

## Daily Economic News Summary: 24 January 2017

### **1. India rejects attempts by EU, Canada to initiate talks on global investment pact**

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

India and some other countries have rejected an informal proposal made by the EU and Canada to work towards a multilateral pact on investments at the World Trade Organisation that would have an Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) mechanism built into it. "The EU and Canada have got into an investment agreement in which they have got the much contentious ISDS which allows corporates to take sovereign governments to international arbitration. They now want it to be the template for a multilateral agreement. We have rejected it completely," said Commerce & Industry Minister Nirmala Sitharaman at a press briefing on Monday. The proposal for a global investment pact, made at an informal breakfast meeting of Trade Ministers of select countries in Davos last week, was also rejected by Brazil, Japan and Argentina. "It is only after all options for settling disputes between a sovereign government and a corporate in domestic courts have been exhausted do we want to allow the issue to be taken up in international courts. It should be part of a bilateral agreement and not a multilateral agreement," Sitharaman said.

### **2. ASEAN a 'role model' for regional cooperation: MoS for External Affairs V K Singh**

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

Describing ASEAN as a "role model" for regional cooperation, India today sought to work closely with the grouping to weave a "mutually beneficial legacy" and strengthen the "very rich" cultural partnership. Minister of State for External Affairs Gen (retd) V K Singh, in his keynote address at the 2nd International Conference on ASEAN-India Cultural and Civilisational Links here, said, the three pillars of the ASEAN-India Strategic Partnership -- political, economic and socio-cultural -- have thrived for many centuries. "Recognising our Prime Minister's desire for building a deeper engagement with South East Asia by expanding and comprehensively documenting India's civilisational links with ASEAN countries, our Act East policy lays significant focus on this third pillar of the ASEAN-India relationship," he said. "ASEAN has evolved into a role model for regional cooperation as it celebrates the 50th anniversary year of its

foundation this year. Today, it is appreciated for the stability it has brought to the region and its immediate neighbourhood” Singh said.

### **3. UAE says ball in India’s court to set up \$75 billion investment fund**

**Source: Business Standard ([Link](#))**

The United Arab Emirates has attributed the delay in setting up the \$75 billion UAE-India Infrastructure Investment Fund on New Delhi's failure in putting in place the necessary governance structures. The UAE is keen that New Delhi expedite the process and has also shown interest to have an 'open sky policy' in the aviation sector and an improved bilateral investment agreement. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the UAE in August 2015 was a watershed in many ways, and not just because Modi was the first Indian PM in 34 years to have visited the Emirates, which is one of India's biggest trade and investment partners. That visit raised India-UAE ties beyond trade to the level of strategic partnership. It also led UAE to agree to set up a \$75 billion UAE-India Infrastructure Investment Fund to support investments over a 10-year period in India's infrastructure sector. The focus of the fund will be roads, railways, ports, airports and industrial corridors and parks.

### **4. Building India’s digital highway**

**Source: Live Mint ([Link](#))**

The next few years will be definitive for the evolution of India’s digital infrastructure and the role it can play in the country’s growth. There is significant unfinished business—India is ranked 91st among 139 countries on the Networked Readiness Index 2016, compiled by the World Economic Forum (WEF). Only 15 out of 100 households have access to the Internet, and mobile broadband remains for a privileged few, with only 5.5 subscriptions for every 100 people, according to the WEF. However, India has skipped a generation in telecom technology—going from no connectivity to over 350 million mobile Internet users—in less than two decades. This needs to be factored in while planning the democratization of digital access in India. The impending growth of digital assets will present India with many unique opportunities to leapfrog its traditional deficit in physical infrastructure. It will help enhance the economic conditions in

remote areas, spur new businesses by enabling access for a large number of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), creating a strong digital identity for the country. Above all, digital infrastructure growth can empower the government to embrace and enable innovation, provide resources to help increase agricultural productivity as well as enable improved healthcare access for rural areas, potentially reducing mortality levels. It can also bring financial services to the unbanked rural and underprivileged communities and help fulfil the country's longstanding goal of 'education for all'.

### **5. Uber to launch on-demand food delivery app UberEATS in India soon**

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

Cab aggregator Uber, will soon introduce a standalone app called UberEATS that makes getting great food as easy as pushing a button. Talking about the company's new food delivery service, Allen Penn, Asia Pacific's head of UberEATS, said "I am incredibly excited about bringing UberEATS to India. This is a significant investment, it spans multiple cities and regions, and it has the potential to change the food industry – with the push of a button – in one of the most vibrant food cultures in the world." In the meanwhile, the company in a blog invited consumers to tell them about their favourite restaurants which could be included in UberEATS. The blog also invited restaurant owners and delivery partners to learn more about becoming UberEATS restaurant partners and delivery partners respectively. According to the blog, UberEATS is powered by the same technology that makes its transport mobile app efficient and cost-effective, where getting great food delivered to consumers is as easy as requesting a ride. "We're excited to help everyone discover great food through the perfect pairing of amazing restaurant partners, our technology, and the Uber delivery network," said the blog. UberEATS features a rotating menu curated with dishes from selected restaurants and claims all orders can be delivered within ten minutes. It is now available in 58 cities around the globe.

**By Rajnee Narula**

