



May 17, 2021 – Monday

### Key Developments

#### **Covid active caseload decreases to 3.6 mn; positivity rate at 16.98%: Govt**

India's COVID-19 active cases count has decreased to 36,18,458 with a net decline of 55,344 cases being recorded in the active caseload in a span of 24 hours, while the daily positivity rate dropped to 16.98 per cent, the Union health ministry said on Sunday. The total active caseload now comprises 14.66 per cent of the country's total infections, it said. Ten states--Karnataka, Maharashtra, Kerala, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Gujarat and Chhattisgarh--cumulatively account for 74.69 per cent of the country's total active cases, the ministry said. A declining trend in the positivity rate is also observed which has dropped to 16.98 per cent (May 16) from 24.47 per cent recorded on May 3, it said. India's cumulative recoveries have reached 2,07,95,335 with 3,62,437 patients recuperating in a span of 24 hours. It outnumbers the country's daily COVID-19 cases for the fifth time in the last six days, the ministry said.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/covid-active-caseload-decreases-to-3-6-mn-positivity-rate-at-16-98-govt-121051600438\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/covid-active-caseload-decreases-to-3-6-mn-positivity-rate-at-16-98-govt-121051600438_1.html)

#### **CBIC starts special drive to clear pending GST refund claims by month-end**

The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has launched a special drive to clear all pending GST refunds by month-end. The 15-day Goods and Services Tax (GST) refund drive is on the lines of an ongoing similar drive organised by the CBIC for refund of customs and duty drawback claims. In an instruction to all Principal Commissioners of Central Tax formations, the CBIC said there is a need to focus on timely disposal of all pending GST refund claims in order to provide immediate relief to business entities, especially MSMEs, in the difficult times of second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. "It is hereby instructed that a 'Special GST Refund Disposal Drive' will be launched by all Central Tax formations during the period from 15th May 2021 to 31st May 2021 for processing and disposal of all pending GST refund claims on priority," it said.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/economy/cbic-starts-special-drive-to-clear-pending-gst-refund-claims-by-month-end/2252724/>

#### **Govt issues guidelines on Covid management in rural, peri-urban areas**

As rural areas see a rise in Covid-19 cases, the Centre on Sunday issued new guidelines for containment of the virus advising that peri-urban and rural areas plan a minimum 30-bedded Covid Care Centre for asymptomatic cases with comorbidities or mild cases where home isolation is not feasible. Provision of Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) kits should be made at all public health facilities including Sub-centres or Health and Wellness Centres and Primary Health Centres, the Union Health Ministry said. Noting that besides urban areas reporting a large number of cases, a gradual ingress is now being seen in peri-urban, rural and tribal areas as well, the ministry released the 'SOP on Covid-19 Containment and Management in Peri-urban, Rural & Tribal areas' to enable communities strengthen primary level healthcare infrastructure at all levels to intensify Covid-19 response.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/govt-issues-guidelines-on-covid-management-in-rural-peri-urban-areas/articleshow/82678231.cms>

Economy

### **India's once-in-a-century budget runs into trouble as virus strikes back**

India's annual budget in February was lauded by many and raised hopes it would drive a sharp economic revival, but there are now fears that its promise may fall flat as it did not account for a crippling second wave of Covid-19 infections. The budget aimed to revive Asia's third-largest economy via investing in infrastructure and health care, while relying on an aggressive privatisation strategy and robust tax collections - on the back of projected growth of 10.5 per cent - to fund its spending in the fiscal year. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said India would not see such a budget in "100 years". At the time, a massive Covid-19 vaccination drive and a rebound in consumer demand and investments had put the economy on track to recover from its deepest recorded slump. The South Asian country is battling the world's second highest coronavirus caseload after the United States, recording some 300,000 cases and about 4,000 deaths a day. With many parts of the country under varying degrees of lockdown, most of the growth projections that the budget was built around are now mired in uncertainty.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/india-s-once-in-a-century-budget-runs-into-trouble-as-virus-strikes-back-121051600409\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/india-s-once-in-a-century-budget-runs-into-trouble-as-virus-strikes-back-121051600409_1.html)

### **Covid-19: Centre asks states to keep ration shops open on all days**

The Centre on Sunday asked the state governments to keep ration shops, also called fair price shops, open for a longer duration and on all days to ensure timely and safe distribution of both subsidised and free foodgrains to the poor. An advisory in this regard has been issued by the Union Food Ministry following representations that during the current lockdown in some states/UTs, ration shops' timings have been curtailed due to which the intended beneficiaries might not be getting adequate time to lift their entitled foodgrains. "In view of ongoing lockdown in some States/UTs, that may curtail the functioning hours of Fair Price Shop (FPS), an advisory has been issued on 15th May, 2021...to keep the FPSs open, preferably on all days of the month," the ministry said in a statement. The Centre is distributing highly monthly subsidised foodgrains of 5 kg per person at Rs 1-3 per kg via ration shops to over 80 crore poor under the National Food Security Act (NFSA).

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/covid-19-centre-asks-states-to-keep-ration-shops-open-on-all-days-121051600468\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/covid-19-centre-asks-states-to-keep-ration-shops-open-on-all-days-121051600468_1.html)

### **GST meet to consider relief for Covid essentials**

With the growing clamour from the States for additional money to manage Covid-relief efforts, the GST Council is likely to take a decision on the matter during its 43rd meeting on May 28. The Council is also expected to consider the request for amendments in the Finance Act, compensation mechanisms for States and modifying the inverted duty structure.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/gst-council-meet-to-consider-relief-for-covid-essentials/article34573571.ece?homepage=true>

### **PM Narendra Modi speaks to four CMs on COVID-19 situation**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday spoke to the chief ministers of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Puducherry on the COVID-19 situation in the states and the union territory, government sources said. Modi has been regularly speaking to chief ministers to take stock of the pandemic's situation in states and union territories. With 3.11 lakh fresh coronavirus infections, India saw the lowest rise in daily COVID-19 cases after a gap of 25 days, while the death toll rose to 2,70,284 with 4,077 new fatalities, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Sunday.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/pm-narendra-modi-speaks-to-four-cms-on-covid-19-situation/articleshow/82677269.cms>

## **Banking and Finance**

### **SBI to sell three NPA accounts next month for recovery of over Rs 235 cr**

The State Bank of India (SBI) will sell three bad accounts to asset reconstruction companies or other financial institutions next month to recover dues of over Rs 235 crore, according to a sales notice. In terms of the bank's policy on sale of financial assets, in line with regulatory guidelines, SBI said it has placed Heavy Metal and Tubes Ltd, Khare and Tarkunde Infrastructure Pvt Ltd and Elize International Ltd for sale to recover a total of Rs 235.32 crore. Heavy

Metal has outstanding dues of Rs 116.91 crore to the bank, Khare and Tarkunde owes Rs 99.84 crore and Elize International Rs 18.57 crore. The bank has set the reserve prices for these NPA accounts for sale at Rs 27.50 crore, Rs 15 crore and Rs 8 crore, respectively. The e-auction of Heavy Metal and Tubes; and Khare and Tarkunde will take place on June 7, while that of Elize will be on June 8. SBI said the interested ARCs/banks/NBFCs/FIs can conduct due diligence of these assets with immediate effect, after submitting expressions of interest and executing a non-disclosure agreement with the bank.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/finance/sbi-to-sell-three-npa-accounts-next-month-for-recovery-of-over-rs-235-cr-121051600219\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/finance/sbi-to-sell-three-npa-accounts-next-month-for-recovery-of-over-rs-235-cr-121051600219_1.html)

#### **Govt may amend DICGC Act in monsoon session to provide timely service to ailing bank depositors**

In a bid to ensure timely support to depositors of stressed banks, the government may bring amendment to DICGC Act in the monsoon session with the objective to provide account holders easy and time-bound access to funds to the extent of the deposit insurance cover. Last year, the government raised insurance cover on deposit five-folds to Rs 5 lakh with a view to provide support to depositors of ailing lenders like Punjab and Maharashtra Co-operative (PMC) Bank. Following the collapse of PMC Bank, Yes Bank and Lakshmi Vilas Bank too came under stress leading to restructuring by the regulator and the government. The amendment to the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC) Act, 1961 is the budget announcement made by the Finance Minister and the Bill is almost ready, sources said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/banking/finance/banking/govt-may-amend-dicgc-act-in-monsoon-session-to-provide-timely-service-to-ailing-banks-depositors/articleshow/82677021.cms>

#### **RBI raises concerns over dual microfinance regulation in Assam**

The Reserve Bank of India has expressed strong reservations about Assam's bid to regulate microfinance activities by way of a legislation, because the Act, promulgated on January 27, leads to dual regulation of a key component of the credit market.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/banking/finance/rbi-raises-concerns-over-dual-microfinance-regulation-in-assam/articleshow/82680367.cms>

#### **Sovereign Gold Bond shines this Akshaya Tritiya**

Consumers who had missed out on buying gold during Akshaya Tritiya on Friday due to the lockdown can heave a sigh of relief with the Sovereign Gold Bond opening for subscription on Monday.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/markets/gold/sovereign-gold-bond-shines-this-akshaya-tritiya/article34573143.ece?homepage=true>

#### **COVID-19 brings about behavioural change in cash usage, say experts**

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about a behavioural change in usage of cash with people withdrawing larger amounts from ATMs but preferring to make digital modes to make payments, said, experts. The ferocity of the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic has scared people, forcing them to withdraw larger amounts from the ATMs with a view to avoid frequent visits. The money thus withdrawn is mostly held for emergency use and often payments are being made through UPI and other digital modes.

Talking about the behavioural change in currency usage, Sarvatra Technologies founder and MD Mandar Agashe said that in view of the lockdown and social distancing norms, people are not venturing out to banks and ATMs as frequently.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/covid-19-brings-about-behavioural-change-in-cash-usage-say-experts/articleshow/82679557.cms>

#### **Covid resurgence to cause short-term disruption in credit offtake: HDFC Securities**

The second wave of pandemic is expected to cause short-term disruption in credit offtake, said HDFC Securities in a report. "We expect recovery in credit growth over the medium term for our coverage universe," the report said. However, it pointed out that industrial credit growth remained muted although registering positive YoY growth for the first time since September. "The large industrial credit, which constitutes 82 per cent of industrial credit, continued to de-grow at (-) 0.8 per cent YoY as the Capex cycle still remains elusive."

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/markets/stocks/news/covid-resurgence-to-cause-short-term-disruption-in-credit-offtake-hdfc-securities/articleshow/82655423.cms>

## Industry

### Hotel industry says it lost Rs 1.3 trillion revenue in FY21, seeks help

The Indian hotel industry has taken a hit of over Rs 1.30 lakh crore in revenue for the fiscal year 2020-21 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) said on Sunday. The apex industry body said it has submitted representation to the Prime Minister and a few other union ministers urging immediate support from the government to save the hospitality sector from imminent collapse and has requested for several fiscal measures for this.

"The Indian hotel industry's total revenue in FY2019-20 stood at Rs 1.82 lakh crore. As per our estimates, in FY2020-21, approximately 75 per cent of the industry's revenues got wiped off. That is more than Rs 1.30 lakh crore revenue hit," the FHRAI said in a statement.

<https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/fhrai-says-indian-hotel-industry-revenue-hit-in-fy-21-1-1.html>

### Covid 2.0 crisis: Majority MSMEs don't expect improvement in business activities in 6 months: Survey

Amid business uncertainty due to the second wave of the pandemic, the majority of Covid-hit MSMEs don't expect any improvement in their business activities over the next six months. According to a survey by credit rating agency Care Ratings, involving 305 respondents including small and medium enterprises between April 27 and May 11 to gauge the impact of ongoing lockdowns on economic prospects, 54 per cent expected the business conditions to worsen over the next six months. 34 per cent respondents expected no change in the business conditions while only 12 per cent anticipated an improvement in business activities.

Recovery of MSMEs in multiple sectors including retail, aviation, hospitality, and others, which were among the worst hit due to Covid last year, was nearing the pre-pandemic levels before the second wave struck around post-February, and cases swiftly started to climb up.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/sme/covid-2-0-crisis-majority-msmes-dont-expect-improvement-in-business-activities-in-next-6-months-survey/2252900/>

### Sales of AC, other cooling products again hit by pandemic in peak season; cos now pin hopes on extended summer

For the second consecutive year, sales of air conditioners (ACs) and refrigerators have been hit during the peak season of April and May due to the localised lockdowns and restrictions on account of surging Covid cases in the country. The pandemic situation has forced companies to recalibrate their target and go for pre-Covid (2019) sales number without being too aspirational. Leading players in the segment including Voltas, Daikin, Blue Star, Panasonic and Haier reported almost 75 per cent dip in April sales this year when compared with the same month of 2019 performance. Moreover, May 2021 has been a complete washout so far for them.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/sales-of-ac-other-cooling-products-again-hit-by-pandemic-in-peak-season-cos-now-pin-hopes-on-extended-summer/2252805/>

### FMCG firms, retailers rejig stock keeping in tune with market shift due to Covid-19

The second wave of the pandemic has thrown up supply chain challenges for FMCG companies and retailers, compelling them to rejig sales strategies by prioritising certain products and stock-keeping unit (SKUs). There are also challenges of limited working hours of stores due to curbs in many States, while consumers are increasingly turning to small-format neighbourhood stores and e-commerce channels.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/fmcg-firms-retailers-rejig-stock-keeping-in-tune-with-market-shift-due-to-covid-19/article34573184.ece>

## Agriculture

### Sesame seed, pulses at stake as Cyclone Tauktae heads for Gujarat coast

As Gujarat braces itself for the impact of Tauktae, farmers in the State are staring at severe damage to harvested and ready-to-harvest summer crops owing to a severe cyclonic storm - currently centered about 700 kilometers south-southeast of Veraval (Gujarat).

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/sesame-seed-pulses-at-stake-as-cyclone-tauktae-heads-for-gujarat-coast/article34570505.ece>

## Infrastructure

### Truck rentals on key trunk routes down by further 5-7% in past fortnight

Reflecting a slowdown in overall economic activity, truck rentals on key trunk routes have fallen further by 5-7 per cent in the past 15 days on the back of a sharp decline in the factory output and pandemic-led lockdowns and curfews in various states, according to the freight rate data released by Indian Foundation of Transport Research and Training (IFTRT) on Sunday. The New Delhi-based think-tank warns of a long road to recovery for the road transport sector as Covid-19 makes a deeper inroad into the hinterlands.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/truck-rentals-on-key-trunk-routes-down-by-further-5-7-in-past-fortnight-121051600615\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/truck-rentals-on-key-trunk-routes-down-by-further-5-7-in-past-fortnight-121051600615_1.html)

### Truckers demand relief measures as losses mount to Rs 42,000 cr due to lockdowns

With around 65 per cent of the total truck fleet in the country out of the road owing to lockdown and lockdown-like conditions in most of the states, the truck industry losses have mounted to around Rs 42,000 crore from the start of the fiscal till mid of this month, All India Motor Transport Congress (AIMTC) has said. The transport sector, which is the lifeline of the nation and essential services provider to the people of the country, bears the first impact of the lockdowns and the curfews, it said. The industry has sought relief from the government by way of EMI moratorium, soft loans provision without collateral, tax waiver, extension of validity of insurance, among others, AIMTC Core Committee chairman Bal Malkit Singh said.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/truckers-demand-relief-measures-as-losses-mount-to-rs-42000-cr-due-to-lockdowns/2252938/>

### Indian railways commissions Wi-Fi facility at 6,000th station

With the commissioning of Wi-Fi at Hazaribagh Town railway station falling under Hazaribagh district of Jharkhand in Dhanbad Division of East Central Railway on Saturday, the Indian Railways commissioned Wi-Fi at 6,000 railway stations, it informed on Sunday. In an official statement released today, the Indian Railways said that it is continuing to extend the Wi-Fi facility at far-flung stations to connect the passengers and the general public with digital systems. The first railway station with which the Indian Railways started its journey of providing Wi-Fi facility was that in Mumbai in January 2016, it said, adding that a railway station in Midnapore of West Bengal was the 5000th station and yesterday it reached the 6,000 mark with the Hazaribagh Town railway station.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/transportation/railways/indian-railways-commissions-wi-fi-facility-at-6000th-station/articleshow/82678612.cms>

## Telecom

### Airtel announces benefits for low-income customers amid Covid crisis

Bharti Airtel on Sunday announced special benefits for low-income customers on its network to help them stay connected during the ongoing pandemic. As a one-time gesture, Airtel will give the Rs 49 pack free of cost to over 5.5 crore low-income customers. The pack offers a talktime of Rs 38 and 100 MB data with a validity of 28 days. "Through this gesture Airtel will empower over 55 million customers, mostly in rural areas, to stay connected and have access to critical information when needed," said a company statement. At this time, customers have an increased requirement of staying connected. Keeping this in mind, Airtel prepaid customers buying the Rs 79 recharge coupon will now get double the benefit, it said. These benefits will be available to Airtel customers in the coming week.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/airtel-announces-benefits-for-low-income-customers-amid-covid-crisis-121051600370\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/airtel-announces-benefits-for-low-income-customers-amid-covid-crisis-121051600370_1.html)

## Energy

### India's Oil demand shrinks further as coronavirus crisis persists

India's oil demand worsened in the first half of May as large parts of the nation remained under local lockdowns to battle the world's worst outbreak of Covid-19. Sales of road transport fuels during May 1-15 dropped by a fifth from the previous month and about 28 per cent from the same period in 2019, according to people familiar with preliminary data from the country's three biggest retailers. Average daily sales of gasoline -- used in cars and motorcycles -- fell to about 53,300 tons, the lowest in a year. Sale of diesel -- the country's most-used fuel and a proxy for economic health -- dropped to a seven-month low of 147,300 tons a day during May 1-15. The plunge in consumption at the world's third-biggest crude consumer will weigh on sentiment on oil prices and damp expectations for a strong global demand rebound in the summer. The International Energy Agency has lowered its 2021 global oil demand forecast from the impact of the raging virus outbreak in India, while OPEC and its allies are already taking a cautious view.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/india-s-oil-demand-shrinks-further-as-the-coronavirus-crisis-persists-121051600558\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/india-s-oil-demand-shrinks-further-as-the-coronavirus-crisis-persists-121051600558_1.html)

## States

### Haryana extends lockdown till May 24 to curb the spread of Covid-19

In order to contain the COVID cases upsurge, the Haryana Government on Sunday announced extension of the COVID-induced lockdown for another week. The lockdown will be in effect till May 24 with strict measures, informed the state home minister on Sunday. "Mahamari Alert/Surkshit Haryana extended from May 17 to May 24. Stringent measures will be taken to implement the alert," tweeted Haryana Home Minister Anil Vij. A week-long complete lockdown was already imposed in Haryana till May 17 with effect from May 10. This had been in continuation of the first lockdown imposed on May 3 for a week. Haryana reported 9,676 fresh COVID cases and 144 deaths on Saturday, according to the state health department. The new cases pushed the infection count to 6,85,312. The active number of COVID cases in the state stands at 95,946. With the new fatalities, the COVID death toll in the state has mounted to 6,546.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/haryana-extends-lockdown-till-may-24-to-curb-the-spread-of-covid-19-121051600519\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/haryana-extends-lockdown-till-may-24-to-curb-the-spread-of-covid-19-121051600519_1.html)

### 'Alarming': Centre directs states to prevent dumping of corpses in Ganga

The union government directed states to prevent dumping of dead bodies in Ganga and focus on their safe disposal and providing support for ensuring dignified cremation. It said dumping of dead bodies or partially burnt corpses in the river Ganga and its tributaries is most undesirable and alarming. The Centre's order comes amid reports of hundreds of suspected coronavirus-linked dead bodies found floating in river Ganga in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. "Stopping of dumping of dead bodies as well as their safe disposal and protection of water quality has to be attended to on war footing," Ministry of Jal Shakti said in an official statement. The government said along with action to stop dumping of dead bodies in river, states were also directed that burying of dead bodies in sand must also be prevented.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/alarming-centre-directs-states-to-prevent-dumping-of-corpses-in-ganga-121051600588\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/alarming-centre-directs-states-to-prevent-dumping-of-corpses-in-ganga-121051600588_1.html)

## Healthcare

### States to receive nearly 51 lakh COVID-19 vaccine doses in next three days: Centre

More than 1.84 crore COVID-19 vaccine doses are still available with states and UTs, while nearly 51 lakh doses are in the pipeline and will be received by them within the next three days, the Union Health Ministry said on Sunday. The Centre has so far provided more than 20 crore vaccine doses (20,28,09,250) to states and UTs free of cost, it said. Of this, the total consumption, calculated based on average up to May 14, including wastages, is 18,43,67,772 doses, according to data available at 7 pm on Saturday.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/healthcare/biotech/healthcare/states-to-receive-nearly-51-lakh-covid-19-vaccine-doses-in-next-three-days-centre/articleshow/82678467.cms>

### **CoWin registration for 18-44: Ratio of vaccine availability to people is 1:230, says Sharma**

The Covid-19 registration challenges faced by those in the 18-44 age group on the CoWin platform are mainly due to vaccine availability issues rather than glitches in the platform, RS Sharma, Chief Executive Officer of National Health Authority and in-charge of CoWin platform, has said.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/policy/cowin-registration-for-18-44-ratio-of-vaccine-availability-to-people-is-1230-says-sharma/article34574057.ece>

### **Covaxin effective against India, UK coronavirus strains: Bharat Biotech**

Bharat Biotech on Sunday said its COVID-19 vaccine 'Covaxin' has been found to be effective against coronavirus strains found in India and the UK. Citing a study published in peer-reviewed medical journal Clinical Infectious Diseases, the Hyderabad-based vaccine major noted that vaccination with Covaxin produced neutralising titres against all key emerging variants tested, including B.1.617 and B.1.1.7, first identified in India and the UK, respectively. The study was conducted in collaboration with the National Institute of Virology and Indian Council of Medical Research, it added.

"Covaxin gets international recognition yet again, by scientific research data published demonstrating protection against the new variants. Yet another feather in its cap," Bharat Biotech co-founder and Joint Managing Director Suchitra Ella said in a tweet. She also tagged PMO India, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Health Minister Harsh Vardhan, among others, in the tweet.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/covaxin-effective-against-india-uk-coronavirus-strains-bharat-biotech-121051600456\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/covaxin-effective-against-india-uk-coronavirus-strains-bharat-biotech-121051600456_1.html)

### **Sputnik V: Second consignment of vaccines arrives in Hyderabad**

The second consignment of Russian Covid19 vaccine, Sputnik V, has arrived in Hyderabad from Russia on Sunday.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/sputnik-v-second-consignment-of-vaccines-arrives-in-hyderabad/article34570491.ece>

### **Tamil Nadu allows Chinese Covid vaccine makers to bid unlike Mumbai**

Tamil Nadu government's global tender for 3.5 crore doses of Covid-19 vaccine does not restrict Chinese vaccine makers from bidding, said an official. "We are allowing every product (vaccine) as long as it is approved by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and licensed by the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI)," a senior official told IANS. According to the official, about six vaccines have been approved by WHO and three by DCGI.

On the other hand, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation in its one crore vaccine dose tender has disqualified companies located in countries sharing borders with India from participating in the bid, thus disqualifying Chinese vaccine manufacturers.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/tamil-nadu-allows-chinese-covid-vaccine-makers-to-bid-unlike-mumbai-121051600314\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/tamil-nadu-allows-chinese-covid-vaccine-makers-to-bid-unlike-mumbai-121051600314_1.html)

### **Substantial increase made in production and allocation of Remdesivir: Gowda**

To ensure adequate availability of anti-viral drug remdesivir, used in the treatment of COVID-19, in the country, substantial increase has been made in its overall production and allocation, Union Chemicals and Fertilisers Minister Sadananda Gowda said on Sunday. "Considering the requirement of Remdesivir in various states & UT's and to ensure its adequate availability substantial increase has been made in overall production and allocation," Gowda said in a post on micro-blogging site Twitter. A total of 76 lakh remdesivir vials have been allocated to the states and union territories from April 21 to May 23, 2021, he added.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/substantial-increase-made-in-production-and-allocation-of-remdesivir-gowda/articleshow/82679370.cms>

### **Oil, steel industry setting up more than 10,000 oxygenated beds to fight second Covid wave**

From augmenting the oxygen production and supply to establishing Covid care facilities across the country, the oil and steel industry has been helping out in the war against Covid. As per a report by these two ministries, they together account for producing and supplying around 6,650 MT of medical oxygen out of the daily allocation of

10,000 MT in India. In addition, the 13 oil PSUs are establishing more than 100 oxygen generation plants at different hospitals across the country.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/indl-goods/svs/steel/oil-steel-industry-setting-up-more-than-10000-oxygenated-beds-to-fight-second-covid-wave/articleshow/82683945.cms>

## External

### Section 301 hearing: Indian industry fights tariffs proposed by US as retaliation against digital tax

Strong arguments have poured in from the Indian industry — including basmati trade, gems and jewellery, steel and seafood — against the proposed tariff action by the US as retaliation against digital services tax imposed by India on non-resident e-commerce operators. A public hearing is being held by the US Trade Representative's office on the suggested action.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/policy/section-301-hearing-indian-industry-fights-tariffs-proposed-by-us-as-retaliation-against-digital-tax/article34573474.ece>

### Govt opens up pulses imports

In a move aimed at keeping prices under a check, the Government on Saturday amended the pulses import policy by moving tur, urad and moong from 'restricted' to 'free' category.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/govt-opens-up-pulses-imports/article34567458.ece>

### Indians pay over 60 per cent in taxes on palm oil

Indian consumers are paying ₹60 in taxes and levies for buying palm oil worth ₹100 with Indonesia, from where India imports much of its palm oil, increasing its export tax further in May.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/indians-pay-over-60-per-cent-in-taxes-on-palm-oil/article34572275.ece>



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