

THE COMSOC GAZETTE



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FINANCE AND INVESTMENT

STOCK MARKET

STARTUPS

ECONOMY

GEO POLITICS

SCIENCE AND TECH

COMSOG GENIE

CONTENTS

TABLE OF



Financial Foresights

01

Market Spotlight

02

Corporate Odyssey

03

The Economic Lens

04

The Global Chessboard

05

Scientific Spectra

06

ComSoc Genie

07

FINANCIAL FORESIGHTS

01 RELIANCE JIO'S "BHARATGPT" TO RIVAL CHATGPT

Reliance Jio Infocomm, the preeminent telecommunications service provider in India, is collaborating with the esteemed Indian Institute of Technology-Bombay to unveil 'Bharat GPT', an expansive language model meticulously tailored to cater to India's unique requirements. This momentous announcement was made by the illustrious chairman, Akash Ambani, during his address at the prestigious annual Techfest held at the bustling city of Mumbai.

Jio, with its unwavering commitment to innovation, is poised to usher in a new era of artificial intelligence (AI) within its enterprise and across various sectors. Ambani confidently proclaimed that the forthcoming decade will be indelibly shaped by the advent of large-language models and generative AI. He further emphasised, "We are diligently toiling to introduce AI not only as a vertical within our organisation but also horizontally across all our sectors."

As a subsidiary of Reliance Industries, the telecommunications behemoth is meticulously contemplating the launch of an operating system specifically designed for televisions. Ambani expressed, "We have dedicated considerable efforts towards developing our own operating system for televisions, and we are meticulously strategizing the optimal approach for its grand unveiling."

02 THE NEWEST GET RICH QUICK TRADE

The jubilation on Dalal Street, as India proudly joins the esteemed league of nations with a staggering \$4 trillion market capitalization and the Sensex soaring to unprecedented heights, may appear to be a testament to economic triumph. However, the erudite former RBI Governor, Raghuram Rajan, astutely argues that this exuberance does not necessarily reflect a broader economic prosperity.

In elucidating his critical stance on India's current growth trajectory, despite the flourishing stock market and lucrative equity investments, Rajan attributes this buoyancy to global factors. He highlights the waning apprehensions of a recession and the redirection of emerging market flows from China to India as significant contributors to this phenomenon.

India's resplendent stock market has become a magnet, attracting multitudes of individual investors who yearn to

amass wealth expeditiously. The benchmark S&P BSE Sensex Index has surged by a remarkable 16% this year, culminating in an all-time high this month. This meteoric rise has not only spurred investors to open over 11 million new accounts with the esteemed National Stock Exchange of India in 2023, but has also resulted in an unprecedented influx of funds into mutual funds that specialise in stock investments. Amongst the myriad investment opportunities, subscribing for shares in new listings has emerged as the most popular endeavour, often leading to substantial value surges during the initial days of trading.

03 GOVT. MAKES A PUSH FOR E-COMMERCE EXPORTS

The government has decided to extend benefits under the Remissions of Duties and Taxes on Export Products (RoDTEP) scheme for shipments sent abroad via courier or e-commerce channels from sectors like gems and jewellery, pharma, leather, textiles and handicrafts, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal announced on Thursday.

"To enable the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises to get RoDTEP benefits, particularly for exports through courier and e-commerce route, the government will extend it to certain products, which could help exports from MSMEs of anywhere between one billion to two billion dollars a year," the Minister said, adding that a notification for this will be issued next week. Director General of Foreign Trade Santosh K. Sarangi pointed out that the biggest beneficiary of cross-border e-commerce until now has been China, which has used it to go beyond B2B commerce and directly reach consumers in overseas markets.

"It is estimated that China's cross border e-commerce is to the tune of \$300-350 billion. India has a huge potential for doing this too with its wide variety of products," he said. The Commerce Ministry is also working with the Department of Revenue to set up special e-commerce export zones to speed up customs clearances for couriered goods and the latter has indicated it is open to lifting value-based restrictions on shipments through courier or postal services from the current limit of ₹5 lakh. Talks are also underway with the Reserve Bank of India to relax its 270-day limit for realising export proceeds for overseas e-commerce-driven sales by MSMEs.

01 SEBI MAY EASE THE RULES FOR RUMOUR VERIFICATION

Market regulator SEBI said it might ease the proposed rumour verification norms applicable for the top 100 listed companies, after several firms raised concerns. In a fresh discussion paper, SEBI has proposed changes to rules for verification of market rumours, tweaking of a 24-hour timeline for verification, and proposed some changes in rules regarding pricing of preferential issuances, buybacks and deals.

For confirming or denying rumours about material events, SEBI proposed that the “timeline for verifying market rumour shall be within 24 hours of material price movement instead of within 24 hours of reporting in the mainstream media as per the existing rumour verification requirement”. For deal-related news, the day a rumour is verified would be taken as the cut-off date for price calculation. And the trading session in which it is verified shall be excluded from the calculation.

02 GOVERNMENT ISSUES NOTICE TO 9 OFFSHORE CRYPTOCURRENCY PLATFORMS FOR NON-COMPLIANCE UNDER PMLA

India's Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU), which falls under the purview of the Ministry of Finance has issued show-cause notices to 9 offshore cryptocurrency platforms under Section 13 of the stringent Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). The notices are issued for non-compliance with the anti-money laundering legislation.

The FIU has also written to the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology to block the URL of these entities as their operations in India are illegal in compliance with PMLA provisions.

The nine cryptocurrency exchanges served with the notices are Binance, KuCoin, Huobi, Kraken, Gate.io, Bittrex, Bitstamp, MEXC Global and Bitfinex. The FIU cleared that the compliance mandate in the PMLA provisions is activity-based and does not require a physical presence in India.

03 ULTRATECH CEMENT CROSSES ₹3 LAKH CRORE IN M-CAP AS SHARES TOUCH NEW RECORD HIGH

The flagship entity of the Aditya Birla Group, marked a significant achievement by crossing ₹3 lakh crore in market capitalization during today's trading session. The company is the third-largest cement producer in the world, outside of China, with a total grey cement capacity of 137.85 MTPA. Demonstrating robust performance, the stock has surged by 16% this month, delivering its best monthly performance since July 2022. After breaking the ₹10,000 mark for the first time on December 13, the stock has continued to trade above this level, reaching a new historic high of ₹10,470 apiece with a gain of 4.51%.

As per the latest exchange data, only 20 stocks are currently trading above the ₹10,000 mark on the Indian stock exchanges.

01 XIAOMI UNVEILS COMPETITION TO TESLA AND PORSCHE

Xiaomi has unveiled its debut electric car, the SU7, at the Stride launch event in Beijing on 28 December 2023, expressing aspirations to become one of the world's top five automakers. Xiaomi CEO Lei Jun emphasised a 15 to 20-year plan to elevate China's automotive industry. Manufactured by Beijing Automotive Industry Holding, the electric sedan, marketed under Xiaomi's Mi brand, comes in three variants – SU7, SU7 Pro, and SU7 Max – and three paint schemes. Presenting Lidar-based autonomous driving features, the SU7 runs on Xiaomi's HyperOS operating system. With dimensions measuring 4,997 mm in length, 1,963 mm in width, and 1,440/1,455 mm in height, and a 3,000 mm wheelbase, the midsize premium sedan weighs between 1,980-2,205 kg. Powertrain options include a 73.6 kWh LFP battery and a larger 101 kWh CTB battery, offering an estimated 800 km range. The SU7 features single and dual motor configurations, the latter reaching a peak output of 495 kW (664 hp) and claiming a top speed of 265 kmph, marking it as one of the fastest EVs globally, with pricing details yet to be announced.



02 DECODING RIL-DISNEY DEAL

Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries is reportedly close to acquiring Disney's India business for around \$7–8 billion. This potential deal includes Star India and Viacom18, creating a major entertainment player with 111 channels in eight languages. While Disney values its India business at \$10 billion, the combined entity would have a strong presence, holding 35-40% of the Indian TV market and 40% in advertising. The merger might lead to the closure of some channels due to overlap, pushing others to shift to online platforms. Although the deal is not confirmed, it would undergo scrutiny for tax and legal considerations, especially from the Competition Commission of India.



On the OTT front, combined strengths of JioCinema and Disney+ Hotstar would create a big player with around 40 million subscribers. This move could signal a consolidation of Indian online streaming services, increasing competition against global giants like Netflix and Amazon. The merger's impact on cricket rights could see the combined platform dominating ad revenues, putting pressure on competitors like Bharti Airtel. They might need to partner with global streaming services to stay competitive in the evolving content landscape.

01 INDIA BREAKS NEW GROUND BY SETTLING CRUDE OIL PAYMENT IN RUPEES

India, the world's third-largest energy consumer, has achieved a milestone by making its first-ever payment in rupees for crude oil from the UAE, signalling a push to globalise its local currency. With over 85% dependence on oil imports, India strategically focuses on sourcing from the cheapest suppliers, diversifying its sources, and adhering to international obligations. Despite controversies surrounding Russian oil post-Ukraine war, India's approach saved billions of dollars. In a move to further reduce transaction costs, India, in July, formalised rupee settlements with the UAE, allowing the Indian Oil Corporation to pay for one million barrels of crude oil in rupees from Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC). This shift aligns with India's broader objective of settling trades in rupees instead of dollars.

03 MAKE IN INDIA 2.0

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) is collaborating with 24 sub-sectors, including furniture, aluminium, agrochemicals, and textiles, to enhance domestic manufacturing, boost exports, and reduce imports. 'Make in India' has achieved significant milestones and is now focusing on 27 sectors under 'Make in India 2.0,' with DPIIT leading action plans for 15 manufacturing sectors, while the Department of Commerce oversees 12 service sectors. The 24 chosen sub-sectors, such as furniture, air-conditioners, agri produce, and electronics, align with India's industrial strengths, competitive edge, import substitution needs, export potential, and employment opportunities. Holistic and coordinated efforts aim to foster the growth of these sub-sectors. Investment outreach involves collaboration with ministries, state governments, and Indian missions abroad, with Invest India handling investment identification, handholding, and facilitation for potential investors.

02 INDIA FACES POTENTIAL FISCAL DEFICIT GOAL SHORTFALL IN 2023-24

India is expected to exceed its targeted fiscal deficit of 5.9% of GDP for the current year, with projections indicating a potential increase to 6%. Despite robust tax collections, the likelihood of revenue spending surpassing the Budget Estimate by around ₹2 lakh crore may contribute to this deviation. Parliamentary approval has already been secured for a ₹53,378 crore supplementary demand for grants, elevating the total spending commitment for 2023-24 to ₹45.6 lakh crore. Anticipating a second supplementary demand, experts foresee a rise in revenue expenditure to ₹37.1 lakh crore, exceeding the budgeted amount by over ₹2 lakh crore. The increased expenditure is attributed to specific Ministries and the recovery of more than ₹28,000 crore to the Contingency Fund of India. The initial supplementary demand focused on crucial areas such as food, fertiliser, LPG subsidy, and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), with a ₹14,524 crore top-up for the latter.

THE GLOBAL CHESSBOARD

01 KASHMIR CONFLICT: DECADES OF TENSIONS, UNRESOLVED STRUGGLES, AND GEOPOLITICAL CHALLENGES

The Supreme Court of India upheld the government's decision to revoke Article 370, removing special status for Kashmir. The region's conflict stems from the 1947 partition, with Kashmir being Muslim-majority. Despite UN resolutions for a plebiscite, wars and skirmishes occurred. The 2019 crisis followed militant leader Burhan Wani's killing, causing unrest. India views Kashmir as integral, while Pakistan seeks self-determination. International efforts, like the Simla Agreement, face challenges. Resolving the Kashmir issue requires complex adjustments. Proposals, like internationalising the Line of Control, face obstacles. The conflict persists amid geopolitical tensions, hindering the dream of peaceful Indo-Pakistani relations.

02 REVIVING HOPE: A CONFEDERAL APPROACH TO ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN PEACE

In the aftermath of recent Middle East violence, activists seek alternatives to the fading two-state solution. A Land for All proposes a confederation, envisioning independent Israeli and Palestinian states with shared interests rather than strict separation. The plan involves establishing a sovereign Palestinian state within defined borders, engaging in a confederal arrangement with Israel.

Open borders, resembling the EU's freedom of movement, aim to reduce economic inequality. Citizens can live and work across territories, voting based on citizenship. Security cooperation and a human rights court would protect citizens. Jerusalem becomes an open city, serving as the shared capital. While acknowledging challenges, proponents advocate replacing failed separation with a cooperative partnership for lasting peace.

03 WFCU LAUNCHES \$200,000 DIGITALISATION PROGRAM FOR UKRAINIAN CREDIT UNIONS

The Worldwide Foundation for Credit Unions (WFCU) has initiated a \$200,000 digitalization program in collaboration with the USAID/World Council of Credit Unions (WOCCU) to aid Ukrainian credit unions. Focused on upgrading core banking systems and enhancing services, the initiative aims to address the impact of low digitalization levels during the pandemic and Russia's invasion. The program will assist 26 credit unions in adopting modern core banking systems with API integration and help 52 credit unions optimise operational processes through third-party providers. By enhancing digital capabilities, these credit unions can attract younger members, expand services, and reduce operational risks and costs, ensuring competitiveness in the financial services market. The WFCU has allocated funds from its Ukrainian Credit Union Displacement Fund to facilitate this crucial digital transformation.

01 SOFTWARE SHEDS LIGHT ON NEUTRON STAR COLLISIONS

Scientists are delving into the aftermath of neutron star collisions, believed to be the source of elements like gold and uranium. Researchers from the Max Planck Institute for Gravitational Physics and the University of Potsdam have utilised an advanced software tool to analyse kilonova explosions. These refer to the flashes that result from the catastrophic mergers of neutron stars. By integrating data from various sources, including radio and X-ray observations, nuclear physics calculations, and particle accelerator experiments, the team has developed a comprehensive model focusing on the cosmic event known as GW170817 occurred, which involved the collision of two neutron stars located 130 million light-years away from Earth. These neutron stars, which are incredibly dense and massive, were hurtling through space when they suddenly came together and merged, creating a series of detectable signals on Earth.

02 SODIUM BATTERIES SPARK A REVOLUTION IN THE INDUSTRY

Major players in the battery industry are turning their attention to sodium-based technology, signalling a potential disruption in the energy transition sector. Sodium, more abundant and cheaper than lithium, holds promise for energy storage and electric vehicles. While sodium-ion batteries may not be suitable for larger EVs due to their lower energy density, they could replace lithium in smaller vehicles or find applications in power-grid energy storage. BloombergNEF estimates that sodium could reduce lithium demand by 272,000 tons by 2035.

The shift underscores the challenge of forecasting metal usage in a dynamic industry. Sodium's success hinges on improving cycle life, with current averages at 5,000 cycles compared to lithium's 7,500. Despite recent lithium price fluctuations, sodium remains a cost-effective alternative, especially for grid storage. Chinese producers are expected to dominate the emerging sodium-based cell sector. JAC Motors, a Volkswagen-backed Chinese automaker, is set to launch the first mass-produced electric vehicle with a sodium-ion battery, highlighting China's leadership in this evolving market.

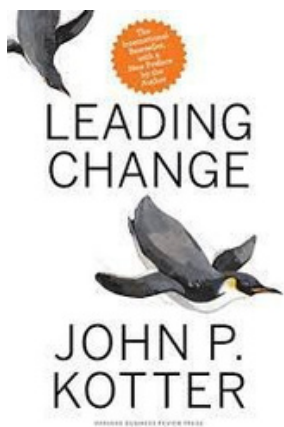
03 ESOIL CAUSES 50% INCREASE IN BARLEY GROWTH

In a groundbreaking study led by the Electronic Plants group at Linköping University, a newly developed eSoil has emerged as a game-changer for hydroponic cultivation. This electrically conductive substrate, tailored for soilless methods like hydroponics, employs a low-power bioelectronic scaffolding that stimulates root systems, resulting in an astonishing 50% increase in barley seedling growth. Unlike traditional substrates such as non-biodegradable mineral wool, eSoil is composed of cellulose and a conductive polymer called PEDOT, which offers an eco-friendly alternative. The primary advantage of eSoil is its minimal energy consumption and absence of high-voltage risks. While researchers acknowledge the mystery surrounding its precise biological mechanisms, they envision eSoil as a catalyst for more efficient seedling processing and growth. As the world grapples with food security challenges and climate change, eSoil presents a promising solution for cultivating crops in urban environments with limited resources and adverse conditions.

MOVIE RECOMMENDATION

INSIDE JOB

The global financial meltdown that took place in Fall 2008 caused millions of job and home losses and plunged the United States into a deep economic recession. Matt Damon narrates a documentary that provides a detailed examination of the elements that led to the collapse and identifies key financial and political players. Director Charles Ferguson conducts a wide range of interviews and traces the story from the United States to China to Iceland to several other global financial hot spots.



BOOK RECOMMENDATION

LEADING CHANGE BY JOHN KOTTER

"John Kotter's concepts on change management and leadership have been widely embraced by millions globally. This highly pertinent book, more essential now than ever before, acts as both a visionary guide and a practical toolkit for effectively navigating the challenging yet vital task of leading change in various organisational settings.

PODCAST RECOMMENDATION

WE STUDY BILLIONAIRES

"The 'We Study Billionaires' podcast, hosted by Stig Brodersen, Preston Pysh, William Green, and Clay Finck, is the flagship podcast of The Investor's Podcast Network, with more than 100 Million downloads.

On the show, they had interviewed and studied famous financial billionaires including Warren Buffett, Charlie Munger, Howard Marks, and Bill Gates, and they teach you what they learn and how you can apply their investment strategies in the stock market.

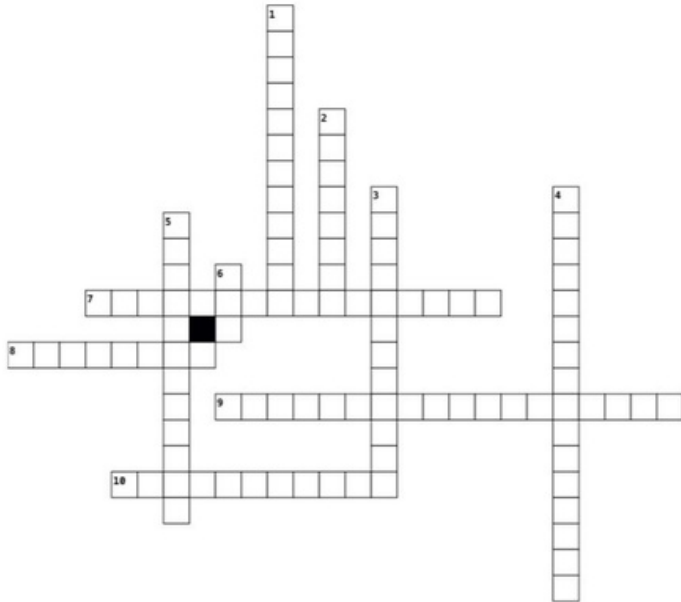


STOCK PICKS

Bharat Electronics, incorporated in the year 1954, is a Large Cap company (having a market cap of Rs 133878.60 Crore) operating in the Defence sector. For the quarter ended 30-09-2023, the company has reported a Consolidated Total Income of Rs 4146.12 Crore, up 12.88% from last quarter Total Income of Rs 3673.17 Crore and up 2.74% from last year same quarter

Total Income of Rs 4035.38 Crore. Company has reported net profit after tax of Rs 780.73 Crore in the latest quarter.

CROSSWORD



DOWN

1. Rahul Dravid is associated with the advertising campaign of which bank?
2. The progress of buying and selling goods and services in the marketplace
3. A corporation that is taxed like a partner ship
4. Liability that is limited to a partner or an investor's investment
5. Legal document and outlining the objectives, structure, and planned operations of a business
6. What economic term describes the total market value of all final goods and services produced in a country in a given period?

ACROSS

7. Which newspaper has the motto - Journalism of Courage?
8. An entity that pays taxes on earnings
9. Full responsibility for all debts and actions of business
10. Person in charge of a meeting

ANSWER IN THE NEXT EDITION

Answers for previous edition

Across

2. Stock Exchange
3. Market Cal
7. Federal Funds Rate
9. Bond
10. Bank Roll

Down

1. Common Stock
4. Royalty
5. Current Ratio
6. Audit
8. Endow

VOCABULARY

1. **APLOMB**: self-confidence or assurance, especially when in a demanding situation.
2. **QUIXOTIC**: extremely idealistic; unrealistic and impractical.
3. **ESOTERIC**: intended for or likely to be understood by only a small number of people with special knowledge.
4. **EPHEMERAL**: lasting for a very short time; transient.
5. **PANACEA**: a solution or remedy for all difficulties or diseases.



JARGONS DECODED

Pivot

Pivot, in business strategy, signifies a fundamental change in a company's direction, products, or target market. It's a strategic adaptation to navigate challenges or capitalise on emerging opportunities for success.

Moonshot

A moonshot refers to an audacious, highly ambitious project or goal, reminiscent of aiming for the moon. It involves pursuing groundbreaking innovation, often with substantial risk and transformative impact.

Strawman

A "strawman" is a rhetorical device involving the presentation of a weakened or misrepresented version of an argument or proposal, intended to make it easier to counter or criticise.

Blue Ocean Strategy

A business approach emphasising innovation to create uncontested market space. It shifts focus from competition to value innovation, fostering growth in new, untapped market segments for sustained success.

Benchmarking

Benchmarking is a strategic management tool involving comparing and evaluating a company's processes, products, or performance against industry leaders or competitors to identify best practices and areas for improvement.

MYTH BUSTERS

Copying a successful business guarantees success

Copying a successful business may seem like a shortcut to success, but it overlooks the importance of innovation and market dynamics. Success often relies on understanding and adapting to specific customer needs, which a mere imitation may not capture. Originality, agility, and a deep understanding of the market contribute more significantly to sustained success.

Entrepreneurs must be extroverts to succeed

The belief that entrepreneurs must be extroverts to succeed is a misconception. While extroversion can aid in networking, introverts bring valuable traits like deep focus and strategic thinking. Success is diverse, and effective communication, rather than extroversion alone, plays a crucial role in navigating the entrepreneurial landscape.

FORTUNE'S FABLES

Snapchat's Snap to Stardom: The Story of Disappearing Content

Snapchat revolutionised social media by introducing ephemeral content, where photos and videos vanish after viewing. Launched in 2011, the app's "Stories" feature allowed users to share moments that disappeared within 24 hours, creating a sense of urgency and authenticity. This unique approach disrupted traditional social platforms, emphasising real-time, unfiltered expression. The disappearing content concept resonated with younger audiences, propelling Snapchat to stardom. Its success prompted imitation by competitors and influenced digital communication trends. The story of Snapchat illustrates how innovative ideas, combined with a deep understanding of user behavior, can redefine an industry, making temporary moments a lasting mark on social media.



“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.” - Eleanor Roosevelt

Thank you for reading!

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

