



April 19, 2024 – Friday

Economy

100-day agenda: Digitisation of land records among key reforms of new government

The Centre is working on digitisation of land records as one of the priority reforms for the incoming administration. The government may allocate ₹1,035 crore for the proposed plan that seeks to complete the digitisation of all land records by the end of 2026, helping streamline the land acquisition process and speed up projects, ET has learnt. The move may be announced when the full budget is presented. "Land reforms are one of the top agenda items for the government and if it comes back to power, these will be aggressively pushed starting with the digitization of land records," a senior official said. The proposed plan is also a part of the next government's 100-day economic agenda that was discussed last week.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/100-day-agenda-digitisation-of-land-records-among-key-reforms-of-new-government/articleshow/109412026.cms>

West Asia crisis on radar; India needs to be ready: Nirmala Sitharaman

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said challenges to the Indian economy may be mounting and the country will have to be ready to respond with the kind of agility that it did after the Covid-19 pandemic and soon after the Russia-Ukraine war started. The authorities are keeping a watch and the chief economic adviser is looking at various indications of what could be coming, she said in an interview. Tesla chief Elon Musk's impending visit to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi is a recognition of the high-tech manufacturing ecosystem that's been established in India by top companies, she said. Sitharaman said everything in the BJP's manifesto is clearly worked out with a sense of responsibility that taxpayers' money should be used efficiently.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/west-asia-crisis-on-radar-india-needs-to-be-ready-nirmala-sitharaman/articleshow/109412105.cms>

Global future will not be driven by big tech but by India's DPI: Amitabh Kant

India's G-20 sherpa Amitabh Kant on Thursday said the global future will not be driven by big technology firms but by the digital public infrastructure platforms developed locally. Speaking at the 'We Made in India' event here, Kant said India will transfer its digital public infrastructure (DPI) to the rest of the world, and already there are many examples of countries warming up to the same. Kant said during the G-20, the world accepted the definition and framework of the DPI, given the strides that India has made through its strategies. "During G-20, the world accepted the definition of digital public infra, the world accepted the framework of DPI and to our belief, the future will not be driven by big tech, it will be driven by DPI," he said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/global-future-will-not-be-driven-by-big-tech-but-by-indias-dpi-amitabh-kant/articleshow/109400700.cms>

Finance

States may get 15% more soft loans for capex; total kitty may swell to Rs 1.5 trillion

The Centre is likely to top up the 50-year interest-free capex loans to states by 15% to Rs 1.5 trillion in 2024-25 from Rs 1.3 trillion provided in the interim Budget. This is because of the increased demand from states for the liberal loan facility aimed at boosting economic activity across the country. Sources told FE that the additional amount is expected to be part of the reform-linked component of the loans as the Centre embarks on next-generation reforms. Accordingly, the reform-tied loans would rise to Rs 95,000 crore from Rs 75,000 crore earmarked in the interim Budget for FY25.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/policy/economy-states-may-get-15-more-soft-loans-for-capex-total-kitty-may-swell-to-rs-1-5-trillion-3460349/>

Industry

Prices of discretionary products like cars, TVs, phones begin to firm up

Prices of discretionary products such as cars, televisions and smartphones have started to firm up with prices of several commodities like copper and aluminum, components such as memory chips and display panels, and a weakening rupee has started taking a toll on the bottomline of the manufacturers. Car manufacturers like Maruti Suzuki, Honda Cars India, Toyota Kirloskar Motor and Kia India have just raised vehicle prices, mostly on fast-moving models, by up to 3% due to increase in commodity costs and adverse forex movement. Other manufacturers are also evaluating such a hike. In electronics, prices of new smartphones have factored the single digit price increase in components such as memory chips and display panels whereby prices of such new launches might increase by 2-3% than originally planned, said market tracker Counterpoint's research director Tarun Pathak.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/cons-products/electronics/prices-of-discretionary-products-like-cars-tvs-phones-begin-to-firm-up/articleshow/109407502.cms>

Electronics industry sees 154% growth in hiring and skilling: Quess report

India's electronics industry has recorded a 154 per cent growth in March 2024 as compared to the corresponding period last year in overall hiring, according to research conducted by Quess Corp Limited, a workforce management solutions provider. The research further showed that the telecom domain tops hiring demand within the electronics industry, accounting for 64 per cent of hiring, followed by lighting and automotive sectors. "In terms of geography, Tamil Nadu leads the states with a significant 33 per cent share of electronics hiring demand, followed by Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, and Telangana," Quess Corp Limited said in a press release.

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/electronics-industry-sees-154-growth-in-hiring-and-skilling-quess-report-124041800550_1.html

India smartphone up 15% on year in Q1, continues recovery: Canalys

The Indian smartphone market continued its recovery, reaching 35.3 million units in the quarter ended March 2024, growing 15% year-on-year, according to a report released Thursday. The growth rate appears sharper on account of a lower base last year with Q1 2023 marred by inventory pileup, inflationary pressure and weak demand, said market research firm Canalys. The report said the inventory situation has improved on the back of price correction and promotional strategies towards the end of 2023, allowing distribution channels to absorb the multiple new launches brands made during the quarter.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/cons-products/electronics/india-smartphone-up-15-on-year-in-q1-continues-recovery-canalys/articleshow/109403282.cms>

Volumes of domestic mining, construction equipment may drop in FY25: ICRA

Rating agency ICRA on Thursday said the volumes of domestic mining and the construction equipment (MCE) industry may drop in the current financial year on account of a slowdown in the new project orders amidst Lok Sabha elections and monsoon-related impact on construction activities. "ICRA expects FY2025 to see a 12-15 per cent year-on-year decline (which translates into volumes of 114,000-118,000 units)," the rating agency said in a statement.

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/volumes-of-domestic-mining-construction-equipment-may-drop-in-fy25-icra-124041800391_1.html

Out-of-court insolvency resolution to get a leg up

The government will redefine and strengthen the out-of-court processes for bankruptcy resolution, before introducing newer rules like cross-border insolvency norms, a senior official said. The idea is to make the processes more efficient and robust, so that the need for involvement of courts could be reduced, and pace of resolution is quickened, the official added. "The out-of-court settlement process has to be refined, in order to aid and supplement the cross-border insolvency processes as resolutions would be expedited," the official said, while adding that the re-designed out-of-court settlement process would be made part of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) in the coming months.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/business/industry-out-of-court-insolvency-resolution-to-get-a-leg-up-3461568/>

Agriculture

Above-normal rains forecast to boost agri loan demand

Expectation of an above-normal monsoon this year is not just a piece of good news for farmers, it has also boosted the sentiment in the banking sector. With the India Meteorological Department forecasting an above-normal monsoon, banks are expecting a rise in demand for agricultural loans. Analysts are expecting around 25% increase in banks' agri loan portfolios.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/policy/economy-above-normal-rains-forecast-to-boost-agri-loan-demand-3460357/>

Infrastructure

NHAI identifies 33 highway stretches of 2,741 km for monetisation in FY25

State-owned National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has identified 33 highway stretches cumulatively spanning 2,741 kilometres to monetise during the current financial year through toll operate transfer (TOT) and infrastructure investment trust (InvIT) modes. The identified stretches include Lucknow-Aligarh, Kanpur-Ayodhya-Gorakhpur, and Bareilly-Sitapur in Uttar Pradesh, Gurugram-Kotputli-Jaipur bypass and Jaipur-Kishangarh in Rajasthan, Panikoili-Rimuli in Odisha, Chennai bypass in Tamil Nadu, and Muzaffarpur-Darbhanga-Purnia highway in Bihar.

https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/nhai-identifies-33-highway-stretches-of-2-741-km-for-monetisation-in-fy25-124041800577_1.html

Overhaul of rural roads scheme likely after polls; proposal part of govt's Viksit Bharat by 2047 plan

The government is planning to overhaul its flagship rural roads scheme after the general election to further bolster connectivity in remote areas, spur economic growth and alleviate poverty, people close to the development told ET. This will form part of the government's ambition to turn India into a developed country by 2047. Revamping the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) will focus on substantially expanding and upgrading the existing network of rural roads and linking them with nearby hubs and markets to bolster "productive capacity of the economy and ensure ease of living", said the people cited above.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/infrastructure/overhaul-of-rural-roads-scheme-likely-after-polls-proposal-part-of-govt-viksit-bharat-by-2047-plan/articleshow/109382595.cms>

New BOT terms may revive pvt capex in highways: India Ratings and Research

The National Highways Authority of India's recent attempt to revive the build-operate-transfer (BOT) mode of building highways will augur well for the road sector and revive private capital expenditure (capex) in the industry, according to India Ratings and Research. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, in March, amended the BOT and toll operate transfer (TOT) model concession agreements (MCAs) to attract more private interest in the sector.

https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/new-bot-terms-may-revive-pvt-capex-in-highways-india-ratings-and-research-124041801005_1.html

Energy

Coal mine auction likely in May, 30 new blocks to be put on offer

The coal ministry is likely to hold the next round of auction of coal mines for commercial mining by May 10 with 30 new blocks on offer. The ministry has received permission from the Election Commission of India for the auction, a

senior government official told ET, referring to the 2024 general elections starting Friday. The auction will also see 50 mines that did not elicit a response in previous rounds being put on offer, the official said. "It will take two months to receive bids for the mines," the official said. The government's target is to augment domestic coal production and reduce imports with commercial mines playing a major role.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/indl-goods/svs/metals-mining/coal-mine-auction-likely-in-may-30-new-blocks-to-be-put-on-offer/articleshow/109412140.cms>

Govt confident of 1.1-billion-tonne coal production

The government is confident of producing 1.08 billion tonne of coal during 2024-25, an official source told FE. The coal ministry is planning to inaugurate 20 first-mile connectivity projects with coal handling plants and silos this fiscal to boost evacuation. "This year, we will produce 1,080 million tonne of coal," the source said. "Rake deployment has increased and effective utilisation of rakes is going to happen. We have CHP (coal handling plants) silos. In FY24, we inaugurated eight CHP silos. This year, we are going to inaugurate almost 20."

<https://www.financialexpress.com/business/industry-govt-confident-of-1-1-billion-tonne-coal-production-3460322/>

Oil PSUs made a capex of ₹1.28 lakh cr in FY24

State-run oil companies made a combined capital spending of ₹1,28,000 crore in 2023-24, a fifth more than the capex target they had set at the beginning of the year and 12% more than the amount they spent the previous year. ONGC, IndianOil, BPCL, HPCL, GAIL and Oil India all exceeded their initial annual capex target for 2023-24, according to the oil ministry data.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/oil-gas/exceeding-target-oil-psus-aade-a-capex-of-1-28-lakh-cr-in-fy24/articleshow/109411710.cms>

Big jump in Ujjwala LPG numbers; 103.3 million in FY24

The government under its flagship Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana has been able to extend the benefits of clean cooking fuel to 103.3 million households between the start of the scheme and the end of 2023-24, according to data from the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell. Additionally, sales of domestic liquified petroleum gas (LPG) by the state-owned oil marketing companies stood at 26.21 million tonnes in 2023-24 up from 25.38 million tonnes in 2022-23.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/business/industry-big-jump-in-ujjwala-lpg-numbers-103-3-mn-in-fy24-3461569/>

Telecom

Three pvt telecom operators ideal for India: Sunil Mittal

A market with three private telecom companies is optimal for India, Bharti Enterprises chairman Sunil Mittal said on Thursday as debt-laden Vodafone Idea (Vi) got a financial lifeline allaying fears of a duopoly in the telecom sector. "My position has been consistent that three private operators are ideal for India," Mittal told ET. His comments come in the backdrop of Vi moving to secure its much-delayed funding.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/telecom/telecom-news/three-pvt-telecom-operators-ideal-for-india-sunil-mittal/articleshow/109412167.cms>

States

ReNew, JERA to jointly evaluate green ammonia projects in Odisha

Nasdaq-listed ReNew Energy Global plc signed an agreement with JERA Co., Japan's power generation major, to jointly develop a green ammonia production facility in India. ReNew in a public statement said its subsidiary, ReNew E-Fuels Private Limited, and JERA will jointly evaluate the development of a green ammonia production project in Paradip, Odisha. There will be a joint study to evaluate the commercial viability of the project, the company said.

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/renew-jera-to-jointly-evaluate-green-ammonia-projects-in-odisha-124041800802_1.html

TN continues to be number one State in electronic goods exports in FY24

Tamil Nadu continued to be the numero uno in the export of electronic goods. It achieved a record-breaking \$9.56 billion in electronics exports in FY 2023-24 - a whopping 78 per cent growth over the previous year's performance of \$5.37 billion. Companies like Tata Electronics and Pegatron, starting their production in the last couple of years helped Tamil Nadu to achieve such a performance. The State now has over 15 leading electronics manufacturers, including Foxconn, Tata Electronics, Salcomp and Pegatron.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/national/tn-continues-to-be-number-one-state-in-electronic-goods-exports-in-fy24/article68078896.ece>

Healthcare

CDSCO issues distribution guidelines for pharma products in market to curb substandard medicines

The country's drug regulator has recently released draft guidelines on good distribution practices to prevent the entry of 'spurious,' 'adulterated,' and 'sub-standard' pharmaceutical products in the market, PTI has reported. The draft guidance document, issued by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), aligns with the WHO Technical Report Series (TRS) on good storage and distribution practices for such products. The guidelines are set to apply to all individuals and establishments engaged in any phase of the storage and distribution of pharmaceutical products, starting from the manufacturer's facilities to the individual dispensing the products to a patient or their representative.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/healthcare/biotech/pharmaceuticals/regulator-issues-distribution-guidelines-to-ensure-no-substandard-pharma-products-in-market/articleshow/109409554.cms>

Govt mulls allowing sale of common medicines in general stores

A government-appointed committee is contemplating the idea of making commonly used drugs like cough and cold medicines, antacids, and fever-reducing drugs available at general stores in India. The committee, entrusted with formulating India's over-the-counter (OTC) drug policy, discussed this proposal during a recent meeting, reported the Times of India. "Many countries, like the US, allow sale of commonly used medicines in grocery stores also. A suggestion was made by some of the experts looking into India's OTC drug policy to allow the same here also for improved accessibility, especially in the rural areas. However, no decision has been taken yet," Times of India reported quoting a source.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/healthcare/biotech/pharmaceuticals/govt-mulls-allowing-the-sale-of-common-medicines-in-general-stores/articleshow/109394340.cms>

Middle East crisis escalation may hurt pharma exports

The conflict in the Middle East could dent India's pharma exports if it escalates, industry experts say. While exports have not been affected so far, the next few days are crucial because, if there is serious escalation in the conflict, it could impact the whole Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Many Indian pharma companies have a significant presence in the region. "Companies like Sun Pharma, Dr Reddy's, Lupin, Torrent, and Divi's Labs are likely to suffer the most due to their significant presence in the MENA region," said Dinesh Dua, a former chairman of the Pharmaceutical Export Promotion Council (Pharmexcil). "In fact, Sun Pharmaceutical has a fully-owned subsidiary, Taro Pharmaceutical, based out of Israel which can have supply chain issues."

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/healthcare/biotech/pharmaceuticals/middle-east-crisis-escalation-may-hurt-pharma-exports/articleshow/109412047.cms>

External

On an upswing: Engineering goods exports pick up pace in H2FY24, shows data

After a tepid start in FY24, demand for engineering goods picked up from December, commerce department data showed. The exports of engineering goods — comprising over a fourth of India's export basket — grew 2.1 per cent to \$109.3 billion. The top five export destinations from April to February (2023-24) included the United States, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Germany, and Italy. Indian exporters also sold engineering goods to new markets such as Macao, Georgia, Croatia, and Azerbaijan.

https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/on-an-upswing-engineering-goods-exports-pick-up-pace-in-h2fy24-shows-data-124041801008_1.html

Good market access offered on both sides, says UK on India FTA talks

There has been good market access offered on both sides but not enough to secure a free trade agreement (FTA), the UK government has said as Indian negotiators are in London this week to continue discussions with their British counterparts. During a debate in the House of Lords this week, UK Foreign Secretary David Cameron was addressing questions from British peers on the current state of freedom of religion or belief in India.

https://www.business-standard.com/external-affairs-defence-security/news/good-market-access-offered-on-both-sides-says-uk-on-india-fta-talks-124041800999_1.html

India's FY24 pulses imports hit 6-year high as red lentil purchases jump

India's pulses imports in fiscal 2024 surged 84% year-on-year to their highest level in six years after lower production prompted India to allow duty-free imports of red lentils and yellow peas, government and industry officials said on Thursday. Higher imports by India, the world's biggest importer, producer and consumer of protein-rich pulses, have been supporting global prices and helping bring down stocks in exporting countries such as Canada, Australia, and Myanmar.

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/agriculture/india-s-fy24-pulses-imports-hit-6-year-high-as-red-lentil-purchases-jump-124041800786_1.html

Pharma exports grow 10% in FY24 despite global disruptions, quality concerns

India's pharmaceuticals exports seem to be bucking the trend. Just when the geopolitical tensions and global demand slump have led to a contraction in overall goods exports, pharma exports jumped 9.6% to touch \$27.8 billion in FY24. This is the highest exports growth for the pharma sector in the past three years. Experts said that key categories such as generic formulations (73% of total exports) and API (active pharmaceutical ingredients) categories witnessed robust growth from critical markets such as US, Europe, and Africa.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/business/industry-pharma-exports-grow-10-in-fy24-despite-global-disruptions-quality-concerns-3461468/>

India exports record 4.8 mn tonnes oilmeal animal feed in FY24: SEA

India exported a record 48.86 tonnes of oilmeal -- used as animal feed -- during the 2023-24 financial year on revival of shipments of soyabean meal, industry body SEA said on Thursday. In value terms also, the country's oilmeal exports were highest at Rs 15,368 crore during 2023-24 fiscal. The previous record was 43.81 lakh tonnes achieved in 2013-14 fiscal, while in value terms shipments stood at Rs 11,500 crore.

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/india-exports-record-4-8-mn-tonnes-oilmeal-animal-feed-in-fy24-sea-124041800552_1.html