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## 01 MICROSOFT AND FEDEX PARTNER ON E-COMMERCE LOGISTICS SERVICE

FedEx and Microsoft introduced the next solution in their multi-year partnership to revolutionize commerce, supply chains, and logistics on Monday. FedEx and Microsoft will combine FedEx network intelligence with Microsoft Dynamics 365 capabilities to offer retailers, merchants, and brands a cross-platform "logistics as a service." "The two companies have a shared vision for reimagining commercial commerce experiences so that they can provide consumers with more integrated shopping experiences and faster, more efficient deliveries.

Every industry's customer needs and expectations have altered. FedEx and Microsoft are collaborating to use artificial intelligence and machine learning to infer new insights from the 17 million packages that move through the FedEx network each day, allowing marketers to provide better customer experiences. This cross-platform approach, according to them, enables brands to provide modern, high-value experiences to their customers, such as faster, more cost-effective delivery; near real-time delivery status communications; and convenient, frictionless returns with approximately 60,000 drop-off locations and printerless QR codes. Since 2020, when both companies promised to "transform commerce," Microsoft and FedEx have been working together. This initiative is a step in the right direction.

## 02 PERNOD RICARD ASPIRES TO PROVIDE BESPOKE CONSUMER EXPERIENCES

The world's second-largest wine and spirits company, Pernod Richard, aims to open its own branded retail outlet in India. India is Pernod Richards' third-largest market by volume and the third-largest contributor to sales and profits globally. It is also one of the most complex and strategic markets in the world due to its state control over liquor and infrequent taxation.

Pernod Ricard owns a quarter of the Indian whiskey market. Women, Generation Z, and millennials are their target demographics. By leveraging urbanization and the digital revolution, they are aiming to strengthen their ability to reach more of these young and adult consumers who are willing to buy premium products. Pernod Ricard is nearing the completion of the launch of its pre-mix cocktails in cans, which will be manufactured in India rather than imported. They plan to open a few flagship stores in India so that customers can have a one-of-a-kind and finer experience. Pernod Ricard is also bringing its venture capital arm based in San Francisco, Convivialite Ventures, to India to explore start-up opportunities.

## 03 MARUTI SUZUKI HIKES PRICES FOR THE FOURTH TIME IN FY22

The country's largest carmaker, Maruti Suzuki India (MSI), has increased the prices of its models by up to 4.3 percent with immediate effect. This was done in order to lessen the impact of increased input costs. The company has increased pricing across its models by 0.1 percent to 4.3 percent. This isn't the first hike in recent times. Maruti Suzuki raised the price of its automobiles three times last year. It boosted prices by 1.4 percent in January, 1.6 percent in April, and 1.9 percent in September, for a total increase of 4.9 percent. The company announced last month that it had been obliged to raise prices due to increases in the cost of vital commodities such as steel, aluminum, copper, plastic, and precious metals over the previous year. MSI offers a variety of vehicles ranging from the Alto to the S-Cross, with prices ranging from 3.15 lakh to 12.56 lakh. Since the outbreak of the pandemic, supply systems all across the world have been interrupted, making it impossible to provide crucial components for automobile production. Automakers can't bear the brunt for much longer and must pass the buck to customers. And it appears that Maruti Suzuki India has already done so.

# FINANCE & INVESTMENT

## 01 **ARYA.AG RAISES ANOTHER \$60 MILLION IN MIX OF DEBT AND EQUITY.**

Arya.ag, an agritech startup that is believed to be India's largest integrated grain commerce platform which helps in connecting sellers and buyers of agricultural produce thereby providing complete assurance of the quality and quantity has come up successful in raising \$60 million in a Series C round. The platform that enables the farmers the freedom of when and whom to sell has raised the requisites in both debt and equity. The equity round was led by Asia impact SA, Light rock India, and Quona Capital contributing to \$46 million while the debt was raised by US International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) amounting to \$14 million. The aim for raising funds is said to act as an incentive not only to capture a wider market share but also to increase the services assured. Arya is proclaimed to write the success story by integrating and sustaining a growth story of rural India. Post this round the company touched the valuation of \$300 million. The startup is believed to raise another round of \$100 million for further growth and expansion in the upcoming months.

## 02 **CCI OKAYS 100% ACQUISITION OF GLAXOSMITHKLINE ASIA**

Competition Commission of India has given a green signal for the acquisition of 100 percent stakes of GlaxoSmithKline Asia Private Limited (GSKAPL) by the parent entities. GSKAPL is a consumer healthcare company that has captured a wide market owing to its marketing and distribution of oral health care products like Sensodyne, Parodontax, Polident, and popular brand names Crocin, Eno. Before the acquisition, the company would complete up its trademarks pertaining to Iodex and Ostocalcium in India.

The parent company acquiring the stakes and ownership are GlaxoSmithKline consumer healthcare overseas limited and GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare UK Trading Limited. The parent company has already made a clear statement to spin off its consumer healthcare segment into a separately listed company that would focus on oral healthcare only by mid-2022.

## 03 **MAJOR FALL IN THE SUBSCRIBERS OF VI**

Vodafone Idea which has a major shareholding by Government Of India, Vodafone Group, and Aditya Birla Group and has been in news for it being the 3 largest mobile telecommunication network in India has started experiencing major losses from quarter 3 of the fiscal year 2021-22. The despair comes over the merger after the price hikes leading to a slowdown of the recharge rates and the SIM consolidation by the current subscribers. MD and CEO, Ravinder Takkar have reported the subscribers fell by 5.8 million in the 3rd quarter 2021-22 and the 4G base subscribers saw a meager growth of 117 million as against the previous 116.2 million in quarter

2. The hike in prices in November 2021 was after a complete 2 years of deliberation and prices are further believed to hike in 2022 or 23 again. Though the price hike was not very much and was compatible with the 4G services that the company provides. The popular base plan that cost around Rs 79 has been revised to Rs 99 making a 25% rise in tariffs. The company is also looking forward to raising funds at the earliest so that they could work more aggressively towards a 4G driven VI India. The impact for the subscriber base is expected to be even higher in the final quarter before the fiscal year comes to an end.

# ECONOMY

## 01 **BLACKROCK REPORT FINDS THAT SHORTAGE IN SUPPLY AND NOT SURPLUS DEMAND, IS DRIVING INFLATION..**

The BlackRock report points to an era where supply constraints are the driving force of inflation rather than excess demand which will bring about more macro volatility and force policymakers to live with higher inflation. Over the past year, limits on supply have driven the surge in inflation, an acute change from the decades-long dominance of demand drivers. Production was unable to get back online as quickly, because of the shutdowns caused by the pandemic and the restart that followed which led to a new era of supply-driven inflation. A sharp shift in consumer spending away from services towards goods led to sector-specific supply problems during the restart, which in turn caused bottle-necks in goods-producing sectors. Although economic activity has not recovered fully, economy-wide and sector-specific supply constraints are propelling inflation higher. The way to deal with this inflation is not to destroy demand, but to increase supply capacity and promote the movement of resources across sectors.

## 02 **INDIA'S GDP FORECAST DOWN FROM 9.5% TO 9% FOR FY22.**

The International Monetary Fund cut its FY22 GDP forecast for India predicted in October, citing disruptions due to the Omicron wave of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the IMF has raised the country's GDP projection for FY23 to 9 percent from 8.5 percent earlier and to 7.1 percent from 6.6 percent for FY24. As the new Covid variant spreads, countries have reimposed mobility restrictions. Supply disruptions and rising energy prices have resulted in higher and more broad-based inflation than anticipated, particularly in the United States and many other emerging markets and developing economies.

Monetary policy in many countries should continue on a tightening path to curb inflation pressures, while fiscal policy— operating with limited space than earlier in the pandemic, will need to prioritize social spending and health focusing on the worst affected. India's prospects for FY24 (2023) are marked up on prospective improvements to credit growth and thereafter, investment and consumption — counting on better than anticipated performance of the financial sector.

## 03 **INDIA INITIATES AN ANTI-DUMPING PROBE AGAINST IMPORTS OF VINYL TILES FROM CHINA, TAIWAN, VIETNAM.**

Following a complaint by domestic players (Welspun India Ltd, WelspunFlooring Ltd, and Welspun Global Brands Ltd) had filed a petition before the directorate to impose anti-dumping duty against imports (of a certain type of tiles, used for covering the floors in residential and commercial buildings) from China, Taiwan, and Vietnam, according to a notification of the commerce ministry's investigation arm Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR). Anti-dumping probes are started by countries to determine whether a surge in cheap imports has hurt their domestic industries. As a countermeasure, these duties are imposed under the regime of the Geneva-based World Trade Organisation (WTO). This duty aims to create a level-playing field for domestic producers and ensure fair trading practices vis-a-vis foreign producers and exporters.



## 01 WHY PEPSI IS FACING CALLS FOR BOYCOTT AND HOW IT'S TIED TO TEXAS POLITICS.

As per recent reports, multinational corporation PepsiCo has once again been caught in a political conflict. Widespread calls for boycotting the company and the hashtag #BoycottPepsi have been trending on Twitter, as well as on other social media platforms. As pointed out by the progressive newsletter Popular Information, PepsiCo has donated an amount of 15,000 dollars as a contribution to the Texas Republican Party. It's public information that Texas Governor Greg Abbott signed a law that bans most abortions in the state. This very contribution is the second-largest donation that the party has received between the period of 31st July and 31st December last year. Evidently, these donations likely occurred before the law was passed, but the contribution nonetheless helped the Republicans who sponsored it. However, what's interesting is that PepsiCo has, in the past, also supported and lobbied for progressive causes. Now finally, PepsiCo has clarified in a published statement that the donations were actually made in August 2020 and supported political convention costs far before the abortion ban was put in place.

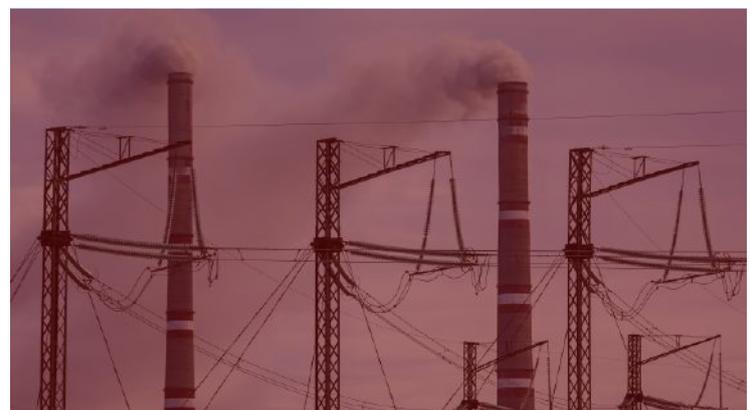
## 02 FEAR OF WAR AMIDST THE UKRAINE-RUSSIA CONFLICT

Tension continues to rise amidst the long-growing conflict between Ukraine and Russia. After recent news reported that around 100,000 Russian troops have been placed near the Ukraine-Russian border, most people are of the belief and fear that Russia is planning to seize Ukrainian territory. Russia is so far denying they have any plans to invade Ukraine. The country has also asked for assurances about Ukraine's place within the NATO (The North Atlantic Treaty Organization) defensive alliance, with the US now intervening to try to calm the situation down. As per the recent reports, the US has rejected Russia's demand to bar Ukraine from NATO amid the warnings that Russia might invade its neighbor.

Another important highlight of the situation is the White House spokesperson Jen Psaki briefly mentioning that the US would welcome India's role in a deescalating situation between the countries of Ukraine and Russia. Even though India has remained silent on the matter, it has urged its citizens in Ukraine to register themselves at the Indian embassy located in Kyiv.

## 03 CENTRAL ASIA HIT BY LARGE-SCALE POWER BLACKOUT, LEAVING MILLIONS WITHOUT POWER

Around lunchtime on Tuesday, 25th January, a massive power outage swept across several cities in 3 Central Asian countries- Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan. While the blackout took place during the late morning, energy was restored in most places by early evening. Nevertheless, due to the blackout several traffic jams, airport delays, and other public transport disruptions were observed across the cities. Several reports also mentioned that the blackout affected the surrounding provinces in all three countries. Hospitals had to rely on generators to keep critical equipment running and some underground trains were left stuck in tunnels in several cities. Uzbekistan's energy ministry said in a statement that the power outage had been triggered by an accident in Kazakhstan's power grid. They added, "The Uzbek power grid, which is connected to the Unified Power Grid, was damaged as a result of an accident that led to sudden changes in voltage and frequency on 530 lines from Kazakhstan." The grids of these 3 countries are interlinked to the Russian power grid, which proves to be a cover in case of any unexpected shortages.



## 01 BLOCKCHAIN TECHNOLOGY IN RASHTRIYA BAL PURASKAR

The Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar (PMRBP) 2021 - 2022 winners have been recently announced. Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi issued digital certificates to 61 winners. These digital certificates use blockchain-driven technology. This blockchain-driven technology has been developed under the National Blockchain Project, by the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (IIT Kanpur). These digital certificates, issued using blockchain technology, will be stored on digital wallets installed on the mobile phones of the recipients. These certificates cannot be forged, verifiable worldwide, selectively disclosable, and sensitive to user content. This digital technology is being executed by CRUBN. CRUBN is a firm that offers blockchain technology solutions. It was founded by 4 IITians namely; Nilesh Vasita (IIT Kanpur), Ras Dwivedi (IIT Kanpur), Tanmay Yadav (IIT Kanpur), and Mukul Verma (IIT Bombay). This technology was advanced under the guidance of Padma Shri Prof. Manindra Agrawal and Prof. Sandeep K Shukla, who are the joint coordinators of the National Blockchain Project under the National Security Council Secretariat. This project is being funded by the National Security Council Secretariat for developing e-governance solutions using blockchain technology. In the first phase of this project, two e-governance applications were identified, to demonstrate the utility of blockchain technology solutions.

## 02 WORLD'S FASTEST AI SUPERCOMPUTER

Facebook parent company Meta declared that its new artificial intelligence supercomputer will be the fastest across the globe, by the middle of the year 2022. Meta instituted the AI Research Super Cluster (RSC) on January 24, 2022. It is believed to be among the fastest AI supercomputers functioning today.

Presently, AI can perform tasks such as translating text between languages and help in identifying potentially harmful content, etc. However, the development of the next generation of AI will require powerful supercomputers, which are capable of quintillions of operations per second.

RCS will facilitate building new and improved AI models. It will also be able to work across hundreds of different languages. RCS will also play a pivotal role in building technologies for the next major computing platform called the Metaverse, where AI-driven applications and products will play a significant momentous role. Metaverse is a network of three-dimensional virtual worlds. This term is described as a speculative replication of the internet and universal virtual world, in science fiction and futurism. The supercomputer has extraordinary performance as compared to a general-purpose computer. Its performance is commonly calculated in floating-point operations per second (FLOPS), rather than million instructions per second (MIPS).

## 03 NEW JUPITER LIKE EXOPLANET

A new planet has been recently discovered by a group of scientists. The planet is named 'TOI-2180 b'. This planet is three times the size of Jupiter and 105 times denser than the earth. It is not only denser than the earth but also denser than Jupiter. It is 379 light-years away from the earth. It takes 261 days for the planet to orbit its star. This long period of revolution is not commonly found in exoplanets. Its surface temperature is 76 degrees Celsius. The planet is completely made of helium and hydrogen. The planet also has rings and moons around it. It dims by half a percent in a period of 24 hours. This planet discovered is a gas giant exoplanet. In our solar system, the planets Jupiter, Neptune, Uranus, and Saturn are the gas giants. Now, Neptune and Uranus are classified as ice giants for the heavily volatile materials they contain. The gas giant planets are basically made of hydrogen and helium gases. The gas giants do not have any solid matter but are full of swirling gases. Also, this new planet is warmer than most of the outer planets of our solar system. Nonetheless, compared to the other exoplanets discovered so far, it is unusually chill.

Tom Jacobs discovered this exoplanet with the help of a NASA telescope. Tom also used the help of TESS to discover this new exoplanet. TESS is the acronym of Transitioning Exoplanet Survey Satellite. It is an explorer program of NASA.



*Thank you for reading!*

**Hope you enjoyed the content.  
Stay tuned for the next edition!**