

■ PMO dedicates ₹5,000 crore to boost economic growth Govt eyes job-creation in 12 sectors

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Concerned over lack of jobs, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) has directed top officials of 12 key service sector ministries like IT, tourism, civil aviation, medical value travel, financial services and telecom among others to prepare roadmaps for making them more competitive with the aim of increasing employment opportunities.

With the NDA government in its final year and general elections just 11 months away, lack of jobs despite aggressive push by the Centre through its

Skill India and *Make In India* initiatives, is among its chief concerns, and therefore earmarking these 12 service sectors is targeted at making them more market and growth friendly.

Highly placed sources informed this newspaper that cabinet secretary P.K. Sinha had held a high level meeting with secretaries of these ministries last week, where intricacies of preparing separate action plans for these 12 sectors was discussed.

The focus of the roadmaps for these 12 service sectors would be making them more competitive and job oriented,

which in turn will also boost economic growth.

The separate action plans will also look at areas like making regulatory mechanisms more investor friendly, improving standards of services and plugging loopholes in the infrastructure set-up, sources further informed.

These 12 sectors were recently branded as champion sectors by the government and in February this year, the Union Cabinet had approved the proposal to prioritise these service sectors in order to make them more competitive. It had approved the setting up of a dedicated fund of ₹5,000

crores to support initiatives. It is reliably learnt that during the aforementioned meeting, the importance of boosting exports and improving GDP growth by making these service sectors more market friendly, was amply highlighted.

The 12 service sectors are IT, hospitality services, medical value travel, transport and logistics services, accounting and finance services, audio visual services, legal services, communication services, construction and related engineering services, environmental services, financial services and education services.