



February 23, 2023 – Thursday

Economy

India can grow at 8%; the time is right to draw investment, says World Bank President

India faced challenges during the Covid-19 pandemic but has recovered "strongly" and can achieve 8% growth through a stronger private sector, land and agriculture reforms, and ensuring credit gets to small enterprises, among others, said David Malpass, president of the World Bank. This is the right time for India to attract investment amid a global diversification of supply chains and manufacturing, he told ET in an interview, calling for a focus on making the country competitive. Malpass is in India to attend a meeting of G20 finance ministers and central bank governors. He met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/india-can-grow-at-8-the-time-is-right-to-draw-investment-says-world-bank-president/articleshow/98164724.cms>

Post-pandemic job recovery for Indian women slower than men: Report

The exclusion of women from the workforce that began due to the pandemic could very well be permanent for many women, a report titled "Women and work: how India fared in 2022" released by Initiative for What Works to Advance Women and Girls in the Economy (IWWAGE) says. The report highlights that fewer women have returned to the workplace. The unemployment rate among rural females increased by 1.6 per cent while that among rural males decreased by 1.2 per cent. According to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) and Centre for Economic Data and Analysis (CEDA), in urban India alone, women's employment was reduced by 22.1 per cent in 2021 compared to 2019.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/post-pandemic-job-recovery-for-indian-women-slower-than-men-report-123022200297_1.html

Workers with digital skills contribute Rs 10.9 trn to India's GDP: Study

Workers in India equipped with advanced digital skills, including cloud architecture or software development, contributed an estimated Rs 10.9 lakh crore, or USD 507.9 billion, to India's annual gross domestic product, an AWS-commissioned study said on Wednesday. According to the study conducted by Gallup on behalf of AWS, workers with advanced digital skills earn 92 per cent higher salaries in India compared to those with a similar education who do not use digital skills at work. "Digital skills yield big economic benefits. We have seen dividends for the GDP for India's GDP to the tune of about USD 508 billion. People who have advanced digital skills, command higher salaries," Gallup, Managing Consultant, Rohit Kar said while sharing findings of the report. The study was conducted in two phases covering 2,005 working adults and 769 employers in India across a variety of public and private sector organizations and industries.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/workers-with-digital-skills-contribute-rs-10-9-trn-to-india-s-gdp-study-123022201234_1.html

Banking and Finance

SEBI proposes to introduce 5 new categories under ESG funds

Capital markets regulator Sebi has proposed allowing mutual funds to introduce five new categories under ESG (environmental, social and governance) scheme. The five new categories should be exclusions, integration, best-in-class and positive screening, impact investing and sustainable objectives. Considering that AMCs may want to launch multiple diversified ESG schemes under the ESG category, Sebi has proposed that each asset management company should be permitted to launch one ESG scheme each under the five subcategories.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/market/sebi-proposes-to-introduce-5-new-categories-under-esg-funds/2989383/>

Surge in personal guarantor cases under IBC in FY23

Personal guarantors of loans taken by bankrupt companies are in the dock as lenders are increasingly invoking such guarantees under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC). In the first three quarters of the ongoing fiscal 2023, National Company Law Tribunals (NCLTs) have admitted 117 such cases against personal guarantors, compared with 28 in the entire FY22 and nine in the previous year, data compiled by the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India showed. Creditors and lenders have filed 428 such cases during FY23 so far claiming ₹32,765 crore of dues. In FY22, 913 such cases were filed with claims worth ₹65,222 crore, though the number of admitted claims was fewer, data showed.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/finance/surge-in-personal-guarantor-cases-under-ibc-in-fy23/articleshow/98160847.cms>

Fintechs see UPI-PayNow linkage as foundation for a global network

The linkage of digital payment systems of India and Singapore will lay a foundation for a global digital payment network and lead to more innovations in the e-payment ecosystem in India, experts told Business Standard. On Tuesday, the two countries linked their digital payment systems, United Payments Interface (UPI) and PayNow, to enable real-time money transfers. The users of these platforms in India and Singapore can now send money across the border using just a mobile number, much like UPI in India. "Considering the Indian diaspora across the globe, the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has recently been planning to allow NRIs from 10 countries, namely Singapore, Hong Kong, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, USA, Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom to digitally transfer funds using the UPI platform from their NRE/NRO accounts. Singapore is the first from this set of 10 countries," Supratik Nag, vice president of product management at Maveric Systems, said.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/fintechs-see-upi-paynow-linkage-as-foundation-for-a-global-network-123022200369_1.html

MPC minutes show RBI not wavering from inflation target; Guv says tapered hike provide space for future action

The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) monetary policy committee (MPC) according to minutes published on Wednesday, has decided to take measures to ensure that inflation remains within the target going forward, while supporting growth. The objective is to achieve the medium-term target for consumer price index (CPI) inflation of 4 per cent while keeping it within the target band of 2-6 per cent. The annual retail inflation rate rose to 6.52 per cent in January from 5.72 per cent in December, on higher food prices. "The monetary policy stance will need to remain disinflationary till inflation is returned to target," said RBI deputy governor Michael Patra. "Global outlook has complicated the fight against inflation," he added. RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said, "Tapered rate increase of 25 bps provides space to calibrate future monetary policy actions." He added, "It is inadvisable to provide specific guidance when we are in a tightening cycle." However, member Jayanth R Varma voted against the rate hike.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/economy/mpc-minutes-show-rbi-not-wavering-from-inflation-target-guv-says-tapered-hike-provide-space-for-future-action/2989525/>

Industry

MCA notifies procedure for physical submission of compliance forms

The ministry of corporate affairs (MCA) on Tuesday notified the procedure for physical submission of compliance forms. The development comes after several companies faced impediments due to glitches in the new online filing portal. In a general circular, the ministry said companies can submit several forms, including PAS-3, GNL-2 and MGT-14, in physical mode. These three forms pertain to capital-raising activities. The Companies Act mandates that these forms should be submitted before the company can utilise the proceeds. However, since the portal was facing

technical glitches, several companies were unable to file the forms and, hence, were unable to utilise the funding proceeds. This ministry's move comes after it received representations from both companies and professional bodies seeking resolution of the issue.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/mca-notifies-procedure-for-physical-submission-of-compliance-forms/articleshow/98161556.cms>

Govt mulling fresh bid for one vacant slot in advanced cell PLI

The government is considering the option of inviting fresh applications to bid for the fourth slot which fell vacant after one of the initial candidates who qualified, Hyundai Global Motors, exited from the production linked incentive (PLI) scheme for advanced chemistry cell battery storage with a capacity of 20 GWH.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/govt-mulling-fresh-bid-for-one-vacant-slot-in-advanced-cell-battery-pli-123022201123_1.html

Cement demand to grow stronger next fiscal; govt's infra push, rural housing, road building to help

Cement demand in India will grow stronger in the next fiscal year 2023-24, helped by the infrastructure push of Union Budget 2023. Most of this demand will come from construction of roads, and affordable housing in rural areas, Crisil said in a research note. Also, while cement companies' operating margins have been under pressure due to rising input costs, those are likely to moderate, improving margins from here, the report said. Cement demand will grow at 7-9 per cent to ~425 million tonne (MT) in fiscal 2024. The demand already grew 11 per cent on-year in the first 10 months of this fiscal, driven by rapid execution in infrastructure projects and strong traction in real estate and rural affordable housing segments. This momentum will likely continue in the remaining months of this fiscal; however, a price increase may play spoilsport, Crisil said. Cement prices were hiked in north India by Rs 10-20/bag in the last few days and by Rs 5-10/bag in the east/central regions and a few markets in the south, according to a Jefferies India report.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/cement-demand-to-grow-stronger-next-fiscal-govts-infra-push-rural-housing-road-building-to-help/2989248/>

Indian contract handset makers may miss FY23 PLI targets

Domestic contract handset manufacturers are struggling to get contracts from smartphone brands despite being eligible for the production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme as weak demand has forced companies to recalibrate their requirements. This has led to the local electronic manufacturing service (EMS) players finding it hard to meet the incremental production targets under the PLI scheme. Three of the five domestic companies eligible under the PLI scheme—Lava International, Bhagwati (Micromax) and Optimus—have failed to meet the incremental production targets for FY22 under PLI and most of them may miss the FY23 targets as well.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/cons-products/electronics/indian-contract-handset-makers-may-miss-fy23-pli-targets/articleshow/98160546.cms>

Syringe companies feel the pain as vaccination rate dips

The syringe and needle manufacturing industry is in for a tough year, amid tepid demand as the rate of Covid vaccination drops. Syringe makers have started to repurpose their machines to produce standard disposable syringes for curative healthcare drug delivery and are aiming to penetrate overseas untapped markets. Rajiv Nath, managing director at Hindustan Syringes & Medical Devices (HMD), said his company has reduced production of syringes drastically. "We have huge un-lifted stocks - around 90 million AD (auto disposable) syringes and 20 million 1 ml disposable syringes - that we hope will be dispatched by April. These were made for Unicef, government of India and PAHO (Pan American Health Organization). The orders got rescheduled by over a year," he said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/healthcare/biotech/pharmaceuticals/syringe-companies-feel-the-pain-as-vaccination-rate-dips/articleshow/98161791.cms>

Indian firms to generate 49% of revenue from digital infra by 2027: Report

Indian organisations are expected to generate as much as 49 per cent of the revenue from digitally connected products, services, and customer experiences by 2027, a report showed on Wednesday. India is leading the Asia-Pacific region, with 97 per cent of businesses using or planning to use edge computing in business operations, according to the 'CIO Technology Playbook 2023' by global technology company Lenovo and chip-maker AMD. "With

the rise of digital capabilities, businesses are leaning towards data-driven innovation to drive effective business decisions. This means staying on top of rapid innovations in Cloud, Edge, AI/ML that must meet the existing infrastructure with as-a-service offerings. CIOs today have a bigger role to play," said Amit Luthra, Managing Director, India, Lenovo ISG.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/indian-firms-to-generate-49-of-revenue-from-digital-infra-by-2027-report-123022200683_1.html

Start-ups, news publishers likely to join digital competition law panel

The digital competition law committee in its first meeting held on Wednesday decided to widen the ambit of its discussions by bringing more stakeholders to the table. The corporate affairs ministry is expected to include some domestic start-ups and news publishers in the panel, a senior official said. The meeting which lasted several hours, was chaired by Manoj Govil, secretary, ministry of corporate affairs. The additional members to the committee will be nominated by Govil. Several start-ups and news publishers had raised the issue of their non-inclusion in the committee earlier and said the panel seemed to be dominated by corporate lawyers, many of them representing the Big Tech. "The whole idea behind the law is to protect the startups and small businesses from abuse of dominance of the big tech. Their representation is very important," an industry official said. The 16-member panel includes chairperson, The Competition Commission of India, Saurabh Srivastava, chairman, Indian Angel Network and co-founder of industry body NASSCOM.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/start-ups-news-publishers-likely-to-join-digital-competition-law-panel-123022201068_1.html

Focus on taking products to world level: Piyush Goyal to electronics, electrical industry

Commerce and industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Tuesday asked manufacturers of electronics and electrical goods to focus on taking their products to the world level and set their target not only on developing economies but developed ones too. The former power minister highlighted the opportunity for the sector from across the world especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and exhorted the industry to seize it. Goyal was speaking at ELECRAMA 2023, the biennial electricals' and electronics showcase of Indian Electrical & Electronic Manufacturers' Association (IEEMA), in Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh. "I think the time has now come that the world be dependent on India and let the world become our stage," Goyal said, adding that Indian manufacturers should not only look at countries which are less developed or are developing economies but also those that are developed and have more exhibitions there.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/focus-on-taking-products-to-world-level-piyush-goyal-to-electronics-electrical-industry/2988683/>

Direct Benefit Transfer: Funds transferred under MSME min's DBT schemes jump 18% till Dec in FY23

Key Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) schemes of the MSME ministry have transferred Rs 1,975.64 crore till December in the current financial year, up 18.3 per cent from Rs 1,668.99 crore during the corresponding period last fiscal. According to the FY23 annual report released by the MSME Ministry recently and the FY22 report, the highest amount of Rs 1,505.61 crore was transferred under the Prime Ministers Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) between April-December in the current fiscal vis-a-vis Rs 1,601.92 crore transferred during April-December FY22. Among other welfare and subsidy schemes with DBT enabled were SFURTI (Soft Interventions), which promotes cluster development in the khadi sector, transferring Rs 384.50 crore till December in the current fiscal in comparison to Rs 8.01 crore till December FY22, Coir Vikas Yojana (Rs 45.78 crore), Market Promotion and Development Assistance (MPDA) scheme for khadi institutions (Rs 29.45 crore), and International Co-operation scheme (Rs 6.87 crore) which provides financial assistance to industry associations to participate in international exhibitions abroad and organize International conferences in India for MSE exports.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/sme/msme-eodb-direct-benefit-transfer-funds-transferred-under-msme-mins-dbt-schemes-jump-18-till-dec-in-fy23/2989438/>

Agriculture

FCI sells 5.08 lakh tn wheat to bulk consumers in 3rd round of e-auction

State-run Food Corporation of India (FCI) sold 5.08 lakh tonnes of wheat to bulk consumers like flour millers in the third round of e-auction held on Wednesday. In the first two rounds, nearly 13 lakh tonnes of wheat have been sold under the Open Market Sale Scheme (OMSS) to bulk users as part of steps to cool down retail prices of the foodgrain and wheat flour. The next weekly e-auction will be held on March 1. "About 5.08 lakh tonne of wheat has been sold to bulk consumers under the OMSS today," FCI Chairman and Managing Director Ashok K Meena told PTI. The government on January 25 announced that it will offload 30 lakh tonnes of wheat in the open market.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/fci-sells-5-08-lakh-tn-wheat-to-bulk-consumers-in-3rd-round-of-e-auction/articleshow/98157176.cms>

Govt approves extension of mandatory jute packaging norms: Report

The government on Wednesday approved the extension of mandatory packaging norms which provide for all foodgrains and 20 per cent sugar to be compulsorily packed in jute bags, sources said. The reservation norms for mandatory use of jute in packaging for Jute Year 2022-23 (July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023) were cleared at a meeting of the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The mandatory packaging norms approved for Jute Year 2022-23 provide for 100 per cent reservation of foodgrains and 20 per cent reservation of sugar to be compulsorily packed in jute bags, the sources said. The approval to these norms will provide relief to 3.7 lakh workers employed in jute mills and ancillary units as well as support the livelihood of several lakh farm families, they added.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/govt-approves-extension-of-mandatory-jute-packaging-norms-report-123022200530_1.html

No cause of concern for wheat crop if temp prevails below 35-degree C in mid-March: IARI

Amid concerns over the impact of rising temperature on wheat yields, government-research body IARI on Wednesday said the situation is not alarming right now even as it advised farmers to be ready to take contingent measures like light irrigation in case of temperature soars beyond 35-degree celsius in mid-March. Wheat, a major rabi (winter) crop, would be ready for harvest next month. As the Met office has forecast rising temperatures in parts of the country, farmers are worried about a repeat of last year when the heatwave hit the crop yields. Speaking with PTI, Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) Director A K Singh said: "The IMD (India Meteorological Department) has forecast that temperature would remain 2-degree celsius above normal but below 35-degree celsius till the first fortnight of March. A below 35-degree celsius temperature is not a concern for the wheat crop." IARI's agriculture and weather scientists explained heat is a major concern during the crop maturity stage in mid-March. The impact on the crop is likely only if temperatures remain above 35 degrees celsius continuously for four days.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/economy/no-cause-of-concern-for-wheat-crop-if-temp-prevails-below-35-degree-c-in-mid-march-iarinbsp/2989471/>

Infrastructure

Nearly 60% large infra projects facing cost overruns, says Ministry of Statistics

Almost 60% of large infrastructure projects with value of Rs 150 crore and above are facing cost overruns as on February 1, a report released by infrastructure and project monitoring division of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (Mospi) said. According to the January data, anticipated costs in these projects is 21.67%, or Rs 4.46 lakh crore, higher than original costs. While the original value of projects was Rs 20.59 lakh crore, the anticipated cost of completion is Rs 25.05 lakh crore. At present, there are 1,454 large projects that are being monitored.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/infrastructure/nearly-60-large-infra-projects-facing-cost-overruns-says-ministry-of-statistics/articleshow/98161640.cms>

Retail space demand to rise further, rents to surge 15% in 6 mnths: Experts

With the worst impact of the Covid pandemic having subsided, revived consumer sentiment, consumption appetite, and omnichannel adoption by brands and retailers are expected to sustain growth in the retail sector. Mall developers, too, are upbeat because of this bright outlook. According to the Retailers Association of India (RAI), the retail market size is expected to touch \$2 trillion by 2032. Surpassing the pre-pandemic levels, retail sales grew around 19 per cent in 2022. Buoyed by this growth, developers plan to add nearly 25 million square feet of new mall

space across the top 7 cities over the next 4-5 years; NCR and Hyderabad account for nearly 46 per cent of total new upcoming supply, closely followed by Bengaluru at 19 per cent, according to the report.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/retail-space-demand-to-rise-further-average-rentals-to-see-spike-by-15-123022201024_1.html

Telecom

Label cable laying and repair critical and essential service: Telcos

Telcos have asked for cable laying and repair to be designated under the critical and essential services and that these have priority for permits- in-principle and clearances - from government agencies. The telcos also suggested that the framework for setting up cable landing stations (CLS) be amended to streamline the process of approvals make it a fast track with time-bound approval process in response to the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India's (Trai) consultation paper on Licensing Framework and Regulatory Mechanism for Submarine Cable Landing in India. The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) had sought recommendations from Trai on the licensing framework and regulatory mechanism for submarine cables landing in India within the scope of existing international long-distance (ILD) permits. The regulator had also been tasked to vet current global practices around regulation of submarine cables landing in global markets as part of the exercise.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/telecom/telecom-news/label-cable-laying-and-repair-critical-and-essential-service-telcos/articleshow/98152807.cms>

States

UP govt presents Rs 7 trn Budget for FY24 including various new schemes

The Uttar Pradesh government on Wednesday presented a Rs 6,90,242.43 crore Budget, including new schemes worth Rs 32,721.96 crore, for the financial year 2023-24. The total receipt is estimated at Rs 6,83,292.74 crore, which includes revenue receipts of Rs 5,70,865.66 crore and capital receipts of Rs 11,247.08 crore, Uttar Pradesh Finance Minister Suresh Kumar Khanna said. The share of tax revenue in revenue receipts is Rs 44,58,71.59 crore, including its own tax revenue of Rs 2,62,634 crore and the state's share in central taxes of Rs 1,83,237.59 crore. Its total expenditure is projected at Rs 6,90,242.43 crore. Out of this Rs 5,02,354.01 crore is spent on the Revenue Account and Rs 1,87,888.42 crore is spent on Capital Account.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/up-govt-presents-rs-7-trn-budget-for-fy24-including-various-new-schemes-123022200523_1.html

J&K administration approves project worth Rs 463 crore to empower farmers

The Jammu and Kashmir administration has approved a five year project worth Rs 463 crore, aimed at empowering farmers and educated youth through technology-driven and inclusive agri-extension services, a senior government official said on Wednesday. One of the crucial outcomes of the project on "Innovative Extension Approaches for Revitalizing Agriculture in Jammu and Kashmir" would be creation of 2,000 'Kisan Khidmat Ghars' (KKGs), which will serve as an 'one stop centre' for extending farmer oriented services, said Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary, Agriculture Production Department. He said the extension system in Jammu and Kashmir faces many challenges, including serving a large clientele with structural complexity and functional diversity.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/jk-administration-approves-project-worth-rs-463-crore-to-empower-farmers/articleshow/98156828.cms>

External

One Earth, One Family, One Future uplifting and mobilizing motto: IMF MD

The 'One Earth, One Family, One Future' motto of G-20 announced by India is very uplifting and mobilizing, IMF Managing Director Kristina Georgieva has said adding that it resonates on a human level with all. "It has chosen a great motto for the presidency that I think resonates on a human level with all of us: One Earth, One Family, One Future. It is the most uplifting, motto of G-20, that I can think of. Very mobilizing for all of us," Georgieva told PTI ahead of her India travel to attend the G-20's financial track meeting in Bengaluru. Unveiled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi last year, the theme of India's G20 Presidency - 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' or 'One Earth

One Family One Future' - is drawn from the ancient Sanskrit text of the Maha Upanishad. Essentially, the theme affirms the value of all life human, animal, plant, and microorganisms and their interconnectedness on the planet Earth and in the wider universe.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/one-earth-one-family-one-future-uplifting-and-mobilizing-motto-imf-md-123022200684_1.html

FDI equity inflows decline 15 pc to USD 36.75 bn in Apr-Dec FY23

Foreign direct investment (FDI) into India declined by 15 per cent to USD 36.75 billion during the April-December this fiscal, according to the latest Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade data. The FDI inflows stood at USD 43.17 billion during the corresponding period of the previous year. The total FDI inflows, which includes equity inflows, re-invested earnings and other capital, declined to USD 55.27 billion during the nine months of the current fiscal year as against USD 60.4 billion in the year-ago period. During April-December 2022-23, Singapore emerged as the top investor with USD 13 billion FDI. It was followed by Mauritius (USD 4.7 billion), the US (about USD 5 billion), the UAE (USD 3.1 billion), the Netherlands (USD 2.15 billion), Japan (USD 1.4 billion), and Cyprus (USD 1.15 billion), the data showed.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/economy/fdi-equity-inflows-decline-15-pc-to-usd-36-75-bn-in-apr-dec-fy23/2989359/>

India, Israel keen on finalising FTA

Israel's handing over of the strategic port of Haifa to the Adani Group is a reflection of the trust that the country has on India, Israeli ambassador Naor Gilon said on Wednesday. At a media briefing, the envoy also said that both India and Israel are keen on finalising the proposed free trade pact as it could further boost overall bilateral trade ties. Gilon indicated that there could be a forward movement on the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) during the upcoming 'high-level' visit.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/india-israel-keen-on-finalising-fta/articleshow/98145593.cms>