders, Goyal said India today stands "at the forefront of building alliances, building friendships, aligning our own trade and investment imperatives with the rest of the world."
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/india-to-be-3rd-largest-economy-by-2027-28-eyes-35-trillion-by-2047-piyush-goyal-at-gec/articleshow/128501095.cms

Finance

SEBI sets up panel to review framework of ESG rating providers

Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has set up a working group to review the regulatory framework governing ESG Rating Providers (ERPs), following feedback from market participants.
https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/markets/sebi-sets-up-panel-to-review-framework-of-esg-rating-providers/article70648047.ece

RBI mandates unique transaction identifier for OTC derivatives from 2027

Market participants will be required to use a Unique Transaction Identifier (UTI) for all over-the-counter (OTC) derivative transactions from January 1, 2027, per the final RBI guidelines on UTI use. The draft circular on UTI for OTC Derivative Transactions in India had proposed that the instructions on its use will come into effect from April 1, 2026.
https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/money-and-banking/rbi-mandates-unique-transaction-identifier-for-otc-derivatives-from-2027/article70648368.ece

MCX, NSE remove additional margin on gold, silver

MCX, the country's largest commodity derivatives exchange and the largest stock exchange NSE, have removed the additional margin levied on gold and silver futures contract with the prices cooling off in the last few weeks. The

additional margin of 3 per cent levied in Gold Futures (all contracts of all variants) and 7 per cent levied in Silver Futures (all contracts of all variants) will be withdrawn with effect from Thursday
https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/mcx-nse-remove-additional-margin-on-gold-silver/article70648720.ece

NBFCs put artificial intelligence to work across lending value chain

India's leading non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) are increasingly deploying artificial intelligence (AI) across the lending value chain — from customer acquisition and underwriting to servicing and collections — to drive growth and improve cost efficiencies. These lenders are embedding AI and generative AI (GenAI) into their operating models, using data analytics, conversational interfaces, and autonomous agents to sharpen decision-making, personalise customer engagement, and strengthen risk underwriting and portfolio management.
https://www.business-standard.com/technology/tech-news/large-nbfcs-scale-ai-adoption-across-acquisition-underwriting-servicing-126021700833_1.html

Seven PSBs roll out 32 generative AI use cases under EASE 8.0 programme

India's Seven public sector banks (PSBs) have rolled out 32 generative AI use cases as part of the government's reform push under the EASE 8.0 programme, said people familiar with the matter. The initiatives are aimed at improving operational efficiency, sharpening credit appraisal, and reimagining business models by leveraging India's Digital Public Infrastructure. Also, ten PSBs have framed formal AI policies, with the latest reform round encouraging adoption of agentic AI to automate complex workflows and enable faster, data-driven decision-making.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/banking/finance/banking/ai-expansion-push-seven-psbs-roll-out-32-generative-ai-use-cases-under-ease-8-0-programme/articleshow/128522718.cms\\

NPCI collaborates with NVIDIA to advance India's sovereign AI infrastructure for digital payments

The National Payments Corporation of India has teamed up with NVIDIA in a dynamic collaboration that promises to elevate the nation's payment systems through the power of advanced AI. Targeting the construction of a strong and secure AI framework, this venture will enable expansive real-time payment processes while adhering to the principles of regulatory and data sovereignty.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/banking/finance/npci-collaborates-with-nvidia-to-advance-indias-sovereign-ai-infrastructure-for-digital-payments/articleshow/128501280.cms

Industry

Junk to high-tech: India bets on e-waste for critical minerals

Hundreds of discarded batteries rattle along a conveyor belt into a crusher in a remote plant in northern India, fuelling a multi-billion-dollar industry that is bolstering the country's geopolitical ambitions. India is cashing in on the growing "e-waste" sector -- pulling critical minerals like lithium and cobalt, which are needed to make everything from smartphones to fighter jets and electric cars, from everyday electronics.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/cons-products/electronics/junk-to-high-tech-india-bets-on-e-waste-for-critical-minerals/articleshow/128491568.cms

Agriculture

India's sugar output likely to reduce

India is likely to produce less sugar than initially estimated, as excessive rainfall across major producing states is resulting in lower cane yields, farmers and trade officials told Reuters, capping exports from the world's second-largest producer. Traders said India may struggle to ship even half of its allocated export quota, lending support to global sugar prices that are hovering near five-year lows while also lifting domestic prices. India is expected to produce between 28.5 million and 29 million metric tons of sugar in the 2025/26 marketing year ending in September, according to internal estimates from five trade houses that declined to be named in line with company policies.

https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/indias-sugar-production-likely-to-decline-amid-excessive-rainfall-export-challenges-loom/articleshow/128504100.cms

Higher area under summer crops may offset lower kharif pulses output

Higher area under groundnut, maize has helped the area under summer (*Zaid*) sowing to take an early lead over the year-ago period. Initial data show that the area under pulses is a tad higher, but paddy acreage is marginally lower from last year.
https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/higher-area-under-summer-crops-may-offset-lower-kharif-pulses-output/article70648173.ece

FCI signs MoU with WFP to supply rice to support eradication of global hunger

State-owned FCI and World Food Programme (WFP) have signed initial pact for supply of rice to eradicate global hunger. According to an official statement on Wednesday, the Food Corporation of India (FCI) and the World Food Programme (WFP) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the supply of rice in support of global humanitarian operations aimed at combating hunger.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/fci-signs-mou-with-wfp-to-supply-rice-to-support-eradication-of-global-hunger/articleshow/128517743.cms

Infrastructure

NHAI to develop 'Bee Corridor' along National Highways

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) will develop pollinator or bee corridors along National Highways, a first-of-its-kind initiative for sustainable infrastructure development in the country. The plan is to develop at least three pollinator corridors during 2026–27 and 60% of around 40 lakh trees planted along National Highways during the year 2026–27 will be under the 'Bee Corridor' initiative. The 'Bee Corridor' will have a continuous linear stretch of bee-friendly vegetation comprising flowering trees and plants that will ensure the availability of nectar and pollen throughout the year, the ministry of road transport and highways said on Tuesday.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/transportation/roadways/nhai-to-develop-bee-corridor-along-national-highways/articleshow/128468849.cms

Railway projects worth Rs 53,000 cr underway in Karnataka, says MoS Somanna

Minister of State for Railways & Jal Shakti V Somanna on Tuesday said the Union Budget has allocated Rs 7,748 crore for railway projects in Karnataka, accelerating the railway infrastructure development in the state. The state already has projects worth Rs 52,950 crore under implementation, the MoS said speaking at an event after flagging off four pairs of express trains at Nayandahalli railway station in Bengaluru. The railways have introduced a stop for the express trains at Nayandahalli station, responding to a long pending demand of locals.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/transportation/railways/railway-projects-worth-rs-53000-cr-underway-in-karnataka-says-mos-somanna/articleshow/128472578.cms

DGCA proposes stricter norms for unruly airline passengers

Aviation watchdog DGCA has proposed stricter norms to deal with unruly passengers, including allowing airlines to directly impose a flying ban on such passengers for up to 30 days.
https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/logistics/dgca-proposes-stricter-norms-for-unruly-airline-passengers/article70648922.ece

NHAI bars NCC from participating in any tenders for 2 yrs

NCC Ltd along with OB Infrastructure, a step-down subsidiary of the company, has received an order of debarment from the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI). As per the order the entities have been debarred from participating in any tender/bids/ issued by NHAI for a period of two years with effect from 17th February 2026.
https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/nhai-bars-ncc-from-participating-in-any-tenders-for-2-yrs/article70648251.ece

Energy

Indo-UK offshore wind task force launched, India crosses 272 GW non-fossil fuel power capacity

Union New & Renewable Energy Minister Pralhad Joshi on Wednesday said India has over 272 GW non-fossil fuel-based electricity generation capacity, including 141 solar and 55 GW wind energy, at the launch of 'India-UK Offshore Wind Taskforce'. This assumes significance in view of India's ambitious target of 500 GW of renewable energy by 2030 and net-zero emission target by 2070. Addressing the official launch of the India-UK Offshore Wind Taskforce, Joshi said in the ongoing financial year, India added more than 35 GW of solar and 4.61 GW of wind capacity.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/renewables/indo-uk-offshore-wind-task-force-launched-india-crosses-272-gw-non-fossil-fuel-power-capacity/articleshow/128497809.cms

Global Energy Alliance to raise $100 mn to digitise electric grids: CEO

The Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet is seeking to raise about $100 million by 2028 to finance the digitisation of India's electricity grids and plans to approach development finance institutions, including the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, its chief executive Woochong Um said. GEAPP is a philanthropic body backed by The Rockefeller Foundation, IKEA Foundation and the Bezos Earth Fund. The proposed fund would follow an initial $25 million deployment by the alliance to digitise grids in the states of Rajasthan and Delhi and would support a broader nationwide roll out of the project, Um said in an interview with Reuters at the Mumbai Climate Week.
https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/global-energy-alliance-to-raise-100-mn-to-digitise-electric-grids-ceo-126021800406_1.html

Telecom

DoT orders Navi Mumbai Airport to allow telecom firms to establish networks

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has asked Navi Mumbai International Airport Limited (NMIAL) to allow telcos to set up their networks at the newly opened airport in December 2025, as per rules laid down in the Telecommunications Act. DoT has sought compliance under the Right of Way Rules under the Act, specifying that the airport was a public entity. The move comes at a time when hundreds of flyers complained of the absence of mobile network connectivity at the airport, which emanated from the airport operator mandating telcos to use its own in-building network at charges that telcos termed unreasonably high. DoT has clarified that NMIAL is a “public entity” under the Telecommunications Act 2023 and has asked Adani Airport Holdings Limited to grant Right of Way (RoW) permissions within the airport premises to licensed telecom service providers to set up network infrastructure.
https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/dot-orders-navi-mumbai-airport-to-allow-telecom-firms-to-establish-networks-126021800901_1.html

States

Madhya Pradesh Budget 2026-27: Rs 4.38 lakh crore outlay; Rs 1.27 lakh crore for women's schemes

Madhya Pradesh Finance Minister Jagdish Devda on Wednesday tabled the state's "women-centric" budget for 2026-27 with an outlay of Rs 4,38,317 crore and said no new taxes would be imposed. Devda presented the Mohan Yadav government's third consecutive budget amid interruptions from the Opposition, which raised concerns over the "mounting debt" burden on the people of the state. Allocations of about 3 lakh crore have been made for these areas, he said. Devda announced provisions of Rs 1,27,555 crore for various women welfare schemes, including self-help groups and the Ujjwala Yojana. He said 5,700 hostels would be constructed for working women.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/madhya-pradesh-budget-2026-27-rs-4-38-lakh-crore-outlay-rs-1-27-lakh-crore-for-womens-schemes/articleshow/128501821.cms

Andhra Pradesh’s SIPB clears investment proposals worth ₹29,021 cr

The 15th State Investment Promotion Board (SIPB) meeting held in Amaravati under the chairmanship of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has on Wednesday approved 27 project proposals involving total investment of ₹29,021 crore.

https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/national/andhra-pradeshssipb-clears-investments-proposals-worth-29021-cr/article70648813.ece

Gujarat tables Rs 4.08 lakh cr Budget, 10.2% higher compared to last year

Gujarat Finance Minister Kanu Desai on Wednesday presented his fifth consecutive state budget, pegging the 2026-27 outlay at ₹4,08,053 cr - an increase of ₹37,803 cr, or 10.2%, over the previous year. Revenue expenditure has been estimated at ₹2,46,016 cr, while capital expenditure stands at ₹1,57,358 cr. The budget identifies six regions - North Gujarat, Central Gujarat, Saurashtra, Coastal Saurashtra, Kutchchh and Surat - to be developed as growth hubs. Economic Master Plans (EMPs) have been prepared for each region.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/finance/gujarat-tables-rs-4-08-lakh-cr-budget-10-2-higher-compared-to-last-year/articleshow/128522491.cms

Healthcare

Pharma GCCs are leveraging AI to cut drug development timelines by 4-6 years, says report

Pharmaceuticals and Life Sciences Global Capability Centres (GCCs) are leveraging AI and advanced analytics to reduce drug development timelines from 10–15 years to 9–13 years, according to a report by KPMG and UnearthIQ.
https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/info-tech/pharma-gccs-are-leveraging-ai-to-cut-drug-development-timelines-by-4-6-years-says-report/article70648619.ece

External

Brazil steps up trade push in India, targets $20 billion bilateral trade by 2026

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva's official visit to India has marked a renewed push to deepen trade, investment, and strategic cooperation between the two major Global South economies. During the visit, Brazil hosted the India-Brazil Business Forum 2026 and inaugurated the first ApexBrasil office in the Indian capital, aimed at expanding exports and strengthening commercial presence in one of the world's fastest-growing markets.
https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/world/brazil-steps-up-trade-push-in-india-targets-20-billion-bilateral-trade-by-2026/article70647228.ece

India's oilmeals exports fall 42 pc in January on weak soyabean, rapeseed shipments

India's oilmeal exports declined 42 per cent year-on-year to 2,60,123 tonne in January as shipments of soyabean meal and rapeseed meal plunged, as per the data of the Solvent Extractors' Association of India (SEA). In January 2025, oilmeals exports stood at 4,52,352 tonne. During April-January 2025-26, oilmeal exports fell to 3.2 million tonne from 3.6 million tonne in the same period a year ago. Soyabean meal exports declined to 132,440 tonne in January 2026 from 286,287 tonnes a year earlier, while rapeseed meal shipments fell to 64,782 tonnes from 131,641 tonnes. Groundnut meal exports also slipped to 1,067 tonnes from 2,636 tonnes.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/indias-oilmeals-exports-fall-42-pc-in-january-on-weak-soyabean-rapeseedshipments/articleshow/128498978.cms

India eases curbs on Chinese equipment imports for power, coal as projects delayed: Reports

India has begun easing its restrictions on buying Chinese equipment after a deadly 2020 border clash, allowing state-run power and coal companies to start limited imports as shortages and project delays mount, two government officials told Reuters. This is the first significant easing of five-year-old curbs that have largely shut Chinese firms out of India's $700 billion-$750 billion government contract market.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/india-eases-curbs-on-chinese-equipment-imports-for-power-coal-as-projects-delayed-sources-say/articleshow/128501727.cms

India-Canada FTA: Countries may finalise terms of reference for trade pact talks next month

India and Canada are expected to finalise terms of reference for initiating talks for a free trade agreement (FTA) during the visit of Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney to India next month, an official said. The terms of reference (ToR) outline the scope and modalities of a proposed trade pact.

https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/india-canada-fta-new-delhi-may-finalise-terms-of-reference-for-trade-pact-talks-next-month/articleshow/128505523.cms

Russian share of India's January oil imports lowest since late 2022, data shows

Russian crude shipments in January made up the smallest portion of India's oil imports since late 2022, according to data from industry sources, while Middle Eastern supplies rose to their highest share over the same period. India, the world's third-biggest oil importer and consumer, ramped up purchases of discounted Russian oil shunned by some Western nations in the wake of Moscow's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, with volumes topping 2 million barrels per day in some months.

https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/oil-gas/russian-share-of-indias-january-oil-imports-lowest-since-late-2022-data-shows/articleshow/128512222.cms