

## The Economy

### India moves up on World Bank Ease of Doing Business Rankings

In the latest ease of doing business rankings of nations released by the World Bank on October 24, 2019, India stands at 63, moving up 14 places from 77 last year.

The World Bank's Doing Business study recognizes the important work countries have done to improve their regulatory environments.

New Zealand, Singapore and Hong Kong topped the list and the 'top 10 performers' starting from the best improver are Saudi Arabia (62), Jordan (75), Togo (97), Bahrain (43), Tajikistan (106), Pakistan (108), Kuwait (83), China (31), India (63) and Nigeria (131).

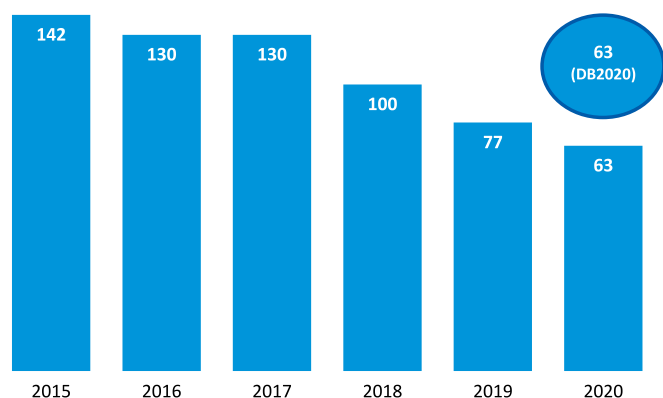
India is amongst the Top 10 performers for the third consecutive year.

Among the 10 economies that advanced the most, efforts were focused on the areas of starting a business, dealing with construction permits, and trading across borders. In general, economies that score the highest share several features, including the widespread use of electronic systems and online platforms to comply with regulatory requirements.

### India's performance

India has made a substantial leap forward over the years raising its ease of doing business ranking from 142 in 2015 to 63 this year.

Doing Business Rankings



Source: World Bank

A closer look at various parameters taken into account by the World Bank while ranking nations vis-à-vis ease of doing business reveals that India has improved in 7 out of 10 indices due to consistent efforts made by the Government to facilitate business development.

### Rankings in the 10 Parameters of DB2020 for India

Parameters	DB 2020 Rank	DB 2019 Rank
Starting a business	136	137
Dealing with construction permits	27	52
Getting Electricity	22	24
Registering Property	154	166
Getting credit	25	22
Protecting minority investors	13	7
Paying taxes	115	121
Trading across borders	68	80
Enforcing contracts	163	163
Resolving insolvency	52	108

Source: World Bank

Some of the major initiatives taken by the Government and noted by the World Bank during May 2018 to May 2019 include:

- Starting a business-** India made starting a business easier by abolishing filing fees for the SPICe company incorporation form, electronic memorandum of association, and articles of association. This reform applies to both Delhi and Mumbai;
- Dealing with construction permits-** India (Delhi) streamlined the process, reduced the time and cost of obtaining construction permits, and improved building quality control by strengthening professional certification requirements. India (Mumbai) streamlined the process of obtaining a building permit and made it faster and less expensive to get that.
- Obtaining all permits and authorizations to build a warehouse** now costs 4% of the warehouse value, down from 5.7% the previous year. In addition, authorities enhanced building quality control in Delhi by strengthening professional certification requirements. Importing and exporting also became easier for companies with the creation of a single electronic platform for trade stakeholders, upgrades to port infrastructure and improvements to electronic submission of documents;
- Trading across borders-** India made trading across borders easier by enabling post clearance audits, integrating trade stakeholders in a single electronic platform, upgrading port infrastructure, and enhancing the electronic submission of documents. This reform applies to both Delhi and Mumbai;
- Resolving insolvency-** India made resolving insolvency easier by promoting reorganization proceedings in practice. India also made resolving insolvency more difficult by not allowing dissenting creditors to receive as much under

reorganization as they would receive in liquidation. This reform applies to both Delhi and Mumbai,

Since its implementation, more than 2,000 companies have used the new law. Of these, about 470 have commenced liquidation and more than 120 have approved reorganization plans, with the remaining cases still pending. Reorganization has become the most likely procedure for viable companies as measured by Doing Business, increasing the overall recovery rate from 27 to 72 cents on the dollar.

**These reform initiatives aimed at digitising, streamlining and rationalising regulatory compliances** and procedures have imparted a huge fillip to the investor sentiment by ensuring faster processes, lower transaction costs and greater transparency.

## Areas of concern

**While there has been substantial progress in the areas mentioned above**, in areas of getting credit, protecting minor investors and enforcing contracts, India's performance was the same as last year and its performance fell for registration of properties.

- It takes 58 days and costs on an average of 7.8% of a property's value to register it, which is longer and at greater cost than among OECD high-income economies.
- And it takes 1,445 days for a company to resolve a commercial dispute through a local first-instance court, almost three times the average time in OECD high-income economies.
- It takes 4 years to enforce contracts in Indian courts against 1.6 in OECD countries.
- It takes 22.5 days in India to start a business against 9.2 in OECD countries.

## Way forward

The Government is working towards being in the top 50 ranks next year and be among the top 25 by 2025. A series of reform measures have already been announced in the last few months. i.e. after May 2019 (policy changes made till May 2019 have been taken note of for this years' ranking). These include reduction in corporate tax rate and minimum alternate tax, easing of FDI norms in single brand retail and contract manufacturing, scrapping of Angel tax for start-ups and introduction of the Model Tenancy Act. However, to move up on the rankings, the Government will have to continue with the reforms agenda at a faster speed and instil confidence among investors. Some of the measures that could help create better business environment include:

- To undertake financial reforms in three key areas -sound regulations for non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), allow private sector banks in a big way in the banking sector and deepen capital market to aide growth;
- Set the agenda for bold reforms now and start implementing that at the earliest;
- There should be focus on reforms in land acquisition, implementation of fixed term employment in all the states, further streamlining of stringent labour laws to enhance production possibility frontiers and employment generation in the economy;
- Empowering businesses in India with a stable policy and regulatory regime;
- Focus on developing a robust market place for stressed assets;
- Registering property can be made easier by increasing transparency, using electronic modes for registration for

faster processing and decreasing any excessive taxes/costs of registering property;

- For protecting minority investors, India needs to introduce fast track courts to resolve disputes in quicker manner and encourage greater corporate transparency;
- Enforcing contracts can be done efficiently by introducing electronic filing for tracking progress of cases and streamlining court procedures.

The challenges are there but so are the opportunities. The Government is willing to make course correction. There is no alternate to continuing reforms at a faster speed to create better business environment. Regular engagement among all stakeholders is the way forward.

## Legally Speaking

### FRESH START PROCESS UNDER IBC

The law relating to Insolvency and Bankruptcy in India was modified and consolidated by the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code passed by the parliament in 2016. The objective of the modification and consolidation of the law was maximizing value of creditors, encouraging timely resolution, promoting entrepreneurship, enhancing availability of credit and balancing interests of all stake holders.

The provision relating to Corporate Insolvency Resolution, Corporate Liquidation & Voluntary liquidation have been operationalized and are working satisfactorily. However, Part II of the Code which deals with Insolvency Resolution and Bankruptcy for Individuals and Partnerships Firms is yet to be notified by the Central Government. Chapter II in Part III of the Code deals with the Fresh Start Process in respect of Individual Insolvency. The objective of making provisions for Fresh Start Process in case of Individual Insolvency is to enable certain low income debtors to get their debts waived after following due process of adjudication in a time bound manner.

The fresh start process is different from insolvency process. It discharges the debtor from debts if he meets certain laid down eligibility criteria. In fact, this process will help the debtors from whom chances of recovery are meagre and process of resolving insolvency may become an additional burden to either the debtor or the creditor or the State. I may hasten to add that the Fresh Start is not an absolute waiver like amnesty schemes or loan waiver schemes brought by the Government in the past. It provides a debtor to get rid of his debt on fulfilment of certain conditions and subject to orders of the adjudicating authority to start his business afresh without being hounded by his creditors. It provides relief to under privileged debtors who may be stuck up in a debt trap. It gives debtor a chance to begin life again by being discharged from the burden of repaying debts.

The Fresh Start Process can be initiated only by a debtor who meets the eligibility criteria under the IBC. A debtor whose gross annual income is less than 60,000 rupees, assets worth less than 20,000 rupees, qualifying debts worth 35,000 rupees and no home ownership is eligible to get a complete waiver of qualifying debts. A resolution professional appointed in the case prepares a report recommending the case for acceptance or rejection of the application by the Adjudicating Authority. The Creditor too can make submission but only on very limited grounds i.e. if the debt is not a qualifying debt and if the details of the qualifying debt are incorrect. If the application filed by the debtor is admitted by the Adjudicating Authority, a moratorium is triggered staying any legal action against debts of the debtor's application.

However, there are certain issues that need to be sorted out before the fresh start process under the IBC is notified/operationalized. There is need to strengthen the ecosystem in

terms of availability and quality of resolution professionals and adjudicating authority with reference to the anticipated work load. The insolvency professionals who are highly qualified charge a decent fee.

Perhaps the cases under the fresh start process do not require the kind of skill which insolvency professionals have and the element of fee will be highly deterrent in effectively implementing the whole process. Individuals, who need to avail this legal remedy, may not be in a position to either access DRTs or afford the fee payable to Insolvency Professionals.

There is need to explore possibility of implementing these provisions through Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) mechanism through authorized centers through a mechanism of Insolvency Advisers, a separate class of professionals with proper training but lesser qualification compared to insolvency professionals. Utilizing administrative authorities, instead of DRT as the adjudicating authority in fresh start process may help in making the process more cost effective, accessible and expedient.

*By Mr. P K Malhotra, Senior Legal Consultant, VJA Legal and Former Law Secretary, Govt. of India*

## Taxation Matters

### Income Tax

- **SC: S. 143(2): Mere mentioning of new address in the return of income is not enough. If change of address is not specifically intimated to the AO, he is justified in sending the notice at the address mentioned in PAN database. If the notice is sent within the period prescribed in s. 143(2), actual service of the notice upon the assessee is immaterial.**

The Apex Court in this case has laid down the following fundamentals:

- a) Mere mentioning of new address in RoI without specifically intimating AO w.r.t. change of address and without getting PAN database changed, is not enough and sufficient.
- b) In absence of any specific intimation, AO would be justified in sending notice at available address mentioned in PAN database, more particularly when return of income has been filed under e-filing scheme.
- c) Filing of Form18 with ROC cannot be said to be an intimation to AO w.r.t. change in address.
- d) Thus, where there was no intimation by assessee to AO w.r.t. change of address, notice u/s 143(2) issued to assessee on available address as per PAN database can be said to be a sufficient compliance of relevant provisions of Act.
- e) Once the notice is sent within the period prescribed in the Proviso to section 143(2) of the Act, in that case, actual service of the notice upon the assessee thereafter would be immaterial.

**[Pr. CIT v. I-ven Interactive Ltd. (Civil Appeal No(s). 8132/2019) Supreme Court]**

- **HC: Though an order refusing to issue refund is not an appealable order u/s 246A, it is subject to revision u/s 264. As the alternate remedy of revision is available, the Writ is not maintainable**

Bombay HC held that a revision would lie to the Commissioner of Income Tax from any order passed by the authority subordinate to him in respect of any proceeding under the Act. In the present case, the order has been passed by the officer subordinate to the Commissioner of Income Tax and the same has been passed in respect of proceeding initiated by the Petitioner seeking refund. The impugned order dated 9 April 2019 adjudicates a lis

between the Revenue and the Petitioner. This requires an examination of facts for adjudication of the dispute. There are no substance in the submission of the Petitioner that no revision would be available against the impugned order as it is not an order passed under the Act. Thus, remedy of revision under section 264(1) of the Act would be available to the Petitioner.

**[ADITYA MARINE LIMITED. VERSUS THE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF INCOME TAX (INTERNATIONAL TAXATION) AND OTHERS WRIT PETITION NO. 2484 OF 2019 Bombay High Court]**

- **ITAT Chandigarh held “Vocational education/training programme run by assessee society was a systematic programme imparting classroom coaching as well training with focus on employment generation, which duly fell within the purview and scope of the term ‘Education’ as used in Sec. 2(15)”**

Assessee-society was running a private industrial training institute which was imparting vocational training to students. It filed an application for registration u/s 12AA. CIT(E) rejected assessee’s application holding that assessee was indulged in activity of merely skill enhancement in which no systematic education was involved falling within definition of education u/s 2(15). The Tribunal noted that vocational education/training programme run by assessee society was a systematic programme imparting classroom coaching as well training with focus on employment generation, which duly fell within the purview and scope of the term ‘Education’ as used in Sec. 2(15). Given the above, ITAT concluded that objection raised by CIT(E) was to be set aside and, assessee’s application for registration was to be allowed.

**[Unique Educational Society v. CIT(E) in ITA No. 1052 of 2018 – ITAT Chandigarh]**

### International Taxation & Transfer Pricing

- **Bombay High Court upholds quality adjustment under CUP-method while benchmarking imports; Deletes TP-adjustment on technical fees**

Bombay HC dismisses Revenue’s appeal against ITAT-order granting quality adjustment under CUP-method while benchmarking imports & deleting TP-adjustment on payment of technical consultancy fees for AY 2010-11. In respect of import transaction, HC notes that ITAT had allowed 10% quality adjustment as the quality of assessee’s products (being manufactured in a German plant where quality control requirements are much more stringent than in India) were demonstrably superior to locally manufactured products in India. Noting that the quality adjustment was allowed as per terms of Rule 10B(1)(a)(ii), HC opines that “...wherever even two products are identical, yet on account of perception there could be difference of the price in the open market. This has to be factored in while determining the ALP as has been recognized in the aforementioned rule 10B(1)(a)(ii) of the Income Tax Rules”. Further, observing that TPO himself had accepted this price adjustment on account of perception of quality by allowing the adjustment at 10% in the AY 2011-12, HC dismisses Revenue’s plea holding that it did not give rise to any substantial question of law. Separately, HC upholds ITAT-order deleting TP-adjustment on payment of bouquet of technical consultancy fees rejecting TPO’s Nil ALP, relies on co-ordinate bench ruling in assessee’s own case for AY 2003-04.

**[Pr.CIT v M/s. Merck Ltd (ITA No.726 of 2017) – Bombay High Court]**

## Goods and Services Tax

- **Karnataka AAR: Volume discount received by motor-vehicle dealer in form of credit note, not liable to GST**

Karnataka AAR holds that volume-discount received by motor-vehicle dealer on purchases/sales, in the form of credit-note without any adjustment of GST, is not liable for GST. It observes that the applicant need not issue tax invoice for this transaction since the amount received in the form of credit note is actually a discount and not a supply to the authorized supplier. It clarifies that since the applicant has not reversed the ITC attributable to discount received in the form of credit note from the authorized supplier, same cannot be covered under clause (b) of section 15. Accordingly it remarks that credit note is only a financial document for account adjustment for the incentive provided hence there is no effect on the GST.

**[In the matter of Kwality Mobikes (P) Ltd.]**

- **Maharashtra AAR: Recovery of 50% of Parental Insurance Premium from employees, not 'supply of service'**

AAR notes that the principal business of the applicant is manufacturing of paints & coatings, and that the applicant entered into a contract with Insurance Company w.r.t coverage of parental health of its employees' parents. It observes that entire amount of premium was initially borne by the applicant against which receipt was issued in its name, and later as per the company policy, the applicant sought to recover 50% of the said premium from its employees. Such recovery cannot be treated as an activity done in the course of business or for furtherance of business since the applicant is not rendering any service of health insurance to their employees' parent. It finds that the same does not satisfy the conditions laid down u/s 7 of CGST Act to be held as 'supply of services' nor it is covered under the term 'business' u/s 2(17) of the Act. Therefore, AAR holds that recovery of 50% of Parental Health Insurance Premium by the applicant from its employees does not amount to 'supply of service'.

**[In the matter of Jotun India Pvt. Ltd.]**

- **Karnataka AAR: E-commerce operators not liable to GST on driver/operator's services, however, tax to be collected u/s 52**

Karnataka AAR observes that applicant is not providing drivers to the consumers but only facilitating the consumers and drivers to come together for provision of service whereas it is collecting service charges for the usage of electronic commerce platform. It further states that drivers are not employees of applicant and are independent, have the option to enter into the contract and the customers have the choice of the drivers, hence they act on principal to principal basis. It highlights that Section 9(5) does not shift the liability of these services provided by the drivers to the e-commerce operator, moreover, services provided by drivers are not covered under Notification No. 17/2017 – Central Tax and hence, not covered u/s 9(5) of CGST Act. Therefore, AAR rules that applicant is not liable to pay tax on the services provided by the drivers. However, applicant is liable to tax collection at source u/s 52 on net value of taxable supplies made by the drivers through it where the consideration is to be collected by the applicant.

**[In the matter of Humble Mobile Solutions Pvt. Ltd.]**

- **Karnataka AAR: No ITC reversal required on 'electricity generated and consumed captively' for 'cement manufacture'**

Karnataka AAR notes that the applicant generates electric energy from the captive power plant which is transmitted to the cement manufacturing plants, and thus the applicant is engaged in manufacture of cement and production of electric energy. It holds that the applicant is entitled to take ITC in respect of goods other than capital goods in terms of Section 17(5)(c). It explains that operation of solar power plant shall not constitute a separate supply warranting the reversal of ITC with the application of Section 17(1) and/or 17(2). It clarifies that this shall apply only in the case where the entire electricity generated is captively consumed and no part of the energy produced is sold or discharged into the grid and taken out at their manufacturing site otherwise the ITC will be required to be reversed.

**[In the matter of Keshav Cement and Infra Ltd.]**

## News Roundup

### Key Developments

#### [India jumps to 63rd position in World Bank's Ease of Doing Business 2020 report \(The Economic Times\)](#)

India has moved 14 places to be 63rd among 190 nations in the World Bank's ease of doing business ranking released on Thursday, October 24 on the back of multiple economic reforms by the Narendra Modi government.

#### [Non-oil firms allowed to open petrol pumps \(The Times of India\)](#)

The government on Wednesday, October 23 laid the ground for eventual full-on price competition in the fuel retail market by easing entry norms to end the dominance of state-run retailers and opening up the business for non-oil companies with a minimum net worth of Rs 250 crore. This is the biggest fuel market reforms since 2002, when the NDA-I government under Atal Bihari Vajpayee had deregulated oil pricing for the first time. The step will assure foreign investors about the Modi government's commitment to market-driven economy at a time the Centre is planning to hive off India's second- and third-largest fuel retailers — BPCL and HPCL.

### Economy

#### [Niti Aayog kick-starts work on 2035 Vision Document \(The Economic Times\)](#)

The NITI Aayog has kick-started the exercise for drafting the Vision Document 2035, a 15-year vision for India starting from 2020, with a mandate for a paradigm shift in policy thinking and formulation. The Prime Minister's Office has directed the Aayog to engage the best Indian and overseas subject experts for consultation while preparing the document, saying business-as-usual approach will not work, a senior government official told ET.

#### [Commerce Ministry considers 5-year extension of income tax benefits for SEZ units \(The Hindu Business Line\)](#)

With exports and investments on the slide, the Centre is considering a five-year extension of tax benefits for units in Special Economic Zones (SEZs) by extending the sunset clause beyond March 31, 2020 to boost investor sentiment.

#### [GST collections have grown 4.9 % Y-o-Y: RBI Monetary Policy \(The Economic Times\)](#)

Despite GST collections coming at an 18 month low for the month of September 2019, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)

in its Monetary Policy Report states that there has been a modest year-on-year growth in the collection of the indirect tax. "Notwithstanding month-over-month fluctuations, the GST collections grew by 4.9 per cent (Y-O-Y) during April-September 2019," said RBI.

#### **M-SIPS, lower tax rate boost for IT, telecom sectors (The Economic Times)**

In a double bonanza of sorts for IT and telecom sectors, companies that have approvals under the M-SIPS scheme and start operations between October 1 this year and March 2023 can avail of the 15% tax rate for new manufacturing companies as well as benefits under the capital subsidy scheme. M-SIPS is the Modified Special Incentive Package Scheme, aimed at encouraging electronics manufacturing, which ran from 2012 to 2018.

#### **RBI relaxes ban for those looking to buy stake of foreign firms in India (Business Standard)**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has clarified that there would be no "blanket ban" on Indian companies wanting to buy stakes in overseas firms, which already have investments in India under the automatic route. An approval from the apex bank would be required, though.

#### **Forex kitty nears USD 440 bn; touches fresh-life high (The Economic Times)**

The forex kitty continued to climb north, swelling by USD 1.879 billion to a new life-time high of USD 439.712 billion, in the week to October 11, the Reserve Bank said on Friday, October 18. The forex reserves had increased by a higher USD 4.24 billion to a new high of USD 437.83 billion in the previous reporting week.

#### **MCA amends rules to allow companies to comply with KYC norms (The Economic Times)**

In a relief to companies that had been rendered inactive after they failed to comply with the know-your-customer rules, the government has given them an option to change their status and become active. The Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) has amended rules to allow such companies to make a filing about their directors and become compliant. The MCA has amended what is called the Rule 25A related to the Active Company Tagging Identities and Verification (ACTIVE). A non-compliant company can now file Form DIR-12 to update details on its directors.

## **Sectoral**

### **Banking & Finance**

#### **MFIs can lend more to small borrowers (The Times of India)**

Small borrowers can now avail loans amounting to Rs 1.25 lakh from microfinance institutions (MFIs) as against Rs 1 lakh earlier. RBI on Friday, October 4 also hiked the lending limit for individual borrowers and allowed MFIs to lend to households with a higher income than before. As against a household income cap of Rs 1 lakh and Rs 1.6 lakh respectively for rural and urban borrowers, MFIs can lend to those with income up to Rs 1.25 lakh and Rs 2 lakh respectively.

### **Defence**

#### **Our priority is to cut imports, be self-reliant: Rajnath Singh (The Economic Times)**

Defence minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday, October 16 said the government's priority in its second term is to cut down dependence on imports and develop indigenous capabilities through greater involvement of the private sector, with a special focus on start-ups.

## **Energy**

#### **175 GW renewables by December 2022, clarifies government (Financial Express)**

The ministry of new and renewable energy (MNRE) clarified on Wednesday, October 9 that the deadline for installing 175 giga-watt (GW) of renewable energy is December 31, 2022. "At places the date for achieving the stated target is mentioned differently, i.e, by the year 2022 or by FY22," the clarification stated.

#### **Solar thermal players eye 10 per cent growth after GST rate cut (Financial Express)**

Solar thermal industry players are confident of getting back into the boom trajectory and expect the sector to clock a growth of 10% after the reduction of GST rate on inputs for solar components from 18% to 5%.

#### **\$60 billion investment coming in gas infrastructure: Dharmendra Pradhan (The Economic Times)**

India is investing over USD 60 billion in developing natural supply and distribution infrastructure as it chases the target of more than doubling the share of natural gas in its energy base to 15 per cent by 2030, Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said on Sunday, October 13. Natural gas currently constitutes 6.2 per cent of all energy consumption in the country.

## **Healthcare**

#### **Ayushman Bharat to generate an estimated 11 lakh new jobs in next 5-7 years: Modi (The Hindu Business Line)**

Around 11 lakh jobs are estimated to be generated due to Ayushman Bharat scheme in the next five to seven years, which will make it the second largest employment generator after the railways, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday, October 1.

#### **Domestic pharma market grows 11.5% in July-September (The Times of India)**

The organised domestic pharma market grew in double digits last month, resulting in one of the best quarters in over a year, with 11.5% growth across July-September, buoyed by higher volumes (3.2%) and price growth (5.5%).

## **IBC**

#### **Concerned about stress in financial sector, government to bring NBFCs under insolvency code (The Times of India)**

The government is set to bring non-banking finance companies within the ambit of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, but in a slightly tweaked form, for smoother resolution of these entities and firewall the rest of the financial system from any possible adverse impact.

#### **Time-bound e-bidding to speed up IBC resolution (The Economic Times)**

The government is actively considering introducing a short, time-bound, online financial bidding process in corporate insolvency cases to improve transparency and reduce litigation, a senior official said. Currently, creditors of a company undergoing insolvency proceedings are free to negotiate with potential bidders individually, which has led to offers being revised, bids coming in after the deadline and associated litigation, prolonging the process.

## **Infrastructure**

#### **500-tonne waste to help build 100km of highways by October-end (The Economic Times)**

At least 500 tons of single use plastic (SUP), particularly

waste polythene, will be used in building nearly 100 km of highways by October-end, a top NHA official said. To achieve this, the government's highway building agency has, for the first time, taken the 'risk performance' of roads which will be built using plastic on itself rather than holding the contractor responsible for poor performance.

### [Government plans 1,400km long great 'green wall' of India \(The Times of India\)](#)

The Centre is mulling an ambitious plan to create a 1,400km long and 5km wide green belt from Gujarat to the Delhi-Haryana border, on the lines of the "Great Green Wall" running through the width of Africa, from Dakar (Senegal) to Djibouti, to combat climate change and desertification.

### [Rs.25 lakh crore will be spent for rural infrastructure development: PM Modi \(The Economic Times\)](#)

In a big boost to strengthen rural infrastructure, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday, October 13 said that Rs 25 lakh crore will be spent for infrastructural development in the villages across the country. "The rural economy of the country is now being given as much attention as never before. Already the work is going on on the roads of the village. Now in the coming years, Rs 25 lakh crore will be spent to develop infrastructure in the villages. The money will also be used to construct modern storage centres for crops," he said.

### [Railways to be 'net zero' carbon emitter by 2030, says Piyush Goyal \(The Times of India\)](#)

Union minister Piyush Goyal on Tuesday, October 15 said that Indian Railways will become "net zero" carbon emitter by 2030. Addressing an event, Goyal said, "By the year 2023, Indian Railways will be the first railways of the size and scale that we have, to be 100% electrically run."

## **IT & Telecom**

### [7 internet companies join hands to check online fraud \(The Times of India\)](#)

Seven leading internet companies are banding together to save their consumers from the rising menace of cyber frauds being carried out by duping innocent users, where the money is being siphoned off from their accounts. The companies taking action include travel majors MakeMyTrip Group and Oyo Hotels & Homes, mobile payments firm Paytm, online food delivery aggregators Swiggy & Zomato, besides ride-hailing giant Uber.

### [SC backs DoT's revenue call in ₹92,000 cr blow to telcos \(Mint\)](#)

The Supreme Court on Thursday, October 24 upheld the government's broader definition of revenue on which it calculates levies on telecom operators, dealing a ₹92,000 crore blow to an industry already reeling from a collapse in tariffs and mounting debt. The top court rejected the definition of adjusted gross revenue (AGR) proposed by the telecom operators that excluded revenue from non-core telecom operations such as rent, dividend and interest income, marking the end of a 14-year-long legal tussle between the department of telecommunications (DoT) and operators.

## **Start-Ups**

### [With 50,000 start-ups registered, India aims for as many more by 2024 \(The Economic Times\)](#)

Regulators and officials now see potential in startups, and are invested in boosting their size and number. Guruprasad Mohapatra, Secretary at the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade of India, said in a statement, "There are 50,000 registered startups in India, and there will be 50,000 more by 2024 at this pace."

### [Government to fund 100 start-ups to use its translation platform \(The Economic Times\)](#)

The government is planning to directly fund 100 start-ups to use its artificial intelligence (AI)-driven language platform which will offer translation services in many languages of the country. The platform will be opened up for private use to allow big companies or start-ups to plug into it to offer services in local languages to their customers, said people aware of the matter. As more users access the platform, the system improves and provides better results.

## **States**

### [Gujarat government inks MoU to set up China Industrial Park at Dholera \(Financial Express\)](#)

### [State governments and industry have committed to train 7 lakh apprentices in the current fiscal: Skill Development Ministry \(The Economic Times\)](#)

### [Karnataka & Delhi most innovative states in Niti index \(The Times of India\)](#)

## **International News**

### [WTO slashes forecast for trade growth as conflicts mount \(Reuters\)](#)

The World Trade Organization cut its forecast for growth in global trade this year by more than half on Tuesday, October 1 and said further rounds of tariffs and retaliation, a slowing economy and a disorderly Brexit could squeeze it even more. The WTO said it now expected global merchandise trade to increase by 1.2% this year, compared with its April estimate of 2.6%.

### [Southeast Asia's net economy to top \\$100 billion this year \(The Economic Times\)](#)

Southeast Asia's internet economy is on track to exceed \$100 billion this year before tripling by 2025, becoming one of the world's fastest-growing arenas for online commerce thanks to a youthful population increasingly comfortable with smartphones. The value of online transactions in areas from internet retail to car hailing should reach \$300 billion by 2025, fueled by an existing population of 360 million online users, according to a research report by Google, Temasek Holdings and Bain & Co.

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