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ECONOMY

India's GDP likely to grow by 7.3% in FY24

Date: 05 January 2024



The Indian economy is expected to grow 7.3% in the current fiscal year, according to an estimate released by the National Statistics Office. The Indian economy had grown by 7.2% in FY23. "Real GDP or GDP at Constant (2011-12) Prices in the year 2023-24 is estimated to attain a level of Rs 171.79 lakh crore, as against the Provisional Estimate of GDP for the year 2022-23 of Rs 160.06 lakh crore, released on 31st May 2023," as per NSO.

Source: The Times of India

TRADE

High tariffs among reasons behind weak exports

Date: 02 January 2024

The reasons behind India's weaker export performance include higher tariffs in India and lower tariffs in its FTA partner countries, think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said in a report. "Many Indian firms choose not to use the FTA route when import duties are low, as FTA-related compliance costs do not justify the tariff benefits. For instance, in the case of India's FTA partners, many imports occur at zero or low Most Favored Nation (MFN) duties," the report said.



Source: The Indian Express

TELECOM

USOF may be enlarged and used to boost telecom equipment manufacturing

Date: 05 January 2024



The Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) — renamed Digital Bharat Nidhi in the new Telecom Bill — may be used to create a mega-money source for research and development (R&D) into networking and telecom equipment manufacturing, department of Telecommunications (DoT) officials said. The DoT is discussing how to ramp up the Telecom Technology Development Fund (TTDF), which is currently pegged at 5% of the annual collections of the USOF or about Rs 500 crore. TTDF aims to fund R&D in rural-specific communications technology applications.

Source: Business Standard

ENERGY

India, Nepal sign power pact, MoU in renewable energy

Date: 05 January 2024

Nepal signed a long-term agreement for the export of 10,000 MW power to India in the next 10 years and an MoU for cooperation in renewable energy while External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his Nepal counterpart N P Saud jointly inaugurated 3 cross-border transmission lines. Jaishankar is on a two-day visit to the Himalayan nation. India's Energy Secretary Pankaj Agrawal and his Nepal counterpart Gopal Sigdel signed the bilateral agreement.



Source: The Indian Express

HEALTHCARE

India’s healthcare sector attracts \$4.6 billion in deals

Date: 05 January 2024



India is emerging as a key player in the healthcare sector in the Asia-Pacific, attracting significant investments, as per global consultancy Bain & Company’s 13th annual Global Healthcare Private Equity and M&A report. The Asia-Pacific region witnessed deals worth about \$14 billion, with India representing the largest share of the announced deal value. The nation is set to host 22 healthcare deals in 2023, with deal value reaching \$4.6 billion, closely trailing the \$4.7 billion recorded in 2022.

Source: Business Today

AUTOMOBILE

Automobile industry registers record sales

Date: 05 January 2024

The Indian automobile market roared to new heights in 2023, showcasing a robust growth trend. Recent figures reveal a groundbreaking milestone, with the annual passenger car market soaring past the 40 lakh mark for the first time — a remarkable 8% surge compared to the previous year. Behind these impressive numbers are automotive giants achieving monumental feats. Maruti Suzuki, a stalwart in the industry, accounted for nearly 40% of the sales, while Hyundai Motor India set a personal record with domestic sales surpassing 6,00,000 cars.



Source: The New Indian Express

News from International Publications

Bulk of £4.2bn housebuilding unspent despite chronic lack of homes

Date: 04 January 2024



More than two-thirds of a government fund aimed at unlocking hundreds of thousands of new homes in England remains unspent more than six years after its launch, despite the chronic shortage of housing. The £4.2bn Housing Infrastructure Fund was created in 2017 in an attempt to jump-start housebuilding by providing local authorities with grants for key infrastructure such as transport and utility connections. However, just £1.3bn of the pot - or about 31% has been spent, according to a Freedom of Information request submitted to the government.

Source: Financial Times

Florida's surgeon general seeks to stop use of mRNA covid vaccines

Date: 04 January 2024

Florida's top health official called for a halt to using mRNA coronavirus vaccines, contending that the shots could contaminate patients' DNA - a claim that has been roundly debunked by public health experts, federal officials and the vaccine companies. Florida Surgeon General Joseph A. Ladapo's announcement, released as a state bulletin, comes after months of back-and-forth with federal regulators who have repeatedly rebuked his rhetoric around vaccines. Public health experts warn of the dangers of casting doubt on proven lifesaving measures as respiratory viruses surge this winter.



Source: The Washington Post

News from International Publications

U.S. Sales Of Autos Bounced Back In 2023

Date: 04 January 2024



The U.S. auto industry re-bounded in 2023 with many car companies reporting double-digit sales gains, marking a return to normalcy for a sector that has been on a roller coaster since the start of the pandemic. Automakers' results were boosted by pent-up demand and better availability on dealership lots. A six-week United Auto Workers strike last fall did little to damp the industry's momentum, and electric vehicle sales continued to rise, albeit at a slower rate than in the previous year.

Source: The Wall Street Journal

Grocery price inflation drops sharply

Date: 04 January 2024

Grocery price inflation fell at the fastest pace on record in December, according to data from research company Kantar, the latest evidence of a significant retreat in price growth. Food price annual inflation eased from 9.1% in November to 6.7% in December, marking the fastest month-on-month drop that Kantar has recorded since it started tracking prices in 2008. The figures published yesterday came after British Retail Consortium numbers this week showed December food inflation easing to the same rate, the lowest since June 2022.



Source: Financial Times

News from International Publications

Japan death toll nears 50, evokes horrors of 2011 quake

Date: 03 January 2024



At least 48 people died, and scores more were injured or missing after the earthquake hit Monday, according to officials. Emergency crews rushed to rescue survivors from the rubble of collapsed buildings and burned homes and to send supplies to damaged areas and survivors. "So far, a large number of casualties, collapsed buildings, fires and other very large-scale damages have been confirmed," Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said. The earthquake prompted the most severe category of tsunami warnings since 2011, when the catastrophic disaster killed at least 18,000 people.

Source: The Washington Post

EU regulators to investigate how shadow banks could fuel contagion

Date: 04 January 2024

EU regulators will dig deeper into the links between banks and other financial groups, such as hedge funds, the chair of the European Banking Authority has said in response to concerns about the potential for contagion from stresses in the wider system. "We should be doing more and we are going to be doing more," José Manuel Campa said about regulators' efforts to predict how banks would be affected by strains in non-bank financial institutions, which include hedge funds, private capital firms and cryptocurrency groups.



Source: Financial Times

News from International Publications

China's slow approval of data exports stymies companies

Date: 04 January 2024



China has approved only about a quarter of applications to export data since the introduction of data security laws, dealing a blow to businesses struggling to navigate a slowing economy and increased tensions between Washington and Beijing. Under a law that came into force in September 2022, government approval is required for cross-border data transfers by companies with more than 1mn registered users, a low threshold in a country with a population of more than 1bn. The Cyberspace Administration of China has yet to approve thousands of requests from local and international businesses to send data.

Source: Financial Times

China's Campaign For More Babies Meets Resistance

Date: 03 January 2024

Chinese women have had it. Their response to Beijing's demands for more children? No. The refusal has set off a crisis for the Communist Party, which desperately needs more babies to rejuvenate China's ageing population. With the number of babies in free fall—fewer than 10 million were born in 2022, China is headed toward a demographic collapse. China's population, now around 1.4 billion, is likely to drop to just around half a billion by 2100, according to some projections.



Source: The Wall Street Journal

News from International Publications

Fed officials warn interest rates could stay high 'for some time'

Date: 04 January 2024



Most Federal Reserve officials want to keep borrowing costs high "for some time", adding to doubts that the US central bank is poised to begin cutting interest rates as early as March. Officials expressed growing optimism that the Fed was succeeding in its quest to quell inflation, according to minutes of their December meeting released, but were careful not to commit to an immediate loosening of monetary policy. Officials surprised markets in December by indicating they expected the bank to cut by a quarter-point three times throughout 2024.

Source: Financial Times