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THE ASSOCIATED CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY OF INDIA

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MINISTRY OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

India and U.S. Hold Bilateral Trade Meeting

India and the United States held the India-U.S. Bilateral Trade meeting in New Delhi. Suresh Prabhu, Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation, Government of India and Mr. Wilbur Ross, Secretary of Commerce, United States of America co-chaired the bilateral meeting.

Both the co-chairs, Suresh Prabhu and Mr. Wilbur Ross appreciated the strong, robust and growing bilateral ties between India and the U.S. across the entire spectrum of trade and commerce. Both sides expressed satisfaction over the progress during the year 2018, with bilateral trade in Goods and Services registering a growth of 12.6% from \$ 126 billion in 2017 to \$142 billion in 2018.

India appreciated the US Trade Winds Indo-Pacific Business Forum and Mission initiative 2019, being held at New Delhi. The forum will bring together distributors, representatives and partners and enable them to increase sales by taking part in business-to-business meetings from 8-10thMay, 2019, across India.

Both co-chairs also complimented the new bilateral private sector led Small Business Interaction initiative, the US - India SME Forum, held today in the forenoon in New Delhi. This is the first event of its kind and would pave the way for collaboration and partnership between the U.S. and Indian small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the areas of manufacturing and services.

Both sides also discussed various outstanding trade issues. Both sides agreed to engage regularly at various levels to resolve outstanding trade issues by exploring suitable solutions, which are mutually beneficial and promote economic development and prosperity in both countries.

Both sides agreed to deepen economic cooperation and bilateral trade by ensuring greater cooperation amongst stakeholders, including Government, businesses and entrepreneurs.

MINISTRY OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

Initiatives by Commerce Ministry to Boost Trade with African Countries

The Commerce Ministry and Indian High Commissions and Embassies of eleven African countries arranged an interaction over Digital Video Conference (DVC) over two days, on 3rd and 6th May 2019, with the Indian business community in Africa. The interactions with Indian Diaspora were held in Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Zambia, and Mauritius, Nigeria, Mozambique, Ghana, South Africa, Botswana, and Madagascar. This initiative was held in order to build an effective engagement with the Indian Diaspora in Africa in order to further deepen and strengthen India-Africa trade ties.

The DVC was attended by over 400 members of Indian business community in 11 African countries.

India's total trade with the African region during 2017-18 was USD 62.69 billion (8.15% of India's total trade with the World). India's share of exports to African countries as a percentage of India's total exports to the world was of the order of 8.21% in 2017-18. Africa region's share in India's total imports from the World accounted for 8.12% in 2017-18.

African countries present immense opportunities for India with the world's largest land mass, 54 countries, a population growing to be almost equivalent to that of India, huge mineral resources, oil wealth, a youthful population, falling poverty levels and increasing consumption patterns.

Thus, Africa has a huge demand for new business models for market entry, stable market access, entrepreneurship and investments in transport, telecom, tourism, financial services, real estate and construction.

This initiative of the Commerce Ministry emphasizes the need for a multipronged strategy for further enhancing trade and investment ties between the two regions. Commerce Ministry recognizes that for formulating an effective export strategy it is imperative to engage the Indian business community in Africa for mutual gain for both sides as trade relations between the people of same origin instill greater confidence amongst trade partners.

The Indian community in Africa is playing a vital role in all fields like politics, business and education. As per the latest available estimates the current strength of the Indian Diaspora in the African countries is 2.8 million out of those 2.5 million are PIOs and rest 220967 are NRIs. Total overseas Indians are 30.83 million of which 17.83 million are PIOs and 13 million are NRIs. (Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, 2016). Indian Diaspora in Africa constitutes 9.11% of the total Diaspora of India.

The inherent strength of India in Africa is its rich and vast Diaspora which has established strong links with the political, economic and social fabric of the African continent. In order to formulate a

strategy to boost India-Africa Trade & Investment, the Indian Diaspora in Africa has to be leveraged further in order to ensure that the strategy is effective. Suggestions were sought from the India business community.

The major issues highlighted by the Indian Business Community in these 11 countries are:

- Improving the Line of Credit system and developing a facility for an affordable and competitive funding.
- Setting up of Indian Banks/financial institutions in Africa
- Enhanced Buyers' Credit facility for promotion of trade between the two regions
- Reviewing and liberalizing visa policies from both sides
- Need for direct flights between the India and African countries
- Exploring the possibility of rupee trade to address the issue of shortage of dollars in region.
- Creation of common database of buyer-suppliers in the two regions for facilitating matchmaking for enhancement of bilateral trade.
- Development of a robust trade dispute settlement mechanism
- More frequent and structured country/sector specific trade exhibitions in Africa
- Frequent visits of policy makers, chamber of commerce and investors for familiarization with local business and investment regime for informed decisions

Department of Commerce welcomed the suggestions of the Indian business community and assured them that these suggestions will be shared with relevant stakeholders /Departments in order to incorporate the suggestions in the India-Africa strategy for trade promotion.

Senior officers from Department of Commerce and Ministry of External Affairs were present during the interactions.

MINISTRY OF FINANCE

Exchange Rate of conversion of the Foreign Currencies relating to Imported and Export Goods notified

In exercise of the powers conferred by Section 14 of the Customs Act, 1962 (52 of 1962), and in super-session of the Notification of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) No.32/2019-CUSTOMS (N.T.), dated 18th April, 2019 except as respects things done or omitted to be done before such super-session, the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) hereby determines that the Rate of Exchange of conversion of each of the Foreign Currencies specified in Column (2) of each of Schedule I and Schedule II annexed hereto, into Indian currency or *vice versa*, shall, with effect from 3rd May, 2019, be the rate mentioned against it in the corresponding entry in Column (3) thereof, for the purpose of the said Section, relating to the Imported and Export Goods.

SCHEDULE-I

Sl.No.	Foreign Currency	Rate of exchange of one unit of foreign currency equivalent to Indian rupees	
		(a)	(b)
(1)	(2)	(3)	
		(For Imported Goods)	(For Exported Goods)
1.	Australian Dollar	50.05	47.85
2.	Bahraini Dinar	190.75	178.85
3.	Canadian Dollar	52.75	50.85
4.	Chinese Yuan	10.50	10.15
5.	Danish Kroner	10.65	10.25
6.	EURO	79.50	76.55
7.	Hong Kong Dollar	9.05	8.70
8.	Kuwaiti Dinar	236.60	221.35
9.	New Zealand Dollar	47.50	45.30
10.	Norwegian Kroner	8.20	7.90
11.	Pound Sterling	92.55	89.30
12.	Qatari Riyal	19.75	18.50

13.	Saudi Arabian Riyal	19.20	18.00
14.	Singapore Dollar	52.10	50.25
15.	South African Rand	5. 00	4.65
16.	Swedish Kroner	7.45	7.15
17.	Swiss Franc	69.75	67.10
18.	Turkish Lira	12.05	11.30
19.	UAE Dirham	19.60	18.35
20.	US Dollar	70.45	68.80

SCHEDULE-II

Sl.No.	Foreign Currency	Rate of exchange of 100 units of foreign currency equivalent to Indian rupees	
		(a)	(b)
(1)	(2)	(3)	
		(For Imported Goods)	(For Export Goods)
1.	Japanese Yen	63.60	61.25
2.	Korean Won	6.20	5.80

MINISTRY OF FINANCE

E-filing of Income Tax Returns registers an increase of 19%

There have been some incorrect reports in media pertaining to reduction in numbers of Income Tax Returns (ITR) e-filed during Financial Year (F.Y.) 2018-19 as compared to F.Y. 2017-18. This is factually untrue, because the figures for F.Y. 2017-18 and F.Y. 2018-19 are not directly comparable.

It is stated that during F.Y. 2017-18, out of a total of 6.74 crore ITRs which were e-filed, 5.47 crore ITRs were filed for Assessment Year (A.Y.) 2017-18 (the current year). In comparison, during F.Y. 2018-19, a total of 6.68 crore ITRs were e-filed which included 6.49 crore ITRs of current A.Y. 2018-19 marking an increase of almost **19%**. This would imply that substantially larger number of taxpayers filed their ITRs electronically in the F.Y. 2018-19 as compared to F.Y. 2017-18.

Furthermore, during F.Y. 2017-18, apart from the returns for the A.Y. 2017-18, nearly 1.21 crore ITRs were filed for A.Y. 2016-17. The balance number of ITRs filed for A.Y. 2015-16 and prior A.Ys is 0.06 crore. In comparison, during F.Y. 2018-19 only 0.14 crore ITRs for A.Y. 2017-18 were filed. Thus, the apparent decrease in the number of ITRs filed during F.Y. 2018-19 pertaining to earlier years was due to an amendment in Section 139(5) of the Income-tax Act, 1961 brought in vide Finance Act, 2017, w.e.f. 01.04.2018, which mandated that a revised return could be furnished only upto the end of the relevant Assessment Year. As a result, only 0.14 crore ITRs pertaining to A.Y. 2017-18 were filed during F.Y. 2018-19 as these were the revised ITRs for the relevant A.Y. which could only be filed due to change in law and no other ITR of any earlier A.Y. could be filed in view of the amended provisions of law.

These figures are also available in the Tab-> 'Filing growth (A.Y.)' on the e-filing website.

It is also stated that the number of paper ITRs for A.Y. 2017-18 was only 9.2 lakh (1.5% of total ITRs filed) and the number of paper ITRs for A.Y. 2018-19 is 4.8 lakh (0.6% of total ITRs filed). As per the above details, it is evident that most of the taxpayers have steadily switched to e-filing which is clear from the dwindling numbers of paper returns filed for A.Y. 2018-19 compared to earlier years.

RESERVE BANK OF INDIA

Ombudsman Scheme for Non-Banking Financial Companies, 2018

NOTIFICATION

April 26, 2019

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had vide [Notification Ref.CEPD.PRS.No.3590/13.01.004/2017-18 dated February 23, 2018](#), implemented the Ombudsman Scheme for Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) as defined in Section 45-I(f) of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934 and registered with the RBI under Section 45-IA of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934 which are authorised to accept deposits. The Scheme was to be extended to remaining identified categories of NBFCs based on experience gained. As announced in Para 11 of the [Statement on Developmental and Regulatory Policies of the Monetary Policy Statement dated April 04, 2019](#), in partial modification of the Notification *ibid*, RBI hereby directs that the Non-banking Financial Companies, as defined in Section 45-I(f) of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934 and registered with the RBI under Section 45-IA of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934 which (a) are authorised to accept deposits; (b) are Non-Deposit Taking Non-Banking Financial Companies having customer interface, with assets size of Rupees 100 crore or above, as on the date of the audited balance sheet of the previous financial year, or of any such asset size as the RBI may prescribe, will come within the ambit, and shall comply with the provisions of the [Ombudsman Scheme for Non-Banking Financial Companies, 2018](#).

2. The Non-Banking Financial Company - Infrastructure Finance Company (NBFC-IFC), Core Investment Company (CIC), Infrastructure Debt Fund-Non-Banking Financial Company (IDF-NBFC) and an NBFC under liquidation, **are excluded** from the ambit of the Scheme.

3. The Scheme will continue to be administered from the offices of the Non-Banking Financial Companies Ombudsman in four metro centers viz. Chennai, Kolkata, Mumbai and New Delhi for handling complaints from the respective zones, so as to cover the entire country. The area of jurisdiction of these offices is indicated in '**Annex- I**' of the Scheme.

4. The extension of the Scheme to eligible Non-Deposit Accepting Non-Banking Financial Companies shall come into effect and force from April 26, 2019.

(Surekha Marandi)

RESERVE BANK OF INDIA

RBI launched Quarterly Order Books, Inventories and Capacity Utilisation Survey: January-March 2019 (Round 45)

The Reserve Bank of India has launched the [45th round](#) of its Order Books, Inventories and Capacity Utilisation Survey (OBICUS). The survey is for the reference period January – March 2019 (Q4:2018-19).

The Reserve Bank has been conducting the Order Books, Inventories and Capacity Utilisation Survey (OBICUS) of the manufacturing sector on a quarterly basis since 2008. The information collected in the survey includes quantitative data on new orders received during the reference quarter, backlog of orders at the beginning of the quarter, pending orders at the end of the quarter, total inventories with a breakup between work-in-progress (WiP) and finished goods (FG) inventories at the end of the quarter and item-wise production in terms of quantity and value during the quarter *vis-à-vis* the installed capacity from the targeted group. The level of capacity utilisation (CU) is estimated from these responses. The survey provides valuable input for monetary policy formulation.

The survey findings are released on the website of the bank regularly. The latest results pertaining to the quarter October – December 2018 were released on [April 04, 2019](#).

During this quarter, selected manufacturing companies will be approached by the Bank. Other manufacturing companies may also participate in the survey by downloading the survey questionnaire from the Reserve Bank's website <https://www.rbi.org.in>. The [survey questionnaire](#) is placed under the head '[Forms](#)' (available under the 'More Links' at the bottom of the home page) and sub-head '[Survey](#)'. The duly authenticated filled-in survey schedule may be e-mailed or faxed as per contact details provided in the survey schedule.

Company level data are treated as confidential and never disclosed.

In case of any query/clarification, kindly contact us at the following address:

The Director, Division of Enterprise Surveys, Department of Statistics and Information Management, Reserve Bank of India, C-8, 2nd floor, Bandra-Kurla Complex, Bandra (East), Mumbai-400 051, Phone - 022-26578279/386; Fax- 022-26572197; Please [click here](#) to send email.

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