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Economy

EPFO enrolls 1.9 million net members in April, increase of 31% from March

Retirement body EPFO enrolled 1.9 million net members in the month of April this year, registering over 31 per cent jump from the previous month's count, according to provisional payroll data released on Thursday. "An increase of 31.29 per cent has been registered in net member addition during the current month as compared to the previous month of March 2024," said the labour ministry in a statement. Around 887,000 new members had enrolled in April 2024.

https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/epfo-adds-1-9-million-net-subscribers-in-april-2024-shows-data-124062000578_1.html

Govt may overhaul PLI schemes: Quarterly incentive payments on the table

To burnish production-linked incentive (PLI) schemes, the government is considering an overhaul of some of them relating to sectors such as textiles and pharma, and making incentive payments quarterly, officials in the know said. In a bid to cut the delay in processing incentive claims, the government is looking at switching to a quarterly disbursement of incentives. Currently, in most schemes, incentives are annual. As a result, hardly any progress is seen for most of the year.

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/govt-may-overhaul-pli-schemes-quarterly-incentive-payments-on-the-table-124062001059_1.html

Centre may issue note, reminding states of legal stand on child labour

As concerns over child labour in industry resurface, the Centre could issue an advisory to states to resensitise them about the legal provisions banning the practice and the need to enforce them more effectively to eliminate the menace, said people familiar with the matter. The Centre believes that though states are working towards eliminating child labour, sensitisation is a continuous process and a reiteration of the norms needs to be examined in the wake of a recent incident about use of child labour by a listed firm in Madhya Pradesh, said an official, who did not wish to be identified. "The Centre is closely monitoring the situation and will intervene when needed," the official said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/centre-may-issue-note-reminding-states-of-legal-stand-on-child-labour/articleshow/111147732.cms>

India sees 43% decline in FDI inflows in 2023, drops to 15th spot

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows to India plummeted by 43 per cent in 2023 to \$28 billion amid a global decline of 2 per cent, a report by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) said on Thursday. While India dropped to 15th spot in 2023 from 8th position in 2022 in terms of FDI inflows, it remained in the Top-5 for both kinds of FDI — greenfield projects and international project finance deals. In 2022, India's FDI inflows had risen by 10 per cent to \$49 billion.

https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/india-sees-43-fall-in-fdi-inflows-in-2023-drops-to-15th-spot-unctad-124062000868_1.html

India most attractive consumer market across the globe: Fibonacci X report

India has emerged as the most attractive consumer market across the globe with trends in consumption in smaller markets likely to merge with large cities, said a report by venture platform and accelerator Fibonacci X, adding that India is poised to grow in the range of 6-10% over the next few years, barring any black swan event. "Going by economic growth trends, India is poised to be a global hotspot for economic growth. India is not insulated from world risks, but can overcome them faster. We are expecting a growth fuelled future for Bharat," Kulmani Rana, Founder and CEO, Fibonacci X, said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/india-most-attractive-consumer-market-across-the-globe-fibonacci-x-report/articleshow/111138779.cms>

Finance

Govt seeks exemption for sovereign funds from RBI's AIF rules: Official

The Indian government has asked the central bank to exempt sovereign funds from a recent set of tightened rules concerning investments in alternate investment funds (AIFs), according to two government sources and a fund official. In December, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) asked banks and non-banking financial companies to raise provisions for AIF investments - under which sovereign funds also fall - if they were also lenders to the projects in which the AIFs were investing.

https://www.business-standard.com/finance/news/govt-seeks-exemption-for-sovereign-funds-from-rbi-s-aif-rules-official-124062000369_1.html

IBBI proposes amendments to insolvency rules; seeks public comments

The IBBI has proposed amendments to the Insolvency Resolution Process for Corporate Process regulations, to enhance efficiency and reduce costs, and sought stakeholder inputs by July 10. These amendments are expected to enhance the efficiency and transparency of the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP), and benefiting creditors and other stakeholders involved in the CIRP. In a discussion paper released on Wednesday, the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI), proposed that the registered valuer should submit a comprehensive valuation report for the corporate debtor as a whole, rather than separate valuations for different asset classes.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/ibbi-proposes-amendments-to-insolvency-rules-seeks-public-comments/articleshow/111147160.cms>

Budget 2024: Renewable sector likely to get double-digit capex allocation

Ahead of the upcoming Union Budget 2024, reports suggest that the power and renewable sector can see a double digit allocation and a number of schemes dedicated to benefit the sector. A report by The Financial Express, quoting a recent study by CRISIL, stated that capital expenditure for renewable power may witness a double-digit allocation, with capacity expected to reach 180-gigawatt by FY26, primarily driven by the continued dominance of solar energy.

https://www.business-standard.com/budget/news/budget-2024-renewable-sector-likely-to-get-double-digit-capex-allocation-124062000847_1.html

Industry

LEDs... and ACTION: White goods PLI may see light of day, again

The government is considering a plan to reopen the production-linked incentive scheme for white goods (PLIWG) after a slow start to domestic manufacturing of some high-value components such as compressors, copper tubes and aluminium foils. The scheme aims to boost the production of air-conditioner and LED light components. The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has approached some of the large companies in the industry and beneficiaries of the scheme on how much they would want to invest if the scheme is reopened. Industry executives said around Rs 1,500 crore of the PLIWG incentive corpus is unallocated.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/cons-products/durables/leds-and-action-white-goods-pli-may-see-light-of-day-again/articleshow/111147758.cms>

Domestic demand for steel soars in India, country turns net importer in FY24: CRISIL Report

In a shift from its status as a net exporter of steel since fiscal 2017, India has become a net importer in fiscal 2024, recording an overall steel trade deficit of 1.1 million tonnes (MT), according to a CRISIL report. The development highlights a dynamic change in the country's steel trade landscape, largely influenced by surging domestic demand and increased imports from major steel-producing nations. India's imports of finished steel reached 8.3 MT in fiscal 2024, marking a substantial 38 per cent increase year-on-year. The primary contributors to this surge in imports were China, South Korea, Japan, and Vietnam. Chinese steel imports alone accounted for 2.7 MT, while South Korea and Japan exported 2.6 MT and 1.3 MT of steel to India, respectively.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/indl-goods/svs/steel/domestic-demand-for-steel-soars-in-india-country-turns-net-importer-in-fy24-crisil-report/articleshow/111137228.cms>

Tech startup funding sees uptick after 2-yr decline in H1 2024: Report

Finally, some good news for the Indian startup ecosystem. After four consecutive half-year periods of declining funding since 2022, the first half of 2024 has shown an upward trajectory compared to the second half of 2023. Indian tech startups raised \$4.1 billion in the first half of 2024, a 4 per cent increase from \$3.96 billion in the second half of 2023, said the India Tech Semi-Annual Funding Report H1 2024 from Tracxn.

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/tech-startup-funding-sees-uptick-after-2-yr-decline-in-h1-2024-report-124062000499_1.html

Agriculture

Govt weighs interventions to stabilise rising wheat prices

The government on Thursday said it will undertake suitable policy interventions to ensure stability in wheat prices for consumers in the country. After a meeting of the committee of ministers chaired by Home Affairs and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah, the government said it has directed officials to keep a close watch on wheat prices.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/govt-weighs-interventions-to-stabilise-rising-wheat-prices/articleshow/111142611.cms>

North India tea industry loses crop, gains in prices amid erratic rainfall

Erratic rainfall has taken a toll on tea production in North India, pushing up prices. But it is hardly enough to cover the increased cost and crop loss, industry stakeholders say. Data sourced from the Calcutta Tea Traders Association (CTTA) shows that the average price realised for CTC leaf at Kolkata auctions held on Wednesday and Thursday was Rs 304.69 per kg compared to Rs 236.90 per kg in the previous year; the average for CTC dust was Rs 304.69 per kg compared to Rs 246.95 per kg; the average for orthodox leaf was Rs 312.15 per kg compared to Rs 230.11 per kg; the average for Darjeeling leaf was Rs 318.80 per kg compared to Rs 310.29 per kg.

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/north-india-tea-industry-loses-crop-gains-in-prices-amid-erratic-rainfall-124062000484_1.html

Infrastructure

DGCA revises regulations to boost seaplane operations under UDAN scheme

In a major leap towards sustainable and safe seaplane operations, the civil aviation regulator, DGCA, has revamped its regulatory provisions. Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) informed that the pivotal amendments will streamline infrastructure procedures, pilot training requirements, and regulatory compliances, paving the way for seaplane services to reach remote, inaccessible areas.

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/dgca-revises-regulations-to-boost-seaplane-operations-under-udan-scheme-124062000264_1.html

NHAI to collaborate with IIIT Delhi to enhance road safety through artificial intelligence

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has entered into an memorandum of understanding with the Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology (IIIT, Delhi) to leverage artificial intelligence (AI) based solutions for improvement in the availability of road signs on national highways, a move aimed at enhancing road safety. The tentative length to be covered under this project shall be around 25,000 km, the ministry of road transport and highways said in a statement issued on Thursday. As per the agreement, IIIT Delhi will conduct surveys for collecting

imagery and other data related to availability and condition of road signages on selected national highways stretches.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/infrastructure/nhai-to-collaborate-with-iiit-delhi-to-enhance-road-safety-through-artificial-intelligence/articleshow/111145647.cms>

Real estate sector sees debt sanctions of Rs 9.63 trn during 2018-23

Real estate sector saw debt sanctions of Rs 9.63 trillion during 2018-23 and there is an opportunity of debt financing of Rs 14 trillion in the next three years, according to a report by JLL India and Propstack. In their joint report -- 'Decoding Debt Financing: Opportunities in Indian Real Estate', JLL India and Propstack said the real estate sector in India witnessed debt sanctioning amounting to Rs 9,63,441 crore in the last six years.

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/real-estate-sector-sees-debt-sanctions-of-rs-9-63-trn-during-2018-23-124062001087_1.html

Housing sales likely to decline 2% in Apr-June across top 9 cities

Housing sales are estimated to decline 2 per cent to nearly 120,000 units in the current quarter across nine major cities, mainly due to lower demand in Hyderabad and Pune, according to PropEquity. Real estate data analytic firm PropEquity on Thursday released housing sales data for April-June, 10 days before the end of the quarter. As per the data, housing sales in April-June are estimated to fall at 119,901 units as against 121,856 units in the year-ago period.

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/housing-sales-likely-to-decline-2-in-apr-june-across-top-9-cities-124062000649_1.html

Energy

Driving towards green horizons, OMCs unite for hydrogen road map

In a bid to accelerate their energy transition plans and ensure the adoption of green hydrogen in a comprehensive manner, state-owned oil marketing companies (OMCs) are expected to soon submit a joint road map for the sector, officials said. The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas Ministry has asked for the detailed plan being submitted before the upcoming national budget, the officials said. Public-sector undertakings (PSUs) under the ministry target to produce more than 1 million tonnes (mt) of green hydrogen by 2030. However, despite forging private sector partnerships, and issuing tenders, work on no green hydrogen production unit has taken off so far.

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/driving-towards-green-horizons-omcs-unite-for-hydrogen-road-map-124062001054_1.html

Landowners' compensation doubled in power projects

The central government has issued guidelines, raising compensation given to landowners for 'right of way' (RoW) in power transmission projects and linking it to market rates against generally lower states' circle rates. As per the norms, if circle rates are higher, they will prevail over market rates. Landowners will get compensated for the tower base area at 200% of the land value, against 80% now, as per the new norms, while compensation for RoW for the transmission corridor has been doubled to 30% of the land value.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/services/property/-cstruction/landowners-compensation-doubled-in-power-projects/articleshow/111147311.cms>

Thermal power plant load factor to remain healthy at 70% in FY25: ICRA

Thermal plant load factor or capacity utilisation is expected to remain healthy at 70 per cent in FY2025 on power demand growth of 6 per cent, ICRA said on Thursday. ICRA's outlook for the thermal power segment is "Stable", following the improvement in the thermal plant load factor (PLF) and healthy demand growth, thereby improving visibility on signing of new power purchase agreements (PPAs), an ICRA statement said.

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/thermal-power-plant-load-factor-to-remain-healthy-at-70-in-fy25-icra-124062000822_1.html

Telecom

Trai suggests infrastructure status, single-window clearance for broadcasting sector

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) has sought 'infrastructure' status for the country's broadcasting industry to help draw significant funds to the sector that is expected to play a key role in telling the country's stellar growth story to a global audience. In its recommendations to the government on formulating the National Broadcasting Policy (NBP), the Trai has also said that the process of granting approvals be digitised through single-window clearance.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/media/entertainment/media/trai-suggests-infrastructure-status-single-window-clearance-for-broadcasting-sector/articleshow/111147312.cms>

States

Rajasthan govt to boost religious tourism by enhancing temple towns, infra

The Rajasthan government has plans to promote religious tourism by promoting temple towns and improving infrastructure. "The new BJP government is taking steps for tourism development. Many religious places in the state are world famous and thousands of devotees from across the country and abroad visit them every year," said an official of the state tourism department.

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/rajasthan-govt-to-boost-religious-tourism-by-enhancing-temple-towns-infra-124062000729_1.html

Healthcare

Imports of bulk drugs grew by 13.06% in April-May as prices cooled

Imports of bulk drugs in the first two months of 2024-25 grew by 13.06 per cent because prices of active pharmaceutical ingredients (or bulk drugs) are low now. Industry insiders say Indian pharma players are stocking up active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) while prices stay low. The data culled from the Pharmaceutical Exports Promotion Council (Pharmexcil) shows in April and May India imported bulk drugs worth \$1.44 billion, up from the \$1.27 billion in the same months last year.

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/bulk-drug-imports-grow-by-13-06-in-april-may-as-prices-cool-off-124062000930_1.html

External

Trade marketing scheme soon to assist small companies board ONDC

The government will soon launch a trade marketing scheme to help micro and small enterprises (MSE) onboard the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) and participate in digital commerce, said officials. The micro, small and medium enterprises ministry has proposed the Trade Enablement & Marketing (TEAM) scheme, with an outlay of ₹277 crore, to expand MSEs' business beyond the bricks-and-mortar model through ONDC, India's mega network, which seeks to enable buyers and sellers to transact through a single platform. "The TEAM initiative aims to help MSEs compete in the digital space using the ONDC," said an official, who did not wish to be identified. On ONDC, sellers don't have to pay high commission of 30-40% as on other e-marketplaces, the official said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/trade-marketing-scheme-soon-to-assist-small-companies-board-ondc/articleshow/111147777.cms>

Govt allows 2,000 tonnes non-basmati white rice exports to Malawi, Zimbabwe

The government has permitted exports of 2,000 tonnes of non-basmati white rice to two African nations - Malawi and Zimbabwe. The export is permitted through National Cooperative Exports Limited (NCEL), the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) has said in a notification. Though exports of non-basmati white rice have been banned since July 20, 2023 to boost domestic supply, exports are allowed on the basis of permission granted by the government to certain countries to meet their food security needs on request.

https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/govt-allows-2-000-tonnes-non-basmati-white-rice-exports-to-malawi-zimbabwe-124062000276_1.html

Curbs on some studded gold jewellery not applicable for SEZ units: DGFT

The government has clarified that its decision to impose import curbs on certain types of studded gold jewellery is not applicable for units in the special economic zones (SEZs). On June 11, the directorate general of foreign trade (DGFT) through a notification imposed the restrictions to discourage inbound shipments of these items from countries like Indonesia and Tanzania.

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/curbs-on-some-studded-gold-jewellery-not-applicable-for-sez-units-dgft-124062000299_1.html

DGFT implements automated system for adhoc input-output norms fixation

The commerce ministry's arm DGFT on Thursday said it has implemented an automated system for adhoc input-output norms fixation for goods, with a view to promote ease of doing business for exporters. Exporters are allowed to import duty-free raw material or inputs for manufacturing goods for exports purposes only under an advance authorisation scheme. For this scheme, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) has fixed standard input-output norms for almost all categories of products.

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/dgft-implements-automated-system-for-adhoc-input-output-norms-fixation-124062001076_1.html

Make India key node to verify origin of diamonds, Indian officials tell EU

If it's Belgium, why not India? New Delhi, along with the Indian diamond lobby, have sent across the message to the G7 club as the countdown begins to a sterner sanctions regime on Russian stones, beginning September 1. At a meeting in Brussels last month, the Indian trade body, senior government officials and Indian customs officials have told the European Union authorities that India, which imports about 90% of rough stones mined in the world, should be a key nodal checkpoint to verify whether diamonds mined in Russia are sneaking into the affluent markets whose governments are backing the sanctions.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/cons-products/fashion/-/cosmetics/-/jewellery/make-india-key-node-to-verify-origin-of-diamonds-indian-officials-tell-eu/articleshow/111147527.cms>