



September 14, 2023 – Thursday

## Economy

### Centre launches Skill India Digital platform, to benefit 260 mn students

The Ministry of Skill Development launched the Skill India Digital (SID) platform on Wednesday, aiming to skill nearly 260 million students in school and higher education while also providing entrepreneurial opportunities nationwide. Built by the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) in collaboration with multiple industry players, the platform is part of the World Bank-assisted Skill Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion (SANKALP) programme. It serves as a digital public infrastructure designed to transform India's skills, education, employment, and entrepreneurship landscape.

[https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/centre-launches-skill-india-digital-platform-to-benefit-260-mn-students-123091301321\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/centre-launches-skill-india-digital-platform-to-benefit-260-mn-students-123091301321_1.html)

### 7.5 million free LPG connections okayed under Ujjwala scheme

The Cabinet has approved the release of 7.5 million free cooking gas connections over three years under the Ujjwala scheme, which will have a financial implication of Rs 1,650 crore, according to an official statement Wednesday. Under the Ujjwala scheme, a poor household receives an LPG connection, the first refill and a stove for free. Oil companies offer three types of connections with varying costs. For Rs 2,200, one can get a traditional 14.2 kg single bottle connection or a 5kg double bottle connection. A 5 kg single bottle connection costs Rs 1,300.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/7-5-million-free-lpg-connections-okayed-under-ujjwala-scheme/articleshow/103644049.cms>

### Women participation in blue-collar industry remains low at 14-15%: Report

Women's participation in the blue-collar industry have increased by 35- 40 per cent post-pandemic, but overall percentage of women in the blue-collar workforce is extremely low and stands still between 14-15 per cent, according to a report by Entitled Solutions. The report revealed that domestic responsibilities, societal norms, concerns about physical safety, and disparities in digital and skill literacy are primary factors contributing to the gender gap. Women's participation in blue-collar jobs in India has ranged between 10-15 per cent in recent years.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/women-participation-in-blue-collar-industry-remains-low-at-14-15-report/article67303175.ece>

## Banking and Finance

### Government exempts investment trusts, ETFs from capital gains tax in GIFT City

The government has exempted units of investment trusts and ETFs issued by entities based in GIFT City or traded in exchanges there from capital gains tax. The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) notified the exemption from capital gains tax any unit of investment trust; a unit of a scheme; and a unit of an Exchange Traded Fund (ETF) launched under the International Financial Services Centres Authority (Fund Management) Regulations, 2022. Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT)-IFSC is being promoted as a tax-neutral enclave for the financial sector. "The

new fund regime provides for funds to be set up as investment trusts, and hence, the law required the inclusion of units issued by such trusts for the purpose of exemption from capital gains.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/government-exempts-investment-trusts-etfs-from-capital-gains-tax-in-gift-city/articleshow/103636628.cms>

### **Banks seek relaxation in account takeover norms**

The Centre is examining a suggestion made by lenders to relax existing guidelines that prevent state-run banks from taking over corporate accounts from another lender where its current top management was previously posted. Over a decade ago, the government, through an advisory, asked public sector banks, or PSBs, to stop this practice and seek board approval with specific reasons justifying the takeover of the account. "Lenders are of the opinion that the circumstances under which those directions were issued in 2012 no longer exist, and also that sanction of loans is done at various levels and the top management is not solely responsible for such decisions," said a person aware of the developments, adding that the matter is being examined.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/banking/finance/banking/banks-seek-relaxation-in-account-takeover-norms/articleshow/103644014.cms>

## **Industry**

### **Proposals worth ₹4k cr under IT hardware PLI likely to be cleared**

India may clear investment proposals worth ₹4,000 crore under the Centre's revised IT hardware Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme, a senior government official told ET. Last month 40 proposals worth ₹5,000 crore were received by the ministry of electronics and IT under the IT Hardware PLI 2.0 scheme. All are unlikely to get a green light since the Government has a fixed budget for incentives. "Earlier, we kept an investment target of ₹2,430 crore in the scheme. But there was an overwhelming response, forty proposals were received indicating a total investment of ₹5,000 crore. Amount needed to fund all the proposals will be ₹23,000 crore but the allocated budget is currently ₹17,000 crore," joint secretary, ministry of electronics and IT, Amitesh Kumar Sinha told ET.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/proposals-worth-4k-cr-under-it-hardware-pli-likely-to-be-cleared/articleshow/103643245.cms>

### **IT companies' forex revenue exceeds earnings of other manufacturers in FY23**

Indian information technology (IT) services companies, such as Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys, Wipro, and HCLTech, have emerged as the most consistent baggers of foreign exchange. For the first time in 2022-23 (FY23), their combined forex revenue surpassed that of listed oil and gas companies, as well as listed non-oil and gas firms in other sectors. The latter category includes industries like pharmaceuticals, automotive and auto ancillaries, industrial metals, capital goods, chemicals, textiles, fast-moving consumer goods, and consumer durables. The combined forex revenue of listed IT firms was up 20.7 per cent year-on-year (Y-o-Y) to Rs 5.14 trillion in FY23, while that of manufacturing companies (ex-IT and oil & gas) was down 5 per cent to Rs 5.08 trillion. An analysis of listed companies in Business Standard's sample suggests a sharp slowdown in forex revenue of manufacturing firms.

[https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/it-companies-forex-revenue-exceeds-earnings-of-other-manufacturers-in-fy23-123091301211\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/it-companies-forex-revenue-exceeds-earnings-of-other-manufacturers-in-fy23-123091301211_1.html)

### **Icra revises growth estimates for domestic steel sector to 10 per cent**

Rating agency Icra on Wednesday revised upwards its growth estimate for the domestic steel industry to 9-10 per cent this fiscal, on account of the robust government capital expenditure. It had estimated the steel industry to grow in the range of 7-8 per cent at the start of the current 2023-24 fiscal, the rating agency said in a statement. "Icra has revised the FY2024 domestic steel demand growth forecast upwards to 9-10 per cent now, from 7-8 per cent made at the start of the current fiscal, on the back of strong government capital expenditure," the statement said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/indl-goods/svs/steel/icra-revises-growth-estimates-for-domestic-steel-sector-to-10-per-cent/articleshow/103640785.cms>

## **Agriculture**

### **Flour mills under FCI scanner as wheat prices continue to rise**

State-run Food Corporation of India (FCI) is conducting checks to see whether flour mills hold more wheat than what they have declared, according to sources, as the government steps up efforts to control its stubbornly high prices. A large number of flour millers confirmed to ET that FCI officials have been checking wheat stocks held by the mills. The FCI sells wheat to flour mills and other bulk consumers under the open market sales scheme (OMSS) to keep domestic prices down. In June, it had offered 1.5 million tonnes of wheat under this scheme. However, wheat prices continue to remain firm. Industry executives have cited the lower volumes offered by FCI at its weekly tenders as one of the reasons for the increase in wheat prices. The mills participating in the bidding process have to declare the stocks held by them.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/flour-mills-under-fci-scanner-as-wheat-prices-continue-to-rise/articleshow/103644275.cms>

### **Maharashtra sugar output set to fall to lowest in 4 yrs after dry August**

Sugar output in Maharashtra, India's top producing state, is likely to fall 14% in the 2023/24 crop year to its lowest in four years due to lower cane yields following the driest August in more than a century, industry and government officials told Reuters on Wednesday. The reduced output could add to food inflation and discourage New Delhi from allowing sugar exports, supporting global prices which are already near their highest in more than a decade. Higher domestic prices will, however, improve margins for producers such as Balrampur Chini, Dwarikesh Sugar, Shree Renuka Sugars and Dalmia Bharat Sugar, helping them make payments on time to farmers.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/maharashtra-sugar-output-set-to-fall-to-lowest-in-4-yrs-after-dry-august/articleshow/103627285.cms>

## **Infrastructure**

## **Energy**

### **Govt withdraws guidelines allowing Discoms to draw power after PPA expiry**

The Power Ministry has withdrawn the guidelines that allowed Discoms to continue drawing power from a Genco even after the expiry of the term of their Power Purchase Agreement (PPA). Now, all the Central generating stations (CGSs) of a Central public sector undertaking (CPSU) whose PPA has expired will be brought together in a central common pool bundled with gas-based power and will be sold to States who want to buy electricity at a uniform tariff.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/govt-withdraws-guidelines-allowing-discoms-to-draw-power-after-ppa-expiry/article67303289.ece>

## **Telecom**

### **TRAI reduces audit compliance burden for LSAs, to cover max tariff offerings in audit**

Telecom regulator Trai has reduced audit compliance of licensed service areas to once in year from four times earlier but it will cover maximum tariff offerings, including related to international roaming, according to the new regulations on quality of service. "Each LSA shall be audited only once in a financial year unlike four times as per old regulations, thereby reducing the audit burden by almost 75 per cent," Trai said. However, while simplifying the audit process, it is also ensured to cover maximum tariff offerings under audit unlike in previous regulation which has the provision for audit of 15 most popular tariff offerings only leaving aside a good number of tariff offerings with less number of subscriptions, the regulator said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/telecom/telecom-policy/trai-reduces-audit-compliance-burden-for-lsas-to-cover-max-tariff-offerings-in-audit/articleshow/103642500.cms>

## **Healthcare**

### **Inflation hurting patients, but health of hospitals improves**

Hospital chains in India have been reporting steady improvement in two key operational parameters -increase in average revenue per operating bed (ARPOB) per day and declining average length of stay (ALOS) of the patients. Improving operational performance have helped them gain valuations on the bourses. For the patients, however, these parameters mean an increase in the cost of treatment - even on shorter hospital stays. Medical inflation in India was estimated to be 14% in 2021 and continues to remain high post the pandemic. For instance, Apollo Hospitals, country's largest hospital chain, has posted steady increase in its ARPOB from ₹ 37,397 in FY20 to ₹57,760 for the first quarter of this fiscal.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/healthcare/biotech/inflation-hurting-patients-but-health-of-hospitals-improves/articleshow/103644027.cms>

### **External**

### **India, Russia explore development of Northern Sea Route for logistics**

After initiating plans for the swift operationalisation of the eastern maritime corridor, India and Russia on Wednesday discussed the potential of the Northern Sea Route (NSR) as a significant trade avenue for major commodities, according to the Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways. Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal is in Russia, where he met with AO Chekunkov, Russian Minister for the Development of the Far East and the Arctic. Chekunkov highlighted the ongoing maritime communications between the two nations, stating, "Cooperation with the Republic of India is a priority for our Ministry. We intend to deepen relations in the Far East in all areas of mutual interest."

[https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/india-russia-explore-development-of-northern-sea-route-for-logistics-123091301303\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/india-russia-explore-development-of-northern-sea-route-for-logistics-123091301303_1.html)

### **India, EU officials to discuss New Delhi's concerns over carbon border levy**

Top officials from India and the European Commission are scheduled to hold virtual discussions on Thursday to address India's concerns over the European Union's (EU's) Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM),

[https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/india-eu-officials-to-discuss-new-delhi-s-concerns-over-carbon-border-levy-123091300972\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/india-eu-officials-to-discuss-new-delhi-s-concerns-over-carbon-border-levy-123091300972_1.html)

### **Indian vegoil imports likely to rise to record high 16.5 million tonnes in 2022-23: USDA**

India is likely to import a record 16.5 million tonnes (mt) of vegetable oil during 2022-23, according to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). In its September report on 'Oilseeds: World Markets and Trade', USDA said India's imports includes nearly 10 mt of palm oil.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/indian-vegoil-imports-likely-to-rise-to-record-high-165-million-tonnes-in-2022-23-usda/article67302511.ece>

### **Govt unlikely to raise import tariffs on edible oils**

The government is unlikely to raise the import duties on refined edible oils, despite the sharp drop in domestic prices and low-priced imports, official sources said. This is because it accords top priority to cooling inflation at this juncture. With a sharp rise in imports of edible oils – palm, soyabean and sunflower – due to softening of global prices and low import duties, the domestic industry has urged the government to increase the existing gap between the crude and refined palm oils to prevent 'dumping' by exporters in Malaysia and Indonesia. Currently the landed cost of RBD palm oil on the Mumbai coast is \$850/tonne against \$ 860/tonne for the crude oil. With a huge surge in imports of edible oils – palm, soybean and sunflower, the imports during the 2022-23 (November-October) is likely to cross a record 17 million tonne (MT), up from 14 MT in the last year.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/policy/economy-govt-unlikely-to-raise-import-tariffs-on-edible-oils-3242832/>