

September 18, 2026 – Friday

Economy

Fed's move pressures India to tighten monetary policy amid rising inflation

Calls for India to join central bank peers from Tokyo to London in tightening rates have grown louder after Washington, despite looming midterm polls, pivoted toward a restrictive monetary policy in the first increase in three years Wednesday, spotlighting the urgency for a sufficiently wide yield gap that would justify sustained foreign investments in the country.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/rbi-rate-hike-imminent-feds-move-pressures-india-to-tighten-monetary-policy-amid-rising-inflation/articleshow/134320527.cms

India’s August exports rise 26.1%, trade deficit narrows to $26.9 billion

India’s merchandise exports accelerated sharply in August, rising 26.1% year-on-year to $43.8 billion from 19.6% growth in July, even as slower import growth helped narrow the merchandise trade deficit to $26.9 billion, signalling continued resilience in external trade despite global and geopolitical disruptions.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/indias-august-exports-rise-26-1-trade-deficit-narrows-to-26-9-billion/articleshow/134306113.cms

Finance

RBI announces ₹2.25 lakh crore 3-day VRRR auction

The Reserve Bank of India has announced a ₹2.25 lakh crore, 3-day Variable Rate Reverse Repo (VRRR) auction under the Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF) to absorb surplus liquidity from the banking system. The auction will be conducted on September 18, 2026, with funds set to reverse on September 21, 2026
https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/money-and-banking/rbi-announces-225-lakh-crore-3-day-vrrr-auction/article71477857.ece

Digital gold may come under RBI, Sebi oversight; physical backing proposed

The government has begun discussions on tightening the rules for digital gold, including requiring every unit to be backed by physical bullion and bringing the product under the joint oversight of the central bank and the securities market regulator, people familiar with the matter said. The finance ministry has sought views from regulators, banks and other stakeholders and the broad consensus is that digital gold should be recognised as a security under the Securities Contracts (Regulation) Act, 1956, they said.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/finance/digital-gold-may-come-under-rbi-sebi-oversight-physical-backing-proposed/articleshow/134319873.cms

MDR rollout will be monitored to protect users

The government would closely monitor the rollout of Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) from October 15 to ensure that merchants do not pass these charges to customers, officials said. "We are in touch with payment aggregators.

The rollout would be closely monitored," an official said, adding that MDR is necessary to help the fintech ecosystem sustain and grow.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/banking/finance/banking/mdr-rollout-will-be-monitored-to-protect-users/articleshow/134319433.cms

FinMin allays fears of increase in cash transactions post UPI MDR levy: Sources

The Finance Ministry does not expect an increase in cash transactions due to the levy of 0.4 per cent Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) for UPI transactions above Rs 2,000, which comes into effect from October 15, sources said on Thursday. Sources said it is anticipated that the imposition of MDR would not lead to a reduction in UPI transactions as only 4 per cent of total volume is getting impacted due to the decision.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/banking/finance/finmin-allays-fears-of-increase-in-cash-transactions-post-upi-mdr-levy-sources/articleshow/134313201.cms

Industry

AI, tech to scan cargo without disrupting trade: CBIC Chairman

India plans to significantly expand the use of artificial intelligence, advanced image analytics and non-intrusive scanning technologies to detect illicit trade, Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) chairman Vivek Chaturvedi said at Ficci-CASCADE's 'MASCRADE 2026'. The government is working towards a phased system that could eventually scan every consignment entering the country, Chaturvedi said.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/ai-tech-to-scan-cargo-without-disrupting-trade-cbic-chairman/articleshow/134319641.cms

Festive online retail surge set to lift gig hiring as platforms prepare for five-year high

India’s online festive season is shaping up to be its strongest in five years, and the expected surge in shopping is prompting e-commerce and quick-commerce platforms to ramp up hiring of temporary and gig workers across fulfilment, warehousing and last-mile delivery. Redseer Strategy Consultants expects online retail to grow 25 per cent year-on-year during the 2026 festive period, up sharply from 16 per cent last year. The growth comes as India’s online retail market is expected to cross $90 billion in calendar year 2026, expanding 22-24 per cent from a year earlier.
https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/companies/festive-online-retail-surge-set-to-lift-gig-hiring-as-platforms-prepare-for-five-year-high/article71477219.ece

India can embed AI in new semiconductor plants from outset: Industry

India has an opportunity to build artificial intelligence into new semiconductor manufacturing operations from the outset, avoiding the changes to established processes facing older manufacturing ecosystems, industry executives said at Semicon India 2026. Speaking during a panel discussion on ‘AI Transforming Industry’, David Fried, Vice-President and Chief AI Officer, Lam Research, said established semiconductor companies were undertaking changes to business processes and tools developed over decades.
https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/info-tech/india-can-embed-ai-in-new-semiconductor-plants-from-outset-industry/article71477347.ece

Agriculture

India rice output set for biggest drop in nearly 20 years as weak rains hit yields

India's rice production is set to fall this year for the first time in a decade, and by the most in nearly 20 years, as below-normal rainfall during the crop's maturation period threatens to cut yields, industry officials told Reuters. The drop in the world's biggest rice-producing and exporting country will lift local prices and make exports expensive at a time when prices are already rising in other exporting countries such as Thailand and Vietnam.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/india-rice-output-set-for-biggest-drop-in-nearly-20-years-as-weak-rains-hit-yields/articleshow/134305818.cms

Infrastructure

India's construction equipment exports to surpass 20,000 units in FY27, driven by global demand

India's construction equipment exports are set to cross 20,000 units this financial year, growing 19% from fiscal 2026 and more than 70% from three years ago, with demand coming from Europe, the US, Australia and Southeast Asia, underscoring the country's increasing prowess as a manufacturer of globally competitive, precision-engineered products.

https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/indias-construction-equipment-exports-to-surpass-20000-units-in-fy27-driven-by-global-demand/articleshow/134320662.cms

First-ever full toll suspension: NHAI bans concessionaire for 3 years, seeks Rs 42 lakh daily compensation

The Kanpur-Lucknow Expressway, also known as the Awadh Expressway, has come under scrutiny after major defects, including premature failures and slippages, emerged within weeks of its inauguration. The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has now barred PNC Infratech, the project's concessionaire, from bidding for its projects for three years.

https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/transportation/railways/first-ever-full-toll-suspension-expressway-develops-major-defects-weeks-after-opening-nhai-bans-concessionaire-for-3-years-seeks-rs-42-lakh-daily-compensation/articleshow/134311344.cms

Energy

India vows to protect energy security as US bill opens door to 100% tariffs

India on Thursday said it was monitoring developments after the US Congress passed the Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act, while making it clear that its energy security priorities would continue to guide its crude sourcing decisions. The Ministry of External Affairs said India remained committed to ensuring energy security for its 1.4 billion people and would continue to diversify its sources of supply based on changing market conditions.

https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/india-vows-to-protect-energy-security-as-us-bill-opens-door-to-100-tariffs/articleshow/134301648.cms

Oil India plans ₹15,000 crore capex for deep, ultra-deepwater exploration

Oil India (OIL) Chairman Ranjit Rath said on Thursday that the state-run E&P company will spend ₹15,000 crore over the next three years to step up exploration in offshore deep and ultra-deep blocks. The Maharatna company has a presence across multiple onshore and offshore sedimentary basins across the Andaman, Krishna-Godavari, Mahanadi and Kerala-Konkan basins. Its exploration footprint exceeds 1 lakh sq km.

https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/companies/oil-india-plans-15000-crore-capex-for-deep-ultra-deepwater-exploration/article71477224.ece

Coal Ministry launches 16th round of commercial mine auctions

The Coal Ministry on Thursday launched the 16th round of commercial auctions offering 25 blocks—21 fully explored and four partially explored mines—across nine coal-bearing States. Launching the auction, Minister of State for Coal and Mines Satish Chandra Dubey highlighted coal's vital role in powering India's growth, meeting around 55 per cent of the country's primary energy requirement and over 70 per cent of its electricity generation.

https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/coal-ministry-launches-16th-round-of-commercial-mine-auctions/article71476963.ece

States

Maharashtra deploys AI to detect power theft, flags 28,000 cases in 3 months

Using a new AI-based system, Maharashtra's power distribution utility has detected 27,964 cases of power theft involving electricity worth Rs 66.28 crore during June-August 2026. Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company Limited (MSEDCL) has deployed more than 190 flying squads across Maharashtra to act on intelligence generated by the AI system, an official release said on Thursday. During the three-month drive, the Konkan region recorded the highest number of cases at 11,083, followed by Nagpur with 5,949, Pune with 5,849 and Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar with 5,083 cases.

https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/national/maharashtra-deploys-ai-to-detect-power-theft-flags-28000-cases-in-3-months/article71476564.ece

External

US tariff threat puts exporters on the edge

The impact of potential new tariffs on Indian exports under the US' Lindsey O Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act can be assessed only after Washington announces the actual levies, product coverage and implementation timetable, said trade watchers. The US Congress passed the Act Wednesday allowing sanctions on Russia's crude exports and tariffs of up to 100% on India, China, and other major buyers of Russian energy. The bill will now be sent to US President Donald Trump for his assent.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/us-tariff-threat-puts-exporters-on-the-edge/articleshow/134318889.cms

India proposes 8 guardrails in softening of stance on plurilateral pacts at WTO

In a softening of stance on plurilateral agreements at the World Trade Organization (WTO), India has suggested eight safeguards such as preserving consensus-based decision making, multilateral charter of the trade watchdog, rights and agency of non-participants, and maintaining development including special and differential treatment.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/india-proposes-8-guardrails-in-softening-of-stance-on-plurilateral-pacts-at-wto/articleshow/134316283.cms

India secures 1.9 MT steel export quota to EU, expects total access to reach 2.8 MT

India has received country-specific tariff-rate quota of 1.9 million tonne (MT) annually for steel exports to the European Union, while the government expects exporters to secure another 0.9 MT through residual quotas, taking the total to 2.8 MT, a commerce ministry official said on Thursday.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/india-secures-1-9-mt-steel-export-quota-to-eu-expects-total-access-to-reach-2-8-mt/articleshow/134307185.cms

India's billion-dollar trade juggernaut has an unwanted case of missing balance

Trade deals were supposed to be a two-way street for India. But about 15 years after it opened the gates wider to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Japan and South Korea, the traffic appears to have moved much faster in one direction.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/india-free-trade-agreements-fta-trade-deficit-asean-japan-south-korea-exports-imports-fta-review/articleshow/134303474.cms