

# MERGING OF PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS

## Bank strike by unions today to protest against mergers

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU  
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 21

THE OPERATIONS of public sector banks (PSBs) are likely to be affected on Tuesday as some of the employees' unions have decided to observe nation-wide strike to protest against the merger of 10 nationalised banks. However, officers and private sector banks are not part of the call for strike given by All India Bank Employees Association and Bank Employees Federation of India. Most of the banks including the country's largest lender, State Bank of India (SBI), have already informed customers about the strike and its impact on them. "The government's decision is most unfortunate and totally unwarranted. All the banks which are facing closures, namely Andhra Bank, Allahabad Bank, Syndicate Bank, Corporation Bank, United Bank

**Officers and private sector banks are not part of the strike call given by All India Bank Employees Association and Bank Employees Federation of India**

of India and Oriental Bank of Commerce are well performing banks and have been greatly contributing to the nation's economic development," said a joint statement from central trade unions. In the absence of any positive outcome in the meeting called by Chief Labour Commissioner, it has been decided to go ahead with the strike, AIBEA General Secretary C H Vekatachalam said. The meeting held before Chief Labour Commissioner between representatives of Indian Banks' Association and unions failed to reach to a common ground. "Hence our call for strike stands. We exhort all our unions and members all over the country to go ahead with the strike,"

# Energy trade with US to jump 40% to \$10 billion in FY20: Pradhan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 21

INDIA'S ENERGY trade with the US is likely to jump by over 40 per cent to \$10 billion in 2019-20, as the world's third-largest oil consumer seeks to move away from its traditional suppliers in the Middle East, Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said on Monday. Mounting geopolitical uncertainties, rising US oil and gas production, and India's insatiable energy appetite has created both the need and the opportunity for the two nations to lift bilateral energy ties to a new level. India in October 2017 began importing crude oil from the US and in March 2018 it got the first shipment of liquefied natural gas (LNG) from there. In the last one year, the import of US crude oil has doubled and New Delhi is now closing on the biggest long-term LNG import deal.

# Wockhardt taken to NCLT over unpaid dues worth ₹1.55 crore

PRABHA RAGHAVAN  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 21

INDIAN DRUGMAKER Morepen Laboratories has approached the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) to recover money that Wockhardt owes it for making and supplying medicines for the drugmaker on a contract, *The Indian Express* has learnt. Wockhardt's payables have been on the rise over the last three years, with the company reporting over Rs 800 crore in trade payables at the end of March 31, 2019. Morepen is seeking to recover around Rs 1.55 crore, along with interest, from Wockhardt for invoices it raised between July 2018 and May 2019 for formulations that it supplied to the company, according to the petition filed with the Mumbai Bench of the NCLT. *The Indian Express* has reviewed a copy of this petition. "However, as per the running account duly maintained by the operational creditor, an unpaid operational debt of Rs 1,54,84,319/-... is still outstanding," Morepen stated in its petition.

**MOREPEN LABORATORIES MOVES TRIBUNAL**

■ Morepen is seeking to recover around Rs 1.55 crore, along with interest, from Wockhardt for invoices it raised between July 2018 and May 2019 for formulations that it supplied to the company, according to the petition filed with the Mumbai bench of the National Company Law Tribunal

■ Wockhardt owed a total of Rs 840.24 crore in trade payables to MSMEs and "others" at the end of the 2018-19

■ The petition states following a legal notice issued to Wockhardt in June 2019, the company gave "oral assurance" that it would pay up.

tion. Despite "several repeated formal communications" through emails and telephonic discussions, Wockhardt has not furnished the overdue amount, it stated. The petition further states that, following a legal notice issued to Wockhardt in June 2019, the company contacted Morepen and gave "oral assurance" that it would pay up. However, the company "again became reclusive and unresponsive and took no step towards fulfillment of its oral assurance" after Morepen withdrew its first legal notice, causing it to issue a second notice in August. It is not clear how much Wockhardt owes Morepen including interest. Morepen declined to comment on the issue, stating that the matter was subjective, while queries sent to Wockhardt remained unanswered by press time on Monday. Wockhardt owed a total of Rs 840.24 crore in trade payables to micro, small and medium enterprises and "others" at the end of the 2018-19 financial year, according to its annual report. In the 2016-17 financial year, its trade payables were Rs 533.81 crore.

# BRIEFLY

## Govt rolls out 6th tranche of gold bonds

New Delhi: To cash in on Dhanteras buying spree, the government on Monday rolled out the sixth tranche of sovereign gold bonds. The Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme 2019-20 - Series VI will close for subscription on the day of Dhanteras, October 25. As per a Finance Ministry statement, the Centre has fixed the issue price at Rs 3,835 per gram with settlement date as October 30. The Centre has decided to offer a discount of Rs 50 per gram for investors applying online and paying digitally.

## Goyal to attend meeting in Stockholm

New Delhi: Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal will attend Indo-Swedish Joint Commission for Economic, Industrial and Scientific Cooperation in Stockholm on October 23, an official statement said. There is significant potential for enhancing bilateral collaboration in areas like green technologies, renewable energy, smart infrastructure, healthcare and defence, it said. PTI

## Oil prices fall 1% as demand concerns grow

New York: Oil prices fell nearly 1 per cent on Monday after comments from a U.S. official stymied hopes that a US-China trade deal would be reached soon, feeding worries that a slowing global economy would reduce demand for oil. Brent crude futures fell 50 cents, or 0.8 per cent, to \$58.92 a barrel by 1:19 p.m. EDT (1719 GMT). US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures fell 45 cents, or 0.8 per cent, to \$53.33 a barrel. REUTERS

## Bharti Infratel Sept quarter net jumps 61%

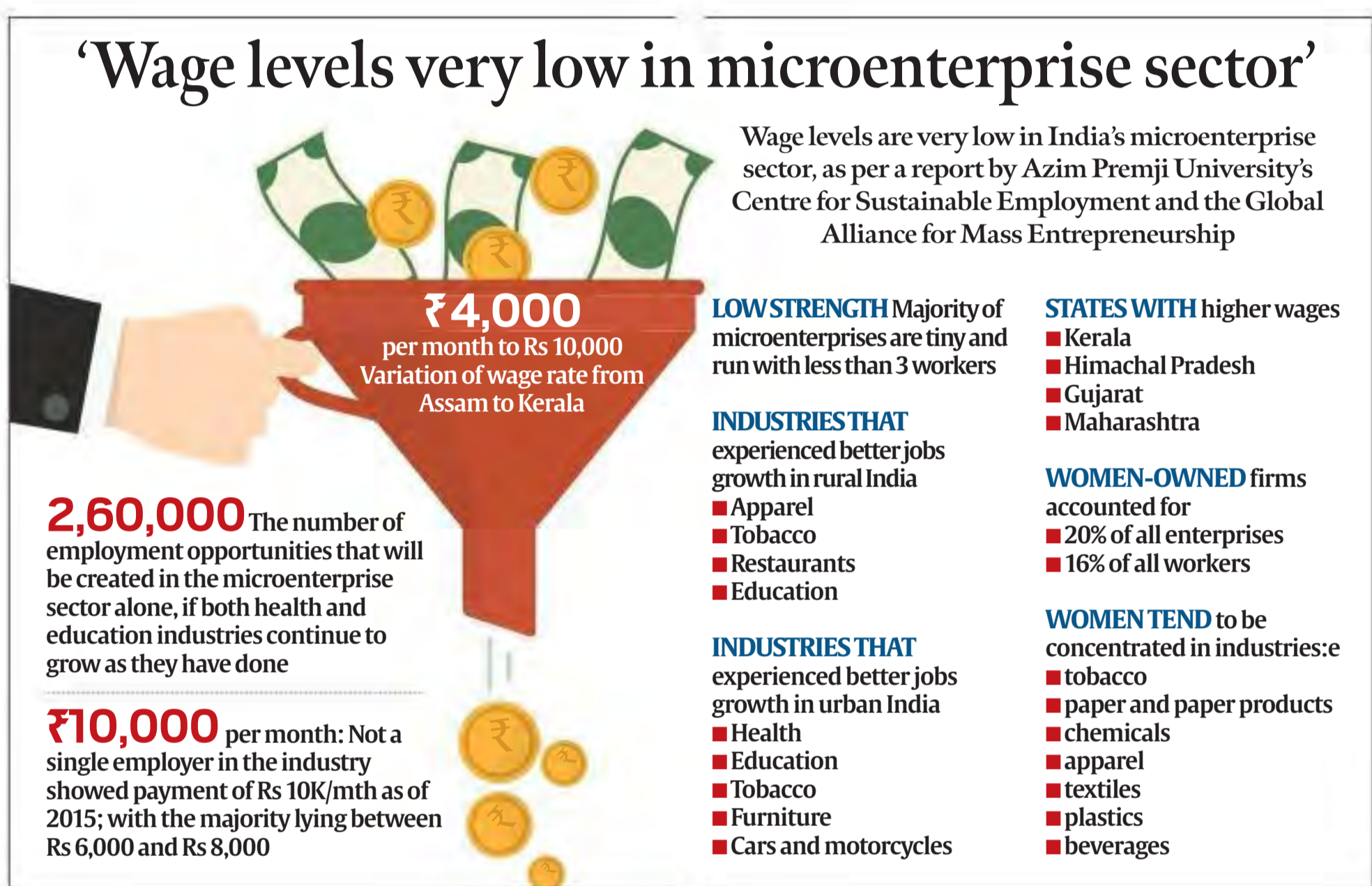
New Delhi: Bharti Infratel on Monday reported a 61 per cent jump in its net profit to Rs 964 crore for the July-September quarter, compared with Rs 600 crore in the same period last year. The revenue of the company was down 1 per cent to Rs 3,638 crore, against Rs 3,668 crore last year. The company, however, said figures for the July-September period are not comparable due to adoption of IND AS 116 with effect from April 1, 2019. FE

# Abhijit Banerjee: Govt's commitment to low inflation led to farm distress

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 21

NOBEL LAUREATE Abhijit Banerjee on Monday said the government's stringent commitment to low inflation has resulted in farm distress by adversely impacting support price for agricultural produce. Striking a note of caution, he said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has more faith in corporates than him. "I think Mr. Modi has more faith in the corporate sector than I do. The recent tax cuts show that someone in the administration believes that you have to give corporate sector lots of money to get growth. I do not believe that," Banerjee, who has been awarded this year's Nobel Prize for Economics along with two others, said here.

Banerjee added that the corporate tax cut would not bring growth but probably moderation in direct tax could push the growth northward. The government last month slashed the corporate tax rate to 22 per cent for domestic companies to push sagging economy. "The commitment to low inflation dove it to clamp down on support price... agricultural income went down relative to rest of the country. This was agricultural distress. Farmers are unhappy," he said. As a result, he said the government was forced to put money for PM-KISAN. On the stress in the banking sector, he said part of the problem is that decision-making is absolutely frozen. The economy hit six-year low of 5 per cent for the first quarter of the current financial year.



# ‘Digital India needs to create aspirations in tier 3-4 cities’

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 21

A DAY after Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged technologists to bridge the gap between technology and human intention, Minister of Electronics & IT Ravi Shankar Prasad called for startups to play a major role in bridging the gaps between "haves and have-nots". "Startup movement should reach out to the rural India and particularly 1 lakh villages being upgraded as digital villages through focused intervention of government," Prasad said. Speaking at the Ministry of

Electronics and IT (MeitY) StartUp Summit, Prasad said there is compelling case for social startups and that these should be encouraged so they unleash their power in India's changing digital narrative. "I want Digital India platform to transform rural India and create aspirations in tier 3 and tier 4 cities and towns," Prasad said. Citing success stories of technology platforms Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and GST Network, the minister said government entities such as NIC, STPI should also become competitive. "For Digital India to succeed, the government entities must

**Govt launches BHIM 2.0**

New Delhi: The Information and Technology Ministry on Monday unveiled a slew of new initiatives and programmes, including BHIM 2.0 that packs-in new functionalities, supports additional languages and has in-

also become competitive. I have told National Informatics Centre that your people have to become competitive and innovative... they have changed. Software Technology Parks of India also

must change," the minister said. He also called for India to become a centre for patent and intellectual property, adding patent clearance timelines should be brought down to a maximum of

one year. Responding to industry's concerns of patent clearances taking 4-5 years at times, the minister said "our patent clearance must be completed in a year's time". The minister instructed senior officials in his department to digitally map innovative products by small entrepreneurs and artisans in villages across India to enable them to tap the domestic as well as the global market. The initiative on having such a digital catalogue of enterprises and entrepreneurs should be co-ordinated by Common Service Centres, and other entities, he said.

## JP Morgan commits \$10 million to World Bank's skilling programme

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 21

WALL STREET major JP Morgan on Monday announced a \$10-million commitment to a new World Bank multi-donor trust fund focused at skilling the youth in the country. The investment is part of the American investment bank's \$25 million, five-year commitment to help low- and middle-income communities here develop the skillsets, a statement said, adding the programme is aimed at improving

access to quality and market-relevant training for youth in select states. "Children who are in primary schools today are likely to work in jobs that do not even exist now. To prepare them for a fundamentally altered world of work is going to be a critical policy decision countries can make to secure the future of their citizens," World Bank country director for India Junaid Ahmad in the statement. The pilot projects will be launched in Maharashtra and Rajasthan, the statement added.

# Data Security Council launches national repository ‘TechSagar’

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 21

IN WHAT could enable targeted search of India's capabilities across technologies such as internet of things, artificial intelligence, machine learning, cyber security, etc, the Data Security Council of India (DSCI), in partnership with the National Cyber Security Coordinator's office, unveiled a platform that will enlist businesses and research entities working across 25 such areas. "... global average is that the losses due to cyber crime globally is 2.5 per cent of GDP, that is the scale that we are talking of... our aspirations of growing to \$5 trillion economy by 2025 are being seriously threatened by the losses due to cyber crimes. In order to combat the growing threat from cybercrime, there is an urgent need to collaborate and develop Cyber Technology capabilities in India," said Rajesh Pant, National Cyber Security Coordinator of India. He said that the repository, called TechSagar, will facilitate new opportunities for businesses and academia to collaborate, connect and innovate in future. The platform, TechSagar, will provide actionable insights about capabilities of various

**TechSagar will enlist businesses and research entities working across 25 such areas. It will help businesses and academia to collaborate, connect and innovate in future**

companies and startups, academia and research. It will allow targeted search, granular navigation and drilldown methods using more than 3,000 niche capabilities. The repository currently features over 4,000 entities. TechSagar will be frequently updated with new entities and information to maintain its relevancy and usefulness. Rama Vedashree, CEO, DSCI, said: "Cyber technology capabilities have become central to our National strategic outlook and there was an urgent need for developing TechSagar. Start-ups, enterprises, academia, researchers, and R&D institutes in the country need to synergise their efforts and work in tandem to make India a Technology leader".

# UltraTech net rises to ₹639 crore in Sept qtr

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU  
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 21

ULTRATECH ON Monday reported a 72 per cent year-on-year increase in its standalone net profit to Rs 639 crore for the quarter ended September. Revenue from operations increased 4.3 per cent to Rs 9,253 crore. Earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation (Ebitda) increased 29 per cent to Rs 1,995 crore while the margins for the quarter stood at 22 per cent, compared with 18 per cent in the corresponding quarter. The consolidated net profit grew 62 per cent year-on-year (y-o-y) to Rs 579 crore. Revenue from operations increased 4 per cent to Rs 9,620 crore. Volumes, however, fell by 1 per cent to 18.69 million tonne during the quarter. Of this, domestic volume stood at 17.77 million tonne, a decrease of 2 per cent y-o-y, while exports and others went down by 16 per cent to 0.57 million tonne. UltraTech expects the demand to normalise in the remaining two quarters of FY20 on the back of positive demand in parts of north India. FE

# EU regulator expects to clear Boeing 737 MAX by January

REUTERS  
COLOGNE, OCTOBER 21

EUROPEAN REGULATORS expect to clear Boeing's grounded 737 MAX to return to service in January at the earliest, following flight trials by European test pilots currently scheduled for mid-December, Europe's top air safety official told Reuters. The head of the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) declined to estimate when US regulators would make their own decision to lift a flight ban imposed in March, but said any gap between the agencies would be a matter of weeks not months. Boeing has said it aims to return the jet to service by year-end following changes to cockpit software and training in the wake of two fatal crashes that sparked the grounding in March. The US Federal Aviation Administration has primary responsibility for lifting the ban and is expected to be followed by other regulators including EASA, but there have been concerns that other agencies could be slow to act. "For me it is going to be the beginning of next year; if everything goes well. As far as we know today, we have planned for our flight tests to take place in mid-December which means



Boeing 737 MAX aircraft at Boeing facilities at Grant County International Airport in Washington. Reuters File

decisions on a return to service for January, on our side," EASA executive director Patrick Ky said late on Friday. He said a return to service of the MAX would be coordinated with the FAA as much as possible, but that the two agencies had slightly different processes and consultation requirements. "So we may end up with a couple of weeks of time difference but we are not talking about six months; we are talking about a delay which, if it happens, will be due mostly to process or administrative technicalities," Ky added. Ky was speaking shortly before the disclosure on Friday of internal pilot messages from 2016 plunged Boeing into fresh turmoil. On Monday, he declined comment on the mes-

# China unveils new carrier rockets to compete with India for global market

K J M VARMA  
BEIJING, OCTOBER 21

CHINA HAS unveiled its new generation of commercial carrier rockets which could carry up to 1.5 tonne payload as it gears up to compete with India to attract the lucrative global space launch market. The new Long rocket series comprises a cluster of solid fuelled rockets codenamed the Smart Dragon (SD) family, and a Tenglong liquid-propellant rocket were unveiled on Sunday by the China Rocket, a commercial space wing of the country's leading rocket-maker China Academy of Launch Vehicle Technology, official media reported on Monday. The new set of rockets were aimed at tapping the growing potential of domestic and global commercial space launches, state-run Global Times reported. The new set of rockets were "basically capable of meeting the requirements of the overwhelming majority of launch missions for domestic and foreign commercial satellites," the daily quoted a statement of the China Rocket. China which has an established space programme with mission to Moon has elaborate plans to extend its mission to Mars besides setting up its own perma-

## The new set of rockets were aimed at tapping the growing potential of domestic and global commercial space launches, state-run Global Times reported

nent space station by 2022. It however lags behind in attracting the global commercial rocket market unlike India. In 2017 an article in Global Times warned that China's space industry is lagging behind that of India in commercial space industry. "India's successful launch of a record-breaking 104 satellites into orbit could serve as a wake-up call for China's commercial space industry and there are a number of lessons for the country to learn," the article said. "Of the 104 satellites, 96 belong to the US, which makes India a fierce competitor in the global market for commercial rocket launch services," the article titled 'China needs to cut commercial space costs to compete with India' said. India's "achievements are largely driven by its low-price advantage, a weak point for China's commercial space sector", it said. PTI