



February 15, 2023 – Wednesday

## Economy

### WPI inflation eases to 4.73 per cent in January

The wholesale price-based inflation eased for the eight consecutive month to 4.73 per cent in January on easing prices of manufactured items, fuel and power. The wholesale price-index (WPI) based inflation rate was 4.95 per cent in December 2022 and 13.68 per cent in January 2022. Inflation in food articles, however, rose to 2.38 per cent in January, from (-) 1.25 per cent in December, 2022. "Decline in the rate of inflation in January, 2023 is primarily contributed by mineral oils, chemicals & chemical products, textiles, crude petroleum & natural gas, textiles, and food products," the Commerce and Industry Ministry said on Tuesday. Inflation in pulses was 2.41 per cent, while in vegetables was (-) 26.48 per cent. Inflation in oil seeds was (-) 4.22 per cent in January, 2023. Fuel and power basket inflation eased to 15.15 per cent, from 18.09 per cent in December 2022. In Manufactured products it was 2.99 per cent, against 3.37 per cent in December, 2022.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/economy/wpi-inflation-eases-to-4-73-per-cent-in-january/2981022/>

### India leapfrogged 40 yrs of development with DPI: G20 Sherpa Amitabh Kant

With effective implementation of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) like Aadhaar, CoWin, many others, India leapfrogged 40 years of development and made progress in seven years which was expected to be achieved in 47 years, G20 Sherpa Amitabh Kant said here on Tuesday. Kant was giving a keynote address in the first Digital Economy Working Group (DEWG) meeting that witnessed active participation from G20 members, knowledge partners, and eight guest countries. "With effective implementation of DPI, India leapfrogged 40 years of development and made progress in 7 years which was expected to be achieved in 47 years. Any country can use the already developed DPIs and innovate on the top of the same," Kant said in a statement. Kant spoke at length about the successes of DPI in terms of inclusion, delivery of social services, preventing monopolisation in digital space, and security, privacy & governance.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/india-leapfrogged-40-yrs-of-development-with-dpi-g20-sherpa-amitabh-kant/articleshow/97925277.cms>

## Banking and Finance

### RBI's FAQ on guidelines for digital lending: Key details

In an FAQ on guidelines for digital lending, the RBI said on Tuesday that in the event of a loan turning delinquent, the lender must give the borrower the details of the recovery agent before the agent comes visiting. According to the RBI FAQ, "If the loan turns delinquent and the recovery agent has been assigned to the borrower, the particulars of such recovery agent assigned must be communicated to the borrower through email/SMS before the recovery agent contacts the borrower for recovery." Besides, the lender also needs to provide the borrower the names/details of empanelled agents at the time of sanctioning the loan. Only those agents are authorised to contact the borrowers when there is a default on the loan, the document said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/banking/finance/banking/rbis-faq-on-guidelines-for-digital-lending-key-details/articleshow/97922638.cms>

### **Loans on debit cards to be governed by digital lending guidelines: RBI**

Loans offered on debit cards, including equated monthly instalment (EMI) programmes, would be governed under the digital lending guidelines of the Reserve Bank of India, the central bank clarified on Tuesday. EMI programmes on credit cards would continue to be governed by rules laid down in the master direction on credit card and debit card issuance (2022). But loan products other than the EMI programmes offered on credit cards, which are not covered under the master direction on credit and debit card issuance, would have to adhere to the digital lending guidelines of RBI. Responding to the frequently asked questions (FAQs) on digital lending guidelines, RBI said, "EMI programmes on credit cards are governed specifically by ... 'Master Direction on Credit Card and Debit Card – Issuance and Conduct, 2022'. Such transactions shall not be covered under the guidelines on digital Lending".

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/finance/loans-on-debit-cards-to-be-governed-by-digital-lending-guidelines-rbi-123021401991\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/finance/loans-on-debit-cards-to-be-governed-by-digital-lending-guidelines-rbi-123021401991_1.html)

### **Life insurance companies plan strategy tweak to offset tax impact**

Life insurers are considering changes in business strategy to offset the possible impact of the proposed tax on high-value policies even as they wait for some relaxations from the government.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/pf/life-insurance-companies-plan-strategy-tweak-to-offset-tax-impact-123021500005\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/pf/life-insurance-companies-plan-strategy-tweak-to-offset-tax-impact-123021500005_1.html)

### **Rs 40-trillion MF industry braces for industry-wide forensic audit**

The Rs 40-trillion mutual fund (MF) industry is bracing for a comprehensive audit — a move aimed at boosting investor confidence. In a first, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has invited Expression of Interest (Eoi) for empanelment of forensic auditors, specifically for MFs.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/pf/rs-40-trillion-mf-industry-braces-for-industry-wide-forensic-audit-123021401952\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/pf/rs-40-trillion-mf-industry-braces-for-industry-wide-forensic-audit-123021401952_1.html)

### **Will use property tax data, electricity bill to increase GST base: CBIC Chairman**

The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) will use the data of electric meters and property tax to increase the base of goods and services tax (GST), said Vivek Johri, CBIC Chairman. When GST was implemented, there was a GST tax base of Rs 45-50 lakh, which has now increased to Rs 1.4 crore, said Johri. The CBIC Chairman added, "We feel that there is a good scope for increasing the tax base. We will take the help of power distribution companies, take the data of electric meters and will also use the property tax data to increase the tax base of GST." In an exclusive interview with ANI, the CBIC Chairman said the board's strategy regarding GST is that collecting revenue is its target, along with that it is also necessary to increase the tax base.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/will-use-property-tax-data-electricity-bill-to-increase-gst-base-cbic-chairman/articleshow/97909154.cms>

### **CBDT nod 3 new electoral trusts; 15 others get renewal**

The Central Board of Direct Taxes has given approval to three new electoral trusts and renewed approval for 15 others. The CBDT has issued an updated list of approved electoral trusts as on December 12, 2022, with names of 18 such entities. Small Donation Electoral Trust, Independent Electoral Trust and Bhartiya Bhumi Electoral Trust have been given fresh approval, while approval has been renewed for trusts such as Prudent Electoral Trust and Progress Electoral Trust. A former senior official of the Election Commission said when such bodies fulfil criteria, the CBDT approves them to function as electoral trusts.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/cbd-t-nod-3-new-electoral-trusts-15-others-get-renewal/articleshow/97924498.cms>

### **States' borrowing cost continues to rise despite 52 pc less supply**

The cost of market borrowings for states rose on Tuesday with the average pricing on their bonds rising by 5 basis points to 7.66 per cent despite the draw down was just about half of the indicated amount. The states' borrowing cost has risen for the third consecutive week. Eleven states raised Rs 11,900 crore through state government securities (SGS) on Tuesday, which was 52 per cent less than the amount indicated for this week in the auction calendar. In spite of lower supply, the weighted average cut-off rose by 5 basis points to 7.66 per cent from 7.61 per

cent in the last auction. This was also despite the decline in the weighted average tenor to 11 years from 15 years, Icra Ratings said in a note.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/finance/states-borrowing-cost-continues-to-rise-despite-52-pc-less-supply/articleshow/97924317.cms>

## Industry

### **MCA21 glitches: Sitharaman reviews matter; directs setting up special team to address grievances**

Amid stakeholders facing glitches in submitting forms under the companies law through the MCA21 portal, Union minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday asked the corporate affairs ministry to form a special team to address public grievances on a priority basis. Besides, Sitharaman, who is in charge of the ministries of finance and corporate affairs, has asked the corporate affairs ministry to monitor the issues on a daily basis. Filings under the companies law and the limited liability partnership law are submitted to the corporate affairs ministry through the MCA21 portal and in recent days, there have been complaints about technical issues with the portal.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/mca21-glitches-sitharaman-reviews-matter-directs-setting-up-special-team-to-address-grievances/articleshow/97916058.cms>

### **Supply chains back to pre-Covid levels for consumer durable firms**

Automotive and consumer durables companies, which depend on China for components, have seen supply chain constraints ease after China ended its zero-Covid policy.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/consumer-durable-supply-chain-back-to-pre-pandemic-as-china-lifts-curbs-123021401944\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/consumer-durable-supply-chain-back-to-pre-pandemic-as-china-lifts-curbs-123021401944_1.html)

### **Steel prices rise 5% on higher export queries, improved domestic demand**

Steel prices have witnessed a 5 per cent rise, sequentially, in the second week of February, with the price of benchmark hot rolled coils (HRCs) being at around ₹59,700 per tonne. Prices have been increased by ₹2,900 over the last one month. The February price hikes came, after two similar ones were initiated in January, following a pick up in export orders and queries across markets such as Europe, UAE and Vietnam; better domestic demand because of restocking; and higher raw material prices. Imported steel prices too have moved up making them unviable. According to Jayant Acharya, Group Managing Director, JSW Steel, the country's largest steel producer by volume, things are looking up on the pricing side. "You are seeing the prices increase from January 1 in some of the products from maybe mid-January as well. You will see this probably play out in this quarter which is seasonally a better quarter," he said during the post earnings call.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/companies/steel-prices-in-india-rise-5-per-cent-on-higher-export-queries-improved-domestic-demand/article66508262.ece>

### **Commercial vehicle industry volumes to see 7-10 pc growth in FY24: Icra**

The commercial vehicle industry volume is expected to grow in the range of 7-10 per cent in the next financial year, rating agency Icra said on Tuesday. The volume growth would be on account of government infrastructure spending, replacement demand, back-to-school and office scenarios and e-commerce expansion, it noted. The growth will, however, moderate from 24-26 per cent in the current financial year, it added. Icra noted that the growth trends were visible in third quarter of the current fiscal, with wholesale dispatches reporting a growth of 16 per cent on a year-on-year basis, supported by replacement demand, improvement in the macroeconomic environment, and healthy traction in the underlying industries such as steel, cement, mining, automobiles, and e-commerce.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/auto/lcv-hcv/commercial-vehicle-industry-volumes-to-see-7-10-pc-growth-in-fy24-icra/articleshow/97912201.cms>

### **Digital lending to pip traditional lending in unsecured loans segment by 2030: Report**

Fintechs will fuel digital lending over the next seven years, and take it ahead of traditional lending by 2030 in the unsecured loans category, a credit information company said on Tuesday. This will be driven by deeper inroads being made in the unsecured small-ticket size segment as well as the secured collateral-based high-ticket size market, the report by Experian India said. The company said it analysed the role of fintech-led digital lending to arrive at the

predictions on the unsecured lending front, where lending happens through personal loans and credit cards sans any securities. "Traditional lenders have always dominated asset-backed lending. With increased digitisation, this segment may become accessible to fintech lenders, allowing them to capture a sizeable portion of the lending pie," Saikrishnan Srinivasan, managing director at Experian Credit Information Company of India, said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/banking/finance/banking/digital-lending-to-pip-traditional-lending-in-unsecured-loans-segment-by-2030-report/articleshow/97924643.cms>

## Agriculture

### Wheat output seen rising 5%

Wheat production for the kharif season (July to June) 2022-23 is expected to rise 5% year-on-year to 112.18 million tonnes (MT), according to the second advance estimate released by the ministry of agriculture on Tuesday. The production of rice is expected to increase marginally to 130.83 MT. India's overall production of foodgrains is estimated to be 322.55 MT, with an expected record production of rice, wheat, maize, gram, pulses, rapeseed and mustard. The production of millets is expected to be 52.72 MT, 1.625 MT more than last year's output, while that of maize is expected to be 34.61 MT, 8.83 MT more than last year's 33.730 MT.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/wheat-output-seen-rising-5/articleshow/97926270.cms>

### Drone use not limited to pesticide spraying; tremendous scope in organic, natural farming too: Govt

Union minister of civil aviation on Tuesday said the applicability of drone in the agriculture sector is beyond pesticide spraying and has tremendous scope in organic and natural farming as well. Drone industry in India has grown 6-8 times in the last one-and-a-half years. The drone infrastructure set up in the country is "extremely robust" and an Indian case study of drones as pioneer in agriculture will be exhibited in the ongoing meeting of G20 agriculture working group. Addressing the media on the sidelines of the first G-20 Agriculture Deputies Meeting here, the Union minister said: "Don't look at drones through narrow lines. The versatility and diversity of the application of using drones as service is vast."

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/drone-use-not-limited-to-pesticide-spraying-tremendous-scope-in-organic-natural-farming-too-govt/articleshow/97916624.cms>

### Government planning to include additional 21 airports under Krishi Udan, says Jyotiraditya Scindia

Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia on Tuesday said the Krishi Udan scheme has been a huge success and the central government is planning to include additional 21 airports under this. "At least 31 airports are under the Krishi Udan. We are speaking with MoD (Ministry of Defence) to include another 21 airports under Krishi Udan," Scindia told reporters while briefing about the second day deliberations of the first G20 Agriculture Deputies Meeting held here. He said Krishi Udan, a special flight meant for quick transportation of agricultural produce, has been a huge success. Citing examples, he said lemon, jackfruit and grapes grown in the North East are transported not only to other parts of the country but also to other nations like Germany, London, Singapore and the Philippines.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/infrastructure/airlines-aviation/government-planning-to-include-additional-21-airports-under-krishi-udan-says-jyotiraditya-scindia/2980918/>

### Centre projects record wheat, mustard and chana crop this rabi season

Wheat production in the coming rabi marketing season (2023-24) is expected to be at an all-time high of 112.18 million tonnes (MT), up 4.12 per cent from last year, on the back of a sharp increase in acreage, according to the second advance estimates of the agriculture ministry released on Tuesday. Production of mustard and chana are also projected to hit record highs this season, the estimates show. A good harvest of wheat, chana and mustard will help the Centre to rein in food inflation, particularly in cereals, which rose again in January.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/centre-projects-record-wheat-mustard-and-chana-crop-this-rabi-season-123021401969\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/centre-projects-record-wheat-mustard-and-chana-crop-this-rabi-season-123021401969_1.html)

## Infrastructure

### Higher govt capex help infra companies clock 17-20% revenue growth: Report

Higher government spending on infrastructure in FY24 will propel engineering, procurement, and construction companies to hit revenue growth of 17-20 per cent, taking their profit to the pre-Covid level, a report said on Tuesday. In the Budget 2023-24, the government has increased the outlay for capital expenditure (capex) on infrastructure sector by 33 per cent from Rs 7.5 lakh crore to Rs 10 lakh crore. Forecasting higher revenue and thicker bottom-line, rating agency Crisil in a report also placed their credit outlook positive citing improving debt metrics. The optimism is supported by the expected strong order inflows due to the government thrust on infrastructure in the latest budget.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/higher-govt-capex-help-infra-companies-clock-17-20-revenue-growth-report-123021401329\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/higher-govt-capex-help-infra-companies-clock-17-20-revenue-growth-report-123021401329_1.html)

## Energy

### Country's first waste-to-hydrogen plant to be set up in Pune, said official

The country's first solid waste-to-hydrogen plant will be set up in Pune at a cost of over Rs 430 crore, an official said on Tuesday. The plant will be set up by sustainability solutions provider TheGreenBillions Ltd (TGBL), who has entered into a 30-year-long agreement with Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC). It will treat 350 tonnes of solid garbage every day by next year, TGBL chairman and founder Prateek Kanakia told PTI here. "Our plan is to produce 10 tonnes of hydrogen daily from 350 tonnes of solid waste. We are setting up the plant at Hadapsar Industrial Estate in Pune. This is the first attempt in India to extract hydrogen from waste," he added.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/country-s-first-waste-to-hydrogen-plant-to-be-set-up-in-pune-said-official-123021401160\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/country-s-first-waste-to-hydrogen-plant-to-be-set-up-in-pune-said-official-123021401160_1.html)

### Over 17,000 circuit kilometers of transmission lines installed in last 9 yrs: Power Minister R K Singh

Over 17,000 circuit kilometers of transmission lines were installed in India in the last nine years to strengthen the electricity distribution system, Union Power Minister R K Singh said on Tuesday. He made the remarks while addressing delegates from the West African region at an event organised by the International Solar Alliance (ISA) in collaboration with Grid Controller of India Ltd (Grid-India) and West African Power Pool (WAPP) in the national capital. The usage of renewable energy is cheaper compared to the conventional form of energy sources, Singh said, urging the participants to increase use of green energy in their countries. Besides making energy available to their people, these nations must also lay emphasis on the transmission as well as storage of power, he noted.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/power/over-17000-circuit-kilometers-of-transmission-lines-installed-in-last-9-yrs-power-minister-r-k-singh/articleshow/97920951.cms>

## Telecom

### DoT asks Trai to add stricter benchmark in telecom service quality norms

The Department of Telecommunications has asked sector regulator Trai to make quality of service norms stricter in order to curb call drops and improve call quality, an official source said on Tuesday. The move comes after the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) collected feedback from the public through an IVRS call around call drop, quality of calls etc. "Quality of service is very important for customer satisfaction and protection of their interests. DoT has requested Trai for improvement in the present quality of service (QoS) through more stringent parameters," an official said. The source said that the DoT also observed few key performance indicators while broadly studying global best practices on QoS. "Same has been shared with Trai today," the source added.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/telecom/telecom-news/dot-asks-trai-to-add-stricter-benchmark-in-telecom-service-quality-norms/articleshow/97925712.cms>

## States

### Tamil Nadu's new EV policy offers various incentives for the sector

Reimbursement of state goods and services tax (SGST), investment and turnover based subsidy, advanced chemistry cell subsidy, electrification of public and commercial transport, formation of electric vehicle cities are some of the features of Tamil Nadu Electric Vehicles Policy 2023. The new policy was released by Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on

Tuesday. According to the policy, the government will promote Chennai, Coimbatore, Tiruchirappalli, Madurai, Salem, and Tirunelveli as pilot cities for implementing e-mobility solutions.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/tamil-nadu-s-new-ev-policy-offers-various-incentives-for-the-sector-123021401171\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/tamil-nadu-s-new-ev-policy-offers-various-incentives-for-the-sector-123021401171_1.html)

### **Andhra Pradesh bullish on investments, aims 10% share in India's exports soon**

Andhra Pradesh will soon contribute to 10% of India's annual exports once new ports projects as well as last mile connectivity are completed, Industries & Infrastructure Minister Gudivada Amarnath said here on Tuesday. The state's exports increased by 15.31% compared to the performance in 2021-22, the recent Leads Report has said, placing it among the achievers in the coastal states, Amarnath said in an interaction with investors ahead of AP's two-day global investors summit scheduled from March 3.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/andhra-pradesh-bullish-on-investments-aims-10-share-in-indias-exports-soon/articleshow/97920481.cms>

### **External**

### **India appeals to G20 nations to adopt '3S' formula in agriculture for tackling food security concerns**

India on Tuesday called on G20 nations to adopt '3S' strategy – Smart, Sustainable and Serve – for the agriculture ecosystem in order to address the global food security concerns. Addressing media on the sidelines of the first G20 Agriculture Deputies' Meeting here, Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said agriculture for India has always been a priority and for the world it has fully come to the fore now. "Our thinking is we have to adopt 3S strategy for the agriculture ecosystem to make a mark on the world food system," Scindia said. The 3S strategy is 'smart' and 'sustainable' agriculture which should 'serve' all, he said. For smart agriculture, Scindia emphasised on adopting drone and other new technologies for increasing the crop yield.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/economy/india-appeals-to-g20-nations-to-adopt-3s-formula-in-agriculture-for-tackling-food-security-concerns/2981232/>

### **India's Rupee trade plans with Russia has likely run into trouble**

India's love for discounted Russia oil is widening its trade deficit with Moscow and the casualty is their much-touted rupee trade plan. The gap between their exports and imports is rising and that's making the local currency payment mechanism futile, people familiar with the matter said, asking not to be identified as the discussions are private. No payment has been initiated because Russian banks do not want excess rupee piling up, they said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/indias-rupee-trade-plans-with-russia-has-likely-run-into-trouble/articleshow/97901787.cms>

### **Soyameal shipments may more than double this season as demand rebounds**

With the rebound in demand for Indian soyameal, especially from the South-East Asian and Far Eastern countries, the industry expects meal shipments to more than double to 14 lakh tonnes (lt) in the current oil season (October 2022-September 2023). Soyameal exports are off to a good start. In the first four months of the season, shipments have increased by 65 per cent to 6.31 lt (3.83 lt).

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/soyameal-shipments-may-more-than-double-this-season-as-demand-rebounds/article66508997.ece>