


**March 19, 2026 – Thursday**

## Economy

### Review Indo-US trade relations, address LPG challenges amid West Asia crisis: Parl panel to govt

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Commerce Wednesday recommended the government that Indo-US trade relations be reviewed and appropriate measures be undertaken as the tariff increase is likely to have a significant impact on finance, commerce, trade and industry, both in the domestic and export sectors. In its 195th Report on Demands for Grants 2026-27, it also said that the current exchange rate of one US dollar is more than ninety two rupees, which is also an additional pressure on trade and commerce at both national and international levels.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/review-indo-us-trade-relations-address-lpg-challenges-amid-west-asia-crisis-parl-panel-to-govt/articleshow/129663165.cms

### Space for global growth to remain contested; greater intra-state coordination needed to counter external headwinds: CEA

Chief economic advisor V Anantha Nageswaran on Wednesday pitched for greater intra-state coordination, cautioning that in a conflict-ridden world, space for economic growth will be contested and countries will compete even more for limited capital and trade flows. He underscored the need to create an "entrepreneurial state" that is willing to innovate, take informed risks and focus relentlessly on outcomes rather than mere processes, to counter shocks stemming from these external headwinds.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/space-for-global-growth-to-remain-contested-greater-intra-state-coordination-needed-to-counter-external-headwinds-cea/articleshow/129662281.cms

### India's privatisation drive derails because of weak investor interest

India is considering shelving three planned privatisation sales amid weak investor appetite, two government sources said, a slump that has already derailed its attempt to sell a stake in IDBI Bank and is a fresh blow to the government's flagship divestment programme. The privatisation plan, delayed for years, is now facing fresh setbacks that include dwindling interest in state-run firms such as Shipping Corporation of India and HLL Lifecare, besides the collapse of the IDBI Bank stake sale last week after bids fell short of the government's minimum price.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/finance/indias-privatisation-drive-derails-because-of-weak-investor-interest-idbi-bank-stake-shipping-corporation-tata-hll-lifecare/articleshow/129652342.cms

## Finance

### Net direct tax mop-up up 7.2% on corporate inflows

Net direct tax collections for this fiscal up to March 17 rose 7.2% year-on-year to ₹22.80 lakh crore, driven by stronger corporate tax inflows, official data showed on Wednesday. Collections remain below the revised estimate of ₹24.84 lakh crore for FY26 by ₹2.04 lakh crore, though officials expect last-minute filings to narrow the gap.

https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/finance/net-direct-tax-mop-up-up-7-2-on-corporate-inflows/articleshow/129664763.cms

**CIBIL score monitoring hits 183 million as credit awareness rises across India**

The number of Indians actively self-monitoring their CIBIL Score reached 183 million as of December 2025, with first-time monitors growing 27 per cent year-on-year, according to a report released today by TransUnion CIBIL, India's credit information company.
https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/money-and-banking/cibil-score-monitoring-hits-183-million-as-credit-awareness-rises-across-india/article70757918.ece

**India mulls exempting micro firms under ₹1 crore from statutory audits**

The government is reconsidering a proposal to exempt companies with annual turnover of up to ₹1 crore from mandatory statutory audits, amid concerns over misuse and weak oversight. Stakeholders have flagged that the move, though well-intentioned, could lead to a rise in shell companies and make monitoring such entities difficult, people familiar with the matter said.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/india-mulls-exempting-micro-firms-under-1-crore-from-statutory-audits/articleshow/129664034.cms

**Industry**

**High base effect, El Nino may weigh on tractor sales next fiscal, says CRISIL Ratings**

Tractor sales growth is likely to slow down sharply next fiscal to 0-2 per cent year-on-year to about 1.2 million units on normalisation of domestic demand after the high base of this fiscal and emerging El Nino weather pattern, according to CRISIL Ratings.
https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/high-base-effect-el-nino-may-weigh-on-tractor-sales-next-fiscal-says-crisil-ratings/article70757616.ece

**CCEA approves Rs 1,718.56 crore funding to CCI for cotton procurement operations**

The government has approved Rs 1,718.56 crore funding to Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) for procurement operations. The decision was taken by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "In a significant step towards strengthening farmer welfare and advancing the vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat, the CCEA has approved Minimum Support Price (MSP) funding of Rs 1,718.56 crore to the Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) for the cotton season 2023-24," an official statement said.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/ccea-approves-rs-1718-56-crore-funding-to-cci-for-cotton-procurement-operations/articleshow/129654924.cms

**Agriculture**

**Cabinet nod to Rs 1,718 cr MSP funding to Cotton Corp**

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs Wednesday approved Minimum Support Price (MSP) funding of Rs 1,718.56 crore to the Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) for the cotton season 2023–24. "This funding aims to provide direct price support to cotton farmers across the country," the government said in a statement. During the 2023–24 cotton season, the area under cultivation was estimated at 114.47 lakh hectares, with production pegged at 325.22 lakh bales, accounting for nearly 25% of global cotton output.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/cabinet-nod-to-rs-1718-cr-msp-funding-to-cotton-corp/articleshow/129655328.cms

**Infrastructure**

**Cabinet clears ₹33.7K crore BHAVYA scheme for 100 industrial parks**

In a fresh effort to bolster India's manufacturing prospects, the Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved a ₹33,660 crore plan to develop 100 world-class plug-and-play industrial parks across the country, with the Centre funding up to ₹1 crore per acre as well as up to 25 per cent of external connectivity infrastructure costs. The new Bharat

Audyogik Vikas Yojna or BHAVYA scheme, to develop industrial parks over an estimated 33,600 acres of land, will be implemented with States through a challenge mode. Private sector developers can also pitch if their projects are routed through the States, and so can central public sector enterprises.
https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/cabinet-clears-33-7k-crore-bhavya-scheme-for-100-industrial-parks-126031801513_1.html

**Centre amends highway fee rules to tighten toll compliance**

The Centre has notified amendments to the National Highways fee rules, introducing a technology-driven framework aimed at strengthening toll compliance as well as enabling digital enforcement. Accordingly, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways notified the National Highways Fee (Determination of Rates and Collection) (Second Amendment) Rules, 2026.
https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/logistics/centre-amends-highway-fee-rules-to-tighten-toll-compliance/article70759007.ece

## Energy

**Centre links extra LPG allocation to PNG push amid supply crunch; urges states to fast-track gas pipeline rollout**

The Centre has linked an additional 10% allocation of commercial LPG to states' efforts to ease the rollout of piped natural gas (PNG) infrastructure. "In the current LPG shortage scenario due to the West Asian crisis, OMCs are providing 20% commercial LPG for states. It would be a smart move at this stage for states to enable the transition of LPG consumers to PNG," petroleum secretary Neeraj Mittal wrote to all state governments.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/oil-gas/centre-links-extra-lpg-allocation-to-png-push-amid-supply-crunch-urges-states-to-fast-track-gas-pipeline-rollout/articleshow/129665237.cms

**Cabinet approves Rs 2,585 crore Small Hydro Power Development Scheme**

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved a small hydro power development scheme with an outlay of Rs 2,585 crore to boost the development of 1,500 MW of renewable capacity. "Small Hydro Power Development scheme approved by the Cabinet with an outlay of Rs 2,585 crore," Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw told reporters after the meeting of the Union Cabinet here.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/power/cabinet-approves-rs-2585-crore-small-hydro-power-development-scheme/articleshow/129655798.cms

**Blame game over CAFE-2 dues stalls rollout of new fuel norms**

A high-level meeting in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) on Monday laid bare the bureaucratic drift that has stalled enforcement of Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency (CAFE-2) norms, with officials from multiple ministries trading blame over more than ₹8,000 crore in penalties yet to be recovered from non-compliant carmakers.
https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/blame-game-over-cafe-2-dues-stalls-rollout-of-new-fuel-norms/article70758369.ece

**India orders oil and gas firms to share data with central agency**

India has ordered companies across its oil and gas industry to submit detailed data on production, imports, stocks and consumption to a central government agency, according to a government notification issued late on Wednesday. The order designates the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC) as the body to collect and analyse the information, and requires firms including producers, refiners, importers and distributors to report data at regular intervals.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/oil-gas/india-orders-oil-and-gas-firms-to-share-data-with-central-agency/articleshow/129664341.cms

**Hormuz chokehold leaves over 1.7 million tonnes of India's oil, LNG and LPG cargo stranded**

India's 1.67 million tonnes of crude oil, 3.2 lakh tonnes of LPG and about 2 lakh tonnes of LNG are stuck on the 22 Indian-flagged ships stranded in the Persian Gulf, waiting to transit through the Strait of Hormuz, Rajesh Kumar Sinha, Special Secretary in the Shipping Ministry, said Wednesday. Originally, there were 28 Indian-flagged vessels

in the Strait of Hormuz when the war in the Middle East broke out following US-Israel attacks on Iran. Of these, 24 were on the west side of the strait and four on the east side. In the last week, two vessels from each side have managed to sail to safety.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/oil-gas/hormuz-chokehold-leaves-over-1-7-million-tonnes-of-indias-oil-lng-and-lpg-cargo-stranded/articleshow/129659781.cms

**India will export fuels after meeting local demand**

India is assessing fuel-supply requests from its neighbours and will approve exports only if it has surplus volumes, the foreign ministry said on Wednesday, as the U.S.-Israeli war with Iran disrupts shipments through the Strait of Hormuz and sends global energy prices higher. India, the world's fourth-largest refiner, supplies fuels to Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and the Maldives. The country has been hit hard by the jump in crude prices, but unlike China it has not moved to ban exports of refined fuel.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/oil-gas/india-will-export-fuels-after-meeting-local-demand/articleshow/129657099.cms

## Telecom

**After govt says no to Chinese-owned satellite companies, AsiaSat gears up for India fight**

Hong Kong-based satellite operator AsiaSat has served notices to the Indian government as well as its customers in the country, including broadcasters such as JioStar and Zee, alleging violations of the existing contracts, according to people familiar with the development. The move marks a combative approach in the wake of a decision by India's space regulator IN-SPACe not to allow AsiaSat and other Chinese-owned satellite players to continue services in the country after March 31 owing to security concerns.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/telecom/telecom-news/after-govt-says-no-to-chinese-owned-satellite-companies-asiasat-gears-up-for-india-fight/articleshow/129664931.cms

**TRAI moots termination charges to tackle spam**

In a bid to curb spam calls, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has proposed imposing termination charges on commercial calls made by businesses to consumers. Commercial calls, commonly known as Application-to-Person (A2P), are frequently misused to make bulk spam calls by disguising them as regular person-to-person calls, TRAI noted. To discourage this practice, the regulator has proposed introducing termination charges on A2P calls, similar to the charges imposed on commercial SMS messages.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/telecom/telecom-news/trai-moots-termination-charges-to-tackle-spam/articleshow/129563662.cms

## States

**Odisha coal ban deepens LPG crisis for food businesses, vendors seek help**

Odisha's ban on coal and briquettes in urban areas to mitigate heatwave conditions has compounded the crisis for food businesses already struggling with a severe shortage of commercial LPG cylinders caused by US-Iran tensions affecting tanker traffic in the Strait of Hormuz. While hotels and restaurants across the country are shifting to coal and other alternatives to tide over the LPG crisis, the Odisha government's decision to prohibit coal use during the summer has hurt roadside eateries, small hotels, restaurants and catering services. The Housing and Urban Development Department (H&UD) on Tuesday evening issued guidelines asking urban local bodies to temporarily prohibit coal and briquette use, stating that fly ash from such fuels contributes to dust pollution and rising temperatures.
https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/coal-ban-amid-lpg-shortage-deepens-distress-of-odisha-s-food-sector-126031800413_1.html

**Maharashtra to set up tribunal for IT employees' grievances**

Following the finalisation of the Industrial Relations Code 2020, the Maharashtra State government is set to set up a separate tribunal for grievances flagged by IT sector employees, said Labour Minister Akash Fundkar in the Legislative Assembly on Wednesday.
https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/maharashtra-to-set-up-tribunal-for-it-employees-grievances/article70758019.ece

## Healthcare

### Pharma companies struggle as input costs rise despite 0.6% price hike

Pharma companies are finding little solace in the government's annual medicine price revision, capped at a marginal 0.6% this year, as war-driven input costs continue to spiral and crimp profits, people in the know told ET. The industry, which is reeling from the ripple effects of the global conflict on raw material prices, is concerned about the WPI-linked pricing. Pharma lobby groups are now gearing up to approach the government seeking relief and exemption from the WPI, said the people cited above.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/healthcare/biotech/pharmaceuticals/pharma-companies-struggle-as-input-costs-rise-despite-0-6-price-hike/articleshow/129640444.cms

## External

### India to stay focussed on food stockholding solution as WTO draft sidesteps key issues

India will continue to push for prioritising a long-pending permanent solution on public stockholding (PSH) at the upcoming WTO Ministerial Conference in Yaounde, Cameroon, later this month, as it remains critical for safeguarding its MSP-based food security programmes from potential legal challenges in the future, sources said.
https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/india-to-stay-focussed-on-food-stockholding-solution-as-wto-draft-sidesteps-key-issues/article70758711.ece

### US wholesale prices rose by a surprisingly hot 3.4% last month, the most in a year

U.S. wholesale prices came in hotter than expected in February, driven partly by a sharp increase in food costs. The Labor Department reported Wednesday that its producer price index — which measures inflation before it hits consumers — rose 0.7% from January, and 3.4% from February 2025. The year-over-year increase was the most since February 2025.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/us-producer-inflation-exceeds-expectations-on-services-costs/articleshow/129657547.cms

### US eases Venezuela oil sanctions as Trump seeks to boost world oil supply during Iran war

US companies will be allowed to do business with Venezuela's state-owned oil and gas company after the US Treasury Department eased sanctions, with some limitations, on Wednesday as the Trump administration looks for ways to boost world oil supplies during the Iran war. The Treasury issued a broad authorisation allowing Petroleos de Venezuela SA, or PDVSA, to directly sell Venezuelan oil to US companies and on global markets, a massive shift after Washington for years had largely blocked dealings with Venezuela's government and its oil sector.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/oil-gas/us-eases-venezuela-oil-sanctions-as-trump-seeks-to-boost-world-oil-supply-during-iran-war/articleshow/129658918.cms