



March 14, 2024 – Thursday

## Economy

### **Niti Aayog comes up with roadmap to boost exports from MSME sector**

Niti Aayog has made a case for a single information portal for exporters to promote e-commerce exports and improve access to finance, especially for micro, small & medium enterprises (MSMEs). In a report titled 'Boosting Exports from MSMEs', the Aayog said India has several portals that help exporters access information, most of which offer incomplete or outdated information.

[https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/niti-aayog-comes-up-with-roadmap-to-boost-exports-from-msme-sector-124031300779\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/niti-aayog-comes-up-with-roadmap-to-boost-exports-from-msme-sector-124031300779_1.html)

### **India's capex cycle to continue: Morgan Stanley**

Morgan Stanley expects India's capital expenditure cycle to remain on track, buoyed by government spending and a revival in private investment with the current uptick reminiscent of the 2003-2007 period, when the economy grew at an average annual rate of 8.6%. The global investment bank expects India's gross fixed capital formation to GDP or investment ratio to rise to 36% of GDP by FY27 from 34% expected in FY24. The Indian government has forecast 7.6% GDP growth in FY24. Data released last week showed growth averaged more than 8% in the first three quarters of the fiscal, with investment growing in double digits in the previous two quarters. "The public capex-led nature of the present cycle in India plays an even more important role for the sustainability of the overall capex cycle," researchers at Morgan Stanley pointed out.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/indias-capex-cycle-to-continue-morgan-stanley/articleshow/108472854.cms>

### **India performs better than China on key global integration parameters: DHL report**

India has overtaken China on two-key parameters -- export to GDP ratio and services export-- with regard to integration into the global market, said a DHL Global Connectedness Report on Wednesday. India's exports-to-GDP ratio has exceeded China's since 2021 and also the country's services trade intensity far for both exports and imports, said the 'New DHL Global Connectedness Report 2024' by DHL and New York University's Stern School of Business, released here. The report said that in 2021 and 2022, India's exports and imports as a share of GDP increased sharply. India exported goods and services was 23 per cent of the GDP (up from 19 per cent in 2020) and imported goods and services 26 per cent of GDP (also up from 19 per cent in 2020). India's services trade intensity far exceeds China's for both exports and imports, the report said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/india-performs-better-than-china-on-key-global-integration-parameters-dhl-report/articleshow/108466789.cms>

## Finance

### **SEBI chief bats for sachetisation of REITs and InvITs**

The SEBI chief, Madhabi Puri Buch, said on Wednesday that the regulator will strive to bring down the minimum investment size for REITs, InvITs, and municipal bonds. This is to facilitate a diverse holding of these products across

investors. “The strength of our equity market comes from our retail investors. What it reflects is the fractional ownership of companies. In a similar manner, the fractional ownership of real estate and infrastructure is where the strength of the country will lie,” Madhabi Puri Buch said during the fifth SEBI-NISM Research Conference held in Mumbai. She said the governance and regulatory aspects of these asset classes had given the regulator the comfort to go and tell retail investors that they could invest in these products. The way the InvITs were being structured, for instance, had resulted in a high investor appetite, particularly among foreign investors.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/markets/sebi-chief-bats-for-sachetisation-of-reits-and-invits/article67946821.ece>

## Industry

### Centre announces new scheme to subsidise electric two and three wheelers

The centre on Wednesday announced a new scheme to promote sale of electric two and three wheelers the country. According to Heavy Industries Minister Mahendra Nath Pandey, Rs 500 crore is being allocated for the Electric Mobility Promotion Scheme (EMPS), 2024. This scheme is valid for four months from April 1 onwards. “We are committed to the growth of electric vehicles in the country and will keep encouraging their sales,” he said while announcing the scheme.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/renewables/centre-announces-new-scheme-to-subsidise-electric-two-and-three-wheelers/articleshow/108467682.cms>

### MSME apprenticeship may become shorter, better-paid

The government is considering a slew of measures to boost apprenticeship training through millions of micro, small and medium enterprises in India, as it seeks to create a large pool of skilled workforce in the country. These measures include reducing the tenure of apprenticeship from six months to three months, raising stipend subsidy for MSMEs to 50% from 25%, doling out tax incentives to MSMEs for hiring apprentices and roping in the private sector for providing manpower to MSMEs that often face staff shortage, a senior government official, aware of the deliberations, told ET.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/msme-apprenticeship-may-become-shorter-better-paid/articleshow/108472850.cms>

### Govt likely to come up with policy to incentivise semiconductor ancillary firms: Rajeev Chandrasekhar

The government may come up with a scheme to incentivise semiconductor ancillary firms to address disability in the segment and make it convenient for supply chain players to set up their units in India, Minister of State for Communications and IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar said on Wednesday. While speaking about the groundbreaking ceremony of three chip plants with Rs 1.26 lakh crore investments, Chandrasekhar said the government is aware of the disability issue in the industry and may come up with a scheme when it starts looking for the second round of investments for semiconductor ecosystem.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/cons-products/electronics/govt-likely-to-come-up-with-policy-to-incentivise-semiconductor-ancillary-firms-rajeev-chandrasekhar/articleshow/108472248.cms>

### Television prices may go up by 10% in April due to rising open cell rates

Consumers may have to shell out more to buy television panels as manufacturers say they will raise prices again in April. The industry has been facing this issue of price rise post the pandemic and open cell prices have gone up by around 30 per cent in the last one year. And, television panel manufacturers expect this trend to continue.

[https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/television-prices-may-go-up-by-10-in-april-due-to-rising-open-cell-rates-124031301120\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/television-prices-may-go-up-by-10-in-april-due-to-rising-open-cell-rates-124031301120_1.html)

### Biscuits, cookies, chocolates: FMCG household consumption presents mixed picture

Companies like Nestle in instant coffee, Mondelez in chocolates, Britannia, ITC, and Parle Products in biscuits and cookies, and Godrej Consumer in insecticides, fabric softeners, and washing liquids have been aggressively expanding in recent quarters. They are investing in new capacity, launching new products, and broadening distribution networks for good reason. Household consumption for the above-mentioned categories (six in all) in

calendar 2023, according to Kantar Worldpanel data, saw a significant jump versus the previous year, driven by stable urban demand. But there is another side to the story.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/business/industry-biscuits-cookies-chocolates-fmCG-household-consumption-presents-mixed-picture-3424500/>

### **IT's 2030 staff doubling target looks distant on slump, GenAI**

India's \$ 250 billion information technology sector, which was expected to double its workforce by 2030 will likely miss the target, according to industry experts. An ongoing cyclical slump in demand for technology services as well as the more long-term threat of artificial intelligence-induced job losses could see the sector employ just about 7.5 million by the end of the decade from the current level of 5.4 million employees, according to data from a top hiring firm. Recruitment consultancy Team Lease Digital had earlier estimated that the Indian IT workforce would expand to 10 million by 2030. AI-based automation is the significant factor impacting headcount, while macroeconomic factors are cyclical with a revival likely in 2025, said Ganesh Natarajan, former CEO of Zensar Technologies and founder of 5F World, a digital transformation solutions company. Pointing to the impact of AI on areas such as testing, he said "with ChatGPT and GenAI (generative AI), coding is also getting destroyed."

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/tech/technology/its-2030-staff-doubling-target-looks-distant-on-slump-genai/articleshow/108472263.cms>

## **Agriculture**

### **Wheat stock with Food Corporation of India falls below 100 lakh tonnes for the first time since 2018**

The Food Corporation of India (FCI) has reported a decline in wheat stocks, falling below 100 lakh tonnes for the first time since 2018, standing at 97 lakh tonnes this month. This decrease is attributed to low procurement over the past two years and a significant sale of the cereal in the open market to regulate prices. However, in contrast, rice stocks held by FCI currently exceed four times the buffer norm. Despite the drop in wheat stocks, the current level remains above the statutory buffer stock requirement, which stands at 74.6 lakh tonnes for April. An official told TOI that the existing stock is sufficient to meet the National Food Security requirements and surpasses the buffer norm. With the procurement season commencing from March 1, authorities anticipate a notable improvement in procurement compared to the previous two years.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/wheat-stock-with-food-corporation-of-india-falls-below-100-lakh-tonnes-for-the-first-time-since-2018/articleshow/108455283.cms>

### **Industry body ISMA revises 2023-24 sugar production estimate upwards by 2.9%**

Industry body Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA) has revised the sugar production estimate for 2023-24 upwards to 34 million tonnes; up by 2.9% from its earlier estimate of 33.05 million tonnes issued in January this year. The Indian government has put a cap of diversion of 1.7 million tonnes of sugar for ethanol production in 2023-24 to make more sugar available for the consumers as there were concerns over the production of sugar due to the drought in Maharashtra and Karnataka. According to the data provided by Maharashtra government, the state's sugar production as on March 12 stood at 9.9 million tonnes against 10.15 million tonnes produced on the same day of previous year; down by 2.42%.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/isma-revises-upwards-estimates-of-gross-sugar-output-by-9-5-lakh-tons-to-340-lakh-tons-in-2023-24/articleshow/108465863.cms>

## **Infrastructure**

### **Network Planning Group evaluates key infrastructure projects including Multi Modal Logistics Park in Maharashtra**

The 67th meeting of the Network Planning Group (NPG) was held on March 12, 2024, in New Delhi, to assess three projects from the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) and two projects from the Ministry of Railways (MoR), the Ministry of Commerce and Industry said in a release on Wednesday. The meeting, led by the Additional Secretary of the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Rajeev Singh Thakur, aimed to promote comprehensive regional socio-economic advancement in alignment with PM GatiShakti principles.

Among the projects reviewed, the MoRTH presented plans for a Multi Modal Logistics Park (MMLP) in Maharashtra, for the enhancement of freight movement efficiency through a public-private partnership model.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/infrastructure/network-planning-group-evaluates-key-infrastructure-projects-including-multi-modal-logistics-park-in-maharashtra/articleshow/108466362.cms>

#### **77% of investment in Indian real estate in 2019-23 by foreigners: Report**

Foreign inflows comprised 77 per cent of the total institutional investment in Indian real estate between 2019 and 2023, said a report on Wednesday, marking “continued confidence” in the sector. The average annual total investment in the period was \$5.1 billion, said real estate consultancy Colliers in its ‘2024 Investor Insights – Country Spotlight Series’ report. Of that amount, \$4 billion was foreign inflow.

[https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/77-of-investment-in-indian-real-estate-in-2019-23-by-foreigners-report-124031300437\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/77-of-investment-in-indian-real-estate-in-2019-23-by-foreigners-report-124031300437_1.html)

#### **NHAI issues advisory for Paytm FASTag users to switch to other Bank FASTag**

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) on Wednesday advised Paytm FASTag users to procure a new FASTag issued by another bank before March 15, 2024 to ensure seamless travel experience and avoid inconvenience at toll plazas. This will help in avoiding penalties or any double fee charges while commuting on National Highways (NH), NHAI said. In line with the guidelines issued by the Reserve Bank of India regarding restrictions on Paytm Payments Bank, the Paytm FASTags users will not be able to recharge or top-up the balance post March 15. However, they can use their existing balance to pay the toll beyond the stipulated date, it added.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/companies/nhai-issues-advisory-for-paytm-fastag-users-to-switch-to-other-bank-fastag/article67947094.ece>

#### **Property leasing by luxury brands in India jumped 170% in 2023: Report**

Real estate leased by luxury companies in India stood at 0.60 million square feet (MSF) last year – 170 per cent higher than in 2022, said a report on Wednesday, attributing the trend to “skyrocketing awareness” about brands. Demand for premium and luxury goods is increasing in the country due to a growing middle and upper class, said the report released jointly by real estate consultancy CBRE South Asia and the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI). The internet and social media shape demand too, said ‘The Ascent of Indian ‘Luxe RE’ report.

[https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/property-leasing-by-luxury-brands-in-india-jumped-170-in-2023-report-124031300426\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/property-leasing-by-luxury-brands-in-india-jumped-170-in-2023-report-124031300426_1.html)

### **Energy**

#### **PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan launched for coal sector**

The coal ministry on Wednesday launched the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan, which offers a database of existing, ongoing and future coal projects, to foster comprehensive planning and execution of projects in the sector. The master plan is a geographical information system (GIS)-based digital platform involving various ministries for integrated planning and coordinated implementation of infrastructure connectivity projects, it said. The coal database has 74 geographical information system-based layers on the PM Gati Shakti portal under categories such as coal block, coalfield boundary and land asset data, which will provide stakeholders with infrastructure information.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/indl-goods/svs/metals-mining/pm-gati-shakti-national-master-plan-launched-for-coal-sector/articleshow/108473316.cms>

#### **Power sector see no summer outages, with enough coal stocks**

As the country is set to witness a spike in power demand at 260 GW in the coming summer, the power sector is confident of being able to meet the higher demand with improved coal stocks and easing supply of imported coal. The electricity demand growth is expected to grow at an average of 6-7% in the upcoming fiscal 2024-25. Increased capacity additions across segments is expected to narrow the supply deficit and meet the rising demand.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/business/industry-power-sector-see-no-summer-outages-with-enough-coal-stocks-3424512/>

### **Private oil companies grab bigger share of aviation fuel market**

Private players are grabbing a larger share of India's growing aviation fuel business as they expand their supply networks and stitch more deals with airlines.] Reliance-BP and Shell-MRPL, the two private sector joint ventures, expanded their market share to 9% in February from 5.5% in the same month last year. Their share was 6% in February 2022. Reliance-BP's share rose to 5.4% in February from 3.3% a year earlier and 3.9% in 2022. Shell-MRPL's share increased to 3.6% from 2.2% a year earlier and 2.25% in 2022. State-run refiners have traditionally dominated India's aviation turbine fuel business. Private players have, however, gained ground in a decade, aided by open access at airports. Reliance and its JV with BP supply jet fuel at about 30 airports now and serve most of the domestic airlines. Shell's JV sources jet fuel from MRPL's Mangaluru refinery to supply airports in South India. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/oil-gas/private-oil-companies-grab-bigger-share-of-aviation-fuel-market/articleshow/108473508.cms>

### **External**

### **Vegetable oil imports dwindle 13% in Feb to 975,000 tonnes, says SEA**

India's vegetable oils import fell 13 per cent year-on-year in February to nearly 9.75 lakh tonne, according to industry data. In a statement on Wednesday, Solvent Extractors' Association of India (SEA) said the import of vegetable oils (comprising edible oils and non-edible oils) during February stood at 9,74,85 tonne as compared to 11,14,481 tonne in the year-ago period.

[https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/vegetable-oil-imports-dwindle-13-in-feb-to-975-000-tonnes-says-sea-124031300362\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/vegetable-oil-imports-dwindle-13-in-feb-to-975-000-tonnes-says-sea-124031300362_1.html)

### **Government allows RBI to import gold without paying import levies**

India has allowed its central bank to import gold without paying import levies, the government said in a notification issued late on Tuesday. Gold importers from the world's second biggest gold consumer need to pay basic customs duty and Agriculture Infrastructure and Development Cess (AIDC). As of September 2023, the Reserve Bank of India held 800.79 metric tonnes of gold, including gold deposits of 39.89 tonnes.

[https://www.business-standard.com/finance/news/government-allows-rbi-to-import-gold-without-paying-import-levies-124031300114\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/finance/news/government-allows-rbi-to-import-gold-without-paying-import-levies-124031300114_1.html)

### **Will bring more investments from Singapore into India: Envoy Shilpak Ambule**

The Indian High Commission here is working to get more and more investments into India's burgeoning economy led by aggressive progress being made in infrastructure, renewable energy and advanced technology space, envoy Shilpak Ambule has said. The High Commissioner listed three factors driving the growth saying for India, it will be a green growth with the development of renewable energy, while digital infrastructure has been put in place for smoother flow of economic activities and thirdly it will be sustainable growth.

[https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/will-bring-more-investments-from-singapore-into-india-envoy-shilpak-ambule-124031300233\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/will-bring-more-investments-from-singapore-into-india-envoy-shilpak-ambule-124031300233_1.html)

### **India, Dominican Republic ink trade protocol**

India Wednesday signed the protocol to establish a bilateral institutional mechanism with Dominican Republic on trade and commerce to develop cooperation on trade, services and industrial technologies. "The protocol envisages to strengthen and develop cooperation on trade, services, industrial technologies and various other sectors by means of technical assistance, training programmes and capacity building," the commerce and industry ministry said in a statement.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/india-dominican-republic-to-set-up-institutional-mechanism-to-promote-trade-relations/articleshow/108461888.cms>