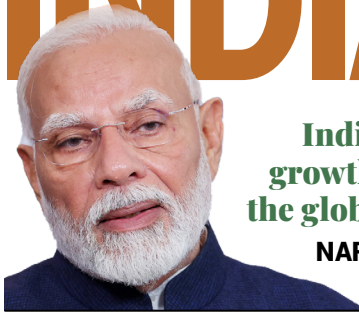


INDIA FOCUS



India remains a growth engine for the global economy

NARENDRA MODI,
Prime Minister

We discussed the flow of talent, people to people exchanges, and joint efforts in tackling trafficking and extremism

EAM S JAISHANKAR,
After meeting UK Home Secretary Yvette Cooper



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India becomes the world's 2nd largest mobile manufacturer

Country ranks third in exports after China and Vietnam as domestic consumption is high



India has made significant progress in mobile and electronics manufacturing and become the world's second-largest mobile manufacturing country after China, the Ministry of Electronics & IT said in an update.

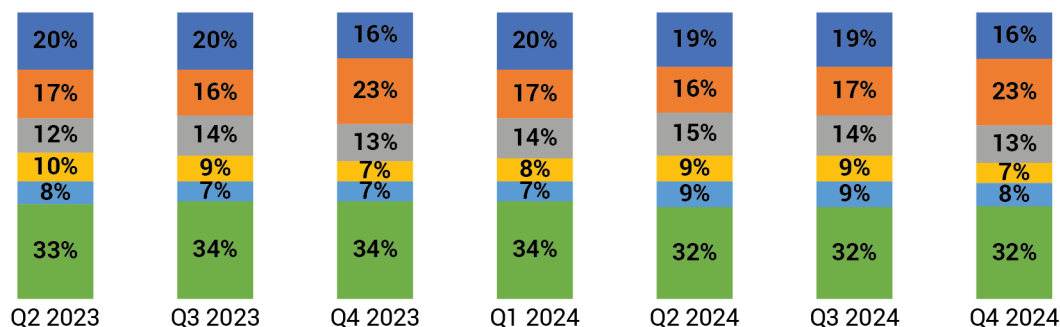
In 2014-15, only 26% of the mobile phones sold in India were made in the country. Today, that has reached 99.2%. The manufacturing value of mobile phones has surged from Rs 189 billion in 2013-14 to Rs 4.22 trillion in 2023-24. In 2014, India had only two mobile manufacturing units; but today, the nation boasts of over 300 manufacturing units.

More than 325 million mobile phones a year are being made in India and there are about a billion mobile phones in use in the country. Mobile phones have virtually saturated the domestic market and there is a substantial uptick in its exports, which were almost non-existent in 2014 but have now surpassed Rs 1.29 trillion.

The Economic Times quoted a Counterpoint Research to state that local manufacturing of mobile phones grew at 23% compound annual rate between 2014 and 2022 on account of huge internal demand, increasing digital literacy and government push through

GLOBAL SMARTPHONE SHIPMENTS MARKET SHARE (%)

■ Samsung ■ Apple ■ Xiaomi ■ OPPO* ■ Vivo ■ Others



*OPPO includes OnePlus since Q3 2021

Source: Counterpoint Research Market Monitor Service

MARKET HIGHLIGHTS

- Global smartphone market remained flat in Q4 2024
- Grew 4% for the year due to growth in the Caribbean and Latin America and Europe
- In 5G, Apple dominated global market with a 32% share, followed by Samsung at 16%
- Xiaomi recorded the highest 5G growth at 33% YoY, driven by strong demand in China, India and Russia
- Low-cost 5G and the diffusion of GenAI in lower price segments are key trends to watch in 2025

Source: Counterpoint

initiatives such as the Rs 380 billion production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme and phased manufacturing programme. "In 2022, more than 98% of shipments in the Indian market were 'Made in India,' compared to just 19% when this government took over in 2014," said Tarun Pathak, research director at Counterpoint Research, according to the report.

The sector created around 1.2 million direct and indirect jobs over the decade.

Apple accounted for 25% of the value of locally made handsets in 2022, up from 12% in 2021. The company's production volumes grew 65% on-year, while in value terms, it zoomed by 162% on-year, Counterpoint said.

India produced around Rs 3.5 trillion worth of mobile phones in 2022, according to data shared by the India Cellular and Electronics Association (ICEA). The industry body estimates that the country will produce Rs 4-4.25 trillion worth of handsets in 2023.

However, for exports, India ranked third after China and Vietnam. Most of the production in Vietnam is exported as local consumption is not high.

"We have managed to achieve large scale, generate massive employment, build mega factories and create Indian champions... India emerged as the hub for electronics manufacturing," said Sunil Vachani, executive chairman of Dixon Technologies, a leading electronics manufacturing services firm, according to the ET report.

Counterpoint's Pathak said local value addition in mobile phone manufacturing stood at 15% at present, compared with the low single digits in 2014.

Experts say local manufacturing of smartphones will only increase as India gears up to bridge the urban-rural digital divide and also become a mobile exporting powerhouse.

India's smartphone export story is being charted by Samsung and contract manufacturers for Apple – Foxconn, Wistron, and Pegatron – that accounted for around 92% of all exports.

According to market research firm Canalys, India exported 13.5 million mobile phone units in the first quarter of 2023, and another 12 million units in the second quarter ended June.

The Make in India initiative has been pivotal in achieving these milestones. It has enabled the domestic production of critical components and sub-assemblies such as chargers, battery packs, mechanics of all types, USB cables and more complex components like lithium-ion cells, speaker and microphones, display assemblies and camera modules.

The focus is expected to intensify when it comes to getting deeper into the value chain, particularly in the production of components and semiconductors. This shift is part of a broader strategy to enhance self-reliance and establish India as a leading player in the global electronics market. ■

First indigenous semiconductor chip to be ready for production by 2025



FAB PLANS

- Assembly, testing, monitoring, and packaging plant – Sanand, Gujarat
BY MICRON TECHNOLOGY
- Outsourced assembly, testing, marking and packaging unit – Sanand, Gujarat
BY KAYNES SEMICON
- Fab with 50,000 wfsm capacity – Dholera, Gujarat
BY TATA ELECTRONICS, WITH POWERCHIP SEMICONDUCTOR MANUFACTURING CORP FROM TAIWAN
- Assembly, test, marking and packaging unit – Morigaon, Assam
BY TATA SEMICONDUCTOR ASSEMBLY AND TEST

The first made in India semiconductor chip would be ready for production by 2025, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said while addressing the second day of the Global Investors Summit 2025 in Bhopal. India has made significant progress in semiconductor manufacturing, with five units under construction simultaneously, he pointed out.

The first made in India chip is expected to roll out by 2025. To further strengthen the talent pipeline, the government has initiated a programme to train 85,000 engineers in advanced semiconductor and electronics manufacturing.

The minister said over the past decade, the electronics manufacturing sector has witnessed unprecedented growth, reaching a valuation of Rs 10 trillion. India is exporting electronics worth Rs 5 trillion, including mobile (Rs 4 trillion); laptops, servers, telecom equipment (Rs 750 billion) and defence & medical electronics. Electronics is among the top 3 export items.

Vaishnav said the focus is now on advancing deeper into the value chain, with an increased emphasis on fine components and semiconductor production, thereby ensuring the indigenous development of the electronic component ecosystem. This will bolster India's stance as a leading electronics market globally.

Between 1950 and 1990, restrictive policies stifled manufacturing. However, make in India is reversing that trend by moving deeper into the value chain and increasing the production of components and chips.

The setting up of a semiconductor manufacturing base in the country has been an important part of the Make in India initiative, which the government has been attempting to achieve for over six decades. Now, a real manufacturing base for semiconductors is being established in India with the launch of the India Semiconductor Mission and the government giving approval for five major projects – Micron, two by Tata Electronics, one by CG Power, and one by Kaynes. ■

MACRO WATCH

IMF reiterates India's high growth in FY26: IMF

Written using agency reports

India's strong economic performance provides an opportunity for the country to advance critical and challenging structural reforms to realise the ambition of becoming an advanced economy by 2047, said the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

"Real GDP is expected to grow at 6.5% in 2024-25 and 2025-26, supported by robust growth in private consumption on the back of sustained macroeconomic and financial stability," it said. According to the second advance estimate released by the government, the country's economy is expected to clock a growth rate of 6.5% during 2024-25. "Headline inflation is expected to converge to target as food price shocks wane," the IMF said after Article IV consultations with India.

The IMF statement also underlined the need for deeper implementation of structural reforms to boost private investment and employment, and push growth. Boosting private investment and FDI, the statement said, was vital and would require stable policy frameworks, greater ease of doing business, governance reforms, and increased trade integration. These would include both tariff and non-tariff reduction measures. ■

Regulatory framework needed to improve investment climate: CEA

Written using agency reports

Chief Economic Advisor V Anantha Nageswaran said India should have a modern, responsive regulatory framework to create a growth-conducive investment climate, as FDI inflows get impacted due to pressure on global growth.

Addressing a webinar, Nageswaran said India has emerged as the preferred investment destination as evidenced from gross FDI inflows. "We need to focus on improving regulatory clarity, easing business operation and making sure that plumbing of the regulatory framework corresponds with broader vision (of reforms)," he said.

Nageswaran said it is very clear that growth will come under pressure across the world considering the actions taken by various governments over the past one month. He said India has to do whatever it can domestically to sustain the "mood of constructive optimism" within the country.

He said a robust investment climate is



"We need to focus on improving regulatory clarity, easing business operation and making sure that plumbing of the regulatory framework corresponds with broader vision (of reforms)"

V ANANTHA NAGESWARAN,
Chief Economic Advisor

necessary, particularly when global FDI flows are likely to be affected due to rising global risk aversion.

"Investment climate needs to be maintained as it would help in capital formation, create jobs and sustain economic growth. A modern responsive regulatory framework is a sine qua non for this to happen. It is a prerequisite to create a growth-conducive investment climate," Nageswaran said. ■

Viksit Bharat '47 realisable with per capita income growth: Panagariya

Written using agency reports

The Chairman of the 16th Finance Commission (FC), Arvind Panagariya, said India's aim to become a developed nation by 2047 is a "realisable ambition" for which the country's per-capita income needs to grow at 7.3% in dollar terms to \$14,000 over the next 24 years.

India's per-capita income, in 2023-24 dollar terms, is about \$2,570, which is very low compared to countries like South Korea, Taiwan, US and other European nations.

Speaking at the 49th Civil Accounts Day, Panagariya said with the existing technology, coupled with reasonable capital accumulation and skill acquisition, India has "enormous room" for "catching up" with the per capita income of developed nations and meet World Bank's definition of \$14,005 per capita income annually.

He further said that as per the estimates by the United Nations, population in India would grow 0.6% by 2050. This would mean that to achieve



“Our growth rate (in real dollar terms) for the last 21 years was at 7.8%... To get from 7.8% (GDP growth) to 7.9% is entirely feasible. Our prospect of Viksit Bharat is a realisable ambition”

ARVIND PANAGARIYA,
Chairman of the 16th Finance Commission

that 7.3% growth in per capita income, India's GDP will have to grow at 7.9% during the next 24 years.

“Our growth rate (in real dollar terms) for the last 21 years was at 7.8%... To get from 7.8% (GDP growth) to 7.9% is entirely feasible. Our prospect of Viksit Bharat is a realisable ambition,” Panagariya said.

He further said that India needs to carry out necessary reforms, which will facilitate the emergence of the labour-intensive industry on a larger scale so as to create good jobs for the masses.

POWER BOOSTER

MHI ties up with Reliance for 10 GWh capacity for ACC scheme

Written using agency reports

In a major step forward for India's advanced battery manufacturing sector, the Ministry of Heavy Industries (MHI) has signed a programme agreement with Reliance New Energy Battery, a subsidiary of Reliance Industries, under the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for Advanced Chemistry Cell (ACC).

This agreement awards Reliance New Energy Battery Limited a 10 GWh ACC capacity, following a competitive global tender process and makes it eligible to receive incentives under India's Rs 181 billion PLI ACC scheme.

This signing is another critical milestone in the implementation of the technology agnostic PLI Scheme on the “National Programme on Advanced Chemistry Cell (ACC) Battery Storage,” approved by the Cabinet in May 2021 to

achieve manufacturing capacity of 50 GWh.

With this signing, a cumulative capacity of 40 GWh has been awarded to four selected beneficiary firms out of 50 GWh capacity. In the first round of bidding conducted in March 2022, three beneficiary firms were allocated a total capacity of 30 GWh.

The PLI ACC Scheme is designed to boost local value addition while ensuring that the cost of battery manufacturing in India remains globally competitive. The scheme allows the beneficiary firm the flexibility to adopt the most suitable technology and associated inputs for establishing state-of-the-art ACC manufacturing facilities, thereby supporting mainly the electric and renewable energy storage sectors.

The Ministry of Heavy Industries remains committed to creating an enabling environment for innovation, fostering a robust domestic supply chain, and attracting significant Foreign Direct Investment—all crucial elements in advancing India's strategic vision for sustainable development and self-reliance.

INFRA BUILDER

India achieves historic milestone of 100 GW solar power capacity

Written using agency reports

India has achieved a historic milestone by surpassing 100 GW of installed solar power capacity, reinforcing its position as a global leader in renewable energy.

This achievement is a testament to the nation's commitment to a cleaner, greener future and marks a significant step toward realising its ambitious target of 500 GW of non-fossil

SOLAR POWER

- Rajasthan, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh top contributors to utility-scale solar installations
- Solar energy accounts for 47% of the installed renewable energy capacity
- Rooftop solar sector has seen remarkable growth in 2024
- Solar module production capacity at 60 GW in 2024 from 2 GW in 2014



fuel-based energy capacity by 2030 set by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, said Union Minister of New and Renewable Energy Pralhad Joshi. “Under the leadership of Prime Minister, India’s energy journey over the past 10 years has been historic and inspiring. Initiatives like solar panels, solar parks and rooftop solar projects have brought about revolutionary changes. As a result, today India has successfully achieved the target of 100 GW of solar energy production. In the field of green energy, India is not only becoming self-reliant but is also showing the world a new path.”

India’s solar power sector has witnessed an extraordinary 3,446% increase in capacity over the past decade, rising from 2.82 GW in 2014 to 100 GW in 2025. The country’s hybrid and round-the-clock (RTC) renewable energy projects are also advancing rapidly, with 64.67 GW under implementation and tendered, bringing the grand total of solar and hybrid projects to 296.59 GW. ■

MAKE IN INDIA

Govt allocation for PLI schemes rises

Written using agency reports

The Government of India has significantly increased budget allocations for key sectors under the Production Linked

Incentive (PLI) Scheme in 2025-26, reaffirming its commitment to strengthening domestic manufacturing.

Several sectors have witnessed substantial hikes, with allocations for electronics and IT hardware soaring from Rs 57.77 billion (revised estimate for 2024-25) to Rs 90 billion, and automobiles and auto components seeing a jump from Rs 3.49 billion to Rs 28.18 billion. The textile sector has also received a major boost, with its allocation surging from Rs 0.45 billion to Rs 11.48 billion.

By targeting industries like electronics, textiles, pharmaceuticals, and automobiles, the initiative offers financial incentives tied directly to measurable outcomes such as higher production and incremental sales. This performance-driven approach not only attracts investments from domestic and global players but also encourages businesses to embrace cutting-edge technologies and achieve economies of scale.

With an outlay of Rs 1.97 trillion, the PLI Schemes focus on 14 critical sectors, each strategically chosen to enhance the country’s manufacturing prowess, foster technological advancements, and elevate India’s position in global markets. These sectors are aligned with the government’s goal of strengthening domestic production and expanding exports, contributing to the broader vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat. ■

SPENDING RIGHT

India’s R&D spend up 2x to Rs 1.27 trillion

Written using agency reports

India’s gross expenditure on research and development (GERD) spending doubled in the past one decade to Rs 1.27 trillion from Rs 601.96 billion in 2013-14.

The economy of India will be defined by home-grown innovations in artificial intelligence, biotechnology and quantum computing, said Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology Jitendra Singh, underscoring the role of government-backed initiatives in catalysing scientific advancements.

Speaking at DISHA in New Delhi, the minister said the government’s multi-pronged strategy to position India as a global leader in deep-tech innovation and commercialisation. He reiterated that India is making significant strides in fostering an intellectual property (IP)-driven innovation ecosystem, with academia, industry, and startups playing a pivotal role. “The government is not only investing in research but also ensuring that these innovations are seamlessly transitioned from labs to industries, strengthening the foundation of Atmanirbhar Bharat.” ■

PLI SUCCESS



Rs 1.46 trillion
investments realised as of
August 2024

Rs 2 trillion
investments projected by next
year

Rs 12.50 trillion
boost in production and sales

0.95 million
direct and indirect jobs created

Rs 4 trillion+
exports

MUSCLING UP

India becoming a global leader in defence innovation: Defence minister

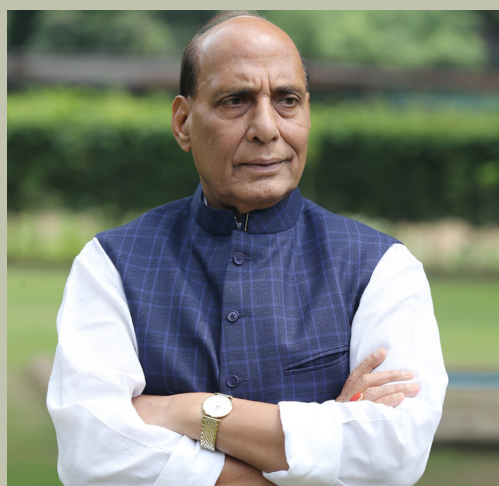
Written using agency reports

While 65-70% of defence equipment was imported a decade ago, today almost the same percentage of weapons and platforms are being manufactured on Indian soil, said Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

India is going through a revolutionary phase of transformation and is moving towards becoming a global leader in defence innovation and aerospace technology, he said, while addressing the valedictory session at the 15th Aero India.

In the beginning, holistic national empowerment was the underlying philosophy of the mantra of self-reliance given by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "This philosophy gradually turned into our national spirit and now it is rapidly moving ahead to becoming a national resolution and national revolution," he said.

Many defence products, including fighter jets, missile systems & naval vessels, are not only protecting our borders, but also catching the attention of the world, said Singh. "From small artillery to large platforms like Brahmos and Akash missile systems, we are exporting a variety of products to many countries. We have forged new partnerships at the global level, which has resulted in increased defence exports," he added.



"I am happy to say that today our forces are not only being equipped with the best weapons/ technologies, they possess the platforms manufactured in India"

RAJNATH SINGH,
Defence Minister

STARTUP LEG-UP

DPIIT issues certificates for recognition of startups

Written using agency reports

India has firmly established itself as the third-largest startup ecosystem in the world, with over 0.16 million certificates issued by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) for recognition of startups as of December 31, 2024.

The nation's entrepreneurial landscape, with more than 100 unicorns, is redefining innovation and creating new opportunities across sectors.

Major hubs like Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Mumbai, and Delhi-NCR have been at the forefront of this transformation, while smaller cities are increasingly contributing to the momentum with over 51% of the startups emerging from Tier II/ III cities. Through initiatives like Startup India, the government has played a pivotal role in nurturing this growth and empowering the next generation of entrepreneurs.

IDENTITY LOCK

Govt allows Aadhaar-enabled face authentication in private entities' mobile apps

Written using agency reports

The government said it has allowed the integration of Aadhaar-enabled face authentication in mobile applications of private entities, a move aimed at easing access to services for customers through apps.

The process will be facilitated as part of the standard operating procedure (SOP) for Aadhaar authentication laid down through the Aadhaar Good Governance portal launched by the Ministry of Electronics and IT (Meity), an official statement said.

"The portal shall work as a resource-rich guide, and offer detailed SOP for authentication seeking entities on how to apply and how to onboard for Aadhaar authentication. Face authentication may also be integrated in the customer facing apps of private entities, which will enable any-time anywhere authentication," the statement said.

The ministry has launched the Aadhaar Good Governance portal to streamline approval process for Aadhaar authentication requests following an amendment that restores access of the unique ID verification mechanism for private entities.

Expansion of the scope of Aadhaar authentication, as envisaged in the amendment notified in



late January 2025, is expected to further improve ease of living and facilitate hassle-free access to newer services of their choice, according to an official statement.

The government on January 31 notified an amendment in the Aadhaar Act to allow private entities to use Aadhaar authentication for delivering their services. "The amendment enables both government and non-government entities to avail Aadhaar authentication service for providing various services in the public interest for related specific purposes like enablement of innovation, spread of knowledge, promoting ease of living of residents and enabling better access to services for them," the statement. ■

Over 2.8 bn Aadhaar authentications in January 2025; 32% jump y-o-y

Written using agency reports

In January 2025, Aadhaar holders conducted more than 2.84 billion authentication transactions, highlighting the continued expansion of the digital economy in India. This significant number demonstrates the growth of the digital economy in the country.

The authentication transactions in January 2025 have recorded a growth of over 32% when compared with January 2024, when 2.15 billion such transactions were carried out.

On an average, over 90 million authentications are taking place every day. This shows the growing adoption and utility of Aadhaar in the daily lives of people. Nearly 550 entities are using Aadhaar authentication service.

Aadhaar face authentication transactions too are getting good traction. In January, almost 120 million Aadhaar face authentication transactions were carried out.

The AI/ML based face authentication solution, developed in-house by the UIDAI, is being used across diverse sectors including finance, insurance, fintech, health and telecommunications. ■

REACHING UP

Reforms in space sector unlocked commercial potential, says minister

Written using agency reports

Space sector reforms have unlocked India's commercial potential in space, said Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology; Earth Sciences and Minister of State for PMO, Department of Atomic Energy, Department of Space, Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, while answering an unstarred question in Rajya Sabha.

NewSpace India (NSIL), a public sector enterprise under the Department of Space and the commercial arm of ISRO, incorporated during March 2019, is responsible for carrying out end-to-end commercial space business on a demand-driven approach and has the mandate to enhance the participation of Indian Industries in space-related activities.

NSIL undertook its 1st communication satellite mission for meeting DTH needs. The satellite was successfully launched on June 23, 2022, and it has commenced its operational services. NSIL undertook its second communication satellite mission for meeting broadband service needs. The satellite was successfully launched on November 19, 2024, and the satellite is undergoing in-orbit testing and commissioning operations.

As on date, NSIL has successfully launched 124 international and 3 Indian customer satellites. ■



AI CROPS

Govt uses artificial intelligence to help farmers

Written using agency reports

The Government of India has employed artificial intelligence (AI) methods to address various challenges in the agricultural sector to aid farmers.

One of the initiatives is Kisan e-Mitra, an AI-powered chatbot, developed to assist

farmers with responses to the queries about the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme. This solution supports multiple languages and is evolving to assist with other government programmes.

National Pest Surveillance System, for tackling the loss of produce due to climate change, utilises AI and machine learning (ML) to detect pest infestation in crop issues, enabling timely intervention for healthier crops.

AI-based analytics use field photographs for crop health assessment and crop health monitoring using satellite, weather and soil moisture datasets for rice and wheat crops. This information was given by Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Shri Ramnath Thakur in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha. ■

TECH FOUNDATION

India's tech sector expected to reach \$300-350 bn in 5 years

Written using agency reports

India's technological sector is on the rise and is expected to reach \$300-350 billion dollars in five years, said Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

"With more than 0.13 million startups and 110 unicorns, our country is emerging as the third-largest startup ecosystem in the world," he said while addressing the 16th Foundation Day of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Mandi, Himachal Pradesh.

India has achieved 88% self-sufficiency in ammunition production, and defence exports have reached around Rs 230 billion in 2023-24. "Our goal is to reach Rs 500 billion in defence exports by 2029," said the Union Minister.

He bolstered the government's commitment in creating a robust defence industry in India, one that supports both the security of the nation and contributes to the country's economic growth. ■

POWER PLAY

Many of our energy goals are aligned with the 2030 deadline, says PM

Written using agency reports

The next two decades are crucial for a Viksit Bharat, and in the next five years, we will cross many significant milestones as our energy goals are aligned with the 2030 deadline, said Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Addressing India Energy Week, the Prime Minister said by 2030, we aim to add 500 gigawatts of renewable energy capacity. The Indian Railways has set a target of achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2030. "Our goal is to produce five million



"We are actively supporting local manufacturing. In the past decade, Bharat's solar PV module manufacturing capacity has grown from 2 GW to around 70 GW. The Production-Linked Incentive scheme has made this sector even more attractive, boosting the manufacturing of high-efficiency solar PV modules"

NARENDRA MODI,
Prime Minister

metric tons of green hydrogen annually by 2030. These targets may seem ambitious, but Bharat's achievements over the past decade give us confidence that we will accomplish them," he said.

Over the last 10 years, India has transformed from the tenth-largest to the fifth-largest economy. In this period, solar energy generation capacity rose by 32 times. Today, India is the third-largest solar power-generating nation in the world. The country's non-fossil fuel energy capacity has tripled. India was the first G20 country to meet the Paris Agreement goals ahead of schedule.

Modi said India is continuously implementing reforms to fully explore the potential of its hydrocarbon resources. Due to major discoveries and the extensive expansion of gas infrastructure, our gas sector is expanding. This has increased the share of natural gas in our energy mix. Currently, India is the fourth-largest refining hub and is working to increase its refining capacity by 20%. ■

INVESTMENT CLIMATE

New model bilateral investment treaty to match demands: CEA

Written using agency reports

Chief Economic Adviser V Anantha Nageswaran said the new model text for bilateral investment treaty (BIT) will be better aligned to the demands of a dynamic global

investment environment, while safeguarding India's sovereign rights and regulatory space.

Addressing a post-budget webinar, he said the BIT framework is being revised to reflect modern challenges. Almost 10 years have passed since the last review of India's model BIT and since then, the global investment ecosystem and international jurisprudence have evolved significantly, he said.

Nageswaran said investors now seek stronger protection for their investments, especially in emerging economies, and this has necessitated an update of the model BIT to align it with international norms, while ensuring that the country remains an attractive investment destination, especially for medium enterprises.

"The new model BIT therefore will be more attuned to the demands of a dynamic global investment environment. At the same time, we will reflect India's sovereign rights and the importance of regulatory space so that public policy priorities are not constrained by international legal obligations," Nageswaran said.

Nageswaran said that foreign investment plays a crucial role in the economic growth and development, and "we are a current account deficit (CAD) country, so we need both portfolio and direct investments". ■



Bilateral investment treaties provide a legal framework to protect foreign investments, especially for small and medium enterprises, while offering safeguards like protection against expropriation and fair treatment

MAKING FUTURE BRIGHT

PM highlights need to invest in people, economy, innovation

Written using agency reports

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the government's commitment to boost job creation through strategic investments in education, healthcare and digital infrastructure has led to investing in people, economy and innovation.

Addressing a post-budget webinar, he said the investments are as critical as infrastructure and industry development. The Prime Minister also said the nationwide expansion of telemedicine facilities to all primary health centres is a significant step toward improving healthcare accessibility.

PM Modi further noted that the Union Budget 2025-26 reflects a transformative and reform-oriented agenda, reinforcing the government's long-term vision for inclusive development and innovation-driven economic growth.

The webinar series had an outreach session on "Broadband Connectivity to Government Secondary Schools and Primary Health Centres". It underscored the transformative impact of expanding digital access in rural and remote areas. By enabling e-learning platforms, virtual labs, digital literacy, telemedicine, and electronic health records, this initiative aims to bridge the urban-rural digital divide, enhance e-governance, and create economic opportunities. The initiative will play a crucial role in making quality education and healthcare more accessible across India's rural landscape. ■

India to grow 6.5% in FY26 despite challenges: Crisil Intelligence

Written using agency reports

India's real gross domestic product (GDP) growth would be steady at 6.5% in fiscal 2026 despite uncertainties stemming from geopolitical turns and trade-related issues led by US tariff actions, said Crisil Intelligence in a report.

According to news reports, the forecast depends on two key factors. The rating agency anticipates that normal monsoon and commodity prices will continue to remain soft, which will keep the food prices stable.

Cooling food inflation, the tax benefits announced in the Union Budget 2025-2026, and lower borrowing costs are expected to drive discretionary consumption, said The Tribune, quote this report.

As per the Crisil Intelligence, the growth is now returning to pre-pandemic rates as fiscal impulse normalises and the high-base effect wears off. Even with that, the high-frequency Purchasing Managers Index (PMI) data reveals that India maintains its pole position among major economies.

"India's resilience is being tested again. Over the past few years, we have built a few safe harbours against exogenous shocks - healthy economic growth, low current account deficit and external public debt, and adequate forex reserves - which provide ample policy latitude. So, while the waters can turn choppy, consumption-led rural and urban demand will be crucial to short-term growth," said Amish Mehta, Managing Director and CEO, Crisil Ltd.

He further added that, on the other hand, continuing investments and efficiency gains will aid in the medium term.

"We foresee both manufacturing and services supporting growth through fiscal 2031," he added. ■

Bilateral Developments

Assam CM Leads Delegation to Singapore

Assam Chief Minister Shri Himanta Biswa Sarma, leading a high-level delegation on a three-day visit to Singapore from 10-12 February 2025, engaged with Deputy Prime Minister Gan Kim Yong and key business leaders to attract investments ahead of the upcoming Advantage Assam 2.0 Summit, scheduled for 25-26 February in Assam.

The discussions highlighted Assam's strategic role in the India-ASEAN partnership, with a focus on semiconductors, skilling, and green energy. At a roadshow organized by FICCI on 12 February, the delegation showcased the state's investment-friendly policies, citing Tata's semiconductor facility in Jagiroad as a pivotal step toward establishing Assam as a semiconductor hub.

The Mission facilitated meetings with Singapore's semiconductor industry leaders, where the delegation extended an invitation to explore investment opportunities in Assam, further strengthening economic ties between India and Singapore.



Indian Budget sessions at Singapore

The Mission, in collaboration with the ICAI Singapore Chapter, organized a budget session titled “Unlocking the Indian Budget 2025 – Insights for Singapore Investors” on 6th February 2025. H.E. Dr. Shilpak Ambule, High Commissioner of India to Singapore, graced the event as the Guest of Honour, sharing valuable insights on India’s economic trajectory and the strengthening India-Singapore partnership.

The session saw active participation from 120 members of the ICAI Singapore Chapter, along with prominent business and financial leaders, who engaged in insightful discussions on the budget’s impact on Singapore investors. As part of its efforts to promote tourism to India, the Mission showcased thematic promotional videos highlighting India’s rich cultural heritage and diverse natural attractions.

Additionally, the High Commissioner participated in an event organized by the Singapore Business Federation (SBF) on India’s Union Budget. Discussions focused on key budget provisions, India’s economic outlook, initiatives to enhance the ease of doing business, and emerging opportunities for Singapore-based businesses.



India Space Pavilion at Global Space Technology Convention & Exhibition 2025, Singapore

The Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre (IN-SPACe), along with six leading Indian space sector companies, participated in the Global Space Technology Convention & Exhibition 2025, held in Singapore from 26–27 February. The event provided a platform to showcase India’s advancements in space technology and foster international collaborations.



Forthcoming Events In India

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I. Reverse Buyer-Seller Meet (RBSM) – Vijayawada, India

Date & Venue: April 24-25, 2025
Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh
Organiser: Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO), in partnership with the Government of Andhra Pradesh
Contact: unni@fieo.org

Details: The Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO), in collaboration with the Government of Andhra Pradesh, invites international buyers to participate in the Reverse Buyer-Seller Meet (RBSM) in Vijayawada. The event aims to connect global buyers with Indian exporters across various sectors.

Website: https://fieo.org/view_detail.php?id=0,21&dcd=11179&evetype=0

II. 59th Edition of IHGF Delhi Fair (Spring) 2025

Date & Venue: DApril 16-19, 2025
India Expo Centre & Mart,
Greater Noida, Delhi NCR
Organiser: Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH)
Contact: mails@epch.com

Details: The IHGF Delhi Fair (Spring) 2025 will feature a comprehensive showcase of over 2,000 product lines and 300+ trends across 16 distinct categories, catering to international buyers including importers, wholesalers, retail chains, and design professionals.

Website: <https://www.springfairdelhi.com/>

INDIA FOCUS

ISSUE: 347
MARCH 2025
HIGH COMMISSION OF INDIA, SINGAPORE

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