

30 September 2020

SIDELINES

High Commissioner P Kumaran met Professor Tommy Koh, Chairman CIL Governing Board, Centre for International Law (CIL), a respected Administrator, an academician and a great friend of India



High Commissioner, Mr. P Kumaran visited the Singapore Indian Fine Arts Society - SIFAS

The High Commissioner was introduced to Sifas by the office bearers who also explained about the variety of art forms which are taught by the talented and dedicated teachers of Sifas.



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TOP NEWS

PM Modi's 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' important initiative: IMF

IBEF: September 28, 2020

Calling for a 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' (self-reliant India) by Prime Minister Mr Narendra Modi is a significant initiative, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said on Thursday.

Mr Gerry Rice, Director, Communications Department, IMF, said, "The economic package under this self-reliant India initiative, which was announced in the aftermath of the coronavirus shock, has supported the Indian economy and mitigated significant downside risks, so we do see that initiative as having been important".

Looking ahead, as the Prime Minister said, for India to play a greater role in the global economy, it is important to follow policies that stimulate the economy by improving productivity and competitiveness, he said, referring to a query on Modi's call for a 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat.'

Mr Rice said, "To achieve the stated 'Make For The World' goal in India, the priority is to remain focussed on policies that can help further integrate India in the global value chain, including through trade, investment and technology".

In response to another issue, the IMF's joint study with NITI Aayog and the Ministry of Finance showed that India would have to steadily increase its overall investment in the healthcare sector from the current 3.7% of GDP to achieve a high performance in health-related sustainable development objectives.

Mr Rice stated, "More generally, beyond the health sector, comprehensive structural reforms are needed to achieve more inclusive and sustainable medium-term growth. We have talked about those reforms before -- infrastructure, land reforms, product market and labour market reforms, increasing female labour force participation, access to finance and better jobs".

Business sentiment has bounced back, says CII survey

FII News

"It is heartening to note the recovery in CII's Business Confidence Index for the July-September quarter indicating an improvement in business conditions during the period," said CII Director General Chandrajit Banerjee. Following a recent CII Business Outlook Survey.

“However, while recovery is underway, it could be tremendously expedited through continued government support and handholding of businesses during this crisis,” he said in comments on 19 Sept 2020.

The latest CII Business Confidence Index has surged to the level of 50.3 in July-September 2020, bouncing back from its lowest reading of 41.0 recorded in April-June 2020.

The stellar recovery in the index has been supported by the remarkable increase in the Expectations Index (EI), which rose 46% quarter-on-quarter, to the level of 55.2, as nation-wide lockdown restrictions were lifted, and businesses gradually began to reopen during the July-September quarter.

The Current Situation Index (CSI), however, continued to trail below 50, at 40.6, depicting weak confidence during April-June 2020, a period marked with stringent lockdown measures and complete shutdown of business operations.

More than 150 companies across all industry sectors, including micro, small, medium and large enterprises from different regions, participated in the survey conducted during August-September 2020.

The results for the July-September quarter signal green shoots of recovery as nearly half of the respondents anticipate an increase in new orders (49%) and sales (46%) during the said quarter, even though a majority of them witnessed a decline in sales and new orders in the preceding quarter.

As a result, capacity utilization levels are also expected to improve. A major share of the respondents (41%) foresee higher utilization levels of 50-75% in the July-September quarter, closely followed by 37% of the respondents anticipating capacity utilization at 75-100% in the said quarter.

Profitability, however, may be slightly harder to achieve during this pandemic as nearly half of the respondents continue to expect a decline in profits in the Jul-Sep quarter after a majority of them (76%) experienced this in the preceding quarter.

As businesses still struggle to recover from the pandemic, more than half of the respondents (51%) have indicated that the weakness in domestic demand is likely to be the topmost risk to business confidence in the next six months.

Further, nearly 30% of the respondents feel that business activity may return to the pre-pandemic levels by Q1 FY22. The heightened uncertainty led by the recurrent lockdown in certain states is

impacting business operations and lengthening the recovery timeline even though a majority of the workforce has already returned to the place of work for a major share of the respondents (42%).

Effectively, a large share of respondents (37%) foresee a return of capital spending to its pre-pandemic levels only by H1 FY22.

With regards to the general economic prospects, more than a third of the respondents (35%) foresee a contraction higher than 4.0% in India's GDP in the financial year 2020-21 as the significant setback to economic growth has been further aggravated by state-imposed lockdowns to curb local outbreaks.

On the inflation front, nearly half of the respondents (46%) feel that inflation may inch up further in the current financial as the supply-side disruptions, caused by the lockdown-led business shutdowns, have stoked price pressures.

As a result, a large proportion of the respondents (37%) feel that RBI may keep policy rates unchanged in the remaining part of FY21. The continued strain on economic activity will dissuade the central bank from raising rates despite inflation overshooting the target range for the fifth consecutive month.

With the Unlock 4.0 guidelines, the Government has allowed the restart of almost all sectors to operate. However, there are still many ad hoc restrictions being imposed by the States which have been an impediment to the unlock process.

These have also resulted in rising inflationary pressure, especially at the retail level. Such supply-side bottlenecks should be eliminated so that people and goods can move freely within States as well as between States to enable business operations to function normally.

The Government has announced several measures under the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative to ease liquidity, provide income in the hands of people and further enhanced ease of doing business besides providing temporary relief from compliances and tax payments.

Any additional measures could be directed at the stressed sectors such as tourism, civil aviation and real estate that are employment-intensive and need financial support to survive.

Atal Innovation Mission to be tech garage of India: Amitabh Kant

IBEF: September 24, 2020

Niti Aayog Chief Executive Officer, Mr Amitabh

Kant stated that the government's Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) will emerge as the technology garage of India, rolling out products and applications across sectors. He said, "We have seen some unique products which have evolved. We will take them to their delivery levels with the private sector. It's a private-public partnership, much like we did with Aarogya Setu (app). And, actually, in the long run, Atal Innovation Mission will become really the tech garage of India, rolling out large numbers of new products, new apps which the world will require".

He stated that the government has developed tinkering labs in schools as part of the task, where students can experiment with concepts such as 3D printing, the use of artificial intelligence and robots. Niti Aayog works closely with the private sector to address problems in areas such as financial inclusion, health care, education and telemedicine. To promote innovation, AIM also works with the Ministry of Defence, the Indian Space Research Organisation and other departments to promote government bodies to purchase products from emerging start-ups.

He said, "we have worked with Isro, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Housing – all of them to actually, to launch new challenges of the problems India is confronted with. Young start-ups who solve these problems, we will assist, support and handhold and the government will buy those products". At present, the task, supported by Dell Technologies, supports 120 incubation laboratories across the world. Dell Technologies India's managing director, Mr Alok Ohrie, stated that the project has grown over time and promoted creativity. He added that some of India's primary technology-enabled transformations, such as UIDAI and GST, have been closely involved and will continue to develop solutions for the next phase of growth.

Mr Ohrie stated that there are a few industries that have certainly taken a front seat in the current climate, and they really need to be equipped with strategies that will help them continue to sustain service levels. For education, healthcare and other fields, Dell is working on solutions. He said, "We are trying to bring in solutions for our customers in the education segment that will allow them to not only maintain the classes and the daily routine that children should have by sitting at home and attending those classes, but also creating content that can help them use this content repeatedly". The firm is also working on automated solutions to hold patient records in India.

Railways planning PPP model for capital funding-technologies

FII news

The use of a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model is being planned for a few initiatives to bridge the gap in capital funding and to induct modern technologies and improve efficiencies in the Indian Railways which has estimated Rs.50 lakh crore capital investment for up to 2030.

Minister of Railways Piyush Goyal said this in a written reply to a question in Lok Sabha (parliament) on 16 Sept 2020, adding that one of the PPP initiatives is to invite private players to invest and induct modern rakes over select routes to provide world-class services to the passengers. Goyal underlined the need to improve the transport segment by expanding the rail network, capacity augmentation, rolling stock induction and other modernization works for better delivery of passenger and freight services.

As part of this initiative, the Ministry of Railways has issued 12 Requests for Qualification (RFQs) on 1 July 2020 for the operation of passenger trains over approximately 109 origin-destination pairs (divided into 12 clusters) through PPP on Design, Build, Finance and Operate (DBFO) basis.

However, the responsibility of train operations and safety certification rests with Indian Railways in all such cases.

As of now, no regular passenger train service, running over Indian Railways, is being operated by Private Operator/s, he told the house.

Project Development Cells being set up for FDI

FII news

To accelerate the growth of investment projects in India, Project Development Cells (PDCs) are being set up in Ministries and Departments to fast track investments with coordination between Central and State Governments.

Giving this update in Rajya Sabha on 18 September, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush, FDI inflow from USA and other countries during (April-July) 2020-21 (Projected) has been US\$16.26 billion. In 2019-20, it was US\$74.39 billion.

He also informed that several multinational companies have evinced their interest to shift their base into India across different States in sectors such as Electronics, Retail, e-Commerce, Automotive, Food Processing, Textiles etc.

However, due to the sensitivity of information maintained by the companies, the reasons for the relocation of operations are not explicitly spelt out.

The Government is also working hard to institutionalize more investor-friendly reforms, especially as FDI inflows usually helps in augmenting domestic capital and promote employment opportunities across sectors.

The Government has constituted an Empowered Group of Secretaries (EGoS) to provide support and facilitation to investors for investing in India and to boost growth in key sectors of the economy.

EGoS shall identify potential investors and organizations, make recommendations to the Ministry/Department to promote investment, facilitate handholding of investors, examine and suggest ways to attract more investment in greenfield projects, said Goyal in a written reply in the house.

The entire focus of the Government is to create an investment-friendly and business conducive ecosystem to drive investment growth in India, he underlined.

Several steps like Production Investment Schemes, GIS mapping of available land banks, issuance of Quality Control Orders to cut down cheap imports and many such measures have been put into place to attract further investment into the country, he said.

PM highlights more than Rs.30,000 crore of Namami Gange projects

FII News

More than Rs.30,000 crore projects are either in progress or have been completed under Namami Gange, said Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the inauguration of six mega development projects in Uttarakhand on 29 Sept 2020 through video conference.

The projects include construction of a 68 MLD STP, upgradation of the existing 27 MLD at Jagjeetpur, in Haridwar and construction of an 18 MLD STP at Sarai, in Haridwar.

The inauguration of 68 MLD Jagjeetpur project also marks completion of the first sewerage pro-

ject taken up on hybrid annuity mode of PPP.

In Rishikesh, a 26 MLD STP at Lakkadghat was inaugurated.

The Haridwar-Rishikesh zone contributes about 80% waste water load into the River Ganga. Hence, inauguration of these STPs will play a significant role in keeping the River Ganga clean.

In Muni ki Reti town, the 7.5 MLD STP in Chandreshwar Nagar will be the first 4-storied Sewage Treatment Plant in the country where the limitation of land availability was converted into an opportunity. The STP was constructed in less than 900sqm area which is about 30% of the usual area requirement for STPs of such capacity.

The Prime Minister also inaugurated a 5 MLD STP at Chorpani, and two STPs with capacities of 1 MLD and 0.01 MLD at Badrinath.

In all 30 projects (100%) are now complete in Uttarakhand for taking care of pollution from 17 Ganga towns near river Ganga, which is a landmark achievement.

The Prime Minister also inaugurated "Ganga Avalokan", the first museum on Ganga dedicated to showcase the culture, biodiversity and rejuvenation activities done in Ganga river. The museum is located at Chandi Ghat, Haridwar.

A book, 'Rowing down the Ganges', co-published by National Mission for Clean Ganga & Wildlife Institute of India will be launched at the event.

The logo of Jal Jeevan Mission and 'Margdarshika for Gram Panchayats and Paani Samitis under Jal Jeevan Mission' was also unveiled by Prime Minister.

India set for 220 million-km of road construction

FII News

India is set to witness the construction of around 220 million km of roads in the near future linking all the major ports of India, said Gen. (Dr.) V. K. Singh, Minister of State, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.

"Road transport which is the fastest mode of transport would be made cost-effective due to the same," he assured.

Meanwhile, work has started on the Delhi-Amritsar link while construction is in full swing on the Delhi-Mumbai-Vadodara work, he told the Global Virtual Summit 2020 – Leasing and Hire Purchase: Procuring Assets @ Ease of Finance" on 19 Sept 2020. It was organised by the Associ-

ated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM).

"This would reduce the travel time to just around 3-3.5 hours between Delhi and Amritsar by road."

He further explained that the government is keen on increasing connectivity between Uttarakhand and Delhi so the work on Dehradun-Delhi road connectivity will start soon. "This would reduce the travel time to just around 2.5- 3 hours between these two places," he pointed out.

Dr. Singh explained that due to digitalisation and new technology coming in, the government would be able to monetise a lot more.

"We are expecting around Rs.1 lakh crore to come from toll collection in the next five years, the same would be utilised in creating more roads," he said.

Giving the example of the London Bus Transport model, he also stated that the public transport system needs to take lead from them by following their Leasing and Hire Purchase model.

"In London, buses are operated on lease where a certain part of the profits are shared with the bus owner. The system is working fine as it benefits everyone," he said.

"Leasing as a concept which is not yet popularised in India and ASSOCHAM needs to take this forward to educate people", said Dr. Singh.

Dr Singh expressed his satisfaction that the infrastructure development work which had witnessed some slowdown on account of the COVID-19 situation has come back to the earlier level.

These are challenging times for all sectors and making capital investments has become all the more difficult, added Vineet Agarwal, Senior vice president, ASSOCHAM, and managing director of TCI Group.

"In this changed scenario, the option of leasing has become more attractive as compared to the past as it reduces capital cost and helps in asset creation at such a difficult time," said Agarwal.

He mentioned that the introduction of Goods And Services Tax (GST) has helped in giving assurance to the companies in leasing as they can apply for input credit to offset certain costs.

"Though the leasing segment has found its space during the pandemic, there are certain irritants that need to be addressed by the government such as the tedious paperwork that is involved in the hiring and leasing segment," said Agarwal.

"Digitization of all the paperwork and allowing e-signature are some of the plausible solutions that we should look at," he explained.

Stating that leasing in India is at the infant stage currently, efforts should be made by the government to encourage a vibrant leasing environment in the country, he added.

The Bharatmala Pariyojana is expected to bring a paradigm change in the road transport sector, added Dr. Niranjana Hiranandani, President, ASSOCHAM, and co-founder & managing director of Hiranandani Group.

"The project is expected to connect around 550 districts in the country. The total road construction in this project would be 66,100 km. This would reduce the travel time by at least 25 percent and bring down the supply chain cost by 5-6 percent," he said.

He explained that the GST simplified the taxation policy for the leasing sector. "Earlier there were a lot of barriers in the way for the leasing sector but with the introduction of GST, it removed most of the barriers," he pointed out.

Dr. Hiranandani added that any country that is in recession needs inputs from roads, housing and infrastructure sectors to deal with the situation. "Leasing is a model that will work like a paradigm in terms of funding where financials are the concern," he explained.

He stated that the BOT (Build, operate, and transfer) model to raise funds is a step in the right direction and should be encouraged to build infrastructure.

BUSINESS

"Biotechnology sector is recognized as the key driver for contributing to India's \$ 5 Trillion economy target by 2024" - Dr Harsh Vardhan

Press Information Bureau: September 25, 2020

Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) has been established by Government of India as a Public-Sector Enterprise under Department of Biotechnology (DBT) in March 2012 to foster and nurture the Startup Ecosystem and promoting Academia –Industry Collaboration in Biotechnology.

BIRAC, through its various funding schemes, supports all stages of product development right from proof-of-concept demonstration to product commercialization. The schemes sup-

port entrepreneurs, start-ups, Companies and academic institutions, to work on research ideas that have translational potential. The details of Programs undertaken and their output during the last three years and the current year including funds allocated may please be seen at Annexure – A.

The Department of Biotechnology has a major focus on promotion of Biotechnology through Research & Development and in terms of Human resource and Infrastructure Development. The key areas of support are Research and Development, Demonstration, Product Development and Commercialization, Capacity building through Human Resource Development and Infrastructure strengthening.

DBT's major focus is on building Centre of Excellence in different areas. DBT also has 16 Autonomous Institutions under its administrative control with focus on promoting and strengthening Biotechnology through national and international partnerships. The key activities supported under Human Resource and Infrastructure are enlisted below.

Biotechnology sector is recognized as the key driver for contributing to India's \$ 5 Trillion economy target by 2024. The biotechnology sector, mainly due to its multi-disciplinary approach holds the potential to provide an array of solutions for challenges in Health, Agriculture, Environment, Energy and Industrial Processes. This includes innovative solutions for various societal challenges, use of biosimilars for helping millions of people around the world in battling life-threatening medical issues, development and manufacture of vaccines for nearly 60% of Global immunization.

Improved crop varieties for increased production and providing better yields to the farmers while reducing the dependence on heavy consumption of water and energy. Industrial biotechnology is being channeled to produce biofuels that can help in ensuring cleaner environment. Biotechnology impacts each sector and the Biotechnology Sector in the country is growing rapidly.

The Biotechnology research and development activities involving use of r-DNA technology and/or hazardous microorganism are being regulated in accordance with Rules for the manufacture, use, import, export & storage of hazardous microorganisms, GE organisms or cells, 1989 of

the Environment Protection Act, 1986. The Review Committee on Genetic Manipulation (RCGM) established under the Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology to monitor the safety of on-going research projects and activities (including small scale field trials, import, export etc.) involving genetically engineered organisms.

Amazon opens specialised fulfilment centre near Chennai

IBEF: September 30, 2020

Amazon India on Tuesday, preparing for the festive season, said it had opened a specialised fulfilment centre in Tamil Nadu, along with the creation of an existing centre.

Amazon India said the expansion would contribute to the state's economic development while generating thousands of job opportunities for locals.

Amazon India said the expansion would contribute to the state's economic development while generating thousands of job opportunities for locals.

Amazon.in will now provide storage space of nearly three million cubic feet across five fulfilment centres to its more than 43,000 distributors in Tamil Nadu with this infrastructure expansion. Mr Abhinav Singh, Director - Amazon Transportation Services, Amazon India, said in a statement, "Tamil Nadu is an important market for us and we are delighted to further invest and expand our infrastructure in the state. This expansion will work as an enabler for SMBs in Tamil Nadu helping them with faster delivery of their products to a wider customer base".

The expansion in Tamil Nadu is part of the newly announced plans by Amazon India to add 10 new fulfilment centres and expand seven existing locations in India.

CapitaLand in talks to develop 3 million sq ft warehousing space near Gurgaon

https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/services/property/-/cstruction/capitaland-in-talks-to-develop-3-million-sq-ft-warehousing-space-near-gurgaon/articleshow/78256730.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

NEW DELHI: Singapore-based CapitaLand is in talks to develop 3 million square feet of warehousing space in Sohna, near Gurgaon, as investors rush to invest in a segment that's growing at a fast clip despite the economic slump owing to increasing demand from e-commerce companies, said two persons aware of the matter. The company is in discussions with Mayar Group, which owns a 100-acre land parcel in Sohna, they said. "It is going to be a joint venture where the foreign fund will develop and lease it. The expected investment will be around Rs 450 crore," said one of the persons, who did not wish to be identified.

CapitaLand, one of Asia's largest real estate groups, owns and manages a global portfolio worth about S \$134.7 billion and is looking to expand its presence in northern India. "Of the 180-acre land we had in Sohna, about 80-acre has been sold to ESR, a venture of private equity firm Warburg Pincus and some global investors. For the remaining 100 acres, we are in talks with investors and expect the deal to close soon," said AK Sud, chairman of Mayar Group, without comment on talks with CapitaLand. The Singapore-based real estate investor did not respond to ET's emailed query till press time on Tuesday.

CapitaLand's real estate portfolio includes commercial, retail, business park, industrial and logistics integrated development.

Since the easing of the lockdown, Gurgaon has emerged as the preferred choice for warehouse developers. Areas such as Lohari and Bilaspur have seen development after a number of major players have acquired or built large warehousing spaces. The focus of warehouse developers has now shifted to the Sohna-Bahadurgarh road. Warehouse and logistics park developer IndoSpace, the real estate arm of Everstone Group, is also in talks to acquire a 135-acre land parcel in Gurgaon for Rs 280 crore.

With its geographical advantage, Sohna is poised to become the largest distribution hub in the region.

Recently, the Haryana government allotted 180 acres of land near Gurgaon for Rs 550 crore to Amperex Technology Ltd, a manufacturer of rechargeable lithium ion polymer batteries. The state is in the process of monetising more land for building warehousing and industrial hubs.

According to a Knight Frank India report, currently committed land for warehouses across the country is estimated at 21,163 acres, which has the potential of adding 63% more supply to the existing 307 million sq ft of warehousing stock.

Singapore investor acquires a highway in West Bengal

FII News

Singapore-based Cube Highways II, a portfolio company of I Squared Capital through its ISQ Global Infrastructure Fund II, has acquired 100% of Farakka-Raiganj Highways Limited (FRHL), an operating toll road in the state of West Bengal from HCC Concessions Limited.

Following the transaction, the Cube Highways group will have a portfolio of 27 highways with nearly 8,400 lane-kilometers across India, including assets under various stages of closing.

FRHL operates a 100-kilometer, four-lane toll road connecting Farakka and Raiganj, in the eastern state of West Bengal. Awarded as a 30-year concession after competitive bidding in 2010 for strengthening and widening a two-lane highway to a four-lane configuration, the project has been operational since October 2016.

Forming part of National Highway-12, FRHL is on the arterial route in West Bengal, connecting major tourist attractions and trade centers from the state capital Kolkata to Siliguri and Darjeeling. The road is also a feeder route to North Bengal, North-East India, Nepal and Bhutan.

"Completing the acquisition during the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic is a testament to the operational capabilities of the Cube Highways team and the strength of the platform. Cube Highways worked constructively with the seller to restructure the transaction so that risks are more appropriately shared to achieve a win-win outcome," said Gautam Bhandari, Director of Cube Highways and Managing Partner of I Squared Capital.

"Successful closing of this transaction, despite COVID, demonstrates the execution leadership of Cube Highways and makes it a partner of choice for all leading Indian infrastructure road construction companies that seek to monetize their assets and recycle capital," said Bhandari, announcing the deal on 22 Sept 2020.

FRHL expands Cube Highways' geographic presence to East India, diversify its traffic flows

and component portfolio. The road has shown a healthy rebound of traffic following the lockdown, underscoring its strategic location with resilience and stickiness of the commercial traffic bound towards north Bengal and northeastern India.

Cube Highways is an independent, professionally managed platform leveraging the extensive transportation experience of its management and execution advisory teams.

Shareholders of Cube Highways are leading international investors including I Squared Capital, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority and International Finance Corporation.

START UP SNIPPETS

Startup Funding

- **Flipkart:** Homegrown ecommerce giant Flipkart has raised \$62.8 Mn from China-based gaming and social media giant Tencent as an extension of its \$1.2 Bn funding rounds. According to the company's regulatory filings in Singapore, Tencent will own about 4 to 5.3% stake in Flipkart Pte, which is the online retailer's Singapore-based holding.
- **Acko:** Amazon-backed online insurance provider Acko raised \$60 Mn in a Series D funding round led by Germany-based Munich Re Ventures. The funding round also saw participation from existing investors Amazon, RPS Ventures, a Silicon Valley-based late-stage venture capital firm and Intact Ventures, the corporate venture arm of Canada's largest property and casualty insurer. The funds would be used to accelerate its growth in existing lines and expand into new product lines.
- **Observe.AI:** Voice AI platform Observe.AI has raised \$54 Mn in Series B round led by Menlo Ventures, with participation from Next47 Ventures and NGP Capital. With the funding, Observe.AI plans to expand its team in both the US and Indian offices. Additionally, the company also plans to accelerate product development.
- **Airmeet:** Bengaluru-based virtual events platform Airmeet has raised \$12 Mn in Series A funding round led by Sequoia Capital India. Existing investors Accel India, Venture Highway and Global Founders Capital (GFC) also participated in the round, along with Gokul Rajaram (Caviar Lead at Doordash). It plans to use this funding to accelerate technology development and grow its 60 member team spread across six countries to a 100 member team. A part of the fund will also be used to expand its customer base globally.
- **CashKaro:** Cashback and coupons site CashKaro has raised \$10 Mn in a Series B funding round led by venture capital and private equity firm Korea Investment Partners (KIP) and existing investor Kalaari Capital.
- **The Moms Co:** Delhi-based baby care products startup The Moms Co. has raised \$8 Mn Series B funding from Saama Capital, DSG Consumer Partners. Brand guru Shripad Nadkarni and the founders of Beardo, Ashutosh Valani and Priyank Shah also participated in the funding round. It will use the fund to expand its product portfolio, invest towards adding to its tech capabilities and add offline presence across India in the next two years.
- **EkAnek:** Delhi-based ecommerce startup EkAnek Networks has raised \$5.4 Mn in a funding round led by Alpha Wave Incubation. The company's existing investors, Sequoia Capital India, Lightspeed India and Matrix Partners India also participated in the round.
- **mCaffeine:** Mumbai-based personal care startup mCaffeine has raised over \$2.9 Mn (INR 22 Cr) from multiple investors including Amicus Capital and Milestone Trusteeship. According to ministry of corporate affairs filings, the company has issued 23,217 Series B Compulsorily Convertible Preference Shares (CCPS) at a face value of INR 10 per share and a premium of INR 9,507 per share to eight entities. Further, the company has allotted 300 equity shares with a face value of INR 10 each and a premium of INR 28,541 per equity share, to three entities.

- **Mobile Premier League:** Bengaluru-based mobile esports platform Mobile Premier League (MPL) has raised \$90 Mn in a Series C funding round led by SIG Ventures, RTP global and MDI Ventures. Sequoia India, Go-Ventures and Base Partners had participated in this round. It plans to expand outside of India in the upcoming months.
- **ShareChat:** Bengaluru-based Indian regional language social platform ShareChat has raised \$40 Mn funding from investors including Twitter Inc and Lightspeed Ventures in its Pre Series E round. The round also saw participation from SAIF Partners and India Quotient. The funding will be used to grow Sharechat's latest short video app Moj.
- **Hopscotch:** Mumbai-based online retailer Hopscotch has raised \$25 Mn from Facebook cofounder Eduardo Saverin's investment arm EE Capital, Lionrock Capital, Rise Capital, RPG Ventures and IIFL Seed Ventures Fund. Several prominent angel investors also participated in this round.
- **Servify:** Mumbai-based device lifecycle management platform Servify has raised \$23 Mn in Series C round led by Iron Pillar. Blume Ventures, BEENEXT and Tetrao SPF have also participated in this round, along with Sparkle Fund, SF Roofdeck Capital, Go Ventures and Madhu Kela Family Office.
- **Samunnati:** US International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) has committed \$20 Mn debt funding to non-banking financial company (NBFC) Samunnati Financial. It will help the NBFC to expand its financing and technical assistance to low-income farmers and enterprises throughout the agricultural value chain in India.
- **Smallcase:** Investment tech startup Smallcase funding is raising \$13.4 Mn (INR 99 Cr) in a mix of equity and preference shares from a clutch of investors as a part of its Series B round. DSP Asset Management Firm, Sequoia's SCI Investment V, Milestone Trusteeship Services, BEENEXT, Unitary Funds and others participated in this round. It will use this funding to meet its growth objectives and strengthen its financial position.
- **Pristyn Care:** Gurugram-based healthcare platform Pristyn Care has raised \$11 Mn (INR 86.14 Cr) from SCI Investments, Redwood Trust, Hummingbird Ventures, and Epiq Capital.
- **Onsitego:** After-sales services startup Onsitego has raised \$10 Mn in its Series B round from IFC. Overall, the company has raised \$30 Mn in Series B round. Onsitego will be using the freshly raised funds to consolidate its market position and strengthen its B2C offerings like AMC, home protection, and on-demand services.
- **BestDoc:** Kerala-based healthtech SaaS startup BestDoc has raised \$2.1 Mn (about INR 16 Cr) in a Pre-Series A round from Accel Partners and Arkam Ventures. Bengaluru-based SEA Fund, an existing investor also participated in this round. It plans to use the funds to expand its presence across India and develop products aimed at improving the in-patient admission and hospitalisation experience.

Other Developments

Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh launches Defence India Startup Challenge-4; says defence Startup ecosystem is a decisive step towards achieving self-reliance in the spirit of AtmaNirbhar Bharat campaign

IBEF: September 30, 2020

Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh launched the Defence India Startup Challenge (DISC 4) during the iDEX event, featuring the initiatives aimed at expanding the horizons of Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) ecosystem in New Delhi today. iDEX4Fauji initiative and Product Management Approach (PMA) guidelines were also launched by the Raksha Mantri during the event. Each of these initiatives is expected to facilitate iDEX-DIO to scale up the program qualitatively and quantitatively.

iDEX4Fauji is a first of its kind initiative, launched to support innovations identified by members of the Indian Armed Forces and will bolster frugal innovation ideas from soldiers/field formations. There are more than 13 Lakh service personnel working in the field and on borders, handling extreme conditions and equipment and would be having many ideas and innovations to improve such equipment. There was no mecha-

nism to support such innovations. iDEX4Fauji would open this window and allow our Faujis to become part of the innovation process and get recognised and rewarded. Services Headquarters will provide support to the soldiers & field formations all over the country to ensure maximum participation.

Speaking on the occasion, Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh said that the iDEX initiative stands out as one of the most effective and well-executed defence Startup ecosystem created in our country and it would be a decisive step towards achieving self-reliance in the spirit of the AtmaNirbhar Bharat campaign. Shri Rajnath Singh said, for the first time, an atmosphere has been created in the country when different stakeholders have been brought together to push for innovations in the defence sector. "In order to further strengthen our defence system and make it self-reliant the participation of private sector is also crucial. For this we have taken certain steps like partnerships with private sector, technology transfer, 74 % FDI through automatic route and the recently released negative list of 101 items for import ban after a stipulated period." Raksha Mantri also said that only yesterday the government launched Defence Acquisition procedure 2020 which seeks to encourage the private industry to participate in the defence sector. Raksha Mantri also exhorted the Armed Forces to "make full use of the Defence Innovation Organisation (DIO) platform to meet their technological requirements and the Indian Startups to use this opportunity to become an integral part of our Defence enablers."

About 24 percent of new B2B companies operate in cutting-edge innovation regions such as AI, blockchain and IoT and drive cutting-edge technology selection in Indian endeavours.

Mr Ravi Chhabria, VP and overseeing chief, NetApp India said, "Big data, analytics, AI, and ML are advanced technologies in focus for B2B startups. Enterprises in every industry want to gain the first-mover advantage using the power of these technologies. Today's infrastructure investments mark a clear preference for technology providing business-relevant solutions that can be adopted across the value chain".

Over 415 new B2B tech companies secured a \$3 billion cumulative value subsidy with a two-fold increase in usual financing. An expansion of cloud-conceived new businesses that are using trend setting innovation to unravel new use cases across companies is a key driver of this growth.

Mr Pari Natarajan, CEO, Zinnov said, "The global digital engineering spends, which is expected to reach \$750 billion by 2023, underscores the trend of accelerating enterprise digital transformation and creates a massive opportunity to be capitalised on. As companies rethink resilience, forge newer partnerships, and leverage the external ecosystem, new-age infrastructure becomes critical".

B2B tech startups driving tech adoption in India: NetApp Zinnov study

IBEF: September 30, 2020

There are over 4,200 Business to Business (B2B) tech new businesses in India, 63 percent of which, according to a study by NetApp and Zinnov, are taking a shot at big business innovation in the BFSI, medical care, retail and car verticals.

The report, Leveraging Start-Ups to Unlock Digital Opportunities in Large Industries, found that B2B tech organisations are around 44 percent of all new firms, and 43 percent of Indian unicorns are new B2B tech companies. A unicorn is a company with an over \$1 billion valuation.

Transforming India: All Sectors

Uttarakhand Takes A Big Leap Towards Clean Ganga

PM Inaugurates Projects Worth ₹521 Crore Under Namami Gange Programme

'Rowing Down The Ganges': Revisiting The Glorious River

- The colourful book is an attempt to merge the biodiversity & culture of the Ganga River
- Conceptualizes the story of the Ganga from its origin to the point before entering the sea
- Aims to educate people about the river & its splendid biodiversity

#NamamiGanga

A Big Push Towards PM's Vision of Sustainable Transportation under FAME Scheme (2/2)

FAME Phase II

- Being implemented for 3 years w.e.f. 1st April'19, with a budgetary support of ₹10,000
- To support approx. 7000 e-Buses, 5 lakh e-3 Wheelers, 55000 e-4 Wheeler Passenger Cars, 10 lakh e-2 Wheelers & creation of charging infrastructure
- 670 new Electric buses sanctioned for Maharashtra, Goa, Gujarat & Chandigarh
- 241 new Charging Stations sanctioned for Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Gujarat & Port Blair

Landmark Bills Passed by Parliament during Monsoon Session 2020

COVID-19 Related Legislations (2/2)

- The Epidemic Diseases (Amendment) Bill, 2020**
 - To curb unprecedented acts of violence, including physical & mental harassment & damage to property during COVID-19
 - To provide protection to healthcare service personnel
- The Insolvency & Bankruptcy Code (Second Amendment) Bill, 2020**
 - To temporarily suspend initiation of corporate insolvency resolution process under the Code to provide relief to companies affected by COVID-19

Landmark Bills Passed by Parliament during Monsoon Session 2020

Historic Agricultural Reforms

- The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion & Facilitation) Bill, 2020**
 - Promotes efficient, transparent and barrier-free trade & commerce by providing farmers the freedom of choice relating to sale & purchase
- The Farmers (Empowerment & Protection) Agreement on Prices Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020**
 - Provides a national remunerative price framework that protects farmers to engage with agri-business firms, processors, wholesalers, exporters
- The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill, 2020**
 - To boost immediate investment, increase competition & enhance farmers' income

Landmark Bills Passed by Parliament during Monsoon Session 2020

Historic New Initiatives In Higher Education

- The National Forensic Sciences University Bill, 2020**
 - Establishes National Forensic Sciences University as an institution of national importance, to achieve excellence in the field of forensic science
- The Rashtriya Raksha University Bill, 2020**
 - Proposes to establish the Rashtriya Raksha University as an institution of national importance
 - A multi-disciplinary University to create new knowledge through research & fulfil the need for trained professionals in various wings of policing, criminal justice system & correctional administration

Landmark Bills Passed by Parliament during Monsoon Session 2020

Historic Labour Reforms

- The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code Bill, 2020**
 - Provides to amalgamate & simplify laws regulating to occupational safety, health & working conditions of persons employed in an establishment
- The Code on Social Security Bill, 2020**
 - Provides to amend & consolidate social security laws with the goal to extend social security to all employees in the organised or unorganised sectors
- The Industrial Relations Code Bill, 2020**
 - Provides to consolidate & amend laws relating to Trade Unions, conditions of employment including investigation & settlement of industrial disputes

FORTHCOMING EVENTS >>>> INDIA

I. NAMASTE BHARAT**Date:** 29 October – 7 November 2020**Venue:** Virtual Platform , www.namastebharat.world**Organizer:** De Ideaz Pte Ltd (<https://namastebharat.world/faq/>)

Details: De Ideaz, has been hosting an annual exhibition in Singapore since the last 10 years for the MSME sector in India. The exhibition is organized with the support of Singapore Press Holdings. Each year, around 150 Indian exhibitors have been participating in the event, which is very popular in Singapore and draws customers from other Southeast Asian countries. From India, FIEO has been participating in the event, with the support of Ministry of Commerce. Due to the recent pandemic, this year the exhibition named “ Namaste Bharat” is being organized on a virtual platform to create a much larger global engagement. Namaste Bharat, the biggest global online L2G (Local to Global) exhibition aims to create an ecommerce ecosystem for MSME, cottage industries, artisans and rural-urban women entrepreneurs to build a sustainable livelihood by promoting "Made in India" products globally. The Federation of The Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) is the nodal agency in India. The Australian Indian Business and Trade Foundation, Gulf Maharashtra Business Forum, UK-USA business chambers and other prominent organisations are supporting the event.

II. 6TH INDIA FARM2FORK VIRTUAL EXHIBITION**Date:** 4 — 6 November 2020**Venue:** Virtual Event**Contact:** mallika.verma@phdcci.in , PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Details: The virtual Farm 2 Fork will provide opportunities to Agribusiness companies and Food Businesses to showcase their products, processes, services and innovative technologies. India ranks in top producers of Milk, Fruits, Vegetables, Meat, Spices, Tea, Fish, etc., but the percentage in global trade is not significant. Further the yields and processing levels are low, hence generating need for new technologies and processes. Therefore, the chamber is inviting technology solution providers to participate as Exhibitor, Panelist and showcase the products to Indian agriculture and food processing units and discuss business and trade prospects.

Notifications

Securities and Exchange Board of India

Circular on Investments by AIFs Incorporated in IFSC

https://www.sebi.gov.in/legal/circulars/aug-2019/circular-on-investments-by-aifs-incorporated-in-ifsc_43867.html

Guidelines for Liquidity Enhancement Scheme (LES) in Commodity Derivatives Contracts

https://www.sebi.gov.in/legal/circulars/jul-2019/guidelines-for-liquidity-enhancement-scheme-les-in-commodity-derivatives-contracts_43699.html

Ministry of Corporate Affairs

Companies Amendment Rules, 2018

http://www.mca.gov.in/Ministry/pdf/CompaniesXBRL0803rule_15032018.pdf

Reserve Bank of India

Change in Bank Rate

<https://www.rbi.org.in/Scripts/NotificationUser.aspx?Id=11705&Mode=0>

Priority Sector Lending (PSL) – Classification of Exports under priority Sector

<https://www.rbi.org.in/Scripts/NotificationUser.aspx?Id=11692&Mode=0>

Expanding and Deepening of Digital Payments Ecosystem

<https://www.rbi.org.in/Scripts/NotificationUser.aspx?Id=11707&Mode=0>

Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion

Industrial Policy Statement 1991

https://dipp.gov.in/sites/default/files/IndustrialPolicyStatement_1991_15July2019.pdf

Consolidated FDI Policy Circular of 2017

http://dipp.nic.in/sites/default/files/CFPC_2017_FINAL_RELEASED_28.8.17_0.pdf

Flight Testing of DRDO's Laser Guided ATGM

PIB Delhi October 1, 2020

The indigenously developed Laser Guided Anti Tank Guided Missile (ATGM) was successfully test fired today on 1st Oct 2020 defeating a target located at longer range. The test was conducted from MBT Arjun at KK ranges (ACC&S) Ahmednagar in continuation of successful trial done on 22nd Sep 2020.

The ATGM employs a tandem HEAT warhead to defeat Explosive Reactive Armour (ERA) protected armoured vehicles in ranges from 1.5 to 5 km. It has been developed with multiple-platform launch capability and is currently undergoing technical evaluation trials from 120 mm rifled gun of MBT Arjun.

This Laser Guided Missile has been developed by Armament R&D Establishment (ARDE), Pune in association with High Energy Materials Research Laboratory (HEMRL), Pune and Instruments Research & Development Establishment (IRDE), Dehradun.

Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh congratulated DRDO for this successful feat. Secretary DD R&D and Chairman DRDO congratulated DRDO personnel for this achievement which paves the way for Atmanirbhar Bharat pledge of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.

Issue No 288, 30 September 2020

FAQs on Foreign Investments In India

The fortnightly FAQs will broadly cover the following areas

- I. Foreign Direct Investment*
- II. Foreign Technology Collaboration Agreement*
- III. Foreign Portfolio Investment*
- IV. Investment in Government Securities and Corporate debt*
- V. Foreign Venture Capital Investment*
- VI. Investment by QFIs*

III. Foreign Portfolio Investment

Q. Whom to approach for Government approval or in case of doubt regarding the concerned Administrative Ministry/ Department or regarding the classification of an activity or the sectoral route?

Answer: Please refer to the 'Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Processing FDI Proposals' issued by Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion, Government of India → <http://fifp.gov.in/Forms/SOP.pdf>

Q. Whether the definition of Indian company in FEMA 20(R) covers companies incorporated under both the Companies Act, 1956 and Companies Act, 2013

Answer: Indian company includes all those entities covered under section 1(4) of the Companies Act, 2013.

Source: RBI

For Feedback & Comments, please contact:

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URL : www.hcisingapore.gov.in