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Foreign Trade

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Govt. vows swifter nod for exporters

New foreign trade policy aims at tripling goods and services exports by 2030; apart from a one-time amnesty, no major schemes announced

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

Union Commerce, Industry and Textiles Minister Piyush Goyal on Friday unveiled a new foreign trade policy that moves away from providing incentives to exporters, but lowers a few costs for smaller firms and promises swifter clearances, along with a one-time amnesty scheme for export obligation defaults.

Replacing the extant policy that had been in place since 2015, the new policy kicks in from 2023-24 and aims to almost triple India's goods and services exports to \$2 trillion by 2030, from an estimated \$760 billion in 2022-23.

India's exports were \$435 billion in 2015-16 when the previous policy was introduced and have

Policy overhauled

Key highlights from India's updated Foreign Trade Policy:



- It focuses on lowering costs for smaller firms and offering swifter clearances
- It aims at tripling exports to \$2 trillion by 2030 from \$760 billion in 2022-23
- Policy allows for adjustments based on world trade and industry feedback
- Export promotion initiatives include encouraging international trade settlement in Indian currency

grown nearly 75% to an estimated \$760 billion in 2022-23, Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) Santosh Kumar Sarangi said.

The new policy will have no sunset date and will be tweaked based on the emerging world trade scenario and industry feedback. While the policy will be open-ended, the schemes sanctioned under

it will be time bound.

There are no major new schemes, barring a one-time amnesty under the existing Advance Authorisation and Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) schemes, that allow imports of capital goods subject to specified export obligations.

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Foreign Trade Policy:

- ▶ A trade policy is a government policy that affects the number of goods and services a country exports and imports.
- ▶ FTP 2023 sets a \$2 trillion target for exports of goods and services by 2030 with a shift from incentives to remission and entitlement-based regime.

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► **Aim of FTP 2023:**

- To enhance the competitiveness of Indian exports in the global market (India's overall exports are about to reach US \$760 billion this year)
- Promote sustainable development of the country's trade sector
- Make India a leader in specific sectors such as pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, and textiles
- To promote a digital economy and leverage technology to enhance the competitiveness of Indian exports.

► **4 pillars:**

- An incentive to Remission (Reduction/cancellation of a debt, duty, or penalty)
- Export promotion through collaboration – Exporters, States, Districts, Indian Missions
- Ease of doing business, reduction in transaction cost and e-initiatives and
- Emerging Areas – E-Commerce Developing Districts as Export Hubs and streamlining SCOMET policy

► Facilitation under the Export Promotion of Capital Goods (EPCG) Scheme

- The EPCG Scheme, which allows the import of capital goods at zero Customs duty for export production, is being further rationalized.
- Additional schemes such as the PM MITRA scheme have been added to claim benefits under the Common Service Provider scheme.

Facilitation under the Advance authorization Scheme (AAS)

- ▶ AAS provides duty-free import of raw materials for manufacturing export items.
- ▶ It has been now extended to the export of the Apparel and Clothing sector

Fiscal policy

'Fiscal deficit touched 82.8% of full-year target in Feb!'

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Centre's fiscal deficit touched 82.8% of the full-year target at the end of February, according to data from the Controller General of Accounts on Friday.

In actual terms, the fiscal deficit or gap between the expenditure and revenue collection during April-February period stood at ₹14.53 lakh crore.

Fiscal deficit in the comparable period of 2021-22 was 82.7% of that year's revised estimate in Budget.

International Organisations

NATO is open to stronger ties with India, says U.S. envoy

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

A leading U.S. official has said the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is "open" to deepening ties with India. Speaking at a virtual press briefing on Friday, Ambassador Julianne Smith, U.S. envoy to NATO, said Russia should withdraw from Ukraine and that NATO is watching China-Russia relation in the backdrop of Russia's continued military operation in Ukraine.

"NATO's door is open to more cooperation if India seeks that. NATO is more than happy to sit down anytime with India," said Ambassador Smith confirming that officials of NATO held "informal" exchanges with Indian counterparts on the sidelines of the recently held Raisina Dialogue in Delhi.

The Ministry of External

The MEA had last year confirmed that the two sides have maintained contact for some time

Affairs (MEA) had last year confirmed that the two sides had maintained contact at various levels for some time. "India and NATO have kept in touch in Brussels at different levels for quite some time now. This is part of our contacts with various stakeholders on various issues of mutual interest," MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi had said in last August.

Ms. Smith announced that a NATO Ministerial will be held on April 4-5 but she also confirmed that NATO hasn't invited India for the meeting. The U.S. official, however, informed that it will see participation from Japan and Australia.

- **About NATO:**
- Its an intergovernmental military alliance between 30 member states – 28 European and two North American.
- Established in the aftermath of World War II, the organization implements the North Atlantic Treaty, which was signed in Washington, D.C., on 4 April 1949.
- NATO is a system of collective security:
- its independent member states agree to defend each other against attacks by third parties.
- During the Cold War, NATO operated as a check on the perceived threat posed by the Soviet Union.

Cyber Security

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CERT-in may be exempted from giving information under RTI Act, says Centre

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-in) may soon be exempt from responding to queries under the Right to Information Act, the government informed Parliament on Friday.

The Department of Personnel and Training has reviewed a proposal from the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology to include CERT-in in the Second Schedule to the RTI Act, which deals with exempted organisations like the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Border Security Force.

Inter-departmental consultations are ongoing to examine the proposal, with the Ministry of Law and Justice participating, Minister of State for Electronics and Information

The waiver will allow the agency to reject applications for information, even on policy matters

Technology Rajeev Chandrasekhar said in response to Biju Janata Dal MP Amar Patnaik's questions.

The exemption would allow CERT-in to reject any application for information, even on policy related matters. This is significant as the body had issued directions in April 2022 that required Virtual Private Network (VPN) providers and cryptocurrency firms to preserve data on all users. The directions are being challenged in the Delhi High Court, and the government has argued that absolute anonymity online is not acceptable. Several major VPN providers have

pulled their servers out of India, arguing that the directions would compromise users' privacy on the internet.

CERT-in coordinates with public and private organisations in India when cyber incidents like data breaches and ransomware attacks are reported. It also issues advisories for software vulnerabilities as guidance for organisations.

When deliberations on exempting CERT-in from the RTI Act were first reported last May, the Delhi-based Internet Freedom Foundation said in a statement, "On the one hand, CERT-In wants our logs [under the April 2022 Cyber Security Directions], non-compliance with which will lead to one year jail time, but on the other hand, doesn't want to be transparent to the citizens in return."

- **CERT-In** was established in 2004 as a functional organization of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
- Functions: The Information Technology (Amendment) Act 2008 designated CERT-In to serve as the national agency to perform the following functions in the area of cyber security:
- Collection, analysis and dissemination of information on cyber incidents.
- Forecast and alerts of cyber security incidents
- Emergency measures for handling cyber security incidents
- Coordination of cyber incident response activities.
- Issue guidelines, advisories, vulnerability notes and whitepapers relating to Information
- security practices, procedures, prevention, response and reporting of cyber incidents.
- Such other functions relating to cyber security as may be prescribed.

THANK YOU

