



December 24, 2020 – Thursday

Key Developments

At least 1% GST dues to be paid in cash if monthly sales top Rs 5 million

Businesses with monthly turnover of over Rs 50 lakh will have to mandatorily pay at least 1 per cent of their GST liability in cash, the Finance Ministry said as it moved to curb evasion by fake invoicing.

The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has introduced Rule 86B in Goods and Services Tax (GST) rules which restricts use of input tax credit (ITC) for discharging GST liability to 99 per cent.

... The registered person shall not use the amount available in electronic credit ledger to discharge his liability towards output tax in excess of 99 per cent of tax liability, in cases where the value of taxable supply ... in a month exceeds Rs 50 lakh, the CBIC said. While calculating the turnover threshold, sales from GST exempt goods and zero rates supply would not be included.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/businesses-with-monthly-turnover-of-over-rs-50-lakh-to-pay-at-least-1-gst-liability-in-cash-120122300698_1.html

Govt approves revised DTH guidelines; to issue 20 year licence with 10 year renewal

The union cabinet has approved the long pending revisions to the licensing guidelines of the direct-to-home (DTH) sector, information and broadcasting (I&B) minister Prakash Javadekar said on Wednesday. Under the revised terms, the licences will be awarded for 20 years — from the present 10—with an auto renewal clause for 10 years. The existing DTH guidelines were silent on the course of action to be adopted after expiry of the 10 year license period and that led to multiple temporary extensions to DTH players after expiration of their original licenses.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/cabinet-nod-for-revised-dth-service-guidelines/articleshow/79924003.cms>

Centre extends suspension of insolvency initiation under IBC till March 25

The Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) has extended by three more months — from December 25 to March 25 — the suspension of insolvency proceedings initiation against corporates for debt defaults. A six-month suspension was first introduced on June 5 for debt defaults arising post March 25, 2020, when the Covid-induced lockdown was announced. The suspension was to end on September 25, but was extended up to December 25.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/policy/centre-extends-suspension-of-insolvency-initiation-under-ibc-till-march-25/article33400181.ece?homepage=true>

RBI governor meets bankers over rate transmission, stressed assets

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor Shaktikanta Das and deputy governors met the managing directors and chief executives of public and select private sector banks on Tuesday and Wednesday, to discuss, among other things, transmission of rates and progress in the implementation of resolution framework for Covid-related stressed assets. The RBI governor touched upon the current economic situation and emphasised the importance of the banking sector in supporting the ongoing revival in economic activities. He highlighted the measures taken by the RBI to stabilise the economy and to ensure financial stability during Covid.

"With regard to the banking sector, he reiterated the need for banks to remain vigilant and take proactive measures to strengthen their resilience and lending capacity by raising capital and making provisions proactively," RBI said in a statement.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/finance/rbi-governor-meets-bankers-over-rate-transmission-stressed-assets-120122300851_1.html

India loses Cairn case in arbitration; asked to pay Rs 8,000 cr in damages

In a major setback, Indian government has lost arbitration to energy giant Cairn under the retrospective tax amendment to the law in a verdict that came late night on Tuesday. India has been asked to pay damages worth Rs 8,000 crore to the UK oil major. The verdict comes three months after India lost arbitration to Vodafone over the retrospective legislation.

The International Court of Justice at The Hague has maintained that the Cairn tax issue is not a tax dispute, but a tax related investment dispute. Hence, it falls under its jurisdiction. It has ruled that India's demand in past taxes was in breach of fair treatment under a bilateral investment protection pact. The case pertains to a Rs 24,500 crore tax demand on capital gains made by the oil major in reorganisation of its India business in 2006-07.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/india-loses-cairn-case-in-arbitration-asked-to-pay-rs-8-000-cr-in-damages-120122300289_1.html

Right to protest should be exercised to resolve issues, not to perpetuate deadlock: FICCI chief

Newly-elected chairman of industry chamber FICCI has said that the right to protest must be exercised to resolve a problem and not to perpetuate a deadlock disturbing normal lives of other persons, as the farmers' agitation against the three new farm laws entered the 28th day on Wednesday. Protesting farmer unions deferred a decision on the central government's offer for fresh talks to Wednesday, even as Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar on Tuesday expressed hope that they will soon resume dialogue to resolve the impasse over the new agri laws.

Responding to a question on the ongoing agitation of farmers in support of their demand for repeal of the three farm laws, FICCI Chairman Uday Shankar said most importantly, there is a need to have a dialogue in a constructive framework.

"I do fail to understand that on the one hand everybody believes that the farm sector is one of the least reformed sectors, we need to raise the agricultural output, the yields, we need to increase the income of the people who depend on the farm sector including the landowners as well as those who work in the farm sector, we need to unlock the flow of capital," he said.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/right-to-protest-should-be-exercised-to-resolve-issues-not-to-perpetuate-deadlock-ficci-chief/2156088/>

Economy

In-Person verification must for GST Registration, new norms notified

Finance Ministry has notified new norms for GST registration. It expects this would help in checking the menace of fake invoices. According to new norm, if the applicant has opted for Aadhaar based authentication, then every application will be followed by biometric-based Aadhaar authentication and taking photograph. In case the applicant does not go for first option, then the process involves taking biometric information, photograph and verification of various KYC (Know Your Customer) documents.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/policy/in-person-verification-must-for-gst-registration-new-norms-notified/article33400500.ece?homepage=true>

Govt may have to apply brakes on existing fiscal consolidation road map

It is a foregone conclusion now that the Centre's fiscal deficit won't meet the budget projection of being reined in at 3.5 per cent of GDP this financial year and may, in fact, be about twice that number. In fact, industry and economists have urged finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman to relax fiscal consolidation for another few years.

If this is accepted by the government, the N K Singh panel recommendations, on the basis of which the fiscal consolidation road map was prepared with some changes, do not hold good.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/govt-may-have-to-apply-brakes-on-fiscal-consolidation-evolve-new-road-map-120122300823_1.html

2 more states roll out reforms for common man; get additional funds from Centre amid pandemic

Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh have joined the league of states that have taken the people-centric Urban Local Bodies (ULB) reforms to borrow more from the Centre. While Madhya Pradesh has come up with 'the Madhya Pradesh Nagarpalik Vidhi Adhyadesh, 2020', Andhra Pradesh has also issued an Ordinance to amend the Municipal corporation Act, 1995, the Andhra Pradesh Municipalities Act, 1965, the Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation Act, 1979, the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation Act, 1981, and the Andhra Pradesh Municipal Corporations Act, 1994. On successfully undertaking the ULBs reforms, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh have been granted permission to mobilise additional financial resources to the tune of Rs.4,898 crore through open market borrowings. Out of these, Andhra Pradesh has received the permission of Rs.2,525 crore, while Madhya Pradesh has been permitted to mobilize an additional Rs.2,373 crore, according to the Ministry of Finance.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/economy/2-more-states-roll-out-reforms-for-common-man-get-additional-funds-from-centre-amid-pandemic/2156117/>

Steady growth: Indian economy stabilizes in November as retail demand improves

India's economic activity showed signs of stabilizing in November, even as concerns of fresh virus outbreaks and a new strain in the UK mount amid news of vaccines fueling hope. All eight high-frequency indicators tracked by Bloomberg News were steady last month, keeping the needle on a dial measuring the so-called 'Animal Spirits' unchanged at 5. The level was arrived at by using the three-month weighted average to smooth out volatility in the single-month readings. The pace of activity thus far was enough for the nation's central bank to revise its forecast for the economy, which it now expects to exit a recession in the current quarter to December.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/economy/steady-growth-indian-economy-stabilizes-in-november-as-retail-demand-improves/2155802/>

CFO Optimism Index at all-time low for October-December quarter: D&B

The confidence level of chief financial officers over the overall financial and macro-economic conditions in the country reached an all-time low for the October-December quarter, says a report. According to the Dun and Bradstreet Composite CFO Optimism Index report based on the survey of over 350 respondents, the confidence in financial and macro-economic conditions has declined. The Dun & Bradstreet Composite CFO Optimism Index showed a decline of 8.4 per cent on a year-on-year basis to 98.1 during Q4 2020, bringing the Index to a record low. The index has, however, registered an increase of 32.1 per cent on a quarter-on-quarter basis and the risk perception still remains high amongst respondents. As per the report, the pace of contraction in GDP has slowed down considerably during Q2 FY21. "Economic activities are firming up. The GDP is expected to register a modest positive growth in Q3 FY21 or Q4 2020," the report said.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/economy/cfo-optimism-index-at-all-time-low-for-october-december-quarter-db/2156151/>

Banking and Finance

RBI warns public about shady digital lending apps promising quick finance

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Wednesday warned consumers against the questionable digital money lending entities that promise loans in seconds at exorbitant rates of interest, and then use muscle powers to recover dues. "Members of public are hereby cautioned not to fall prey to such unscrupulous activities and verify the antecedents of the company/ firm offering loans online or through mobile apps," the central bank said in a statement. "Moreover, consumers should never share copies of KYC documents with unidentified persons, unverified/unauthorised Apps and should report such Apps/Bank Account information associated with the Apps to concerned law enforcement agencies or use Sachet portal to file an on-line complaint," it added.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/finance/rbi-warns-public-about-shady-digital-lending-apps-promising-quick-finance-120122300816_1.html

Retail credit has experienced an increase in serious delinquencies: Report

Retail credit has experienced an increase in serious delinquencies, with loans against property and credit cards being the most affected segments, a report by a credit information bureau said on Wednesday. As of August-end, the loans

overdue for over 90 days in the credit card segment were 0.51 per cent up from the year-ago period at 2.32 per cent, while the same for the loans against property was 0.34 per cent up at 3.96 per cent, Transunion Cibil said.

"Credit cards delinquency rates reflected the wider economic slowdown, salary cuts and job losses caused by the pandemic. Further, credit cards often have a lower payment priority, with consumers choosing to pay other credit accounts first," the bureau said. For LAP, a product generally used by small businesses as working capital finance, delinquencies had already been on the rise prior to COVID-19.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/finance/retail-credit-has-experienced-an-increase-in-serious-delinquencies-report-120122300684_1.html

NBFC collection efficiencies at their highest this fiscal says Crisil

Collection efficiencies of securitised loans of non banking finance companies (NBFCs) have improved to their highest this fiscal year helped by the uptick in economic activity and recovery efforts by lenders. Average collection efficiencies for vehicle loans, home loans and even micro finance are near pre Covid levels though loans to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are still showing some signs of stress, rating agency Crisil said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/banking/finance/nbfc-collection-efficiencies-at-their-highest-this-fiscal-says-crisil/articleshow/79925957.cms>

PFRDA issues RFP for selection of pension fund sponsors

An opportunity to manage over ₹5 lakh crore pension monies will soon be up for grabs as the pension regulator PFRDA has issued the much awaited Request for Proposal (RFP) document for selection of sponsors of pension funds for National Pension System (NPS) of government as well as private schemes besides other schemes administered by the regulator. All the existing sponsors of seven pension fund managers would have to again go through the new process of selection, according to the RFP.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/pfrda-issues-rfp-for-selection-of-pension-fund-sponsors/article33403750.ece>

Industry

Indian firms see a silver lining in cloud adoption in pandemic-hit year

The Covid-19 pandemic accelerated Cloud adoption by several years in 2

020 and Indian enterprises of all sizes fast-tracked their decisions to shun the legacy infrastructure and move their operations -- in piecemeal or in full -- to artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML)-powered Cloud or Cloud players, the year offered a great opportunity to sell their scalable and secure Cloud-based solutions while keeping data within the territories of the country.

According to an IDC survey that came out in November, more than 60 per cent of the Indian organisations plan to leverage Cloud platforms for digital innovation, as the firms re-strategise their IT spending plans as a result of Covid-19.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/indian-firms-see-a-silver-lining-in-cloud-adoption-in-pandemic-hit-year-120122300485_1.html

High shipping freight rates and shortage of containers may disrupt supply chains of automakers

Increase in shipping freight rates and inadequate availability of containers globally may disrupt supply chains and impact production of automobile companies in the country, said industry body Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM). Industry executives say freight rates have increased 50-100% and container rates have almost doubled with some companies even resorting to transporting parts via air cargo. This has led to cost overruns and loss of revenues for exporters leading to estimated fourth-quarter cost overruns of \$ 1-1.5 billion in a month.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/auto/auto-news/high-shipping-freight-rates-and-shortage-of-containers-may-disrupt-supply-chains-of-automakers/articleshow/79924600.cms>

Companies hopeful of economic recovery in 2021 but cautious about Covid-19

Sanitaryware makers to manufacturers of consumer durables remain optimistic about an economic revival in 2021 but cautious as the risk of COVID-19 pandemic still exists, officials said on Wednesday. Many companies across

sectors are looking to make their balance sheets strong after they have experienced market disruptions in the current calendar year due to the raging global coronavirus outbreak, they said.

Firms ranging from tourism, food and beverage sectors to sanitaryware industry are focusing on the health and hygiene segment and strengthen their digital presence to overcome the challenges, the officials said, adding that the economic revival is expected in the second half of the next year, they said.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/companies-hopeful-of-economic-recovery-in-2021-but-cautious-about-covid-19-120122300580_1.html

Agriculture

PM Modi to release PM-KISAN instalment to 9 crore farmers on December 25

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will release the next instalment of the financial benefits under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) on December 25 via video-conferencing, his office said on Wednesday. With the push of a button, Modi will enable the transfer of more than Rs 18,000 crore to over nine crore beneficiary farmer families, it added. Modi will also interact with farmers from six states during the event, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said. "The farmers will share their experiences with PM-KISAN and also on various other initiatives taken by the government for the welfare of farmers," it said. Under the PM-KISAN scheme, a financial benefit of Rs 6,000 per year is provided to small and marginal farmers, payable in three equal instalments of Rs 2,000 each.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/pm-modi-to-release-pm-kisan-instalment-to-9-crore-farmers-on-december-25/articleshow/79924012.cms>

Infrastructure

World Bank, GoI ink pact for \$500 million project to develop green, safe highway corridors

The government inked a \$500 million loan pact with the World Bank (WB) to develop safe and green national highway corridors in the states of Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, on Tuesday. The Green National Highways Corridors project will support the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) in constructing 783 km of highways by integrating technology designs such as local and marginal materials, industrial byproducts, and other bioengineering solutions, said a finance ministry statement.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/infrastructure/world-bank-goi-ink-pact-for-500-million-project-to-develop-green-safe-highway-corridors/articleshow/79914735.cms>

Gadkari to inaugurate, lay foundation stones for Rs 8,341 cr highway projects in Rajasthan

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari will on Thursday inaugurate and lay foundation stones for highway projects worth Rs 8,341 crore in Rajasthan, an official statement said. These projects are for a total length of 1,127 kms. "Union Minister for Road Transport, Highways and MSMEs Nitin Gadkari will inaugurate and lay foundation stone for 18 highway projects in Rajasthan tomorrow," the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/infrastructure/gadkari-to-inaugurate-lay-foundation-stones-for-rs-8341-cr-highway-projects-in-rajasthan/articleshow/79927360.cms>

Housing sales up 51 per cent in October-December across 7 big cities: JLL India

Sales of residential properties are estimated to grow 51 per cent across seven major cities during October-December compared with the previous quarter driven by festive demand, but demand is likely to fall 48 per cent in 2020 due to the impact of the pandemic, property consultant JLL India said. According to the data, housing sales are estimated to rise at 21,832 units during December quarter as against 14,415 units in July-September.

"GDP in July-September quarter of 2020 showed higher than expected recovery. During the same quarter, the housing market showed some initial signs of recovery as well, with sales increasing by 34 per cent on a sequential basis. In the backdrop of issues like job security and fall in income levels, this uptick in sales was a significant achievement," JLL India CEO and Country Head Ramesh Nair said in a statement.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/housing-sales-up-51-per-cent-in-october-december-across-7-big-cities-jll-india/2156156/>

Domestic air passenger traffic grows 22% in November: ICRA

Further relaxation in aircraft capacity deployment coupled with festive season air travel demand helped recovery in the domestic traffic with passenger volume seeing 22 per cent sequential growth in the previous month, ratings agency ICRA said on Wednesday. ICRA also said that the November domestic passenger traffic was close to 50 per cent of the domestic air travel demand in November 2019. The recovery in international passenger traffic, however, is likely to further get delayed in the wake of fresh travel curbs by select countries following the detection of a new virus strain in the UK, it said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/transportation/airlines/-aviation/domestic-air-passenger-traffic-grows-22-in-november-icra/articleshow/79928131.cms>

Noida airport region drew Rs 7,617 crore in investments amid pandemic: Official

Notwithstanding the COVID-19 pandemic, the region surrounding the upcoming Noida International Airport has got investments worth Rs 7,617 crore this ongoing fiscal including those from some “big ticket” Fortune 500 firms, a top government official said. From April till December, industrial plots were allotted to 911 companies which are expected to create 1.91 lakh jobs in this region in western Uttar Pradesh, Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA) CEO Arun Vir Singh told PTI in an interview.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/transportation/airlines/-aviation/noida-airport-region-drew-rs-7617-crore-in-investments-amid-pandemic-official/articleshow/79923972.cms>

Telecom

Telecom tariff hikes to ring in improved debt metrics in next fiscal: ICRA

Telecom service providers (telcos) are expected to dial in next round of tariff hikes over the next one or two quarters which is likely to drive revenue growth in the next financial year (FY2021-22), according to investment information firm ICRA.

In the light of higher funding requirements arising from sizeable pay-outs towards adjusted gross revenue (AGR) liabilities, spectrum purchase, regular revenue share with the government and auction installments (which start from FY23), it is imperative for the players to embark on sustainable and sizeable expansion in the average revenue per user (ARPU).

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/telecom-tariff-hikes-to-ring-in-improved-debt-metrics-in-next-fiscal-icra-120122300496_1.html

Energy

Why the discoms may be pushing their luck too far on renewable power pacts

The sharp decline in the tariffs of renewable power projects is again giving the government headaches. It also exposes the sector to a massive interest rate risk, as data shows most of the dip is built on cheap money.

Early this year, once the bidders had been forced to live without dirt cheap solar modules from China, prices had shot up to Rs 2.92 per kWh (kilowatt hour). But as 2020 draws to a close, prices have slid back massively.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/why-the-discoms-may-be-pushing-their-luck-too-far-on-renewable-power-pacts-120122300770_1.html

No change in petrol and diesel prices for 16th consecutive day

Oil marketing companies kept the retail price of petrol and diesel static on Wednesday maintaining the wait and watch stance amidst a firm global oil market. Accordingly, the pump price of petrol remained at Rs Rs 83.71 a litre and diesel Rs 73.87 a litre in Delhi on Wednesday. Across the country as well, the price of the two petroleum products remained unchanged. OMCs have gone on a pause mode at a time when news of successful coronavirus vaccine and expectations of big pick up in demand had kept crude on the boil with prices breaching \$50 a barrel mark.

However, the recent news on a new mutant strain of the virus has affected markets across the world and uncertainty over fresh lockdowns and demand squeeze had again brought crude prices below the \$50 a barrel mark.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/no-change-in-petrol-and-diesel-prices-for-16th-consecutive-day-120122300519_1.html

Fuel sale coming back to pre-COVID level: IOC official

Fuel sale in the country is coming back to normal which also shows the reflection of normalcy in economy, a senior Indian Oil Corporation official said on Wednesday. In Maharashtra, the sale is yet to reach the pre-COVID situation and the deficit in diesel sale is still around 12 per cent, Executive Director and Maharashtra State head of Indian Oil Corporation Amitabh Akhauri told reporters here. "As an industry we saw growth in petrol sale in October by 2 per cent. But in November it remained down but this month we are expecting to reach back to pre-COVID situation," he said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/oil-gas/fuel-sale-coming-back-to-pre-covid-level-ioc-official/articleshow/79926162.cms>

States

Haryana cabinet approves new enterprises and employment policy

The Haryana cabinet on Wednesday approved the Haryana Enterprises and Employment Policy 2020. The policy aims to establish the state as a competitive and favoured investment destination. The cabinet, which met here under the chairmanship of Chief Minister M L Khattar, approved the new policy, which will come into effect from January next year, an official statement said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/haryana-cabinet-approves-new-enterprises-and-employment-policy/articleshow/79924547.cms>

Healthcare

Govt starts contest for strengthening digital network platform for COVID-19 vaccine distribution

The government on Wednesday launched a technology contest to invite solutions from IT companies and start-ups to strengthen digital platform CoWIN, which will be used for rolling out and scaling up COVID vaccine distribution across the country. The government is enhancing use of the Electronic Vaccine Intelligence Network (eVIN) system, which provides real-time information on vaccine stocks and storage temperatures across all cold chain points in the country to address the needs for distribution and tracking of COVID-19 vaccine. The contest will be jointly run by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Ministry of Electronics and IT, a statement said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/healthcare/biotech/healthcare/govt-starts-contest-for-strengthening-digital-network-platform-for-covid-19-vaccine-distribution/articleshow/79926298.cms>

External

DGFT curbs import of tyres if alternative made in India, seeks undertaking from importers

As the centre looks to curb the import of tyres into the country, traders seeking an import license have been asked to submit an undertaking by the regulator declaring that they will only purchase those tyres sizes which are not manufactured locally and the failure to do that will attract penal action. The undertaking has been sought by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) and a failure in adhering to it could result in prosecution under the Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/auto/tyres/dgft-curbs-import-of-tyres-if-alternative-made-in-india-seeks-undertaking-from-importers/articleshow/79926858.cms>

India's supply of medicines globally to tackle Covid-19 has created goodwill: Jaishankar

India's reputation as the pharmacy of the world may have been enhanced by providing medicines to more than 150 countries to fight the Covid-19 pandemic, but the goodwill that it has created is even more, Minister of External Affairs S Jaishankar has said. "My message is a simple one: in times of trouble, we stand with our people; we will do what it takes for their welfare; and this government will deliver," the Minister said in his keynote address at the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Virtual Conference, titled 'Forging Media and Entertainment Partnerships to showcase India@75', on Wednesday.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/indias-supply-of-medicines-globally-to-tackle-covid-19-has-created-goodwill-jaishankar/article33400721.ece>

FDI growth story to 'go well' in 2021 too, says DPIIT secretary

The high growth story of foreign direct investments into India will "go well" in the new year too as there is a growing interest among overseas investors about the country amid the government's continuing reform measures to further improve the business climate.

With relaxed FDI norms, defence production will be among the areas that will be looked at for fresh overseas investments in the months ahead while easing compliance burden of businesses will be a priority area. Irrespective of the global slowdown and the COVID-19 pandemic, FDI into India recorded a significant jump, according to Secretary in the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) Guruprasad Mohapatra.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/fdi-growth-story-to-go-well-in-2021-too-120122300503_1.html

Indian exporters expect vegetable export demand to fall 15-20%

Indian vegetable exporters expect demand from the UK, a major buyer and a hub for the European market, to fall 15-20% because of lockdowns in that country, industry executives said. "There is also a likelihood of airfreight rates to be increased by airlines in the short run," said Sunil Awari, general manager at Bengaluru-based Namdhari Farm Fresh. There is also a risk of losing business if any UK buyer declines delivery of committed orders, he added. India exports 70-100 tonnes of vegetables to the UK a week, which go up by 15% for Christmas and the New Year, exporters said. With restaurants and hotels closed due to the lockdown, volumes would fall, said Babu Lal Barai, proprietor of Khushi International, which exports fresh fruits and vegetables from Mumbai. "Looking at the past situations, we are assuming that the airlines will increase freight rates by 10-15% and take advantage of the situation," Barai said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/indian-exporters-expect-vegetable-export-demand-to-fall-15-20/articleshow/79917173.cms>

SBI extends global trade finance solutions to Israeli corporates

State Bank of India is offering trade finance solutions and services to Israeli corporates to help them tap business potential arising out of recent Abraham accords leading to normalisation of ties between Israel and Arab states, a bank official said.

International trade activities of late have picked up momentum after the unprecedented market shocks and resultant inactivity due to COVID-19 pandemic induced lockdowns and closures around the world, with optimistic outlook for the near to medium term, B V Ramana, the CEO of SBI Tel Aviv branch told PTI.

"In view of the revival of business activity in the coming months with vaccine approvals being accorded by various governments around the world, we are offering our services/products to the Israeli business community at competitive pricing to meet all their cross border trade finance needs," Ramana said.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/finance/sbi-extends-global-trade-finance-solutions-to-israeli-corporates-120122300709_1.html