

## India to open up dairy, poultry markets for US

Agencies

**NEW DELHI:** India is likely to give the US access to its dairy and poultry markets in exchange for renegotiated terms for its pharmaceutical, textile and industrial exports under a new bilateral trade deal to be signed during President Donald Trump's visit to New Delhi later this month.

Top sources told IANS that India is willing to partially open up its traditionally protected sectors -- dairy and poultry -- on the condition that the US grants India better terms

to the collapse of the domestic apple industry. None of it turned out to be true," a source said, adding the opening up of dairy and poultry will not hurt the domestic market either.

Sources said, India has also shown willingness to reduce its 50 per cent tariffs on Harley-Davidson very large motorcycles to please President Trump who gave India the epithet of "tariff king" on Twitter over the issue.

The lowering of tariff won't have much impact because very few bikes of Harley Davidson are sold



for its pharmaceutical, textile and agro-machinery products. The Indian offer, sources said, is in view of President Trump's lament that US has had a trade deficit of \$65 billion with India. However, in 2018, the deficit had reduced to \$25.2 billion while the US and India trade of goods was worth \$142.6 billion.

"India is the world's largest milk producer but our dairy economy is not sound given the production cost and unaffordability of keeping the cattle once they stop producing milk. Similarly, there is a huge environmental cost to poultry," a top source familiar with the negotiations of the trade deal between the US and India, said. The government in New Delhi has made the offer to the US, its second-largest trading partner, after making a thorough assessment of India's traditionally protected markets which have already been opened up.

"When India gave access to China, New Zealand and Australia to the apple market, many feared that it would lead

in India, sources said.

Incidentally, the United States Trade Representatives (USTR) removed India from the list of 'developing' countries while the negotiations over the trade deal are ongoing. Sources said the USTR member Robert Lighthizer cancelled plans for a trip to India this week because both sides are fighting hard for a deal which is a win-win for both.

"If India aspires to be counted among the big players, it has to compete. Don't think it served any purpose to stay in the developing list since there wasn't any scope of getting any more preferential treatment under the US countervailing duty (CVD) laws. In 2018, our export of goods were over \$300 billion. There isn't any room for preferential treatment if we want to exceed our exports and get into the bracket of \$600 billion worth exports," an official in New Delhi said.

Thailand, Vietnam, Brazil, Indonesia and Malaysia, which are economically thriving countries, have also been removed from the list.

## Gold prices rise Rs 75, silver gains Rs 147

Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI:** Gold prices on Friday rose by Rs 75 to Rs 41,481 per 10 grams in the national capital amid rupee depreciation, according to HDFC Securities.

Likewise, silver also gained Rs 147 to Rs 47,036 per kg from Rs 46,889 per kg in the previous trade, it said. Gold had on Thursday closed at Rs 41,406 per 10 gram.

"Spot gold of 24 karat in Delhi was trading up by Rs 75 with rupee depreciation," HDFC Securities Senior Analyst (Commodities) Tapan Patel said.

The rupee fell marginally by 2 paise to 71.33 against the US dollar in opening trade on Friday.

In the international market, both gold and silver were trading flat at USD 1,575.80 per ounce and USD 17.69 per ounce, respectively.



## 'Pay Rs 92,000 Crore By Midnight': Centre Orders Telecom Firms After SC Rap

Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI:** After Supreme Court rap, the telecom department began issuing orders, directing companies such as Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea to clear dues before Friday midnight.

The DoT, which faced the ire of the Supreme Court for putting on hold recovery of dues from telecom companies, started issuing circle or zone-wise demand notices to firms, an order seen by PTI said.

The order issued on Friday by the UP (West) Telecom Circle asked "all telecom service providers" to clear dues by 11.59 pm Friday.

"With reference to subject cited above, you are hereby directed to make the payment of outstanding dues of licence fee and spectrum usage charges by 14.02.2020, 11:59 PM positively," it said. One of the telecom operators, who did not wish to be named, confirmed the receipt of the said order from the circle.

While in all, 15 entities owe the government Rs 1.47 lakh crore -- Rs 92,642 crore in unpaid licence fee and another Rs 55,054 crore in outstanding spectrum usage charges, it is not immediately clear just how much of that has been sought by the government by midnight tonight.

The order issued the circle-based Controller of Communication Accounts came after the telecom de-

partment earlier on Friday withdrew its order that asked for no coercive action against telecom companies defaulting on statutory dues payment. The circular was withdrawn by the telecom department immediately after the Supreme Court took a strong view of non-compliance in payment of dues by telecom companies. The DoT order issued to its field offices subsequently had asked for "immediate necessary action" in compliance with the October judgment of the Supreme Court. The direction by the DoT had said its previous order dated January 23, 2020 "stands withdrawn with immediate effect". "It is directed to take immediate necessary action in compliance with the judgement dated October 24, 2019 of the Supreme Court," said the fresh order issued by the DoT.

The Supreme Court on Friday directed the managing directors and directors of telcos and other firms to explain why contempt action be not taken against them for non-compliance of its order to pay adjusted gross revenue (AGR) of Rs 1.47 lakh crore to the Department of Telecommunications.

Taking strong note of the non-compliance of its order, a bench of Justice Arun Mishra, Justice S Abdul Nazeer and Justice M R Shah expressed anguish over the order passed by DoT's desk officer, staying the effect of its verdict in AGR matter.

Of the three private players operating in the Indian telecom market, Vodafone Idea is considered to be in the most vulnerable position.

Vodafone Idea is staring at dues worth Rs 53,000 crore that includes up to Rs 24,729 crore of spectrum dues and another Rs 28,309 crore in licence fee, and the company had earlier warned of shutdown if no relief was given. Vodafone Idea in its earnings statement on Thursday had also sounded out warnings on "material uncertainty" casting "significant doubt" on its ability to continue as a going concern. VIL had said on Thursday that the company's ability to continue as a going concern is essentially dependent on a positive outcome of its modification application in the Supreme Court on the AGR matter and any relief from the telecom department on payments.

Last week, Vodafone Chief Executive Officer Nick Read had said the situation in India is critical, following the AGR ruling of the Supreme Court. The British telecom major holds 45.39 per cent stake in VIL.

VIL had suffered staggering Rs 50,922 crore loss in the September quarter (highest ever loss posted by any Indian corporate), when it had made provisions for statutory dues following the Supreme Court's order in the adjusted gross revenue matter, although its losses in December quarter narrowed to Rs 6,439 crore.

## Govt willing to do more beyond Budget to boost growth: FM

Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI:** Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday said that if required, the government would take more steps beyond the announcements made in the Union Budget 2020-21 to boost economic activities.

At an interactive session on 'Budget and Beyond' with professionals from asset management, wealth advisory, tax consultancy and other related industries, the minister also said the Budget 2020-21 was a budget where the impact on equity, bond and currency markets was positive.

"If more has to be done

beyond the Budget 2020, we are willing to do that," Sitharaman said at the session, where the par-



ticipants made several suggestions to boost economic activities in the country. The government announced a host of steps in the Union Budget, pre-

sented on February 1 in Parliament, to expand the economic activities at a time when the country is faced with demand slowdown due to several reasons. The country's GDP growth is estimated to slow to an 11-year low of 5 per cent in the current financial year.

During the interactive session, participants made suggestions for increasing consumption, giving more money into the hands of consumers, measures required to boost liquidity and hosts of suggestions for the capital markets.

Several suggestions were also made on the 'Vivad se Vishwas' scheme to deal with the disputes

related to the direct taxes. It was announced in the Budget 2020-21.

She said the finance ministry will provide details of the scheme soon. However, Parliament approval will be required before the scheme is implemented.

The Union Cabinet has approved certain amendments to the scheme.

"In a day or two, we shall be coming with a clear non-paper (on the scheme) because Parliament is yet to pass it," she said.

To a suggestion regarding PAN card, the minister said the issuance process would be simplified further.

## Delhi airport launches doorstep baggage pick-up, drop service

Agencies

**NEW DELHI:** GMR-led Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL) on Friday announced that it has launched a doorstep baggage transfer facility for passengers flying to and from Delhi Airport.

After successful trial the facility has been officially launched at Terminal 3. The service has been introduced in collaboration with Bengaluru-based 'CarterX', as part of DIAL's endeavour to provide

Similarly, passengers arriving at Delhi Airport can book the service online or at the baggage pick-up and drop counter, located in meeters and greeters area of Terminal 3 arrival. The baggage will then be delivered to locations in Delhi, NCR region, Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. All the baggage booked for pick-up and drop facility are insured by the service provider agency, he said.

With this fully digital plat-



world-class experience to its passengers.

To avail the facility, a passenger can book their baggage through CarterX website or app or counters at Delhi Airport to be picked from their home in Delhi and NCR region. Soon the booking facility would be available through Delhi Airport website - www.newdelhiairport.in, said DIAL spokesperson. Each bag thus booked is then secured in separate tamper-resistant sealable bags, which are marked and bar-coded for easy identification. On arrival at the airport, passengers can collect their baggage at the Departure forecourt area and proceed for check-in, he said.

form, passengers can travel hassle free while they are travelling from and to Delhi Airport, as they no longer need to worry about carrying their heavy bags. The service offers seamless experience of baggage transit for passengers, the spokesperson said.

Passengers availing this facility will have to provide the date of service for pick-up or delivery, flight details, delivery location. After payment of service fee, the baggage would be brought to arrival departure area. The passenger can also track their baggage in transit on phone or tablet, he said.

However, going forward, this service will be extended to Terminal 1 and Terminal 2.

## 2 SpiceJet pilots suspended for improper landing

Agencies

**NEW DELHI:** Two SpiceJet pilots were on Thursday handed an over four-month suspension for improper landing of a 737 Boeing aircraft at the Mangalore airport which "jeopardised the safety" of aircraft and the passengers.

Strangely, the regulator said that pilots were suspended for the 135 days from the "date of incident", which was October 31 last year. This means that the pilots could return to work by mid of March which translated to an effective one month suspension.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said its investigation revealed that the aircraft touched down left of the centreline and deviated further to the left and the delayed "corrective input by the crew" led to the damage of three runway edge lights.

"DGCA has suspended the license held by the pilot in command and first officer for a period of four and a half months from the date of incident," the regulator said.



### NEWS MAKERS

## 25 fish farmers flagged off on exposure tour in Budgam

**BUDGAM:** Additional Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Mushtaq Ahmad Simnani in presence of Assistant Director Fisheries, Showkat Ahmad Bhat flagged off 25 progressive fish farmers including women entrepreneurs on exposure tour under ATMA at DC office Budgam, here today.

Earlier, ADC interacted with the farmers and urged them to expand their units and promote fish cultural in the district. He said that district administration is providing assistance including better marketing facilities to support farm holders.

He said that tour will enable farmers to get acquainted with latest fish farm techniques. He urged the touring farmers to make best of the training and



demonstrations they will be imparted. While giving the details of the tour activities of the farmers, the Assistant Director, Fisheries, Budgam,

Showkat Ahmad Bhat, said that the farm holders will visit places including National Fish Seed Manasbal, Trout Fish Farm Pandach and Trout Farm

Laribal. He said there are presently 100 fish farms in operation in the district which include 60 carp and 38 trout farms in the district.

## Facebook inks deal to stream Filmfare Awards globally

**NEW DELHI:** Facebook on Friday inked a deal with Worldwide Media, the content company that produces the Filmfare Awards -- India's most prominent entertainment awards show. The year-long partnership will provide exclusive non-linear digital simulcast partnership to the entire Filmfare awards franchise, including Filmfare Hindi, Filmfare Marathi, Filmfare South, Filmfare Punjabi and Filmfare Glamour and Style Awards in 2020.

"We are excited because we will leverage the various FB tools to drive like-minded communities of Bollywood buffs to discuss, debate and enjoy topics and content of similar interest



levels. It will enable them to talk about the

world of movies, favourite stars and artists all year around, centered around exciting content that the Filmfare team creates," Deepak Lamba-CEO, Worldwide Media, said in a statement.

Kickstarting the association with the 65th Amazon Filmfare Awards, the awards show will simulcast on February 16 at 9.00 p.m. on Filmfare's official

Facebook page, in addition to red carpet highlights, backstage footage, special moments and best of Filmfare archive content, that will be exclusively available digitally on Facebook and Instagram.

"We are excited to partner with Filmfare to bring exclusive and engaging videos, photos and more for people on our platforms," said Manish Chopra, Director and Head of Partnerships, Facebook India.