



August 14, 2024 – Wednesday

## Economy

### Centre sets up team to implement internship scheme announced in Budget

The Union Ministry of Corporate Affairs has intensified efforts to roll out the ambitious youth internship programme, which was announced by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her Budget 2024-25 speech. The Ministry has set up a team of Indian Corporate Law Service (ICLS) officers to implement the internship scheme, according to a CNBC TV18 report. Besides, the ministry has also made several new appointments for this purpose. The ministry is also holding discussions with corporate HR leaders in Delhi and Mumbai to finalise the contours of the scheme.

[https://www.business-standard.com/budget/news/centre-sets-up-team-to-implement-internship-scheme-announced-in-budget-124081300614\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/budget/news/centre-sets-up-team-to-implement-internship-scheme-announced-in-budget-124081300614_1.html)

### Govt kick-starts revamp of Centrally Sponsored Schemes

As part of the expenditure reforms, the Niti Aayog has initiated a process for revamping of Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSSs), which account for over 10% of the Centre's annual budget outlay, to assess each scheme's relevance, effectiveness and sustainability. The Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO) of the think tank has invited proposals to engage consultancy firms to support the evaluation of CSSs in nine broad sectors. These are the Agriculture and Allied Sector; Women and Child Development; Education, Urban Transformation & Skill Development; Rural Development Sector; Drinking water and sanitation; Health Sector; Water Resources, Environment and Forest Sector; and Social Inclusion, Law & Order and Justice Delivery.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/policy/economy-govt-kick-starts-revamp-of-centrally-sponsored-schemes-3582175/>

### CPI inflation down, but road ahead could be bumpy: SBI Report

India's Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation dropped to 3.54 per cent in July 2024, its lowest in nearly five years, largely driven by a decline in vegetable prices. However, despite this positive development, the State Bank of India (SBI) has cautioned that the path forward may be challenging, according to the SBI research report. The dramatic reduction in vegetable inflation, which plummeted from 29.3 per cent in June to a mere 6.8 per cent in July, played a crucial role in achieving this multi-year low. The weighted contribution of vegetables to the overall CPI also shrank from 1.77 per cent in June to 0.55 per cent in July, underscoring their impact on the headline inflation figure.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/cpi-inflation-down-but-road-ahead-could-be-bumpy-sbi-report/articleshow/112482754.cms>

## Finance

### GST meet on Sept 9 to discuss rate rejig, levy on health insurance

The GST Council, which will meet here on September 9, is likely to make progress on the long-pending agenda of rate rationalisation, and review levy of GST on import of services by Indian entities from offshore branches. It may also discuss taxation of health insurance, including a proposal to cut the current 18% tax rate on the gross premium, and another one to remove such services from the ambit of the tax, sources privy to the matter said. However, the

Council may not take up the issue of contentious 28% GST levy on online gaming industry, which was supposed to be reviewed six-months post its enforcement from October, 2023.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/policy/economy-gst-meet-on-sept-9-to-discuss-rate-rejig-levy-on-health-insurance-3582045/>

#### **Insolvency Board mandates unique identification number for valuation reports**

The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India will provide a unique identification number for each valuation report prepared under the insolvency law to ensure authenticity, the board said in a circular on Monday. IBBI is the designated authority for registration, monitoring and development of valuers under the Companies Act, 2013.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/banking/finance/insolvency-board-mandates-unique-identification-number-for-valuation-reports/articleshow/112500659.cms>

#### **IREDA may set up arm to help finance small biz, retail clients**

Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd (IREDA), the state-run shadow bank whose shares have risen four-fold since last year's listing, plans to form a subsidiary to help finance small businesses and retail customers seeking to set up rooftop solar and bioenergy projects or buy electric vehicles, its chairman has said. Many small and micro businesses planning renewable projects such as rooftop solar, waste-to-energy, bioenergy projects or e-mobility "are not getting proper banking support," IREDA chairman Pradip Kumar Das told ET.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/banking/finance/insure/ireda-may-set-up-arm-to-help-finance-small-biz-retail-clients/articleshow/112503511.cms>

### **Industry**

#### **Indian smartphone market grows 7.2%, reaching 69 million in H1 2024**

The Indian smartphone market shipped 69 million smartphones in the first half of 2024, with 7.2 per cent growth year-on-year (Y-o-Y). In the second quarter of CY24, the market shipped 35 million smartphones, with growth of 3.2 per cent Y-o-Y, according to the International Data Corporation's (IDC) Worldwide Quarterly Mobile Phone Tracker. Although it is the fourth consecutive quarter of Y-o-Y shipment growth, muted consumer demand and rising average selling prices (ASPs) continue to restrict swift annual recovery.

[https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/indian-smartphone-market-grows-7-2-reaching-69-million-in-h1-2024-124081301141\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/indian-smartphone-market-grows-7-2-reaching-69-million-in-h1-2024-124081301141_1.html)

#### **Festivals hold promise but passenger vehicle sales may stay flat in FY25**

Passenger vehicle sales, which have been on a slower growth trajectory so far this financial year, are likely to end the 2024-25 fiscal on a flat note, feel industry insiders. While OEMs are upbeat on the upcoming festive season sales, analysts peg the overall growth in PV sales for FY25 to be flat at 0.8 percent or so. Shailesh Chandra, MD, Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles and Tata Passenger Electric Mobility said that he expects the year to end with a 2-3 per cent overall growth in PV retail sales over the 4.2 mn units (highest ever) last year.

[https://www.business-standard.com/industry/auto/passenger-vehicle-sales-likely-to-be-flat-in-fy25-over-4-2-mn-units-last-yr-124081100249\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/industry/auto/passenger-vehicle-sales-likely-to-be-flat-in-fy25-over-4-2-mn-units-last-yr-124081100249_1.html)

#### **MSMEs to get Rs 15,000-crore subsidy to adopt green tech**

The government is firming up a ₹15,000 crore green scheme for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and creating an e-marketplace for recyclables connecting manufacturers and waste collectors. The scheme, which is expected to be launched by early 2025, includes setting up material recovery facilities (MRF) and facilitating product treatment after consumption. Besides, a dedicated body is expected to be set up to oversee the transition of MSMEs to green energy and to formulate MSME-specific green policies, said officials aware of the developments.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/renewables/msmes-to-get-rs-15000-crore-subsidy-to-adopt-green-tech/articleshow/112503658.cms>

### **Agriculture**

#### **CITI, ILO join hands for best labour standards in cotton farms**

The Confederation of Indian Textile Industry (CITI) and International Labor Organization (ILO) Tuesday launched a project to promote Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (FPRW) among the cotton growing community. The project's inaugural phase will focus on the major cotton-producing districts of Madhya Pradesh, with a special emphasis on small and marginal farmers and migrant labor engaged as cotton farmers with leased land. The project aims to ensure fair labor practices, social protection, and sustainable livelihoods for about 6.5 million cotton

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/citi-ilo-join-hands-for-best-labour-standards-in-cotton-farms/articleshow/112503591.cms>

## Infrastructure

### Indian ports make bunkering activity gains amid Red Sea crisis: S&P

Indian ports reported a 64 per cent year-on-year (Y-o-Y) increase in the total number of bunkering and ship-to-ship (STS) calls during the first seven months of 2024, according to S&P Global Commodity Insights. The gains are attributed to the attacks on ships in the Red Sea region. S&P said the Red Sea crisis has prompted shipowners to choose longer routes around Africa, resulting in a substantial increase in monsoon bunker demand at Indian ports. The crisis emerged in October 2023 and has persisted since then.

[https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/indian-ports-make-bunkering-activity-gains-amid-red-sea-crisis-s-p-124081301337\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/indian-ports-make-bunkering-activity-gains-amid-red-sea-crisis-s-p-124081301337_1.html)

### Green-certified buildings account for 82% of all office leasing: Colliers

Occupiers' preference to lease green-certified buildings, called so because they are environmentally responsible and resource-efficient, has been seeing an uptick in India. During the April-June quarter this year, 12.9 million square feet (msf) of office space has been leased in green-certified buildings across the top six cities in India, according to data shared by real estate consultancy Colliers on Tuesday. This represents a 24 per cent increase compared to 10.5 msf in the same quarter in 2023 and accounts for 82 per cent of all total office leasing (15.8 msf) during the quarter.

[https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/green-certified-buildings-account-for-82-of-all-office-leasing-colliers-124081300510\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/green-certified-buildings-account-for-82-of-all-office-leasing-colliers-124081300510_1.html)

### Realty firms ramp up hospitality focus as travel biz booms

More Indian developers are warming up to high-capex hospitality projects across the country after domestic travelers, emerging from the aftermath of the pandemic, resume spending for quality vacation experiences. "We didn't focus much on hospitality in the past as it's very capex heavy and returns take time. But, we see cycles are changing," said Adrija Agarwal, founder of Sattva Ventures and VP, business development at Salarpuria Sattva Group. "Average room rates are improving and discretionary spends are going up. We think some of these discretionary spends will also be directed towards travel and experiences," she added.

[https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/services/property/-cstruction/realty-firms-ramp-up-hospitality-focus-as-travel-biz-booms/articleshow/112502860.cms?utm\\_source=ETTopNews&utm\\_medium=HPTN&utm\\_campaign=AL1&utm\\_content=23](https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/services/property/-cstruction/realty-firms-ramp-up-hospitality-focus-as-travel-biz-booms/articleshow/112502860.cms?utm_source=ETTopNews&utm_medium=HPTN&utm_campaign=AL1&utm_content=23)

## Energy

### Sugarcane set to reclaim dominance as ethanol feedstock next year: Industry

After ceding space to maize and broken rice, industry players believe that sugarcane-based molasses will regain its position as the pre-eminent feedstock in the ambitious ethanol blending program starting in the forthcoming ethanol supply year, which begins in November 2024. In the ongoing supply year (2023-24), which ends in October, maize and broken rice have replaced sugarcane-based molasses as the main feedstock for producing ethanol to keep the blending program running.

[https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/sugarcane-set-to-reclaim-dominance-as-ethanol-feedstock-next-year-industry-124081301132\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/sugarcane-set-to-reclaim-dominance-as-ethanol-feedstock-next-year-industry-124081301132_1.html)

### India adds 1.7 GW solar power capacity in July

India added 1,733.7 MW of solar power capacity in July, taking the cumulative installed capacity to 87.2 GW at the end of the month, according to the ministry of new and renewable energy. In FY25 till July, the addition in solar power capacity was 5,394 MW. In FY24, the total installation of solar capacity was around 15 GW.

[https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/renewables/india-adds-1-7-gw-solar-power-capacity-in-july/articleshow/112503585.cms?utm\\_source=ETTopNews&utm\\_medium=HPTN&utm\\_campaign=AL1&utm\\_content=23](https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/renewables/india-adds-1-7-gw-solar-power-capacity-in-july/articleshow/112503585.cms?utm_source=ETTopNews&utm_medium=HPTN&utm_campaign=AL1&utm_content=23)

#### **Govt awards 18 coal mines to private operators**

The government on Tuesday said of the 28 coal mining projects identified to be operated through mining operators-cum-developers, 18 mines have been awarded to leading private firms. The engagement of these mining developers-cum-operators (MDOs) promises to make substantial contributions to coal production, ensuring both enhanced output and operational excellence. "Initially, CIL (Coal India) identified 15 coal mine projects with a combined capacity of 168 MT (million tonnes) for MDO implementation. This number has now expanded to 28 projects (18 opencast and 10 underground mines) with a total capacity of 257 MT.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/incl-goods/svs/metals-mining/govt-awards-18-coal-mines-to-private-operators/articleshow/112501719.cms>

#### **Govt mulls ethanol price hike for 2024-25 season to increase production**

The government is considering a proposal to increase ethanol prices for the season starting November 2024, while also pushing for diversification of feedstocks, as it aims to achieve the 20 per cent blending target by 2025-26, sources said. A committee headed by a joint secretary from the petroleum ministry has already held one round of discussions on the proposal. The revision of ethanol prices will be based on the fair and remunerative price of sugarcane, they added. "The price revision is being considered on priority to incentivize production and meet our blending goals," a source said, requesting anonymity.

[https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/govt-mulls-ethanol-price-hike-for-2024-25-season-to-increase-production-124081300700\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/govt-mulls-ethanol-price-hike-for-2024-25-season-to-increase-production-124081300700_1.html)

### **Telecom**

#### **Trai asks telcos to blacklist unregistered telemarketers' lines over spam**

Sector regulator Trai on Tuesday directed telcos to disconnect all telecom resources of unregistered telemarketers found making spam calls, and to blacklist them for up to two years. Further, Trai has asked telcos to comply immediately with its latest directive and submit regular updates on action taken in this regard on a fortnightly basis. Issuing its directive to telcos, Trai said this "decisive action" is expected to significantly reduce spam calls and provide relief to consumers.

[https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/trai-asks-telcos-to-blacklist-unregistered-telemarketers-lines-over-spam-124081300876\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/trai-asks-telcos-to-blacklist-unregistered-telemarketers-lines-over-spam-124081300876_1.html)

#### **Discoms face financial constraints due to payment delays from govt: ICRA**

The state-owned power distribution companies are facing financial constraints despite improving their aggregate technical and commercial losses, according to an IcrA report. The agency has cited delays in realising payments from state government departments for power supply as one of the reasons for the constrain of discom finances and assigned a negative outlook for the power distribution segment. The all-India aggregate technical and commercial (AT&C) losses for state-owned discoms declined from 23 per cent in FY2021 to 16.5 per cent in FY2022 and further to 15.8 per cent in FY2023 due to infrastructure upgrades and higher subsidy payout.

[https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/discoms-face-financial-constraints-due-to-payment-delays-from-govt-icra-124081301448\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/discoms-face-financial-constraints-due-to-payment-delays-from-govt-icra-124081301448_1.html)

### **External**

#### **India, Russia explore dynamic rupee-rouble rate to overcome trade issues**

India and Russia are exploring a dynamic rupee-rouble rate to overcome dollar trade barriers in the wake of US sanctions on Moscow, according to The Economic Times report. The development comes as Russia has accumulated

a significant amount in rupees while trading with India since the outbreak of the Ukraine war in February 2022. Currently, banks handling export-import payments or any capital flows between the two countries have to take the dollar route in converting the currencies. This means carrying out two, almost simultaneous, transactions – of rupee to US dollar, and dollars to rouble – in arriving at a rupee-rouble exchange rate.

[https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/india-russia-explore-dynamic-rupee-rouble-rate-to-overcome-trade-issues-124081300559\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/india-russia-explore-dynamic-rupee-rouble-rate-to-overcome-trade-issues-124081300559_1.html)

#### **EEPC India, ISSDA sign MoU to promote MSME exports, international trade**

The Engineering Export Promotion Council of India (EEPC India) and the Indian Stainless Steel Development Association (ISSDA) on Tuesday signed an MoU to promote exports by MSME members. The two organisations will collaborate to identify potential export products and organise trade exhibitions, buyer-seller meets, and economic summits, an EEPC statement said. The agreement also aims to facilitate the exchange of trade information and encourage international investment through joint ventures and technical collaborations.

[https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/eepec-india-issda-sign-mou-to-promote-msme-exports-international-trade-124081301156\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/eepec-india-issda-sign-mou-to-promote-msme-exports-international-trade-124081301156_1.html)

#### **Govt likely to extend import regime for laptops, IT hardware products**

The Union government may consider extending the import management system for laptops and other IT hardware products for a few months, people aware of the matter said. The current deadline for the system ends on September 30. An extension, if agreed upon, would provide clarity and stability to the industry, particularly at a time when the domestic manufacturing ecosystem for these products is not yet robust.

[https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/govt-may-extend-import-management-system-for-it-hardware-beyond-sept-30-124081301517\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/govt-may-extend-import-management-system-for-it-hardware-beyond-sept-30-124081301517_1.html)