



October 17, 2024 – Thursday

## Economy

### India Inc's capacity utilisation falls off 44-quarter peak

Corporate India's capacity utilisation too remained muted at 74% in Q1FY25 after recovering to a 44-quarter high of 76.8% in the fourth quarter of last fiscal year, data from RBI's Order Books, Inventories, and Capacity Utilisation Survey show. Also, the companies' inventory-to-sales ratio rose to 67.4% in April-June quarter this fiscal year as compared with 65.4% in the previous quarter, indicating persisting weakness in consumption demand.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/business/industry-india-incs-capacity-utilisation-falls-off-44-quarter-peak-3641781/>

### It's Indian century but we should not be too complacent: Economist Jagdish Bhagwati

This is the Indian century, and the country is on the right track, leading economist professor Jagdish Bhagwati said, while cautioning that it should not become complacent. On rising trade protectionism, he said India needs to be nimble, flexible and explore multiple opportunities, and that there is nothing called a trustworthy partner in international politics.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/its-indian-century-but-we-should-not-be-too-complacent-economist-jagdish-bhagwati/articleshow/114292585.cms>

### FY25 fresher hiring by IT sector to rise by 20-25%: TeamLease Digital

Fresher hiring, which has been muted as Indian IT services firms reduced their intake, is expected to finally see a turnaround. The information technology (IT) sector's fresher hiring is projected to rise by 20-25 per cent for FY25. Additionally, Global Capability Centres (GCC) are expected to increase their fresher hiring by 40 per cent compared to the previous year, according to a TeamLease Digital analysis. The analysis highlights that this hiring uptick is driven by a focus on specialised skills in segments like artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), and data. TeamLease also noted that the emphasis on these skills spans various experience levels.

[https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/fy25-fresher-hiring-by-it-sector-to-rise-by-20-25-teamlease-digital-124101600876\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/fy25-fresher-hiring-by-it-sector-to-rise-by-20-25-teamlease-digital-124101600876_1.html)

## Finance

### SEBI introduces liquidity window facility for investors in debt securities

Sebi on Wednesday introduced a liquidity window facility for investors in the debt securities through a stock exchange mechanism. The liquidity window facility allows investors holding listed debt securities to sell them back to the issuer using a put option on specific dates, ensuring liquidity. This facility, available from November 1, will be of immense utility to investors, especially retail investors, and can serve to enhance their investment in such debt securities, Sebi said in a circular.

[https://www.business-standard.com/finance/news/sebi-introduces-liquidity-window-facility-for-investors-in-debt-securities-124101601083\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/finance/news/sebi-introduces-liquidity-window-facility-for-investors-in-debt-securities-124101601083_1.html)

### Indian payments industry likely to grow to \$49 trillion in value by 2028: BCG

The Indian payments industry is likely to grow to \$49 trillion in value by 2028 recording a 10% growth from the level of \$30 trillion seen at the end of 2023, estimates by Boston Consulting Group (BCG) exclusively shared with ET shows. BCG also projects that the transaction volumes will outpace total transaction values to grow at 25% by 2028 to reach 434 billion. It was at 144 billion at the end of 2023.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/banking/finance/banking/indian-payments-industry-likely-to-grow-to-49-trillion-in-value-by-2028-bcg/articleshow/114290237.cms>

#### **Ministers' group discusses merger of GST compensation cess into taxes**

The group of ministers (GoM) on GST compensation cess, under Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary, on Wednesday discussed merger of compensation cess into GST. States suggested that during the transition of cess, once it is decided to merge with taxes no new goods should be added to the list of luxury, sin and demerit goods. States were of the view that since the compensation cess ends in March 2026, the only way to restructure it is to merge the levy with the taxes and bring about separate tax rates for the items on which cess is levied currently.

[https://www.business-standard.com/finance/news/ministers-group-discusses-merger-of-gst-compensation-cess-into-taxes-124101600657\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/finance/news/ministers-group-discusses-merger-of-gst-compensation-cess-into-taxes-124101600657_1.html)

#### **Combined capex of state govts to undershoot FY25 budget estimates: ICRA**

Rating agency ICRA on Wednesday said the combined capital spending of a sample of 13 major state governments is projected to increase by 12.6 per cent to Rs 6.5 trillion in FY25. This is significantly lower than the 24 per cent growth indicated in the budget estimates (BE) of the states, which total Rs 7.2 trillion, and the 19.6 per cent growth rate witnessed in FY24.

[https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/combined-capex-of-state-govts-to-undershoot-fy25-budget-estimates-icra-124101601307\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/combined-capex-of-state-govts-to-undershoot-fy25-budget-estimates-icra-124101601307_1.html)

### **Industry**

#### **India's high food prices curtail spending in early festive season, say retailers**

Rising prices of edible oils and vegetables like onions and tomatoes have driven up grocery spending for Indian households ahead of the festival season, prompting some consumers to limit more expensive purchases like electronic items, retailers said. India's annual festival season, which runs from late September to early November, sees households scramble to buy food and other goods, encouraged by discounts offered by both online and brick-and-mortar retailers. But the start to the festive season this year has been slow.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/services/retail/indias-high-food-prices-curtail-spending-in-early-festive-season-say-retailers/articleshow/114286277.cms>

#### **Motorcycle industry sales below expectations so far this festive season: Bajaj Auto**

Motorcycle sales in the ongoing festive season so far are below expectations as demand is muted and the industry will be lucky if it sees 3-5 per cent growth compared to last year, Bajaj Auto Executive Director Rakesh Sharma said on Wednesday. While there are still about 15 more days to go for the festive sales this month, he said as a result of muted growth in motorcycles, the overall growth prospects of the two-wheeler industry could also be impacted for the full fiscal. "The responses in the motorcycle industry are a little bit muted in the sense that we thought that about 6 to 8 per cent growth will be there in the festive period, but it is not that much. It is 1-2 per cent, almost very similar to last year, same period," Sharma told reporters in an earnings call.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/auto/two-wheelers-three-wheelers/motorcycle-industry-sales-below-expectations-so-far-this-festive-season-bajaj-auto/articleshow/114289849.cms>

#### **Most Indian execs say IT infra 'best-in-class' but only half of them trust risk preparedness: Report**

A majority of Indian executives believe they have 'best-in-class' IT infrastructure, but only half of them trust their systems' preparedness to tackle future risks and challenges, a report said on Wednesday. The findings of the 2024 Kyndryl Readiness Report is based on insights from AI-powered digital business platform Kyndryl Bridge as well as a survey conducted across 3,200 senior decision-makers across 25 industries in 18 global markets, covering sectors like healthcare, manufacturing, energy. "Among global respondents, India leads in average readiness across risks at

35 per cent. In India, 88 per cent of business leaders are confident that their IT infrastructure is the best in class and 44 per cent among them say their IT infrastructure is ready to manage future risks," the report said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/infrastructure/most-indian-execs-say-it-infra-best-in-class-but-only-half-of-them-trust-risk-preparedness-report/articleshow/114291762.cms>

## Agriculture

### Edible oil mission to scale up output by 64 per cent in 7 years

The government has set a target to raise oil seeds production by 64% to 20.18 million tonne (MT) per annum by 2032 from 12.3 MT at present. The move is aimed at reducing the rising import bill for cooking oils, which is proving to be another strain for the country's current account, along with crude petroleum imports. India imported edible oils worth \$20billion in oil year 2022-23 (Nov-Oct). Imports have continued unabated in the current year too, aided by low import tariffs.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/policy/economy-edible-oil-mission-to-scale-up-output-by-64-per-cent-in-7-years-3640668/>

### Centre approves MSP hikes for rabi crops for marketing season 2025-26

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday raised the Minimum Support Prices (MSP) for key rabi crops for the 2025-26 marketing season starting from April by 2.4-7 per cent. The support price of wheat has been hiked by 6.59 per cent and fixed at Rs 2,425 per quintal from Rs 2,275 per quintal in the marketing season 2024-25. The hikes might not have a big inflationary impact. According to an analysis done by the Bank of Baroda, the overall inflationary impact of MSP hikes on wheat, chana, mustard, and masur would be lower at around 0.18-0.20 per cent over a year.

[https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/centre-hikes-wheat-msp-by-6-59-percent-for-2025-26-marketing-season-124101601137\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/centre-hikes-wheat-msp-by-6-59-percent-for-2025-26-marketing-season-124101601137_1.html)

### Natural rubber production up 2% in FY24: Rubber Board

India's natural rubber production has shown a steady growth, registering a 2.1 per cent increase in FY2023-24 at 8.57 lakh tonnes compared with 8.39 lakh tonnes (lt) a year ago.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/natural-rubber-production-up-2-in-fy24-rubber-board/article68760673.ece>

## Infrastructure

### Sub-Rs 1k crore shortcut on Bharatmala Map

The yet-to-be-awarded projects under Bharatmala Pariyojana that were halted in November 2023 will now be awarded directly by the ministry of road transport and highways. Projects costing less than `1,000 crore will be awarded over the next few months, a senior official said. The government is looking to fast-track the award of road contracts that had considerably slowed down this fiscal year, with Bharatmala being put on hold due to cost escalation.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/sub-rs-1k-crore-shortcut-on-bharatmala-map/articleshow/114293889.cms>

### Union Cabinet approves Rs 2,642-cr Varanasi-DDU multi-tracking project

Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the Varanasi-Pt Deen Dayal Upadhyaya (DDU) multi-tracking project with an estimated cost of Rs 2,642 crore. The proposed project includes a new rail-cum-road bridge across the Ganga river and the addition of third and fourth railway lines between Varanasi and DDU Junction route, among other infrastructural upgrades. "The proposed multi-tracking project will ease operations and reduce congestion, providing the much-required infrastructural development on the busiest sections across Indian Railways. The project traverses through Varanasi and Chandauli districts in Uttar Pradesh," a government statement said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/infrastructure/union-cabinet-approves-rs-2642-cr-varanasi-ddu-multi-tracking-project/articleshow/114284944.cms>

### **Industrial and warehousing leasing up 17% YoY growth in 9 months: Report**

The industrial and warehousing leasing saw 17 per cent year-on-year (Y-o-Y) growth during the first three quarters of the ongoing calendar year (CY2024) across the top five cities of India, a research report by Colliers said. About 20.2 million square feet (msf) space was leased during the period in Mumbai, Pune, Bengaluru, Delhi NCR, and Chennai.

[https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/industrial-and-warehousing-leasing-up-17-yoy-growth-in-9-months-report-124101600672\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/industrial-and-warehousing-leasing-up-17-yoy-growth-in-9-months-report-124101600672_1.html)

### **Office demand high as leasing to cross 80 mn sq ft in top 8 cities: C&W**

Gross leasing of office space across top eight cities is likely to cross 80 million square feet this calendar year, beating a record 74.5 million square feet during 2023, according to Cushman & Wakefield. Real estate consultant Cushman & Wakefield on Wednesday released its report on the office market for the third quarter of this calendar year. The gross leasing of office space rose 66 per cent to 24.8 million square feet across the top eight cities in Q3 2024, marking the second highest quarterly leasing volume in the sector's history. During January-September, the gross leasing has reached 66.7 million square feet.

[https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/office-demand-high-as-leasing-to-cross-80-mn-sq-ft-in-top-8-cities-c-w-124101600234\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/office-demand-high-as-leasing-to-cross-80-mn-sq-ft-in-top-8-cities-c-w-124101600234_1.html)

## **Energy**

### **India set to lead global energy demand growth, coal will remain central: IEA**

India is poised to experience more energy demand growth than any other country over the next decade due to its large population and rising demand from all sectors, according to a new report by the International Energy Agency. The World Energy Outlook 2024 report also said that coal will remain a major part of India's energy mix for the next few decades, with the country projected to add about 60 gigawatts of new coal-fired power capacity by 2030, even though some older coal plants will retire. "The population size and the scale of rising demand from all sectors mean that India is poised to experience more energy demand growth than any other country over the next decade," the IEA report said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/power/india-set-to-lead-global-energy-demand-growth-coal-will-remain-central-iea/articleshow/114289555.cms>

### **Govt wants multiple methanol plants over next 5-7 years: VK Saraswat**

The Centre aims to promote methanol as a green fuel, and based on initial discussions, it anticipates multiple methanol plants to be established over the next five years, Niti Aayog member VK Saraswat said on Wednesday. "We hope that as part of the coal gasification mission, there will be at least a couple of plants manufacturing coal-to-methanol in the next five to seven years. We are also collaborating with public and private industry to set up bamboo-to-methanol plants to produce green methanol, which will then be utilised for both domestic and export purposes," Saraswat said.

[https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/govt-wants-multiple-methanol-plants-over-next-5-7-years-vk-saraswat-124101601316\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/govt-wants-multiple-methanol-plants-over-next-5-7-years-vk-saraswat-124101601316_1.html)

### **Over 4 lakh rooftop solar systems installed under PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana, says Pralhad Joshi**

Over 4 lakh rooftop solar systems have been installed across the country under the PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana, Union Minister Pralhad Joshi said on Wednesday. The Minister for New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) was speaking at the curtain raiser event for the 7th International Solar Alliance (ISA) Assembly scheduled for November 3-6 in the national capital. "India is positioning itself as a key player in global efforts to combat climate change. We are simultaneously working to achieve our own energy goals. In fact, just last week India achieved 400,000 (4 lakh) installations under PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana," he said addressing the gathering which included delegates of member countries.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/renewables/over-4-lakh-rooftop-solar-systems-installed-under-pm-surya-ghar-muft-bijli-yojana-says-pralhad-joshi/articleshow/114288939.cms>

## **Telecom**

### **6G standards, regulations must ensure inclusivity: Union minister Scindia**

Union Communications Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia on Wednesday asserted that the standards and regulations around 6G should ensure inclusivity and affordability. Speaking at the international 6G symposium at India Mobile Congress, the minister emphasised on the scope of India's tremendous opportunity in advancing 6G technology.

[https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/6g-standards-regulations-must-ensure-inclusivity-union-minister-scindia-124101600528\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/6g-standards-regulations-must-ensure-inclusivity-union-minister-scindia-124101600528_1.html)

### **States**

#### **Bhopal mining conclave: Madhya Pradesh seeks to become an industrial hub**

A mining conclave will be held in Bhopal on October 17-18 to highlight potential opportunities in mining, oil, gas, and mineral-based industries within the state, ToI reported on October 16. An announcement to this effect was made by Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav. The event will focus on the state's mineral resources to attract investments. Topics such as artificial intelligence, machine learning in mining, digital transformation, energy security, and sustainability will be discussed. Alternative energy sources like coal-bed methane (CBM) will also be explored. A round table meeting will address issues in the cement, energy, and mineral-based industries, with several Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) expected to be signed.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/indl-goods/svs/metals-mining/bhopal-mining-conclave-madhya-pradesh-seeks-to-become-an-industrial-hub/articleshow/114280453.cms>

### **External**

#### **Trade deficit eases to \$20.8 bn in Sept amid geopolitical challenges**

India's trade deficit eased to \$20.78 billion in September as merchandise imports growth slowed to 1.6 per cent, and merchandise exports grew 0.5 per cent due to muted global demand amid geopolitical challenges, according to data released by the commerce department. The trade deficit had widened to a 10-month high of \$29.7 billion in August. Exports stood at \$34.58 billion in September, while imports were at \$55.36 billion during the month.

[https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/trade-deficit-eases-to-20-8-bn-in-sept-amid-geopolitical-challenges-124101600669\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/trade-deficit-eases-to-20-8-bn-in-sept-amid-geopolitical-challenges-124101600669_1.html)

#### **China emerges as India's top import source during April-September 2024: Commerce ministry data**

China has emerged as India's top import source with USD 56.29 billion worth of inbound shipments during the April-September period of this fiscal, according to the commerce ministry data. During the period, the US emerged as the top export destination for the country with outbound shipments increasing by 5.62 per cent to USD 40.38 billion.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/china-emerges-as-indias-top-import-source-during-april-september-2024-commerce-ministry-data/articleshow/114287599.cms>

#### **India looks to expedite FTA talks with Australia in next 2 months to close negotiations**

India is looking at expediting the free trade agreement talks with Australia in the next two months to bridge differences on the sensitive issues and close the negotiations, a senior government official said on Wednesday. "Otherwise Australia goes for election next year, maybe the (talks for the) agreement will go beyond that depending on the work, we are able to do in these two months," Additional Secretary in the Department of Commerce Rajesh Agrawal told reporters here. The eleventh round of negotiations are expected to be held next month. The India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (AI-ECTA) came into effect from December 2022.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/india-looks-to-expedite-fta-talks-with-australia-in-next-2-months-to-close-negotiations/articleshow/114286903.cms>