

## Daily Economic News Summary: 28 February 2020

### **1. New Zealand for bilateral trade pact with India if New Delhi does not join RCEP**

**Source: The Economic Times ([Link](#))**

New Zealand on 27 February said it will look forward to a bilateral trade agreement with India in case New Delhi does not join the China-backed mega trade deal RCEP. The Narendra Modi-led government in November decided not to join Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) deal as negotiations failed to satisfactorily address New Delhi's "outstanding issues and concerns". However, the possibility of India joining the trade pact is open provided its concerns are addressed by the member nations. Responding to issues concerning the opening of domestic dairy sector, he said New Zealand appreciates the concerns of the Indian dairy industry but expressed hope that some solutions could be arrived at through negotiations.

### **2. Anti-CAA stir, Delhi violence have not dampened investor sentiment: FM Nirmala Sitharaman**

**Source: Money Control ([Link](#))**

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman asserted that the anti-CAA protests and the recent violence in Delhi have not dampened the spirit of investors. Addressing a press conference here after meeting various shareholders post the Union Budget, Sitharaman said investors whom she met in her recent visit to Saudi Arabia expressed willingness to invest more in India. "I met several investors... both Saudi and Indian investors there. No one showed any concern. On the contrary, they were willing to invest more in India," she said. Sitharaman claimed that the companies also explored possibilities for opening representative offices in India, reflecting their willingness to invest more.

### **3. Jeff Bezos, Narayana Murthy team up to challenge Zomato, Swiggy with this new venture**

**Source: Business Today ([Link](#))**

E-commerce giant Amazon India is all set to pilot its much-anticipated project of food-delivery services in Bengaluru soon. With this venture, Jeff Bezos-led Amazon will partner with Infosys co-founder Narayana Murthy, while challenging the already established players like Zomato and Swiggy. The US-based e-tailer has an expansive portfolio like Amazon Prime Video, Amazon

Prime Now, Amazon Music and Amazon Fresh. Amazon's food delivery platform is already open for its employees and pilots are underway across cities like-HSR, Bellandur, Haralur, Marathahalli and Whitefield, according to a report by The Economic Times. bSeveral restaurants have signed contracts with Prione Business Services to list on Amazon with 10 to 15 per cent commission -- half of what Swiggy and Zomato charge. Prione Business Services is a joint venture between Infosys co-founder NR Narayana Murthy's Catamaran Ventures and Amazon India.

#### **4. Study overtakes work as common reason to move to UK, but not for Indians**

**Source: Money Control ([Link](#))**

Education has overtaken employment as the most common reason (since 2012) to move to the United Kingdom. However, for Indians, working in the UK still is more popular than getting a British degree. The total number of work visas granted (Tier 2) touched an all-time high of 113,958 in 2019, of which 57,199 were given to Indians. This assumes importance because there is a general perception that work visas will be tightened in the UK as a consequence of Brexit (United Kingdom's exit from the European Union). Indians, however, form the largest chunk of international skilled professionals with a Tier 2 (work visa) in the UK

#### **5. 63,000-plus robots at Accenture's operations**

**Source: The Economic Times ([Link](#))**

Accenture's operations division has the largest robot workforce in the industry, topping 63,000, the incoming head of the unit told ET. The company, however, does not forecast robots replacing humans. Manish Sharma takes charge of the \$6 billion unit with over 141,000 employees on March 1, as part of Accenture's recent reorganization. "I don't want my people anywhere in the world to do boring jobs. We call it MRPT — measurable, repeatable, predictable and transaction work — that our people will not do," Sharma told ET in an interview. "That will be done by robots and our people will be the supervisors of robots." Sharma said automation should be a goal in itself as companies look to make processes more efficient.

#### **6. Government puts spending restrictions on ministries to contain fiscal slippage**

**Source: Livemint ([Link](#))**

The finance ministry has directed central government departments and ministries to limit expenditure in March to 10% of their budget allocations for FY20 instead of 15% as was the

practice earlier, in an effort to contain fiscal slippage. The directive could constrain expenditure plans of laggard ministries with huge resource allocations such as agriculture (61%), housing and urban affairs (66%), human resource development, Jal Shakti (63%), railways (63%), and women and child development (63%), which have spent less than 75% of their allocations in the April-December period. The “rush of expenditure, particularly in the closing months of financial year, shall be regarded as breach of financial propriety and shall be avoided”, the department of expenditure in the finance ministry told departments, citing the General Financial Rules, 2017, in a letter dated 11 February, a copy of which has been reviewed by Mint.

### **7. Hindustan Unilever, Nestle India top access to nutrition rankings**

**Source: Livemint ([Link](#))**

Packaged goods firms Hindustan Unilever Ltd that sells food brands such as Knorr and Kissan, and Nestle India jointly topped the rankings this year for making efforts to improve nutrition. They were followed by the local arm of the American snacking and beverages company PepsiCo in Access to Nutrition Spotlight Index 2020. According to the findings of a report by Access to Nutrition Initiative (ATNI), a not-for-profit organisation, 16 food and beverage manufacturers were evaluated for policies, practices and performance related to improving nutrition in their products. Britannia Industries and Cola-Cola India have shown substantial individual progress across most elements of the Index since 2016, the report added.

### **8. US, Taliban set to sign truce pact tomorrow, Delhi gets an invite**

**Source: Livemint ([Link](#))**

Indian ambassador to Qatar, P. Kumaran, will represent New Delhi on 22 February when the US hopes to sign a peace deal with the Taliban to end the 18-year war in Afghanistan, following a partial truce with the rebel group. This will be the first time since 2001 that a serving Indian diplomat will be present in the same room as Taliban representatives. In 2018, New Delhi had sent retired diplomats to a conference hosted by Moscow, where representatives of the Taliban were present. Following the historic deal on 29 February, the US will start withdrawing its troops to wind down Washington’s longest war launched after the September 2001 terrorist attacks. This was a key election promise of US President Donald Trump.

### **9. Ikea will open store in Navi Mumbai this summer, says MD Peter Betzel**

**Source: Business Standard ([Link](#))**

Ikea, the world's largest furniture retailer, will open its store in Navi Mumbai this summer, India Managing Director. Peter Betzel said on Thursday. He was speaking at the sidelines of the Retail Leadership Summit in Mumbai. Alongside, Betzel, an Ikea veteran who took charge of the India market two years ago, said the retailer was lining up at least one more smaller store within Mumbai, as it sought to tap the potential of the city. This would rollout by the end of this calendar year, he said. Industry sources said smaller stores targeting central business districts and residential areas in Mumbai were in the works by the retailer. The smaller stores would come up in South Mumbai and the western and central suburbs of the city. The Navi Mumbai store is coming up in Turbhe.

### **10. PM Modi holds talks with Myanmar president; India, Myanmar sign 10 pacts**

**Source: Financial Express ([Link](#))**

India and Myanmar signed on 27 February 10 agreements with a focus on the socio-economic development of the southeast Asian nation as Prime Minister Narendra Modi held wide-ranging talks with Myanmar President U Win Myint. The Myanmar president, who arrived in India on 26 February, received a ceremonial welcome at the Rashtrapati Bhavan. He and First Lady Daw Cho Cho were welcomed by President Ram Nath Kovind and PM Modi. The prime minister and President Myint later held talks at Hyderabad House and 10 agreements were signed between the two countries. The focus of many agreements was on development projects under India's assistance, particularly in the conflict-torn Rakhine state.

### **11. Sequoia India leads \$16 mn funding round in healthtech start-up Qure.ai**

**Source: Business Standard ([Link](#))**

Sequoia India has led a \$16 million funding round in AI-based healthcare start-up Qure.ai. MassMutual Ventures Southeast Asia also participated in the round. Qure.ai will use the capital to drive geographical expansion, expand product portfolio in two more areas and support regulatory clearances. Warier claims Qure.ai's solutions can detect every critical brain abnormality on a head CT including five types of intracranial hemorrhages, cranial fractures, infarcts, midline shift, and mass effect for tumor detection. Its chest X-ray automation helps generate chest X-ray interpretation reports, detect tuberculosis, chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases, lung malignancies and medical emergencies like lung collapses and cardiac disorders.

