

Daily News Monitor: 12 February 2021

1. Grofers weighs indirect US listing

Source: Livemint ([Link](#))

Grofers, one of India's top online grocers, is in talks for an indirect listing in the US by merging with a special purpose acquisition company, or SPAC, three people familiar with the development said. SPACs or so-called blank-check companies are investment vehicles that raise money by listing on a stock exchange. Such companies use the proceeds of the initial public offering solely to acquire or merge with private firms who want to skirt the costly and lengthy process of an IPO in the US.

2. Koo: Indian firms to take over Chinese investments

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

Homegrown microblogging platform Koo on 11 february said Chinese VC Shunwei will be fully exiting the venture, and added that Indian entrepreneurs Ashish Hemrajani of BookMyShow, Vivekananda of Bounce, and Nithin Kamat of Zerodha, among others, will be investing in it. "It is a clear indication the company is getting more Indian money," Koo said in a statement as it tried to address criticism over the Chinese ownership. The recent investment of \$4.1 million into its parent firm, Bombinate Technologies, was led by 3one4 Capital, an Indian investor. "Shunwei had not participated in the latest round of funding. It had invested in the company for the earlier product, Vokal, which answers user questions in Indian languages and will be exiting fully with the new investors buying their stake," Koo said.

3. From govt regulation to self-governance, Apprenticeship Act to be amended to boost ease of doing biz

Source: Livemint ([Link](#))

The government will amend the Apprenticeship Act and integrate its provisions with the ease of doing business goal with a "shift from government regulation to self-governance" and build flexibility for employers and individuals to establish better shop-floor training and employment ecosystem. The amendment will also allow outsourcing of apprentice aggregation to third parties, including staffing companies, expand the definition of establishment to include new sectors such as services and open up apprenticeship opportunities for students to improve their employability, skills and entrepreneurship secretary Praveen Kumar said on 11 February.

4. Govt is planning to subsidise 62,000 e-passenger vehicles: Gadkari.

Source: Livemint ([Link](#))

In a bid to promote electric mobility, the government aims to provide subsidies to about 62,000 electric passenger cars and buses and develop electric charging infrastructure, Nitin Gadkari on 11 February told the Lok Sabha. 1) Phase-II of Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid &) Electric Vehicles in India (FAME India) Scheme is being implemented with a total budget of ₹10,000 crore. 2) This phase focuses on the electrification of public transportation. Under this scheme, the government will provide subsidies to 7,000 e-Buses, 5 lakh e-3 Wheelers, 55000 e-4 Wheeler Passenger Cars and 10 lakh e-2 Wheelers.

5. BharatPe set to become next unicorn after valuation crosses \$900 mn

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

Fintech company BharatPe has raised \$108 million in a Series D equity round, at a valuation of \$900 million. The financial services company for merchants raised \$90 million in a primary fundraising and also ensured secondary exit for its angel investors and employees for a \$18 million. The round was led by the company's existing investor Coatue Management. All 7 existing institutional investors participated in the round. These include Ribbit Capital, Insight Partners, Steadview Capital, Beenext, Amplo and Sequoia Capital. With this round, the company has raised a total of \$268 million in equity and debt to date.

6. India set to see a median increase in salaries of 7% in 2021: Survey

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

Backed by growth in pharmaceutical, high tech, and consumer products sectors amid the Covid-19 pandemic, India is set to see a median increase in salaries of 7 per cent in 2021, the highest among key Asia Pacific markets, according to a survey. However, the average salary growth in 2021 is projected at 6.4 per cent. This is slightly lower than last year, when the median increase was 7.5 per cent and average was 5.9 per cent, the latest Salary Budget Planning Survey by Willis Towers Watson has found. Compiled by the NASDAQ-listed Willis Towers Watson's Data Services Practice, the survey, conducted online in October and November, received over 18,000 responses from 130 countries. Among key markets in Asia Pacific, India is followed by Indonesia (6.5 per cent), China (6 per cent), Philippines (5 per cent), Singapore (3.5 per cent) and Hong Kong (3 per cent) in terms of median growth

7. In a first, Isro tests satellites developed by private sector

Source: Hindustan Times ([Link](#))

This is a first for the space agency, which so far has only taken help in manufacturing and fabrication of various parts of satellites and rockets from the Indian industry. Two satellites

by Indian startups—SpaceKidz India and Pixxel (incorporated as Sygyzy)—were tested at the UR Rao Satellite Centre of the Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro). This is a first for the space agency, which so far has only taken help in manufacturing and fabrication of various parts of satellites and rockets from the Indian industry. This comes after India opened up its space sector to private players in June last year. An independent body, Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe), was set up to not only to oversee the space activity of the private sector, but also to handhold and share Isro facilities. The decision of the body would be binding on Isro as well.

8. New Foreign Trade Policy likely to include a chapter on ecommerce exports

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

The new Foreign Trade Policy is likely to focus on encouraging exports through ecommerce as also identifying districts as export hubs while re-looking at products that are restricted or banned for export and import. The commerce and industry ministry is drawing up the FTP 2021-26, which is likely to be released on April 1 and is expected to have separate chapters dealing with measures for ecommerce, districts as export hubs, and trade in items such as toxic chemicals, micro-organisms and nuclear material.