



March 22, 2022 – Tuesday

### Key Developments

#### **Petrol and diesel prices hiked for the 1st time since November 2, 2021, LPG rates up too**

Petrol and diesel prices have been hiked by 80 paise a litre each, ending a over four and half month hiatus in rate revision. Petrol in Delhi will now cost you Rs 96.21 a litre as against Rs 95.41 previously while diesel rates have gone up from Rs 86.67 per litre to Rs 87.47. The hike comes after 137 days of freeze in rate revision. Prices had been on a pause since November 4 ahead of the assembly elections in states like Uttar Pradesh and Punjab. Petrol and diesel prices per litre in Mumbai will cost Rs 110.82 and Rs 95.00 in Mumbai; Rs 105.51 & Rs 90.62 in Kolkata; Rs 102.16 & Rs 92.19 in Chennai.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/oil-gas/petrol-and-diesel-prices-hiked-for-the-1st-time-since-november-2-2021/articleshow/90365002.cms>

### Economy

#### **Centre says at least 18 states, UTs have pre-published draft rules for four labour codes**

At least 18 states and Union Territories have pre-published draft rules for four labour codes on wages, social security, industrial relations and occupation safety, health and working conditions, the government said on Monday. In a written reply to Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Labour and Employment Rameshwar Teli said that as per the latest information, 27 states/UTs have pre-published the draft rules for the Code on Wages. As many as 23 states/UTs have pre-published draft rules for the Industrial Relations Code while 21 states/UTs have done so for the Code on Social Security. A total of 18 states/UTs have pre-published draft rules under the OSH & WC Code.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/centre-says-at-least-18-states-uts-have-pre-published-draft-rules-for-four-labour-codes/2466978/>

#### **States panel may propose a single 15% GST levy by merging 12% and 18% slabs**

A panel of state ministers set up to suggest changes to the GST rate structure may propose a single 15% levy by merging the 12% and 18% slabs, but is wary of proposing an increase in the threshold rate to 8%, from 5%, given growing inflation concerns. The group of ministers (GoM) is likely to meet this week to take a final call on rates and firm up its recommendations, people familiar with deliberations said. The GST Council is expected to meet early next month to consider the report and the revenue status of the states.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/finance/states-panel-may-propose-a-single-15-gst-levy-by-merging-12-and-18-slabs/articleshow/90342687.cms>

#### **Nomura India Business Resumption Index hits a fresh record**

The Nomura India Business Resumption Index rose to another record high of 126.4 for the week ending March 20 from 122.8 in the previous week, 26.4 percentage points above its pre-pandemic levels. The pickup was broad-based. "Google workplace mobility rose by 2.4 percentage points, retail & recreation by 3.1 percentage points and the Apple driving index by 11.7 percentage points from the previous week, with all mobility indicators above their pre-pandemic levels. The labour participation rate stood at 39.3 per cent on March 20 from 39 per cent in the prior week, while power demand rose by 1.8 per cent w-o-w vs 2.1 per cent," Nomura said.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/nomura-india-business-resumption-indexhits-a-fresh-record/article65245965.ece>

## Banking and Finance

### Govt to unveil plan to boost PSU general insurers

The government is soon likely to announce a plan to strengthen state-run general insurance firms, including details of the capital infusion of about ₹5,000 crore that it has already approved. "An announcement to this effect is expected within this month," said a government official in the know. Three of the four public sector general insurance companies are loss-making.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/finance/govt-to-unveil-plan-to-boost-psu-general-insurers/articleshow/90364296.cms>

### Government files updated draft papers with SEBI for Life Insurance Corporation's 65,000 crore IPO

The government has filed updated draft papers with market regulator Sebi for an initial public offer of LIC, incorporating December quarter financials of the insurance behemoth, an official said on Monday. In the run-up to the mega IPO, on February 13, the government had filed the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) with the regulator giving details of financial results till September. The DRHP got Sebi approval early this month. "Updated DRHP of LIC with December financials has been filed," an official said, adding it was required to be done as per Sebi observations. As per the updated financials, the Life Insurance Corporation reported a net profit of Rs 235 crore in the October-December quarter. The net profit in April-December, 2021, increased to Rs 1,671.57 crore from Rs 7.08 crore a year ago.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/market/lic-ipo-government-files-updated-draft-papers-with-sebi-for-life-insurance-corporations-65000-crore-ipo/2466778/>

### Crypto losses can't be set off, clarifies govt

The worst fears of crypto traders have come true. The government has clarified that losses from one crypto can't be adjusted against gains from another. Responding to questions by Congress MP Karti P. Chidambaram in Parliament, the Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said that as per the Budget, the loss from transfer of a virtual digital asset shall not be allowed to be set off against income from another virtual digital asset.

[https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/wealth/tax/crypto-losses-cant-be-set-off-clarifies-govt/articleshow/90358573.cms?utm\\_source=ETTopNews&utm\\_medium=HP&utm\\_campaign=TN&utm\\_content=23](https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/wealth/tax/crypto-losses-cant-be-set-off-clarifies-govt/articleshow/90358573.cms?utm_source=ETTopNews&utm_medium=HP&utm_campaign=TN&utm_content=23)

## Industry

### Centre deliberating on e-commerce policy draft, says CAIT

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal has said that several ministries, which are related to e-commerce, are deliberating on the e-commerce policy draft and it will be put out in the public domain after discussions, according to a statement issued by domestic traders body CAIT. A delegation of the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) met the minister and presented a white paper on e-commerce. They urged Goyal to roll out an e-commerce policy and form a regulatory authority for the sector. "Piyush Goyal, while talking to the trade delegation, said that e-commerce sector is on priority of the central government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and several ministries which are related with e-commerce are deliberating on the draft of e-commerce policy and as soon as the draft is discussed at the level of the government, the same will be put in public domain," the confederation said in statement.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/centre-deliberating-on-e-commerce-policy-draft-says-cait-122032101012\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/centre-deliberating-on-e-commerce-policy-draft-says-cait-122032101012_1.html)

### Value of MSME invoices financed in FY22 doubles from previous year, triples from FY20

Invoice discounting mechanism for MSMEs — Trade Receivables Discounting System (TReDS) — regulated by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has registered a steep rise in the value of invoices financed in the current financial year vis-a-vis FY21, as per the RBI data. The value of transactions undertaken on TReDS platforms in FY22 doubled to Rs

34,362 crore from Rs 17,080 crore amid Covid in FY21, and more than tripled from Rs 11,165 crore during pre-Covid FY20. The data was shared by MSME Minister Narayan Rane in a written reply to a question in Rajya Sabha on Monday. The overall transaction value since the inception of TReDS in 2017 stood at Rs 69,277.93 crore. "This jump has been due to the successful adoption of TReDS by the private sector as enterprises have realised they can save cost through TReDS as vendors are financed at a very reasonable rate of 4-9 per cent per annum. So, when the cost of funding for vendors reduces, certainly they are able to pass on that benefit to corporates," Sundeep Mohindru, CEO at invoice discounting platform M1xchange told Financial Express Online.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/sme/msme-fin-treds-value-of-msme-invoices-financed-in-fy22-doubles-from-previous-year-triples-from-fy20/2466818/>

#### **Over Rs 276 crore loans disbursed to 18,000 small entrepreneurs under Prayaas scheme**

Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) on Monday said more than Rs 276 crore loans have been disbursed under its Prayaas programme to over 18,000 small entrepreneurs "who are at sustenance level and aspire to reach an enterprise level." The scheme offers credit up to Rs 5 lakh loan in partnership with financial and non-financial intermediaries to women and micro entrepreneurs at the bottom of the pyramid at an affordable rate, SIDBI said in a statement. SIDBI has a dedicated corpus of Rs 1,000 crore earmarked for the programme to provide loans for livelihood activities at interest rates not exceeding 13 per cent, according to the programme details available on SIDBI's website. The addressable credit demand of Rs 11.90 lakh crore in the micro enterprise segment, women entrepreneurs accounting for around 20 per cent of the total proprietary concerns in India, and the cost of micro credit remaining on a higher side are reasons driving SIDBI to come up with focused interventions to support entrepreneurs in livelihood space, the bank noted.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/sme/msme-fin-sidbi-over-rs-276-crore-loans-disbursed-to-18000-small-entrepreneurs-under-prayaas-scheme/2466621/>

#### **Steel firms may use force majeure to call for fresh contracts**

Some Indian steelmakers are planning to invoke the force majeure clause and renegotiate short- and long-term contracts with customers following a surge in raw material costs, including coking coal prices. "Due to the global geopolitical situation, there is a problem of short supply (of coking coal) and that too is at a very high price," said JSW Steel-owned Bhushan Power & Steel in a letter to its customers. "This is a force majeure situation... the net impact is coming to ₹25,250 (per metric tonne). We request you to accept (the price hike) and continue the same (contract)."

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/indl-goods/svs/steel/steel-firms-may-use-force-majeure-to-call-for-fresh-contracts/articleshow/90364346.cms>

#### **Aluminium Association of India seeks PMO intervention as coal supply deteriorates**

Aluminium Association of India (AAI) on Monday said it has written to the Prime Minister's Office seeking its urgent intervention to ward off the imminent disruption in coal supplies with the state-run coal miner deciding to curtail road and rake coal dispatches to the non-power sector. The letter has been prompted by a recent adhoc decision by state-run CIL to further curtail road and rake supplies of coal to the non-power sector, without any advance notice.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/aluminium-association-of-india-seeks-pmo-intervention-as-coal-supply-deteriorates/2467130/>

### **Agriculture**

#### **Hike in urea prices unlikely till 2024**

Amid a cut in urea subsidy in the Budget for 2022-23, the government has admitted that the demand could be more and it may be made available in supplementary demand for grants as there is no intention to either increase the price or cut supply. Besides, the current retail price of ₹266.5 per 45 kg bag may be continued under the proposed urea policy for another two years. Of the total fertiliser subsidy, about 70 per cent goes towards provide cheaper urea to farmers while the rest is used for subsidising potash and phosphorous nutrients. The actual price of urea ranges from ₹1,000 to ₹2,000 for a 45 kg bag.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/hike-in-urea-prices-unlikely-till-2024/article65245921.ece>

## Infrastructure

### **7.7 mn domestic passengers travelled in Feb; 20% more than Jan: DGCA**

Around 76.96 lakh domestic passengers travelled by air in February, approximately 20 per cent more than the 64.08 lakh who flew in January, Indian aviation regulator DGCA said on Monday. The February figure is a sign that the domestic aviation market is recovering after the 43 percent dip that was observed in January due to Omicron variant of coronavirus. In December last year, 1.12 crore domestic passengers had travelled by air. The passenger load factors -- which means occupancy rates -- increased for all Indian carriers in February as compared to January, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) stated in its monthly statement.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/7-7-mn-domestic-passengers-travelled-in-feb-20-more-than-jan-dgca-122032101030\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/7-7-mn-domestic-passengers-travelled-in-feb-20-more-than-jan-dgca-122032101030_1.html)

### **Indian Railways shuns use of diesel for lighting up and cooling coaches**

The Indian Railways has completed its transition from diesel for meeting its electricity requirement inside coaches. According to officials in the know, this will result in a saving upwards of Rs 3854 crores per annum. The electricity being transmitted on the overhead cables will now be used for illumination and air conditioning needs inside trains. "The Indian Railways has converted 1586 trains (992 rakes) from End On Generation (EOG) to Head On Generation (HOG). This move will result in a reduction of CO2 emissions to the tune of nearly 5.8 lakh tonnes per year, besides saving Rs 3854 crores per annum in terms of saving of costly imported diesel," G K Bansal, Executive Director (Information and Publicity) told ET.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/transportation/railways/indian-railways-shuns-use-of-diesel-for-lighting-up-and-cooling-coaches/articleshow/90359395.cms>

## Telecom

### **Telcos say availability of new 5G phones to take a hit due to mandatory local testing decree**

Telcos have warned that consumers may see a sharp slowdown in the availability of latest 5G mobile phones with the government calling for mandatory local testing and certification of such devices from January 1, 2023, before they are sold in the country. Operators have told the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) that such a move would hit data consumption, restrict market access and deprive consumers from buying the latest 5G phones. This scenario would be ironic, given that India's top mobile carriers are readying to pump in top dollars in the upcoming 5G spectrum auctions, likely to be conducted around May-June, and roll out the next-gen wireless broadband networks later in FY23.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/telecom/telecom-news/telcos-say-availability-of-new-5g-phones-to-take-a-hit-due-to-mandatory-local-testing-decree/articleshow/90343607.cms>

### **BSNL/MTNL auction facing challenges: DoT informs Standing Committee**

One of the asset monetisation plans for Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) and Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL) — auction of properties — is facing challenges due to various permissions required from the State governments, the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has told the Standing Committee on Telecommunications and Information Technology. For monetisation of land/ building assets, Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) approved monetisation of 11 assets of BSNL (tentative value ₹18,200 crore) and six assets of MTNL (tentative value ₹5,158 crore) in phase-1, wherein four properties (reserved price of ₹670 crore) of BSNL and two properties (reserved price of ₹290 crore) of MTNL have been taken for e-auction, it informed the Committee.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/national/bsnlmtnl-auction-facing-challenges-dot-informs-standing-committee/article65245889.ece>

## States

### **TN defence corridor to attract investment of over ₹11,000 crore**

MoUs for a potential investment of ₹11,103 crore by 39 industries in the Tamil Nadu Defence Industrial Corridor have been signed. Currently, the actual investment in the corridor is ₹2,217 crore, Union Minister for State for Defence, Ajay Bhatt, said in a written reply to Rajya Sabha MP from the State, P Wilson, on Monday, based on information provided by the State government. Defence Industrial Corridors were established in Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh to attract over ₹10,000 crore investments each. The State governments provide and support development of infrastructure facilities like connecting roads, electricity, water and sewage systems for developing the corridors.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/tn-defence-corridor-to-attract-investment-of-over-11000-crore/article65245878.ece>

### **Assam Electricity Regulatory Commission has allowed rebate of 20% in energy charges for oxygen manufacturing units**

What is likely to bring investment in the oxygen production section, Assam Electricity Regulatory Commission (AERC) has allowed rebate of 20 percent in energy charges for oxygen manufacturing units. Abhijit Barooah, Managing Director, Premier Cryogenics Limited told ET, " During the second wave of covid 19 we have seen how oxygens demand increased manifold. The rebate will bring investment in this sector and assist the existing units in sustaining. "

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/assam-electricity-regulatory-commission-has-allowed-rebate-of-20-in-energy-charges-for-oxygen-manufacturing-units/articleshow/90360325.cms>

### **Maharashtra realtors plan to stop construction as raw material price surge continues**

In the backdrop of escalating prices of key input materials including cement and steel, realty developers in Maharashtra are planning to stop purchasing raw material and pause the construction activity at their ongoing sites. Realty developers have also requested the Maharashtra Real Estate Regulatory Authority to extend the deadline for completion of ongoing projects by at least 6 months so that they get time to pause construction activity until prices rationalise.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/services/property/-/cstruction/maharashtra-realtors-plan-to-stop-construction-as-raw-material-price-surge-continues/articleshow/90348051.cms>

## **Healthcare**

### **Govt considers widening Covid booster shots to all adults in India: Report**

India is considering making all adults eligible for booster doses of COVID-19 vaccine, two sources with knowledge of the matter said on Monday, as infections grow in some countries and some Indians find it hard to travel abroad without a third dose. Only frontline workers and those older than 60 are now allowed to take booster doses in India, whether free in government centres or paid for in private hospitals. The government is debating whether to provide boosters to other groups for free, said one of the sources, who both sought anonymity as the government has yet to make a decision. A health ministry spokesperson did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/govt-considers-widening-covid-booster-shots-to-all-adults-in-india-report-122032100438\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/govt-considers-widening-covid-booster-shots-to-all-adults-in-india-report-122032100438_1.html)

## **External**

### **National Investment and Infrastructure Fund and Australia's sovereign wealth fund to enhance cooperation**

India and Australia on Monday signed a pact enabling India to source critical minerals from the resource rich country down under. A memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed by Khanij Bidesh India Ltd (Kabil) and Australia's Critical Minerals Facilitation Office will establish a framework for joint investments in Australian projects to mine critical minerals.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/national-investment-and-infrastructure-fund-and-australias-sovereign-wealth-fund-to-enhance-cooperation/articleshow/90360989.cms>

### **'India's import of Russia oil less than 1% of total; share from US to rise'**

India buying more volumes of crude oil from Russia is still less than 1 per cent of the total oil imports while the volumes from the US will rise significantly, Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Monday. Replying to supplementaries during the Question Hour in the Rajya Sabha, he said India bought 419,000 tonnes of crude oil from Russia during the first 10 months of the current fiscal year that began in April 2020, which was 0.2 per cent of the total import of 175.9 million tonnes. In 2020-21, India imported 633,000 tonnes of 0.3 per cent while in 2019-20 the purchases were 2.93 million tonnes or 1.3 per cent of total imports, he said.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/india-s-import-of-russia-oil-less-than-1-of-total-share-from-us-to-rise-122032101209\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/india-s-import-of-russia-oil-less-than-1-of-total-share-from-us-to-rise-122032101209_1.html)

### **Ukraine crisis: Exporters explore 3 back-up routes to Russia, CIS nations**

Exporters are readying back-up routes to send their shipments to the nations belonging to the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), including Russia, as the war in Ukraine continues to intensify. Three routes are being explored. The first is the China route using Qingdao port. The second is the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) route that connects Mumbai to Moscow via Iran and Azerbaijan. The other is the one that traverses between Hamburg in Germany and Poti port in Georgia, industry sources said.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/ukraine-crisis-exporters-explore-3-back-up-routes-to-russia-cis-nations-122032000959\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/ukraine-crisis-exporters-explore-3-back-up-routes-to-russia-cis-nations-122032000959_1.html)

### **Garment exporters worried about fall in global orders**

Garment makers in Tirupur and Noida are seeing up to a 25% reduction in fresh orders from global brands like Mango, Zara, H&M after they suspended operations in Russia following its invasion of Ukraine. Spanish fashion retailer Inditex - which owns Zara - has halted trading in Russia, closing its 502 shops and stopping online sales a fortnight ago. H&M has suspended operations in Russia, while Spain's second-largest fashion retailer Mango has also temporarily closed its 120 shops in Russia.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/garment-exporters-worried-about-fall-in-global-orders/articleshow/90362216.cms>