

## Daily Economic News Summary: 21 December 2017

### **1. US takes India back to WTO in solar power dispute**

**Source: The Economic Times ([Link](#))**

India has failed to comply with a World Trade Organization ruling on solar power, the United States will tell the WTO's dispute settlement body (DSB) next month, triggering a fresh round of litigation, according to an agenda issued on 20.12.2017. Renewable energy has become a hot area of trade friction as major economies compete to dominate a sector that is expected to thrive as reliance on coal and oil dwindles. India unveiled its national solar programme in 2011, seeking to ease chronic energy shortages in Asia's third-largest economy without creating pollution. But the United States complained to the WTO in 2013, saying the programme was discriminatory and U.S. solar exports to India had fallen by 90 percent from 2011. The United States won the case last year, when WTO appeals judges ruled India had broken the trade rules by requiring solar power developers to use Indian-made cells and modules.

### **2. Govt to combine old, modern tech for crop forecast**

**Source: The Economic Times ([Link](#))**

The Centre is weighing combining traditional and modern technologies like yield estimate and satellite imagery to ensure accurate farm output forecast, Chief Statistician T C A Anant said on 20.12.2017. "The Centre is working on a combination of traditional and modern technology like satellite imagery for crop acreage and yield estimation to build up a much more sophisticated analysis and ensure accurate agriculture forecasts," Anant said here while addressing an event of Geospatial Technologies in India. "If we can combine traditional technology of acreage, yield

estimation with satellite imagery, which is possible through a small hand-held device... it will be possible for you to not only get the estimates... but also the geospatial coordinates... This is one work which is now in progress," an Assocham statement quoted him as saying. He further said, "The technology is there, apps have been developed, it is a question of working with all state officials and there is huge administrative machinery out in districts to adopt it, that is one work which is going on."

### **3. Cabinet approves Consumer Protection Bill**

**Source: The Economic Times ([Link](#))**

Focused on faster redressal of consumer grievances and to ensure stringent action against unfair trade practices, the Cabinet approved the introduction of the Consumer Protection Bill, 2017, to amend the Consumer Protection Act, 1986, sources said. The Bill seeks to enlarge the scope of the existing Act and proposes stricter actions against misleading advertisements and food adulteration. The amended Act will provide for the setting up of a Central Consumer Protection Authority, which will make way for faster redressal of consumer complaints. It will also take up class-action cases, raised by a group of consumers with the same set of complaints.

### **4. Government may allow 100 per cent FDI in telecom via automatic route**

**Source: The Economic Times ([Link](#))**

The government is finalising a plan to allow 100 per cent FDI for telecom services through the automatic route which allows firms to attract foreign funds without its approval, sources said on 20.12.2017. The proposal is likely to be considered by the Telecom Commission, the apex decision making body of the Department of Telecom, at its meeting scheduled for tomorrow, they said. "The TC is likely to consider raising of FDI limit up to 100 per cent for all telecom services

including infrastructure through automatic route," a source said. At present 100 per cent FDI is allowed, of which up to 49 per cent investment in a company can be done through the automatic route. The inflow of overseas investment beyond that requires government approval because of security reasons.

#### **5. West Bengal to construct 13,000 km of rural roads: Minister**

**Source: The Economic Times ([Link](#))**

To improve the rural economy the West Bengal government would construct 13,000 kilometre of rural roads in the state. West Bengal Panchayat and Rural Development Minister Subrata Mukherjee said the Mamata Banerjee government would spend Rs 3,100 crore as state's share to complete the Rs 7,800 crore project to construct 13,000 km rural roads. "I have been able to extract sanction for more rural roads from the Centre. Instead of previous plan 7000 km, we will now build 13,000 km but we will have to shell out 40 per cent of the cost in the new norms," Mukherjee told PTI. Earlier, entire funding for construction of rural roads could be recovered from the Centre but in the revised terms Centre has reduced its contribution to 60 per cent of the cost, he said. To improve the rural economy the state government has decided to build rural roads almost double than its earlier plan, the minister said.

#### **6. Alternative assets industry in India worth \$43 billion: Preqin report**

**Source: The Economic Times ([Link](#))**

The alternative assets industry in India is worth USD 43 billion across private equity, venture capital, real estate, infrastructure, private debt and hedge funds, says a report. With 221 private capital fund managers and 46 hedge fund managers based in the country, the alternative assets industry is a small but growing space in India, according to a Preqin report. Compared to other

major markets, the alternatives industry in India remains in its infancy, with other countries in Asia-Pacific such as China and Hong Kong notably more established with assets worth (USD 265 billion) and (USD 108 billion), respectively. Meanwhile, the number of active private capital firms in the industry has increased annually, indicative of the growing and burgeoning industry in India.

### **7. 101 cold-chain projects sanctioned in 2016-17 facing delays: Minister**

**Source: The Hindu Business line ([Link](#))**

All 101 integrated cold chain projects sanctioned and assisted in 2016-17 by the Ministry of Food Processing are yet to be completed. Out of the 101 cold chains sanctioned, 53 are for processing fruits and vegetables, 33 for dairy products and 15 for meat, marine and poultry products. “On the basis of experience in implementation of the scheme and interaction with the stakeholders, availability of affordable credit from the banks/financial institutions for the projects and delay in statutory clearances from the State government/agencies have been observed as the major reasons for delay,” said Food Processing Minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal, adding that the Ministry was regularly reviewing the progress of the implementation of cold chain projects. “On the basis of the feedback and in-house learning, the Ministry has also been amending the guidelines to make them more investor-friendly,” she added.

### **8. Boost to textile sector: Govt clears ₹1,300-crore package**

**Source: The Hindu Business line ([Link](#))**

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved the scheme for Capacity Building in Textile Sector (SCBTS). An official statement said the new skill development scheme covers the entire value chain of the textile sector, excluding spinning and weaving in the organised sector.

The scheme will be applicable from 2017-2018 to 2019-2020 with an outlay of ₹1,300 crore. It will have the National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF)-compliant training courses with funding as per the common norms notified by Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), the statement said. Meanwhile, there was confusion over Cabinet approval of the Consumer Protection Bill, 2017, and withdrawal of the Consumer Protection Bill, 2015, which is before Parliament, following a tweet of the approval by the Press Information Bureau, which was later deleted.