



June 10, 2021 – Thursday

Key Developments

RBI money printing must be last option, can consider Covid bonds: Subbarao

The central bank can directly print money and finance the government, but it should avoid doing so unless there is absolutely no alternative, former RBI governor D Subbarao on Wednesday said while pointing out that India is 'nowhere' near such a scenario. In an interview with PTI, Subbarao suggested that to deal with the second wave of COVID-19 induced slowdown in the economy, the government can consider Covid bonds as an option to raise borrowing, not in addition to budgeted borrowing, but as a part of that.

"It (RBI) can (print money) but, it should avoid doing so unless there is absolutely no alternative. For sure, there are times when monetisation despite its costs - becomes inevitable such as when the government cannot finance its deficit at reasonable rates." "We are nowhere near such a scenario," he said. India's economy contracted by less-than-expected 7.3 per cent in the fiscal ended March 2021. For 2021-22, the deficit has been put at 6.8 per cent of the GDP, which will be further lowered to 4.5 per cent by 2025-26.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/money-printing-should-be-last-option-can-consider-covid-bonds-subbarao-121060900956_1.html

Covaxin phase 3 full trial data will be made public in July: Bharat Biotech

Hyderabad-based vaccine manufacturer Bharat Biotech, which is carrying out its phase 3 trial will publish the data in July following that the company will be applying for the full licensure of COVAXIN.

"It is critical to understand, and further emphasise the Phase-3 data will first be submitted to Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), followed by peer-reviewed journals, with a timeline of 3 months for publication, and as communicated earlier COVAXIN® phase 3 results full trial data will be made public during July. Once data from the final analysis of phase III studies are available, Bharat Biotech will apply for full licensure for COVAXIN®," Bharat Biotech informed ANI on Wednesday. Regarding the efficacy of the vaccine, Bharat Biotech said that, "Vaccine efficacy refers to the ability of a vaccine to bring about the intended beneficial effects on vaccinated individuals in a defined population under ideal conditions of use. When it comes to efficacy and safety, the efficacy data of Covaxin have been reported at overall efficacy is 78 per cent and efficacy against hospitalizations is 100 per cent."

https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/covaxin-phase-3-full-trial-data-will-be-made-public-in-july-bharat-biotech-121060901052_1.html

Mission mode vaccinations and frontloading fiscal measures key to India's recovery: Finance Ministry

Mission mode vaccination and frontloading of fiscal measures planned in the budget hold the key to India's invigorating investment cycle, a finance ministry report said Wednesday, warning that the second wave of pandemic has posed a downside risk to recovery. It said accelerated vaccination was imperative to avoid or lower the ferocity of subsequent waves and economic activity is inextricably linked to the path of pandemic.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/mission-mode-vaccinations-and-frontloading-fiscal-measures-key-to-indias-recovery-finance-ministry/articleshow/83371891.cms>

Economy

Centre releases revenue deficit grant of Rs 9,871 crore to 17 states

The Finance Ministry has released the third monthly instalment of Post Devolution Revenue Deficit (PDRD) Grant of Rs 9,871 crore for the year 2021-22 to 17 states. With the release of the instalment, a total amount of Rs 29,613 crore has been released in the first three months of the current financial year as Post Devolution Revenue Deficit Grant to the states. The Centre provides the Post Devolution Revenue Deficit Grant to the States under Article 275 of the Constitution. The grants are released as per the recommendations of the Finance Commission in monthly installments to meet the gap in Revenue Accounts of the States post devolution. The 15th Finance Commission has recommended Post Devolution Release Deficit grants to 17 States.

The States recommended for Post Devolution Revenue Deficit Grant are: Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttarakhand and West Bengal.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/centre-releases-revenue-deficit-grant-of-rs-9-871-crore-to-17-states-121050601177_1.html

May retail inflation likely rebounded to 5.3% on higher food prices: Poll

India's retail inflation likely rose last month after a three-month low in April, lifted by higher food and energy prices, but stayed within the Reserve Bank of India's target range for the sixth consecutive month, a Reuters poll found. "In April, the retail prices of petroleum products were kept unchanged because of multiple state elections being held then, despite rising crude prices," said Kunal Kundu, India economist at Societe Generale. "But immediately thereafter, the retail prices were increased about seven times in May itself, which led to substantial shooting up of this inflation component." The June 4-9 poll of 40 economists showed consumer price inflation rose to 5.30% in May from a year ago, after dipping to a three-month low of 4.29% in April. If realised, inflation will have held within the RBI's 2%-6% comfort range for the sixth month in a row. While there were fewer supply chain disruptions during the recent pandemic lockdowns compared with last year, a general rise in inflation globally has elevated domestic price pressures.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/may-retail-inflation-likely-rebounded-to-5-3-on-higher-food-prices-poll-121060900799_1.html

India loses 5-7% of GDP due to corrosion: International Zinc Association

India loses around 5-7 per cent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) every year due to corrosion, International Zinc Association (IZA) said on Wednesday. The association also stressed upon the need for immediate and appropriate measures by authorities to control further damage. Speaking during a webinar on emerging, sustainable construction technologies like Continuous Galvanized Rebar (CGR), IZA Director (India) Rahul Sharma said, "India loses as much as 5-7 per cent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) every year on the account of corrosion. These are staggering figures that require immediate and appropriate measures by authorities to control further damage."

Continuous Galvanized Rebars are value-added rebars for higher life and low maintenance of infrastructure to provide significant cost savings compared to other corrosion resistant rebar systems.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/india-loses-5-7-of-gdp-due-to-corrosion-international-zinc-association-121060900742_1.html

Vaccine taxation likely to be non-issue with Centre's new policy

New vaccination policy is expected to put an end to differences in GST Council over taxing jobs. The Council is set to meet and discuss tax on individual Covid relief materials soon.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/national/vaccine-taxation-likely-to-be-non-issue-with-centres-new-policy/article34767529.ece?homepage=true>

15 days special casual leave for govt employees whose parents or dependents test Covid positive: Centre

All central government employees will be able to get 15 days of special casual leave (SCL) in case their parents or any dependent family members test COVID-19 positive, according to an order issued by the personnel ministry. "In case of active hospitalisation of any of the family members/parents even after 15 days of the expiry of SCL, the government servants may be granted leave of any kind due and admissible beyond 15 days of SCL till their discharge from hospital," it said. The ministry has come out with the detailed order on treatment, regularisation of

hospitalization or quarantine period during COVID-19 pandemic after it received several queries related to it and keeping in view the "hardships faced by the government servants".

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/15-days-special-casual-leave-for-govt-employees-whose-parents-or-dependents-test-covid-positive-centre/articleshow/83369822.cms>

Banking and Finance

Second wave: Too early to take call on asset quality dip, says SBI chief

State Bank of India has said the new financial year (FY22) has begun with an unexpected second wave of Covid-19 infections, accompanied by low aggregate demand and impairment of household income. Although the containment strategy this time included avoiding complete lockdown and managing the situation through micro-containment zones, the impact on the economy will nevertheless be felt. "It is too early to take a call of a possible deterioration of asset quality in banks due to the second wave," said Dinesh Khara, its chairman in a communication to shareholders. The annual general Meeting of shareholders is slated on June 25, 2021. However, with rollout of pre-package insolvency for resolution, resumption of courts and formation of National Asset Reconstruction Company, efforts will be in full force to keep the momentum in stressed asset recovered in FY22, he added.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/finance/second-wave-too-early-to-take-call-on-asset-quality-dip-says-sbi-chief-121060900803_1.html

India offers huge potential for digital challenger banks, says report

India offers a huge potential for Digital Challenger Banks (DCBs) but currency depreciation and local regulations are concerns for foreign investors, according to a report. Leading consultancy BCG said in the report on Wednesday that the revenue opportunity in India, which has a population of 130 crore people, was pegged at being up to ten times higher than that of rest of South East Asia. "Indian regulators place significant emphasis on financial inclusion and priority sectors, which can limit the potential model and opportunity," the report said, flagging the policies as among the "strategic hurdles" faced by foreign entities. However, the report said that not all licenses carry the constraint and operating as a Non-Bank Finance Company (NBFC) gives one a significant flexibility.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/finance/india-offers-huge-potential-for-digital-challenger-banks-says-report-121060900885_1.html

Covid resets corporate credit scene as cautious companies rush to repay loans

Amid deep uncertainties triggered by Covid's second wave, there has been a noticeable reset in priorities for many Indian companies, a report by SBI showed. A significant number of major corporate borrowers are seeking to deal with this uncertainty by cutting down on loans in order to reduce their debts, the research found. This cautious, conservative approach driven by the current instability is also reflected in the changed nature of companies' books. There has been a sizeable increase — around 35% — in cash holding/bank balance of the top 1,000 Indian companies as of March 2021 compared to the same period a year ago.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/banking/finance/covid-changes-corporate-credit-scene-as-cautious-companies-rush-to-repay-loans/articleshow/83362194.cms>

Health insurers may not go in for premium hike

A hike in health insurance premium may not be on the cards, at least for now, with the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) not in favour of such a move at present.

"With claims and losses mounting, some insurers were looking at the possibility of revising premium on health insurance this year. However, the IRDAI is not keen on a rate hike in the middle of a pandemic," said the CEO of an insurance company, adding that the focus now is to clear claims.

The IRDAI has been closely monitoring the settlement of health insurance claims in the wake of the pandemic to ensure that it is done speedily by insurers. "As of now, there has not been any increase in premium rates for health insurance this fiscal. A number of insurers had hiked rates last year and some were considering doing so this year," said another industry expert.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/money-and-banking/health-insurers-may-not-go-in-for-premium-hike/article34771978.ece?homepage=true>

At Rs 10,083 cr, equity MFs garner highest inflows in 14 months in May

Equity-oriented schemes saw net inflows for the third consecutive month in May amid a sharp up move in the stock prices. Inflows stood at Rs 10,083 crore in May—highest since March 2020, data released by industry body Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) showed. Market experts said run up in the markets coupled with waning in covid-19 infections has helped keep the mood buoyant. They, however, said the valuations have turned expensive and investors should also focus on asset allocation. “The unfortunate part is inflows always follow near-term returns. Higher the past one-year returns, stronger will be the inflows and this is what is prevalent again,” said Swarup Mohanty, chief executive officer, Mirae Asset Management Company (AMC).

https://www.business-standard.com/article/markets/at-rs-10-083-cr-equity-mfs-garner-highest-inflows-in-14-months-in-may-121060901079_1.html

Global crypto exchanges scout entry into India despite potential ban

Global digital currency exchanges are exploring ways to set up in India, following in the footsteps of market leader Binance, industry sources told Reuters, while the government in New Delhi dithers over introducing a law that could ban cryptocurrencies. Opponents of the potential ban say it would stifle the economic power of a tech-savvy, young nation of 1.35 billion people. There is no official data, but industry analysts reckon there are 15 million crypto investors in India holding over 100 billion rupees (\$1.37 billion). According to four sources, who declined to be identified as they were not authorised to comment on private discussions, U.S.-based Kraken, Hong Kong-based Bitfinex and rival KuCoin are actively scouting the market, which analysts say would only get bigger if it was given a free rein.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/markets/leading-crypto-exchanges-scout-entry-into-india-despite-potential-ban-121060900205_1.html

Consumer tech, IT/ITES and healthcare to see continued interest from PE funds: Bain & Co

India’s IT/ITES, consumer tech and healthcare sectors are expected to continue to be a big draw for private equity investments in 2021, the Bain & Co’s India Private Equity Report 2021 said on Wednesday.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/consumer-tech-itites-and-healthcare-to-see-continued-interest-from-pe-funds-bain-co/article34770743.ece>

Industry

Hospitality MSMEs, others urge govt for interest waiver, moratorium extension, employee salaries, more

Nearly a week after the Reserve Bank of India had announced separate liquidity support of Rs 15,000 crore with tenure up to three years for the contact-intensive sectors such as hospitality and ancillary services till March 31, 2022, the industry has now reached out to the Tourism Minister Prahlad Singh Patel and MSME Minister Nitin Gadkari to recommend “immediate fiscal measures to save it from imminent collapse,” the apex hospitality association Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) said on Wednesday. “Hotels’ recovery would take at least three years after everything gets back to normal and travel is fully allowed. It would be juvenile to think about recovery in the coming few months of unlock to reach the pre-Covid levels. Even if people start eating out and travel, it would not compensate for the 1.5 years of closure. Restaurants will take 1.5 years to recover if there are no restrictions and no social distancing norms. The sector has a large portion of MSMEs,” Gurbaxish Singh Kohli, Vice President, FHRAI told Financial Express Online.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/sme/hospitality-msmes-others-urge-govt-for-interest-waiver-moratorium-extension-employee-salaries-more/2268262/>

India ranks 67th globally in data skills despite math proficiency: Report

Despite high skills proficiency in Machine Learning (ML) and Maths, India trailed in data skills as it ranked 67th overall globally, a report said on Wednesday. Coursera’s latest Global Skills report reveals that, overall, India ranks 67th globally, with 38 per cent proficiency, with mid-rankings in each domain, 55th in business and 66th in both technology and data science. In Asia, India ranks low, placed at 16th, ahead of countries such as the Philippines and Thailand, but below others like Singapore and Japan.

“The pace of skills transformation is slower than the pace of digital transformation in India, as is the case in several countries across the world,” Coursera’s Managing Director, India and APAC, Raghav Gupta, said in a statement.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/india-ranks-67th-globally-in-data-skills-despite-math-proficiency-report-121060901088_1.html

Exports, ethanol boost to increase sugar mill margins up to 100 bps: Report

Profitability of integrated sugar mills is likely to go up by 75-100 basis points (bps) this financial year due to high exports for the second consecutive season and increased supplies of ethanol for blending with petrol, according to a report. High exports for the second sugar season (October -September) in a row, coupled with increased supplies of ethanol for blending with petrol will improve the operating profitability of integrated sugar mills by 75-100 bps to 13-14 per cent this fiscal, according to a Crisil Ratings report. Also, the recent announcement by the government to advance the ethanol-petrol blending target of 20 per cent by two years to 2023, could help sustain this momentum over the medium term, it added. Additionally, sugar closing stocks are expected to decline to their lowest levels in the past four sugar seasons (SS) to 9-9.5 million tonnes in SS 2020-21, resulting in lower working capital borrowings. The improvement in profitability and controlled debt levels will, in turn, bolster the credit profiles of integrated mills this fiscal, the report noted.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/exports-ethanol-boost-to-increase-sugar-mill-margins-up-to-100-bps-report-121060900997_1.html

FSSAI asks states to enforce decision to ban blending of mustard oil with other cooking oil

Food regulator FSSAI has asked states to effectively enforce the decision to ban blending of mustard oil with any other cooking oil from June 8. In its notification dated March 8, the FSSAI had prohibited the blending of mustard oil for production of Multi-Sourced Edible Vegetable Oils (MSEVOs) with effect from June 8. To ensure that the prohibition is effectively enforced, the food regulator has issued an order on June 8 asking all the Commissioners of Food Safety of States/UTs and Central Licensing Authority to carry out an inspection drive.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/fssai-asks-states-to-enforce-decision-to-ban-blending-of-mustard-oil-with-other-cooking-oil/articleshow/83373116.cms>

Gold traders seek clarity on 20, 23, 24-carat inventory as hallmarking deadline nears

With the date of compulsory hallmarking drawing near, the gold trader has sought a clarification from the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) on the fate of the inventory of 20-carat, 23-carat and 24-carat purity lying with jewellers. With the date of compulsory hallmarking drawing near, the gold trader has sought a clarification from the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) on the fate of the inventory of 20-carat, 23-carat and 24-carat purity lying with jewellers.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/cons-products/fashion/-/cosmetics/-/jewellery/gold-traders-seek-clarity-on-20-23-carat-hallmarking-from-bureau-of-indian-standards/articleshow/83372937.cms>

Tractor volumes decline in May as rural sales take a hit

Domestic tractor volumes saw a decline both year-on-year and month-on-month during May as the second wave of Covid-19 and the resultant localised lockdowns in rural areas affected sales.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/tractor-volumes-decline-in-may-as-rural-sales-take-a-hit/article34772120.ece?homepage=true>

Maharashtra govt move making vehicle registration faceless to make vehicle-buying process seamless: FADA

Automobile dealers' body FADA on Wednesday said the Maharashtra government's decision to make vehicle registration faceless and paperless will make the vehicle-buying process seamless besides promoting ease of doing business. FADA Maharashtra was persistently engaged in a dialogue with the state transport department for the implementation of the new rules which were notified by the Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways on Tuesday, it said in a statement. The notification enables online submission of documents for registration of vehicles. Besides, no physical verification will be required for the first registration of new fully-built motorcycles and cars. It allows all document to be e-signed by the dealers using digital signature as well as auto generation of vehicle ordinary numbers at the dealerships itself, the Federation of Automobile Dealers Association (FADA) said in a statement.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/auto/auto-news/maha-govt-move-making-vehicle-registration-faceless-to-make-vehicle-buying-process-seamless-fada/articleshow/83370272.cms>

Travel, hospitality tech firms join hands to launch industry association

To empower the voice of smaller operators in the travel and hospitality tech ecosystem and enable their recovery from Covid-19, Airbnb, EaseMyTrip, OYO and Yatra have come together to start an industry association called Confederation of Hospitality, Technology and Tourism Industry (CHATT).

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/travel-hospitality-tech-firms-join-hands-to-launch-industry-association/article34769000.ece>

Agriculture

Union Cabinet approves increase in MSP for kharif crops for 2021-22

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Wednesday has approved the increase in the Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) for all mandated kharif crops for marketing season 2021-22. The MSP of paddy (common) has been increased by Rs 72 per quintal, from Rs 1,868 per quintal in 2020-21 to Rs 1,940 per quintal in 2021-22. Highest absolute increase in MSP over the previous year has been recommended for sesamum (Rs 452 per quintal) followed by tur and urad (Rs 300 per quintal each), said Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar at a press briefing in New Delhi. The increase comes during ongoing farmers' protest against three contentious farm laws passed last year. "In case of groundnut and nigerseed, there has been an increase of Rs 275 per quintal and Rs 235 per quintal respectively in comparison to last year. The differential remuneration is aimed at encouraging crop diversification," said CCEA in a statement.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/cabinet-approves-increase-in-msp-for-summer-sown-crops-121060900745_1.html

Govt buys record 418.47 lakh tn wheat at MSP for Rs 82,648 cr this year

The Centre on Wednesday said it has procured a record 418.47 lakh tonnes of wheat so far in the current marketing year that started in April, costing exchequer Rs 82,648 crore. The record procurement of wheat has been achieved amid farmers' protests at Delhi borders since late November 2020. Farmer unions are demanding a repeal of three new farm laws and a legal guarantee of the Minimum Support Price (MSP). The Rabi marketing season (RMS) 2021-22 runs from April to March but the bulk of the procurement gets completed by June. "Procurement of Wheat in ongoing RMS 2021-22 is continuing smoothly in the procuring states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir at MSP, as was done in previous seasons," an official statement said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/govt-buys-record-418-47-lakh-tn-wheat-at-msp-for-rs-82648-cr-this-year/articleshow/83371966.cms>

Cotton industry is trying to poach farmers to increase acreage as farmers may opt for edible oils due to record prices

A rally in both cooking oil prices, including soybeans and cotton, to a 11-year high has worried cotton traders that acreage for cotton could fall as farmers choose the smaller crop cycles of oilseeds and pulses. However, production cost of soyabean is less as farmers use their own seeds. Besides, pesticide and labour costs are also lesser in soyabean as compared to cotton.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/cotton-industry-is-trying-to-poach-farmers-to-increase-acreage-as-farmers-may-opt-for-edible-oils-due-to-record-prices/articleshow/83361682.cms>

Project Bandhan to protect cotton growers from pink bollworm launched in Vidarbha

The South Asia Biotechnology Centre (SABC), in collaboration with Agrovision Foundation, Nagpur, has launched an innovative and multi-stakeholder 'Project Bandhan' to protect cotton growers from the devastating pink bollworm.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/project-bandhan-to-protect-cotton-growers-from-pink-bollworm-launched-in-vidarbha/article34772206.ece>

Cabinet approves sops to Ramagundam urea plant

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs on Wednesday decided to provide benefits accruing from the New Investment Policy-2012 to Ramagundam Fertilisers and Chemicals Limited (RFCL) in Telangana, even though the project was commissioned only in 2021, an official statement said.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/cabinet-approves-sops-to-ramagundam-urea-plant/article34770596.ece>

Infrastructure

Govt approves construction of 361,000 houses under PMAY-U scheme

Under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Urban (PMAY-U), the government has approved 708 proposals for the construction of 3.61 lakh houses. The decision was taken at the 54th meeting of the Central Sanctioning and Monitoring Committee (CSMC) under PMAY-U held in the national capital on Tuesday. According to the press statement by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, the meeting was attended by 13 states/UTs. These houses are proposed to be constructed across "Beneficiary Led Construction and Affordable Housing in Partnership verticals". In addition, 'PMAY- U Awards 2021 - 100 Days Challenge' was also launched by Durga Shanker Mishra, Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA).

"The awards are given to recognize and celebrate the outstanding contribution and performances by states, Union Territories (UTs), urban local bodies (ULBs) and beneficiaries for successful implementation of the mission and create a healthy competition," said the release.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/govt-approves-construction-of-361-000-houses-under-pmay-u-scheme-121060900604_1.html

APAO seeks government support for airport sector

The Association of private airport operators (APAO) has requested the government to help the airport sector, as the second wave of COVID infections has brought down passenger traffic to 25% and further ruined chances of any rebound in revenues. "As the cash flow situation is precarious, airports have been requesting the government amidst an extremely challenging environment to provide some relief measures to the airport operators which will directly alleviate the financial burden for airports. Relief measures are required not only to ensure sustaining operations at airports but also needed to save jobs and allow economic recovery of the airport sector," APAO said in a statement today.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/transportation/airlines/-aviation/apao-seeks-government-support-for-airport-sector/articleshow/83371231.cms>

Railways to get 5 MHz spectrum in 4G band

The government has approved expenditure of almost ₹25,000 crore that will be spent over next five years in upgrading 34000 km track – about ₹12,000 crore in signalling systems, and ₹12,000 crore in putting in place the 4G spectrum infrastructure.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/logistics/railways-to-get-5-mhz-spectrum-in-4g-band/article34769622.ece?homepage=true>

PPP gross contract model to drive transport undertakings' shift to electric buses: Ind-Ra

State transport undertakings are likely to take to a public private partnership gross contract model for running electric buses, according to India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra).

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/logistics/ppp-gross-contract-model-to-drive-transport-undertakings-shift-to-electric-buses-ind-ra/article34770831.ece>

Telecom

Telecom industry bats for linking public procurement norms with PLI schemes

Telecom industry manufacturers and experts have recommended the linkage of India's public procurement norms with the production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme, to provide market access to global companies who make equipment locally. Telecom products are unique and highly customised, making it impossible to manufacture at scale in a single location. Current value addition norms are very high and do not factor in the nascent component

ecosystem," according to a whitepaper published by telecom industry think tank Broadband India Forum (BIF). As per the recommendation the Preference to Make in India (PMI) policy must be linked with PLI to enable exports. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/telecom/telecom-news/telecom-industry-bats-for-linking-public-procurement-norms-with-pli-schemes/articleshow/83372446.cms>

Energy

India's natural gas consumption starts to stage recovery in June

India's natural gas consumption is recovering in June after declining in the previous two months, as states ease restrictions in the wake of a drop in coronavirus infections, officials said on Wednesday. "In the Indian market there was some slowdown, but the situation is not as bad as last year," Manoj Jain, chairman of GAIL (India), the country's biggest gas pipeline operator, said at a news briefing to announce quarterly results. He said gas consumption in April and May fell by about 10% to 15% compared to a 50% reduction last year when there was a nationwide lockdown to stem the spread of the virus. Instead of a national lockdown, the state governments imposed their own restrictions to stem the spread of deadly second wave of COVID-19. The states, however, started this month to ease the curbs after the decline in reported infections.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/india-s-natural-gas-consumption-starts-to-rebound-in-june-121060901134_1.html

States

Creating a '24-hour city', upgrading commercial core in Delhi: Main focus of draft Master Plan

Fostering night-time economy as part of a '24-hour city', revitalising the national capital's commercial core including Connaught Place, and shifting wholesale activities from the walled city, are key focus areas of the draft Master Plan of Delhi 2041. Prepared by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), the draft plan has been put up in public domain on Wednesday inviting suggestions and objections from all stakeholders within 45 days. Given the rising concerns regarding pollution, shift towards cleaner economies such as information technology (IT), IT-enabled services, knowledge-based and hi-tech industries, entrepreneurial activities, realty market, tourism, hospitality, tertiary healthcare and higher education is envisaged, stated the voluminous draft.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/infrastructure/creating-a-24-hour-city-upgrading-commercial-core-in-delhi-main-focus-of-draft-master-plan/articleshow/83371754.cms>

UP prepared for third COVID wave, favours GST cuts to facilitate patients: State FM

Uttar Pradesh is in all preparedness to deal with the third wave of COVID-19 and the state would not resort to hiking taxes for raising resources to fight the pandemic, state Finance Minister Suresh Kumar Khanna said on Wednesday. He said the UP government is in favour of cutting taxes on COVID essentials to facilitate patients but will accept the decision of the GST Council with regard to Goods and Services Tax rates. "The moment experts predicted that a third COVID wave may hit the country, UP government has started making arrangements for 50 isolation and 50 ICU beds, and 10 beds for holding area. We have also done manpower training," Khanna said in online interaction with reporters here.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/up-prepared-for-third-covid-wave-favours-gst-cuts-to-facilitate-patients-state-fm/articleshow/83370053.cms>

Goa govt announces 'Tika Utsav 3.0' to jab people between 18-44

The Goa government on Wednesday announced that it will host "Tika Utsav 3.0", a vaccination festival across the state to inoculate maximum population in the age group of 18 to 44 years against COVID-19. Speaking to reporters after chairing a state Cabinet meeting, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said, "Through Tika Utsav 3.0, we will be able to vaccinate everyone in the 18-44 age category in the state. We have witnessed a good response to the Tika Utsavs that were held in the past." The state government has held two "Tika Utsavs" in the past involving all panchayats and municipal councils. Sawant further said the opposition parties were "unnecessarily" criticising the Tika Utsavs, when they had been garnering good response from the public.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/goa-govt-announces-tika-utsav-3-0-to-jab-people-between-18-44/articleshow/83367216.cms>

Karnataka may go for unlock in 4 to 5 phases: Minister

Karnataka Revenue Minister R Ashoka on Wednesday indicated that the state may go for unlocking in four to five phases after June 14, as the COVID-19 induced lockdown comes to an end. "Keeping the number of deaths and new cases in mind and aimed at bringing down the COVID infections further, lockdown will not be relaxed at one go.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/karnataka-may-go-for-unlock-in-4-to-5-phases-minister/articleshow/83364623.cms>

Healthcare

Refrain from sharing sensitive vaccine related details: Health Ministry to states

Health ministry has written to the states refraining them from sharing data on vaccine stocks and temperature of vaccine storage at public forums. The health ministry said it is a "sensitive information". According to the letter written by Pradeep Haldar, advisor, Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) the data on vaccine stock status and temperature of vaccine storage are owned by ministry and not to be shared on public forums without ministry's consent. "This is very sensitive information and to be used only for program improvement," said the letter written to mission health directors of the states dated June 4.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/healthcare/biotech/healthcare/refrain-from-sharing-sensitive-vaccine-related-details-health-ministry-to-states/articleshow/83368637.cms>

Urgent need for a transparent, predictable regulatory environment: Healthcare industry body

The Healthcare Federation of India (NATHEALTH) on Wednesday urged the government to develop a transparent and predictable regulatory environment, particularly around pricing. It submitted its recommendations to PMO, pharmaceuticals department, Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation, health and family welfare ministry and NITI Aayog. The healthcare industry body sought creation of mechanisms where decisions are not unilateral, linked to quality/standards and arrived at after due deliberations at central and state level with appropriate input from the industry. "An unstable pricing regulatory environment has deep disincentives for investments and access to financing, which are critically needed now.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/healthcare/biotech/healthcare/urgent-need-for-a-transparent-predictable-regulatory-environment-healthcare-industry-body/articleshow/83370724.cms>

External

Exports up 52.39% to \$7.71 bn during June 1-7 on healthy shipments growth

India's exports grew by 52.39 per cent to USD 7.71 billion during the first week of this month on account of healthy growth in shipments in sectors including engineering, gems and jewellery and petroleum products, according to preliminary data of the commerce ministry. Imports too rose by about 83 per cent to USD 9.1 billion during June 1-7. Exports of engineering, gems and jewellery and petroleum products increased by 59.7 per cent to USD 741.18 million, 96.38 per cent to USD 297.82 million and 69.53 per cent to USD 530.62 million respectively, the data showed. However, exports of iron ore, oil seeds and spices recorded negative growth during June 1-7.

Imports of petroleum and crude oil jumped by 135 per cent to USD 1.09 billion. Imports of electronic goods and pearls, precious and semi-precious stones increased by 45.85 per cent to USD 324.77 million and 111 per cent to USD 294 million respectively.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/exports-up-52-39-to-7-71-bn-during-june-1-7-on-healthy-shipments-growth-121060900412_1.html

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