



November 14, 2024 – Thursday

Economy

Festivals take e-toll collections to a record ₹6,000 crore in October

Electronic toll collection in India totalled ₹6,114.92 crore in October, the highest in a month since the collation of data from 2021 and 7.6% higher than the monthly average of ₹5,681.46 crore over the previous six months, according to government data, signalling robust economic activity during the festive month. Total electronic toll collection in the country in the first six months of this financial year stood at ₹34,088.77 crore, up 9.8% from ₹31,026.64 crore a year ago.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/infrastructure/festivals-take-e-toll-collections-to-a-record-6000-crore-in-october/articleshow/115266601.cms>

India's workforce to increase to 457.62 mn by 2028: Report

India is on track to increase its workforce from 423.73 million in 2023 to 457.62 million by 2028, reflecting a net gain of 33.89 million workers, a report said on Wednesday. According to a report by American software company ServiceNow, emerging technology will transform talent across India's key growth sectors, generating 2.73 million new tech jobs by 2028. According to the report this surge in demand presents retail professionals with a valuable opportunity to upskill in areas like Software Application Development and Data Engineering, equipping them for a tech-driven landscape.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/jobs/hr-policies-trends/indias-workforce-to-increase-to-457-62-mn-by-2028-report/articleshow/115257945.cms>

Modi regime sees five-fold jump in ITR filers with income above Rs 50 lakh; middle class tax burden falls

Tax burden on individuals earning less than Rs 20 lakh a year, broadly described as middle class, has come down during the 10 years of Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government, while there has been a substantial increase in taxes paid by those having annual income above Rs 50 lakh, sources said on Wednesday. As per the income tax return (ITR) filing data, the number of individuals showing annual income of over Rs 50 lakh has gone up to over 9.39 lakh in 2023-24, a five-fold jump from 1.85 lakh in 2013-14. Also, the income tax liability of those earning above Rs 50 lakh has gone up 3.2 times, from Rs 2.52 lakh crore in 2014, to Rs 9.62 lakh crore in 2024.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/finance/modi-regime-sees-five-fold-jump-in-itr-filers-with-income-above-rs-50-lakh-middle-class-tax-burden-falls/articleshow/115261078.cms>

Finance

Severe action to be taken for causing harassment to taxpayers: Sitharaman

It is not the intention of the government to cause any difficulty or harassment for taxpayers, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said during an interactive session with the Citizen Council in Mangalore on Wednesday. She assured that concerned officials are held accountable for any unintended or intentional harassment to ensure it does not happen. "If there is any attempt at unfair treatment that comes to my notice, I pull them up severely... If there is any harassment, I appeal to every one of you to let me know. I'll take responsibility to resolve it," the finance minister said.

https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/severe-action-to-be-taken-for-causing-harassment-to-taxpayers-sitharaman-124111301874_1.html

Centre expects to exceed gross direct tax collection target for FY25

Ahead of the presentation of the FY26 Budget in February, government sources said they not only expect to meet the Rs 22 trillion gross direct tax collection target for FY25, but also exceed it given the robust trend so far. "Gross collections have not come down. It is because of higher refunds that net collections have slowed down. The way the economy is doing and the way the collections are growing, we are hopeful that we will not only meet the target but also exceed it," the source said.

https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/centre-expects-to-exceed-gross-direct-tax-collection-target-for-fy25-124111301828_1.html

Civic bodies need major reforms to enhance revenue sources: RBI report

The Municipal corporations (MCs) in the country need comprehensive reforms to boost their own sources of revenue through tax reforms, rationalisation of user charges, and strengthening of collection mechanisms to plug leakages, according to a report released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Wednesday. The report titled 'Own Sources of Revenue Generation in Municipal Corporations: Opportunities and Challenges' analysed the budgetary data for 232 MCs, covering more than 90 per cent of the total MCs in the country.

https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/civic-bodies-need-major-reforms-to-enhance-revenue-sources-rbi-report-124111301662_1.html

Small savings collection expected to fall short of Budget Estimates

Collections through small saving schemes may be lower than the Budget Estimate, a senior Finance Ministry official has indicated. This would be despite good mop-up during the last two months of the current fiscal – February and March.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/small-savings-collection-expected-to-fall-short-of-budget-estimates/article68866453.ece>

MFIs reduce lending rates as RBI voices concerns

About half a dozen pure-play microfinance lenders have reduced lending rates in the past couple of months amid heightened regulatory scrutiny on the pricing policy adopted by these financiers that service the bottom of the consumer pyramid.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/banking/finance/mfis-reduce-lending-rates-as-rbi-voices-concerns/articleshow/115263135.cms>

FinMin not keen on inclusion of BIT in free trade pacts: Sources

The Finance Ministry does not want Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITs) to be negotiated as part of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) that India is working on with partner countries and has suggested to the Commerce & Industry Ministry that the two be kept separate, sources have said.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/finmin-not-keen-on-inclusion-of-bit-in-free-trade-pacts-sources/article68864468.ece>

Industry

Automakers see slight growth in domestic sales after three months, driven by festive sales

After a gap of three months, carmakers in the local market reported a small uptick in dispatches, albeit on a high base, as consumers drove home vehicles during the festive period in October, spurting retails and bringing down inventory at dealerships. As per data released by industry body Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM), as many as 393,238 vehicles were dispatched from factories to dealerships, compared to 389,714 units sold in the corresponding period of the last financial year.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/auto/auto-news/carmakers-see-slight-growth-in-domestic-sales-after-three-months-driven-by-festive-sales/articleshow/115257050.cms>

AI could create 2.73 million jobs in India by 2028: ServiceNow study

Amid intense debates over Artificial intelligence (AI) and generative AI (GenAI) causing job loss going forward, a study by ServiceNow, in collaboration with Pearson, has projected that AI could actually drive employment growth, creating an estimated 2.73 million jobs in India by 2028. The study highlights that tech-driven sectors — particularly retail, manufacturing, education, and healthcare — will require an influx of skilled workers. Retail alone is projected to add 6.96 million roles, presenting opportunities for reskilling in fields such as software application development, and data engineering.

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/ai-could-create-2-73-mn-jobs-in-india-by-2028-servicenow-study-124111301863_1.html

Quick commerce platforms flouting FDI norms, competition law, alleges CAIT

The Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) on Wednesday alleged that quick commerce platforms are violating several domestic laws in the country, including Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) norms, the Competition Act, and the Consumer Protection Act. In a white paper, the trade body claimed that the country's top three quick commerce platforms — Zomato-owned Blinkit, Swiggy Instamart, and Zepto — have received FDI funds of more than Rs 54,000 crore. "Of this, only Rs 1,300 crore (or 2.5 per cent) has been used to create real assets. It is estimated that over 50 per cent of the FDI may have been spent covering operating losses incurred due to practice of predatory pricing," the document stated.

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/quick-commerce-platforms-flouting-fdi-norms-competition-law-alleges-cait-124111301742_1.html

Quick Commerce captures nearly half of Kirana sales; market projected to hit \$40 billion by 2030

As consumer preferences shift towards the convenience of last-minute grocery deliveries, quick commerce companies are outpacing traditional retailers, with 46 per cent of consumers surveyed reporting a cut in purchases from Kirana shops, a report has said. The quick commerce market size is expected to reach USD 40 billion by 2030, a jump from USD 6.1 billion in 2024, according to the report by Datum Intelligence. "Nearly half (46 per cent) of respondents report reduced spending at Kirana shops, indicating a shift in customer behavior towards quick commerce platforms," it noted. Quick commerce refers to the delivery of consumer items in 10-30 minutes. Blinkit, Zepto, Swiggy Instamart, and Flipkart Minutes are among the top quick commerce platforms in India.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/services/retail/quick-commerce-captures-nearly-half-of-kirana-sales-market-projected-to-hit-40-billion-by-2030/articleshow/115265558.cms>

India need to secure long-term critical mineral supply sources: CareEdge

With India having limited resources of lithium, cobalt, nickel and other critical minerals, domestic players need to secure long-term supply from countries having sizable reserves and focus on battery reuse and recycling, ratings agency CareEdge said on Wednesday. This would provide environmental benefits and reduce price and supply risk associated with imports of these minerals, CareEdge said. India has set an ambitious target to meet 50 per cent of its primary energy requirement from renewable energy sources by 2030 (as a percentage of annual sales).

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/india-need-to-secure-long-term-critical-mineral-supply-sources-careedge-124111301653_1.html

Cooking oil prices surge 13% in a month, no post-Diwali reprieve

Prices of cooking oils such as palm and sunflower have surged 10-13% over the past month, with no reprieve even after the Diwali peak demand season, taking the industry by surprise and pressuring packaged goods firms to raise prices. Strong rally in international prices of palm and soyabean oil, strong buying by China and supply shortages in India are some of the reasons that are keeping cooking oil prices firm, analysts said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/cons-products/fmcg/cooking-oil-prices-surge-13-in-a-month-no-post-diwali-reprieve/articleshow/115267036.cms>

Agriculture

Onion prices likely to cool down further with arrival of new kharif crop: Govt official

Onion prices are expected to further cool down in the coming days as the arrival of fresh kharif crop has begun, a senior consumer affairs ministry official said on Wednesday. Currently, the average all-India retail price of onion is ruling at Rs 54 per kg and the prices have declined in the past one month after the government's subsidised sale of onion in key consuming centers, the official said. The government is disposing of the buffer stock onion in the retail market at a subsidised rate of Rs 35 per kg in Delhi-NCR and other cities to provide relief to consumers from high prices.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/onion-prices-likely-to-cool-down-further-with-arrival-of-new-kharif-crop-govt-official/articleshow/115267236.cms>

India's wheat acreage trails 15% as rabi sowing gathers pace

Sowing of wheat, a key rabi season cereal, is lower by 15.5 per cent at 41.3 lakh hectares (lh) as of November 8 against 48.87 lh a year ago.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/indias-wheat-acreage-trails-15-as-rabi-sowing-gathers-pace/article68864336.ece>

Infrastructure

Mid-sized developers construct a comeback amid real estate boom

Mid-sized real estate firms in India are re-establishing their market presence as the sector experiences an unprecedented upswing in sales. This resurgence follows an extended period of consolidation, primarily led by large corporations. These mid-sized entities are reclaiming market share by concentrating on agile, niche developments that align with changing consumer preferences.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/services/property/-/cstruction/mid-sized-developers-construct-a-comeback-amid-real-estate-boom/articleshow/115266564.cms>

External

India's outward FDI rises to \$3.7 billion in October 2024: RBI data

India's outward foreign direct investment (FDI) commitments rose to \$3.24 billion in October 2024, up from \$2.55 billion in October 2023. However, sequentially, they declined from \$3.77 billion in September 2024, according to data from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Outbound FDI, expressed as a financial commitment, comprises three components: equity, loans, and guarantees.

https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/india-s-outward-fdi-rises-to-3-7-billion-in-october-2024-rbi-data-124111301837_1.html

Govt may seek flexibility in tariff concessions under FTA review with Asean

India may seek flexibility in the existing tariff concessions in sectors which are impacted by significant increase in imports, under the free trade agreement (FTA) review with the 10-nation Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), an official said. The Asean official team is visiting India for the next round of review negotiations, which will start from November 19-22 here. The Asean-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA) was signed in 2009. "We may seek some flexibility in the tariff (or customs duty) concessions that have been given in the agreement. Some of the concessions can be taken back and can be given somewhere else because in some sectors we feel our domestic industry is badly getting hurt. We have domestic injuries in some sectors. We would like to do that in a minimum possible way," the official said.

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/govt-may-seek-flexibility-in-tariff-concessions-under-fta-review-with-asean-124111301119_1.html

India's edible oil imports dip 3% to 15.96 mn tonnes in 2023-24: SEA

India's edible oil imports declined by 3.09 per cent to 159.6 lakh tonnes during the 2023-24 oil marketing year due to higher domestic oilseeds production and reduced demand amid rising prices, according to industry body SEA. The country, which is the world's largest importer of edible oils, had imported 164.7 lakh tonnes in the previous oil year (November-October). In value terms, the imports marginally decreased to Rs 1,31,967 crore in 2023-24, from Rs 1,38,424 crore in the previous year, the Solvent Extractors Association of India (SEA) said in a statement.

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/india-s-edible-oil-imports-dip-3-to-15-96-mn-tonnes-in-2023-24-sea-124111301066_1.html

India's Apr-Oct finished steel imports at seven-year high: Govt data

India's finished steel imports during April-October surged to a seven-year high at 5.7 million metric tons, according to provisional government data reviewed by Reuters on Wednesday. India, the world's second-biggest crude steel producer, had turned a net importer during 2023/24 and the trend has continued during April-October, the data showed. During April-September, China was the lead exporter of finished steel to India and this is widely expected to be the case during April-October. Details will be known later in the month.

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/india-s-apr-oct-finished-steel-imports-at-seven-year-high-govt-data-124111300874_1.html

India's apple imports likely hit a new high this year on rising demand

India's fresh apple imports are likely to hit a new high this 2024-25 marketing year starting July on rising consumption and growing demand for quality apples. This is despite an improved harvest in the domestic market.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/indias-apple-imports-likely-hit-a-new-high-this-year-on-rising-demand/article68864664.ece>

India-Kazakhstan business partnership in manufacturing sector gets a big boost

The India-Kazakhstan Business Conference on Electronics Equipment and Engineering Goods was held on November 11 in Astana, at the Astana International Financial Centre (AIFC). The event brought together prominent business leaders, government officials, and industry experts to discuss opportunities for increased trade, joint ventures, and collaboration in the electronics and engineering sectors.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/india-kazakhstan-business-partnership-in-manufacturing-sector-gets-a-big-boost/articleshow/115265887.cms>