



August 31, 2021 – Tuesday

## Key Developments

### **NITI Aayog suggests tax sops for investment in Infra Investment Trusts**

Niti Aayog has suggested to the government to provide tax incentives for investment in InvITs, and bring them under the IBC to attract retail as well as institutional investors to achieve the goals of the National Monetisation Pipeline scheme. The Aayog in consultation with infra line ministries has prepared and released a report on National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP) this month.

"More tax-efficient and user-friendly mechanisms like allowing tax benefits in Infrastructure Investment Trust (InvITs) as eligible security to invest under Section 54EC of the Income-Tax Act, 1961, are important starting points for initiating retail participation in the instruments," the Aayog has recommended. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on August 23 had announced a Rs 6 lakh crore NMP scheme that will look to unlock value in infrastructure assets across sectors, ranging from power to road and railways. She had also said the asset monetisation does not involve the selling of land and it is about monetising brownfield assets.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/niti-aayog-suggests-tax-incentives-for-investment-in-invits-121083000870\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/niti-aayog-suggests-tax-incentives-for-investment-in-invits-121083000870_1.html)

### **IBBI proposes amendments in liquidation norms to increase transparency**

In a bid to increase transparency in the liquidation process under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), IBBI has proposed amendments to the regulations. In a discussion paper, the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) noted that the regulatory framework of liquidation process has been improvised on several occasions during the last five years to address the difficulties faced by stakeholders, meet the evolving requirements and in aid of achievement of objectives of the Code.

"With the emergence of new issues and the gaining of sufficient experience, a need is felt to further strengthen the regulatory framework of liquidation process in terms of accountability of liquidator towards stakeholders and certain matters related to sale," it said. The Code and IBBI (Liquidation Process) Regulations, 2016, provide that the liquidator shall carry on the business of the corporate debtor for its beneficial liquidation, exercise all powers of its board of directors, key managerial personnel and the partners, complies with applicable laws on behalf of the firm, among others.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/ibbi-proposes-amendments-in-liquidation-norms-to-increase-transparency-121083000506\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/ibbi-proposes-amendments-in-liquidation-norms-to-increase-transparency-121083000506_1.html)

## Economy

### **Super app to trump government websites for vehicle solutions**

The National Informatics Centre (NIC) is developing a 'super' app. This will be a one-stop shop for all government related vehicle solutions. Instead of having to navigate through several government websites users, across states, can avail multiple facilities on this app itself. The features of the app will include tax payment, duplicate RC/ fitness/ permit, transfer of ownership, change of address, hypothecation and issue of NOC. Besides that, other services such as, online payment of challan, learner's license, new driver's license, and other driver related facilities can also be availed.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/super-app-to-trump-government-websites-for-vehicle-solutions/articleshow/85760683.cms>

#### **One District One Product plan: pencils from Pulwama, wine from Nashik**

The Ministry of Commerce has developed a strategy to expand and hone special products that each district produces across the country. The One District One Product plan doesn't do away with traditionally popular products, but in fact manages to include new ones. For example, Darjeeling tea is obviously still on the list, however, a new addition would be pencils from Pulwama, Jammu and Kashmir. However, a few surprises have come up in the list of 106 products like, LED bulbs in Karnataka's Chitradurga, wine from Nashik and capacitors and integrated circuit boards from Mysuru.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/one-district-one-product-plan-pencils-from-pulwama-wine-from-nashik/articleshow/85758826.cms>

#### **Gatishakti to ensure timely implementation of NIP projects; minimal cost overruns: Govt official**

The ambitious Rs 100 lakh crore-Gatishakti programme will provide the framework for timely implementation of the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) initiative with minimal cost overruns, Road Transport Secretary Giridhar Aramane said on Monday. A holistic infrastructure development programme that aims to boost employment opportunities and productivity of industries, Gatishakti was announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his Independence Day speech on August 15. The initiative is set to be launched in September. "Gatishakti provides the implementation framework for NIP. Gatishakti basically ensures that the National Infrastructure Pipeline is implemented in time and as per the original estimated cost, with very little overrun of costs and time," Aramane told PTI in an interview.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/infrastructure/gatishakti-to-ensure-timely-implementation-of-nip-projects-minimal-cost-overruns-govt-official/articleshow/85766181.cms>

#### **MGNREGA work demand up: 77% of budget used up in five months**

Demand for work under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) continues to be robust in the first five months of the current fiscal year (2021-22, or FY22). The numbers are still lower than 2020-21, which was an unusual year for MGNREGA work demand due to the nationwide lockdown and unprecedented migration of workers from cities to villages. But compared to the pre-pandemic 2019-20 (FY20), experts say demand still shows a spike. This, claim activists, is a strong signal. Even though the economic situation might have improved in rural areas, it still hasn't returned to its normal levels. A large number of casual workers are still looking for temporary jobs under schemes like MGNREGA.

Which brings the question of more funding to the fore. Of the budgeted Rs 73,000 crore for the Centre's flagship scheme, around Rs 55,915.31 crore (approximately 77 per cent of the budget) has already been exhausted in the first five months of FY22.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/mgnrega-work-demand-up-77-of-budget-used-up-in-five-months-121083001029\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/mgnrega-work-demand-up-77-of-budget-used-up-in-five-months-121083001029_1.html)

#### **Biz activity continues to rise, now well above pre-pandemic levels: Report**

Business resumption activity continued its northward journey and reached a new high, much above the pre-pandemic levels for the week ended August 29, a Japanese brokerage said on Monday. The Nomura India Business Resumption Index rose to 102.7 for the week ending 29 August from 101.3 in the prior week, as per the brokerage. The index, which compared business activity with the pre-pandemic levels of March 2020, had fallen steeply during the two waves of infections, which were accompanied by lockdowns. Nomura said the index increased by 5.6 percentage points (pp) in August 2021, after 17.1 pp in July and 15 pp in June. For the week ended August 29, Google retail and recreation and Apple driving indices rose by 0.6 pp and 10 pp, respectively, although workplace mobility surprisingly fell by 3.7 pp.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/biz-activity-continues-to-rise-now-well-above-pre-pandemic-levels-report-121083000924\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/biz-activity-continues-to-rise-now-well-above-pre-pandemic-levels-report-121083000924_1.html)

#### **Economists project GDP growth at 14%-23% in Q1FY22**

Economists have pegged economic growth in the range of 14 per cent to 23 per cent for the first quarter of the current financial year. The growth was projected on a low base of 24.4 per cent contraction in the gross domestic product in Q4 of the previous financial year.

This implies that economic growth has to be more than 24.4 per cent in order for the GDP at constant price in Q1 of FY'22 to equal that of FY'20. The projections fall short of that number. The data will be released on Tuesday.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/economists-project-gdp-growth-at-14-23-in-q1fy22-121083000856\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/economists-project-gdp-growth-at-14-23-in-q1fy22-121083000856_1.html)

### **India's economy ready for faster growth, says Ashima Goyal**

Noted economist Ashima Goyal reposed confidence in India's economy and said that the economy is ready for faster recovery from pandemic lows. "Despite the Covid-19 severe shock, India's macroeconomy is more healthy and ready for faster growth than it has been for a long time. That recovery from both the first and second waves was faster than expected points towards inherent strengths of the economy," she said in an interview to PTI. Several agencies have lowered India's projected growth rate in the current fiscal due to the impact of the second coronavirus wave. The Reserve Bank of India estimates peg growth for FY22 at 9.5 per cent. The first quarter GDP data will be released on August 31.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/indias-macroeconomy-more-healthy-ready-for-faster-growth-says-economist-ashima-goyal/articleshow/85734137.cms>

### **Hiring activity in India touches pre-pandemic level, says report**

The overall economic activity has shown signs of improvement, and for the first time in months, hiring activity in India is at a pre-pandemic level, according to a report by jobsite Indeed on Monday. Job postings for IT tech software roles saw a 19 per cent increase between July 2020 and July 2021 as an expected outcome of the pandemic-induced digitization. Job posting for other IT job roles such as project head, engineer, also saw an increase of 8-16 per cent. The easing of lockdown restrictions and the consequent reopening of spaces turned the focus on hygiene and sanitisation, increasing the demand for housekeepers, caretakers, housekeeping managers, custodians, executive housekeepers, and cleaners. These jobs saw 60 per cent growth between July 2020 and July 2021, the report said.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/hiring-activity-in-india-touches-pre-pandemic-level-says-report-121083000546\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/hiring-activity-in-india-touches-pre-pandemic-level-says-report-121083000546_1.html)

## **Banking and Finance**

### **RBI issues direction on compensation of private banks' top officials**

The RBI said on Monday the fair value of the share-linked incentives paid to chief executive officers, whole-time directors and other key functionaries by the private banks should be recognised as an expense during the relevant accounting period. The RBI has also asked all banks, including local area banks, small finance banks and foreign banks to comply with its directions for all share-linked instruments granted after the accounting period ending March 31, 2021.

The central bank had issued guidelines on the compensation of whole-time directors/ chief executive officers/ material risk takers and control function staff in November 2019. Issuing a clarification in this regard, the RBI said, the fair value (of share-linked incentives) ...should be recognised as expense beginning with the accounting period for which approval has been granted".

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/finance/rbi-issues-direction-on-compensation-of-private-banks-top-officials-121083001040\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/finance/rbi-issues-direction-on-compensation-of-private-banks-top-officials-121083001040_1.html)

### **PhonePe gets IRDAI nod to sell life, general insurance**

Digital payments platform PhonePe on Monday said it has received in-principle approval from Irdai to be a broker to sell life and general insurance products. With this, PhonePe said it can now offer insurance advice to its over 30 crore users (300 million). PhonePe has been issued an insurance broking licence from the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI), it said in a release. Last year PhonePe entered the insurtech sector with a limited insurance corporate agent license. It restricted the company to partnering with only three insurance companies per category.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/banking/finance/insure/phonepe-gets-irdai-nod-to-sell-life-general-insurance/articleshow/85770145.cms>

## Industry

### Indian food services market to hit \$13 billion in GMV by 2025

Although massively under-penetrated when compared to the US and China, online penetration of food services market in India is set to grow two times by 2025 with the right tailwinds -- likely to clock a gross merchandise value (GMV) of \$13 billion, a new report showed on Monday. Although the market was hit by the pandemic, it has also accelerated the pace of online adoption.

"Similar to many other markets, this market is also seeing a rising online growth especially post-Covid, and it is gaining prominence in the overall share of the market," according to data provided by market research firm RedSeer. "While foodtech services (like Zomato) are doing IPOs and raising big bucks, the domestic market still lags behind in the food services market when compared to global counterparts, which means there is a lot of scope," the report noted.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/indian-food-services-market-to-hit-13-billion-in-gmv-by-2025-121083000362\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/indian-food-services-market-to-hit-13-billion-in-gmv-by-2025-121083000362_1.html)

### Aluminium industry asks CIL to normalise 'precarious' situation arisen due to coal supply stoppage

The Aluminium Association of India (AAI) on Monday sought intervention of state-owned CIL to normalise the precarious situation arisen due to stoppage of coal supplies and rakes for captive power plants, resulting in situation of crunch of dry-fuel for the aluminium sector. This "ad hoc decision" without any advance notice has brought down the industry to a standstill and the industry has been left out with no time to devise any mitigation plan to continue sustainable operations, the AAI said in a letter to Coal India (CIL) Chairman and Managing Director. "This has reference to the crisis situation developed for the entire aluminium sector due to the recent ad hoc decision for stopping/drastically curtailing the coal supplies and rakes for captive power plants (CPPs) resulting in coal crunch situation for aluminium sector," the letter said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/indl-goods/svs/steel/aluminium-industry-asks-cil-to-normalise-precarious-situation-arisen-due-to-coal-supply-stoppage/articleshow/85768882.cms>

### Festival sales, pent-up demand to push auto dealer volumes up by 10-15% in FY22: Crisil

Festival season sales and pent-up demand along with new launches are expected to push automobile dealers' volumes up by 10-15 per cent in FY22, even as they see a patchy recovery this fiscal, according to a survey by credit ratings agency Crisil.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/festive-sales-pent-up-demand-to-push-auto-dealer-volumes-up-by-10-15-in-fy22-crisil/article36176102.ece>

## Agriculture

### Normal rainfall likely next month, above-normal rains during Sept-November: IMD official

After taking another "break" earlier this month, the south-west monsoon is expected to be normal next month, while the country is forecast to get above-normal rainfall during September-November this year, an India Meteorological Department (IMD) official has said.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/normal-rainfall-likely-next-month-above-normal-rains-during-sept-november-imd-official/article36176729.ece?homepage=true>

### Tomato prices crash to Rs 4/kg amid supply glut in most growing states

Tomato prices in wholesale markets in most producing states have crashed to as low as Rs 4 per kg amid supply glut, government data showed. In fact, the wholesale prices of tomato in 23 growing centres out of 31 monitored by the government were down by 50 per cent from the year-ago period or below three-year seasonal average. Currently, tomato crop of the early kharif (summer) season of the 2021-22 crop year (July-June) is being harvested. According to the data, the wholesale price of tomato in Dewas in Madhya Pradesh -- the country's top tomato growing state - fell to Rs 8 per kg on August 28 of this year from Rs 11 per kg in the year-ago period. Similarly, the wholesale price

of tomato at Jalgoan in Maharashtra -- the country's sixth largest tomato growing state -- fell by 80 per cent to Rs 4 per kg on August 28 from Rs 21 per kg in the year-ago period.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/tomato-prices-crash-to-rs-4/kg-amid-supply-glut-in-most-growing-states/articleshow/85765461.cms>

## Telecom

### COAI sees India lagging in 5G unless airwaves cost less

India risks lagging in the rollout of the super-fast fifth-generation wireless networks unless the government makes airwaves cheaper in an upcoming auction, a local telecom industry body said, citing the financial stress in the sector. "The reserve prices are fixed so high that almost 50-60% of the spectrum may go unsold," S.P. Kochhar, director general of Cellular Operators Association of India, said in an interview Friday. "It is not viable because we are not passing on the extra price to the consumer as we continue to bleed. We have to reduce our cash outflow and one of the major things money goes into is auctions." Proceeds from the 5G airwaves auction, likely early next year, is an important source of revenue for the Indian exchequer especially as the Narendra Modi-led government looks to spur the pandemic-hit economy. Too high a reserve price for spectrum risks putting off wireless operators whose financial health has been battered by a brutal tariff war after the entry of billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd. in 2016. Most operators since have quit, gone bankrupt or merged.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/coai-sees-india-lagging-in-5g-unless-airwaves-cost-less-121083001116\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/coai-sees-india-lagging-in-5g-unless-airwaves-cost-less-121083001116_1.html)

## Energy

### ONGC eyes offshore wind energy projects

India's largest oil and gas producer ONGC is eyeing generating electricity from wind at its vast offshore acreage as it looks to augment its renewable energy portfolio, its chairman Subhash Kumar said. Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) has oil and gas fields both in the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal. That experience of operating in shallow and deep-sea is now being tapped to set up wind turbines to generate electricity that could be wired to land.

"A study for a pilot project in Offshore Wind has already been commissioned for assessing the opportunities in this niche segment," Kumar said in the company's latest annual report. Last year, ONGC signed an MoU with India's largest electricity generator NTPC to explore setting up offshore wind projects along with the 7,600-km coastline. Offshore windmills are almost twice as efficient as onshore wind turbines. But the cost per MW for offshore turbines is higher because of stronger structures and foundations needed in marine environments. The government has set a target of 5 GW of offshore wind installations by 2022 and 30 GW by 2030.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/ongc-eyes-offshore-wind-energy-projects/2320583/>

### NTPC gears up to meet rising power demand; generation up 23 pc

State-run power giant NTPC on Monday said that it has geared up to meet rising power demand and recorded electricity generation growth of 23 per cent over the previous year. The country is witnessing a sharp increase in power demand, and NTPC is making all efforts for meeting demand as per the grid requirement, it said in a statement. NTPC has geared up to meet the increasing demand, and the generation from NTPC group stations have registered a 23 per cent growth compared to the previous year, it stated. Under flexible utilisation of coal policy, NTPC is arranging coal at the stations where the stock position is critical. The company also said that it is continuously coordinating with Coal India and Railways for augmenting coal supply at critical stations and diverting rakes wherever required.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/ntpc-gears-up-to-meet-rising-power-demand-generation-up-23-pc-2/2320539/>

### India's plans to build world's largest solar project stumbles, again

The Centre's showstopper solar power project in Ladakh can't seem to catch a break. The government announced a raise in the capacity of the proposed mega solar power project to 10,000 MW along with a 5,000 MW battery storage and 3,000 MW wind farm, even when the initial plan continues to stumble over land issues. "Every time a parcel is finalised, some new issue is raised," a source aware of the developments told TOI. In the latest instance, presence

of a water body was "discovered" in the parcel of land in the Pang area after it was finalised on the basis of satellite mapping.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/renewables/indias-plans-to-build-worlds-largest-solar-project-stumbles-again/articleshow/85762851.cms>

## States

### Delhi will start implementing action plan to combat climate change by year end

Delhi will start implementing a new 10-year action plan by this year end to combat climate change, according to officials. The Centre had prepared the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) in 2009 and asked the states to prepare their own specific plans. However, Delhi submitted its plan to combat climate change in 2019, becoming the last state to do so. "The plan remained mostly on paper and could not be implemented properly. It expired in 2020. Now, we are due for a new plan," a senior official of the environment department said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/renewables/delhi-will-start-implementing-action-plan-to-combat-climate-change-by-year-end/articleshow/85767693.cms>

### Rs 100-crore tech innovation hub to be set up at IIT-Delhi

The Department of Science and Technology (DST) is to help set up a cognitive computing and social sensing hub called iHUB Anubhuti at the Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology (IIIT-Delhi) in New Delhi at a cost of Rs 100 crore over the next five years, a statement said on Monday.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/education/rs-100-crore-tech-innovation-hub-to-be-set-up-at-iit-delhi/article36180122.ece>

### Construction of UP's first film city near Noida likely to start in Jan 2022

The construction of Noida Film City, a pet project of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, is likely to start in January 2022, state government officials said Monday. The film city, to be developed on a public-private partnership model at an estimated cost of Rs 6,000 crore, is proposed to come up in Sector 21 of the Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA) in Gautam Buddha Nagar district, the officials said. "The preparations for the construction of the film city at YEIDA city are in full swing with the approval of the detailed project report (DPR) that was submitted to the state government recently by consultant company CBRE South Asia Private Limited," YEIDA CEO Arun Vir Singh said. "The CBRE now has to get the bid document ready within three weeks, after which a global tender will be floated in which both domestic and foreign companies will be able to participate," Singh said in a statement.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/construction-of-ups-first-film-city-near-noida-likely-to-start-in-jan-2022/articleshow/85769415.cms>

### Karnataka targets to complete NEP implementation in 10 years

The Karnataka government is planning to complete the implementation of NEP (National Education Policy) 2020 in 10 years, according to CN Ashwathnarayan, Karnataka Minister for Higher Education, IT and BT, and Science and Technology.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/national/karnataka-targets-to-complete-nep-implementation-in-10-years/article36180624.ece>

### COVID-19 restrictions at border with Kerala to continue, says Karnataka official

Restrictions on the movement of people enforced at the border with Kerala will continue as there has been no change in the Covid-19 situation in Kerala, Dakshina Kannada district Deputy Commissioner K V Rajendra said. Giving a clarification on reports claiming that the Centre has lifted the requirement of RT-PCR certificates to cross the border, he said the Karnataka government's order mandating the RT-PCR test negative certificates for those coming to DK from Kerala is still in force. The order is meant to contain the spread of Covid-19 and the district administration will continue to implement the same, he said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/covid-19-restrictions-at-border-with-kerala-to-continue-says-karnataka-official/articleshow/85770360.cms>

### **Goa govt extends COVID-19 curfew again till September 6**

The Goa government has once again extended its statewide curfew, this time till September 6. The 24-hour curfew was first imposed on May 9, and has since been extended regularly. The state government opened majority of activities in the tourist state but some public places like casinos are yet to reopen.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/goa-govt-extends-covid-19-curfew-again-till-september-6/articleshow/85757214.cms>

## **Healthcare**

### **Over 63.09 crore Covid vaccine doses supplied to states so far: Centre**

More than 63.09 crore COVID-19 vaccine doses have so far been provided to the states and Union territories by the Centre for free and under the direct state procurement category, the Union health ministry said on Monday. Further, more than 21.76 lakh (21,76,930) doses are in the pipeline, it added. More than 4.87 crore (4,87,39,946) balance and unutilised COVID-19 vaccine doses are still available with the states, the ministry said. The Centre is committed to accelerating the pace and expanding the scope of COVID-19 vaccination throughout the country, it said, adding that the inoculation drive has been ramped up through availability of more vaccines, advance visibility of vaccine availability to the states for enabling better planning by them and streamlining the vaccine supply chain.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/over-63-09-crore-covid-vaccine-doses-supplied-to-states-so-far-centre/articleshow/85763263.cms>

### **Covid third wave could peak between Oct-Nov; intensity expected to be 1/4 of second wave**

India may see a third wave of COVID-19 peaking between October and November if a more virulent mutant than the existing ones emerge by September, but its intensity is expected to be much lower than the second wave, a scientist involved in the mathematical modelling of the pandemic said on Monday. Manindra Agrawal, an IIT-Kanpur scientist who is part of the three-member team of experts that have been tasked with predicting any surge in infections, said if no new virulent emerges, then the situation is unlikely to change. If the third wave peaks, the country may see only 1 lakh daily cases as against more than 4 lakh when the deadly second wave was at its peak in May. The second wave killed thousands and infected several lakh.

[https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/covid-third-wave-could-peak-between-oct-nov-intensity-expected-to-be-1/4-of-second-wave/articleshow/85766983.cms?utm\\_source=ETTopNews&utm\\_medium=HP&utm\\_campaign=TN&utm\\_content=23](https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/covid-third-wave-could-peak-between-oct-nov-intensity-expected-to-be-1/4-of-second-wave/articleshow/85766983.cms?utm_source=ETTopNews&utm_medium=HP&utm_campaign=TN&utm_content=23)

## **External**

### **Exports from SEZs up 41.5% to Rs 2.15 trillion during Apr-June 2021**

Exports from special economic zones (SEZs) grew by about 41.5 per cent to Rs 2.15 lakh crore during the April-June quarter of the current fiscal on account of healthy growth in pharmaceuticals, engineering, and gems and jewellery sectors, as per official data. SEZs are key export hubs which contribute about one-fourth of the country's total outbound shipments. According to commerce ministry data, exports from these zones dipped to Rs 7.56 lakh crore in 2020-21 as against Rs 7.97 lakh crore in 2019-20. In the first quarter of the current financial year, SEZ exports rose about 41.5 per cent to Rs 2.15 lakh crore. As many as 427 such zones have been approved by the government, out of which 267 are operational as on June 30.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/exports-from-sezs-up-41-5-to-rs-2-15-trillion-during-apr-june-2021-121083000890\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/exports-from-sezs-up-41-5-to-rs-2-15-trillion-during-apr-june-2021-121083000890_1.html)

### **EAM Jaishankar holds talks with UAE President's advisor Anwar Gargash**

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Monday held talks with Anwar Gargash, the diplomatic advisor to UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, with a focus on "regional concerns" of common interest. It is learnt that Jaishankar and Gargash deliberated on the Afghan crisis besides the overall situation in the Gulf region. "Happy to welcome Diplomatic Advisor to President of UAE, Dr. @AnwarGargash. Noted the steady progress of our relationship. Discussed regional concerns of common interest," Jaishankar tweeted. The visit to India by the senior diplomat of the UAE comes at a time Afghanistan is witnessing fast-paced developments following the Taliban's

capture of power. The Taliban seized control of Kabul on August 15, hours after Afghan President Ashraf Ghani fled the country. Four days later, Ghani surfaced in the United Arab Emirates.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/eam-jaishankar-holds-talks-with-uae-president-s-advisor-anwar-gargash-121083001103\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/eam-jaishankar-holds-talks-with-uae-president-s-advisor-anwar-gargash-121083001103_1.html)

### **Consignments of dry fruits and spices from Afghanistan arrive in the Indian market**

Traders of dry fruits and spices in Mumbai and Delhi seemed relieved as consignments of raisins, small pistachios, apricot, figs, asafoetida and shah jeera from Afghanistan that were lying in transit at the Wagah border have arrived in the market after the Indian government gave clearance. Though the consignments comprise only small quantities of dry fruits and spices, those will still help meet demand during the upcoming Ganesh Chaturthi and Navratri festivals.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/consignments-of-dry-fruits-and-spices-from-afghanistan-arrive-in-the-indian-market/articleshow/85768105.cms>

### **India's COVID vaccine supply jumps, raising export hopes**

India's rising output of COVID-19 vaccines and the inoculation of more than half its adult population with at least one dose are raising hopes the country will return as an exporter within months, ramping up from early next year. After donating or selling 66 million doses to nearly 100 countries, India barred exports in the middle of April to focus on domestic immunisation as infections exploded, upsetting the inoculation plans of many African and South Asian countries. India's daily vaccinations surpassed 10 million doses on Friday, with national vaccine production more than doubling since April and set to rise again in the coming weeks. New production lines have been set up, a vaccine developed by Cadila Healthcare % won recent approval, and commercial production of Russia's Sputnik V is starting in India.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/healthcare/biotech/pharmaceuticals/indias-covid-vaccine-supply-jumps-raising-export-hopes/articleshow/85759763.cms>



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