

FINANCIAL TIMES

WEDNESDAY 21 DECEMBER 2022

INTERNATIONAL NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

ASIA

Will green rules spawn zombie office blocks?

BIG READ, PAGE 13

There were glints of light in a year to forget

MARTIN WOLF, PAGE 15

'Superhuman' Zelenskyy hails troops

Volodymyr Zelenskyy, left, hands out the State Award to a soldier yesterday during a ceremony for Ukrainian servicemen in the eastern city of Bakhmut.

Ukraine's president hailed the "superhuman" troops during a surprise visit to the frontline city. He urged them to maintain morale as the boom of artillery sounded in the distance. "Motivate those who are near you, those who might be weaker," Zelenskyy said.

At the same time, Russia's president Vladimir Putin made a rare admission of his country's challenges in the near 10-month war.

In a video message to his security services, he said the situation in four Russian-occupied regions of Ukraine was "extremely complicated", and urged them to intensify efforts to identify "traitors, spies and diversionsists".



Ukraine presidency/AP

Briefing

► Wells Fargo told to pay \$3.7bn over illegal activity Consumer watchdogs have ordered the fourth-biggest US bank to pay out over conduct between 2011 and this year, the latest in a string of fines. — PAGE 5

► China normal 'in months' State media have promised a quick return to normality and sought to portray an "exit wave" of coronavirus cases as part of a pre-planned strategy. — PAGE 4

► Scandal claims new scalp Luca Visentini, head of a global trade union body, has quit after admitting taking cash from the MEP at the heart of a European parliament scandal. — PAGE 4

► Car chip shortage alert Manufacturers and chipmakers have warned that the automotive sector will suffer semiconductor shortages in 2023 as the electric switch accelerates. — PAGE 6

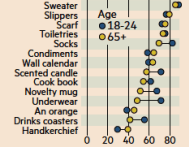
► Gates takes aim at Musk Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates has said that "seat-of-the-pants" decisions at Twitter since Elon Musk's takeover are worsening digital turmoil. — PAGE 5; LEX, PAGE 16

► Amazon seals EU deal The US tech giant has finalised a deal with antitrust regulators and announced new measures to level the playing field for sellers in its marketplace. — PAGE 4

Datawatch

Underwear overrated

% of Britons happy to receive:



Source: YouGov, Nov 23-30

Younger Britons are far more likely than pensioners to welcome underwear as a gift — the biggest generational divide among traditional Christmas presents. A handkerchief is a little more likely to be appreciated by an older recipient

Bank of Japan policy rethink sends shockwaves across global markets

◆ Surprise yield curve shift ◆ Big jump in yen ◆ Traders see 'pivot' point ◆ Kuroda plays down move

KANA INAGAKI AND LEO LEWIS — TOKYO

The Bank of Japan surprised investors with a change to a core tenet of its monetary policy, sending shockwaves across the currency, bond and equity markets.

Traders described an adjustment to its longstanding yield curve control measures as potentially marking a "pivot" by the BoJ, the last of the leading central banks to stick to an ultra-loose monetary regime.

"We view this decision as a major surprise, as we had expected any widening of the tolerable band to be made under the new BoJ leadership from spring next year, similar to the market," said Naohiko Baba, chief Japan economist at Goldman Sachs.

The yen jumped more than 4 per cent

to about ¥131.2 against the US dollar in New York trading, while Japan's Topix equity index fell 1.5 per cent. The 10-year Japanese government bond yield surged by its most in almost two decades, reaching a high of 0.47 per cent.

The BoJ move ricocheted across other big markets. The US 10-year Treasury yield rose 0.11 percentage points to 3.69 per cent, while the equivalent UK gilt yield increased by a similar margin to 5.6 per cent. Yields rise when prices fall.

Lex. The move is the boldest step Kuroda has taken after years of criticism, and only when he has one foot out the door

BoJ governor Haruhiko Kuroda denied that the adjustment amounted to a tightening of monetary policy, stressing that the central bank would not scrap its yield target.

Japan's increasingly extreme outlier status has contributed to a big fall in the yen this year as markets have priced in the differential with the rate-tightening US Federal Reserve.

The BoJ said it would let 10-year yields fluctuate by plus or minus 0.5 percentage points of its target of zero, instead of the previous band of plus or minus 0.25 percentage points.

Kuroda had earlier said any tweak to the yield curve control policy would in effect amount to an interest rate rise.

But he said yesterday the adjustment was meant to address increased volatility in global markets and improve bond market functioning to "enhance the sustainability of monetary easing". He added: "This measure is not a rate hike. Adjusting the YCC does not signal the end of YCC or an exit strategy."

Japan's core inflation, which excludes volatile food prices, has exceeded the BoJ's 2 per cent target for the seventh consecutive month, hitting a 40-year high of 3.6 per cent in October.

Kuroda had long argued that any tightening would be premature without robust wage growth, which is why most economists had expected the BoJ to stay the course until he steps down in April. The BoJ yesterday maintained its outlook that inflation would slow down

next year and warned of "extremely high uncertainties" for the economy.

"Maybe it's an act of generosity by Kuroda to reduce the burden for the next BoJ governor, but it's a dangerous move and market players feel duped," said Masamichi Adachi, chief Japan economist at UBS. "US yields are falling now but if they start to rise again, the BoJ would once again face the risk of being pressured into raising rates."

The BoJ effort to defend its YCC targets have contributed to a cut in market liquidity and what some analysts describe as "dysfunction" in the Japanese government bond market. The bank owns more than half of outstanding bonds, compared with 11.5 per cent when Kuroda took charge in 2013. Bond bears win page 8

Media groups shed \$500bn in value as shares head for historic declines

ALISTAIR GRAY — LONDON

More than \$500bn has been wiped off the market value of the world's biggest media companies this year as investors sour on the streaming revolution, triggering historic share price declines for broadcasting and entertainment groups.

Intensifying competition and rising costs have combined with consumer belt-tightening and an advertising slowdown to spark an industry-wide decline.

Media, which for investors spans a range of activities from film production to advertising to cable television, has been among the hardest hit sectors in what is set to be the worst year for global equities since the financial crisis.

"It's been a perfect storm of bad news," said Michael Nathanson, media analyst at MoffettNathanson. "I've been

covering this sector a long time and I've never seen such a bad collection of data points before."

Walt Disney shares, down about 45 per cent this year, are heading for their biggest annual fall in half a century. The shares have come under more pressure in recent days as takings from Disney's eagerly anticipated *Avatar* sequel fell short of estimates in its debut weekend.

Paramount Global has dropped 42 per cent this year and Netflix 52 per cent, while Warner Brothers Discovery has tumbled 65 per cent since its creation this year by the combination of Discovery and AT&T's WarnerMedia.

The conglomerate's executives are trying to integrate two of the largest operations in media at a time of industry turmoil, and last week warned that it faced as much as \$5.5bn in restructuring and other charges related to the merger.

Streaming companies coped well with the onset of the pandemic as lockdown restrictions boosted audiences. But while executives spent tens of billions of dollars on streaming content, viewing options have proliferated while living costs have soared — encouraging financially squeezed households to "churn", or switch subscriptions.

The Dow Jones Media Titans index, which tracks 30 of the world's biggest media companies, has shed 40 per cent this year, with its total market value shrinking from \$1.35tn to \$808bn.

Rising interest rates have dented valuations, particularly of the sector's "growth stocks". Music provider Spotify has slumped 69 per cent and video specialist Roku 81 per cent.

Advertisers have also become more reluctant to promote brands as the global economy slows.



Outspoken oligarch's \$1bn hotel grabbed by court

Analysis ► PAGE 2

Table with 2 columns: Country and Currency/Value. Includes Australia (A\$7000mc GST), China (RMB30), Hong Kong (HK\$33), India (Rupee220), Indonesia (Rp45000), Japan (¥6500mc ICT), Korea (₩4,500), Malaysia (RM1150), Pakistan (Rupee350), Philippines (Peso140), Singapore (S\$5.800mc GST), Taiwan (NT\$940), Thailand (Bht140), Vietnam (US\$4,50)

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World Markets

Table with columns for Stock Markets, Currencies, and Government Bonds. Includes data for S&P 500, Nasdaq Composite, FTSE 100, Euro Stoxx 50, etc.

INTERNATIONAL

Young Iranians turn ire on clerics and religious establishment

Clergy's turbans are being knocked off in public as part of nationwide protests

NAJMEH BOZORGMEHR — TEHRAN

Young men and women run towards clerics in the streets, including old men, knocking off their turbans and running away, giggling as if it is a game.

For more than four decades, Iran's ruling Shia clerics have taken an uncompromising approach to social freedoms, setting a compulsory Islamic dress code for women, and restricting dancing and drinking alcohol in public.

But public opinion has turned against the conservative establishment after nationwide protests following the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini in September in police custody. She was detained for failing to properly observe the Islamic dress code.

Videos of anti-regime protesters knocking turbans off clerics' heads in cities and towns have surfaced on social media. While not widespread, the attacks have deterred some clerics from wearing the headgear in public.

"This aggressive act is not extensive but has symbolic importance by creating fears among the clergy who wonder how far protesters are ready to go," said a reform-minded analyst. "The pressure on religious segments of the society is very heavy now. There are concerns this might happen to women who wear [the] *chador*, too," the person said, referring to the top-to-toe black covering.

While Iran has witnessed protests before, these are the first to call for the toppling of the Islamic establishment. "Canons, tanks, firecrackers, the clergy must get lost," has been one of the pro-

test's most popular slogans, the first part borrowed from a football chant critical of referees.

Hundreds of thousands of male and female clerical students live in Iran, which has the biggest seminaries for Shia clergy in the Islamic world. The clerics targeted by young people do not necessarily have any links to the political establishment, nor are they well off, but for protesters, they are fair game.

"When people have no access to clerical rulers, they avenge those clerics who live a normal life without any positions in the political establishment and have no bodyguards," said Mohammad Ali Abtahi, a cleric and former reformist vice-president.

"This act of knocking turbans off clerics' heads is a big insult in the clerical world," he added.

Clerics have been targeted in this way before, usually by other clerics or their followers. Abtahi recalls radical hard-line clerics knocking his turban off on a visit to the holy city of Qom in 2014.

The clergy became the centre of Iran's political establishment after the 1979 revolution when Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini founded the Islamic republic based on his theory of *Velayat-e Faqih*, or the rule of the highest ranking cleric, as he brought Islam and politics under one umbrella. His senior religious ranking and political charisma meant he saw few challenges from other clerics.

However, since 1989 when Ayatollah Ali Khamenei replaced him, clerics have interfered increasingly in the country's affairs. Even if politicians in Tehran



Line of fire: Shia clerics have become targets for protesters. Below, busy road junctions have also been disrupted

Morteza Nisoubazi/NoiPhoto/Getty Images/AP

wanted to address demands for more social freedom, they faced opposition from clerics. The clergy, whom people accuse of having lost touch with an increasingly modern society, are reluctant to allow full participation of women in public life. Women's attendance at football matches has been only recently slightly relaxed, but they are still forbidden to ride motorcycles and there are hardly any female ministers in govern-

ments. Rules on divorce, custody and inheritance reflect Islamic decrees. When Abtahi went to Qom in 2001 to lobby religious leaders for the appointment of female ministers, he said the then Grand Ayatollah Lotfollah Safi Golpaygani told him he would tell his followers to stop paying tax if a woman was picked as a minister.

Whether this year's protests will encourage the clergy to make concessions is unclear. So far, many have kept silent about the unrest, barely commenting on the fact that many women refuse to cover their hair in public, the biggest social change since the revolution.

"What is happening in cities shows the danger to the clergy the path they have taken [under the Islamic republic] has been the wrong one," said Abbas Abdi, a reformist analyst, in local media. He added that the clergy had historically been independent of political power but their closer ties to the regime could cost them their position as a leading voice on morality.

For now, authorities have promised to

prosecute anybody who dares to harass clerics. "Those who assault the clergy's turbans should know that these turbans are the clergy's shrouds"

prosecute anybody who dares to harass clerics. "Those who assault the clergy's turbans should know that these turbans are the clergy's shrouds . . . and [clerics] will sacrifice their lives for Islam and the Islamic republic," warned Alireza Araf, director of the country's seminaries.

Public reaction to those knocking off turbans has been mixed. "The clergy should realise what they have done to people for 43 years. Is it good to be harassed for clothing?" said Amir, an artist.

But 49-year-old Elaheh believes "we should not treat the clergy the way they have treated us. Our acts of civil disobedience should be civilised".

Analysts have warned that it would be difficult to get rid of clerical institutions without provoking a backlash, particularly from religious families. Clerics in Qom have hardly been targeted.

Mohammad Javad Fazel Lankarani, a senior cleric in Qom, said "it is time for us to be more present in public with this dress" and if "we are slapped for Islam, we should not leave the scene".



FT FINANCIAL TIMES

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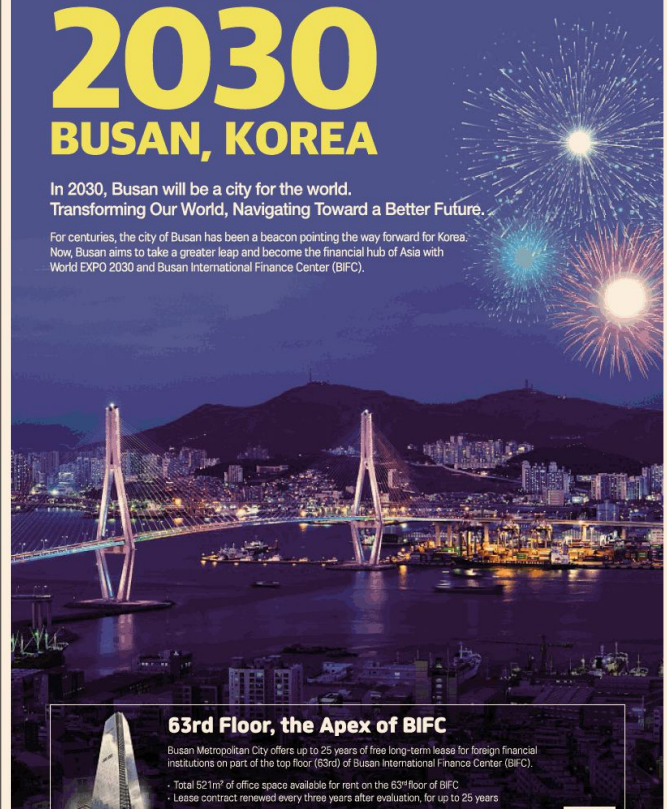
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Higher for longer Ultra-low inflation rates are a thing of the past and investors should get used to it ● MARKETS INSIGHT, PAGE 9

Companies & Markets

Wells Fargo to pay \$3.7bn for 'rinse-repeat' lawbreaking

- Thousands of homes and cars seized
- Illegality continued until this year

JOSHUA FRANKLIN AND STEFF CHÁVEZ
NEW YORK

Wells Fargo has been ordered to pay \$3.7bn over illegal activity spanning from 2011 until this year, the latest in a series of regulatory penalties incurred by the lender.

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau fined Wells Fargo \$1.7bn – the largest civil penalty the consumer watchdog has ever imposed – and ordered it to pay \$2bn in redress to customers for the mismanagement of mortgages, car loans and bank accounts that occurred under its current leadership.

Wells Fargo, the fourth-largest bank in the US by assets, has been attempting to rebuild its reputation since the emer-

gence in 2016 of its so-called fake accounts scandal. The bank agreed to pay \$5bn in criminal and civil penalties in 2020 after it was discovered it had fraudulently opened millions of customer accounts.

Explaining the latest round of penalties, the CFPB said yesterday that the bank had illegally assessed fees and interest charges on automotive and mortgage loans, had cars "wrongly repossessed" and misapplied customers' payments to vehicle and mortgage loans.

"Wells Fargo's rinse-repeat cycle of violating the law has harmed millions of American families," said CFPB director Rohit Chopra.

The regulator said that the bank's actions caused billions of dollars in harm to its customers, including the loss

The legal violations 'harmed millions of American families'

Rohit Chopra, CFPB director

of vehicles and homes for thousands of people.

Wells refused customers mortgage modifications that should have been allowed, leading some borrowers to lose their homes. The bank "was aware of the problem for years, before it ultimately addressed the issue", the CFPB said.

The bank also sprung illegal overdraft fees and other incorrect charges on current and savings account customers and incorrectly froze accounts.

Wells chief executive Charlie Scharf said the CFPB agreement was "an important milestone" in its work to improve operating practices.

Wells's stock trimmed early gains to be down nearly 1 per cent at lunchtime in New York. "We see the formal completion as a positive in its finality," JEFFREY ANALYSTS said.

Wells is operating under a cap on the size of its balance sheet imposed by the Federal Reserve in 2018, which was introduced in the wake of its fake accounts scandal.

Scharf took over at Wells in 2019 with a mandate to overhaul the bank after it became mired in the fake account scandal. In October of this year, he said the bank was working to "put these issues behind us".

The CFPB order highlights that some of the illegal activity – including incorrectly applying or processing many borrowers' car loan payments – continued as recently as this year.

Wells said that the bank's "new leadership team has been working to address issues and, as part of that work, we identify items or areas of potential concern".

The bank's third-quarter earnings took a nearly \$3bn hit from accruals to cover potential bad loans and other regulatory fallout resulting from the 2016 scandal.

Fresh foundation Lenders to take ownership of indebted Revlon in bankruptcy settlement



Revlon filed for bankruptcy in June as it battled \$3.5bn in debt, a capital crunch and supply chain woes – *Alamy*

SUJEET INDAP – NEW YORK

Revlon has struck an agreement with creditors to give lenders and bondholders ownership of the bankrupt cosmetics maker and wipe out the interests of Ron Perelman, who has controlled it for decades.

Under a proposed restructuring support agreement, the company would raise \$650m in equity and exit the Chapter 11 bankruptcy process by April in private hands. The majority of its new ownership would be held by senior lenders.

Revlon filed for bankruptcy in June as it struggled with \$3.5bn in debt, a capital crunch and supply chain problems. The company's shares subsequently enjoyed a fleeting rally as retail investors embraced it as a so-called meme stock. However, difficult financing conditions and a weakening economy soured hopes.

The new Revlon is set to have total

debt of \$1.4bn, though its proposed enterprise value has not been finalized, said a person familiar with the negotiations.

The proposed settlement allows Revlon and its creditors to avoid a messy fight over its assets. The disputes stem from 2020, in the early days of the pandemic, when the company struck a deal to raise \$88.0m of capital from hedge funds that claimed intellectual property, such as the Elizabeth Arden and Aïmays brands, as collateral.

A group of investors that had not participated in the financing later sued Revlon, alleging that the brand assets had been pledged to them in connection with a previous loan.

Later in 2020, Citigroup, an administrator of Revlon loans, mistakenly repaid \$900m of the earlier loan. A group holding \$500m of the loan declined to return the mis-wired funds to the US bank.

Revlon told the New York bankruptcy court that uncertainty over the identities of its creditors made it more difficult to raise capital and avoid a bankruptcy filing. A New York federal appeals court this year ordered the hedge funds to return the mis-wired funds to Citigroup, a ruling that hastened negotiations of a restructuring deal.

Perelman's daughter, Debra, is the chief executive of Revlon. The restructuring agreement calls for her employment agreement to be honored as well as a newly agreed severance plan.

Perelman acquired Revlon in 1987. While it thrived for years with supermodel endorsers, it eventually became vulnerable to upstart beauty brands and was weighed down by the debt from its 2016 acquisition of Elizabeth Arden.

The restructuring plan will be voted on by creditors and requires approval by the bankruptcy court.

Gates warns Musk's rule of Twitter stirs polarization

ANDREW EDGECLIFFE-JOHNSON
NEW YORK

A "seat-of-the-pants" decision-making style at Twitter since Elon Musk's takeover is worsening digital polarization, Bill Gates, the co-founder of Microsoft has warned.

"I wish I had the grand answer for this one because it seems more unclear now than even a year ago," Gates told the Financial Times when asked whether combating online extremes was an engineering challenge or a matter of human judgment.

"I think, certainly, the Twitter situation is stirring things up. That, instead of an objective set of measures done by a broad group of people, you're... seeing seat-of-the-pants type activity," he said.

Twitter has been in turmoil since Musk bought it for \$44bn in October. Advertisers have left the social media platform over concerns about his content moderation strategy, and Musk polled users this week over whether he should step down as chief executive.

Gates said social media platforms "need to focus on the things that incite riots or lead to huge misconceptions about the safety of vaccines or masks" in their effort to tackle misinformation. He said it was, for example, "daunting [for] even a fair-minded person with the world's best technology and infinite staffing budget" to distinguish between sensibly sceptical vaccine research and conspiracy theories that suggest "the people who make these vaccines are just trying to get rich".

The billionaire's donations to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the world's largest private philanthropic organisation, have taken his net worth below that of Musk.

In an annual letter released yesterday, Gates lists polarised US politics as one of the factors reversing progress on global health challenges from polio to malaria, alongside Covid-19, Russia's war in Ukraine, inflation and climate change.

"The degree to which global health is off the agenda is a big concern to me," he said in the interview. Foreign aid was likely to go through a sustained dip as donor countries absorbed the "extraordinary expenses" of the Ukraine war, he said, while many African countries would find it harder to obtain the debt financing on which some depend.

"The US, the world's biggest aid donor, absolutely could do more," he said.

See Lex

Indian states court manufacturers seeking to shift from China

INSIDE BUSINESS

ASIA

Chloe Cornish



Do you make semiconductors? Harshadeep Kamble, 25-year veteran of India's civil service, wants to make you an offer you can't refuse.

The principal secretary for industry in India's wealthiest state, Maharashtra, Kamble says he is pursuing three to four foreign semiconductor companies, not all Taiwanese, with juicy incentives packages. "We are telling these companies, this is what we already have on the platter for them. What is it further they would like to have?"

Semiconductors is the most ambitious industry Maharashtra seeks to attract, as India's states aim to position themselves as a viable "plus one" for companies diversifying supply chains away from China.

Kamble is planning a roadshow in Taiwan to build the industry's confidence. He wants to show his state has stripped back bureaucracy, expedited clearances and is offering sweeteners from capital subsidies to tax-based

\$34bn to production-linked incentive schemes to encourage companies to take risks building factories. And Indian states are competing hard against each other to attract investment.

The southern state of Tamil Nadu has long been a pioneer. It already boasts manufacturing by the likes of computer maker Dell, Korea's technology group Samsung and carmaker Hyundai. Foxconn, Pegatron and Wistron are manufacturing Apple's iPhone 14 in the state and Karnataka. Maharashtra this year lost to Gujarat to be the site of a \$19.4bn chipmaking complex for Foxconn and Indian Industrial group Vedanta.

Despite the urgency to reorient supply chains, experts say foreign investment is not exactly pouring into Indian manufacturing just yet. Foreign direct investment equity inflow from April, the start of the financial year, to September was down 14 per cent on the previous year, at \$27bn.

"In terms of the inflows, we don't see a stepping up," says Biswajit Dhar, a trade expert and professor at New Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru University. Dhar said industrialists continued to complain about skill shortages and lack of infrastructure.

Sachit Jain, managing director of Punjab-based Vardhman Special Steels, understands why foreign investors are wary. "India is not an easy country to

do," he said. "We have actively gone out and pursued customers in the countries where we know that there's a strong anti-China sentiment"

giant Toyota. The tie-up was designed to ensure Toyota had supply options outside Japan, Jain said. But Aichi's credibility has also helped Vardhman gain traction in south-east Asian markets.

Some analysts argue that India is quietly benefiting from supply chain shifts. "We don't have to think that we will become China," says Samir Arora, founder and fund manager of Helios Capital, which invests in Indian stocks. "But can we get a bit more growth? That is happening."

Producers of goods from specialised chemicals to towels say that they are finding new markets for export as Chinese rivals fall from favour.

Take India's largest transmission towers manufacturer, Skipper, a listed company based in Kolkata. Executive director Sharan Bansal expects export sales to double from just under Rs4bn in the last financial year, ending in March, to Rs8bn this year. Along with developing countries increasingly eschewing Chinese financing, some US companies now stipulate Chinese products should not be used in projects, Bansal says – all of which helped him sell more towers.

"We have actively gone out and pursued customers in the countries where we know that there's a strong anti-China sentiment," Bansal says.

Ashok Kajaria, chair and managing director of India's largest tilemaker, Kajaria Ceramics, says a collapse in Chinese imports has let him sell more tiles domestically.

Back in Maharashtra, Kamble is not



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COMING 2022 ISSUES

DM/HTSI

COMPANIES & MARKETS

Automobiles

Carmakers face parts drought until end of 2023

Semiconductor makers warn of shortages amid switch to electric vehicles

LAULY LI — LONDON

The global car industry will suffer semiconductor shortages next year as the switch to electric vehicles accelerates, leading manufacturers and chipmakers have warned.

Hassane El-Khoury, chief executive of leading US-based chipmaker Onsemi,

said it had already sold out of silicon carbide chips, advanced power semiconductors largely used in electric cars, at least to the end of 2023 because of strong demand.

"There's nothing you can do now to change 2023," he said. "We will be adding capacity every quarter, every month in 2023 to meet our customer demand."

Jochen Hanebeck, chief executive of the auto chip producer Infineon, issued a similar warning in Munich recently. "I do expect quite a long-term shortage," he said. Carmakers are bracing themselves

for problems. Carlos Tavares, chief executive of Stellantis, the world's fourth-largest automaker by sales, has said chip constraints will continue to haunt the auto industry next year.

Demand for auto chips has boosted manufacturers such as Onsemi and Infineon as well as STMicroelectronics, NXP Semiconductors and Nexperia.

Infineon last month raised its forecast for revenue growth from 9 per cent to more than 10 per cent in the coming years. The German chipmaker also announced its biggest single investment

of €5bn to build a factory in Dresden to produce analogue, mixed-signal and power semiconductors, used in cars and other industries.

El-Khoury said Onsemi was expanding production at plants in Rožnov in the Czech Republic, Busan in South Korea and New Hampshire in the US, which will increase capacity by 30 per cent next year. "We have a lot of customers under long-term supply agreements and we are building the capacity to support those first," he added.

The demand for auto chips has been

driven mainly by the more connected functions of vehicles and the switch to electric cars, which is likely to accelerate further as combustion engines are phased out.

Gregg Lowe, chief executive of Wolf-speed, a leading substrate materials supplier for silicon carbide chips, said the switch from combustion engines towards electric vehicles was "unstoppable". "What we're anticipating is through the end of this decade, power semiconductors — specifically silicon carbide power semiconductors — could

see a 14 per cent compounded annual growth rate, which means all of us will be running as fast as we can, trying to catch up with the demand."

The upbeat outlook for auto chips contrasts with other parts of the sector, which supplies semiconductors for smartphones and personal computers.

These groups, which include Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company, Intel and Samsung, have suffered a drop in demand. TSMC has cut planned capital expenditure by about 10 per cent this year.

Technology, Supply chains

US extends blacklist to target China's potential chip stars

Shenzhen-based PXW among start-ups denied access to key equipment by export controls

QIANRAN LIU — HONG KONG
KATHRIN HILLE — TAIPEI

In China's southern tech hub of Shenzhen, employees at the chipmaking start-up PXW Semiconductor Manufacturing began to panic after the US put it on a trade blacklist last week.

"Most team leaders and executives are in emergency meetings but the rest of us are not allowed to discuss such a 'sensitive' matter," an employee said, adding that their boss's office door remained closed on Friday, a day after the US added PXW to the "entity list" along with 55 other Chinese companies.

US suppliers are barred from exporting to companies on the list without approval, which in most cases would be denied. Analysts said the latest blacklisting was "housekeeping" to close loopholes in far-reaching measures imposed in October that allow Washington to block Chinese access to high-end



chip design company VIA Technologies to develop a homegrown alternative to Intel-based PC processors. "It is a bad surprise," said a Hefei Core Storage engineer. "Nobody expected that we would be on their radar."

A western trade official said the US might have discovered that Hefei was working on processors suitable for supercomputers or supporting China's development of advanced memory chips — areas targeted by the controls.

"The US is developing an increasingly detailed understanding of the industry in China, including players you would have considered as obscure," the official said.

But the list also contains prominent companies.

Yangtze Memory Technologies, China's largest memory chipmaker, was already hit hard. The company had halted its expansion and asked US equipment manufacturers to return downpayments for previously ordered tools, said a senior engineer at YMTC.

"At that time, we could still consider retreating to [making less advanced] chips, but now our fate is all sealed," he said, referring to the near-impossibility of getting licences approved for equipment to expand production after being put on the entity list.

YMTC had already suspended talks with Apple on supplying memory chips for iPhones. The research company TrendForce predicts it could be forced to exit the market for advanced 3D NAND flash products by 2024 as it has lost critical support from toolmakers to compete with rivals on this particular memory technology.

Washington also included a prominent developer of chipmaking equipment: Shanghai Micro Electronics Equipment, which represents China's only hope of developing homegrown lithography machines, the critical advanced chipmaking tool dominated by Dutch company ASML.

The company's machines rely on imported components and have never run in mass production. "There is still a long way to go," said a Shanghai official who handled its development project. But the official pointed out that the company had formed teams of staff to replace ASML field workers withdrawn due to US export controls.

Another key addition is Shanghai Integrated Circuit Research and Development Center, a company believed to be connected to Huawei's efforts to increase domestic chip manufacturing. Huawei denies its involvement.

Blacklisting could await other Chinese groups. "There is a lot more out there on the chip design side," Fuller said.

None of the companies responded to requests for comment.

One chipmaker has halted its expansion plans after being put on the blacklist
Wei Dongsheng/CX/CZ Getty Images

chips and the talent and tools to make them.

"It is a game of whack-a-mole," said Douglas Fuller, an expert on the Chinese chip industry at Copenhagen Business School. "Whenever Washington comes up with sanctions, there are new projects popping up which they then try to block."

The US started using export controls to rein in China's technological rise by putting Huawei on the entity list in May 2019. Washington has since added many more, including surveillance companies, chipmakers, drone developers, smartphone makers and others suspected of supplying the People's Liberation Army.

Some of the companies targeted last week, including PXW, are only just starting to develop their semiconductor businesses and are thus more vulnerable than established groups such as Huawei. "The US government has mastered the Chinese semiconductor supply chain and knows who the priorities are and who are with future potential," said Brady Wang, a Taiwan-based analyst at the research firm Counterpoint.

PXW has strong support, including funding from the Shenzhen government and the leadership of a former Huawei executive. The company ordered equipment from various US companies to arrive next year but might now never receive it, according to two employees.

Another addition to the list is Hefei Core Storage Electronic, a company founded by former staff of Taiwanese

'It is a game of whack-a-mole... there are new projects popping up which they then try to block'

FT LIVE

FT AT DAVOS

FT Live events taking place around the World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting

16 – 20 January 2023 | #FTDavos

FT Live will host a number of events alongside the World Economic Annual Meeting, gathering leaders in policy, business and finance to share insights into the big issues being debated and the solutions that may pave the way to renewed growth, stability and resilience.

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Utilities

Engie takes €1bn hit from nuclear bill and tax

SARAH WHITE — PARIS

Engie suffered a double blow yesterday as it revealed a hit of up to €1bn on its net profits this year from windfall taxes and a hefty potential bill linked to the cost of dismantling its nuclear reactors in Belgium.

France's biggest supplier of gas to households has branched heavily into renewable energy in recent years, and also operates some nuclear plants.

It estimated yesterday that levies in France, Belgium and Italy on revenues generated by non-gas electricity producers, designed to capture "excess profits" from soaring power prices, would

although countries have interpreted the caps in different ways.

They come as Europe seeks to shield consumers from the market chaos sparked by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Funds from the levy are intended to bolster resources to help households and small businesses hit by the energy crisis.

The bill from the various legislative moves could rise to between €1.1bn and €1.4bn in 2023, based on forward prices, Engie pointed out. The group

said that despite the hit from the windfall measures, it would maintain its recurring net profit forecast for 2022 of between €4.9bn and €5.5bn.

The company added it faced an extra potential bill of €3.3bn to dismantle its nuclear plants in Belgium. The revised additional estimated cost was calculated by nuclear authorities in Belgium to cover the cost of taking apart the reactors and dealing with spent fuel. Engie said its estimates of the additional cost were closer to €900mn, adding that it was considering an appeal.

Engie said it would reflect on the potential costs by setting aside an extra €2.5bn in its 2022 accounts.



COMPANIES & MARKETS

Tech start-ups race to find creative debt deals

Retreat of venture capital sees businesses turn to bridge loans and structured equity in push to protect their valuations

TABBY KINDER — SAN FRANCISCO

Tech start-ups that have relied on deep-pocketed Silicon Valley investors to fund ambitious growth plans are being forced into alternative financing deals to sustain their businesses and avoid drastic cuts in valuation.

A sharp decline in venture capital dealmaking, alongside a closed market for initial public offerings, has resulted in a funding crunch for many private tech companies over the past year.

Leading start-ups have been aggressively cutting costs, creating a wave of lay-offs across the tech sector. Still, a growing number of companies are running out of cash and are seeking more creative funding arrangements, according to interviews with VCs, entrepreneurs, pension funds and bankers.

Company founders have entered into debt-focused deals such as bridge loans, structured equity, convertible notes, participating bonds and generous liquidation preferences. These moves are designed to avoid a dreaded "down round" — accepting funding at a far lower valuation than a company had previously secured.

"Everyone is taking corrective action" said one investor based on Sand Hill Road, the Californian thoroughfare that is home to many of Silicon Valley's top venture capital groups from Sequoia Capital to Andreessen Horowitz.

As the market rout looks set to continue into next year, this person said that even founders of well-capitalised tech groups have had to ask: "What are the adjustments [we need] so we can live longer, how can we punt financing from next year into 2024?"

Among the largest debt deals this year is Arctic Wolf, a cyber security company valued at \$4.5bn and backed by Owl Rock Capital, which raised a \$400mm convertible note in October — twice as much as its largest equity financing.

SoftBank-backed delivery app Gopuff raised a \$1bn convertible note in March and has explored plans to borrow more since then, despite raising more than \$2bn last year, which had boosted its valuation to \$15bn by mid-2021.

These deals come with a conversion premium, which allows their backers to convert shares at a higher price than an eventual IPO. Such deals represent a bet that the company will trade higher after going public.

Convertible "kick the can down the road", said Chris Evidaimon, a private companies investor at Baillie Gifford. "They are mostly being led by existing investors who are saying we also don't want to get into this unpleasant valuation discussion right now."

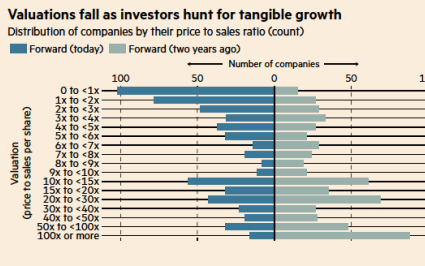
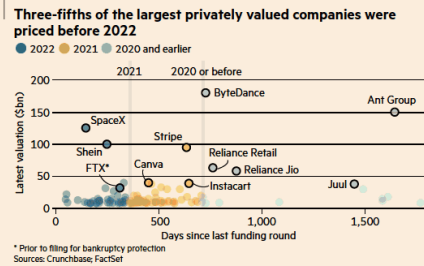
Coatue Management and Viking Global Investors, which were both traditionally focused on public equity, started raising funds to invest specifically in structured equity deals with start-ups earlier this year.

Coatue is targeting \$2bn for its fund. "For a private company to suddenly mark things down by 75 or 80 per cent... it's a huge risk," the firm's founder Philippe Laffont told the Financial Times. "We can give you an alternative... Capital that gives you more time to build your business."

Such large debt deals have been relatively uncommon for tech start-ups, the best of which have been able to tap the huge amounts of funding from venture capitalists, which have been willing to fund young companies even at frothy valuations over the past decade.

However, new VC deals fell 42 per cent in the first 11 months of this year to \$286bn, compared with the same period last year, according to investment data company Preqin. Silicon Valley law firm Cooley said the total value of late-stage VC deals it advised on had slumped almost 80 per cent this year.

That trend has been driven by a rout in tech stocks, an uncertain macroeconomic environment and rising interest



SoftBank-backed delivery app Gopuff raised a \$1bn convertible note in March and has explored plans to borrow more since then (Richard B. Levine)

rates. Meanwhile, initial public offerings have dropped to their lowest level since 2009, cutting off a key source of fundraising for mature private companies and their backers.

"Next year is when it all comes home to roost," said Ravi Viswanathan, founder of California-based New View Capital. "There will come a point where even companies with 18 to 24 months' capital have to raise. There is going to be a lot of pain."

Up and down Sand Hill Road, VC funds have reviewed their portfolios and warned founders to assume that capital markets may be shut for another year and to shift their strategies from growth to survival.

"The companies that are most struggling to raise new funding are unprofitable groups in capital-intensive sectors like battery making or robotics."

"We have just come off a borderline insanity environment," said one institutional tech investor. "If you had raised an outstanding amount at an undeserving valuation you felt you had done very well as a founder or a management team. Now it is coming back to bite you."

Hunting for creative financing options to protect a company's valuation is an "old playbook", said an investment manager at a large pension fund that backs tech. "But it's been a long time since the sums have been this big and it's affecting everyone."

Some companies are persuading existing investors to put up more capital at the same valuation as their previous fundraising — known as a "sideways round" — but with underlying economic terms that are far less favourable to the company.

"Where companies are getting desperate, 'dirty' termsheets — deals that on

'For a private company to suddenly mark things down by 75 or 80%... it's a huge risk. We can give you an alternative'

their face accept a company's existing valuation, but have conditions that could prove more beneficial to new investors — are circulating, said one investment banker.

"Investors are saying we will buy at the same price but we want seniority and to be at the top of the stack in case of liquidity," said Kroll's Silicon Valley leader Glen Kernick, adding that he had seen a number of deals signed that provide for investors to make two times their investment before other shareholders in the event of a sale or bankruptcy.

Tonal Systems, which develops smart fitness devices, reached such a funding deal earlier this year, according to corporate filings that were first reported by the Wall Street Journal.

This structure can prove brutal for shareholders further down the seniority ladder — such as employees holding stock options — if a company's value were to fall. It is a trade-off between accepting a hit to valuation or accepting punishing terms that risk creating conflicts in a company's shareholder base, or even wiping out employee value.

Some companies are repricing their own equity to improve upside potential for employees' shares. Delivery app Instacart cut its internal valuation for a third time to \$13bn in October, down from \$39bn in 2021. Similarly, Check-out.com, Europe's most valuable tech start-up, slashed its internal valuation to about \$11bn, after it raised a \$400m valuation in January.

Slashing internal valuation — which is separate from the investor-determined price of a group's preferred equity — benefits staff by reducing the cost of their company shares. This gives employees scope for further gains in the case of future deals such as an IPO.

"We are telling our portfolio companies you shouldn't get overly anchored on a valuation you had a couple of years ago when the market was abnormally inflated," said the investment manager on Sand Hill Road. "It is best to take your medicine now."

FT LIVE In partnership with **MILlicom ticó** THE DIGITAL EXPERTS

SPOTLIGHT ON LATIN AMERICA

The role of digital local content in fostering regional growth

27 January 2023 | 19:00 - 22:00 COT
Dinner Briefing | Cartagena, Colombia

Speakers include:



Senator Alfredo Deluque
Senate of the Republic,
Colombia



Juana Uribe
VP,
Canal de Caracol Televisión



Mauricio Ramos
CEO,
Millicom



Michael Stott
Latin America Editor,
Financial Times

This exclusive dinner briefing taking place in Cartagena will explore how partnerships can foster local content production and harness the vibrancy of local cultures.

The discussion will be focused on how increased connectivity leverages the economic opportunities of producing and distributing local content and enhances representativity.



Industrials

3M vows to stop making 'forever chemicals'

JAMIE SMYTH — NEW YORK

3M has said it will stop making "forever chemicals" by the end of 2025, citing pressure from regulators and investors over the accumulation of the substances in the environment.

The US company said yesterday it would exit the manufacture of PFAS — per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances — and work to discontinue their use across

polluters more accountable for cleaning contaminated sites.

Environmental campaigners said 3M's decision represented one of the first examples of a big company in the US chemicals industry phasing out the manufacture and use of PFAS.

PFAS are known as "forever chemicals" because they do not break down easily, accumulate in the environment and can remain in people's bodies.

rivers and caused health problems, including cancer. It has also been targeted by an investor-led campaign aimed at forcing the chemicals industry to phase out use of PFAS.

Mike Roman, 3M chief executive, said it was a moment that demanded innovation. "While PFAS can be safely made and used, we also see an opportunity to lead in a rapidly evolving external regulatory and business landscape to make

Banks. Historic reorientation

India overtakes China in M&A fees for first time



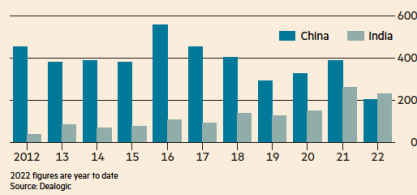
Beijing's Covid restrictions and decoupling of economy bring pivot by US dealmakers

MERCEDES RUEHL AND LEO LEWIS SINGAPORE HUDSON LOCKETT — HONG KONG

The world's largest investment banks will earn more dealmaking fees in India this year than in China, a first that financiers describe as a historic reorientation as they diversify away from a decoupling Chinese economy. Foreign banks have pulled in \$231mm in mergers and acquisitions fees from India so far this year, according to Dealogic, beating the \$204mm earned in China over the same period. JPMorgan is among those that will earn more from M&A in India than in China this year for the first time, according to two people with knowledge of the bank's position. JPMorgan declined to comment.

Revenue from Chinese equity and bond markets, long one of the biggest sources of fees for US and European finance houses in Asia, has fallen in 2022 as mainland China sealed itself off during the pandemic and increasingly favoured local banks. Although deal activity is expected to expand as China now reopens, Wall Street bankers have warned that the long period of closure had made more Chinese companies turn to domestic banks for advisory work in the future. Foreign investment banks' core revenue — including equity and debt

Indian M&A fees have overtaken Chinese ones for foreign banks



capital markets as well as M&A — has dropped 70 per cent to \$602mm over the year to date compared with 2021, according to data from Dealogic. That follows a drop of 15 per cent the previous year.

The trend reinforces how the decoupling in trade, investment and technology between the US and China is affecting capital markets.

While India remains a fraction of the revenue China historically brings in for global investment banks, the numbers are indicative of a broader shift by western finance to find opportunities and growth in other markets.

Jan Metzger, head of banking, capital markets and advisory for Citi in Asia, said "the evolution of the banking wallet there with the growth in tech, alongside the established Indian corporate titans being more active" had made India a "leading investment banking market for Citi in 2022".

He added: "We expect that to continue in the years ahead with the pipeline [in India], one of the largest we have."

The Singapore-based Asian investment banking head of one US bank described it as a "fundamental and I think permanent repositioning by Wall Street. If you believe [China's President] Xi Jinping is intent on building his own sphere of economic influence, while the US shows no sign of stopping its crackdown on China, where else do you go in the region?"

India has been a global outlier for M&A activity this year, even as inflation and recession fears forced some of the biggest declines in dealmaking in other regions since the financial crisis.

M&A activity in India surged 58 per cent year on year to an all-time high of \$148bn in the first nine months of 2022, according to a report by data provider Refinitiv.

M&A cycle: a big chunk of this year's dealmaking activity in India came from the \$40bn merger of HDFC Bank and parent Housing Development Finance Corporation, the leading mortgage

A significant chunk of that came from the \$40bn merger between HDFC Bank, India's third-biggest listed company by market capitalisation, and parent Housing Development Finance Corporation, the leading mortgage provider.

Bankers also said a shift in the type of Indian companies engaging them for initial public offering and equity issuance work had been pivotal.

When many of India's largest listings were privatisations of state-owned assets, the fees were relatively low. Now that the balance has shifted to private companies, the work is significantly more profitable.

The banking industry's shift follows a similar dynamic at play in India's tech sector last year when many investment dollars were diverted from China to India.

For every dollar invested in Chinese tech, \$1.50 went into India in 2021, according to Asian Venture Capital Journal, though slower growth and rising interest rates this year helped reduce inflated valuations and some of the market frenzy.

"India can be unpredictable and certainly foreign businesses have been burnt [there] before," said one asset manager growing their India office, who did not want to be named because they still had clients and business in mainland China. "But you can no longer have all your eggs in one basket like China, especially as supply chains and economies decouple."

Additional reporting by Chloe Cornish in Mumbai

'You can no longer have all your eggs in one basket like China, especially as supply chains and economies decouple'

Fixed Income

BoJ's yield cap shift hands lucrative win to bond bears

ORTENGA ALIAJ, KATIE MARTIN AND LAURENCE FLETCHER

A trade known as the "widow maker" for its ability to inflict enormous losses on traders has finally paid off after the Bank of Japan shocked investors with a change to the way it controls its government bond market.

Traders at firms such as BlueBay Asset Management, Neuberger Berman and hedge fund Caygan Capital have been betting that the BoJ would relax its cap on bond yields after aggressive rate rises this year by the US Federal Reserve and other major central banks left Tokyo as an outlier with its ultra-loose monetary policy.

As a result, many investment houses put on a wager that Japanese bonds would fall, nudging yields higher.

"We had reached the point where that policy was no longer warranted," said Mark Dowling, chief investment officer at BlueBay, who has been shorting Japanese government bonds since the summer. "It was a question of when, not if."

JPMorgan Asset Management also had positioned itself for a change in the central bank's policy, said a source familiar with the bank, and is continuing to bet against longer-term Japanese debt, which is especially sensitive to changes in yield curve control policy.

The Japanese central bank yesterday said it would allow long-term yields to

'We had reached the point where that policy was no longer warranted. It was a question of when, not if'

fluctuate from around minus 0.5 per cent to 0.5 per cent, from minus 0.25 per cent to 0.25 per cent previously.

Japan has been keeping long-term yields pinned at low levels since 2016 and the previous range had been in place since 2021.

The move yesterday ignited a powerful sell-off in Japanese government bonds with the benchmark 10-year yield soaring by the most in almost two decades, according to Refinitiv data. The 10-year yield is now 0.42 per cent, its highest since 2015.

Fredrik Repton, portfolio manager at Neuberger Berman, said the group had expected the shift in policy and as such had bet on falling Japanese bond prices and a rising yen.

He added that the increase in the yield curve control cap could signal a pivot to more sweeping changes when governor Haruhiko Kuroda ends his decade-long run at the bank.

Naruhisa Nakagawa, founder of hedge fund Caygan Capital, started shorting Japanese government bonds when the yield stood at 0.25 per cent and is now betting that the 10-year yield will rise to 1 per cent as the BoJ gradually loosens its yield curve control.

Investors began ramping up wagers against Japanese government bonds over the summer, effectively taking a view that the debt's price would drop. See Lex

Equities

Hong Kong and Beijing agree to expand scope of Stock Connect trading scheme

CHENG LENG — HONG KONG

More than 1,000 Chinese and multinational stocks will be included in an expanded scheme that allows investors greater access to mainland shares while boosting trading liquidity in Hong Kong.

The securities watchdogs in mainland China and Hong Kong have announced an agreement to expand the scope of eligible stocks under the Stock Connect scheme, linking the Hong Kong bourse with those of Shanghai and Shenzhen.

The northbound trading will include stocks with a market capitalisation of Rmb5bn (\$717mn) or more that meet liquidity criteria.

Southbound trading expansion will include stocks of primary-listed foreign companies that are part of Hang Seng composite indices.

brokerage added. Shares of fashion outlet Prada and beauty brand L'Occitane could be eligible for the list, based on the latest criteria information from data provider Wind.

"The further expansion of the scope of Stock Connect will give international investors more choice in A-shares [which are listed on either the Shanghai or Shenzhen exchanges] and consolidate Hong Kong's position as a gateway to mainland China," said Julia Leung, acting chief executive of Hong Kong's Securities and Futures Commission.



"In particular, the inclusion of foreign companies primary-listed in Hong Kong is of strategic importance to Hong Kong as a leading fundraising platform for international companies," she added.

The performance of Hong Kong stocks has been tepid this year with trading dragged down by weak initial public offerings, geopolitical tensions and China's harsh zero-Covid policies.

The benchmark Hang Seng index has recovered since late October, posting a 27 per cent rally last month on hopes of a reopening of the economy.

However, the gauge is still down about 18 per cent in the year to date.

"Southbound inflows will continue to rise after the scheme expansion," said Zhang Qi, analyst at Chinese brokerage Haitong Securities, adding that companies which are more familiar to mainland investors and yet inaccessible

Crypto

FTX seeks to recoup Bankman-Fried's political donations to pay creditors

JOSHUA OLIVER

FTX will try to recoup millions of dollars in donations to US politicians made by Sam Bankman-Fried and his close associates to help pay back creditors amid accusations that the contributions were funded with customers' money.

The company's new management said it had been "approached by a number of recipients of contributions or other payments" seeking to return money received from Bankman-Fried, his companies or senior executives.

FTX said it would set up a process to accept repayments and take legal action to reclaim cash that is not returned.

"To the extent such payments are not returned voluntarily, the FTX debtors intend to commence actions before the bankruptcy court to require the

a Financial Times analysis of public records.

He was the second-largest supporter of Democratic-leaning groups in the recent midterm elections as he lobbied Congress and US regulators over crypto regulation.

Ryan Salame, chief executive of FTX's entity in the Bahamas, gave about \$24mm, mostly to Republican groups.

Bankman-Fried stepped down as FTX

'FTX debtors intend to commence actions before the bankruptcy court to require return of payments'

chief executive in November as the company collapsed into Chapter 11 bankruptcy in Delaware.

Among the allegations, the Justice department alleges that Bankman-Fried broke campaign finance laws such as the prohibition on using third parties to funnel money to candidates beyond the limit for donations. Bankman-Fried has denied wrongdoing.

In a separate lawsuit, the US Securities and Exchange Commission levelled civil fraud charges, including the misuse of customer money to fund donations.

"From the start, Bankman-Fried improperly diverted customer assets to his privately held crypto hedge fund, Alameda Research and then used those customer funds to make undisclosed venture investments, lavish real estate purchases and large political donations," the Wall Street regulator said in court filings last week.

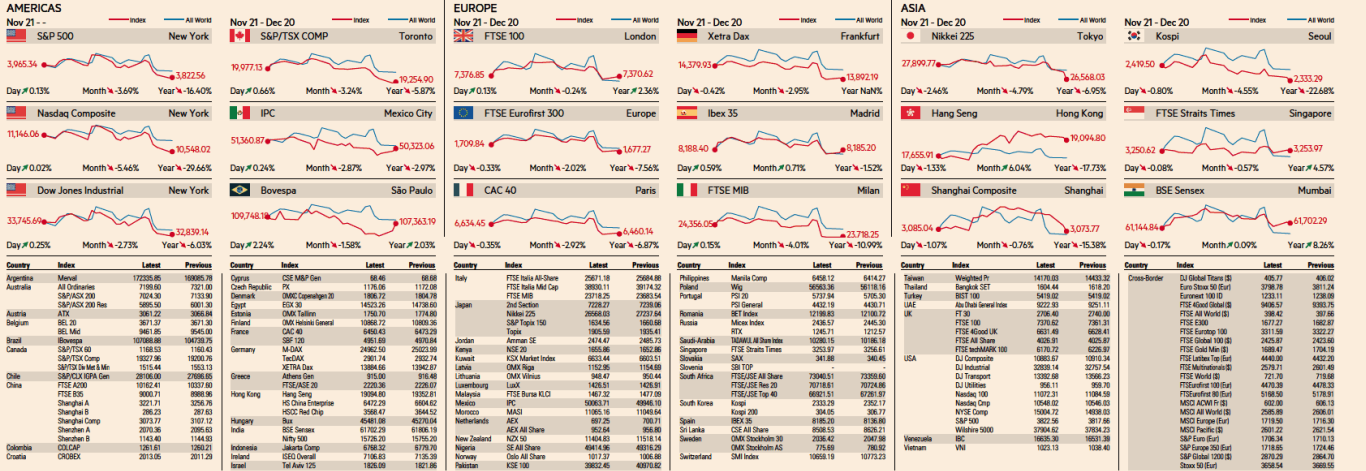
Several US politicians have said they will donate money received from FTX

MARKET DATA

WORLD MARKETS AT A GLANCE



Stock Market movements over last 30 days, with the FTSE All-World in the same currency as a comparison



AMERICA'S

Table listing US market indices such as S&P 500, Nasdaq Composite, Dow Jones Industrial Average, and their performance metrics.

EUROPE

Table listing European market indices from various countries like Germany, France, UK, and their performance metrics.

ASIA

Table listing Asian market indices from countries like Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, and their performance metrics.

MARKET: BIGGEST MOVERS

Table showing the top gainers and losers in the market, including stock names and their percentage changes.

UK MARKET: WINNERS AND LOSERS

Table showing the top gainers and losers in the UK market, including stock names and their percentage changes.

CURRENCIES

Table showing exchange rates for various currencies against the US Dollar, including the Euro, British Pound, and others.

FTSE ACTUARIES SHARE INDICES

Table listing various FTSE Actuarial Share Indices and their performance metrics.

FT 30 INDEX

Table listing the FT 30 Index components and their performance metrics.

FTSE SECTORS: LEADERS & LAGGARDS

Table showing the performance of different market sectors, identifying leaders and laggards.

UK STOCK MARKET TRADING DATA

Table providing detailed trading data for the UK stock market, including volume and value.

UK COMPANY RESULTS

Table listing recent company results for UK firms, including revenue and profit.

UK RECENT EQUITY ISSUES

Table listing recent equity issues in the UK market, including company names and issue sizes.

MARKET DATA

FT500: THE WORLD'S LARGEST COMPANIES

Table with columns: Stock, Price, Change, High, Low, YTD, P/E, Mkt Cap. Lists major global companies like ANZ Bank, BHP Group, BP, etc.

ASX 200: AUSTRALIA'S LARGEST COMPANIES

Table with columns: Stock, Price, Change, High, Low, YTD, P/E, Mkt Cap. Lists Australian companies like BHP Group, Rio Tinto, Westpac, etc.

FTSE 100: THE UK'S LARGEST COMPANIES

Table with columns: Stock, Price, Change, High, Low, YTD, P/E, Mkt Cap. Lists UK companies like AstraZeneca, Unilever, HSBC, etc.

FTSE 250: THE UK'S MEDIUM CAP COMPANIES

Table with columns: Stock, Price, Change, High, Low, YTD, P/E, Mkt Cap. Lists UK mid-cap companies like BT Group, BTicino, etc.

FTSE 350: THE UK'S SMALL CAP COMPANIES

Table with columns: Stock, Price, Change, High, Low, YTD, P/E, Mkt Cap. Lists UK small-cap companies like Baxi Group, Baxi, etc.

FT 500: TOP 20

Table showing top 20 FT 500 companies with price, change, and volume.

FT 500: BOTTOM 20

Table showing bottom 20 FT 500 companies with price, change, and volume.

BONDS: HIGH-YIELD & EMERGING MARKET

Table showing high-yield and emerging market bond performance.

BONDS: GLOBAL INVESTMENT GRADE

Table showing global investment grade bond performance.

GILTS: UK CASH MARKET

Table showing UK gilt and cash market performance.

INTEREST RATES: OFFICIAL

Table showing official interest rates for various countries and currencies.

BOND INDICES

Table showing performance of various bond indices.

VOLATILITY INDICES

Table showing volatility indices for different markets.

GILTS: UK FTSE ACTUARIES INDICES

Table showing UK FTSE actuaries indices.

COMMODITIES

Table showing commodity prices for various goods.

INTEREST RATES: MARKET

Table showing market interest rates for various instruments.

BONDS: INDEX-LINKED

Table showing index-linked bond performance.

BONDS: TEN YEAR GOVT SPREADS

Table showing ten-year government spreads for various countries.

PRECIOUS METALS (PM) LONDON

Table showing London precious metal prices.

COMMODITIES

Table showing commodity prices for various goods.

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ARTS

A landmark in Australian art

The Art Gallery of New South Wales's extension is Sydney's most important building since the Opera House – and its curators have done it proud, writes Jane Ure-Smith

Sanaa, the Pritzker prize-winning architects, buck the trend for flashy art-world architecture. In Manhattan, the practice's Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa memorably stacked "boxes" above the Bowery to give the New Museum a new home. For the Sydney Modern Project, an expansion of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, they have used the box concept again, but this time as an exercise in concealment.

Flanked by the Royal Botanic Garden and the green space of the Domain, a series of limestone-clad pavilions step down towards the water. The aim was a construction "that breathes with the city, the park and the harbour", the pair said at the building's unveiling in late November.

In what is arguably the most significant new Sydney landmark since Jørn Utzon's Opera House, a public art garden links the North Building (as it's called for the moment) to the neoclassical original. But it is only when you step inside and peer into its vast glass atrium – 11 metres at its tallest point – that you grasp the scope of Sanaa's A\$344m (US\$250m) creation. Below, two banks of steep escalators sweep visitors down and down again, beside an eco-friendly rammed-earth wall, to an airy café, terraces with harbour views, green roofs, green spaces and galleries built into the hillside.

Sanaa's initial challenge had centred on a massive fuel bunker, one of a pair dating from the early 1940s buried in the hillside. Filled in its heyday with 6m litres of oil, the tank supplied the nearby Garden Island naval base during the second world war. Sanaa's solution was to preserve the tank, complete

with oil smears and graffiti on the walls and, removing just one of its 125 pillars, insert an elegant, white spiral staircase to connect it to the museum above. Director Michael Brand last year compared it to a lotus rising out of a muddy pond.

The Argentine artist Adrián Villar Rojas is the first to respond to this mysterious space: for *The End of Imagination* he has populated the Tank with perplexing sculptures – composites of



wax, tree bark, used car parts and more – that began life as time-travellers in a virtual world. Clusters of spotlights shuttle around overhead, seeking out and illuminating each one in turn, and from time to time plunging viewers into darkness.

In the gallery's new set-up, Indigenous Australian art takes pride of place. The Yiribana gallery, dedicated to the display of Aboriginal and Torres Strait



Clockwise from main: aerial view of the Art Gallery of New South Wales's extension, the Yiribana Gallery is dedicated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art; Darren Sives's 'Jingli Kwin' (2015) — from Sara Zan Wimberley

Islander art, is the first space visitors encounter when they enter the building. Yhonnie Scarce's "Death Zephyr" (2017), composed of 2,000 glass yarns suspended in a cloudlike formation, sits at its heart, its aesthetic allure at odds with its grim message. Scarce's work alludes to the radioactive poison that lingered around Maralinga, near her birthplace in South Australia, in the wake of atomic tests carried out by the British in the 1950s. Close by is Vernon Ah Kee's equally haunting "Unwritten #9" (2008), in which a mass of ruled charcoal lines powerfully evokes a skull-like face. Ah Kee made the work in response to the death in custody of an Aboriginal man on Palm Island, Queensland, in 2004.

"As an art gallery I think we have an obligation to talk about difficult moments in Australia's history," says Cara Pinchbeck, senior curator for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art. "We wanted to refer to difficult issues, as well as humorous ones – and everything in between."

In the hands of Darren Sives and Vincent Namatjira, humour comes with a political edge. For "Jingli Kwin" (2015), Sives dresses an Aboriginal couple in mock-royal regalia for a portrait. In a 2016 animated film, Namatjira hails the moment in 1975 when the prime minister, Gough Whitlam, symbolically returned Aboriginal land to its rightful owners by pouring red earth into the hands of a Gurindji man, Vincent Lingiari. But as Whitlam's successors chatter on, the film fades out amid peals of kookaburra laughter.

The museum has been working on gender parity. With works by female artists outnumbering those by men in the North Building, "Walawuru ngunytju kukaku ananyi (Mother eagles going hunting)" by Ilwanti Ken is among the standout pieces. In this wildly energetic ink and acrylic painting, large eagles swoop, dive and fly upside down, dwarfing flora and fauna below them.

"Eagles have lots of lessons to share with Anangu women, particularly with regard to motherhood," notes Ken in the wall text. "I love the chaos of it: so much of motherhood is like that," says Pinchbeck as we contemplate the picture. "Narrbong-galang (many bags)" (2022)

by Wiradjuri artist Lorraine Connelly-Northey, an array of ochre and yellow scrap-metal sculptures, evokes the bags used in the bush to collect everything from frogs to yam daisies, and is also a real treat.

If the Sydney Modern Project is about elevating female and Indigenous artists, it is also about amplifying the voices of artists raised in protest. These themes come together in a green glass panel depicting six hooded figures, a new work by Wiradjuri artist Karla Dickens installed in a long empty niche above the entrance to the original building. Dickens began making hoods in response to stories of the suffocating spirit-hoods forced on inmates of a youth detention centre in the Northern Territory, then gravitated to wearing and photographing them. "Once I put one on, it became a lot more personal, about wanting or not wanting to be invisible," she says.

An exhilarating rehanging of the 20th-century collection has produced thrilling "vignettes" that shed new light on familiar works. Sidney Nolan's "First-class marksman" (1964), for example, part of his *Ned Kelly* series, is now

In the gallery's new set-up, indigenous Australian art takes pride of place

flanked by fragments from a 1906 Kelly Gang movie and Tom Roberts's bushranger (bandit) scene "Bailed up". Captions are packed with additional information: we learn that the townspeople from Inverell posed as models for Roberts, among them Bob Bates, a stage-coach driver who had in fact been held up 30 years earlier by local bushranger Fred Ward; Ward was married to a Worimi woman, Mary Ann Bugg, whose knowledge of Country was key to the bushranger's survival.

At the press view, much was made of the fact that, after 10 years, the Sydney Modern Project has been completed on budget and on time. In fact, a significant piece is still to come: "Bial ghywup (the fire is not yet lighted)" by Wiradjuri and Kamilaroi artist Jonathan Jones is a "living sculpture" – a seasonal "fire garden" – slated for completion in mid-2023. Tiered ambitiously across 5,000 square metres of the Art Garden, Jones's work will respond to the site and its history and – perhaps controversially – underline fire's regenerative power. It should also underline the Sydney Modern Project's success in regenerating the museum.

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Anti-capitalism is a profitable business

GAMING
Tom Faber

Is communism "overpowered"? This is the question currently concerning players of strategy game *Victoria 3*. While guiding their chosen nations through the 19th century, making decisions on political, social and economic governance, gamers found that adopting socialist policies made for more productive, happier countries than any alternative. They realised that forming worker co-operatives and redistributing wealth was simply too effective, almost like a cheat code to the perfect nation. "Damn this game made me value subsidies and welfare in real life," wrote one player on Reddit. The outcry was such that the developer, Paradox, rebalanced the game's systems in an update.

The merits and – far more regularly – pitfalls of capitalism are a common topic in video games. Yet all too often, this important topic is not given the intelligent scrutiny it deserves. In the rare cases where there is a smart critique, it still exists within the gaming ecosystem, an industry which exhibits many of the worst excesses of unchecked capitalism. Can games critique economic systems? Or is their message undermined by their medium? Usually, the commentary isn't smart. Developers lean into tired tropes such as nefarious corporations and cast cartoon capitalists as stock villains. In *Cyberpunk 2077* you're a rebel hacker roving around a megacity controlled by corporations and in *Grand Theft Auto V* you're pitted against the villainous billionaire Devin Weston. This satire is partly neutered by its crudeness – depicting unchecked capitalism as fat cats chomping cigars and entire worlds owned by a single tycoon misses the subtler ways



Visitors try out new games at a gaming fair in Paris — LightRocket via Getty Images

anyway). Add to this the industry's fondness for money-grabbing business models of microtransactions and loot boxes. Similarly dubious practices resulted in *Fortnite* creator Epic Games agreeing this week to pay a \$520m settlement to the US Federal Trade Commission. Knowing this, when games take aim at immoral corporations, their critiques ring hollow. They have adopted anti-capitalism as an aesthetic.

When games take aim at immoral corporations, their critiques ring hollow

The conditions behind game production inevitably shape the stories that games tell. It is revealing that capitalist ideology is built into the most fundamental mechanics of game play: in almost every game you acquire resources to make yourself more powerful than everyone else and dominate the world. It's a shame because games can also be a uniquely effective medium to explore ideologies since players participate in

games to tackle politics, set in a world of working-class uprisings, corrupt unions and militarised governments where players are encouraged to grapple with different ideologies. *Citizen Sleeper* casts players as androids trying to escape the clutches of a tech company which owns their mind and body, while *Kentucky Route Zero* and *Night in the Woods* offer intimate and elegiac depictions of rural American poverty.

Other games take a more direct approach. In *Democratic Socialism Simulator* you play the first socialist president of America and must make decisions to enact radical leftwing policies while navigating scandals, lobbyists and impending environmental collapse. Meanwhile, *Tonight We Riot* casts players as a revolutionary crowd killing cops and trying to topple the government. By making players a collective rather than a single character, it offers a rare admission in gaming that it usually takes more than one person to change the world. The developers match the ideals of their games by structuring their team as a worker-owned collective. Games are contradictory things – they're products of intense labour designed for idle pleasure, telling stories that might envision a better world but

Opinion

West's axis of prudence risks a Kremlin victory by default in Ukraine

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

Constanze Stelzenmüller



As 2022 ends and western leaders ponder coming challenges, few questions are as globally consequential as what to do about Russia's invasion of Ukraine...

should do whatever it takes to help Ukraine repel the aggressors as quickly and completely as possible. They have committed allies in high places in the US government as well as among the leaders of Germany's greens...

job to continue to sustain our military support to Ukraine, so they're in the best possible position on the battlefield, so that if and when diplomacy is right, they will be in the best position at the negotiating table.

What is debatable is whether the calculus of containing the conflict is actually working

newspaper that "our goal is that Russia ends its war of aggression and Ukraine defends its integrity". Notably, both of these articulations are carefully ambiguous about how the war should end or what a sustainable peace would

look like. The US, which has given Ukraine about \$20bn in military aid since the beginning of the war, has declined to provide it with aircraft, tanks or long-range ATACMS missiles. Yet in the light of Russia's sustained onslaught on Ukraine's civilian infrastructure, Washington is now expected to announce a delivery of the longer-range Patriots surface-to-air defence system, which it had long resisted...

Prudence in a democratic leader is not just a virtue but a responsibility. What is debatable is whether the calculus of containing the conflict in Ukraine is actually prudent. Or whether it is working. Putin has not used sub-strategic nuclear weapons - not even after his troops' rout from Kherson...

assumes a degree of rationality and control, and the possibility of a stable post-war political equilibrium. But what if Putin's rants about Nazis in Ukraine and satanism in the west are not political theatre but - as the historian Lawrence Freedman has suggested - a paranoid projection of fear at the irredeemable rot in his own system?

Glimmers of light in a terrible year

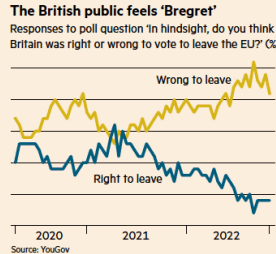
Martin Wolf Economics

From the return of Nato to the triumph of democracy, not everything that happened in 2022 was bad



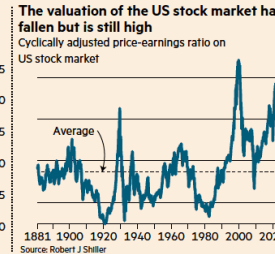
Few will regret the passing of 2022. It has seen a brutal onslaught on a peaceful neighbour by a vile despot. It has seen soaring inflation and falling real incomes in a global cost of living crisis...

this before we plunge into a new year. The west is back. The invasion of Ukraine has brought those who share democratic values together. For the Nato alliance, it was a time of rebirth. For Germany, it was a Zeitenwende. For Finland and Sweden, it was time to reject neutrality...

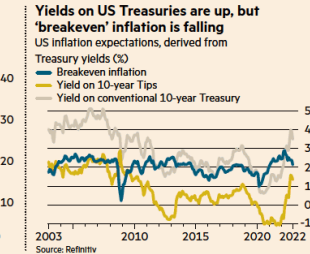


shows 51 per cent regretting Brexit and a mere 34 per cent still supporting it. This shift will allow a future government to bring the UK closer to the EU again. Too late, but with determination, the Federal Reserve has acted to bring domestic inflationary pressures under control in the US, where they were strongest...

The world is not deglobalising: trade is just not growing as fast as before



2023. A return to growth should follow. Rising nominal and real interest rates have shaken the markets. The cyclically adjusted price/earnings ratio in the S&P 500 has fallen from 39 in December 2021, the second-highest peak in history, to a recent low of 27...



outside the US, where whining about unfair trade has become almost epidemic, most countries understand that they need buoyant trade to thrive. Encouragingly, the IMF forecasts the volume of world trade in goods and services to rise by 4.5 per cent this year. Interestingly, this is faster than the 2.9 per cent growth in trade in goods...

Torsten Bell

The snow and strikes which dominated UK headlines last week have a surprising amount in common. Both close schools and cancel trains but, while the snow has melted away leaving little trace, strikes are here to stay well into 2023.

poorer, but they don't automatically determine who gets poorer or how. That is instead shaped by power, policy and politics, as well as markets. Strikes are just one part of that messy process. It's no coincidence that in the 1970s both energy prices and industrial disputes surged.

lance workers, highlight the focus of disputes in the public (and pseudo-public) sector. Private sector workers lack the unionisation rates (only 13 per cent are members) for widespread strike action. Instead, thanks to their good fortune of holding this contest during a tight labour market, they can seek a pay rise

warned, unpersuasively, that successful strikes for higher public sector pay risk stoking inflation. Fast rising prices are causing public sector strikes not vice versa, and it is far higher wage growth in the private sector that is concerning inflation hawks at the Bank of England.

more broadly - on taxpayers or public service users. Ignore the claims that it would cost an extra £28bn to inflation-proof public sector wages - some pay rises are already pencilled in and public sector workers do actually pay tax. But the burden-sharing choices being made here are substantial: double-digit pay rises could easily cost low double-digit billions.

economic impact of closing the rail network is small, but the indirect effects are significant (a third of rail commuters have jobs that can't be done from home). Strikes in the NHS will mean fewer operations and, with more than 7m people already waiting to start routine treatment, it's clear our failure to improve the population's health is undermining our ability to generate wealth.

Threatening to move employer is less use for public sector workers given centrally set wages



Twitter: @FTLex

BoJ/Kuroda: addicted to quack

Critics have derided Bank of Japan governor Haruhiko Kuroda as a lame duck since 2016. With just months to go before his term ends in April, he has tried to prove them wrong.

But the BoJ's surprise decision to widen its bond yield target band will not be enough to lift the economy out of its slump.

The bank shocked markets by unexpectedly heightening interest rate rails, allowing long-term interest rates to rise. The 10-year bond yield can edge up to around 0.5 per cent from a previous upper limit of 0.25 per cent.

Bond prices dropped, the yen strengthened and the benchmark Nikkei fell 2.5 per cent.

The beneficiaries are Japanese banks and insurers. The steeper upper limit means higher interest income and profits for banks such as Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group and Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group.

These have long suffered from negative rates. The change bolsters insurers, who are reliant on bond returns to fund liabilities. They can count on higher investment returns and improved cash flow.

As the gap between short- and long-term government bond yields widens, they can use long-term bonds to match liabilities.

The BoJ's goal is to boost the yen — its weakness meant record trade deficits this year. The value of imports rose 45 per cent in the first half. This lifted raw material prices for local companies, weakening earnings.

Higher import costs caused GDP to contract in the third quarter.

Yesterday's move is justified. It may mark the start of a gradual shift away from the strict bond yield controls emblematic of Japan's status as the last big economy sticking to ultra low rates.

But the move is too little too late. It comes six years after the BoJ adopted negative interest rates. It is the boldest step Kuroda has taken after enduring after years of criticism, and only when he has one foot out of the door.

Even after spiking, the yen remains at two-decade lows to the dollar.

Moreover, the BoJ plans to increase monthly purchases of government bonds to ¥9tn (\$67bn) a month, up from ¥7.5tn before. That lengthens odds on a sustained move away from

current ultra dovish policies. Low interest rates — and yen weakness — will persist. The yen remains vulnerable to a sell-off as the yield spread with countries such as the US continue to widen.

Rheinmetall: the tracks of my tears

A moralistic take on war is that arms manufacturers are the only winners. Sometimes the outcome is less clear. Shares in defence giant Rheinmetall are up 80 per cent this year due to the Ukraine War's revival of conventional conflict in Europe.

But the stock has fallen about 10 per cent in two days after an explosive row with the German government over Puma tanks.

This is the downside of having a few large defence ministries as your clients. Big contract wrangles often result.

Rheinmetall's Puma tanks appear to be a lot less reliable than the sports shoes of the same name. Germany has bought 550 of the armoured vehicles, 40 of which boast an upgraded design.

Almost 20 of these reportedly broke down during a training session.

That is frustrating for a German government keen to improve its military capabilities. Two new Puma-related contracts — for €1.5bn-€2bn — hang in the balance. Germany accounts for a third of Rheinmetall's sales.

It is not clear why the tank tracks fell off the Puma project. A possible culprit is a complex original design.

Maintenance issues could be another. Big military contracts have a history of time and cost overruns, with mudslinging from both sides.

The UK's Ajax armoured vehicle veered off course. The Nimrod MKA4, a British patrol aircraft, was €800m over budget and more than nine years late when its project was cancelled.

In this context, the Puma debacle is all in a normal day's work for defence contractors. Rheinmetall may emerge with only a few nicks and scratches.

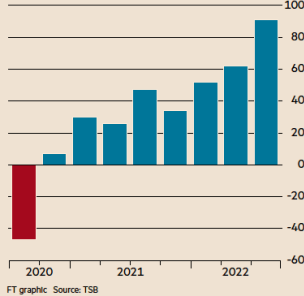
The Ukraine war is spawning new orders. In December, contractors gained €10bn of them in Europe, says researcher Agency Partners. While big government clients have heft, suppliers hold a lot of cards too. Rheinmetall is strong on scarce ammunition, recently winning a €500m-plus order from Berlin.

Expect governments and suppliers to stay locked in an uneasy truce as spending increases on conventional battlefield weapons.

TSB/Sabadell: the Spanish, patient

Sabadell has started to see decent profits from TSB six years after the Spanish bank bought its UK peer. Despite a disastrous IT project, TSB has recovered lost share in the local mortgage market. Sabadell's high group exposure to retail banking explains the strong performance of its shares this year

TSB purchase is finally paying off for Sabadell

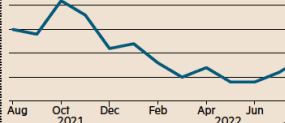


Spain's Banco de Sabadell may have forgotten why it bought UK retail bank TSB seven years ago. Big IT hiccups locked depositors out of their online accounts in 2018. The chief executive was ousted. Yesterday, UK regulator the Financial Conduct Authority finally closed the book on the affair with a 115-page report and a fine of £48.7m.

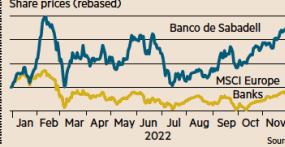
Resolving this problem has already cost Sabadell about €330m. When two companies try to merge their IT systems, it can cause disastrous problems.

According to the FCA, TSB needed eight months to return to "business as usual" having paid out £32.7m to affected customers. And yet, Sabadell's perseverance — having

TSB bouncing back in UK mortgage market



Sabadell is outperforming



refused at least one offer for TSB over the years — may have paid off.

Investors have taken a shine to Sabadell shares, up 59 per cent over one year. That is partly due to its high proportion of retail pre-tax profits, about 70 per cent, well above average for the European sector according to Citigroup.

Retail banks tend to have high and positive earnings sensitivity to rising interest rates. Sabadell has similar exposure in the UK from TSB.

Pity it took so long. Sabadell was too ambitious in its aims. A 2017 investor presentation revealed that Sabadell had planned to close 250 branches while changing IT platforms. Subsequently, TSB reversed from profit to loss from 2018 until 2021, according

to Sabadell's accounts. The FCA fine comes when this former English Patient is properly adding to Sabadell's coffers. Pre-provision operating profits almost doubled year on year in the quarter through September to €91m.

TSB's mortgage market share has begun to recover since the summer. Meanwhile, its own common equity tier one capital ratio is high at more than 16 per cent. This year, TSB should provide the largest earnings contribution to its Spanish parent in six years.

The hapless TSB has quietly gone from a public-relations nightmare to a steady profit provider. Sabadell's international expansion is finally paying off.

suppliers to stay locked in an uneasy truce as spending increases on conventional battlefield weapons.

Brenntag/Univar: bulking large

Bigger is better, right? Wrong, says activist investor PrimeStone. It opposes plans by the world's largest chemical distributor to buy number two Univar. Germany's Brenntag has not outlined terms publicly. US-listed target Univar is capitalised at more than \$5bn.

Customers are often taken for granted in big takeovers. Acquirers expect "synergies" — cost savings and marketing benefits. But that depends on customers staying put. PrimeStone

is sceptical that they would do so if Brenntag combined with Univar.

It is easy to see why a deal appeals to Brenntag management. Supply chain turmoil during the pandemic boosted profits. That effect is fading and shares have been slowly deflating. A big takeover could bring the chance to cut costs and push up margins.

But PrimeStone, which holds 2 per cent of Brenntag, thinks that logic is flawed. It believes a deal would trigger an exodus of clients spooked by the risk to supply chains of swapping two suppliers for one. Some might defect to independent distributors. The activist says that happened after Univar bought rival Nexeo, erasing \$220m of organic ebids in the years following.

PrimeStone bases its views in part on the way chemicals are distributed. This differs from bulk chemicals and speciality chemicals. The latter tend to be distributed via exclusive contracts. The former are sold through more of a free-for-all. It is here that customer risk is concentrated.

The activist believes Brenntag should split itself into a bulk chemicals group and a speciality chemicals company. Pure play groups of the latter type demand much higher ratings. IMCD and Azelis trade on 22 times forward earnings against Brenntag's 9 times.

Lex calculates spinning off speciality chemicals would add about a third to the group value of €8.8bn. Over two-fifths of Brenntag profits originate from this division. Growth could flow from smaller bolt-on acquisitions. Size does matter — but can be achieved without an expensive and risky takeover.

Musk/Twitter: Vibe check

The meme stock phenomenon has not ended. It has merely migrated. Zombiefied companies such as GameStop inspired retail investors to rally on social media then drive up share prices.

Elon Musk can apparently create a similar vibe at Twitter. The app is now privately held by the billionaire entrepreneur and institutional investors. Its value has plummeted from the \$44bn purchase price, stung by the advertising downturn and Musk's erratic leadership.

Few CEOs could run an investment into the ground this quickly. Musk has, for example, broached a bankruptcy multiple times. Yet the Musk circus has an approving as well as a disapproving audience. Perhaps that alone can temporarily upend the laws of finance.

As if hoping to prove this, Musk has been marketing more equity. Even more remarkably, this has generated a modicum of interest.

Musk and co-investors committed \$33bn of equity to fund the original deal. That was one reason banks lent \$13bn. The "equity cushion" was designed to absorb value degradation before debt. The latter is now stuck on the balance sheet of Morgan Stanley and others, on offer for 60 cents on the dollar. So the equity cushion that would-be equity investors envisage adding to has already been incinerated.

Normally, new investors could buy Twitter debt at a discount and take over the company. That would leave little reason to buy common equity, let alone at the buyout price.

But perhaps buying equity really just represents the chance to attend an annual meeting with Musk, get a verified account and gain other psychic benefits from being in his club.

Musk, if he wanted to, could simply hand the keys of Twitter to his creditors. Tesla shareholders would prefer to have his attention again. Instead, he is selling billions of Tesla stock seemingly to support Twitter.

It seems Musk is also willing to burn cash irrationally to remain in the clique of which he is the leading member.

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