

News Letter

October Recap

FINANCE FORWARD: WHERE FINANCE MEETS INNOVATION



Harvard Class of 2029: Financial Aid Shapes Elite Access

Harvard College will dramatically widen its undergraduate financial-aid program starting in 2025–26. Families earning up to US \$100,000 will now receive full coverage i.e. tuition, housing, meals, fees, insurance and travel, while those earning up to US \$200,000 will qualify for free tuition and partial aid based on need.

The new thresholds make about 86% of U.S. families eligible for support. In the Class of 2029, 45% will attend tuition-free, 20% are first-generation students, and 21% qualify for Pell Grants, reflecting broader access.

Harvard's yield rate remains strong at 83.6% (1,675 of 2,003 offers accepted), even as costs top US \$86,000 per year and funding pressures grow.

Key Takeaway: Harvard's sweeping aid expansion redefines elite college affordability, though sustaining it amid rising costs will be the real test.



Diwali 2025: Festival Spending Powers India's Economy

India's 2025 Diwali season saw record spending of ₹5.40 lakh crore in goods and ₹65,000 crore in services, pushing total festive consumption past ₹6 lakh crore. The surge was driven by GST cuts, strong consumer confidence and robust urban spending, with a four-year-high spending index of ~117. E-commerce sales jumped 15% year-on-year, as digital platforms captured a growing share of festive shopping. Retailers noted tighter purchase windows, with 42% of shoppers buying within a month of Diwali.

Key Takeaway: India's record festive spending signals a powerful rebound in consumer demand, fueling growth across retail, industry and rural markets.



Piyush Pandey: Advertising Genius as Priceless Capital

Piyush Pandey, the ad legend who reshaped Indian advertising with emotion, humour and cultural authenticity, has passed away at 70. Joining Ogilvy India in 1982, he turned it into one of the country's most awarded creative powerhouses.

Pandey created iconic campaigns like Fevicol's "Jod Ke Rakhe Hamesha," Cadbury's "Kuch Khaas Hai," Asian Paints' "Har Ghar Kuch Kehta Hai," and the timeless "Mile Sur Mera Tumhara." He championed storytelling rooted in Indian language and life, breaking away from Western tropes.

The first Indian Global Chief Creative Officer of Ogilvy (2019–2022), Pandey brought Indian creativity to the global stage. A Padma Shri awardee (2016) and multiple Cannes Lions winner, he leaves behind a legacy of ideas that built brands through emotion, trust and national pride.

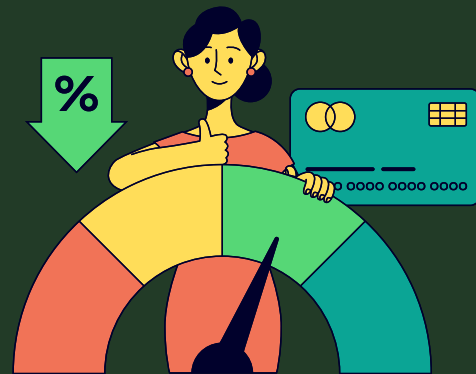
Key Takeaway: Piyush Pandey didn't just sell products, he sold stories that made India feel seen.



Credit Scores: Your Financial Passport to Cheaper Loans

A credit score isn't just a number, it's your money reputation. A 750+ score opens doors to cheaper loans and premium cards; a bad one shuts them fast.

The rulebook's simple: pay on time, spend wisely, apply rarely. Protect your score as it speaks before you do



Ponzi Scams: High Returns, Higher Risk, Investors Burned

Ever been promised sky-high returns with minimal effort? That's the bait of a Ponzi scheme, a fraudulent setup where money from new investors is used to pay earlier ones, creating a dangerous illusion of profit.

Here's the playbook, flashy promises attract investors, early participants get paid, word spreads and the cycle continues until it inevitably collapses. When it does, most people lose everything.

India's Falcon Invoice Discounting scam lured thousands with fake 22% returns and big-brand lies. The moral? In finance, shortcuts don't build wealth, they burn it.

Dussehra & Gandhi Jayanti: Festival Spending vs. Frugal Lessons Shape ₹3L+ Crore Economy

With Dussehra and Gandhi Jayanti coinciding on 2 October 2025, India saw a rare twin national holiday with banks, markets and liquor shops shut nationwide. The extended Navratri-Diwali window now drives an estimated ₹3 lakh crore+ festive economy, accounting for 40-45% of annual festive spending.

Retailers report early spikes in sweets, gifts and decor, even as official messaging promotes frugality and mindful celebration.

Key Takeaway: The twin holiday highlights India's festive paradox, a surge in demand and spending, tempered by calls for simplicity and prudence.

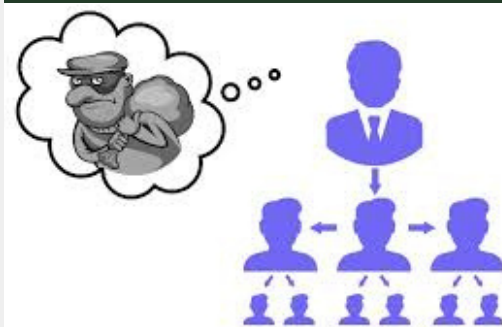
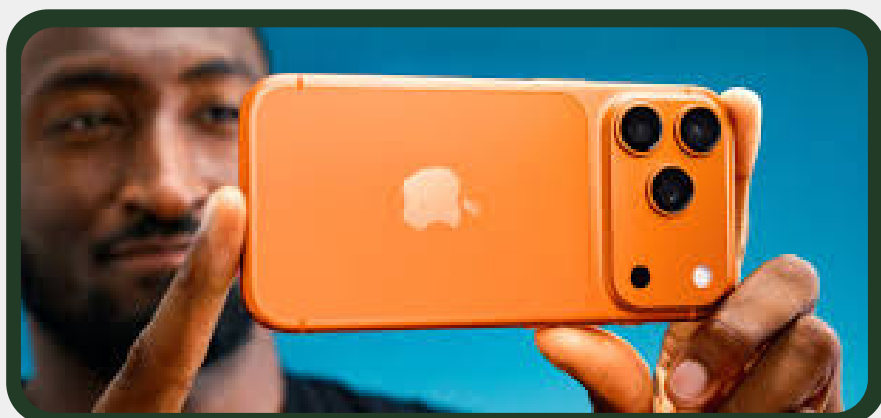


iPhone 17 India Launch: \$10B Exports, Record-Breaking Sales

India's iPhone exports hit US \$7.5 billion (₹63,000 crore) between April-July 2025, likely surpassing US \$10 billion for FY25, powered by full-scale production of the iPhone 17 series across five plants, including Foxconn and Tata Electronics.

Shipments to the U.S. now make up 97% of exports, up from 50% a year ago. The boom reflects India's PLI-driven manufacturing push, which cuts import duties and boosts exports.

Key Takeaway: India is no longer just Apple's market, it's fast becoming a manufacturing powerhouse, driving jobs, tech supply chains and global integration.



India Protein Market: ₹38,000+ Crore & Growing, Fitness Fuels Spending

India's protein-based product market, valued at ₹38,247 crore (US \$4.6 billion) in 2024, is projected to hit ₹1,36,327 crore by 2033, growing at a 15.2% CAGR. Parallel estimates show the protein segment rising from US \$1.49 billion in 2024 to US \$2.08 billion by 2030.

Growth is fueled by fitness trends, health awareness and protein-fortified foods, from whey and plant-based options to bars and beverages. Urban demand leads, but brands are expanding into rural and mass markets to tackle India's protein gap.

Key Takeaway: Protein is no longer a gym niche, it's becoming a mainstream nutrition movement shaping India's next food frontier.



India Defence Boost: ₹79,000 Crore Strengthens Security & Economy

India has cleared ₹79,000 crore in defence deals, from AI surveillance to missile systems. It is a move that's as economic as it is strategic.

Aligned with Atmanirbhar Bharat, the push boosts local manufacturing, R&D, and exports.

Stronger defence, stronger economy like N innovation is the new armour.

Key Takeaway: National security, it seems, is no longer just about protection, it's a portfolio expansion for the nation's economic and industrial backbone

Louvre Heist: €88 Million Robbery Hits Paris Tourism & Revenue

In a seven-minute stunt, thieves disguised as workers looted €88 million in royal jewels from Paris's Louvre, escaping on scooters and shaking global headlines.

Beyond the drama lies damage, tourism losses, insurance shocks, and shaken trust.

Because sometimes, the real price of art isn't in gold, but in credibility.

Key Takeaway: Every masterpiece has a price, and sometimes, it's far greater than money.



LG IPO Confusion: Wrong Stock Soars, Then Crashes

In a wild market twist, investors mistook LG Balakrishnan & Bros, an Indian auto parts firm, for LG Electronics, whose global IPO was grabbing headlines. The mix-up sent the wrong stock soaring 80% in two days before crashing just as fast.

A costly reminder: in markets ruled by hype and haste, research beats rumor. Always double-check the ticker ; because sometimes, one alphabet can wipe out your portfolio.



Deloitte AI Error: Refunds \$290K to Australian Government

Deloitte Australia admitted its government report used AI-generated fake quotes and citations, prompting a partial refund of its A\$440,000 fee. While officials still deem the report valid, the scandal ignites questions on AI oversight and accountability.

A clear takeaway: AI can assist, not absolve. In consulting or anywhere its integrity must stay human

US Government Shutdown: 2M Workers Unpaid, Services Paused



The U.S. government has ground to a halt after Congress failed to approve funding, leaving 2 million workers unpaid and essential services strained. From soldiers on duty without pay to shuttered parks and frozen benefits, the ripple effects are nationwide.

A stark reminder: in Washington's power games, every delay hits the people first.

Govardhan Puja: From Grains to ₹85,000 Crore Gains



Celebrated after Diwali, Govardhan Puja reflects India's agrarian roots, honouring grains, cattle and communal feasts. Beyond ritual, it's now tied to rural enterprise, seen in initiatives like the "Govardhan Yojana", which turns cow dung into bio-compost and ethanol, blending devotion with sustainability.

The festival also fuels post-Diwali commerce, with spikes in sweets, dry fruits, decor and ritual foods. While no verified national figure (₹85,000 crore) exists, the broader trend is clear.

Key Takeaway: Govardhan Puja embodies how India's culture and economy intertwine, where faith, farming and festive spending sustain each other.



PhysicsWallah : Alakh Pandey Wealth Surpasses Shah Rukh Khan



PhysicsWallah co-founder Alakh Pandey's wealth has surged to ₹14,510 crore (US \$1.75 billion), overtaking Shah Rukh Khan's ₹12,490 crore (US \$1.4 billion). His fortune jumped 223% in a year, powered by the ed-tech firm's US \$210 million Series B funding that pushed its valuation to US \$2.8 billion.

Despite the milestone, PhysicsWallah reported a steep FY 2024 loss of ₹1,131 crore, up from ₹84 crore a year earlier.

Key Takeaway: Valuations can skyrocket faster than profits, but not without risk.



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