



January 10, 2022 – Monday

Key Developments

All set to start administering precaution dose of COVID-19 vaccine in India from Monday

India will start administering the precaution dose of Covid vaccine to healthcare and frontline workers and comorbid people aged 60 and above from Monday in a bid to stymie the coronavirus spread driven by its Omicron variant. Personnel deployed for election duty in poll-bound Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Manipur and Goa have also been designated as frontline workers. Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, in a tweet on Sunday, said reminder SMSes have been sent to over one crore healthcare and frontline workers and senior citizens for their precaution dose. An estimated 1.05 crore healthcare and 1.9 crore frontline workers, and 2.75 crore comorbid people in the 60 plus age group would be administered the precaution dose according to schedule, Health Ministry sources said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/all-set-to-start-administering-precaution-dose-of-covid-19-vaccine-in-india-from-monday/articleshow/88795017.cms>

Businesses to be given 'reasonable time' to explain mismatch in GSTR-1, 3B

Tax officers will give reasonable time to erring business to explain reasons for mismatch in turnover reported in sales return GSTR-1 and tax payment form 3B before initiating recovery action for short payment or non-payment of taxes. Apex indirect tax body CBIC has issued guidelines on recovery proceedings and said that taxmen would give a "reasonable time" to businesses to explain the reasons for such mismatch. As per the changes in the GST law effective January 1, GST officers were allowed to directly initiate recovery action against those errant businesses which showed higher sales in monthly return GSTR-1 but under-report it while tax payment in GSTR-3B. The move was aimed at curbing the menace of fake billing whereby sellers would show higher sales in GSTR-1 to enable a purchaser to claim an input tax credit (ITC) but report suppressed sales in GSTR-3B to lower GST liability.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/businesses-to-be-given-reasonable-time-to-explain-mismatch-in-gstr-1-3b-122010900301_1.html

Will soon approach Cabinet on revised FDI policy to aid LIC IPO: DPIIT Secy

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) will soon try to approach the Union Cabinet to seek its approval on changes in the FDI policy to facilitate disinvestment of the country's largest insurer LIC, a top government official said on Sunday. DPIIT Secretary Anurag Jain said the issue has been discussed with the Department of Financial Services and Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) and all have reached unanimity. "Now it is a matter of drafting it out. We will try that soon we will make the Cabinet note, after holding inter ministerial consultation, (to) take the approval...It will be very soon," Jain told reporters here. The Finance Minister has directed that the disinvestment has to be completed during the current financial year, "so we also have to work at that pace," he added.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/markets/will-soon-approach-cabinet-on-revised-fdi-policy-to-aid-lic-ipo-dpiit-secy-122010900577_1.html

RBI to set up new fintech department to push innovation

After setting up a financial technology unit back in 2018, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said it will now put together a separate fintech department in view of the sector's rapidly changing landscape. In an internal circular, the central bank said it decided to set up the department to further focus and facilitate innovation in the Indian fintech sector. "Accordingly, a new department has been created with effect from January 4, 2022, by subsuming the fintech division of DPSS, CO. The department will not only promote innovation in the sector, but also identify the challenges and opportunities associated with it and address them in a timely manner," RBI said in the circular.

DPSS is the department of payment and settlement systems, which works on policy formation and authorisation of payment and settlement system operators in the country, among other things.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/tech/technology/rbi-to-set-up-new-fintech-department-to-push-innovation/articleshow/88792612.cms>

Economy

India logs 179,723 new Covid-19 cases, most since May

India reported 179,723 new cases of Covid-19 infections on Monday, the most since late May, health ministry data showed, taking the total to 35.71 million. Deaths rose by 146 to 483,936. Testing, boosting health infrastructure and vaccination must form India's strategy for rising Covid-19 cases, said Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday at a meeting he chaired on the pandemic.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/live-news-updates-10-january-2022-coronavirus-live-india-cases-180-000-novak-djokovic-australia-omicron-latest-news-122011000072_1.html

COVID-19 review meet: PM calls for adequate health infra, boosting vaccination drive for adolescents

Reviewing the Covid situation amid a surge in cases fuelled by the Omicron variant of the virus, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday called for ensuring adequate health infrastructure at district level and accelerating the vaccination drive for adolescents in mission mode. Noting that the coronavirus has been evolving continuously, Modi underlined the need for continuous scientific research in testing and vaccines besides pharmacological interventions, including genome sequencing, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said in a statement.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/covid-19-review-meet-pm-calls-for-adequate-health-infra-boosting-vaccination-drive-for-adolescents/articleshow/88795540.cms>

Interest calculator soon in GSTR-3B for delayed monthly tax payment

GST Network, which provides technology backbone for the indirect tax regime, will shortly release interest calculator functionality in monthly tax payment form GSTR-3B to help taxpayers in calculating interest for delayed tax payment. This new functionality will compute the minimum interest applicable on the basis of the values declared by the taxpayers in GSTR-3B for a particular tax period, GSTN said in an advisory. "To facilitate taxpayers in doing self-assessment, the new functionality of interest calculator is being released in GSTR-3B. This functionality will assist taxpayers in calculating the interest applicable for delayed filing of returns. Taxpayers will have to verify and discharge the correct interest liability as per law, as payment of interest is a statutory compliance," it said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/interest-calculator-soon-in-gstr-3b-for-delayed-monthly-tax-payment/articleshow/88789107.cms>

Centre surveys 17.78 lakh acres of defence land using advanced technologies

In a first such comprehensive exercise since Independence, the government has surveyed 17.78 lakh acres of defence land using the latest technologies such as three-dimensional modelling, drone and satellite imageries. The defence ministry said the mammoth exercise of surveying about 1.61 lakh acres of defence land inside cantonments and 16.17 lakh acres outside cantonments was started in October 2018 and is now completed. "It is a remarkable achievement since, for the first time after Independence, entire defence land has been surveyed by using latest survey technology," it said. The ministry said the magnitude of landholding, the location of land in approximately 4,900 pockets, inaccessible terrain in many places and involvement of various stakeholders made it one of the "largest" land surveys in India.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/centre-surveys-17-78-lakh-acres-of-defence-land-using-advanced-technologies-122010900286_1.html

Food Processing Ministry sets up grievance cell to ensure uninterrupted supplies of food-related essentials

As State governments across India have begun imposing various restrictions to curb the surge in Covid cases, the Union Food Processing Ministry said it has set up a dedicated grievance cell to maintain uninterrupted supplies of food-related essentials. In a statement the Ministry said, "Subsequent to the recent surge in Covid cases across the country, steps are being taken by State governments/UT administration to control the spread of the Covid virus. Ministry of Food Processing Industries has a dedicated grievance cell for the food and food-related industry to ensure hassle-free operations and uninterrupted supply of essentials for citizens."

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/companies/food-processing-ministry-sets-up-grievance-cell-to-ensure-uninterrupted-supplies-of-food-related-essentials/article38201211.ece>

Employees Provident Fund: No tax on income from deposit up to Rs 7.5 lakh suggested for Budget 2022

In Budget 2021, the Government proposed to tax income on Provident Fund (PF) contributions above Rs 2.5 lakh in a year. This limit was further increased to Rs 5 lakh for PF accounts having no contribution from employers. According to the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI), this limit is harsh for EPF accountholders planning their own retirement and contributing to PF to maximise their savings. The ICAI has, hence, proposed that in the upcoming Budget 2022-23, the Government should raise the Rs 2.5/5 lakh limit to at least Rs 7.5 lakh.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/money/employees-provident-fund-epf-budget-2022-rs-7-5-lakh-tax-free-limit/2401965/>

Banking and Finance

Deposits in bank accounts opened under Jan Dhan scheme cross Rs 1.5 trn

Deposits in bank accounts opened under the Jan Dhan scheme, launched about seven and half years ago by the government, have crossed the Rs 1.5 lakh crore mark. As per the latest finance ministry data, the total balance in over 44.23 crore Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) accounts was at Rs 1,50,939.36 crore at December end, 2021. PMJDY, the National Mission for Financial Inclusion, had completed seven years of implementation in August last year. It was announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his Independence Day address on August 15, 2014. As per the finance ministry data, of the total 44.23 crore accounts, 34.9 crore were with the public sector banks, 8.05 crore with regional rural banks, and the rest 1.28 crore with private sector banks.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/deposits-in-bank-accounts-opened-under-jan-dhan-scheme-cross-rs-1-5-trn-122010900345_1.html

Banks Q3 results: Improved asset quality, modest growth on cards

Banks are likely to report a modest growth in earnings with improved loan growth in the third quarter of the fiscal and asset quality could improve. Kotak Institutional Equities said it expects an improvement in asset quality outlook for most lenders in the third quarter led by lower slippages and better recovery trends. "There are no large corporate slippages while retail and SME should show improvement on a net basis," it said in a research note.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/money-and-banking/banks-q3-expectation-modest-earning-growth-asset-quality-may-improve/article38205658.ece?homepage=true>

Mcap of eight of top-10 most valued firms jumps by over Rs 2.50 trillion

Eight of the top-ten most valued companies together added a whopping Rs 2,50,005.88 crore in market valuation last week amid a rally in the equity market, with Reliance Industries and Tata Consultancy Services emerging as the lead gainers. Last week, the BSE benchmark Sensex jumped 1,490.83 points or 2.55 per cent. Among the top ten, Infosys and Wipro emerged as the laggards. The valuation of Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) zoomed by Rs 46,380.16 crore to reach Rs 16,47,762.23 crore. Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) added Rs 43,648.81 crore taking its valuation to Rs 14,25,928.82 crore. The market valuation of Bajaj Finance jumped by Rs 41,273.78 crore to Rs 4,62,395.52 crore and that of HDFC Bank rallied Rs 39,129.34 crore to Rs 8,59,293.61 crore.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/markets/mcap-of-eight-of-top-10-most-valued-firms-jumps-by-over-rs-2-50-trillion-122010900398_1.html

Industry

Omicron: 45% business loss in first week of 2022 incurred by traders due to fresh curbs: Survey

MSMEs and other traders across the country suffered a 45 per cent average loss in business during the first week of 2022, said traders' body Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) as states imposed fresh Covid-appropriate regulations to curb rising cases. Citing a survey conducted by its research arm CAIT Research and Trade Development Society from January 1 to January 6 among traders across 36 cities of different states, the confederation noted that the panic among people due to the third wave, reluctance among traders for goods distribution from neighbouring cities, capital crunch, and Covid restrictions imposed without consulting the traders were the main reasons for the decline in business activity. CAIT represents around 8 crore traders across approximately 40,000 trade associations in India.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/sme/msme-eodb-omicron-45-business-loss-in-first-week-of-2022-incurred-by-traders-due-to-fresh-curbs-survey/2402068/>

Consumer durables prices to go up 5-10% amid rising input costs

Prices of air conditioners and refrigerators have shot up in the new year as consumer durables makers pass on the impact of rising raw material costs and higher freight charges to customers, while home appliances like washing machines may witness 5-10 per cent price hike later this month or by March. Companies including Panasonic, LG, Haier have already reviewed prices upwards, while other makers such as Sony, Hitachi, Godrej Appliances may take a call by the end of this quarter. According to the Consumer Electronics and Appliances Manufacturers Association (CEAMA), the industry make hike prices from January to March in the range of 5-7 per cent. With an unprecedented surge in the cost of commodities, global freight and raw materials, we have taken steps to increase prices of our products by 3 to 5 per cent in the refrigerator, washing machines, and air conditioner categories, Haier Appliances India President Satish N S told PTI.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/consumer-durables-prices-to-go-up-5-10-amid-rising-input-costs-122010900375_1.html

FMCG cos see customers pantry loading as COVID-19 cases spike; say ready with stocks

FMCG companies witnessed an increase in demand in the past two weeks as consumers stocked up in the wake of rise in COVID-19 cases across the country, and have ramped up supplies to their stockists to avoid supply shortage. Companies such as Parle Products, Dabur India and ITC, which are already facing inflationary pressures on inputs, are keeping extra stock of raw materials to avoid any disruptions in the supply chain due to the fresh wave of the pandemic, putting in use their learnings from the past two waves. The FMCG makers also expect that a sudden increase in COVID cases and some restrictions imposed by local authorities in some states would again impact the demand for 'out of home' channels products, which was recovering from the last few months, though demand for home consumption and immunity products is going to gain for few weeks.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/cons-products/fmcg/fm-cos-see-customers-pantry-loading-as-covid-19-cases-spike-say-ready-with-stocks/articleshow/88787409.cms>

Mandatory pre-litigation mediation needs lot of ground work before rollout

Mediation has been gaining significant traction globally as an effective dispute resolution mechanism. The pro-mediation trend in India particularly has been on the rise in the recent past, with the government initiating various measures such as the introduction of mediation as a pre-litigation tool in certain specific sectoral laws, and being an early signatory to the UN Convention on International Settlement Agreements Resulting from Mediation (Singapore Convention). Amidst these various policy measures, a uniform national legal framework for mediation will provide a much-needed impetus. Sensing the need for independent legislation for mediation, the Ministry of Law and Justice recently released the draft Mediation Bill 2021. The mediation Bill is a significant step forward in establishing a clear framework for the mediation process in India. The Bill seeks to address various aspects of the key process and principles of mediation, including issues such as confidentiality, self-determination and voluntary-ness. It provides a regulatory framework for the practice of mediation, and significantly, provides a mechanism for the recognition and enforcement of mediated agreements, both domestic and international.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/business-laws/mandatory-pre-litigation-mediation-needs-lot-of-ground-work-before-rollout/article38204536.ece?homepage=true>

Over 30,000 MSME exporters to get specially designed websites for better digital presence

Over 30,000 micro, small and medium exporters, part of the exporters' body Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO), will now be able to create and manage their own websites to enhance their digital presence. The federation has partnered with digital platform provider RebelCorp that offers do-it-yourself (DIY) tools for businesses and individuals to create and manage their websites having unique templates without coding. The tie-up came in the backdrop of MSMEs' growing need for digital presence amid Covid even as "exports of \$37 billion in December 2021 (India's highest-ever in a month) – a 37 per cent jump from \$27 billion in December 2020 was recorded," Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal had said earlier this week.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/sme/msme-exim-over-30000-msme-exporters-to-get-specially-designed-websites-for-better-digital-presence/2401984/>

Annual tractor production crosses 1 m, exports surpass 1 lakh for the 1st time in 2021

Despite hitting a 20-month low in production and domestic sales in December, the calendar year 2021 proved to be a record year for the tractor industry with annual production surpassing the one million milestone and exports crossing the one lakh mark for the first time in history. Strong domestic sales momentum in the first half of 2021 and sustained growth in exports in the past several months pushed the total domestic tractor production for 2021 to 1,065,280 units, the highest-ever annual number, as compared to 8,63,125 units in 2020.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/annual-tractor-production-crosses-1-m-exports-surpass-1-lakh-for-the-1st-time-in-2021/article38204109.ece?homepage=true>

Agriculture

MSP should not be seen together public procurement

Now that the farm laws have been repealed by the Centre, the leaders of farmers' unions are pushing for legal minimum support price (MSP) entitlement for 23 crops. Since MSP has no statutory backing, technically farmers cannot demand these prices as a matter of right. The farmers' unions want the Centre to enact legislation conferring mandatory status to MSP, rather than MSP just being an indicative or desired price. The Centre has assured the unions that it will form a committee to review this demand. Currently, the MSP is decided based on the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP). Farmers' unions have been demanding a legal entitlement that amounts to the comprehensive cost of production (C2) plus 50 per cent (i.e., C2+50 per cent). Further, farmers are also demanding that there should be a legally enforceable MSP for 23 crops for which MSP is currently announced by the government for all buyers who willingly participate in the market.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/msp-should-not-be-seen-together-public-procurement/article38200742.ece>

Infrastructure

Railways unveil new wagon design policy

Indian Railways have sought private participation in designing new freight wagons, according to a new wagon design policy issued by the government aimed at tapping outside expertise in an area that was a preserve of the Research Designs & Standards Organisation (RDSO), the R&D wing of Indian Railways. The policy seeks to expedite the introduction of new wagon designs incorporating latest technology to cater to the needs of more efficient and cost-effective transportation of existing commodities as well as expansion of the commodities basket.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/railways-unveil-new-wagon-design-policy/article38204472.ece?homepage=true>

Kochi becomes first city with water metro project

With the launch of the first in a series of battery powered electric boats, Kochi has become India's first city to have a water metro project. Operated by Kochi Metro Rail Ltd, the project envisages an integrated water transport system with the development of 15 identified routes, connecting 10 islands along a network of routes that span 76 km with a fleet of 78 fast, electrically propelled hybrid ferries plying to 38 jetties.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/logistics/kochi-becomes-first-city-with-water-metro-project/article38202868.ece>

Energy

Discoms' outstanding dues to gencos rise 4.4% to Rs 121,030 cr in January

Total outstanding dues owed by electricity distribution companies (discoms) to power producers rose 4.4 per cent year-on-year to Rs 1,21,030 crore in January 2022. Discoms owed a total of Rs 1,15,904 crore to power generation firms in January 2021, according to portal PRAAPTI (Payment Ratification And Analysis in Power procurement for bringing Transparency in Invoicing of generators). On a sequential basis also, total dues in January increased from Rs 1,15,462 crore in December 2021. The PRAAPTI portal was launched in May 2018 to bring in transparency in power purchase transactions between generators and discoms. In January 2022, the total overdue amount, which was not cleared even after 45 days of grace period offered by generators, stood at Rs 1,01,357 crore as against Rs 99,650 crore in the same month a year ago. The overdue amount stood at Rs 99,981 crore in December 2021.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/discoms-outstanding-dues-to-gencos-rise-4-4-to-rs-121-030-cr-in-january-122010900172_1.html

Scrap move to privatise electricity distribution in Chandigarh: AIPEF

All India Power Engineers Federation on Sunday urged the government to withdraw the Union Cabinet decision to privatise power distribution in Chandigarh as the matter is still sub-judice. "The All India Power Engineers Federation (AIPEF) on Sunday urged the government to withdraw Cabinet decision on privatisation of electricity distribution in UT (Union Territory) Chandigarh as the matter is still sub-judice," an AIPEF statement said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/power/scrap-move-to-privatise-electricity-distribution-in-chandigarh-aipef/articleshow/88792406.cms>

States

Weekend curfew: Nearly 1,500 booked for Covid-19 violation in Delhi

Delhi Police have booked nearly 1,500 people in the national capital for violating Covid norms on the first day of the weekend curfew on January 8, an official said on Sunday. "A total of 1,484 COVID challan were issued on Saturday, January 8," the official said. To curb further spread of Covid-19, the national capital currently remains under a stringent curfew from 10 p.m. Friday to 5 a.m. Monday. Apart from COVID violation, the official said, FIR was registered against 384 people under section 188 (Disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant) of the Indian Penal Code. Triggered by the newly emerged Omicron variant, Covid-19 situation in Delhi is deteriorating on a daily basis.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/weekend-curfew-nearly-1-500-booked-for-covid-19-violation-in-delhi-122010900603_1.html

Delhi looking at minimum restrictions so that livelihoods are protected: CM

The Delhi government on Sunday assuaged fears of migrant workers and businessmen, saying to protect livelihoods, its attempt is to impose minimum Covid restrictions and not a lockdown. The national capital in the past few days has seen a massive spike in daily cases, with migrants workers fearing a lockdown, like those imposed during the 2020 and last year Covid waves, could further dent their earnings, landing them into a severe financial crisis. Addressing a virtual press conference, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal stressed that the hospitalisation rate is low and that there will be no need of a lockdown if everyone wears a mask. "Rising Covid cases are a matter of concern but there is no need to panic. Very few people are getting hospitalised. Wearing mask is very important. There will be no lockdown if you continue to wear mask. There is no plan to impose a lockdown as of now," he said.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/delhi-looking-at-minimum-restrictions-so-that-livelihoods-are-protected-cm-122010900508_1.html

UP gov't clamps night curfew across State, suspends physical classes

Uttar Pradesh has clamped night curfew and has decided to close physical classes in all educational institutions after Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath chaired the COVID-19 review meeting in Lucknow on Sunday.

"In view of developing situation due to COVID-19, night curfew has been imposed in every district of Uttar Pradesh between 10 pm to 6 am. Physical classes have also been suspended in all educational institutions till January 16. Classes in online mode can continue. However, scheduled examinations can be conducted," reads the official

release. The Chief Minister also passed instructions for the district administration to monitor the situation and ensure necessary resources for the curtailment of the virus. "Monitoring committees and Integrated Covid Command Centres should be fully operational. Separate numbers should be issued for home isolation, monitoring committees, ambulance and teleconsultation," reads the release.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/up-govt-clamps-night-curfew-across-state-suspends-physical-classes-122010900388_1.html

Maharashtra government revises restrictions for beauty salons and gyms

The Maharashtra government will gradually bring curbs at places of worship and other sites, including liquor vends, that attract crowds to control the coronavirus pandemic, state health minister Rajesh Tope said on Sunday, a day after the state decided to tighten restrictions in the face of surging COVID-19 cases. Speaking to reporters in Jalna, the minister said that the restrictions imposed by the government a day earlier were in the interest of the people. "Curbs in crowded areas like liquor shops and places of worship will be imposed as well," he said. Tope, however, said that even as cases are rising, hospital bed occupancy and oxygen demand remain low. "When these start rising, we will enforce stricter restrictions," he added. On Saturday, when the state reported over 41,000 new COVID-19 cases, the state government decided to prohibit movement in public in groups of five or more from 5 in the morning to 11 at night. Further, no movement will be allowed in public from 11 pm to 5 am except for essential services, a government circular had said.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/india-news/maharashtra-govt-revises-covid-19-curbs-for-beauty-salons-gyms/2402106/>

Jharkhand announces incentives up to Rs 10cr for investment in tourism

The Jharkhand government announced a slew of fiscal incentives for those willing to invest in developing tourism facilities, including hotels and resorts, amusement parks, ropeways and adventure sports, to give a boost to the sector and attract tourists to the state. The incentives were announced in the recently-unveiled state tourism policy, which aims to make Jharkhand a "must-visit destination" by tapping its unexplored potential. "Fiscal incentives are to be provided for the promotion of tourism in Jharkhand... To provide incentives for increasing the competitive attraction of Jharkhand as compared to other states... All the fiscal incentives shall be routed through the Single Window System of Department of Industries," the policy mentioned.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/jharkhand-announces-incentives-up-to-rs-10cr-for-investment-in-tourism/articleshow/88792616.cms>

Healthcare

Bharat Biotech says its Covaxin booster dose offers long term protection

India's Bharat Biotech said on Saturday a booster dose of its COVID-19 vaccine Covaxin offered long-term protection from severe disease in a trial. The company said a booster dose was given to trial participants six months after they received their second dose.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/healthcare/biotech/healthcare/bharat-biotech-says-its-covaxin-booster-dose-offers-long-term-protection/articleshow/88779041.cms>

External

Exports from STPI units seen at over Rs 5 trn in FY22 despite Omicron wave

The surge in COVID cases driven by the fast-spreading Omicron variant is not expected to disrupt the performance of units registered under the STPI scheme with proven remote working protocols already in place, according to a top official. The value of software exports from the Software Technology Parks of India units is expected to be at over Rs 5 lakh crore during FY22, almost similar levels or a tad higher than the previous year, Arvind Kumar, Director General of STPI said. The safety protocols activated during the previous waves of COVID have resulted in the adoption of an effective remote working model, and the digital nature of work has enabled STPI units to maintain continuity of services without disruption. The value of software exports from units registered under the STPI scheme is expected to be a little over Rs 5 lakh crore during FY22, against nearly Rs 4.96 lakh crore in FY21, Kumar said. "We will not fall

short of the levels achieved in FY21, given that remote working model has matured and is proven. All the enabling provisions for work from home are already in place, and online approval procedure is ongoing," Kumar told PTI.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/exports-from-stpi-units-seen-at-over-rs-5-lakh-crore-in-fy22-despite-omicron-wave/2402089/>

Garment and leather goods exporters face shortage of workers due to rising covid cases

Garment exporters from Noida and leather goods exporters from Mumbai, Delhi and Kolkata, are facing a shortage of workers due to rising covid cases. In the Noida apparel export cluster, the return of migrant workers has completely stopped with 3,000 garment export units facing a shortage of around 3 lakh tailors. With orders in hand from the US and Europe, exporters are concerned how to meet their obligations. Similarly, leather goods exporters are flooded with orders from global markets but rising covid cases among workers is creating a shortage in manpower at the units.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/cons-products/garments-/textiles/garment-and-leather-goods-exporters-face-shortage-of-workers-due-to-rising-covid-cases/articleshow/88794254.cms>

India to keep sensitive dairy, agri items out of FTA with Australia

India is keeping sensitive dairy and agriculture items out of the India-Australia free trade agreement (FTA) as it does not want to compromise the interest of its farmers. But it may give limited market access to a handful of farm items that are not produced in the country, a person close to the negotiations has said. "India is not offering concessions for items that are essential for the livelihood of lakhs of dairy and agriculture farmers such as milk, butter, milk powder or wheat. This has been clearly communicated to Australia and there is no cause for apprehension for farmers," the source said.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/india-to-keep-sensitive-dairy-agri-items-out-of-fta-with-australia/article38204337.ece?homepage=true>

Centre not to impose anti-dumping duty on certain steel products

The government has decided not to impose anti-dumping duty on certain steel products being imported from countries like China, Japan, and Korea, as the finance ministry has not accepted the recommendations of the directorate general of trade remedies (DGTR). The commerce ministry's investigation arm DGTR had conducted a probe against imports of 'Cold Rolled/cold reduced flat steel products of iron or Non-Alloy Steel, or other Alloy Steel of all width and thickness - not clad, plated or coated' and 'Hot Rolled flat products of alloy or non-alloy steel', following complaints filed by domestic manufacturers of the respective products. On both these categories of steel, the directorate on September 14, 2021, had recommended the imposition of definitive anti-dumping duties.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/centre-not-to-impose-anti-dumping-duty-on-certain-steel-products-122010900215_1.html

FPIs turn net buyers of equities in Jan so far; invest Rs 3,202 cr

After three months of selling spree, foreign investors have turned net buyers in the first week of January by infusing Rs 3,202 crore in Indian equities, as correction in markets provided them good buying opportunity. Going forward, FPIs flows will remain volatile on the expectation of the US Fed rate hike, rising concerns over the Omicron variant and elevated inflation levels, experts said. The latest inflow came after witnessing a net outflow of Rs 38,521 crore during October-December 2021. Before that, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) had made a net investment of Rs 13,154 crore in September last year. According to data available with the depositories, FPIs have infused a net sum of Rs 3,202 crore in the Indian equities during January 3-7.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/markets/fpis-turn-net-buyers-of-equities-in-jan-so-far-invest-rs-3-202-cr-122010900325_1.html

Former RBI Governor Urjit Patel appointed Vice President of AIIB

Former RBI Governor Urjit Patel has been appointed as a Vice President of the Beijing-based multilateral funding institution AIIB, according to sources in the bank on Sunday. India is a founding member of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) with the second highest voting share after China. It is headed by former Chinese vice minister for finance Jin Liqun. Patel, 58, will be one of the five Vice Presidents of the AIIB with a three-year tenure. He is expected to take over his posting next month. He will succeed outgoing Vice President D J Pandian, who is in charge

of sovereign and non-sovereign lending of the AIIB in South Asia, the Pacific Islands and South-East Asia, AIIB sources told PTI. Pandian, who has previously served as the chief secretary of Gujarat, is set to return to India later this month.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/former-rbi-governor-urjit-patel-appointed-vice-president-of-aiib-122010900291_1.html