



October 20, 2020 - Tuesday

### Key Developments

#### **FM asks 14 CPSEs to spend 75% of Rs 1.15 trillion capex by December end**

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday asked officials to ensure that 14 state-owned companies spend 75 per cent of their capital outlay for the year by the end of December. This is because the government looks to maintain the pace of capital and infrastructure projects in a bid to soften the economic blow from the pandemic. According to an official statement, Sitharaman held a video conference with secretaries of the ministries of petroleum and natural gas and ministry of coal, as well as the 14 PSUs under these departments. "This was the fourth in the ongoing series of meetings that the finance minister is having with various stakeholders to accelerate the economic growth in the background of Covid-19 pandemic," the statement said. The combined capex target for the 14 central public sector enterprises (CPSEs) for FY21 is Rs 1.15 trillion. Sitharaman asked the concerned secretaries to closely monitor their performance and ensure they spend 75 per cent of their capex by the end of the third quarter of the current fiscal.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/fm-asks-14-cpses-to-spend-75-of-rs-1-15-trillion-capex-by-december-end-120101900592\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/fm-asks-14-cpses-to-spend-75-of-rs-1-15-trillion-capex-by-december-end-120101900592_1.html)

#### **CBDT keeps tolerance range for transfer pricing unchanged, experts surprised**

The Central Board of Direct Taxes has re-notified prevailing 1% tolerance range for wholesale trading and the 3% range for all other transactions during financial year ending 31 March 2020, for transfer pricing cases for multinationals.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/cbdt-keeps-tolerance-range-for-transfer-pricing-unchanged-experts-surprised/articleshow/78752062.cms>

#### **CBIC offers more relaxations to small taxpayers for FY20**

The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has provided further relaxations in compliance for small taxpayers for the financial year ended March 2020. The requirement to file annual return in GSTR-9 by taxpayers having aggregate turnover up to Rs 2 crore has been made optional for financial year 2019-20.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/finance/cbic-offers-more-relaxations-to-small-taxpayers-for-fy20/articleshow/78745581.cms>

#### **Government issues time-bound rules for farm contract disputes; says farmers have flexibility**

The government has rolled out time bound rules and procedures for dispute resolution in the recently enacted farm law - Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020 - which is related to contract farming. As per the notified rules, sub-divisional magistrate would resolve the dispute by forming a conciliation board having equal representation from both sides.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/government-issues-time-bound-rules-for-farm-contract-disputes-says-farmers-have-flexibility/articleshow/78748836.cms>

#### **Centre nudges 2,800 large corporates to clear dues of MSMEs by October-end**

Encouraged by the strong response from the top 500 companies to its earlier entreaty to clear dues of MSMEs, the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises has now cast a substantially wider net. The Ministry has written to the top management of over 2,800 corporates by name, asking them to clear the pending dues of MSMEs by the end of this month.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/centre-nudges-2800-large-corporates-to-clear-dues-of-msmes-by-oct-end/article32894879.ece>

## Economy

### Assessing impact of pandemic on economy, says Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday said the government has begun an exercise to assess the impact of the pandemic on the economy and likely contraction in GDP, even as she did not rule out the possibility of another stimulus to boost growth. "I have not closed the option for another stimulus...Every time we have announced one, it has been after a lot of consideration... I have not closed the option to come up with one more stimulus," she said at the launch of a book - Portraits of Power: Half a Century of Being at Ringside - by the 15th Finance Commission Chairman N K Singh. To a question on whether the Finance Ministry would come out with an assessment of economic contraction, Sitharaman said the ministry has started doing some assessment since the beginning of October and would soon come with a projection.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/assessing-impact-of-pandemic-on-economy-says-finance-minister-nirmala-sitharaman/articleshow/78753111.cms>

### Centre asks at least eight state-run companies to consider buybacks: Report

India has asked at least eight state-run companies to consider share buybacks in the fiscal year that runs through March 2021, two government officials said, as New Delhi scours for ways of raising funds to rein in its fiscal deficit. The firms asked include miner Coal India, power utility NTPC, minerals producer NMDC and Engineers India Ltd, said one of the sources, who sought anonymity as the discussions are private.

"Buyback is an important tool in our strategy and it helps in building market price," added the second official, who also spoke on condition of anonymity. India is unlikely to be anywhere near its fiscal deficit target of 3.5% of GDP for 2020/21 as coronavirus curbs hit tax collections and delayed efforts to privatise energy firm Bharat Petroleum Corp and flag carrier Air India.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/centre-asks-at-least-eight-state-run-companies-to-consider-buybacks-report-120101900393\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/centre-asks-at-least-eight-state-run-companies-to-consider-buybacks-report-120101900393_1.html)

### Centre, states relations worsen over farm bills, GST compensation

The opposition-ruled states' stand mellowed somewhat after the Centre offered to borrow Rs 1.10 trillion towards GST compensation on their behalf. However, the union government's move to invoke a tripartite agreement (TPA) to realise Rs 1,417.50 crore of power dues from Jharkhand has made at least that state reject the offer. Though confined to one state, the recent move is among a series of actions by the Centre that have allegedly strained relations between the union government and the states.

The union power ministry recently auto-debited a sum of Rs 1,417.50 crore from Jharkhand's consolidated account— maintained by the RBI—to pay for central power generator Damodar Valley Corporation's (DVC) dues. This amount is the first installment of the Rs 5,600 crore Jharkhand owes to DVC for power supplied to seven of its districts. For this purpose the union power ministry invoked the tripartite agreement signed between the union government, the Reserve Bank of India and the Jharkhand government on April 27, 2017.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/centre-states-relations-worsen-over-farm-bills-gst-compensation-120101900923\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/centre-states-relations-worsen-over-farm-bills-gst-compensation-120101900923_1.html)

### Centre should take initiative in settling GST borrowing quantum issue: Kerala FM

Kerala Finance Minister Thomas Isaac on Monday asked the central government to take initiative in settling the issue of quantum of borrowing to fund goods and services tax (GST) shortfall. "Having come half way through for amicable settlement on issue of who should borrow, centre now should take initiative to settle remaining issue: How much to borrow?" Isaac tweeted. Last week, the centre gave in to the demands of opposition-ruled states to borrow and fund the GST compensation shortfall. The Finance Ministry said that the centre would borrow from the market to pay the GST compensation shortfall of Rs 1.1 lakh crore to states, and then act as an intermediary to arrange back-to-back loans to state governments. This arrangement, the ministry said, will not reflect in the fiscal deficit of the centre and will appear as capital receipts for state governments.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/centre-should-take-initiative-in-settling-gst-borrowing-quantum-issue-kerala-fm/articleshow/78744762.cms>

### Gujarat High Court to relook at GST on intermediaries

The controversy around levying Goods and Services Tax on intermediaries has come back to the fore and the Gujarat High Court is planning to relook at the controversy. The issue is whether certain Indian units of multinationals or BPOs are actually supplying services or exporting. As per the GST framework 18% tax has to be levied if it is not an export.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/gujarat-high-court-to-relook-at-gst-on-intermediaries/articleshow/78746197.cms>

### **No more extension of BPCL privatisation bid deadline: DIPAM Secy**

BPCL privatisation bid deadline will not be extended for the fifth time, as the government's strategic disinvestment programme that was hit by the pandemic is back on track, DIPAM Secretary said Monday. The government had on four occasions extended the date of putting in the preliminary expression of interest for buying out the majority stake in Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd (BPCL). The current deadline is November 16. "We had a serious COVID impact on strategic disinvestment, investors asked for time, particularly with respect to key transactions. I hope that further extensions may not be there, especially in BPCL where the current date is November 16. So hopefully, we will be able to move through," Tuhin Kanta Pandey, Secretary in the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM), told PTI.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/no-more-extension-of-bpcl-privatisation-bid-deadline-dipam-secy/2109195/>

### **Business index at post-lockdown high but beware of 'faux recovery': Nomura**

Financial services company Nomura on Monday cautioned about a 'faux recovery' being reflected by various indicators which is limited to festive consumption even as the Nomura India Business Resumption Index (NIBRI) picked up sharply to a post-lockdown high of 82.2 for the week ending 18 October versus 80.8 in the previous week led by improvement in mobility indices.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/business-index-at-post-lockdown-high-but-beware-of-faux-recovery-nomura/articleshow/78748531.cms>

### **Living standard, not income, key to fixing poverty line: Govt paper**

The future definition of poverty line cannot be the subsistence level income required by an individual but will have to factor in living standards that encompass facilities like housing, education and sanitation among others, a working paper on poverty released by Union rural development ministry notes. Besides, the paper says that the coronavirus pandemic has "underscored the criticality of certain essentials — access to quality healthcare, education and awareness, water and sanitation facilities, adequate nutrition and the need for living spaces where social distancing can be practiced." Interestingly, it says that World Bank has classified India as a lower middle-income country with poverty line at the consumption level of Rs 75 per person per day— a figure higher than India's present marker. "Over time, India will need to adjust to the new reality of the transition to a lower middle-income country in which poverty does not mean living at the edge of hunger but, rather, lack of income to take advantage of the opportunities thrown up by a growing economy," the paper notes.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/living-standard-not-income-key-to-fixing-poverty-line-govt-paper/articleshow/78742279.cms>

## **Banking and Finance**

### **Banks sanction Rs 1.35 lakh cr concessional loans to 1.5 cr KCC card holder farmers**

The Finance Ministry on Thursday said banks have covered 1.5 crore farmers under the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme to sanction credit limit of Rs 1.35 lakh crore to help them meet financial requirements during the COVID-19 crisis. As part of the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Package, the government has announced to cover 2.5 crore farmers under the KCC scheme with a credit boost of Rs 2 lakh crore through a special saturation drive. "As a result of concerted and sustained efforts by the banks and other stakeholders in the direction of providing access to concessional credit by the farmers, including fishermen and dairy farmers, a major milestone target of covering more than 1.5 crore under KCC, with sanctioned credit limit of Rs.1.35 lakh crore has been achieved," an official statement said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/banking/finance/banking/banks-sanction-rs-1-35-lakh-cr-concessional-loans-to-1-5-cr-kcc-card-holder-farmers/articleshow/78752087.cms>

### **India mustn't neglect bank recapitalisation despite Covid-19: Viral Acharya**

India is neglecting bank recapitalisation as it focuses on debt moratoriums and interest waivers for borrowers amid the COVID-19 pandemic, a former central bank official told Reuters on Monday. Indian banks are saddled with over \$120 billion in bad debt, and in severely stressed conditions the bad-loan ratio could nearly double by March, according to Reserve Bank of India projections. Restoring banks' capital is critical for aiding a meaningful recovery, but there has been little focus on the matter, former RBI Deputy Governor Viral Acharya said.

"This lack of focus is tantamount to kicking the can down the road and jettisoning financial stability for short-term gains," said Acharya, who recently wrote a book titled the "Quest for Restoring Financial Stability in India." "This repeated mistake has prevented India from recovering well from adverse shocks," Acharya said. His comments came weeks after India offered to waive the compounded interest component on all loans up to 20 million rupees following a legal challenge to the terms of a six-month moratorium.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/india-mustn-t-neglect-bank-recapitalisation-despite-covid-19-viral-acharya-120101900879\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/india-mustn-t-neglect-bank-recapitalisation-despite-covid-19-viral-acharya-120101900879_1.html)

## Industry

### **MSMEs' long term recovery likely ahead but subdued demand, lower disposable income among key issues**

MSME was among five key sectors in India that witnessed the severe impact of the pandemic even as its recovery was expected to be long term ahead, according to a report by Dun & Bradstreet. "Subdued domestic consumption demand and lower disposable income would keep the revival of demand constrained," the report said adding that the global recession will limit the revival for export demand for the MSMEs. Moreover, lack of technical expertise might continue to be a hurdle for MSMEs to adopt digital technology to enable business online. Also, costs for maintenance for required hygiene levels and change in work processes for MSMEs in the service sector such as the shift to teleworking would be higher for small businesses.

MSME along with automotive, gems & jewelry, hospitality and tourism, metal, and nine other key sectors were analysed for the impact they witnessed post Coronavirus and the near future outlook. MSMEs had largely faced challenges due to the disruption in the supply chain, lack of raw materials, unavailability of migrant labour, and restrictions in transportation.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/sme/msme-eodb-msmes-long-term-recovery-likely-ahead-but-subdued-demand-lower-disposable-income-among-key-issues/2109233/>

### **FSSAI's new food safety compliance platform to become operational across India from November**

Food regulator FSSAI on Monday said its Food Safety Compliance System (FoSCoS) will become operational in the entire country from November 1. The system is operational in nine States/UTs -- Tamil Nadu, Delhi, Gujarat, Odisha, Chandigarh, Goa, Manipur, Puducherry and Ladakh since June. " FSSAI is now ready to extend FoSCoS to entire country with effect from 1st November 2020," the regulator said in a statement. It said since 2011, its online FLRS (Food Licensing and Registration System) is the soul of the licensing ecosystem. It is operational in all states and 70 lakh licences/ registrations have been issued till date while over 40 lakh licensees/ registrants are actively transacting on it.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/cons-products/food/fssais-new-food-safety-compliance-platform-to-become-operational-across-india-from-nov/articleshow/78745739.cms>

### **Wine body appeals State govts on removal of excise fees**

The All India Wine Producers Association (AIWPA) has appealed to all the State governments that the excise fees from April 1 till September 31, which is levied on hotels, restaurants and bars serving wines and other alcoholic drinks should be waived off given the Covid pandemic, said newly appointed President of AIWPA, Jagdish Holkar.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/wine-body-appeals-state-govts-on-removal-of-excise-fees/article32894000.ece>

### **In muted festive season, low-value items are a hit among ethnic wear shoppers**

Low value ethnic wear products are the favourite among a chunk of shoppers this festival season as celebrations remain restricted due to the pandemic, said top ethnic wear retailers. "Customer trends are certainly showing a tendency towards greater discernment, with a focus on seeking value for their spends this year," Viney Singh, Managing Director, Fabindia, the six-decade ethnic seller that operates more than 300 outlets. The pandemic has forced people to stay indoors for months. The Covid-19 will also prompt celebrations mostly to be limited to either small gatherings or digital parties and many consumers they will make do this year with value products unlike any other normal year where consumers generally splurge on design heavy and expensive items, said Mansi Gupta, founder of Tjori, an online fashion portal that sells ethnic clothing and other items.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/cons-products/garments-/textiles/in-muted-festive-season-low-value-items-are-a-hit-among-ethnic-wear-shoppers/articleshow/78747275.cms>

## Agriculture

### **APMC mandis lose grip on Maharashtra FPCs**

Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs) in Maharashtra are increasingly bypassing mandis to enter into deals with private players. Some of them dream of building brands in the vegetable business, while others are looking to tap the international market.

Last week, farmers in Buldhana district of Maharashtra met with a pleasant surprise when they got a bonus from a farmer producer company Jai Sardar FPC for selling their maize to them. Jai Sardar had purchased around



3120 quintals from the farmers in their region and had sold the maize to a private company in Muzzafarpur in Bihar for Rs 45 lakh.

“We decided to share some of the profit with the farmers who had sold their maize to us and distributed a bonus of Rs 10 per quintal to the farmers. The amount is small but is a gesture of appreciation,” Ashish Nafade, founder of the FPC said. “The Centre’s Farm Bills give us more freedom to sell anywhere and we need to keep farmers happy if we want them to be with us,” he added.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/economy/apmc-mandis-lose-grip-on-maharashtra-fpcs/2108760/>

### **Essential Commodities Act okay, but not law that deals with direct trade, say farmers**

Over half the 5,000 farmers surveyed opposed the recently-passed farm laws, while one-third said they support the laws. Over 5,000 farmers participated in a survey on farm laws by Gaon Connection, an independent media platform.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/essential-commodities-act-okay-but-not-law-that-deals-with-direct-trade-say-farmers/article32891651.ece>

## **Infrastructure**

### **Proposal to relax eligibility norms for highway projects to ensure larger participation by developers**

The government has proposed to relax financial as well as technical eligibility criteria for highway projects to encourage increased participation of developers amid COVID-19 pandemic. To overcome delays in highways construction, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) has already issued some relaxations under AatmaNirbhar Scheme to contractors for the ongoing as well as yet- to-start projects, besides providing some relaxation to bidders in performance security. Changes in bidding documents in respect of financial and technical capacity for HAM (hybrid annuity model) and BOT projects (build, operate, transfer) projects and general relaxation for tunnel and bridge projects have been deliberated in the Ministry.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/infrastructure/proposal-to-relax-eligibility-norms-for-highway-projects-to-ensure-larger-participation-by-developers/articleshow/78748290.cms>

### **Nitin Gadkari to lay foundation stone for Rs 694 crore multi-modal logistics park in Assam**

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari will on Tuesday lay the foundation stone for India's first multi-modal logistics park in Assam to be constructed at an estimated cost of Rs 694 crore, an official statement said. The multi-modal logistic park will be developed under the ambitious Bharatmala Pariyojna. "Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Shri Nitin Gadkari will virtually lay the foundation stone for the first-ever multi-modal logistic park in Assam tomorrow," the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways said in the statement on Monday. The Rs 693.97 crore park will provide direct connectivity through air, road, rail and waterways to the people, the statement added.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/infrastructure/nitin-gadkari-to-lay-foundation-stone-for-rs-694-crore-multi-modal-logistics-park-in-assam/articleshow/78753177.cms>

### **Air India bid deadline may be extended till Dec 15, govt to ease asset valuation norm**

To attract potential suitors, the government will ease asset valuation norms for Air India by allowing bidders to put in offers on an enterprise value basis, a source said on Monday. To begin with, the government is likely to further extend the deadline for putting in a preliminary expression of interest for the loss-making national carrier to December 15. The source said bids will be sought on an enterprise value basis - a popular valuation methodology for takeover deals. Enterprise value (EV) is a measure of a company's total value, often used as a more comprehensive alternative to equity market capitalization. EV includes in its calculation the market capitalization of a company but also short-term and long-term debt as well as any cash on the company's balance sheet.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/transportation/airlines/-aviation/air-india-bid-deadline-may-be-extended-till-dec-15-govt-to-ease-asset-valuation-norm/articleshow/78748502.cms>

### **Cube Highways pays Rs 5,011 crore to NHAI for TOT-3**

A year after it won bids for the third bundle of Toll-operate-transfer projects, Cube Highways has paid the National Highways Authority of India ₹5,011 crore towards the award. The Singapore-based firm had delayed the payment to the National highways building authority amid the uncertainties posed by Covid-19 outbreak. NHAI on Monday received upfront payment of Rs 5,011 crore, a statement from the ministry of road transport and highways said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/indl-goods/svs/construction/cube-highways-pays-rs-5011-crore-to-nhai-for-tot-3/articleshow/78752895.cms>

### **Delhi metro to offer 2 lakh sq ft commercial space at two stations**

The Delhi metro rail corporation (DMRC) will monetise about 2 lakh sq ft at Karkarduma and Anand Vihar metro stations in a bid to increase revenue, which has been hit badly due to Covid 19. DMRC has invited tenders for leasing of approximately 9563 sqm area at Karkarduma metro station of Pink line for commercial development.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/services/property/-/cstruction/delhi-metro-to-offer-2-lakh-sq-ft-commercial-space-at-two-stations/articleshow/78749121.cms>

### **2.5-3 mn sq ft of warehousing space to come up in Bengal in 3 yrs: Report**

West Bengal will see a fresh supply of 2.5-3 million sq ft of warehousing space over the next three years with an investment of around Rs 750 crore to meet rising demand from e-commerce firms, according to realty consultant Vestian. In its report 'Looking East: Warehousing in Kolkata', the US-based property consultant highlighted that Kolkata and adjoining areas currently have 17.2 million sq ft of organised warehousing space.

This accounts for 10 per cent of the total warehousing stock in the top 8 cities of the country. The region witnessed an absorption of nearly 3.1 million sq ft in 2019, depicting a slight year-on-year decline of 3 per cent. "Going forward, nearly 2.5-3 million sq ft of warehousing space is likely to come up across the state in the next 18-36 months at an approximate investment of Rs 750 crore," the report said.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/2-5-3-mn-sq-ft-of-warehousing-space-to-come-up-in-bengal-in-3-yrs-report-120101900476\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/2-5-3-mn-sq-ft-of-warehousing-space-to-come-up-in-bengal-in-3-yrs-report-120101900476_1.html)

## **Telecom**

### **Fibre broadband underserved market, renewed efforts to help firms gain wallet share: Report**

India's fibre broadband is an underserved market at about 3 million subscribers, and renewed efforts will help operators gain 'wallet share' among top-end of consumption class, in turn, supporting converged offerings, according to a report. India's wireline broadband market is seeing a pickup with one million new connections in year to date - more than FY17-20 combined - crossing the 20 million mark. "As per Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) data, amid the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns, India broadband wireline market added 1 million new connections year to date in the current year to 20.1 million total subscribers," CLSA said in a recent report on the sector capturing 'pick up in fibre broadband'. The report noted that among the operators, Reliance Jio added highest new subscribers to reach nearly 1.2 million and Bharti Airtel is the largest private operator with 2.5 million users.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/telecom/telecom-news/fibre-broadband-underserved-market-renewed-efforts-to-help-firms-gain-wallet-share-report/articleshow/78745977.cms>

### **Investment for all-India 5G rollout seen at Rs 1.3-2.3 lakh cr: Report**

Investments in key components of 5G network on mid or low-band spectrum with pan-India coverage is estimated to be about Rs 1.3-2.3 lakh crore, according to a report by Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

The total capital expenditure or capex requirement when it comes to 5G rollout for Mumbai alone is seen at Rs 10,000 crore, and Rs 8,700 crore for Delhi, it said. According to the telecom report from Motilal Oswal Financial Services, for mid band or low band spectrum, overall capex requirement for pan-India coverage would hover at Rs 1.3-2.3 lakh crore.

Based on the TRAI's latest reserve price, capex requirement for obtaining 100 MHz mid band spectrum in Mumbai would be about Rs 8,400 crore, which could go up further if the bidding price is higher than the base price.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/investment-for-all-india-5g-rollout-seen-at-rs-1-3-2-3-lakh-cr-report/2109258/>

## **Energy**

### **CIL coal supply to power sector drops 10% in first half of FY21**

The supply of coal by state-owned Coal India Ltd (CIL) to the power sector dropped by 10 per cent to 197.89 million tonnes (MT) in the first half of the ongoing fiscal.

Coal India had supplied 219.85 MT of coal in the April-September period of the previous fiscal, according to official data. However, the supply of fuel by the coal behemoth to the power sector increased by 22.4 per cent to 35.74 million tonnes (MT) in September compared to 29.20 MT in the corresponding month of previous fiscal.

The country's power consumption registered a growth of 11.45 per cent to 55.37 billion units (BU) in the first half of October this year, mainly driven by buoyancy in industrial and commercial activities. The government

had imposed nationwide lockdown on March 25 to contain the spread of COVID-19. Power consumption started declining from March onwards due to fewer economic activities in the country.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/cil-coal-supply-to-power-sector-drops-10-in-first-half-of-fy21/2109241/>

## States

### **Anti-pollution campaign: Delhi to deploy 2.5k marshalls to create awareness**

The Delhi government will deploy 2,500 environment marshalls across the city to generate awareness about its recently launched anti-pollution campaign, 'Red Light On, Gaadi Off', Environment Minister Gopal Rai said on Monday. These marshalls will be deployed at 100 traffic signals across Delhi's 11 districts, he said. Addressing reporters, Rai said the shortlisted traffic signals are those where the red light is two-minute long. "From October 21 to November 15, a ground-level awareness drive on 'Red Light On, Gaadi Off' campaign will be launched at 100 traffic signals. We are in the process of appointing 2,500 environment marshalls who will spread awareness about the campaign at these signals. It is an awareness drive, not an enforcement drive," he said.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/anti-pollution-campaign-delhi-to-deploy-2-5k-marshalls-to-create-awareness-120101900674\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/anti-pollution-campaign-delhi-to-deploy-2-5k-marshalls-to-create-awareness-120101900674_1.html)

### **Telangana govt steps up support for MSMEs' credit need; partners with BSE for ease of listing, more**

In a bid to encourage more MSMEs to go public to meet capital requirements, the Telangana government along with networking portal for small businesses GlobalLinker on Monday partnered with BSE. Apart from helping address finance-related issues and enhancing credibility for MSMEs, BSE would also offer 'intellectual and manpower support to create awareness about the importance and benefits of listing,' the exchange said. BSE added that there has been a lot of preconceived notions around the listing of small businesses due to lack of awareness around it such as listing involves increased compliance levels, increased costs, etc.

"Currently there are very few MSMEs registered on the stock exchange from Telangana and we would like to see these numbers grow soon," said Jayesh Ranjan, Principal Secretary, Govt. of Telangana in a statement. Last year the Industries & Commerce Department had introduced the Telangana State GlobalLinker portal for MSMEs to go digital and seek support in growing their business. The state government currently offers a free e-commerce store with payment gateway and logistics capabilities, buyers-sellers connect, support for exports, etc. on the portal.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/sme/msme-fin-telangana-govt-steps-up-support-for-msmes-funding-need-partners-with-bse-for-ease-of-listing-more/2109146/>

### **Kerala High Court dismisses state govt's plea against lease of Thiruvananthapuram airport**

The Kerala High Court on Monday dismissed petitions filed by Kerala government and others challenging the Centre's decision to lease Thiruvananthapuram international airport to Adani Enterprises. A division bench of the High Court comprising Justices K Vinod Chandran and C S Dias delivered the verdict, dismissing arguments raised by the state government and others opposing the Centre's decision to lease out the airport to Adani Enterprises Limited. The Kerala government, on August 21, had moved the high court seeking a stay on further proceedings in leasing Thiruvananthapuram international airport to Adani Enterprises. The state government had filed the application in the court, after an all-party-meeting in Kerala demanded withdrawal of the Union Cabinet's decision to lease the airport to Adani Enterprises.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/transportation/airlines/-aviation/kerala-high-court-dismisses-state-govts-plea-against-lease-of-thiruvananthapuram-airport/articleshow/78745449.cms>

## Healthcare

### **Oxford University says COVID-19 patients experience symptoms months after contracting virus**

Britain's Oxford University said on Monday initial findings from a study on the long term impact of COVID-19 has found that a large number of patients discharged from hospitals still experience symptoms of breathlessness, fatigue, anxiety and depression two to three months after contracting the virus. The scientists also detected abnormalities in multiple organs and believe persistent inflammation may be a factor for COVID-19 survivors, the university said in a statement.

[https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/oxford-university-says-covid-19-patients-experience-symptoms-months-after-contracting-virus/articleshow/78751260.cms?utm\\_source=ETTopNews&utm\\_medium=HPTN&utm\\_campaign=AL1&utm\\_content=23](https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/oxford-university-says-covid-19-patients-experience-symptoms-months-after-contracting-virus/articleshow/78751260.cms?utm_source=ETTopNews&utm_medium=HPTN&utm_campaign=AL1&utm_content=23)

### **Covid 'effectively contained', positivity rate below 8% for 4th day: Govt**

India's cumulative COVID-19 positivity rate has remained below 8 per cent for four days, demonstrating that the rate of spread of infection is being effectively contained, the Union health ministry said on Monday. This has been brought about by a high level of comprehensive countrywide testing, it said.

The country's cumulative positivity rate stands at 7.94 per cent and is on a continuous decline, the ministry said in a statement. "As evidence has revealed, higher numbers of testing on a sustained basis have aided in bringing down the positivity rate. The decline in the cumulative positivity rate has demonstrated that the rate of spread of infection is being effectively contained," it said.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/covid-19-effective-contained-positivity-rate-below-8-for-4th-day-govt-120101900468\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/covid-19-effective-contained-positivity-rate-below-8-for-4th-day-govt-120101900468_1.html)

#### **Vaccine storage demands could leave 3 billion people without access**

The chain breaks here, in a tiny medical clinic in Burkina Faso that went nearly a year without a working refrigerator. From factory to syringe, the world's most promising coronavirus vaccine candidates need non-stop sterile refrigeration to stay potent and safe. But despite enormous strides in equipping developing countries to maintain the vaccine cold chain, nearly 3 billion of the world's 7.8 billion people live where temperature-controlled storage is insufficient for an immunization campaign to bring COVID-19 under control.

The result: Poor people around the world who were among the hardest hit by the virus pandemic are also likely to be the last to recover from it. The vaccine cold chain hurdle is just the latest disparity of the pandemic weighted against the poor, who more often live and work in crowded conditions that allow the virus to spread, have little access to medical oxygen that is vital to COVID-19 treatment, and whose health systems lack labs, supplies or technicians to carry out large-scale testing.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/vaccine-storage-demands-could-leave-3-billion-people-without-access-120101900492\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/vaccine-storage-demands-could-leave-3-billion-people-without-access-120101900492_1.html)

#### **External**

#### **Exporters feel pinch as sea freight to US and Europe rises by 30-40%**

Sea freight rates from Indian ports to the US and European ports have increased by 30-40 per cent to \$4,000-4,500 per twenty-foot equivalent unit (TEU) container, and with further increases expected in October, the rate could soon breach \$5,000. Traditional export-oriented industries like textiles, leather, automotive and others are feeling the pinch as they dealt with very thin margins only. Adding to that shortage of containers is causing delays for exporters.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/exporters-feel-pinch-as-sea-freight-to-us-and-europe-rises-by-30-40-120101900942\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/exporters-feel-pinch-as-sea-freight-to-us-and-europe-rises-by-30-40-120101900942_1.html)

#### **India needs to export 6 million tonne sugar as output rebounds: Trade body**

India needs to export 6 million tonnes of sugar in 2020/21 marketing year started on Oct. 1 as the production is set to jump on higher area, a leading trade body said on Monday.

The world's biggest consumer of the sweetener is likely to produce 31 million tonnes of sugar in the new season, nearly 13% more than a year ago, the Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA) said in a statement.

India started the new marketing year with carry forward stocks of 10.64 million tonnes, lower than the 14.58 million tonnes a year ago, the ISMA said.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/india-needs-to-export-6-million-tonne-sugar-as-output-rebounds-trade-body-120101900695\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/india-needs-to-export-6-million-tonne-sugar-as-output-rebounds-trade-body-120101900695_1.html)