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NEWSFLASH

23rd March - 29th March

Design Credits - Akash Yadav and Deepak Mantri

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RUSSIA TO INTRODUCE BAN ON GASOLINE EXPORTS FROM APRIL 1, GOVT SAYS



Russia will impose a ban on gasoline exports starting from April 1 to July 31, 2026. This move by the Russian government aims to stabilize domestic fuel prices. The decision was taken in the face of volatility in the global oil market and due to previous instances of fuel shortages due to refinery outages and increasing demand. The global demand for oil is high, but the Russian government is focusing on meeting local demand first. The refinery output is steady to meet local demand.

INDIA PMI GROWTH SLOWS AMID WEST ASIA IMPACT

India's private sector activity growth eased in March 2026. The HSBC Composite PMI registered a multi-year low of 56.5 in March 2026. Manufacturing activity growth slowed down considerably. In addition, service sector growth also eased. Nevertheless, exports helped support activity growth. Inflation and overall business conditions weighed on business confidence. These are largely due to weak domestic demand and higher input costs amid the West Asia conflict.



BARRICK GOLD'S REKO DIQ DELAY WEIGHS ON PAKISTAN'S ECONOMIC OUTLOOK



Barrick Mining has delayed Pakistan's Reko Diq copper-gold project, extending its review by 12 months due to rising security risks linked to regional tensions, including the Iran conflict. The mine, one of the world's largest undeveloped deposits, is vital for Pakistan's economy as it could boost exports and attract foreign investment. The delay may push timelines, increase costs, and hinder Pakistan's efforts to reduce reliance on IMF bailouts and stabilize its fragile economy.

OIL PRICES PLUNGE; TWO INDIAN LPG TANKERS CROSS STRAIT OF HORMUZ

Crude oil prices decreased significantly after US President Donald Trump announced a five-day halt to US strikes on Iran. Brent crude oil fell by over 10%, but some of the loss was regained. Two Indian LPG tankers safely passed through the Strait of Hormuz amid the tensions. In the context of energy security, the situation illustrates how geopolitical tensions are affecting oil supply and prices, and how this impacts fuel security concerns for India.



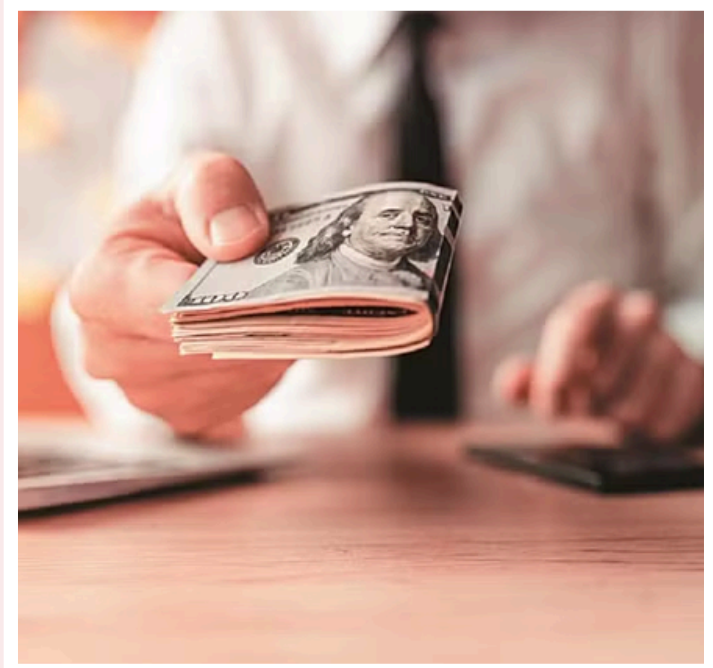
INDIA'S ECONOMY STRONG DESPITE GLOBAL TENSIONS: PM MODI



Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the economic fundamentals of India were sound despite global disruptions caused by the conflict in the Middle East. India has assured the availability of petroleum, coal, and fertilizers. India possesses strategic oil reserves and is expecting growth rates of 7% or more. The prolonged conflict, especially in the Strait of Hormuz, might pose some risks to India's growth and inflation.

REMITTANCES TO INDIA SET TO HIT RECORD \$140 BILLION

Remittances to India are estimated to touch \$137-140 billion in FY26 despite the prevailing tensions in West Asia, indicating strong and resilient remittance flows to the country. Remittances from the region have surged by a strong 30-35% on account of precautionary remittances. India continues to maintain its position of receiving the highest remittances in the world with a large overseas population. Prolonged instability in oil-rich countries can weaken job security for overseas workers.



INDIA CLEARS MILITARY PURCHASES WORTH \$25 BILLION TO BUY AIRCRAFT, RUSSIAN S-400 MISSILE SYSTEMS



India approved proposals worth \$25 billion on Friday to buy transport aircraft, Russian S-400 missile systems and remotely piloted strike aircraft as it pushes its military modernisation and replenishes equipment after its conflict with Pakistan. The decision comes on the back of another major approval last month worth \$40 billion to purchase more French Rafale fighter jets for the air force and Boeing P-8I reconnaissance aircraft for the navy.

INDIA'S EXCISE DUTY CUT ON PETROL, DIESEL COMES AMID RISING GLOBAL OIL RISKS

In a significant move, the government has reduced excise duty by ₹10 per litre on both petrol and diesel. This brings excise on petrol down to roughly ₹3 per litre, while diesel excise has effectively been brought to zero. The move is aimed at easing cost pressures on oil marketing companies (OMCs), which have been grappling with rising global crude prices. The move comes amid a global energy crisis triggered by escalating US-Israel-Iran tensions



INDIA TO BORROW 8.2 TRILLION RUPEES VIA BONDS IN 1H. CUTS ULTRA-LONG DEBT SUPPLY



India's federal government will raise ₹8.20 trillion (\$86.38 billion) through bonds between April and September, accounting for 51% of its annual borrowing target, according to the finance ministry. The plan signals a front-loaded borrowing strategy for FY26. Meanwhile, the share of ultra-long bonds (30–50 years) will be reduced to 24.9%, down from higher levels in previous periods, indicating a shift in debt composition to manage interest costs and investor demand.

RUPEE HITS ALL-TIME LOW OF 94.70 AGAINST US DOLLAR AMID GLOBAL TENSIONS

The Indian Rupee plunged 74 paise to a record low of 94.70 against the US Dollar in intra-day trade on Friday, pressured by rising oil prices and a stronger dollar amid continued tensions in West Asia. Weak domestic equity markets and persistent FII outflows further weighed on the local currency, highlighting growing external pressures. Market participants expect volatility to persist in the near term, especially if global crude prices remain elevated.



MARCH SEES \$30 BILLION DROP IN INDIA'S FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVES



India's foreign exchange (forex) reserves fell by \$11.41 billion to \$698.35 billion during the week ended March 20, the latest data from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) showed. Over the past three weeks, forex reserves have declined by \$30.14 billion. The contraction in total reserves was driven by a fall in gold reserves, which dropped \$13.49 billion to \$117.19 billion during the reported week. Meanwhile, foreign currency assets rose by \$2.13 billion to \$557.69 billion.

THE PARLIAMENT ON FRIDAY APPROVED THE FINANCE BILL 2026

The Parliament of India on Friday approved the Finance Bill 2026, with the Rajya Sabha returning it to the Lok Sabha by a voice vote, thereby completing the budgetary process for the fiscal year beginning April 1. The Lok Sabha had earlier passed the bill on March 25 along with 32 amendments. The Rajya Sabha cleared it after a brief discussion and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's response to members' queries.



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