

INDIA FOCUS



Our government has reshaped the budget

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN,
Finance Minister

Under the leadership of PM Modi, the foreign policy of India has given fame to our country ...

S JAISHANKAR,
External Affairs Minister



INSIDE

Bilateral Developments
India Pavilion at AT X SG
(CommunicAsia)



PAGE 12

India the most preferred market for tech giants:
Apple CEO

PAGE 03

India's retail sector set to cross \$2 trn by 2030,
says report

PAGE 05

Govt to train workers to propel green hydrogen mission

PAGE 07

ISRO tests 3D-printed rocket engine

PAGE 09

India's internet economy likely to reach \$1 trn by 2030: Experts

PAGE 10

Space industry offers good opportunity for private players:
Isro chief

PAGE 11

India's economy grows 7.8% in Q4; takes FY24 growth to 8.2%

Macro indicators look up; now investors' eyes on likely boosts from full-year budget

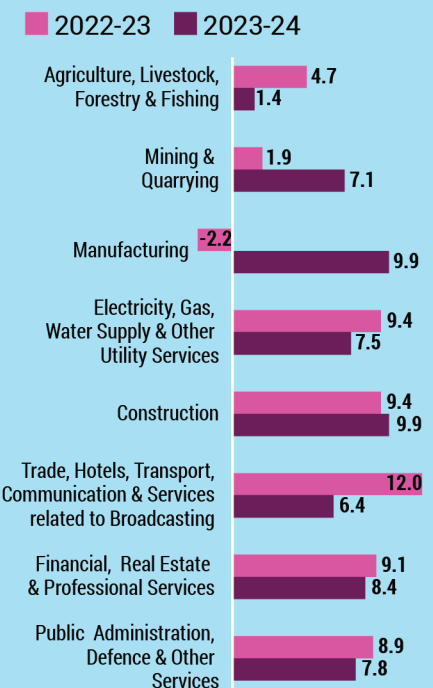


India's economy grew at a faster-than-expected pace of 7.8% year-on-year in the first three months of 2024, helped by a strong performance in the manufacturing sector, and economists expect the momentum to continue this year. India's economic growth for the full 2023-24 fiscal year was revised up to 8.2%, also the highest among large economies globally, from an earlier government estimate of 7.6%.

The highest growth pace among the largest economies globally will bolster the economic record of this government, which has returned to power after the general elections. Now, investors are looking ahead to the full-year budget, which is likely in mid-July, to see what steps the new government would take to boost the economy in the current situation.

Manufacturing And Construction Pull Up GDP Growth

Sectoral composition of GDP growth in Jan-Mar quarter (% Y-o-Y)



Source: Government of India

Garima Kapoor, economist, at Mumbai-based Elara Securities, said the growth figures come amid subdued inflation and a forecast of a normal monsoon, which could help boost consumer demand.

The arrival of monsoon rains can support farm output and rural wages. "The high frequency indicators during the first two months of this financial year suggest 2024-25 fiscal year has started on a relatively stable footing," she said.

On Wednesday, S&P Global raised its sovereign rating outlook for India to "positive" from "stable", adding that regardless of the outcome of the national elections it expected broad continuity in economic reforms and fiscal policies. It expects the economy to grow at 6.8% in the current fiscal year starting April, and close to 7% annually over the next three years.

The gross domestic product growth in the January-March quarter was lower than a revised 8.6% expansion in the previous quarter, but higher than the 6.7% forecast by economists in a Reuters poll, government data released on Friday showed.

In the January-March quarter, the headline growth figure was boosted by a sharp fall in subsidies, while gross value added (GVA), seen by economists as a more stable measure of growth, rose 6.3%, data showed. For the previous quarter, GVA growth was revised to 6.8%. ■

FY24 fiscal deficit improves to 5.63% of GDP

India's fiscal deficit for 2023-24 was lower than its full-year target of 5.8% of the gross domestic product due to a small cut in expenditure, government data showed. The fiscal deficit stood at 5.63% of gross domestic product for the financial year that ended on March 31.

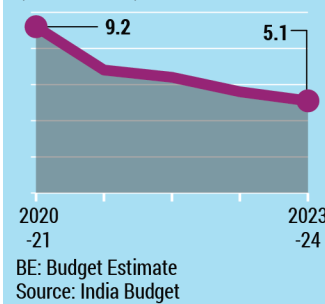
The budget gap, or fiscal deficit, was Rs 16.54 trillion (\$198.34 billion), or 95.3% of the estimate, even though the government continued its record infrastructure spending to boost the economy.

For April, the first month of the current financial year, the fiscal deficit was Rs 2.1 trillion, or 12.5% of the target.

The government has set a fiscal deficit target of 5.1% for the current financial year, but expectation of a narrower deficit has built up due to the surprise \$25 billion dividend transfer by the Reserve Bank of India to the government earlier this month. ■

India's Fiscal Consolidation Path

(% of GDP)



April infrastructure output rises 6.2%

India's infrastructure output in April rose 6.2% year-on-year, compared with a revised 6% growth in March, government data showed, backed by strong electricity and steel output.

Infrastructure output, which accounts for 40% of industrial production, measures activity in eight sectors, including refinery products and electricity.

Coal production grew 7.5%, while electricity generation rose 9.4%. In March, coal production rose 8.7% and electricity generation grew 8.6%.

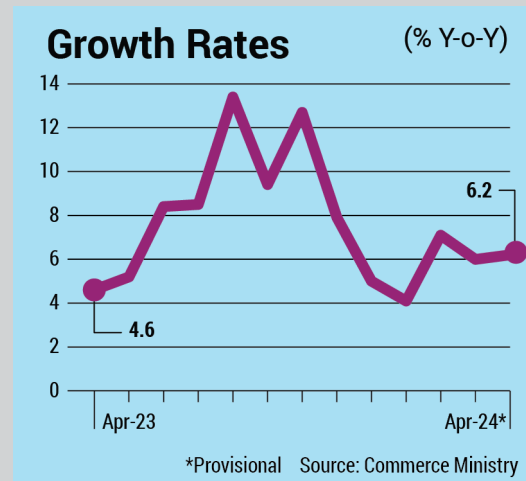
Steel production grew 7.1% year-on-year in March, against a 6.4% increase a month earlier. Natural gas output registered a growth of 8.6% in April, while it rose 6.3% in the previous month.

Cement production rose 0.6% in April year-on-year, its growth slowing compared with March's 10.6% rise. Crude oil production rose 1.6% in April, compared with a 2% growth a month earlier.

All sectors but fertilisers registered growth.

The eight core sectors contribute 40.27% to the country's Index of Industrial Production (IIP).

India Ratings and Research said: "The start



of the new fiscal year has been on a good note with the core sector output growing at 6.2% YoY in April 2024 after clocking a growth of 6% last month. This shows that the momentum has continued as the core sector was up 0.6% month-on-month on a seasonally adjusted basis. This is the fastest pace of growth witnessed since December 2023. India Ratings and Research believes the pickup in core sector in April 2024 will provide support to the overall industrial output and expects IIP to grow at around 5% YoY in April 2024." ■

TECH TITANS BACK INDIA

India the most preferred market for tech giants, says Apple CEO Tim Cook

Written using agency reports

India has become a key market for global tech giants, with a burgeoning developer base attracting significant attention, said Tim Cook, CEO of Apple. He expressed his contentment with India's growing developer community, underlining Apple's holistic approach covering everything from developer support to market strategies and operational efficiency.

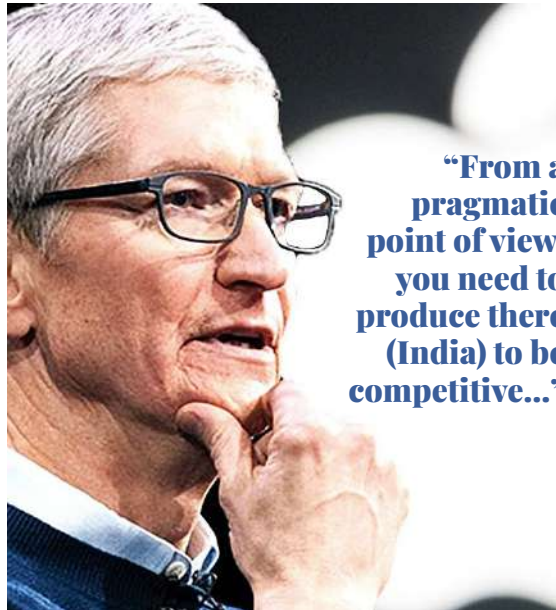
MoS Electronics and Technology Rajeev Chandrasekhar tweeted that the CEO of Apple has said, "We have been very pleased that there is a rapidly growing base of developers in India. Apple is working on the entire ecosystem from developer to the market to operations, the whole thing."

Cook lauded Apple India's double-digit revenue growth, marking a new March quarter record. He described India as an "incredibly exciting market" and a major focus for the company.

"We did grow strong by double-digit, and so we were very, very pleased with that. It was a new March quarter revenue record for us. As you know, as I've said before, I see it as an incredibly exciting market and it's a major focus for us," said Cook on Apple's performance in India.

India has become a top priority for global tech companies due to its large talent pool, low operating costs, and stable environment for supply chains.

In 2023, revenue growth rates for Apple, Microsoft and Meta in India outpaced their global expansion rates, according to media reports.



"From a pragmatic point of view, you need to produce there (India) to be competitive, and so, yes, the two things are linked from that point of view, but we have both operational things going on and we have to go to market and initiatives going on," he added.

Apple's efforts to expand its presence in India include strengthening distribution channels and nurturing the developer community. Apple supported over a million developer jobs in India in 2023, with plans for further expansion.

Moreover, Apple's achievement of setting a six-month revenue record in India and other emerging markets underscores the country's significance in the tech landscape. ■



Google CEO bets on India's AI embrace

For countries like India, technology shifts are an opportunity to catch up or leap ahead, according to Alphabet and Google CEO Sundar Pichai.

He highlighted that in terms of the user base for Google's AI tools, India is the number one country. "To serve them, we're very committed to bringing these same AI tools globally. We see a lot of developer activity from India on top of our AI platforms already. I think this will be an exciting moment, and India will be well positioned as the shift to AI happens," he said.

Pichai was quoted by media as stating, "India was never going to cross developed worlds in personal computing penetration. But for mobile, more people got access than prior generations." People didn't have landlines, and most directly jumped to mobiles. With each tech shift you have a better opportunity to drive penetration he added. ■

FINDING NEW MARKETS

India's exports rise to 115 nations in FY24

Written using agency reports

Despite global economic uncertainties, India's exports have increased to as many as 115 countries out of 238 destinations in 2023-24, according to Commerce Ministry's data.

These 115 export destinations, which account for 46.5% of India's export basket, include the US, UAE, Netherland, China, UK, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Bangladesh, Germany and Italy.

Overall exports reached \$778.2 billion in 2023-24 against \$776.4 billion in 2022-23, registering a marginal growth of 0.23%.

The share of India's merchandise exports has also increased marginally from 1.70% in 2014 to 1.82% in 2023. India's rank in world merchandise exporters too has improved from 19th to 17th during the period.

Further, India's export to its top 10 destinations witnessed a 13% year-on-year increase in 2023-24.

The UAE has emerged as the primary destination, with a substantial 12.71% growth in export value at \$35.6 billion. Similarly, exports to Singapore surged by 20.19% to \$14.4 billion, to the UK by 13.30% to \$13 billion, and to China by 8.70% to \$16.7 billion, indicating a sustained demand for Indian products.

The data showed that the exponential growth rates observed in countries like Russia (35.41%), Romania (138.84%), and Albania (234.97%) underscore the exploration of new markets.

The country's outbound shipments to regions including CIS (commonwealth of independent states), Oceania and Europe too witnessed expansion during 2023-24 over 2022-23.

The top five export destinations driving export growth in CIS region during 2023-24 are Russia, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Armenia and Tajikistan.

Similarly, the top five destinations driving India's export growth in Oceania region in the last fiscal are Australia, Timor Leste, Samoa, Vanuatu and Solomon Island.

And in Europe, the major countries where Indian exporters recorded healthy growth in their shipments during 2023-24 are the UK, Romania, Albania, Netherland and Greece. ■

GROWING TRADE

Exports of merchandise and services see growth of 6.88%

Written using agency reports

Merchandise and services exports rose by 6.88% in April 2024 to \$64.56 billion from \$60.40 billion in April 2023.

India's exports in April 2024 is estimated to be \$64.56 billion, exhibiting a positive growth of 6.88% over April 2023. Total imports in April 2024 is estimated to be \$71.07 billion, exhibiting a positive growth of 12.78% over April 2023.

Merchandise exports in April 2024 were \$34.99 billion, as compared to \$34.62 billion in April 2023. Merchandise imports in April 2024 were \$54.09 billion, as compared to \$49.06 billion in April 2023.

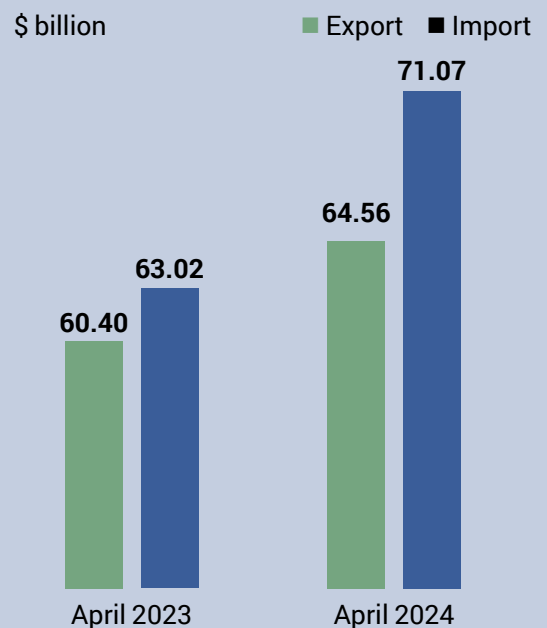
Non-petroleum and non-gems & jewellery exports in April 2024 were \$26.11 billion, compared to \$25.77 billion in April 2023.

Non-petroleum, non-gems & jewellery (gold, silver & precious metals) imports in April 2024 were \$32.72 billion, compared to \$32.13 billion in April 2023.

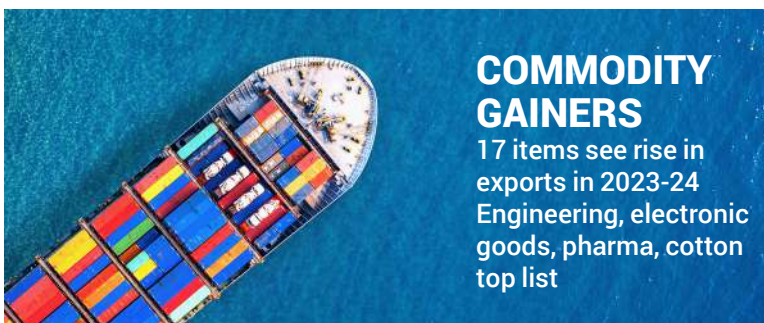
The estimated value of services export for April 2024 stood at \$29.57 billion, as compared to \$25.78 billion in April 2023.

The estimated value of services import for April 2024 estimated to be around \$16.97 billion as compared to \$13.96 billion in April 2023.

Services exports are projected to grow by 14.68% during April 2024 over April 2023. ■

TOTAL TRADE DURING APRIL 2024*

* Note: The latest data for services sector released by RBI is for March 2024. The data for April 2024 is an estimation, which will be revised based on RBI's subsequent release.

**COMMODITY GAINERS**

17 items see rise in exports in 2023-24
Engineering, electronic goods, pharma, cotton top list

Exports may surge 12-15% to cross \$500 bn this fiscal: FIEO

Written using agency reports

The country's merchandise exports are expected to increase about \$60-70 billion to \$500 billion by the end of FY25, apex exporters' body FIEO said.

In 2023-24, exports dipped over 3% to \$437 billion. Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) President Ashwini Kumar also said the country's services exports are also likely to reach \$390-400 billion this fiscal year. "We are looking for merchandise exports to be \$500-510 billion in 2024-25. In the services, we expect exports to be around \$390-400 billion for the current fiscal year," Kumar told reporters here.

He said traditional markets like the US and Europe will help in boosting India's exports. ■

HOT CHIPS

Deeptech startup Mindgrove to roll out Indian designed IoT chips

Written using agency reports

IT Madras-incubated semiconductor startup Mindgrove Technologies has rolled out India's first commercial high-performance SoC (system on chip) called Secure IoT.

The chip is designed on open-source instruction set architecture (ISA) RISC-V and is expected to improve cost efficiency for Indian original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) for their feature-rich devices.

Secure IoT will cost 30% less than other chips in similar segments, the startup claimed. Further, the startup also said that the chip can be deployed by players like smartwatches, smart city devices, connected home devices, as well as EV battery management systems, among others.

Mindgrove, founded by Shashwath TR and Sharan Srinivas Jagathrakshakan in 2021, has been working on the development of SoCs since inception. It uses indigenous RISC-V Shakti cores to power its chips.

Last year, the startup also secured \$2.32 million in its seed funding round led by Peak XV Partners.

Shashwath TR said that during research and development, the startup was able to recognise a wide gap between high-end and low-end players in the embedded systems space, with the latter prioritising cost and volume over the chip's actual performance.

"Thus, we set out to design chips that target the middle market. 'Right-sizing' has been the key differentiating factor when it comes to Mindgrove, giving it an edge over others, with enhanced flexibility, adaptability, security and cost-efficiency coupled with a robust support system," he added. ■

Tata Electronics starts exporting semiconductor chip samples

Written using agency reports



The Indian government is reportedly evaluating proposals worth \$21 billion in investments as part of its effort to boost chip manufacturing within the country

Tata Electronics has reportedly started exporting limited quantities of semiconductor chips packaged at its Bengaluru-based research and development centre. This move is expected to give a boost to India's semiconductor ecosystem, according to an Economic Times report.

According to the report, these packaged chips are being shipped to the company's partners in Japan, the US and Europe. A person in the know said that the packaged chips from Tata Electronics are being sent to customers outside the country, and that the company is expanding its customer base.

Tata Electronics has established partnerships with multiple entities and is actively expanding its customer network. Some of these products are still undergoing pilot testing. Furthermore, the company is also nearing completion of the design process for semiconductor chips in various sizes. This progress indicates that they are in the final stages before sending these designs for manufacturing, a phase known as tape-out in the semiconductor industry.

Before achieving a successful tape-out, there are several rounds of development. Hence, some of these products will be in advanced stages of research and development. They will



be dispatched to specific customers to gather feedback for testing and further enhancement. Commercial production is scheduled for 2027, said in the report.

The Union Cabinet approved the country's first semiconductor fab to be set up by the Tata Group in partnership with Taiwan's Powerchip Semiconductor Manufacturing Corp. ■

MAKE IN INDIA

17 firms under IT hardware PLI to start production this year: IT secy

Written using agency reports

Most of the personal computer and server makers selected under the IT hardware production-linked incentive scheme are expected to start production this year, a senior government official has reportedly said.

"... About 17 out of 27 PLI companies will start production this year. Around 6-7 of them started production last year and two have plans to start production next year," Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) Secretary S Krishnan said on the sidelines of the inauguration of a new high-end computing server manufacturing unit of Netweb Technologies.

The government in November, 2023 approved the application of 27 companies under the new production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for IT hardware.

On the Rs 104 billion India AI mission, Krishnan said domestic companies will get preference.

The Cabinet on March 7 this year approved the India AI Mission for five years to encourage AI development in the country. The approved corpus will be used to build a high-end scalable AI ecosystem in public-private partnership mode. ■



"... About 17 out of 27 PLI companies will start production this year"

S KRISHNAN,
MeitY Secretary

BUYING POWER

India's retail sector set to cross \$2 trn by 2030, says report

Written using agency reports

India's retail market is poised to surpass \$2.2 trillion by 2030, with approximately 90% of sales expected to occur offline, according to a report, Decoding Omnichannel: Strategies for D2C Brands, by Accel, Fireside Ventures, and Redseer Strategy Consultants.

The report also finds that a substantial portion of all purchases will be influenced by what consumers see online.

While consumer companies like Mamaearth saw successful initial public offerings (IPOs), startups such as Cult.fit, Urban Company, Curefoods, Homelane, and Lenskart, among others, have grown successfully. The journeys of these companies reflect a dynamic shift in consumer behaviour towards omnichannel shopping experiences, where consumers traverse different channels at various stages of the purchase funnel.

"The fusion of online and offline presence is distinctly Indian, reflecting the unique preferences and behaviours of Indian consumers. It bridges trust

and convenience barriers, accommodating a shopping journey characterised by a mix of traditional values and modern conveniences," said Prashanth Prakash, partner at Accel. "While the first generation of omnichannel brands focused on building omnichannel technology, the next generation will introduce new, uniquely Indian business models and solutions."

The Decoding Omnichannel report indicates that digital-first brands are best positioned to lead the charge in scaling up omnichannel strategies across various consumption categories in the country. Digital-first brands can leverage their product innovation engines, data-driven marketing strategies, and tech backbone to scale effectively and efficiently across different offline channels.

Kanwaljit Singh, founder and managing partner at Fireside Ventures, said, "For every Sweet Karam Coffee that leverages quick-commerce as a discovery channel, there's a boAt that uses it to drive e-commerce bestsellers front and

centre. While no single formula works across categories, we have several learnings to share. We believe consumer brands should be omniprepared for omnichannel.”

Anil Kumar, founder and CEO of Redseer Strategy Consultants, said he has tracked the journey of Indian consumer brands over the past decade and a half, where many pioneering brands and platforms established online as a viable channel. With that accomplished, the players are now evolving to broaden their focus by serving consumers wherever they are, whether online or offline. ■

CALL SIGNS

India's smartphone market up 11.5%

Written using agency reports

India's smartphone shipment grew by 11.5% in the first quarter of calendar year (CY) 2024 on a year-on-year basis to 34 million units. This is the third consecutive quarter of growth in shipments, International Data Corporation's (IDC) Worldwide Quarterly Mobile Phone Tracker said.

However, the overall growth for smartphones to be in mid-single digits for 2024. “The first few months of the year have provided momentum for the smartphone market in India. However, the second half of the year will be crucial. IDC estimates a modest overall annual growth in the mid-single digits for 2024,” says Navkendar Singh, Associate Vice President, Devices Research, IDC.

Singh said that the reasons for the tepid growth include challenges around attracting first-time smartphone users and the impact of the second hand market. “Notably, the market's concentration among the top brands is weakening, with the long tail of smaller brands and sub-brands gaining volume. The share of the top five brands has dropped to 65% from 69% a year ago,” Singh added.

In the overall market share, the top three brands were Vivo, Xiaomi and Samsung, making up 53% share in this segment. Vivo has dethroned Samsung to top the chart with a market share of 16.2%. While Samsung saw its market share fall to 15.6% for the Q1 of CY2024. This is down from the high of 20.1% in Q1 of CY23.

For the quarter, growth was driven by the super-premium segment (\$800+), which grew the highest with 44% growth, with its share up from 7% to 9%.

The iPhone14/15/14 Plus, 15 Plus together accounted for 64% of shipments, followed by the Galaxy S24/S24 Ultra/S23/S24+ with 25% share. Overall, Apple led the segment with a share of 69%, followed by Samsung at 31%.

After the super-premium, the share of entry-premium (\$200-\$400) segment reached 23%, up from

20% growing by 25% YoY. Shipments to the mass budget (\$100-\$200) segment grew by 22% Y-o-Y, reaching 48% from 44% a year ago. The entry level (sub-\$100) segment declined by 14% Y-o-Y to 15% share, down from 20% a year ago. ■

CLEAN FUEL

Govt to train workers to propel green hydrogen mission

Written using agency reports

In a move towards sustainability, the government unveils plans to train a workforce of 600,000 individuals to drive the ambitious National Green Hydrogen Mission, with an investment nearing Rs 200 billion, according to a report in Economic Times.

A comprehensive analysis by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) has identified the critical need for skilled personnel across the entire value chain until 2030. Collaboration between MSDE and the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) will shape a strategic plan to address this demand, as revealed by a senior government official to ET

MNRE, as the lead ministry for the Green Hydrogen Mission, has released draft guidelines for skill development, anticipating finalisation by month-end following stakeholder consultations.

The skilling framework outlined in the guidelines emphasises short-term training, upskilling, creation of centres of excellence, and integration of curriculum-based long-duration training across educational institutions. With the green hydrogen value chain encompassing renewable energy generation, hydrogen production, storage, and application, the government underscores the necessity for specialized skill sets.



Recognising the transformative potential of hydrogen technologies, the government underscores the importance of a coordinated skilling initiative to transition workers from traditional sectors to the burgeoning green hydrogen ecosystem. ■

FLYING HIGH

Air passenger traffic in India to touch 407-418 mn in FY25: ICRA

Written using agency reports

Air passenger traffic in the country is projected to touch record levels in the range of 407-418 million in the current financial year and the revenues of select airport operators together are estimated to rise 15-17% during the same period, rating agency IcrA said.

Surpassing the pre-Covid level by 10%, the traffic reached 376.4 million in the fiscal year ended March 2024.

In a report, IcrA said the overall traffic is expected to see a healthy growth of around 8-11% year-on-year to around 407-418 million in FY2025, supported by strong pick-up in both leisure and business travel, improving connectivity to newer destinations in the domestic segment and the continued uptick in international travel.

Indian airport operators' revenue is anticipated to grow 15-17% on an annual basis in the current fiscal year ending March 2025, it added.

"The recovery in the Indian airport passenger traffic is one of the best compared to other major global counterparts. India accounted for 4.2% of the global passenger traffic in CY2023, and its share in passenger traffic has improved from 3.8% in CY2019," Vinay Kumar G, Vice President & Sector Head, Corporate Ratings at IcrA, said. "While the global passenger traffic recovered to just 96% of global passenger traffic in CY2023, the Indian airport passenger traffic revived to 106% of the pre-Covid level owing to strong economic growth as well as the addition of new airport routes. The Indian air passenger traffic is expected to outperform the global trend." ■



POSITIVE EXPECTATIONS

8-11%
growth in
traffic in
FY2025

15-17%
rise in
airport
operators
revenue in
FY2025

Strong pick-up in leisure and business travel

RISE OF AI

Top 3 Indian IT firms train over 775,000 in GenAI skills

Written using agency reports

The top three Indian IT firms – Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Infosys and Wipro – collectively trained over 775,000 employees in generative AI (GenAI) capability by the end of 2023-24, according to Business Standard quoting an analysis of GenAI-trained workforce of leading companies in India in this sector.

This number is significantly higher than the projection made by the IT industry body Nasscom in its Strategic Review of 2023, released in February this year. It said in 2023-2024, over 650,000 employees across the IT industry received training in GenAI skills.

TCS, India's largest IT services company, is leading the pack, and has trained around 300,000 employees in GenAI skills, according to the company, added the report. Infosys, based on information provided by the company, is second-placed, having trained 250,000 of its staffers in GenAI skills. It is followed by Wipro, which imparted training to over 225,000 employees on AI fundamentals and the responsible use of AI.

HCL Tech said that the company plans to equip 50,000 employees with GenAI skills in FY25. LTIMindtree, the fifth-largest IT services player, has so far trained over 20,000 employees on GenAI capabilities. ■



"AI will be the very fabric of the company. We are ensuring that everybody in the organisation has foundational skills and then we build expertise on it"

MILIND LAKKAD,
CHRO of TCS

India ranks first in adoption of GenAI across Asia-Pacific: Deloitte

Written using agency reports

With 93% of students and 83% of employees actively engaging with the technology, India ranks first in the adoption of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) across the Asia-Pacific, a report released by Deloitte India showed. It, however, added that only 50%

of these employees believe their managers know they use this technology.

The findings were a part of the “Generative AI in the Asia Pacific: Young Employees Lead as Employers Play Catch-Up” report, based on a survey of 11,900 individuals across 13 countries in the region. It also noted that over the next five years, an increase of a whopping 182% is anticipated in the daily usage of GenAI.

The report said that GenAI could significantly affect 17% of working hours across the Asia Pacific, amounting to almost 1.1 billion work hours annually. Across the Asia-Pacific region, GenAI users save an average of 6.3 hours per week. “Indian users save even more time, with an average of 7.85 hours weekly, allowing for increased focus on skill acquisition,” it added.

Moreover, 86% of Indian GenAI users reported that the technology enhanced their productivity. In Asia-Pacific, 83% said this technology improves their ideation capabilities.

However, businesses may not be fully implementing this technology. According to the survey, around 75% of the users said that their businesses were falling behind on GenAI adoption. ■

Indian GenAI platform goes live in 98 languages

Written using agency reports

Homegrown generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) platform Hanooman went live in 98 global languages, including 12 Indian languages.

Developed by 3AI Holding Limited and Seetha Mahalaxmi Healthcare (SML) India, the conversational AI platform aims to reach 200 million users within its first year of launch.

Apart from translation, the platform will also allow users to perform other tasks such as chatting, coding, and tutoring, among others.

“Hanooman represents a new era of AI innovation in India. With its launch, we aim to impact the lives of 200 million users within the first year alone. 80% of Indians can’t use English, hence, Hanooman’s capabilities to support Indian languages will bring GenAI within everyone’s reach



GENAI TO
SAVE ...

**1.1
billion**
work hours
annually

**6.3
hours**
per week in
Asia-Pacific

**7.85
hours**
hours a week
in India

Source: Survey by
Deloitte India

in India and open massive opportunities for companies and startups bringing GenAI products to the market,” said Vishnu Vardhan, co-founder and chief executive officer (CEO), SML India.

The platform aims to cater to four sectors – healthcare, governance, financial services and education. ■

PRINTING TO SPACE

ISRO tests 3D-printed rocket engine

Written using agency reports

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has successfully conducted a long-duration test of its PS4 engine, re-designed for production using cutting-edge additive manufacturing (AM) techniques – also known in common parlance as 3D printing – and crafted in Indian industry.

The new engine, now a single piece, saves 97% of raw materials and reduces production time by 60%, ISRO said.

ISRO achieved the major milestone on May 9 using the PS4 engine of PSLV (Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle) upper stage.

The engine was made in India (WIPRO 3D), and the engine was hot tested at ISRO Propulsion Complex, Mahendragiri, Tamil Nadu, said a release.

As part of the development programme, the injector head of the engine was realised and successfully hot tested earlier. Detailed flow and thermal modelling, structural simulation, and cold flow characterisation of the proto hardware were carried out to gain confidence for the hot test, ISRO said.

Consequently, four successful developmental hot tests of integrated engines were conducted for a cumulative duration of 74 seconds which validated the engine performance parameters.

Furthermore, the engine was successfully tested for the full qualification duration of 665 seconds and observed that all the performance parameters were as expected. It is planned to induct this AM PS4 engine into the regular PSLV programme, ISRO added. ■



ECOMM BOOM

India's internet economy likely to reach \$1 trn by 2030: Experts

Written using agency reports

India's internet economy is estimated to reach \$1 trillion by 2030, primarily due to e-commerce, which is expected to be worth \$325 billion and rank third globally, according to industry experts.

InGovern Research Services, a leading corporate governance advisory firm, hosted a virtual roundtable to deliberate on the notable developments in India's e-commerce sector in 2023, with a particular focus on the essential role of customer trust in fueling its ongoing expansion.

Shriram Subramanian, Founder and MD of InGovern Research Services, said as India becomes a \$5 trillion economy, e-commerce will continue to annually grow at about 25% per annum from \$60 billion in FY23.

"E-commerce players are benefiting from huge tailwinds. They are responsibly enabling small and medium enterprises to sell in India and globally through their global selling programmes. They continue to invest in tools and processes to enhance customer trust," said Subramanian.

Quick commerce has shaken up the e-commerce sector as a disruptor model promising faster deliveries. As e-commerce evolves, players must cater to the changing needs of consumers across India's cities and towns, said Mohanty. ■

FERTILE GROWTH

Number of agri startups jumps multifold in 9 years: Report

Written using agency reports

The number of startups in agriculture and allied sectors has risen to over 7,000 in the last nine years due to a conducive business environment and government support, a report said.

Before 2014-15, there were less than 50 startups in agriculture and allied sectors, according to a report "Transformation of India's Agriculture" released by the Federation of All India Farmer Associations (FAIFA).

The Department of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare (DA&FW) is implementing the "Innovation and Agri-Entrepreneurship Development" programme under Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) from 2018-19 to promote innovation and agri-entrepreneurship by providing financial support and nurturing an incubation ecosystem.

The report commended the government's



decade-long efforts, acknowledging a comprehensive approach that has borne fruit. From initiatives supporting farmers' income, agricultural insurance schemes and expanded irrigation coverage to promoting organic farming, empowering women farmers, bolstering infrastructure and digitising services, the government has embraced a holistic strategy in championing the cause of the farmers, it said.

During the nine years, there has been a 300% jump in budget allocation for agriculture. It has gone up from Rs 300 billion to Rs 1.3 trillion. ■

SUPPLY CHAIN SUPPORT

Ficci, IESA sign contract to foster innovation in semiconductor industry

Written using agency reports

The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and the India Electronics and Semiconductor Association (IESA) have signed a memorandum of understanding to promote innovation, support the semiconductor and electronics industry, and strengthen supply chains.

The MoU establishes a framework for long-term collaboration between the two organisations.

"This collaboration will focus on establishing a joint task force on semiconductors and future critical technologies. The core objective of this MoU is to conduct technology consultative roundtables and foster business partnerships," said S K Pathak, secretary general of FICCI, in a press release.

Ashok Chandak, president of IESA, said, "By leveraging IESA's domain expertise and FICCI's influential member network, we are poised to significantly increase investments from Indian conglomerates in the semiconductors and electronics sectors." ■

SPACE FOR BUSINESS

Space industry offers good opportunity for private players: Isro chief

Written using agency reports

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)'s Chairman S Somanath has said the Indian space industry is offering a tremendous opportunity to the private sector in the country as a new area of growth and development.

He said the Union government envisages the space sector in the country to become a \$9-10 billion industry in the next 5-10 years from the current levels of \$2 billion.

Somanath also said that 400 private sector companies have benefited from the technology developed by ISRO for its various missions.

"The Indian space industry is offering a tremendous opportunity for the private sector in the country as a new area of growth and development," the ISRO chief added.

Somanath also unveiled a replica of Chandrayaan at the campus highlighting the cooperation of SFO Technologies and ISRO.

He interacted with the NeST engineers and management team later. The Carbon Reduction initiative of the NeST Group is in tune with

the United Nations' objective of achieving a 50% reduction by 2035 and zero emissions by 2040, the release said. ■

GOING GLOBAL

REC gets RBI nod to set up subsidiary in GIFT City

Written using agency reports

State-owned REC Ltd has received the RBI's approval to set up a subsidiary in GIFT City, Gujarat.

The proposed subsidiary will engage in a range of financial activities as a finance company within GIFT, including lending, investment and other financial services, a company statement added. The decision to expand operations into GIFT, a burgeoning hub for financial services in India, comes as REC continues to diversify its portfolio and explore new avenues for growth, it stated.

Vivek Kumar Dewangan, CMD, REC Ltd, said in the statement, "The GIFT City platform offers a conducive environment for international lending activities coupled with world-class infrastructure. We are confident that REC will harness these advantages to carve a niche for itself in the global market." ■

MARKET PENETRATION

ONDC platform onboarded more than 0.5 mn sellers

Written using agency reports

More than 0.5 million sellers have been onboarded on the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) platform, of which more than 70% are small or medium sized sellers.

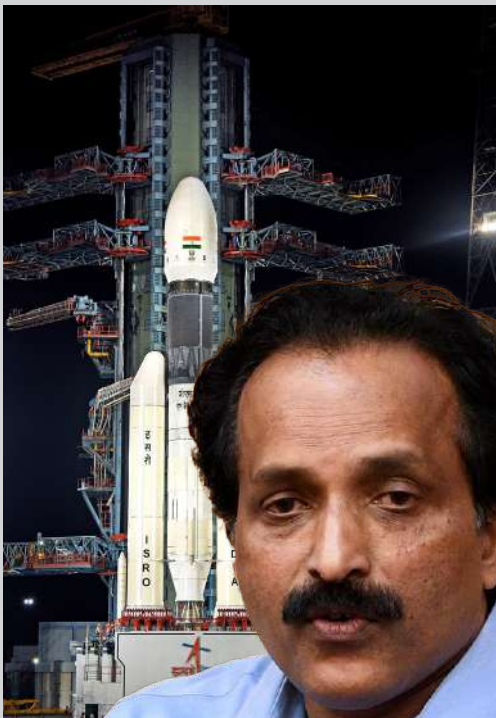
In April 2024, ONDC facilitated around 7.22 million transactions.

Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT's) Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh said the government is committed to nurture and encourage the ecosystem for startup growth and innovation.

He said, "The ONDC Startup Mahotsav is an inflexion point for startups in India to leverage the opportunities unlocked by ONDC. The network has rapidly grown and matured over the past one and a half years."

The Startup Mahotsav witnessed the participation of around 5,000 startups in hybrid mode.

ONDC was launched in 2021 as a first-of-its-kind protocol, with a mission to democratise digital commerce. Today, ONDC is fully operational across India, with the digital infrastructure completed and rolled out to businesses and the public at large. ■



Government expects the space sector to become a \$9-10 billion industry in the next 5-10 years from the current \$2 billion

S SOMANATH,
ISRO Chairman

Bilateral Developments

India Pavilion at AT X SG (CommunicAsia)



The High Commissioner inaugurated the India Pavilion at AT X SG (CommunicAsia), organised under the Market Access Initiative of the Department of Commerce. Asia's largest information and communications technology (ICT) exhibition and conference, Communic Asia was held in Singapore during May 29-31, 2024. As many as 27 companies from India participated in the event, in coordination with the Telecom Equipment and Services Export Promotion Council (TEPC).

IDY 2024 Curtain Raiser organised by HCI Singapore

The High Commission of India in Singapore collaborated with Vyasa Yoga, Singapore, to kick off the IDY2024 celebrations at the Singapore landmark - Merlion Park. Here are some snapshots of the event promoting peace, health, and harmony.



India's first indigenous stealth frigate, INS Shivalik, during its port call at Changi Naval base



Forthcoming Events In India

13

INDIA FOCUS

ISSUE: 338
JUNE 2024
HIGH COMMISSION OF INDIA, SINGAPORE

I. UP INTERNATIONAL TRADE SHOW (UPITS)

Date & Venue: September 25-29, 2024; at India Expo Centre & Mart, Greater Noida
Organiser: Federation of Indian Export Organisations
Contact: Email- WhatsApp at +91 8586877982, +91 8826947573 or via email at vishvadiya@fieo.org, neelamrawat@fieo.org, ashishjain@fieo.org
Details: The second edition of the UP

International Trade Show (UPITS) 2024 is set to take place from September 25-29, 2024, at India Expo Centre & Mart, Greater Noida. Building on the success of the first edition, UPITS 2024 promises to be even bigger and more impactful, with aspirations of expanding our reach, business opportunities and prospects. This grand event will attract B2B and B2C buyers from both India and abroad, along with various government agencies. The event provides a comprehensive platform for all stakeholders to explore and capitalise on the showcased products.
Website: <https://upinternationaltradeshow.com/>

II. 58th Edition IHGF DELHI FAIR (AUTUMN) 2024

Date & Venue: October 16-20, 2024; India Expo Centre & Mart, Greater Noida Expressway, Delhi-NCR
Organiser: Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts
Contact: Email- visitors@ihgfdelhifair.in

Details: Organised by the Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts, New Delhi, this trade event brings together over 3,000 exhibitors, representing the pinnacle of Indian manufacturing prowess. Explore innovations by leading and accredited manufacturers of India in the gigantic exhibition halls, see collective displays at theme pavilions, marvel at regional craft treasures, and witness live demonstrations by skilled artisans.
Website: <https://www.ihgfdelhifair.in/>

III. India Steel Expo 2025, 6th International Exhibition & Conference on Steel Industry

Date & Venue: April 24-26, 2025; at Bombay Exhibition Centre, Mumbai
Organiser: The Ministry of Steel along with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)

Contact: Email- sudhanshu.gupta@fikki.com

Details: The Ministry of Steel along with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) is organising the "Sixth Edition of International Exhibition & Conference on Steel Industry - INDIA STEEL 2025". It is scheduled to be held from April 24-26, 2025, at Bombay Exhibition Centre, Mumbai.
Website: <https://www.indiasteelexpo.in/>

For feedback & comments, please contact:

High Commission of India,

31, Grange Road, Singapore-239702

Email: com2.singapore@mea.gov.in; com.singapore@mea.gov.in

URL: www.hcisingapore.gov.in