PGIM Private Capital invests $65.0M in ED&F Man Capital Markets

PGIM Private Capital provided a $65.0M Senior Secured Credit Facility consisting of a $50.0M Senior Secured First Lien Term Loan and a $15.0M committed Delayed Draw Term Loan to ED&F Man Capital Markets US Holdings, Inc., a global financial brokerage business. PGIM Private Capital is a leading source of private debt for public and private companies and is the private capital arm of PGIM, the $1.4 trillion global investment management business of Prudential Financial, Inc.

"We are pleased to provide funding to ED&F Man Capital Markets to provide strategic financing for the business as they pursue the next phase of growth. Our experience with similar financings in this sector introduced us to the opportunity to work with the Firm's management team, forming a strong, direct partnership.

Our relationship-oriented approach is reflected in the Firm's mission centered on integrity, trust, client care and astute risk management," said PJ LaFemina, Vice President of PGIM Private Capital's Direct Lending group.

Christopher J Smith, Global CEO of ED&F Man Capital Markets, said: "Our partnership with PGIM Private Capital's Direct Lending group is built on a relationship whose foundations go back over many years. The provision of $65m of strategic financing will enable us to leverage the significant opportunities we see as a leading provider in global capital markets operating at the heart of the financial services ecosystem. Our Firm has a resilient and proven track record, a highly executable strategy, and clear vision for the future This facility will enable us to develop and achieve our financial and strategic goals."

Matthew Harvey, Managing Director and Head of PGIM Private Capital's Direct Lending group, said: "We look forward to supporting ED&F Man Capital Markets' strategic journey and working closely with their leadership team. Our Direct Lending strategy is based on close, long-term relationships with strong management teams, which was reflected through the Firm's outstanding leadership. Our thorough understanding and experience with financing strategies and flexible structures enabled us to provide a valuable solution as ED&F Man Capital Markets further invests in their business." (Agencies)

Major indexes rise broadly on Wall Street

Health care stocks among strongest gainers

NEW YORK, Oct 14, (AP): Stocks rose broadly on Wall Street Thursday as the market builds momentum a day after breaking a three-day losing streak.

The S&P 500 rose 1.5% as of 11:40 am. Eastern. More than 90% of stocks within the benchmark index gained ground, and it is now on track for a weekly gain. The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 471 points, or 1.4%, to 34,849 and the Nasdaq rose 1.5%.

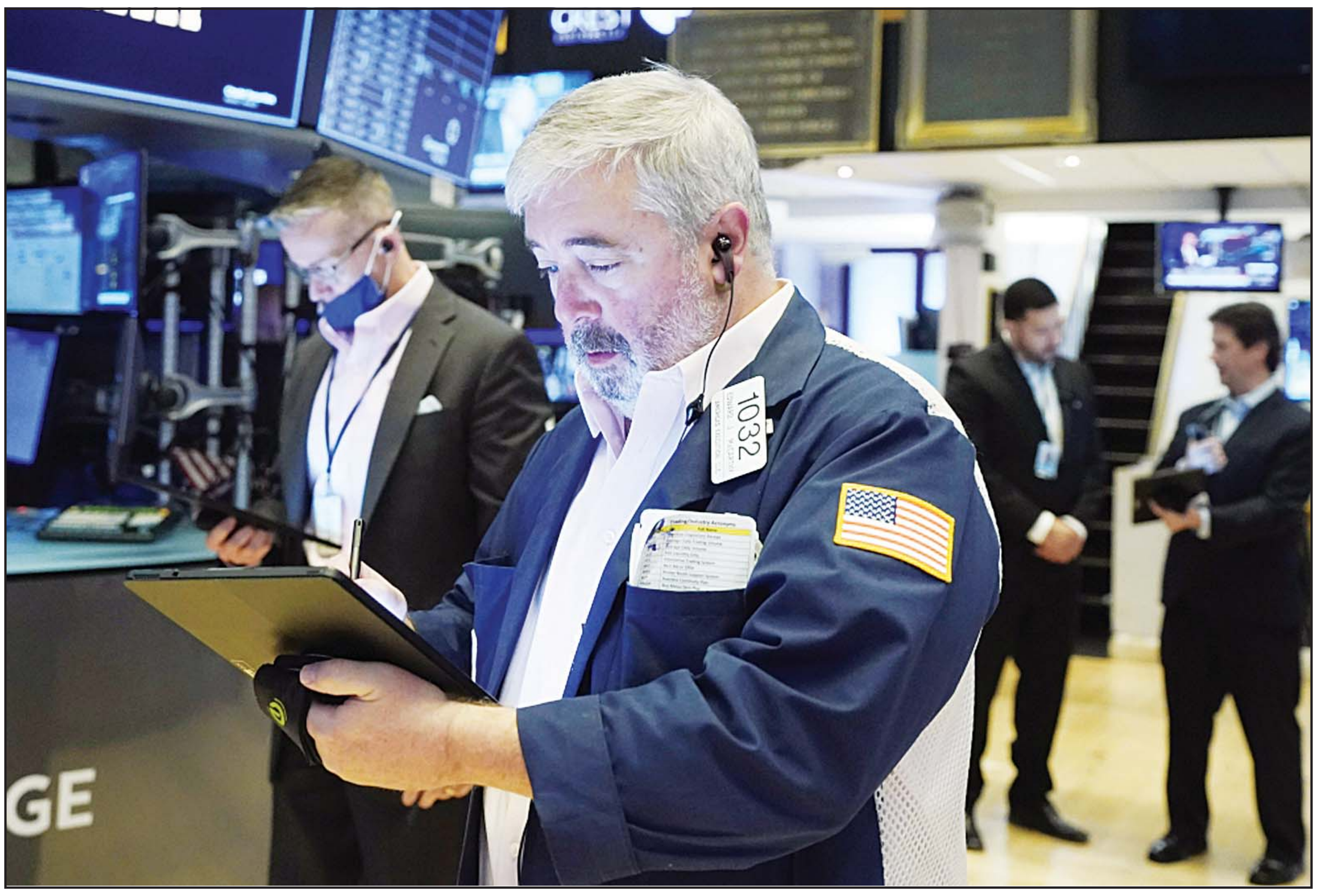
Health care stocks made some of the strongest gains. UnitedHealth Group jumped 4.6% after raising its profit forecast for the year following a strong third-quarter. Technology stocks also did a lot of heavy lifting. Apple rose 1.5% and Microsoft rose 1.6%.

This is the first big week for companies reporting their most recent quarterly financial results and investors have had mixed reactions so far to the latest round of bank earnings. Bank of America rose 3.2% after beating analysts' forecasts. Wells Fargo also beat forecasts, but it fell slightly as profits from lending fell compared with a year ago.

Investors are also reviewing the latest data on jobs and inflation as they try to gauge the economy's health and path forward.

The Labor Department said the number of Americans applying for unemployment benefits last week fell to its lowest level since the pandemic began. It's a positive sign for a job market that is still trying to recover from the initial hit from the pandemic 18 months ago. A surge of cases over the summer stunted the recovery.

The latest report on inflation showed that businesses continue to face pressure from rising costs. The Labor Department said inflation at the wholesale level rose 8.6% in September compared to a year ago, the largest advance since the 12-month change was first calculated in 2010.



Trader James McCarthy, foreground, works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange, Thursday, Oct. 14, 2021. Stocks are moving broadly higher in early trading on Wall Street as the market builds momentum a day after breaking a three-day losing streak. (AP)

Rising inflation has been raising costs for consumer goods. Analysts are concerned that could affect how much people spend and slow down the economic recovery. Investors will get an update on spending Friday when the Commerce Department reports retail sales for September.

Bond yields edged lower. The yield on the 10-year Treasury fell to 1.52% from 1.55% late Wednesday.

Stock prices rose in Paris, London and Tokyo, while Shanghai shares were little changed after the release of data showing producer price inflation at a record high in September.

Concerns about inflation and how price pressures might affect central bank policy, consumer spending and corporate profits remain a key focus for investors, and economists have been trimming economic growth estimates in response.

France's CAC 40 gained 0.7% in early trading to 6,646.16. Germany's DAX was up 0.8% at 15,363.06. Britain's FTSE 100 climbed 0.7% to 7,190.95. The future for the Dow industrials rose 0.6% to 34,445.00. The future contract for the S&P 500 was 0.7% higher at 4,384.75.

The Shanghai Composite index inched down nearly 0.1% to 3,558.28, after the government reported a surge in producer price inflation, which rose to 10.7% over a year earlier in September from 9.5% in August.

Much of the increase was due to surging coal prices, which appear not to have fed into consumer prices even as parts of the country contend with power shortages, Capital Economics said in a report. Consumer price inflation slipped to 0.7% from 0.8% in August.

Also Thursday, the Monetary Authority of Singapore raised a benchmark interest rate, citing price pressures. The move to allow the Singapore dollar to appreciate slightly against the US dollar, widening the trading band from 0%, coincided with news that the city-state's economy grew at a 6.5% annual pace in July-September.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 added 1.5% to finish at 28,550.93, as its new prime minister, Fumio Kishida, dissolved parliament ahead of an Oct. 31 general election. In office for about a week, Kishida has already flipflopped on major policies. But a splintered opposition means the ruling Liberal Democratic Party may still have an advantage, despite growing public disenchantment over a stagnating economy and the government's coronavirus measures.

South Korea's Kospi jumped 1.5% to 2,988.64. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 added 0.5% to 7,311.70. Hong Kong's trading was closed for a holiday.

Investors will get an update on US consumer spending on Friday when the Commerce Department reports retail sales for September.

In energy trading, benchmark US crude jumped $1.01 to $81.45 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It lost 20 cents to $80.44 on Wednesday. Brent crude, the international standard, rose $1.07 cents to $84.25 a barrel.

In currency trading, the US dollar rose to 113.33 Japanese yen from 113.23 yen. The euro cost $1.16171, up from $1.1592.

Mexico presents 'plan' to shutter pvt power plants

MEXICO CITY, Oct 14, (AP): Mexico's president presented details on Monday of a proposal that is likely to squeeze out hundreds of private power generating plants and may provoke complaints under the Mexico-U.S.-Canada free trade accord known as the USMCA.

The constitutional reform presented by President Andrés Manuel López Obrador would cancel contracts under which 34 private plants sell power into the national grid. The plan declares "illegal" another 239 private plants that sell energy direct to corporate clients in Mexico.

It also would cancel many long-term energy supply contracts and clean-energy preferential buying schemes, often affecting foreign companies.

It puts private natural gas plants almost last in line - ahead of only government coal-fired plants - for rights to sell electricity into the grid, despite the fact they produce power about 24% more cheaply. Government-run plants that burn dirty fuel oil would have preference over private wind and solar plants.

It guarantees the government utility a market share of "at least" 54%, contradicting promises to reserve 46% for private companies.

Rocio Nahle, the secretary of energy, said that means "the private firms are going to be in the market with 46% percent, they are not going to be nationalized at all, not even one screw or one nut."

But Nahle didn't explain what the difference is between effectively shuttering a private power plant and nationalizing it. Both would have zero value for the owner and would be impossible to move.

Moreover, it would apparently be up to the state-owned utility, the Federal Electricity Commission, to determine whether it wanted to go over the "at least" 54% market share.

The president's bill - which needs a two-thirds majority to pass in Congress - is meant to shore up the finances of the federal utility, which currently produces only about 38% of the country's electricity because its plants are older, more expensive to run and more polluting.

López Obrador idolizes state-owned companies; in addition, he needs the government utility to burn all the excess fuel oil produced by Mexico's oil refineries, which he has expanded. A by-product of refining gasoline and diesel, nobody else wants fuel oil, which is dirty when burned.

So the president was eager to pressure the old ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party - which has the swing votes he needs to pass the reform - to support it. It is a long-shot bid: it was the Institutional Revolutionary Party that pushed through the 2013 privatization reform, and several leading members say they won't vote for a return to a government-dominated power sector.

"If this Constitutional reform isn't passed, these (private) companies will wind up taking over all of the electricity market and we will get what is happening in Spain right now, where electrical rates are going through the roof," López Obrador said.

Ironically, Nahle displayed a graph showing that, so far this year, Mexico's electricity prices have increased very little under the current, partially privatized scheme.

In this file photo, a power generation plant stands idle near Huexca, Morelos state, Mexico. A constitutional reform presented by President Andrés Manuel López Obrador would cancel contracts under which some private power generating plants plants sell power into the national grid. (AP)

Move escalates clash between automaker and regulators

NHTSA seek answers from Tesla over lack of recall

DETROIT, Oct 14, (AP): U.S. safety investigators want to know why Tesla didn't file recall documents when it updated Autopilot software to better identify parked emergency vehicles, escalating a simmering clash between the automaker and regulators.

In a letter to Tesla, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration told the electric car maker Tuesday that it must recall vehicles if an over-the-internet update deals with a safety defect.

"Any manufacturer issuing an over-the-air update that mitigates a defect that poses an unreasonable risk to motor vehicle safety is required to timely file an accompanying recall notice to NHTSA," the agency said in a letter to Eddie Gates, Tesla's director of field quality.

The agency also ordered Tesla to provide information about its "Full Self-Driving" software that's being tested on public roads with some owners.

The latest clash is another sign of escalating tensions between Tesla and the agency that regulates vehicle safety and partially automated driving systems.

In August the agency opened an investigation into Tesla's Autopilot after getting multiple reports of vehicles crashing into emergency vehicles with warning lights flashing that were stopped on highways. The software can keep cars in their lane and a safe distance from vehicles in front of them.

Messages were left early Wednesday seeking comment from Tesla.

NHTSA opened a formal investigation of Autopilot after a series of collisions with parked emergency vehicles. The investigation covers 765,000 vehicles, almost everything that Tesla has sold in the U.S. since the start of the 2014 model year. Of the dozen crashes that are part of the probe, 17 people were injured and one was killed.

According to the agency, Tesla did an over-the-internet software update in late September that was intended to improve detection of emergency vehicle lights in low-light conditions. The agency says Tesla is aware that federal law requires automakers to do a recall if they find out that vehicles have safety defects.

The agency asked for information about Tesla's "Emergency Light Detection Update" that was sent to certain vehicles "with the stated purpose of detecting flashing emergency vehicle lights in low light conditions and then responding to said detection with driver alerts and changes to the vehicle speed while Autopilot is engaged."

The letter asks for a list of events that motivated the software update, as well as what vehicles it was sent to and

In this file photo, a sign bearing the company logo stands outside a Tesla store in Cherry Creek Mall in Denver. In a letter to Tesla, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration told the electric car maker that it must recall vehicles if an over-the-internet update mitigates a safety defect. (AP)

whether the measures extend to Tesla's entire fleet.

It also asks the Palo Alto, California, company whether it intends to file recall documents. "If not, please furnish Tesla's technical and/or legal basis for declining to do so," the agency asks.

Philip Koopman, a professor of electrical and computer engineering at Carnegie Mellon University, said NHTSA clearly wants Tesla to issue a recall. "They're giving Tesla a chance to have their say before they bring the hammer down," said Koopman, who studies automated vehicle safety.

When automakers find a safety defect, they must tell NHTSA within five working days, and they're required to do recalls. NHTSA monitors the recalls to make sure they cover all affected vehicles.. Automakers are required to notify all owners with letters explaining the repairs, which must be done at company expense.

A public recall allows owners to make sure the repairs are done, and so people buying cars are aware of potential safety problems.

NHTSA's actions put all automakers on notice that when they do software updates via the internet, they have to be reported to the agency if they fix a safety problem. It's another new technology that the agency has to deal with as numerous automakers follow Tesla with internet software capability.

"Now every company has exposure every time they do an over-the-air update because NHTSA may come back weeks later and say 'wait a minute, that was a stealth recall,'" Koopman said.

Tesla has to comply with the request by Nov. 1 or face court action and civil fines of more than $114 million, the agency wrote.

In a separate order to Tesla, NHTSA says that the company may be taking steps to hinder the agency's access to safety information by requiring drivers who are testing "Full Self-Driving" software to sign non-disclosure agreements.

The order demands that Tesla describe the non-disclosure agreements and say whether the company requires owners of vehicles with Autopilot to agree "to any terms that would prevent or discourage vehicle owners from sharing information about or discussing any aspect of Autopilot with any person other than Tesla."

Responses must be made by a Tesla officer under oath. If Tesla fails to fully comply, the order says the matter could be referred to the Justice Department. It also threatens more fines of over $114 million. Tesla has said that neither vehicles equipped with "Full Self-Driving" nor Autopilot can drive themselves. It warns drivers that they must be ready to intervene at all times.

Shares of Tesla rose slightly in Wednesday morning trading.

It was unclear how Tesla and CEO Elon Musk will respond to NHTSA's demands. The company and Musk have a long history of sparring with federal regulators.

In January, Tesla refused a request from NHTSA to recall about 135,000 vehicles because their touch screens could go dark. The agency said the screens were a safety defect because backup cameras and windshield defroster controls could be disabled.

A month later, after NHTSA started the process of holding a public hearing and taking Tesla to court, the company agreed to the recall. Tesla said it would replace computer processors for the screens, even though it maintained there was no safety threat.

Mavenir & HCL to 'collaborate'

RICHARDSON, Texas, Oct 14, (Agencies): Mavenir, the Network Software Provider building the future of networks with cloud-native software that runs on any cloud and transforms the way the world connects, today announced a strategic partnership with HCL Technologies (HCL), a leading global technology company with expertise in network systems testing. This partnership helps accelerate the market availability of O-RAN split 7.2 compliant Remote Radiohead Units (RRUs) while establishing a business model to meet the growing demand and evolving requirements for O-RAN RRUs.

Today's RRU ecosystem has expanded to offer Communication Service Providers (CSPs) a significantly wider choice of 2G, 3G, 4G, 5G, massive MIMO (mMIMO), millimeter Wave (mmWave), small cell and indoor radios. In turn, the number of RRU partners that Mavenir works with continues to grow, with each partner releasing new and sophisticated radios, with new software, across different radio technologies, output power, antenna dimensions and spectrum to meet the evolving needs of O-RAN customers.

The collaboration brings together HCL's platform for third-party RRU testing and Mavenir's full Centralized Unit (CU) and Distributed Unit (DU) RAN software stacks. RRU vendors will, as a result, be given the ability to work directly with HCL to assess their O-RAN interfaces and integrate with Mavenir's O-RAN compliant cloud-native CU/DU software.

By simplifying testing and validation across multiple O-RAN interoperability profiles, the collaboration will help vendors fast-track validation of frequency variants and the increasingly diverse RRU offerings being demanded by the O-RAN market.

This partnership will benefit both RRU vendors and CSPs by supporting the continued expansion of the radio ecosystem and helping to establish a self-sustaining RRU business model:

Vendors will be able to rapidly validate their O-RAN compliant RRUs as they develop portfolios of products targeted at different deployment scenarios. CSPs will be able to more easily identify the available O-RAN compliant RRU options for specific use cases and locations. "We are directly addressing requests from customers and partners to speed the integration of new RRU products.