

## ***While the PMEAC stresses the need for jobs creation, Prakash Javadekar seems to feel all is well with employment***

Every minister is expected to rise to the defence of the party, extolling the work it has done, especially during electioneering. So, it is not surprising to see HRD minister Prakash Javadekar defending the government's track record on employment at Gandhinagar recently. So, he spoke of the one crore new provident fund (PF) accounts with the EPFO in FY17—a PF account, Javadekar said, “can be opened only when a person gets a job”. He also spoke of how seven crore persons got employment through the Mudra Yojana that gives loans to entrepreneurs. Problem is, Javadekar was working off an old script. Given India needs to create around 12-24 million jobs a year, one crore new jobs for which PF accounts have been opened in FY17 is stupendous; and seven crore more through Mudra is even more impressive.

If this data was correct, no one would be accusing the government of not creating jobs. Indeed, just a few days ago, the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council (PMEAC) said it had come up with a roadmap to increase employment—while it didn't give details of the roadmap, it wouldn't need to come out with a plan had there been employment-creation at the levels Javadekar spoke of. In the case of the EPFO, for instance, there are many organisations that need to open PF accounts but don't do so—so, the new accounts Javadekar spoke of are the result of greater policing, not new jobs. As for the Mudra loans, such loans are given every year and, as such, do not represent new jobs. In future, it would be more helpful for the government if everyone associated with it was on the same page