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Economy

India's population estimated at 1.4 bn, 24% in 0-14 age bracket: UNFPA

India's population is estimated to have reached 1.44 billion, with 24 per cent in the 0-14 age bracket, according to a recent report by the UNFPA. The United Nations Population Fund's (UNFPA) State of World Population - 2024 report -- "Interwoven Lives, Threads of Hope: Ending Inequalities in Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights" -- revealed that India's population is estimated to double in 77 years.

https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/india-s-population-estimated-at-1-4-bn-24-in-0-14-age-bracket-unfpa-124041700171_1.html

Wider social security net on cards for unorganised sector workers

The government is working on a strategy to empower millions of informal sector workers and help them avail of the benefits of several welfare schemes, such as housing, health care, insurance, pension, and foodgrain support. The Ministry of Labour & Employment is working to build a comprehensive database of unorganised sector workers by merging the data of the beneficiaries of existing government welfare schemes with the e-Shram portal, a senior government official told Business Standard.

https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/unorganised-sector-workers-to-avail-welfare-benefits-via-e-shram-portal-124041700678_1.html

Overhaul of rural roads scheme likely after polls; proposal part of govt's Viksit Bharat by 2047 plan

The government is planning to overhaul its flagship rural roads scheme after the general election to further bolster connectivity in the remote areas, spur economic growth and alleviate poverty, people close to the development told ET. This will form part of the government's ambition to turn India into a developed country by 2047. Revamping the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) will focus on substantially expanding and upgrading the network of rural roads and linking them with nearby hubs and markets to bolster "productive capacity of the economy and ensure ease of living", said the people cited above. "Along with rural housing, rural roads will assume renewed focus in the next term (of the Modi government). The priority will not just be to have roads in every nook and corner of rural India but to go beyond that and link economic, educational, health, social or agriculture centres," one of the persons said. "These steps are aimed at transforming rural India like never before," he added.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/infrastructure/overhaul-of-rural-roads-scheme-likely-after-polls-proposal-part-of-govt-viksit-bharat-by-2047-plan/articleshow/109382595.cms>

Govt plans major capital goods production push

India is proposing to expand the ambit of a key capital goods promotion scheme to include more sectors such as pharmaceuticals and textiles. The current capital goods promotion scheme focuses heavily on electrical component and automobile manufacturing, and the government is now keen to extend support to others. Plans are afoot to also bring new-age technologies besides those used for electric vehicles, batteries and automobile manufacturing. "Proposals to expand the ambit of the scheme are being considered. The aim is to better cover capital goods manufacturing across sectors," a senior official aware of the development told ET.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/govt-plans-major-capital-goods-production-push/articleshow/109382496.cms>

Nearly 17% of world's elderly population to be in India by 2050; Is it the fastest-growing silver economy?

The world's elderly population is surging and India is expected to be the fastest growing housing up to 17 per cent of the world's elderly population by 2050, said a report by CBRE South Asia Pvt Ltd. In India, the segment is witnessing substantial growth, driven by favorable demographics, rising chronic conditions, and increasing awareness. And with the rising number of seniors seeking specialised care and lifestyle options, the demand for senior living facilities has surged significantly in recent years.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/policy/economy-nearly-17-of-worlds-elderly-population-to-be-in-india-by-2050-is-it-the-fastest-growing-silver-economy-3459945/>

India not reaping benefits of its demographic dividend: Raghuram Rajan

India is not reaping the benefits of demographic dividends, former RBI governor Raghuram Rajan said on Tuesday, emphasising that there is a need to focus on improving the human capital and enhancing their skill sets. I think we are in the midst of it (demographic dividend), but the problem is we are not reaping the benefits, Rajan said at a conference on Making India an Advanced Economy by 2047: What Will it Take at the George Washington University here.

https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/india-not-reaping-benefits-of-its-democratic-dividend-raghuram-rajan-124041700070_1.html

Finance

RBI mandates offline payment aggregators to verify KYC for merchants

The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) draft regulation for payment aggregators (PAs) will enable the latter to manage risks on their platform with well-defined Know Your Customer (KYC) norms for merchants, said market participants. In the draft guidelines published Tuesday, the banking regulator outlined KYC procedures for small and medium-sized merchants. It said, a PA will need to undertake Contact Point Verification (CPV) and duly verify the bank account in which the funds of small merchants are settled.

https://www.business-standard.com/finance/news/rbi-mandates-offline-payment-aggregators-to-verify-kyc-for-merchants-124041700787_1.html

NaBFID eyes Rs 1 trillion sanctions for new infra projects in FY25

The National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID) is eyeing fresh sanctions of Rs 1 trillion for new projects and refinancing through structured instruments in the current financial year (2024-25). Rajkiran Rai G, managing director of NaBFID, told Business Standard that the cumulative sanctions crossed the Rs 1 trillion mark by the end of March 2024. While this was a performance in 15 months since lending operations began in December 2022, now the Government of India-backed lenders would look at fresh sanctions of Rs 1 trillion each financial year.

https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/nabfid-eyes-rs-1-trillion-sanctions-for-new-infra-projects-in-fy25-124041700830_1.html

Industry

Domestic finished steel consumption grows 13% to 136 MT in FY24: Govt data

Domestic finished steel consumption has registered a growth of 13 per cent to 136 million tonnes during 2023-24, supported by increased demand from automotive and infrastructure sectors, SteelMint India said. The country consumed 120 million tonne (MT) finished steel in the preceding 2022-23 financial year, the research firm said in a report.

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/domestic-finished-steel-consumption-grows-13-to-136-mt-in-fy24-govt-data-124041700184_1.html

Discounts, freebies drive in as automakers seek to push sales

Carmakers have started offering discounts and freebies this fiscal after a hiatus of three years, hoping to entice new buyers and clear record inventory levels. Car dealership stock reached an all-time high of 310,000 vehicles at the start of the financial year. This is leading companies into pushing sales by expanding into smaller towns and cities, potentially igniting a price war, multiple car retailers and company executives told ET. This could be the first price war since the easing of the pandemic. Car sales surged after the pandemic, but chip shortages hampered production, resulting in extended customer waiting lists and leading automakers to suspend discounts.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/auto/auto-news/discounts-freebies-drive-in-as-automakers-seek-to-push-sales/articleshow/109382390.cms>

Sales and customer acquisition biggest pain points for MSMEs: Survey

Intra-city delivery service Borzo in a survey on the growth of the MSME sector on Wednesday highlighted sales and customer acquisition as the biggest pain points in business growth for MSMEs. While 16 per cent of the survey respondents noted sales and customer acquisition as the biggest concern; recruitment or manpower problem was the second biggest issue as per 13 per cent of MSMEs surveyed. Packaging and inventory management posed significant operational challenges for 12 per cent and 11 per cent MSMEs respectively. Marketing, payments, funds/finance, economic costs/pricing were a few more challenges faced by MSMEs.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/business/sme/sales-and-customer-acquisition-biggest-pain-points-for-msmes-survey/3459950/>

Data protection law needs clarity on risk threshold for breaches: Group

BSA, which represents the global software industry, wants that rules in India's data protection law give companies 72 hours for reporting breaches and have better clarity on "risk threshold". Digital Personal Data Protection Act (DPDPA) became law in August and its rules are expected to be put up for public consultation after Lok Sabha elections. It asks companies to report breaches to a Data Protection Board.

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/need-clarity-on-risk-threshold-for-data-breaches-in-dpdp-rules-bsa-124041700702_1.html

Spending in IT sector to hit \$139 bn in 2024, growing at 13.2%: Gartner

Spending in the Indian information technology (IT) sector is projected to reach \$138.9 billion in 2024, compared to \$122.6 billion last year, with a double-digit growth rate of 13.2 per cent, according to recent projections from Gartner. The growth is expected in all major segments, including software, devices, IT services, and data centre systems.

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/spending-in-indian-it-sector-to-clock-double-digit-growth-in-2024-gartner-124041700840_1.html

Tech industry growth projected to halve to 3.8% in FY24 compared to FY23

India's technology industry is projected to have earned \$253.9 billion in revenue in Financial Year 2023-2024 (FY24), marking a slower year-on-year (Y-o-Y) growth rate of 3.8 per cent, according to a report. Moneycontrol.com, while citing the Annual Strategic Review report of the National Association of Software and Service Companies (Nasscom), said the industry's growth projection has slowed to a lower single-digit figure compared to the 8.4 per cent forecasted in FY22. This slowdown in FY24 is attributed to delays in deal closures, uncertainties arising from tech budget reductions among customers, layoffs, and macroeconomic challenges.

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/tech-industry-growth-projected-to-halve-to-3-8-in-fy24-compared-to-fy23-124041700265_1.html

Agriculture

Govt might look at reforming agri inputs administration in next tenure

With farm Acts out of the picture, the government may look at reforming the input side of the agriculture sector — regulations and rules that govern seeds, fertilisers and plant chemicals. Sources said such a blueprint, which is aimed at making the life of farmers easier, with quicker approvals but not compromising on quality, is in the works as part of the 100-day agenda of Modi 3.0. Also, ways to administer fertiliser subsidy more effectively and cutting down on leakages and diversions to build on the success of neem-coated urea are being thought of.

https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/govt-might-look-at-reforming-agri-inputs-administration-in-next-tenure-124041700690_1.html

Operating margins of cotton yarn spinners to improve by 150-200 bps this fiscal, says CRISIL

The cotton yarn spinning industry is expected to witness a breather this fiscal with operating margins of cotton yarn spinners set to improve by 150-200 bps this fiscal after hitting decadal lows of 8.5-9 per cent last fiscal, said a report by CRISIL Ratings. In fiscal 2024, it added, profitability was affected by lower cotton yarn spreads and inventory losses. However, this fiscal holds better promise. "Stable cotton prices due to better availability of cotton during cotton season 2024 and improved cotton yarn spreads this fiscal will support improvement in margins," the report stated.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/business/industry-operating-margins-of-cotton-yarn-spinners-to-improve-by-150-200-bps-this-fiscal-says-crisil-3459838/>

Infrastructure

GCCs, 3rd-party IT service providers driving demand for workspace: Report

International companies outsourcing jobs to India have become a major driver of office demand in the country with global capability centres and third-party IT service providers contributing 46 per cent to the total leasing of workspace during 2023, according to Knight Frank. Real estate consultant Knight Frank, in its latest report 'Asia Pacific Horizon: Harnessing the Potential of Offshoring', noted that the offshoring industry in India has grown significantly into a leading global service provider, accounting for 57 per cent of the global offshoring market.

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/gccs-3rd-party-it-service-providers-driving-demand-for-workspace-report-124041700410_1.html

Energy

Power consumption rises nearly 10% to 70.66 bn units in first half of April

India's power consumption grew nearly 10 per cent year-on-year to 70.66 billion units (BU) in the first half of April this year, showing improvement in economic activities and consumption patterns, according to the power ministry data. According to the data, power consumption in the country rose to 70.66 BU during April 1-15 this year from 64.24 MU in the year-ago period.

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/power-consumption-rises-nearly-10-to-70-66-bn-units-in-first-half-of-april-124041700384_1.html

External

Govt asks shipping firms to enhance reporting, tracking on West Asia routes

The government has issued advisories to ship companies to enhance reporting, tracking and security protocols for vessels on West Asian routes and coming into Indian waters. In a circular dated April 10, 2024, the Directorate General of Shipping (Mumbai) advised ship managers, ship masters and seafarers to enhance the mechanism for reporting and tracking maritime activities to safeguard the interest of merchant ships and their crews.

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/govt-asks-shipping-firms-to-enhance-reporting-tracking-on-west-asia-routes-124041700741_1.html

Crude import bill down 16% in FY24; dependence increases marginally to 87.7%

Lower oil prices helped India cut its crude oil import bill by 16% YoY to \$132 billion in 2023-24 even though volumes remained the same, according to the oil ministry data. The country imported 232 million metric tonnes (MMT) of crude oil in 2023-24. Domestic crude oil production was 29 MMT, little changed from the output in the previous year.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/crude-import-bill-down-16-in-fy24-dependence-increases-marginally-to-87-7/articleshow/109382580.cms>

India's oilmeal exports in 2023-24 fiscal hit record high

India's oil meal exports in 2023-24 fiscal have touched record high levels in both value and quantity terms, shows data compiled by industry body Solvent Extractors's Association (SEA). The overall export of oilmeals during April 2023 to March 2024 has increased to 4,885,437 tons valued at Rs. 15,370 crores compared to 4,336,287 tons valued at Rs. 11,400 crores during the same period of previous year; which is up by 13% in terms of quantity and 35% in term of value. This is highest export of oilmeals since 2013-14 in term of quantity and value. Previously during 2013-14, India had exported 43.81 lakh tons of oilmeals valued at Rs 11,500 crores.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/indias-oilmeal-exports-in-2023-24-fiscal-hit-record-high/articleshow/109370044.cms>