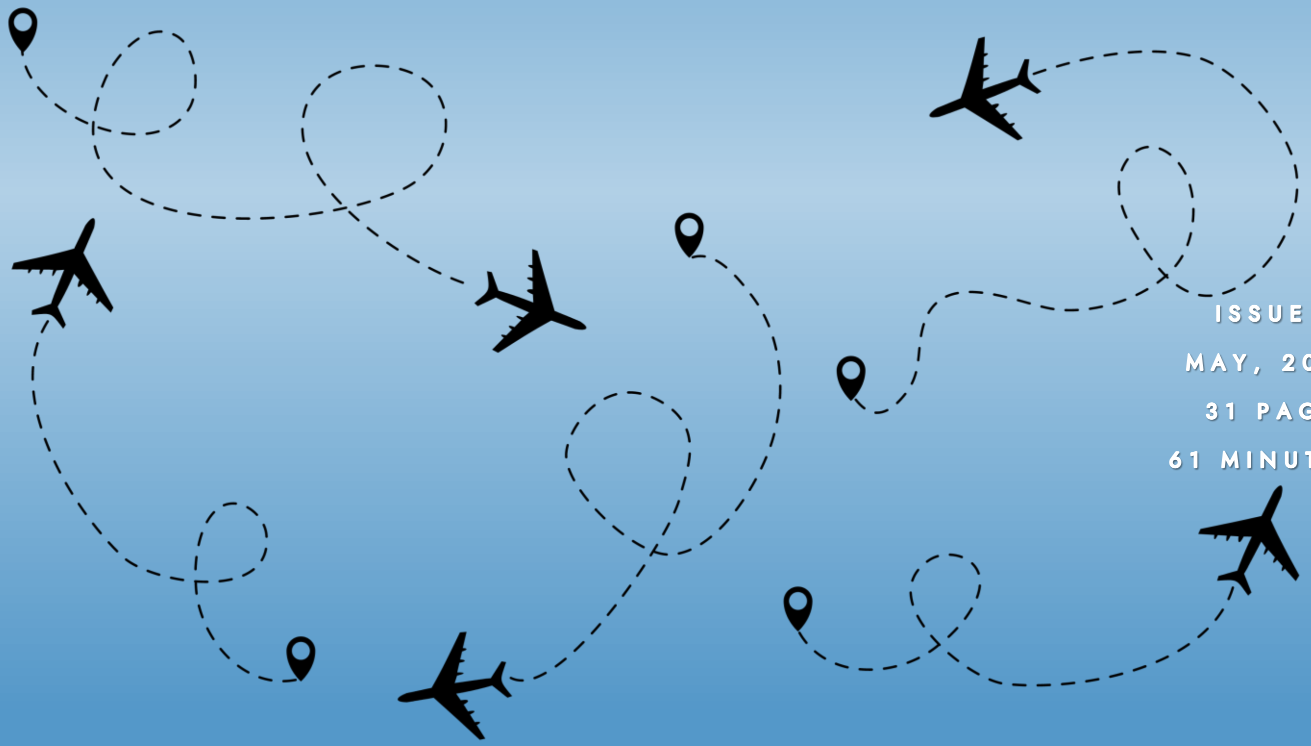
GREEN DIGEST

EVERYTHING THAT CONCERNS YOUR MONEY



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ABOUT US

Greenvissage is a CFO consulting firm with the passion and expertise in helping companies set up in India and in managing their finances, accounts, payroll, taxes and compliances.
At Greenvissage, our constant endeavor is to help companies achieve growth that is scalable, sustainable and hassle-free through our CFO Consulting and Business Advisory Services.
Greenvissage, one of the trusted and top CFO Consulting firms serves clients from over 12 countries and wades them through hundreds of statutory and internal target lines every year.
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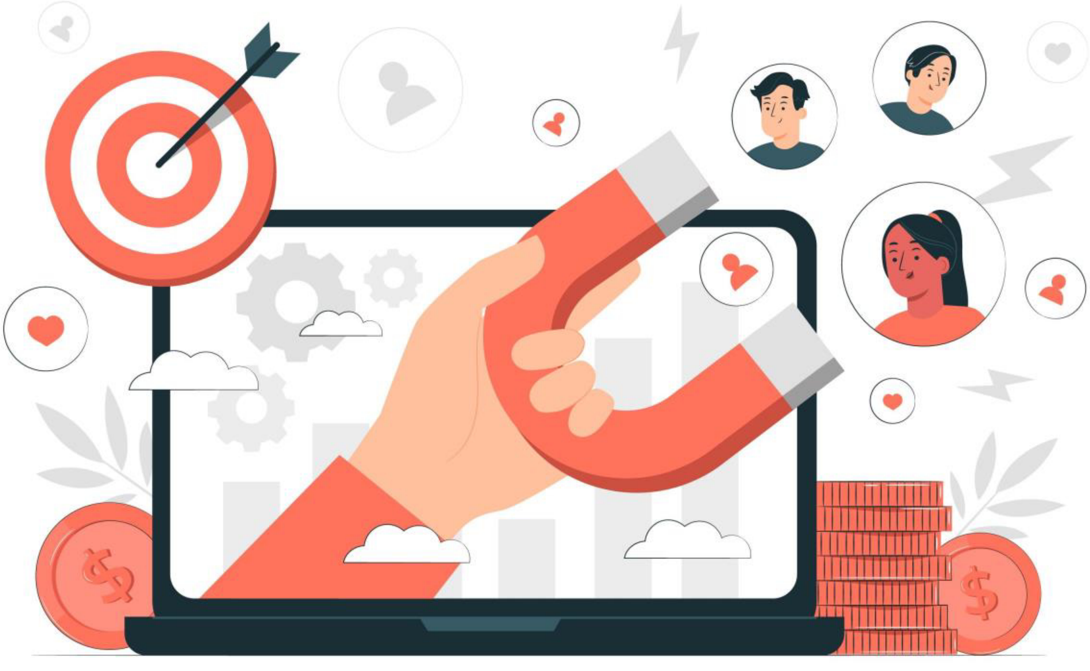


THE BIG STORY

Greenvissage

Sahara, Deccan, Kingfisher, Jet Airways and now Go First – Why are airline companies struggling to survive in India?

Introduction

The Indian aviation industry has been experiencing significant growth in recent years. It is one of the fastest-growing aviation markets in the world, with a high demand for both domestic and international air travel. The industry is supported by a growing economy, rising income levels, and a large population with a growing propensity to travel. In addition to passenger airlines, the Indian aviation industry also has a growing cargo sector, with companies like Blue Dart and SpiceXpress providing air cargo services across the country. The Indian government has been taking various initiatives to support the growth of the aviation industry, including the development of new airports and the modernization of existing ones. The government has also launched the Regional Connectivity Scheme (UDAN) to improve air connectivity to remote and underserved areas of the country. However, despite this growth, several airlines have folded in recent years, leaving many wondering why this is happening. With Spicejet already struggling to survive, Go First is the latest in the list of airlines unable to withstand their business.

What happened with Go First?

Go First (formerly known as GoAir), one of India's leading low-cost airlines has been facing financial challenges for some time. The airline, which operates primarily in the domestic market, has been struggling to compete with bigger players like IndiGo and SpiceJet, which have a larger market share and greater financial strength. The Covid-19 pandemic further exacerbated Go First's financial difficulties. The airline was forced to suspend operations during the nationwide lockdown in 2020, and even after resuming operations, it faced reduced demand for air travel, resulting in lower revenues. In May 2021, Go First's financial troubles came to a head when it was reported that the airline was on the verge of insolvency. The airline had accumulated significant debts, including unpaid salaries to employees, and had been unable to secure additional funding from investors. Despite efforts to improve its financial position, such as reducing its fleet size and cutting routes, the airline was unable to achieve profitability. The company's financial troubles were also compounded by its ownership structure. The airline is owned by the Wadia Group, a diversified conglomerate that also has interests in textiles, real estate, and consumer goods. The Wadia Group's other businesses have also been facing financial challenges, further limiting the group's ability to support Go First financially. In response to its financial challenges, Go First had been exploring various options to raise capital, including seeking a buyer for a controlling stake in the airline. However, no buyer was found, and the airline's financial situation continues to be precarious. And thus, the company finally halted its operations and filed for insolvency. The insolvency process will be managed by the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) and a resolution professional will be appointed to manage the affairs of the airline during the process. The objective of the insolvency process is to find a new investor who can take over the airline and revive its operations. If no investor is found, the airline may be liquidated.

Why are Airlines failing in India?

India's aviation industry has seen significant growth in recent years, with more people flying than ever before. However, private airlines in India have struggled to survive, with many failing over the past decade. One of the biggest challenges facing private airlines in India is the intense competition from established players like IndiGo and Air India. These airlines have strong brand recognition, loyal customer bases, and extensive route networks, making it difficult for new entrants to compete effectively.

With a large number of airlines operating in the country, competition for passengers is fierce, and profit margins can be slim. This is particularly true for low-cost carriers, which make up a significant portion of the market. These airlines often operate on thin margins and rely on high passenger volumes to stay afloat. Besides, running an airline is an expensive business, and private airlines in India often struggle with high operating costs. Fuel prices, airport charges, and maintenance costs are all significant expenses for airlines, and these costs can be difficult to manage when revenue streams are limited. Fluctuations in global oil prices can have a significant impact on the profitability of airlines, particularly for those that are struggling to maintain high passenger volumes. The Indian aviation industry is also heavily regulated by the government, and private airlines often face challenges in obtaining necessary licenses and permits. Additionally, the government imposes various taxes and fees on the industry, which can be a significant financial burden for airlines.

Although Government has been working on improving infrastructure, the airports and air traffic control systems are often overcrowded and outdated, causing delays and disruptions for airlines. Finally, poor management is a common reason why private airlines fail in India. Airlines require strong leadership, effective cost management, and strategic planning to succeed in a highly competitive industry. However, many private airlines in India have struggled with mismanagement, which has led to financial losses and ultimately, bankruptcy.

Costs of operating flights

The Indian aviation industry faces various costs that impact airlines' profitability and passenger growth. Aviation policy is regulated by the Ministry of Civil Aviation and the DGCA, which is responsible for safety, licensing, and airworthiness. However, experts argue that India has not kept pace with modern technology, which has increased costs to the industry. Although no-frills brands faced intense competition, the government levies high taxes on Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF), which contributes to 40-50% of operational expenses. Some Indian states also impose provincial taxes of up to 30% on jet fuel, making shorter flight routes unsustainable for smaller airlines. Leasing also adds high costs to operations as about 80% of India's total commercial fleet is leased, and airlines pay annual lease rents of about INR 10,000 crores to lessors, making up nearly 15% of the revenues of Indian Airlines, except Air India. The costs of these leases go up further when the Indian rupee depreciates during short and long-term global financial developments. Airlines also bear costs related to airport fees for the use of airport facilities, including aircraft landing, freight, and other charges related to the use of airport infrastructure such as runways and passenger terminals. While internationally, airlines pass on these charges to passengers, carriers in India have to remain competitive and offer lower ticket fares to increase reach. Lastly, there are high costs associated with the training of airline crew, and the inadequate number of Flight Training Organisations has led to a crunch in pilots.

EXPERT OPINION

Greenvissage

The India Story – What makes India the focus of global attention and economic activities?

By Amit Chandak, Managing Partner, Greenvissage

Background

India is poised to become a major investment destination for global businesses as the country's economy continues to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite facing significant challenges during the pandemic, including a sharp economic contraction in 2020, India is now seeing strong growth in various sectors, including manufacturing, services, and agriculture. International investors are taking note of India's potential, with many already increasing their investments in the country. Some of the world's largest tech companies, including Apple, Google, and Amazon, have announced plans to expand their operations in India, while other major firms are investing in areas such as renewable energy, infrastructure, and healthcare. The Indian government has also been working to improve the country's business environment, with measures aimed at simplifying regulations, reducing bureaucracy, and boosting foreign investment. These efforts have already resulted in increased foreign direct investment (FDI) in India, with the country recording a 13% increase in FDI inflows in 2021. Despite these positive developments, India still faces significant challenges, including a high level of income inequality, a large informal sector, and ongoing issues related to corruption and red tape. However, with its large and growing consumer market, a young and skilled workforce, and a favourable business environment, India is well positioned to attract increasing amounts of foreign investment in the coming years.

Young workforce

Recently India surpassed China's population and became the most populated country in the world. While this might sound like increased pressure on resources, India is well positioned on its growth and development trajectory. India's population is one of the largest in the world, which means that there is a vast pool of potential workers. This workforce is also diverse, with different levels of education and skill sets, which can be leveraged to drive economic growth and innovation. India has a young population, with over 65% of the population under the age of 35. This demographic dividend is expected to provide a boost to the economy in the coming years as these young people enter the workforce and drive growth. Indians are well-known for their innovation and entrepreneurial spirit. With a large pool of talented individuals, India has the potential to be a leader in innovation and technology. Overall, India's population represents a significant asset for the country, providing a strong foundation for economic growth and development. However, it is important to note that India also faces significant challenges, including poverty, inequality, and infrastructure issues, that need to be addressed to fully realize the potential of its population.

Manufacturing hub

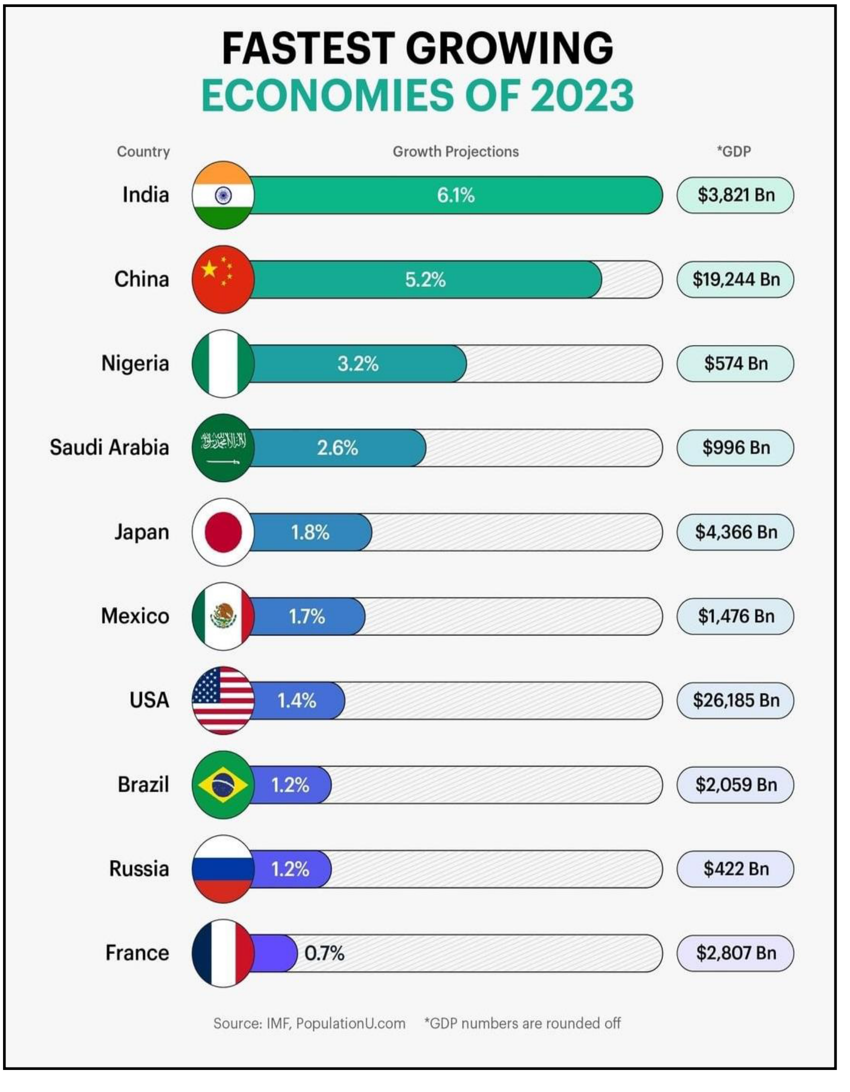
India's Sensex index has been trading at a record high compared to the S&P 500, reflecting the country's potential to attract capital investments. India's manufacturing sector has been a focus of the government since the launch of the 'Make in India' campaign in 2014, which aimed to emulate the successes of East Asian countries such as Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan, which had turned into rich economies by filling factories with workers who made products that the world wanted to buy. However, boosting manufacturing to 25% of GDP, a key metric for the program, has proved elusive. While the ratio rose to 17.4% in 2020 compared to 15.3% in 2000, Vietnam's factory sector's share of GDP doubled during the same period. Meanwhile, The rivalry between the United States and China has resulted in a China-plus-one strategy, benefiting countries like India and Vietnam, according to supply-chain analysts. In India, Apple's key Taiwanese suppliers have been awarded incentives from the Government to increase smartphone production and exports. As growth slows in powerhouses like China and Germany, there is a growing need to identify another country that can drive the global economy. Morgan Stanley has predicted that India will contribute to a fifth of global expansion this decade, making it one of the three countries that can generate more than USD 400 billion in annual output growth.

Consumer market

With a population of over 1.3 billion, India represents a massive consumer market. This large consumer base provides a significant opportunity for businesses to tap into and grow their sales. According to a recent report by Boston Consulting Group (BCG) and the Retailers Association of India (RAI), India's consumer market presents a USD 1 trillion investment opportunity for both domestic and international businesses. The report estimates that India's consumer market is expected to double to USD 6 trillion by 2030, from USD 3.2 trillion in 2020. Five key drivers will fuel this growth - increasing per capita income, a rising middle class, urbanization, digitalization, and a shift in consumer behaviour. The increasing per capita income is driving demand for high-quality products and services, while the rising middle class is expanding the market for aspirational and premium products. Urbanization is another important driver, with India projected to have 75 cities with a population of more than one million by 2030, up from 52 in 2020. This presents a significant opportunity for businesses to tap into the growing demand for consumer goods and services in urban areas. Digitalization is also a key factor, with India's e-commerce market expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 27% to reach $200 billion by 2026, up from $38.5 billion in 2017. This growth is driven by increasing internet penetration, rising smartphone usage, and a growing preference for online shopping. Finally, the report highlights the shift in consumer behaviour, with consumers becoming more health-conscious and environmentally aware. This has led to a rise in demand for organic and sustainable products, as well as a growing interest in wellness and fitness.

The challenges

India has made significant progress in the last few decades towards becoming a developed nation and world leader. However, there are still several key challenges that need to be addressed to achieve these goals. One of the biggest challenges facing the Indian economy is the lack of adequate infrastructure. The country's roads, railways, ports, airports, and other key infrastructure are in dire need of modernization and expansion. This not only hinders economic growth but also makes it difficult for businesses to operate efficiently. Despite progress in the education sector, India still has a long way to go in providing quality education to all its citizens. The literacy rate in India is around 75%, which is significantly lower than in developed countries. This limits the potential of the country's workforce and reduces its competitiveness in the global market. India's healthcare system faces several challenges, including inadequate funding, limited access to quality healthcare in rural areas, and a shortage of skilled medical professionals. Improving healthcare services is crucial to reducing the burden of disease and improving the quality of life for citizens. India has made significant progress in reducing poverty in recent years, but inequality remains a major challenge. The country has one of the highest levels of income inequality in the world, with a large portion of the population living below the poverty line. Addressing this challenge will require sustained efforts to create jobs, improve education, and provide social safety nets to vulnerable populations. India is also one of the world's largest emitters of greenhouse gases, and the country faces significant environmental challenges such as air pollution, deforestation, and water scarcity. Addressing these issues is crucial for sustainable economic growth and the well-being of citizens.



GREENVISSAGE EXPLAINS

Greenvissage

What is Dedollarisation and why is everyone seeking it?

De-dollarization refers to the process of reducing dependence on the US dollar in international transactions, reserves, and financial markets. It is the result of several factors, including concerns about the stability of the US economy, geopolitical tensions, and the desire to diversify investments. Historically, the US dollar has been the dominant global reserve currency, with countries holding it as a means of payment for international trade and investments. This has given the United States considerable power and influence over the global financial system. However, as other countries have grown in economic strength, they have sought to reduce their reliance on the US dollar, which they see as vulnerable to economic and political risks. One of the primary drivers of de-dollarization is the perception that the US economy is not as stable as it once was. Since the global financial crisis of 2008, the US has faced significant economic challenges, including a large national debt, low-interest rates, and an increasing trade deficit. These challenges have led some countries to question the long-term viability of the US dollar as a reserve currency. Geopolitical tensions are also a factor in de-dollarization. Some countries have sought to reduce their reliance on the US dollar as a way of exerting their influence in the global financial system. For example, China has been promoting the use of the renminbi as a reserve currency and has been trying to establish its international payment system as an alternative to the US-dominated SWIFT network. Another factor driving de-dollarization is the desire to diversify investments. Many countries are looking to reduce their exposure to the US dollar and invest in other currencies or assets. This can help reduce the risks associated with holding a single currency and provide greater stability to their financial systems. De-dollarization can have significant implications for the global financial system. If more countries reduce their reliance on the US dollar, it could weaken the currency's dominance in global trade and reduce the United States' influence in international affairs. It could also lead to increased volatility in currency markets and make it more difficult for countries to manage their economies. However, de-dollarization is not an easy process. It requires significant investment in infrastructure and new financial systems, and it can take many years to achieve. Some countries may also face resistance from the United States, which has a vested interest in maintaining the dominance of the US dollar. Despite these challenges, many countries are continuing to pursue de-dollarization as a way of reducing their exposure to economic and political risks. As the global financial system continues to evolve, it will be interesting to see how this trend develops and what impact it has on the global economy.

Why should mutual funds shift to performance-based fees?

As India's mutual fund industry continues to grow, investors have become increasingly aware of the risks associated with investing in mutual funds. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has already made some changes to mutual fund regulations, including a new framework for categorizing funds based on their investment objectives and risk profiles. However, some experts argue that more needs to be done. One issue that has been raised is the lack of transparency in mutual fund fees. Currently, mutual fund houses are allowed to charge a variety of fees, including management fees, exit loads, and expense ratios. However, investors often find it difficult to understand the true cost of investing in a particular fund. To address this issue, some experts have suggested that mutual fund houses should be required to disclose all fees in a standardized format, making it easier for investors to compare funds and make informed investment decisions. Another issue that has been raised is the conflict of interest that can arise when mutual fund houses also have their asset management businesses. In these cases, the mutual fund house may prioritize its funds over others, potentially leading to biased investment recommendations. To address this conflict of interest, some experts have suggested that mutual fund houses should be required to separate their mutual fund and asset management businesses. Additionally, some experts have called for greater transparency in mutual fund portfolio disclosures. Currently, mutual fund houses are only required to disclose their top 10 holdings. However, investors may want more detailed information about the securities in which their funds are invested. To address this issue, some experts have suggested that mutual fund houses should be required to disclose their entire portfolio quarterly, in addition to their top 10 holdings. Furthermore, some experts have called for the implementation of a fiduciary standard for mutual fund managers. This would require managers to act in the best interests of their clients, rather than their interests or those of their firm. To ensure compliance with this standard, some experts have suggested that mutual fund houses should be required to establish independent boards of directors or trustees to oversee their operations and protect the interests of investors. Despite these potential changes, some experts argue that the mutual fund industry in India is still in its infancy and that it may be premature to implement sweeping reforms. However, many agree that greater transparency and accountability are needed to ensure that investors are protected and that the industry continues to grow sustainably. In conclusion, while the mutual fund industry in India has seen significant growth in recent years, there is still room for improvement. By implementing changes to improve transparency, minimize conflicts of interest, and protect the interests of investors, the industry can continue to grow and evolve responsibly.

Why did Tupperware fail after becoming a household name?

Tupperware, a famous plastic container brand founded by chemist Earl Tupper in the 1930s, has experienced a 90% decrease in its stock price over the last year and is struggling to survive. Earl Tupper founded Tupperware in the 1930s to create better plastic. He developed polyethylene, a strong, translucent plastic with airtight lids, as a byproduct from refining crude oil. Brownie Wise, a key figure in Tupperware's success, pioneered the sales strategy of Tupperware parties. At these parties, she demonstrated the product's strength to groups of women which proved to be a highly successful sales tactic. The network of sales consultants grew, and Tupperware expanded its product line and entered 80 countries worldwide. Despite Tupperware's early success, the company is now struggling due to several factors. Firstly, people are now more concerned about plastic pollution and the potential for chemicals in plastic to leak into food, so they are moving towards glass containers. The shift towards glass containers is a major issue for Tupperware. Consumers are becoming increasingly aware of the environmental impact of plastic, and glass containers are seen as a more eco-friendly option. Secondly, the company has failed to adapt to the shift from direct sales to online shopping and social media platforms. Tupperware continues to rely on direct sales for 80% of its sales, but most people prefer to shop in retail stores or online. As a result of these changes, Tupperware's sales have fallen by 40% over the past decade, and many of its sellers have left the business. Tupperware attempted to enter the e-commerce market in 2019, but it has struggled to compete with other established online retailers. The company's failure to adapt to changing consumer preferences and behaviours has led to a decline in its stock price, leaving the future of the 77-year-old company uncertain.

How did Zara establish itself without spending on advertising?

Zara is a dominant player in the fashion industry and has become a USD 13 billion empire without investing in advertising. This fast-fashion retail clothing brand was founded by Amancio Ortega in 1975 and has over 2,000 stores in approximately 96 countries. The company's success can be attributed to its ability to address the market discrepancy by introducing new collections based on the latest trends quickly. The company changed the fashion industry forever by working on the most important aspects of its business. Its production system is based on the Just-in-time production system of Toyota. This means that the company does not need to store large inventories as the fresh garments are delivered straight to the stores. This saves the company money on inventory management costs. Additionally, the company creates artificial scarcity to be exclusive, as it does not manufacture huge quantities of a particular design. The company also skips the storage part from its supply chain, which helps to keep its inventory management cost low. It introduces 12,000 new designs every year, in contrast to the industry average of 2000. By understanding the target customer, the company provides stylish and affordable products. Zara's design team and agents visit clubs, social gatherings, and universities to scout new fashion trends and designs. They track influencers rather than attending red-carpet events. It also invests heavily in the location and appearance of its stores around the world, rather than on traditional advertising methods like TV commercials and billboards. The company pays high rent to be in the most luxurious buildings, next to big brands like Armani, Gucci, and Louis Vuitton. This creates the Halo effect, which is when a company or its products become successful due to its association with another successful company. Zara carefully designs its big glass windows with the help of neuro marketers to present the collection for window shopping, which unconsciously takes consumers inside the store. It focuses on the customer experience because it matters more than the product itself in this fast-moving world. The interior of Zara stores is strategically planned, minimal, and artistically subtle. Thus, the company has become successful because it understands that no one is a better trendsetter than the customer itself, and they just have to be careful and observant.

COMPLIANCE UPDATES

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Goods and services tax

GSTN mandates large businesses to upload e-invoices on IRP within 7 days Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN) has made it mandatory for businesses with a turnover of over Rs 100 crore to upload their electronic invoices on the Invoice Registration Portal (IRP) within seven days. This move aims to ensure the smooth implementation of e-invoicing and reduce tax evasion. GSTN has stated that non-compliance will lead to a penalty of INR 50,000. The e-invoicing system was launched last year to simplify and automate the invoicing process, and has been gradually extended to more taxpayers. (Economic Times)

Advisory on debit notes and credit notes GSTN has issued an updated advisory on the time limit applicable to credit/debit notes in GST invoice reporting. As per the new advisory, taxpayers have to report notes within the time limit for invoices. The advisory applies to all taxpayers, including those who are currently under the QRMP Scheme (Quarterly Return Filing and Monthly Payment of Taxes). The GST law requires taxpayers to issue notes for any changes in the taxable value, a tax charged, or any other particulars mentioned in the original invoice. Earlier, there was no specific time limit prescribed for reporting credit/debit notes in GST invoices. However, the new advisory provides that taxpayers need to report credit/debit notes within the time limit applicable to invoices. This means that notes relating to invoices issued in a particular tax period need to be reported in the same period's return or the next period's return, depending on the taxpayer's filing frequency. The updated advisory aims to ensure that taxpayers report credit/debit notes promptly, thereby reducing errors and promoting compliance with GST regulations. (GSTN)

Revocation of cancellation of registration through portal Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN) has announced that it has enabled a new functionality that allows taxpayers to apply for revocation of cancellation of registration through its portal. This move aims to simplify and expedite the process of revocation of cancellation of registration for taxpayers. Taxpayers can now file for revocation of cancellation within 30 days from the date of the cancellation of registration. The GSTN has also provided a step-by-step guide on its portal for the convenience of taxpayers. (GSTN)

GST evasion detection doubles to INR 1.01 lakh crore in FY23 The Indian Government's efforts to curb Goods and Services Tax (GST) evasion have nearly doubled the detection of such evasion to INR 1.01 lakh crore in the fiscal year 2022-23 so far. This is a significant increase from the INR 50,000 crore detected in the previous year. According to sources, this rise in detection can be attributed to the use of data analytics and artificial intelligence (AI) to identify instances of tax evasion. The government is expected to continue its efforts to prevent GST evasion and improve tax collections. (Economic Times)

GST collection reaches an all-time high in April, up 12% YoY India's Goods and Services Tax (GST) collection reached a record high of Rs 1.87 lakh crore in April, up 12% compared to the same month last year. This is the highest-ever collection since the introduction of GST in July 2017, surpassing the previous record of Rs 1.41 lakh crore collected in April 2021. The increase in GST collection can be attributed to improved compliance and increased economic activity, despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Of the total revenue collected, CGST was Rs 31,624 crore, SGST was Rs 40,569 crore, IGST was Rs 75,000 crore, and Cess was Rs 40,605 crore. The strong GST collection figures bode well for India's economic recovery in the coming months. (Financial Express)

(For queries or more information about goods and services tax, contact our colleague Ashish at ashish.gandhi@greenvissage.com)

Income tax

High courts can examine transfer pricing cases In a significant development, multinational corporations (MNCs) operating in India with their subsidiaries or group companies are expressing concerns about transfer pricing litigation. The litigation, which deals with the pricing of goods or services transferred between related entities, was previously finalized at the level of Income Tax Appellate Tribunals (ITATs). However, the Supreme Court of India has now ruled that High Courts

(HCs) can examine whether the ITAT's findings in determining the arm's length price are unjustified or not. This has caused some apprehension among MNCs, as the case may drag on for an extended time if it moves to the high courts. As a result of this ruling, tax experts believe that alternative mechanisms such as advance pricing agreements (APAs) may become more popular. APAs are arrangements between a taxpayer and tax authority that establish an appropriate transfer pricing methodology for a set time. They are intended to reduce transfer pricing disputes and provide greater certainty for MNCs operating in India. This ruling could have significant implications for MNCs operating in India and highlights the need for careful consideration of transfer pricing arrangements to avoid lengthy and costly litigation. (Times of India)

No penalty on late payment of TDS The Supreme Court of India has held that the delay in remitting tax deducted at source (TDS) by assessees is not liable for penalty. The ruling was made by a bench of Justices M R Shah and C T Ravikumar, who held that the revenue department should adopt a literal interpretation of the penal provision. The court also allowed the assessee to appeal against the Kerala High Court judgment on the interpretation of Section 271C of the Income Tax Act. The judges observed that mere belated remitting of the TDS after deducting the same by the assessee shall not attract a penalty under the said Section. They further noted that the appeal concerned was not the case of non-deduction of TDS, and thus, the particular Section would not apply. The court emphasized that the provision in question refers to the failure to deduct the whole or any part of the tax, not the failure to remit the deducted tax. (Business Standard)

Bogus donations under IT department's scanner In a recent development, the Income Tax department has taken action against several taxpayers who made donations to bogus political parties during the financial year 2018-19. According to sources, the department issued show-cause notices to approximately 3,500 taxpayers in the last week of March. These notices demand that the taxpayers explain the legitimacy of their donations to these unrecognized political parties. Experts are warning that if these taxpayers are unable to prove the authenticity of their donations, they could face significant penalties. This could include tax and penalties of up to 83 per cent of the amount in question and further penalties of up to 200 per cent on their tax liabilities. Chartered accountant Sulabh Padshah, commenting on the situation, said that the IT department had conducted a nationwide search in July and identified various registered unrecognized political parties (RUPP) that were not involved in any election activity but were formed solely to accept bogus donations. (Times of India)

The tax regime for salaried employees The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) issued a circular on April 5, 2023, regarding the deduction of tax on salaries for the current financial year 2023-24. According to the circular, employees must inform their employers of the income tax regime they intend to choose for TDS on salaries. Employees can choose either the new or old tax regime as per their preference. If an employee fails to inform the employer of their choice, it will be assumed that the employee has opted for the new regime, and TDS on salary will be deducted based on the income tax rates applicable under the new tax regime. The new circular was issued after changes were announced in the Income-tax Act, 1961, during Budget 2023. One of the announcements was that the new tax regime would become the default option from April 1, 2023. Till March 31, 2023, the old tax regime was the default option, and individuals were required to opt for the new tax regime specifically. However, from April 1, 2023, onwards, the new tax regime has become the default tax regime. Therefore, individuals who want to claim the benefit of tax deductions and exemptions are required to specifically opt for the old tax regime. (Economic Times)

CBSE to receive an exemption from tax The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has been granted an exemption from paying income tax on its earnings from examination fees, book sales, and other sources by the Finance Ministry. The exemption is effective retrospectively from the financial year 2020-21 (covering the period from June 1, 2020, to March 31, 2021), and it will continue for the fiscal years 2021-22, 2022-23, and the next two fiscal years (2023-24 and 2024-25). The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) issued a notification stating that the Central government has designated CBSE, Delhi, a board formed by the Central government, under section 10 (46) of the Income Tax Act, and exempted it from paying income tax on specified revenue. These revenues include examination fees, affiliation fees, sales of textbooks and publications, registration fees, sports fees, training fees, and other academic receipts. Additionally, receipts from CBSE projects/programs, interest on income tax refunds, and interest earned on these specified incomes would also be exempted from income tax. (Business Standard)

Cost inflation index for FY 2023-24 Income Tax Department has released the Cost Inflation Index (CII) for the fiscal year 2023-24, which began in April 2023. The CII is used to calculate long-term capital gains from the sale of immovable property, securities, and jewellery after adjusting for inflation. The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) issued a notification that the CII for FY 2023-24 relevant to AY 2024-25 is 348. Typically, the CII is announced in June. Last fiscal year, the CII was 331, while it was 317 for the 2021-22 financial year. Rajat Mohan, Senior Partner at AMRG and Associates, noted that the early notification of the CII would assist taxpayers in calculating long-term capital gains tax accurately and in paying the necessary advance tax in the first quarter of FY 2023-24. (Economic Times)

(For queries or more information about income tax, contact our colleague Sneha at sneha.halder@greenvissage.com)

Customs and foreign trade

CBIC postpones the second phase of customs e-payment The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has deferred the implementation of the second phase of the electronic payment system for customs duties and taxes until further notice. The new system was originally scheduled to come into effect on May 1, 2022, but has now been postponed due to technical difficulties. The first phase, which was implemented in April 2021, will continue to be in operation until further notice. (Financial Express)

CBIC waives penalty for late submission of declaration The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has waived the penalty, interest and fee for the late submission of certain declarations due to a technical glitch. The waiver will apply to declarations that were due on or after April 1, 2021, and filed by May 15, 2023. This decision will provide relief to taxpayers who were affected by the technical issues faced while filing declarations. (Economic Times)

CBIC to launch system for the release of exchange rates of 22 currencies The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) is reportedly planning to launch a system that would publish exchange rates of 22 currencies. The move is expected to facilitate importers and exporters in determining the correct value of their transactions. The system will be integrated with the Customs EDI (Electronic Data Interchange) System, and the exchange rates will be updated daily. The CBIC has sought feedback from stakeholders and is expected to finalize the system soon. (Business Standard)

(For queries or more information about customs and foreign trade, contact our colleague Adnan at adnan.ginwala@greenvissage.com)

Corporate and allied laws

Committee on Digital Competition Law The Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) is expected to extend the term of the Committee on Digital Competition Law (CDCL) by two months. The committee has been meeting regularly to discuss the proposed framework to address the anti-competitive conduct of big technology companies. CDCL has been tasked witexploring the need for an ex-ante regulatory mechanism for digital markets via separate legislation. It has also been tasked with drafting a Digital Competition Act. Additionally, the Panel must review the adequacy of existing provisions in the Competition Act and related regulations in dealing with challenges emerging from the digital economy. In the four meetings held on February 22, March 4, March 11, and March 24, the Panel heard from representatives from various Big Tech companies, including Google, Apple, Amazon, and Netflix, as well as industry associations, including Digital News Publishers and digital start-ups. The European Union has been at the forefront of digital competition law with the General

Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and its anti-trust investigations and fines against tech giants like Google and Facebook. The United States has also taken some steps towards digital competition law with ongoing anti-trust investigations and lawsuits against companies such as Google and Facebook. In contrast, countries such as Japan and South Korea have been slower to enact digital competition laws, although they have started taking steps towards regulation in recent years.

SEBI's new requirement for independent assurance and regulated Rating The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has issued new regulations that require companies to disclose their environmental, social, and governance (ESG) practices. In addition, SEBI has mandated independent assurance and regulated rating of these disclosures to enhance their credibility. This move is expected to increase the transparency and accountability of companies, thereby promoting sustainable investment practices. (Moneycontrol)

SEBI asks AIFs to offer direct plans SEBI has directed Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs) to offer direct plans to investors from 1 July 2021. The regulator has also introduced a trial model for commissions to ensure that there is no conflict of interest between AIFs and investors. The new commission model will apply to all AIFs irrespective of their investment strategy or asset class. (Business Standard)

SEBI bars bank guarantees on client funds SEBI has issued new guidelines prohibiting brokers from using bank guarantees for client fund obligations. The regulator has also mandated brokers to segregate their securities from clients' securities and hold them in separate demat accounts. This move is expected to increase the safety of investor funds and prevent misappropriation of securities by brokers. (Financial Express)

RoC to take stricter actions against violators The Registrar of Companies (RoC) in India has implemented new reforms to crack down on companies that violate the law. The RoC will now require companies to file annual reports and disclose their financial statements on time, failing which they will be penalized. The RoC will also scrutinize companies that have not filed financial statements for the past three years and strike them off the register. The reforms aim to promote transparency and accountability in the corporate sector. (Business Standard)

(For queries or more information about corporate and allied laws, contact our colleague Adnan at adnan.ginwala@greenvissage.com)

Finance and banking

ED probe finds Chinese companies misused RBI circular An investigation by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) has revealed that Chinese firms exploited a Reserve Bank of India (RBI) circular to operate illegal mobile loan apps in India. The circular allowed companies to lend money through digital platforms, but the Chinese firms used this to create mobile loan apps that charged exorbitant interest rates and harassed borrowers for repayment. The ED has now arrested several individuals and frozen bank accounts belonging to these companies. (Hindustan Times)

RBI's Credit on UPI Plan The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) recent announcement of a Credit on UPI plan has the potential to create a win-win situation for all involved, according to an opinion piece in The Economic Times. The plan would allow banks to extend credit to customers via the Unified Payments Interface (UPI), creating a new revenue stream for banks and making credit more accessible for consumers. The author argues that this move could also benefit non-bank financial companies (NBFCs), which could partner with banks to provide credit to customers. (Economic Times)

RBI report suggests CBDCs are more environmentally friendly The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has released a report suggesting that central bank digital currencies (CBDCs) are more environmentally friendly than other cashless modes of payment. The report highlights that the energy consumption associated with CBDCs is much lower than that of cryptocurrencies and even lower than traditional payment systems. Additionally, CBDCs could reduce the need for paper currency, which has a significant carbon footprint due to the resources to produce and transport it. (The Indian Express)

■ **India's foreign exchange reserves increase** India's foreign exchange reserves have risen by USD 4.5 billion to USD 588.78 billion, according to the latest business updates reported by India TV News. The increase was driven by a rise in foreign currency assets, which make up a significant portion of India's forex reserves. The country's forex reserves have been steadily increasing over the past few months, bolstered by strong foreign investment inflows and a trade surplus. (India TV News)

■ **RBI says it won't activate the counter-cyclical capital buffer** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided not to activate the counter-cyclical capital buffer for the time being, citing the need to maintain the economic recovery in the country. The buffer, which would require banks to set aside a portion of their capital during times of economic growth, was first introduced by the central bank in December 2015. The RBI's decision to maintain the buffer at zero per cent was made during its latest review of the country's financial stability. (Economic Times)

■ **RBI MPC keeps the repo rate unchanged** The Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has decided to keep the repo rate, the rate at which the central bank lends to commercial banks, unchanged at 6.5% in April. The decision was made due to the need to maintain the country's economic recovery while also keeping inflation under control. The MPC also announced that it would maintain a prolonged pause on policy rates, with the next policy meeting scheduled for June. (Financial Express)

(For queries and more information about banking and finance, contact our colleague Kethaan at ksparakh@greenvissage.com)

Accounting and management

■ **CA, CS, and CMA under the ambit of anti-money laundering laws** The Ministry of Finance has released new rules under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) that bring accountants who manage client money under the PMLA's ambit. This means that accountants who receive client funds or securities as part of their professional services will be required to follow PMLA regulations, including maintaining records of transactions and verifying the identity of clients. The new rules aim to strengthen the anti-money laundering framework in India and prevent the misuse of professional services by money launderers. (Business Standard)

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Payroll and personal finance

■ **EPFO extends the deadline to apply for higher pension** The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has extended the deadline for its pensioners to submit their applications for a higher pension until June 26, 2023. The decision was taken due to the ongoing pandemic and the difficulties faced by pensioners in submitting their forms. EPFO has two pension schemes, namely the Employees' Pension Scheme 1995 (EPS) and the Employees' Pension Scheme 2014 (EPS). The EPS 1995 scheme provides a pension based on the years of service and the average of the last 60 months' salary, whereas the EPS 2014 scheme provides a pension based on the years of service and the average of the last 180 months' salary. To avail of a higher pension under both schemes, a pensioner has to submit a joint declaration form along with their spouse to the concerned regional office. The declaration form is to be attested by the pensioner's bank. The decision to extend the deadline comes as a relief to the pensioners who were finding it difficult to submit the application forms due to the restrictions in place during the pandemic. EPFO has taken several other measures to ease the process for pensioners, such as the introduction of an online application process. The extension of the deadline is expected to benefit a large number of pensioners who were unable to submit their forms due to the pandemic-related restrictions. (MoneyControl)

■ **IRDAI bans the use of credit cards to pay loans against insurance** The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has banned the use of credit cards to repay loans taken against insurance policies. The regulator has taken this step to prevent insurance policyholders from using their credit cards to repay loans taken against their insurance policies, thereby reducing the risk of defaults on such loans. The IRDAI has directed insurance companies to ensure that any payment made towards repayment of loans against insurance policies should be made through a bank account, and not through a credit card. This move is expected to benefit both policyholders and lenders, as it will help to reduce the risk of default on such loans. The use of credit cards to repay loans taken against insurance policies has been a contentious issue in India, with many policyholders complaining that they have been misled by their banks into taking such loans. (BQ Prime)

In Focus: National Pension Scheme

1. The National Pension System (NPS) is a voluntary defined contribution retirement savings scheme launched by the Government of India in 2004. The scheme is open to all Indian citizens aged between 18 and 60 years and aims to provide a pension income after retirement.

2. NPS provides tax benefits under Section 80C and Section 80CCD of the Income Tax Act. Contributions made to the scheme are eligible for a tax deduction of up to INR 1.5 lakh per annum. The scheme provides flexibility to subscribers to choose their investment options and fund managers. Subscribers can choose between equity, corporate bonds, and government securities for their investment portfolio.

3. The NPS has one of the lowest cost structures among pension schemes in India, with a fund management fee of 0.01% of the assets under management. The scheme is portable, meaning that subscribers can transfer their pension account from one sector to another or from one city to another without any hassles.

4. The minimum contribution required to open an NPS account is INR 500. Subsequently, a minimum contribution of INR 1,000 per annum is required to keep the account active. Subscribers can exit the scheme upon reaching the age of 60 or upon retirement. At least 40% of the accumulated corpus needs to be used to purchase an annuity that provides a regular pension income. The remaining 60% can be withdrawn as a lump sum. Subscribers can choose their investment allocation between equity, corporate bonds, and government securities. However, the equity exposure is capped at 75% of the total corpus.

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BUSINESS NEWS

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Government

Government launches INR 200 Crore scheme to monitor Char Dham Route The Indian government has announced its plans to introduce a new scheme worth INR 200 crore to monitor the Char Dham route in Uttarakhand. The scheme aims to improve the safety and security of the route and its pilgrims. The monitoring system will be equipped with CCTV cameras, emergency response systems, and other technologies to provide real-time information about the route's condition. The scheme will also improve road connectivity and provide employment opportunities for the local population. (Times of India)

ONDC registers 37 lakh products According to Thampy Koshy, the CEO of Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC), the Indian government's initiative to create a network of market participants has been highly successful with both buyers and sellers. In the past year, over 31,000 merchants with 37 lakh products have registered on the ONDC network. Auto and cab aggregators like Ola and Uber have also joined, with over 56,000 vehicles in Bengaluru and Kochi. ONDC has also attracted 46 network participants, such as Delhivery, Dunzo, e-Samudaay, PayTM, and Snapdeal. ONDC was designed to provide small businesses with equal access to technologies typically deployed by larger e-commerce platforms. Koshy mentioned that the network would allow even small Kirana shops to participate. The buyers will benefit from having access to a much larger seller pool, resulting in a better selection and price range. ONDC started as an alpha test on April 29, 2022, with only groceries and food, but has now expanded to include fashion and electronics. Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) has also joined ONDC, with the possibility of offering railway tickets in the future. (BusinessLine)

UPI aims to achieve 1 trillion transactions by 2026 Unified Payments Interface (UPI), the popular digital payments system in India, is expected to cross the milestone of 1 trillion transactions by 2026. The growth in UPI transactions has been phenomenal, with the system recording over 3.5 billion transactions in April 2023 alone. The increasing adoption of digital payments, including UPI, has been driven by factors such as ease of use, convenience, and safety. With the government of India pushing for a digital economy and the continued rise of e-commerce and online payments, UPI is well-positioned for further growth in the coming years. (YourStory)

Economies

WHO declares Covid-19 as no longer an emergency The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared that Covid-19 is no longer a healthcare emergency or a pandemic. The global organisation has shifted its focus from emergency response to sustainable public health. It has further stated that the end of the emergency phase does not mean an end to the pandemic, instead, it means a shift from a reactive approach to a proactive one. WHO has requested governments to continue monitoring the situation, plan their response, and build resilience for future outbreaks with a focus on improving healthcare infrastructure, strengthening surveillance systems, and preparing for potential future pandemics. (Indian Express)

Central Bank in Argentina prohibits crypto trading The Central Bank of Argentina has imposed a ban on cryptocurrency trading and intermediation by payment providers. The move was made to safeguard the nation's financial stability and protect citizens from potential fraud risks. The Central Bank of Argentina stated that payment providers should not participate in any transactions related to virtual currencies, such as exchanging cryptocurrencies for Argentine pesos or vice versa. (Bitcoin Warrior)

Russia unable to use accumulated Indian rupees The Russian Ambassador to India, Nikolay Kudashev, during a virtual event on Thursday stated that Russia has accumulated billions of Indian rupees, but it cannot use them due to the Reserve Bank of India's regulations. Kudashev expressed his concern over the matter and urged for a resolution between the two countries to enable the use of these funds. (Business Line)

IMF denies funds to cash-strapped Pakistan The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has rejected Pakistan's request for a USD 452 million loan due to its failure to comply with the conditions set by the organization. Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves have declined significantly, and it has been struggling to meet its external financing needs. The IMF stated that Pakistan needs to undertake necessary reforms to restore its economic stability before it can receive any further funds. (Times Now)

FPIs invest INR 10,850 crore in Indian equities in four trading sessions Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have invested INR 10,850 crore in Indian equities in the first four trading sessions of May 2023. The inflow of funds is attributed to positive sentiment due to a strong quarterly earnings season and a stable macroeconomic environment. The FPIs have been net buyers of Indian equities for the past few months, indicating their confidence in the Indian economy. (Economic Times)

Corporates

Adani Ports sells Myanmar Port for USD 30 million Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd. (APSEZ) has completed the sale of its entire stake in the container terminal in Myanmar's Yangon for $30 million. The move comes after the military takeover in Myanmar in February 2021 led to unrest and a deteriorating business environment in the country. The sale is part of APSEZ's strategic plan to focus on its core ports business and realign its portfolio to enhance shareholder value. (Adda247)

Aditya Birla Fashion to buy a 51% stake in TCNS Clothing Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail Limited (ABFRL) announced that it will acquire a 51 per cent stake in TCNS Clothing Company for INR 1,650 crore. TCNS Clothing owns brands such as W, Aurelia and Wishful. The acquisition will help ABFRL expand its women's ethnic wear portfolio and increase its presence in the premium ethnic wear market. (Telegraph India)

CBI conducts raids on Jet Airways offices and founder's residence The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) raided the offices of Jet Airways and the residence of its founder Naresh Goyal in connection with a bank fraud case worth INR 650 crore. The CBI also searched the premises of the company's former directors and other officials. Jet Airways, which suspended operations in 2019, is facing multiple investigations by different agencies. (Times of India)

Vedanta Resources repays USD 800 million loans to Standard Chartered Bank Vedanta Resources, the natural resources company, announced that it has repaid USD 800 million of loans to Standard Chartered Bank. The company used cash reserves to make the repayment, which will reduce its gross debt and improve its credit profile. The repayment is part of Vedanta's strategy to deleverage its balance sheet and simplify its corporate structure. (Moneycontrol)

MSCI tweak triggers sell-off in HDFC stocks HDFC Bank and HDFC Limited, two of India's largest financial companies, witnessed a sharp decline in their share prices after MSCI announced changes in its indices. MSCI lowered the weightage of HDFC Bank and HDFC Limited in its indices due to changes in the foreign ownership limits of these companies. This led to a sell-off by foreign institutional investors (FIIs) who hold a significant shares in these companies. (Indian Express)

Amara Raja lays the foundation for a lithium cell facility in Telangana Amara Raja Batteries has laid the foundation for its INR 9,500-crore lithium cell manufacturing facility in Andhra Pradesh. The facility, which is being set up in the Chittoor district of the state, will have a capacity of 18 GW hours per year and will be completed in a phased manner over the next 10 years. The company expects to start production by the second quarter of 2023. The move is in line with the company's efforts to tap into the growing demand for lithium-ion batteries in India's electric vehicle market. (Moneycontrol)

HDFC Bank receives relief from RBI for merger HDFC Bank and Housing Development Finance Corporation have been granted regulatory relief by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to smoothen their merger process, set to conclude by July 2023. The RBI has allowed HDFC Bank to stagger its priority sector lending requirements over three years, while the merged entity will have to comply with cash reserve ratio, statutory liquidity ratio, and liquidity coverage ratio requirements from the beginning. HDFC Bank has also been granted permission to increase its stake in HDFC Life Insurance and HDFC ERGO General Insurance. The bank can continue to hold HDFC's stake in HDFC Education and Development Services and HDFC Credila Financial Services, subject to certain conditions. HDFC Bank will also transition all HDFC's retail and small business borrowers to an external benchmark within six months of the merger. Reuters reported earlier this week that the bank and the housing financier have raised adequate liquidity to meet the requirements from the start. (Economic Times)

Startups

■ **VC funding was down by 60% in April** According to data from industry tracker Venture Intelligence, venture capital (VC) funding in India witnessed a 60 per cent decline in April compared to the same month last year. The total investment value dropped to USD 343 million in April 2023 from USD 853 million in April 2022. The decrease can be attributed to the ongoing pandemic and the uncertainties surrounding the economy. (YourStory)

■ **Upstox witnesses leadership exits** Online brokerage firm Upstox has experienced some leadership exits. As per sources, the company's co-founder, CMO, and Head of Business Operations have all resigned. However, Upstox has not yet confirmed the news. Upstox is backed by investors such as Tiger Global, Kalaari Capital, and Sequoia Capital India. (YourStory)

■ **Go First cancels all flights until May 12** Indian airline Go First has cancelled all its flights until May 12 due to the ongoing pandemic. The airline had earlier announced that it would not operate flights to certain destinations until May 15. However, the latest announcement suggests that all flights have been suspended until May 12. Passengers have been advised to check the airline's website for updates. (YourStory)

■ **Paytm Records 148% YoY increase in loan disbursals in April** Paytm, the Indian digital payments and financial services company, saw a significant increase of 148 per cent in loan disbursals in April 2023, compared to the same period last year, according to company data. However, there was an 8 per cent decline in loan disbursals compared to the previous month, March 2023. The company has been rapidly expanding its lending business, offering a range of loan products to consumers and small businesses, with a focus on serving underbanked customers. (Inc42)

Conglomerates

■ **Amazon to offer severance pay to Workers in Sonepat Facility** E-commerce giant Amazon has announced that it will be offering severance pay to hundreds of workers in its warehouse facility located in Sonepat, India. The move comes as Amazon restructures its operations in the country and shifts towards a more automated model of warehousing. The workers will receive a payout equivalent to 2 months of salary for every year worked, along with other benefits. The company has stated that it is committed to ensuring a smooth transition for affected employees. (Moneycontrol)

■ **Google pays a fine of INR 1,338 crore to CCI** Google has confirmed that it has paid the entire fine amount of INR 1,338 crore to the Competition Commission of India (CCI) concerning the Android case. The CCI found that Google was using its dominant position in the market to block rivals in the smart TV market. As a result, the company was fined 5 per cent of its average revenue generated from the Indian market over the last three years. Google has also been directed to stop any anti-competitive practices in the future. (Tribune India)

■ **Apple Reports Strong Q2 Earnings** Apple has reported a strong financial performance in the second quarter of 2021, with a revenue of USD 89.6 billion, up 54 per cent year-on-year. The company saw significant growth in its iPhone and Mac sales, as well as its services business, which includes the App Store, Apple Music, and iCloud. CEO Tim Cook credited the success to the unwavering focus of Apple's employees and expressed optimism for the company's future. (BBC)

■ **First Republic Bank faces financial troubles** First Republic Bank, one of the largest banks in the United States, is facing financial troubles due to its exposure to troubled hedge fund

Archegos Capital. The bank's stock price has fallen significantly in recent weeks, and its credit rating has been downgraded. The bank is also reportedly under investigation by regulators for potential violations of anti-money laundering rules. First Republic is just the latest in a series of banks to be affected by the collapse of Archegos Capital, with Credit Suisse and Nomura also suffering significant losses. (WION)

■ **Visa launches CVV-free payment feature for tokenised transactions** Visa, a global payment technology company, has launched a new feature that enables tokenised transactions without requiring a Card Verification Value (CVV) code. The feature aims to provide a more secure and convenient payment experience for Visa cardholders, eliminating the need to enter a CVV code during checkout. The feature is available to all participating merchants and acquirers globally. This move is expected to increase the adoption of tokenisation and enhance payment security. (Inc42)

■ **EY cancels plan to split its businesses** After months of internal disagreement, EY has decided to cancel its plans to split into two separate businesses, according to reports. The move comes as a result of concerns over the practicality of the proposal, which was originally announced in August 2021. The plan would have seen EY divide its operations into two separate entities, with one focusing on traditional audit services and the other on non-audit services such as consulting and tax advice. However, the proposal faced opposition from EY partners who were concerned that the split could damage the firm's reputation and competitiveness. The decision to abandon the plan represents a significant setback for EY, which had hoped that the split would enable it to better compete with its rivals, who have already separated their audit and non-audit businesses. The move also highlights the challenges facing the big four accounting firms as they attempt to navigate a rapidly changing market. In recent years, the firms have faced increasing scrutiny over their audit work, which has been blamed for several high-profile corporate scandals. (Economic Times)

■ **Google Bard is now available for Workspace users** Google Bard, an AI service from Google is now accessible to Workspace users. Bard is an AI writing tool that helps users compose better content by providing suggestions for grammar, style, and other aspects of writing. It can be integrated with various productivity tools, including Google Docs, and can analyze text in real time, making it a valuable tool for professionals who want to improve their writing skills. (Medium)

■ **Google's Project Magi to revolutionize search with AI** Google is working on Project Magi, which aims to revolutionize search by combining visual, snackable, personal, and human AI. This project utilizes AI technology to provide more personalized search results that are easier to understand. The project will use visual cues and other features to help users understand and engage with search results more easily. It will also incorporate human AI to provide a more personalized experience for users. (TechStory)

ECONOMIC INDICATORS

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ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Key Economic Indicators

Indicator	As on	Current	Prior
GDP Growth (%)	Dec-22	4.40	6.30
Inflation (%)	Mar-23	5.66	6.44
Unemployment (%)	Mar-23	7.80	7.50
Trade Balance ($m)	Mar-23	(19.70)	(17.43)
Business confidence	Mar-23	126.00	133.00
Manufacturing PMI	Mar-23	57.20	56.40
Services PMI	Mar-23	62.00	57.80

Commodities Future

Commodity	Expiry	Price	%
Gold	Jun-23	61,180.00	1.10
Silver	Jul-23	77,094.00	3.41
Crude Oil	May-23	5,950.00	(9.77)
Natural Gas	May-23	184.90	9.93
Aluminum	May-23	209.70	1.53
Copper	May-23	751.20	(2.50)
Zinc	May-23	238.00	(3.90)

Global Indices

Index	Country	%
NIFTY 50	India	3.64
BSE SENSEX	India	3.20
INDIA VIX	India	3.30
NIFTY BANK	India	5.79
DOW JONES	USA	-
NASDAQ	USA	0.99
S&P 500	USA	0.38
FSTE 100	UK	0.26
NIKKEI 225	Japan	5.82
SHANGHAI COM	China	1.28
MOEX	Russia	(0.78)
CAC 40	France	0.87
DAX	Germany	2.19
S&P ASX 200	Australia	0.49
BOVESPA	Brazil	4.83
KOSPI	South Korea	(0.08)
HANG SENG	Hong Kong	(2.28)

Currency Exchange Rates

Pair	Current	Prior	%
INR/1 USD	82.02	81.98	(0.06)
INR/1 GBP	103.61	102.08	(1.50)
INR/1 EUR	90.18	89.34	(0.93)
INR/100 YEN	60.86	62.42	2.50

Cryptocurrencies

Pair	Crypto	Price	%
BTC/USD	Bitcoin	27,966.80	0.20
ETH/USD	Ethereum	1,867.75	1.73
USDT/USD	Tether	1.00	0.09
BNB/USD	Binance	317.00	2.06

Small Savings Schemes

Scheme	Current	Prior	%
SSCS	8.20	8.00	0.20
SSA	8.00	7.60	0.40
NSC	7.70	7.00	0.70
PPF	7.10	7.10	-
KVP	7.50	7.20	0.30

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