



November 01, 2021 – Monday

Key Developments

PSBs to introduce common staff accountability guidelines for NPAs

Public sector banks will implement common staff accountability policies for loan accounts up to Rs 50 crore, excluding fraud accounts, turning into non-performing assets (NPAs) on or after April 1, 2022. This is expected to ensure a common approach across state-owned banks in dealing with staff accountability for accounts becoming NPA and save employees for undue hardships. The finance ministry had advised on broad guidelines (revision) to be adopted by all PSBs. Banks should revise Staff Accountability Policies based on these broad guidelines and frame the procedures with approval of the respective boards. Indian Banks' Association in a statement said that at present, different banks are following different procedures for conducting staff accountability exercises.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/finance/psbs-to-introduce-common-staff-accountability-guidelines-for-npas-121103100595_1.html

Low Covid vax coverage: PM to hold meeting with DMs of over 40 districts

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will hold a review meeting on November 3 with district magistrates of over 40 districts having low COVID-19 vaccination coverage, the PMO said on Sunday. The meeting will include districts with less than 50 per cent coverage of the first dose and low coverage of the second dose of the vaccine, it said. The 40 districts are spread across Jharkhand, Manipur, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Maharashtra and Meghalaya among other states, and chief ministers of these states will also attend the meeting. Modi will be holding the meeting immediately on his return from abroad after attending the G20 and COP26 meetings, the PMO noted.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/low-covid-vax-coverage-pm-to-hold-meeting-with-dms-of-over-40-districts-121103100419_1.html

Economy

Govt's excise collection on petro products 79% more than pre-Covid levels

The government's collection from levy of excise duty on petroleum products has risen 33 per cent in the first six months of the current fiscal when compared with last year and is 79 per cent more than pre-Covid levels, official data showed. Data available from the Controller General of Accounts (CGA) in the Union Ministry of Finance showed excise duty collections during April-September 2021 surging to over Rs 1.71 lakh crore, from Rs 1.28 lakh crore mop-up in the same period of the previous fiscal. Thanks to a steep hike in excise duty rates, the collection is 79 per cent more than Rs 95,930 crore mop-up in April-September 2019. In the full 2020-21 fiscal, excise collections were Rs 3.89 lakh crore and in 2019-20, it was Rs 2.39 lakh crore, CGA data showed.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/govt-s-excise-collection-on-petro-products-79-more-than-pre-covid-levels-121103100260_1.html

Centre likely to make fresh attempt to reach consensus with states for an all-India judicial service

The central government is likely to make a fresh attempt at reaching a consensus with states to set up an all-India judicial service, official sources said on Sunday. The establishment of All-India Judicial Service (AIJS) is likely to be made part of the agenda of a proposed meeting between Union Law Minister Kiren Rijiju and state law ministers in November, the sources in the government said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/centre-likely-to-make-fresh-attempt-to-reach-consensus-with-states-for-an-all-india-judicial-service/articleshow/87428751.cms>

Govt should support honest taxpayers by tweaking the system: SBI Ecowrap

The Government should ensure that the existing tax structure is favourable to the 11.4 crore tax paying population that constitutes only 8.5 per cent of the population but cross-subsidises 91.5 per cent of the population, according to State Bank of India's economic research report, Ecowrap.

The report assessed that of the total population, 8.5 per cent contribute to ₹75 lakh crore or 65 per cent of the private final consumption expenditure.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/govt-should-support-honest-taxpayers-by-tweaking-the-system-sbi-ecowrap/article37270518.ece>

Banking and Finance

RBI regulations on offshore investments

Start-ups and other businesses have often considered setting up headquarters outside India while the key owners in control of the business remain here. Structures involving investments by resident Indians in a foreign entity that invests or already has investment back in India are popularly referred as 'Round Tripping Structures'. The legitimacy of such structures has been a topic of elevated debate. Round tripping often becomes necessary to meet eligibility criteria by certain larger offshore investors/ business accelerators, nonetheless, these are also preferred for several other reasons such as availability of capital, regulatory environment, mature markets understanding their products, etc. An FAQ list by the RBI on Indian overseas investment regulations (ODI regulations) permits such investment structures only with a prior approval from the RBI, which practically is not easily forthcoming. To achieve these desired structures, most Indian founders resort to a mode usually involving a cashless receipt of shares, whereby a third party sets up a foreign entity and makes a gift to the Indian residents. In absence of any guidelines governing this route, the regulatory provisions come to haunt at the time of exit or divestment where the RBI has sometimes alleged contravention of regulations and ordered for the unwinding of such structures.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/business-laws/rbi-regulations-on-offshore-investments/article37269074.ece>

Customers can now subscribe to Atal Pension Yojana via Aadhaar eKYC: PFRDA

To expand its subscriber base and simplify the on-boarding process further, pension fund regulator PFRDA has now allowed Aadhaar eKYC as an additional option to add customers under its flagship pension scheme Atal Pension Yojana. The Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) is allowing enrollment of subscribers through physical, net banking and other digital modes, at present. "Now in order to further increase the outreach and simplify the process of subscription, CRA (Central Recordkeeping agency) would be providing digital on-boarding based through Aadhaar eKYC as an additional option. These processes are paperless," the PFRDA said in a notification.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/customers-can-now-subscribe-to-atal-pension-yojana-via-aadhaar-ekyc-pfrda/articleshow/87426895.cms>

Crop insurance claims at Rs 9,570 cr for 2020-21 lower by over 60 pc from previous year

There has been more than 60 per cent decline in the crop insurance claims of farmers at Rs 9,570 crore under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) for the 2020-21 crop year from the previous year as there were no major crop losses, according to official data. However, much of the crop insurance claims reported for 2020-21 and 2019-20 crop years have been cleared by the government. Crop insurance claims stood at Rs 27,398 crore in the 2019-20 crop year (July-June).

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/crop-insurance-claims-at-rs-9570-cr-for-2020-21-lower-by-over-60-pc-from-previous-year/articleshow/87420718.cms>

Big push to spending means more allocation for Ministries next fiscal

The comparatively better expenditure numbers at the end of the first half of this fiscal are expected to favourably impact the first Budget Estimate for the next fiscal year. Thirty four ministries and departments have spent more as a percentage of BE than in the last fiscal. Besides, borrowings for the whole fiscal are expected to be lower than the BE.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/big-push-to-spending-means-more-allocation-for-ministries-next-fiscal/article37273592.ece>

60 per cent of Indian shoppers used digital payments multiple times each week during festive season: Report

A majority of consumers in India are leveraging digital payments more frequently during the festive season, according to a new study conducted by YouGov and ACI Worldwide. As per the report, frequent usage (2-3 times per week) of digital payments has increased from 57 per cent last year, while 6 per cent of respondents have no intention of using digital payments this festive season, declining from 9 per cent a year ago.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/money-and-banking/60-per-cent-of-indian-shoppers-used-digital-payments-multiple-times-each-week-during-festive-season-report/article37264613.ece>

Industry

PLI scheme for specialty steel likely to attract Russian investors

Steel manufacturing firms from Russia are expected to make investments in India under the production-linked investment (PLI) scheme for specialty steel, according to an official. Mukesh Kumar, the Director of Steel Research & Technology Mission of India (SRTMI), said there are some Russian companies interested in setting up businesses in India. The SRTMI is a collaborative research platform formed jointly by the steel ministry and domestic steel players which facilitate research and development (R&D) in the iron and steel sector by strengthening association among industry, academia and research bodies. Kumar was replying to a question on whether there are potential domestic and international players who could invest in India's steel sector under the PLI Scheme for Specialty Steel. "Our Steel Minister Ram Chandra Prasad Singh recently went to Russia. We are expecting steel producing companies that have technologies like NLMK and Severstal of Russia," he told PTI.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/pli-scheme-for-specialty-steel-likely-to-attract-russian-investors-121103100537_1.html

Jewellers expecting strong demand during Dhanteras on softer gold prices

With Indian jewellery market already on the robust recovery path, the jewellers are expecting strong Diwali sales in the Dhanteras as the festive mood remains high with low Covid third wave possibility and softer gold price this season. The industry expects the trends in 2021 will be able to reach pre-covid level sales of 2019 on the back of gold price hovering at Rs 46,000-47,000 per 22 carat 10 grams gold nearly 5 per cent lower than 2020, and jump in number of weddings, a senior official of an industry body said. "Since Navratri market is showing demand. It will continue on Dhanteras also. This year the festive mood is strong with the pandemic remaining under control, lower gold prices and strong wedding season. This year October-November months will account for 40 per cent of yearly sales," All India Gems and Jewellery Domestic Council chairman Ashish Pethe told PTI.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/jewellers-expecting-strong-demand-during-dhanteras-on-softer-gold-prices-121103100369_1.html

India Inc faces margin pressure as costs pinch

Companies across segments — including FMCG, cement, paints, and consumer durables — are witnessing a pressure on margins with increasing raw material costs. While Q2 gross margins (and EBITDA in some cases) levels have taken a hit due to input price rise, most companies are now hinting at a price rise post Diwali.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/india-inc-faces-margin-pressure-as-costs-pinch/article37257985.ece>

Registration of electric vehicles picking up pace in Delhi: Officials

Adoption of electric vehicles is picking up pace in Delhi with the count of such vehicles surpassing the total number of registrations of CNG and hybrid-fuel vehicles in the city in the recent months, officials said on Sunday. In the period of July to September, electric vehicles accounted for seven per cent of the total number of vehicles registered with the Delhi government's transport department, while CNG vehicles accounted for six per cent, official figures showed. Over 1.5 lakh vehicles were registered in the said period, including 7,869 electric vehicles, 6,857 CNG vehicles, 7,257 vehicles driven on both CNG and petrol, and 93,091 vehicles driven on petrol or diesel.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/renewables/registration-of-electric-vehicles-picking-up-pace-in-delhi-officials/articleshow/87428471.cms>

Agriculture

CAI estimates cotton production at 360.13 lakh bales for 2021-22 crop year

The Cotton Association of India (CAI) on Saturday estimated cotton output at 360.13 lakh bales for the crop year (October-September) 2021-22, due to expectation of better yield. The total cotton production in the last season is estimated at 353 lakh bales, which is 7.13 lakh bales less than the current season, the CAI said in a statement. "The cotton yield is estimated to be excellent and the farmers are expected to go for the third and fourth pickings due to good availability of water following a good monsoon," CAI president Atul Ganatra told PTI.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/cai-estimates-cotton-production-at-360-13-lakh-bales-for-2021-22-crop-year/articleshow/87417658.cms>

Infrastructure

Rise in services on domestic routes bringing down airfares: Jyotiraditya

Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia on Sunday said the expansion of air services on domestic routes was bringing down fares. He was speaking online at a function here to mark the start of six new IndiGo flights connecting Indore to Surat in Gujarat, Jodhpur in Rajasthan and Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh. "Airfares are tumbling (on domestic routes). Airfare between some cities is cheaper than second-class air-conditioned train tickets. Prime Minister Narendra Modi wants people wearing slippers to fly. That is why the government is working to set up airports in small cities as well," Scindia said. With the expansion of flight services from small cities in Bihar, Jharkhand and Assam as well as other states, the number of people flying from these places has risen by two lakh per month, he said.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/rise-in-services-on-domestic-routes-bringing-down-airfares-jyotiraditya-121103100819_1.html

One year of Kisan Rail: Railways gives subsidy of Rs 95 Cr, reimbursed with Rs 55 cr

While the Kisan Rail has come as a boon for farmers across the country, the railways has been left with a burden of about Rs 40 crore in the form of unpaid reimbursements from the Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) for running these trains for a year at a 50-per cent rebate. From October 14, 2020 to October 10, 2021, the Indian Railways has provided a subsidy of around Rs 95 crore to farmers for ferrying their goods on Kisan Rail trains.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/transportation/railways/one-year-of-kisan-rail-railways-gives-subsidy-of-rs-95-cr-reimbursed-with-rs-55-cr/articleshow/87432751.cms>

Major ports to board new port law from November 3

The Centre owned 11 major port trusts will start afresh under a new law from Wednesday, allowing them to shed decades-old baggage that was an impediment to growth and help them compete with modern, private ports on the back of greater operational freedom including market pricing of services.

The Major Port Authorities Act was passed by Parliament in February and notified in the gazette on February 18, but was waiting for the ministry of ports, shipping and waterways to frame the rules for implementation. The rules have now been finalised and the new law will take effect from November 3, government officials said.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/logistics/major-ports-to-board-new-port-law-from-november-3/article37271475.ece>

Energy

Cement, steel industries should use green hydrogen for energy: Gadkari

Union minister Nitin Gadkari on Sunday said it is now time that cement and steel industries start using green hydrogen as energy instead of coal for production. He was speaking at the inauguration of various facilities of Manganese Ore India Limited (MOIL) based in Nagpur. "It is now time for using green hydrogen as energy in the cement and steel industry in place of coal. We should work on value addition by running metal industries, where mining products are using green hydrogen as energy. We will have to protect the environment and increase our production at the same time," he said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/renewables/cement-steel-industries-should-use-green-hydrogen-for-energy-gadkari/articleshow/87438036.cms>

Healthcare

Zydus to knock Covid vax price to Rs 265 a dose, decision soon: Sources

Zydus Cadila has agreed to bring down the price of its COVID-19 vaccine to Rs 265 a dose following persistent negotiations by the government but a final deal is yet to be reached, sources said on Sunday. To administer the needle-free ZyCov-D vaccine, a disposable painless jet applicator costing Rs 93 is required for each dose, which would take the price to Rs 358 per dose. The Ahmedabad-based pharma company earlier had proposed a price of Rs 1,900 for its three-dose regimen, a source had said. "The company has brought down the price to Rs 358 for each dose which includes Rs 93, the cost of a disposable jet applicator, following repeated negotiations by the government.... A final decision in the matter is likely to be taken this week," a source in the know of developments told PTI. The three doses are to be administered 28 days apart, with each dose comprising a shot in both arms.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/zydus-to-reduce-covid-vax-price-to-rs-265-a-dose-decision-soon-sources-121103100446_1.html

Nearly 112 crore Covid vaccines given to states, UTs so far: Govt

Nearly 112 crore Covid vaccine doses have been provided to states and Union Territories so far, the Union Health Ministry said on Sunday. More than 13 crore balance and unutilised vaccine doses are still available with the states and UTs for inoculation, it said. The Union government is committed to accelerating the pace and expanding the scope of COVID-19 vaccination throughout the country. The vaccination drive has been ramped up through availability of more vaccines, advance visibility of vaccine availability to states and UTs for enabling better planning by them, and streamlining the vaccine supply chain, the ministry said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/nearly-112-crore-covid-vaccines-given-to-states-uts-so-far-govt/articleshow/87426587.cms>

Health Ministry auctions e-waste worth Rs 13 lakh

The Union Health Ministry on Sunday said it has auctioned e-waste worth Rs 13 lakh following the prime minister's clarion call of 'Swachh Bharat'. The e-wastes which were auctioned included printers, computers, photo-copy machines and their spare parts, an official said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/telecom/telecom-news/filled-gaps-with-recent-buys-ma-now-only-for-distinctive-capability-stl-cfo/articleshow/87425028.cms>

External

Edible oils: Govt hikes tariff value again

The Finance Ministry has upped tariff value for the second time in the current month for edible oils. Experts say with this rise, the impact of import duty cut has been negated, while domestic firms say this will be good for the farmers. Meanwhile, the data from the Consumer Affairs Ministry show that prices of edible oils are still on the rise. According to a gazette notification, tariff value for all types of edible oils has been raised between \$18 a tonne and \$38 a tonne. Tariff values refer to the base on which *ad valorem* (percentage of value) duty is calculated for an imported good. Change or no change in the value is notified every fortnight, keeping in mind the prices in the international market.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/edible-oils-govt-hikes-tariff-value-again/article37259592.ece>

India, UK to launch solar Green Grids Initiative at COP26 summit in Glasgow

India and the UK are set to enhance their International Solar Alliance (ISA) partnership with the launch of a new Green Grids Initiative connecting different parts of the world at the United Nations (UN) COP26 climate summit in Glasgow. The new Global Green Grids Initiative One Sun One World One Grid (GGI-OSOWOG) is an evolution of ISA's OSOWOG multilateral drive to foster interconnected solar energy infrastructure at a global scale. The new Green Grids Initiative, to be launched at COP26 on Tuesday, will mark a merging of flagship interconnection initiatives from India and the UK as part of their bilateral cooperation. This initiative will bring together an international coalition of national governments, financial organisations, and power system operators to accelerate the construction of new infrastructure needed to deliver a massive scale-up of secure, reliable and affordable power, such as modern, flexible grids, charging points, and electricity interconnectors, the UK's Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) said, in reference to the joint project.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/india-uk-to-launch-solar-green-grids-initiative-at-cop26-summit-in-glasgow-121103100551_1.html

FinMin extends anti-dumping duty on seamless tubes, pipes from China for 5 years

The Finance Ministry has imposed definitive anti-dumping duty on certain seamless tubes and pipes from China for a period of five years.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/policy/finmin-extends-anti-dumping-duty-on-seamless-tubes-pipes-from-china-for-5-years/article37268231.ece>



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