



October 20, 2021 – Wednesday

### Key Developments

#### Agencies may have to pay GST on service charges collected on govt's behalf

Agencies, whether public sector or private sector, may have to pay goods and services tax on the charges they collect on behalf of the government from clients. The authority for advance rulings (AAR), Telangana, has ruled that e-procurement transaction fee collected by an agency on behalf of the government is chargeable to GST, said Rajat Mohan, senior partner at AMRG & Associates. The AAR also ruled that neither services provided by the agency to the government, nor services provided on behalf of the government to the business entities are exempt from GST, he informed about the case. The case relates to an application filed by the Telangana State Technology Services Ltd (TSTSL), a public sector undertaking and a service agency to the Telangana government and its departments relating to IT and related services. One of such services provided by TSTSL is execution of e-procurement process as a fund manager on behalf of the Telangana IT, Electronics and Communication department.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/agencies-may-have-to-pay-gst-on-service-charges-collected-on-govt-s-behalf-121101901005\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/agencies-may-have-to-pay-gst-on-service-charges-collected-on-govt-s-behalf-121101901005_1.html)

#### Government aims to be better with 60 ideas

The Centre has sought 'action plans' from various ministries on 60 new ideas such as bringing down the 'cost of doing business' in India, replacing multiple environmental legislation with a single Environment Management Act, opening up beach and sand minerals mining to the private sector and indigenous manufacture of low-cost tablets to take education to poor children. As a follow-up of the September 18 interaction of the prime minister with secretaries of all union ministries and departments, 60 ideas and suggestions across sectors have been identified as desirable. The Cabinet Secretariat has identified the lead ministries to take these suggestions forward and furnish action plans for their implementation.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/government-aims-to-be-better-with-60-ideas/articleshow/87127993.cms>

#### States, UTs asked to focus on increasing second Covid vaccine dose coverage

Highlighting that the nation is close to administering a billion Covid vaccine doses, the Centre has urged states and Union Territories to focus on increasing the coverage of the second dose in light of adequate availability of shots. The cumulative vaccine doses administered in the country so far under the nationwide COVID-19 inoculation drive has exceeded 99 crore. The countrywide COVID-19 vaccination programme was launched on January 16 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The Union government has also sought from the states suggestions in formulating new guidelines for international travel. Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan reviewed the progress of vaccination with Health Secretaries and mission directors of national health missions in states and UTs, through a video conference on Monday, according to a ministry statement.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/states-uts-asked-to-focus-on-increasing-second-covid-vaccine-dose-coverage/articleshow/87131614.cms>

Economy

### **NITI Aayog launches Geospatial Energy Map of India**

Government's think-tank NITI Aayog, in collaboration with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), has developed a comprehensive geographic information system (GIS) energy map of India that it hopes will aid in planning and investment decisions in the sector besides helping in disaster management. The map attempts to identify and locate all primary and secondary sources of energy and their transportation and transmission networks, the Aayog said on Monday. "It is a unique effort aimed at integrating energy data scattered across multiple organizations and to present it in a consolidated, visually appealing graphical manner," the Aayog said in a statement. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/niti-aayog-launches-geospatial-energy-map-of-india/articleshow/87111249.cms>

### **India ranks 40th out of 43 global pension systems, as per survey**

India has ranked 40th out of 43 pension systems across the world in the 2021 Mercer CFS Global Pension Index survey, suggesting the need for strategic reforms in India to revamp the pension system so as to ensure adequate retirement income. India had stood at 34th position out of 39 pension systems rated in 2020. According to the survey, India had an overall index value of 43.3 among the countries analysed, lower than the index value of 45.7 for 2020. Globally, Iceland was ranked highest with an overall index value of 84.2 while Thailand had the lowest overall index value at 40.6. The index highlights key strengths of retirement pension systems around three sub-indexes - adequacy, sustainability and integrity, where India scored 33.5, 41.8 and 61.0 respectively. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/finance/india-ranks-40th-out-of-43-global-pension-systems-as-per-survey/articleshow/87134588.cms>

### **India's gold demand faces slowing savings rate, farm wages risk**

Gold demand in India is likely to face challenges from a declining household savings rate and lower agricultural wages, according to the World Gold Council. Rising income is one of the biggest drivers of gold demand, suggesting that as India's economy grows, sales of the precious metal should increase, the WGC said in a report. However, "households are saving proportionately less than they used to, which may reduce the amount of capital they allocate to gold," it said. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/indias-gold-demand-faces-slowing-savings-rate-farm-wages-risk/articleshow/87132591.cms>

### **Govt sanctions ad hoc bonus to employees for FY21**

The government has sanctioned non-productivity linked or ad hoc bonus for central government employees for fiscal year 2020-21. In an office memorandum, the Department of Expenditure under the Finance Ministry said the employees of central para military forces and armed forces too would be eligible for the bonus. Employees who were in service as on March 31, 2021, and have rendered at least six months of continuous service during 2020-21 fiscal year would be eligible for this ad hoc bonus. The non-productivity linked bonus (ad hoc bonus) would be paid to the central government employees in Group C and all non-gazetted employees in Group B, who are not covered by any productivity-linked bonus scheme. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/finance/govt-sanctions-ad-hoc-bonus-to-employees-for-fy21/articleshow/87136020.cms>

### **Job posting activity in September saw stable monthly growth of 1%: Report**

Hiring demand has increased one per cent sequentially in September led by printing and packaging on account of rising online sales, followed by BPO and ITeS, as well as import and export, according to a report. Compared with August, September saw a stable monthly growth of one per cent in job posting activity this year, according to the Monster Employment Index by Monster.com, a Qess company. In September 2021, hiring demand for printing and packaging grew 11 per cent sequentially due to rising online sales, followed by uptick in industries such as BPO/ITeS (5 per cent), import/export (4 per cent), retail (2 per cent) and travel and tourism (2 per cent), it added. Meanwhile, job postings improved by nine per cent year-on-year in September compared to the same month in 2020, indicating an optimistic outlook for the rest of the year, the report noted.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/job-posting-activity-in-saw-stable-monthly-growth-of-1-report-121101901046\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/job-posting-activity-in-saw-stable-monthly-growth-of-1-report-121101901046_1.html)

## Banking and Finance

### Moody's upgrades outlook on Indian banking from 'negative' to 'stable'

Global rating agency Moody's has upgraded the outlook on the Indian banking system from "Negative" to "Stable" on the back of stabilising asset quality and improved capital. The deterioration of asset quality since the onset of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic has been moderate, and an improving operating environment will support asset quality. The level of problem loans for rated banks has moved down from 8.5 per cent in FY19 to 7.1 per cent in FY21.

Declining credit costs as a result of improving asset quality will lead to improvements in profitability and capital will remain above pre-pandemic levels, the rating agency said in a statement. The operating environment will be stable as the economy gradually recovers from the Covid-19 pandemic, said Moody's. "India's economy is expected to continue to recover in the next 12-18 months, with Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growing 9.3 per cent in FY22 and 7.9 per cent in the following year. The pickup in economic activity will drive credit growth, which we expect to be 10 per cent to 13 per cent annually," the rating agency said.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/moody-s-upgrades-outlook-on-indian-banking-from-negative-to-stable-121101900455\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/moody-s-upgrades-outlook-on-indian-banking-from-negative-to-stable-121101900455_1.html)

### Financial stability taken care of under flexible inflation targeting regime: RBI research

Financial stability is well taken care of in the RBI's flexible inflation targeting regime and it need not be a separate explicit monetary policy goal, according to a research paper by RBI economists. The present flexible inflation targeting (FIT) regime in India envisages policy action to ensure price stability, 'while being mindful of the growth objective'. "The empirical results show that through a proper co-ordination between monetary and macroprudential policies, the financial stability goals are implicitly met under the FIT regime without diluting the inflation targeting objective" said a research paper by RBI economists in the latest monthly bulletin.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/finance/financial-stability-taken-care-of-under-flexible-inflation-targeting-regime-rbi-research/articleshow/87135327.cms>

### Banking system NPAs may rise to 8-9% by end of FY22, says Crisil

The gross non-performing assets (NPAs) of Indian banks may rise to 8-9 per cent by the end of this fiscal year (FY22), 50-150 basis points higher than FY21 levels, but much below the FY18 levels when NPAs reached a peak of 11.2 per cent, said rating agency Crisil in a research note. Also, the stressed assets of the banking sector may touch 10-11 per cent, assuming 2 per cent of assets will be restructured by the end of FY22, the rating agency said. The projections are made on the assumption that the Indian economy will grow at 9.5 per cent this year and there will be continued improvement in corporate credit quality. However, if there is a third wave of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, posing challenges to demand growth then there may be significant downside risks to the estimates made. On the other hand, if the National Asset Reconstruction Company Limited (NARCL) or "bad bank" as it is popularly known gets operationalised this fiscal then the NPAs of the banking system may fall further.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/finance/banking-system-npas-may-rise-to-8-9-by-end-of-fy22-says-crisil-121101900574\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/finance/banking-system-npas-may-rise-to-8-9-by-end-of-fy22-says-crisil-121101900574_1.html)

## Industry

### Aluminium firms draw costly power from grid, hurting utilities low on coal

India's aluminium producers are drawing expensive power from the national grid and adding to pressure on utilities with low coal stock, the Aluminium Association of India (AAI) told Reuters on Tuesday, as state-run Coal India has curbed supplies. A crippling shortage across the country has pushed state-run Coal India to impose temporary supply curbs to non-power consumers, including the energy-intensive aluminium industry, pushing producers to draw electricity from the grid.

Indian aluminium producers such as Hindalco Industries Ltd and Vedanta Ltd largely use power generated from the so-called captive utilities - which are not connected to the national grid - where the companies generate electricity

for self-use. AAI estimates aluminium production to annually account for 5-6% of India's total power demand met through the national grid. "Since we are going to the (national) grid, that increases power demand in the country and puts further pressure on coal plants which already have low fuel," AAI told Reuters in a statement.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/aluminium-firms-draw-costly-power-from-grid-hurting-utilities-low-on-coal-121101901031\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/aluminium-firms-draw-costly-power-from-grid-hurting-utilities-low-on-coal-121101901031_1.html)

#### **PM Modi to interact with CEOs, experts of global oil and gas sector**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will interact with CEOs and experts of the global oil and gas sector on Wednesday via video conferencing, his office said. This is the sixth such annual interaction which began in 2016 and marks the participation of global leaders in the oil and gas sector, who deliberate upon key issues of the sector and explore potential areas of collaboration and investment with India, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said in a statement. Prime Minister Modi will interact with CEOs and experts of the global oil and gas sector on October 20 at 6 PM via video conferencing, it said. The broad theme of the upcoming interaction is promotion of clean growth and sustainability. The interaction will focus on areas like encouraging exploration and production in hydrocarbon sector in India, energy independence, gas-based economy, emissions reduction through clean and energy efficient solutions, green hydrogen economy, enhancement of biofuels production and waste to wealth creation, according to the PMO.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/pm-modi-to-interact-with-ceos-experts-of-global-oil-and-gas-sector-121101900662\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/pm-modi-to-interact-with-ceos-experts-of-global-oil-and-gas-sector-121101900662_1.html)

#### **Restructuring likely to be highest for MSMEs, would lead to 18% jump in stressed assets this FY: Crisil**

Gross non-performing assets (NPAs) of banks are projected to increase to 8-9 per cent this fiscal year, though below the peak of 11.2 per cent witnessed at FY18 end, as Covid relief measures including restructuring dispensation, and the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) will help restrict growth, credit rating agency Crisil said on Tuesday. However, the most impacted MSME and retail segments are likely to see a higher accretion of NPAs and stressed assets. Even as MSMEs benefitted from the ECLGS scheme, which was recently expanded in terms of its limit and period, the sector is expected to see a deterioration of asset quality and would also need restructuring to tide over cash-flow problems, Crisil said. The restructuring is likely to be the highest for the MSME segment — at 4-5 per cent of the loan book that would lead to growth in stressed assets to 17-18 per cent by this fiscal end from around 14 per cent last fiscal. The gross NPAs were around 10 per cent in the MSME category during the 2020 fiscal year and are expected to be around 12 per cent by March 2021.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/sme/msme-fin-restructuring-likely-to-be-highest-for-msmes-would-lead-to-18-jump-in-stressed-assets-this-fy-crisil/2352269/>

#### **FMCG majors expect to report 'strong' Q2**

FMCG majors are expected to report a set of strong Q2 numbers with rural demand remaining resilient, good kharif crops and progressive improvement in modern trade across urban markets. Out-of-home consumption and sales of discretionary items have picked up, but it is yet to reach the pre-Covid levels. Cigarette volumes are expected to improve on a softer base (of Q2 FY21). However, companies could face margin pressure because of rising raw material costs, say analysts tracking the sector.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/fmcmajors-expect-to-report-strong-q2/article37058759.ece?homepage=true>

#### **Indian API space attracts M&A deals**

Fuelled by an 'Atmanirbhar' push and growing preference for India-made pharmaceutical raw materials over Chinese, the Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient (API) sector is in the spotlight for mergers and acquisitions (M&A). Attractive valuations, bright future prospects and certified plants make the Indian API sector attractive for Indian and global investors.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/science/indian-api-space-attracts-ma-deals/article37065263.ece>

#### **Agriculture**

#### **Gujarat to harvest record high groundnut crop, says SEA**

Industry body Solvent Extractors' Association (SEA) of India has pegged the groundnut production of Gujarat, the top producer of the oilseed at 38.55 lakh tonnes, up by 8.74% than the previous year. A team of SEA headed by GG Patel, convener, SEA Oilseed Crop Estimate Committee carried out the crop survey, informed SEA in a statement. "Gujarat is expected to harvest a record groundnut crop of 38.55 lakh tonnes during the current kharif season, which is about 8.74% higher when compared to 35.45 lakh tonnes produced in the previous year. The production is up mainly due to normal to excessive rainfall during the months of August and September and absence of significant crop damage," said SEA in the statement.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/gujarat-to-harvest-record-high-groundnut-crop-says-sea/articleshow/87137825.cms>

#### **Onion prices expected to stay firm till Diwali**

Onion prices are likely to stay firm till Diwali, traders said, as the vegetable's rates hovered around Rs 60/kg in the metros, including Delhi and Mumbai, pushed up by speculation that the damage caused to crops by untimely rains may affect supplies. Along with onions, prices of tomatoes and vegetables like cabbage and bottle gourd have also increased, as excess moisture has damaged the quality of the crops. Traders said the weather will remain the key factor that will influence onion prices till December, when the arrival of the new crop normally is at its peak.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/onion-prices-expected-to-stay-firm-till-diwali/articleshow/87126954.cms>

#### **Cotton trade body trims 2020-21 crop estimate to 353 lakh bales**

The Cotton Association of India (CAI), a body of traders, has reduced its estimate of the cotton crop last season (October 2020- September 2021) to 353 lakh bales (each 170 kg) from its previous estimate of 354.5 lakh bales. The final estimate is about 7 lakh bales lower than the 360 lakh bales of crop estimated initially. The total cotton availability for the year is estimated at 488 lakh bales, including an opening stock of 125 lakh bales and import of 10 lakh bales besides the 353 lakh bales of crop.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/cotton-trade-body-trims-2020-21-crop-estimate-to-353-lakh-bales/article37074050.ece>

#### **FCI introduces new method to buy rice**

Beginning this kharif marketing season, all rice stocks procured by the Food Corporation of India (FCI) will have to pass through the "Mixed Indicator Method" to determine its age. The FCI godowns will accept custom milled rice only after the reagents turn green/avocado green when tested on the samples. If it turns yellow, yellow-orange or orange, the consignments will be marked "not freshly milled" and rejected upfront.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/fci-introduces-new-method-to-buy-rice/article37073907.ece>

### **Infrastructure**

#### **Domestic air traffic grew more than 20% in Jan-Sept**

Over 5.31 crore people travelled on domestic airlines in the first nine months of calendar 2021, the aviation regulator Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said. This is over 20 per cent higher than the number of air travellers during the corresponding period of last year. For the month of September alone, the number was 70.66 lakh which is nearly 79 per cent higher than last September and over 5 per cent more than this August. While IndiGo carried 39.69 lakh passengers in September, with a 56.2 per cent share of the domestic market, SpiceJet flew 6.02 lakh passengers, accounting for a 8.5 per cent share, according to the data shared by DGCA.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/logistics/domestic-air-traffic-grew-more-than-20-in-jan-sept/article37073757.ece>

### **Energy**

#### **Coal, railway, power ministers discuss coal supply at power plants**

Coal minister Pralhad Joshi on Tuesday discussed ways to improve coal stocks at thermal power plants with railway minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and power minister R K Singh. The meeting comes against the backdrop of power plants grappling with coal shortages.

"Held virtual meeting with Ministers @AshwiniVaishnaw ji & @RajKSinghIndia ji, along with officers of @CoalMinistry, CMDs & officials of coal companies. We discussed improving coal stock at thermal power plants & resolved our commitment to fulfill energy demands of the country," Joshi said in a tweet. The coal minister also reviewed the performance of Coal India arm Northern Coalfields Ltd (NCL) and directed it to ramp up production and load at least 34 rakes of the dry fuel daily.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/coal-railway-power-ministers-discuss-coal-supply-situation-at-power-plants/2352546/>

#### **Number of power projects with less than 4-day coal stock dips to 58**

The coal stock situation at thermal power projects has improved further as the number of non-pit head projects having less than four days of coal (supercritical stock) reduced to 58 on Monday from 69 a week ago, government data showed. According to latest coal stock data of the Central Electricity Authority (CEA), the number of non-pit head projects having less than four days of coal was 58 on October 18 and 69 on October 11. The data showed that the number of plants with supercritical stock was 61 this Sunday (October 17). Thus, the coal stock situation is inching towards normalcy. The improvement in the coal stock situation assumes significance in view of the ongoing shortage of the dry fuel at thermal power plants in the country.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/power/coal-crisis-number-of-power-projects-with-less-than-4-day-coal-stock-dips-to-58/articleshow/87139579.cms>

#### **India plans to form group of PSU, private refiners to seek better oil import deals: Oil secy**

India is forming a group that brings together state-run and private refiners to seek better crude import deals, oil secretary Tarun Kapoor said on Tuesday, as the country grapples with soaring oil prices. The world's third-largest oil importer and consumer, India depends on imports for about 85% of its crude and buys most of it from Middle East producers. Initially the group of refiners will meet once in a fortnight and exchange ideas on crude purchases. "The companies can form joint strategies and they can even go for joint negotiations wherever possible," Kapoor, the top bureaucrat in the petroleum ministry, told Reuters.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/oil-gas/india-plans-to-form-group-of-psu-private-refiners-to-seek-better-oil-import-deals-oil-secy/articleshow/87138617.cms>

#### **Cap power prices at energy exchanges: AIPEF**

All India Power Engineers Federation on Tuesday demanded an immediate meeting of Forum of Regulators to cap power prices at energy exchanges, alleging black marketing by private operators during the ongoing coal shortage crisis. "All India Power Engineers Federation (AIPEF) has demanded that a meeting of the Forum of Regulators be held immediately to stop black marketing in energy exchanges mostly by private operators during the crisis." AIPEF has also demanded that Expert Committee be constituted to fix responsibility for the Coal Crisis and to evolve ways and means to avoid such crises in future," an AIPEF statement said.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/cap-power-prices-at-energy-exchanges-aipef/2352022/>

### **States**

#### **Restaurants and eateries in Maharashtra can function till midnight: Govt**

The Maharashtra government has permitted all restaurants and eateries to function till midnight, according to a government notification issued by state's Chief Secretary Sitaram Kunte on Tuesday. The notification comes a day after Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray chaired a meeting with the state's COVID Task Force and directed officials to prepare guidelines for extending the operational hours for restaurants and shops. "... all restaurants and eateries may be allowed to function till midnight 12 AM and all other establishments that have been allowed to function by the government may be allowed to function till 11 PM," the notification said. The state government has allowed the reopening of amusement parks, theatres and drama theatres from October 22.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/restaurants-and-eateries-in-maharashtra-can-function-till-midnight-govt/articleshow/87137250.cms>

### **Madhya Pradesh gov't announces electricity subsidy of over Rs 20,700 cr**

Amid concerns regarding a power crisis in the country, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Tuesday announced a subsidy of over Rs 20,700 crores on electricity, with an aim to provide cheap electricity to farmers and domestic consumers. Speaking to ANI, Chouhan said, "Today in Cabinet meeting, we have decided to give a subsidy of over 20,700 crores on electricity to provide cheap electricity to our farmers and domestic consumers in spite of an increase in power prices across the world."

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/power/madhya-pradesh-govt-announces-electricity-subsidy-of-over-rs-20700-cr/articleshow/87133844.cms>

## **Healthcare**

### **India delays Covid vaccine supplies to WHO-backed COVAX: Report**

India has delayed committing supplies of vaccine to the COVAX global sharing platform, two sources told Reuters on Tuesday, a day after one of its key backers, the WHO, said the agency could not "cut corners" to approve a domestically developed vaccine. The world's biggest vaccine maker resumed exports of COVID-19 doses this month for the first time since April. It has sent about 4 million to countries such as neighbouring Bangladesh and Iran, but none to COVAX. On Monday, in the run-up to an Oct. 26 meeting on Covaxin, India's first domestically developed COVID-19 vaccine, the World Health Organization (WHO) said it could not "cut corners" in the approval decision. One of the sources said it was "frustrating" that India had yet to confirm any supply to COVAX, despite a promise last month by the health minister to meet the commitment to COVAX and others during the quarter to December.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/india-delays-covid-vaccine-supplies-to-who-backed-covax-report-121101901008\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/india-delays-covid-vaccine-supplies-to-who-backed-covax-report-121101901008_1.html)

### **Covid-19: India's R-value below 1 since September, say researchers**

India's R-value, which reflects how rapidly the coronavirus pandemic is spreading, has remained below 1 since September, suggesting that the infection rate is declining, according to a study. The Reproduction number or R refers to how many people an infected person infects on an average. In other words, it tells how 'efficiently' a virus is spreading. An R-value smaller than 1 means the disease is spreading slowly. Conversely, if R is greater than 1, the number of infected people is increasing in each round - technically, this is what is called the epidemic phase. The bigger the number than 1, the faster the rate of spreading of the disease in the population. According to figures calculated by researchers of the Chennai-based Institute of Mathematical Sciences, the R-value of top 10 states with most number of active cases was below 1 till October 18.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/covid-19-india-s-r-value-below-1-since-september-say-researchers-121101900930\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/covid-19-india-s-r-value-below-1-since-september-say-researchers-121101900930_1.html)

### **Many Indians skipping second Covid-19 shot despite record vaccine stocks**

A "sizeable number" of people in India have not taken their second COVID-19 vaccine dose by the due date despite adequate supplies, the health ministry said on Tuesday, as new infections fell to their lowest since early March. Daily shots have averaged 5 million this month, a fifth of September's peak, though states are sitting on record stocks of more than 100 million as domestic output of the AstraZeneca vaccine soars. Despite the low number of infections, ministry officials have been urging people to get vaccinated fast, especially as the ongoing festival season means family gatherings and mass shopping, raising the risk of infection.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/many-indians-skipping-second-covid-19-shot-despite-record-vaccine-stocks/articleshow/87136436.cms>

## **External**

### **Rising commodity prices to push CAD to 1.3% or \$40 bn this fiscal: Report**

Rising global commodity prices, led by crude, coal and metals, will shave a lot off the current account leading to higher imports and a rise in current account deficit, which is likely to print at 1.3 per cent of the GDP or USD 40 billion, up from 0.9 per cent surplus last fiscal, according to a brokerage report. However, the report, by the Wall

Street major Bank of America Securities, said the balance of payments (BoP) is strong enough to defend any US Federal Reserve taper impacts on the rupee and the bond yields even though the BoP peak is history now.

Given the sharp increase in global commodity prices, particularly oil, concerns about current account deficit (CAD) and its serviceability have resurfaced. Potential taper by the Fed has only added to these jitters. "But, we see FY22 CAD at 1.3 per cent of GDP or USD 40 billion, up from a 0.9 per cent surplus in FY21, but still well-contained under the threshold of 2.5 per cent of GDP," BofA said on Tuesday.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/rising-commodity-prices-to-push-cad-to-1-3-or-40-bn-this-fiscal-report-121101901019\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/rising-commodity-prices-to-push-cad-to-1-3-or-40-bn-this-fiscal-report-121101901019_1.html)

#### **India only G20 nation well on track to achieve Paris agreement goal: Kant**

India's efforts in mainstreaming sustainability and reducing carbon footprint should inspire countries across the world, Niti Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant said on Tuesday, while pointing out that India is the only G20 nation well on track to achieve the goals mentioned under the Paris Agreement. Addressing 'Schneider Innovation India summit 2021' virtually, Kant said India introduced the faster adoption of electric mobility policy which is facilitating India's transition to clean mobility. "Our efforts in mainstreaming sustainability and reducing our carbon footprint should inspire countries across the world," he said. Kant mentioned that when "we talk of sustainability, and a future which is cleaner and greener, one cannot ignore the dangers posed by climate change". "India is not responsible for the situation. In fact, India is one of the only G20 countries well on track to achieve its nationally determined contributions," he emphasised.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/india-only-g20-nation-well-on-track-to-achieve-paris-agreement-goal-kant-121101900864\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/india-only-g20-nation-well-on-track-to-achieve-paris-agreement-goal-kant-121101900864_1.html)

#### **Indian EAM S Jaishankar discusses ways to expand economic, political cooperation in Middle East, Asia with counterparts from US, Israel and UAE**

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar had a "fruitful" first quadrilateral meeting with his counterparts from the US, Israel and the UAE on ways to expand economic and political cooperation in the Middle East and Asia, including through trade and enhancing maritime security. Jaishankar, who is currently on a five-day visit to Israel, was accompanied by the home nation's Foreign Minister Yair Lapid, during the virtual meeting on Monday. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan participated virtually as the four leaders also exchanged views on shared issues of concern in the region.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/indian-eam-s-jaishankar-discusses-ways-to-expand-economic-political-cooperation-in-middle-east-asia-with-counterparts-from-us-israel-and-uae/articleshow/87129858.cms>

#### **Crop fires take India's global contribution to GHG emissions to 12.2%**

A latest data analysis has shown that compared to the previous three years, there has been an increase in emissions due to crop fires in 2019-2020 by 12.8 per cent, taking India's global contribution to 12.2 per cent. The new insights into recent trends in biomass fires, including emissions from forest and crop residue fires in India, showed a downward trend in crop fires being observed between 2016-19 citing a reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions due to cropland fires by 11.39 per cent during the three years. However, the data and analysis for GHG emissions available online, show that even when India tops the chart when it comes to crop fires, this particular emission quantum comes at 47th position when total emission categories from agriculture sector are considered. That inventory is dominated by enteric fermentation, managed soil, and rice cultivation.

[https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/crop-fires-take-india-s-global-contribution-to-ghg-emissions-to-12-2-121101901036\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/crop-fires-take-india-s-global-contribution-to-ghg-emissions-to-12-2-121101901036_1.html)

#### **Services exports may reach over \$240 billion in 2021-22, need govt support: SEPC**

Seeking incentives from the government, SEPC on Tuesday said the country's services exports are expected to reach over USD 240 billion during 2021-22 on account of healthy performance by segments such as professional and management consulting services, audio visual, freight transport services, and telecommunications. Services Export Promotion Council (SEPC) Chairman Maneck Davar said that during the first five months of the current fiscal year, exports from the sector increased 14 per cent to USD 95 billion.

“Total services exports for 2021-22 are expected to touch over USD 240 billion dollars and may increase even further when the tourism sector is opened up later in the year,” Davar said. In 2020-21, services exports dipped by three per cent to USD 206 billion.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/economy/services-exports-may-reach-over-240-billion-in-2021-22-need-govt-support-sepc/2352383/>

### **India, developing nations continue to push WTO for permanent solution on MSP, public stock holding**

India, the African group, China and the G33 group of developing nations have stepped up pressure at the WTO for a permanent solution on public stock holding programmes, including crop support prices, prior to the crucial 12th WTO Ministerial Conference scheduled next month, and have insisted that the solution should cover all products without the need for onerous paperwork. The countries have also indicated their willingness to meet mid-way those who have concerns on the matter and take measures to ensure that there are no trade distortions, a Geneva-based official told BusinessLine.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/india-developing-nations-continue-to-push-wto-for-permanent-solution-on-msp-public-stock-holding/article37073955.ece>

### **Agri, processed food exports top \$10 billion in H1FY22**

Exports of 37 major agricultural and processed foods topped \$10 billion in the first half of the current fiscal with the shipments increasing by 17.6 per cent to \$1.007 billion. The exports, promoted by the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), were \$8.51 billion during the same period a year ago.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/agri-processed-food-exports-top-10-billion-in-h1fy22/article37069236.ece>

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