

# Tax Hotline

January 13, 2004

## INDIAN FINANCE MINISTER ANNOUNCES ADDITIONAL MEASURES FOR SUSTENANCE OF ECONOMIC GROWTH

Close on the heels of tax concessions announced on January 8, 2004 in relation to certain provisions for direct and indirect taxes, the Indian Finance Minister announced on Friday, a slew of measures in a bid to ease exchange control regulations and move towards the capital account convertibility, boost availability of finance for industry, agriculture and infrastructure. These provisions, as reported in the newspapers, are briefly summarized below:

### EXCHANGE CONTROL LIBERALIZATION

Now, an Indian resident Individual can remit, or take, US\$25,000 out of the country, irrespective of the nature of the transaction. Though the fine print of these provisions need to be examined, it is widely reported that the individual can use this money to invest in listed foreign securities.

Indian companies can now make investments up to 100 per cent of their net worth abroad thus lifting the earlier limit of \$100 million on them. Existing restrictions on making investments in the agricultural sector abroad have also been removed

### LIBERALIZATION OF THE ECB NORMS

The government has eased the ECB (External Commercial Borrowings) norms for raising funds from abroad by putting it on the automatic route of clearance for five-year projects

## VARIOUS MEASURES FOR SUSTENANCE OF SPURT IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### MEASURES TO KICK OFF SECOND GREEN REVOLUTION

A special fund has been announced for INR 500,000 million to build agri-infrastructure and provide more rural credit. The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), has been asked to work out details for creation of an agricultural infrastructure and credit fund (AICF) and the fund would be made operational within four weeks and will be in addition to the already existing Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF). It will finance new infrastructure such as cold chains, develop wasteland and minor irrigation and strengthen institutions such as cooperatives, to attain the key goals of diversification, agri-exports and value addition. NABARD will make the funds available to the ultimate borrower at two percentage points below the Prime Lending Rate (PLR).

### MEASURES FOR BOOST OF INFRASTRUCTURE

A consortium of major financial institutions to be set up in the country to coordinate another INR 500,000-million Infrastructure and Manufacturing Fund to finance key infrastructure and manufacturing projects over the next three years. The cost of funds to the ultimate borrower would be two percentage points less than the PLR. Areas to be covered: Power generation, ports, roads, airports, tourism, telecom and urban infrastructure.

### SUPPORT TO SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES ("SMES")

The government has announced the setting up of a INR 100,000 million fund to provide loans to SMEs. The fund will be operational within four weeks. The fund will be setup by the Small Industry Development Bank of India, and the interest rate for the ultimate borrower is expected to be two percentage points below PLR. Housing Sector in the Rural Area A scheme called the 'Atal Grameen Griha Yojana' has also been announced. It seeks to provide tax incentives to banks or housing finance companies. All income earned by these institutions from rural housing loans will be tax-exempt. Lenders now get an insurance cover against a rural housing loan turning bad where the security (such as the property financed) cannot be enforced.

### FACILITATING FINANCING OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Students can now get educational loans at 2 percentage points below the prime-lending rate.

The Indian national elections are proposed to be announced any day. Once the elections are announced, the

## Research Papers

### Little International Guide (India) 2024

November 08, 2024

### Unmasking Deepfakes

October 25, 2024

### Are we ready for Designer Babies

October 24, 2024

## Research Articles

### The Bitcoin Effect

November 14, 2024

### Acquirers Beware: Indian Merger Control Regime Revamped!

September 15, 2024

### Navigating the Boom: Rise of M&A in Healthcare

August 23, 2024

## Audio

### Digital Lending - Part 1 - What's New with NBFC P2Ps

November 19, 2024

### Renewable Roadmap: Budget 2024 and Beyond - Part I

August 26, 2024

### Renewable Roadmap: Budget 2024 and Beyond - Part II

August 26, 2024

## NDA Connect

Connect with us at events, conferences and seminars.

## NDA Hotline

Click here to view Hotline archives.

## Video

### "Investment return is not enough" Nishith Desai with Nikunj Dalmia (ET Now) at FI8 event in Riyadh

October 31, 2024

### Analysing SEBI's Consultation Paper on Simplification of registration for FPIs

September 26, 2024

existing parliament will be dissolved. The current finance minister has announced the above summarized provisions as interim policy measures till the next full fledged budget, which would only be presented by the finance minister of the next government after the elections. Meanwhile, there would be a caretaker government which would need some financial support. This will be obtained by the outgoing government by way of "vote on account" from the current parliament before it is dissolved.

Source: The Economic Times and The Indian Express dated January 12, 2004.

---

#### **DISCLAIMER**

The contents of this hotline should not be construed as legal opinion. View detailed disclaimer.

This Hotline provides general information existing at the time of preparation. The Hotline is intended as a news update and Nishith Desai Associates neither assumes nor accepts any responsibility for any loss arising to any person acting or refraining from acting as a result of any material contained in this Hotline. It is recommended that professional advice be taken based on the specific facts and circumstances. This Hotline does not substitute the need to refer to the original pronouncements.

This is not a Spam mail. You have received this mail because you have either requested for it or someone must have suggested your name. Since India has no anti-spamming law, we refer to the US directive, which states that a mail cannot be considered Spam if it contains the sender's contact information, which this mail does. In case this mail doesn't concern you, please unsubscribe from mailing list.

**Scope of judicial interference and inquiry in an application for appointment of arbitrator under the (Indian) Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996**

September 22, 2024

---