



November 03, 2020 - Tuesday

Key Developments

Government extends emergency credit line guarantee scheme till November 30

The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government on Monday announced extending the time window for businesses to seek sovereign-guaranteed loans under the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) by one month till November 30.

The finance ministry said in a statement that it has extended the scheme till the end of this month or "or till such time that an amount of Rs 3 trillion is sanctioned under the Scheme, whichever is earlier, in view of the opening up of various sectors in the economy and the expected increase in demand during the ongoing festive season." The scheme, in place since May 23, had a deadline of October 31.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/govt-extends-emergency-credit-line-guarantee-scheme-till-november-30-120110201018_1.html

Factory output hits decade high in October as demand bounces back: PMI

India's factory activity expanded at its fastest pace in over a decade in October as demand and output continued to recover strongly from coronavirus-related disruptions, but firms cut more jobs, a private survey showed.

Asia's third-largest economy is healing after shrinking a record 23.9 per cent in the April-June quarter. The Indian government has removed most restrictions imposed to control the spread of the virus, though infections continue to climb and now number over 8 million people. The Nikkei Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index INPMI=ECI, compiled by IHS Markit, rose to 58.9 in October from September's 56.8. The reading was the highest since May 2010 and above the 50-level separating growth from contraction for the third straight month.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/factory-output-hits-decade-high-in-october-as-demand-bounces-back-pmi-120110200332_1.html

RBI to extend trading hours to 3:30 pm from 2 pm starting November 9

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Monday said it will restore trading hours in the bond and currency markets in a graded manner, effective November 9.

The trading hour restrictions were put in place on April 7, in view of the national lockdown owing to the Covid crisis. The lockdown caused operational dislocations, preventing normal functioning of the markets.

"With the graded roll-back of the lockdown and easing of restrictions on movement of people and functioning of offices, it has been decided to restore trading hours for regulated markets in a phased manner," the RBI said in a notification.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/finance/rbi-to-extend-trading-hours-to-3-30-pm-from-2-pm-starting-november-9-120110201158_1.html

RBI extends deadline for banks' compliance with new guidelines for existing current accounts

The Reserve Bank of India on Monday extended the deadline for banks to comply with new guidelines with respect to existing current accounts. Current accounts are widely used by businesses for their daily activities. A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document will be issued to address all the issues raised by banks regarding implementation of the guidelines for existing current account. The banks will have time till December 15 to ensure compliance in this

regard, according to the RBI. In August, the RBI proposed changes to the current account operations in order to discipline banks to follow better practices, following recent learnings. However, the banks -- especially the private sector and foreign ones -- have voiced concerns.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/banking/finance/banking/rbi-extends-deadline-for-banks-compliance-with-new-guidelines-for-existing-current-accounts/articleshow/79004635.cms>

Finance Ministry releases Rs 6,000 Cr to states under special window for meeting GST compensation shortfall

The Ministry of Finance is today releasing Rs 6,000 crore as the second tranche to 16 States and 3 Union Territories under the special window to states for meeting the GST compensation cess shortfall. 21 States and 3 UTs have so far opted for the Special Window under Option I and the finance ministry has facilitated loans of Rs 12,000 crore to date under the special window, said a statement by the Ministry of Finance. The government added that the amount was raised at a weighted average yield of 4.42 per cent and it will be passed on to the states at the same interest rate, which is lower than the cost of borrowings for the states and will thus benefit them.

The loans have been released to Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand. UT of Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir, and Puducherry also received the loans.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/economy/finmin-releases-rs-6000-cr-to-states-under-special-window-for-meeting-gst-compensation-shorfall/2119491/>

Economy

Tax payers generate 49.5 million e-invoices in first month: Govt

Tax payers generated 4.95 crore e-invoices in the first month of the launch of the service, the ministry of electronics and IT said on Monday. Besides e-invoices, 6.41 crore e-way bills were generated in October which was highest in any month since the launch of the service. "According to NIC, within the first month of introduction itself, more than 495 lakh e-invoices were generated on the NIC portal by 27,400 taxpayers," the ministry of electronics and IT said in a statement.

The e-invoice system was launched on October 1, 2020 as part of the goods and services tax regime for the businesses with aggregate turnover of more than Rs 500 crores in the financial year.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/tax-payers-generate-49-5-million-e-invoices-in-first-month-govt-120110201048_1.html

Business sentiment rises from record low, up 41% during July-September, says NCAER survey

Business sentiment shot up by 41% during the July-September quarter from a record low in the previous quarter, according to the Business Expectation Survey conducted by the National Council for Applied Economic Research (NCAER). The think tank's Business Confidence Index (BCI) rose to 65.5 in the second quarter after recording a massive drop to 46.4 in the first quarter of the ongoing fiscal, according to a NCAER statement released on Monday. However, this was still 36.5% below last year's levels and the 77.3 seen in the final quarter of FY20, it said. Covering around 600 firms across sectors, geographies and sizes, the BCI surveys four aspects including economic conditions, financial position, investment climate and capacity utilisation.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/business-sentiment-up-41-during-jul-sept-rises-from-record-low-last-quarter-ncaer-survey/articleshow/79001323.cms>

India's October unemployment rate climbs up to 6.98%, CMIE data shows

India's unemployment rate in October rose to 6.98% from 6.67% in September, according to data released by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE). The novel coronavirus has infected nearly 8.2 million people in the world's second-most populous nation, hitting large parts of the economy. Economic activity has resumed after the government eased pandemic lockdown restrictions.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/india-s-october-unemployment-rate-climbs-up-to-6-98-cmie-data-shows-120110200183_1.html

Centre plans a two-week winter session post Bihar assembly elections

The Centre is planning a two-week winter session of Parliament from December 21. The winter session, which usually begins in the third week of November, may be postponed till the third week of December. A final call will be taken after the Bihar assembly election results on November 10. The Centre expects all formalities, including the government formation and oath taking ceremony, to be over by the third week of November. Sources indicated that the dates proposed by the parliamentary affairs ministry are tentative. The government would review the legislative agenda proposed by ministries and then take the final call.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/centre-plans-to-conduct-a-two-week-winter-session-post-bihar-assembly-elections/articleshow/79007479.cms>

How Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code can provide exit mechanism in economy

Change is the rule of nature and it applies to businesses and corporates too. Profitability in a business is the natural corollary of the efficiencies of its promoters and/or management. If this efficiency starts slipping, things spiral out of control at times leaving only two options in front of its owners/management – either let the entire venture sink or the owners and management gracefully exit and allow the business's creditors to try and salvage the situation which may even give a chance for the business to survive. This is possible in cases where, though the promoters/management might have failed, there are still good assets or business prospects in the company. In these situations, it is necessary to have a mechanism whereby the promoters voluntarily exit and let some other person run the show. But prior to the introduction of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code in 2016 the laws in force in India did not provide an exit mechanism for the promoters or management. They merely enabled needful action against erring and inefficient promoters or management and were modes to recover the dues. The earlier laws did not facilitate or explore options to keep the ailing business a going concern.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/economy/how-insolvency-and-bankruptcy-code-can-provide-exit-mechanism-in-economy-ibc-defaulter-company/2119467/>

Banking and Finance

Bad debt will hinder India's economic recovery: Ex-RBI Guv Subbarao

Indian banks saddled with the world's worst bad debt pile pose a risk to the nation's economic growth unless the government steps in to recapitalize some of them, according to three former central bank chiefs in a soon-to-be released book.

The problem though is that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has very little resources to help the banks after pledging money to fight the pandemic's fallout, the ex-central bankers say in the book, "Pandemonium: The Great Indian Banking Tragedy". The reason: falling revenues that are seen causing the fiscal deficit to blow out to double that budgeted.

"Yes, the bad loan problem is big and real," Duvvuri Subbarao, governor at the Reserve Bank of India between 2008 and the autumn of 2013, said in the book by journalist Tamal Bandyopadhyay. "But, what is also big and real is the fiscal constraints of the government."

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/bad-debt-will-hinder-india-s-economic-recovery-ex-rbi-guv-subbarao-120110200244_1.html

PNB Housing Finance set to prune corporate loan book by Rs 1,500 cr

Mortgage lender PNB Housing Finance (PNB HFC) plans to reduce corporate loan book by Rs 1,500 crore by March 2021 and is going in for a second round of rationalisation. Hardayal Prasad, managing director (MD) and chief executive officer (CEO) said the company has built a strong balance sheet and will continue to rebalance its portfolio to build a robust retail franchise. There was a sell down and accelerated pre-payment of Rs 477 crore in the corporate book.

"HFC remains steadfast in its strategy to bring down share of corporate book by end of the current fiscal year," Dayal said in an analysts' call. The company is closely monitoring its corporate book and many accounts are in various stages of resolution. Some of these resolutions are expected to fructify during the current financial year.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/finance/pnb-housing-finance-set-to-prune-corporate-loan-book-by-rs-1-500-cr-120110200301_1.html

50-60% of spends on E-commerce platforms via digital modes

About 60% of customer spends on e-commerce platforms such as Flipkart and Amazon were through digital modes during the festival season this year, in a reversal from the pre-Covid-19 days when Cash on Delivery (CoD) used to be the preferred payment method, multiple people with knowledge of the matter told ET. CoD has traditionally constituted as much as 70% of all e-commerce transactions. During the early days of the pandemic, CoD transactions fell sharply, as most leading online marketplaces discouraged physical contact on home delivery, although it has picked up since. Smartphone apps enabled by Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and e-wallets, along with debit and credit cards that offered incentives and EMI options, nudged consumers towards contactless modes at a time when physical cash-based transactions are being discouraged, the executives said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/services/retail/50-60-of-spends-on-etail-platforms-via-digital-modes/articleshow/79006398.cms>

Industry

Two-wheeler sales zoom in Oct in anticipation of a good festive season

Two-wheeler sales at most firms rose at a brisk pace in October as companies dispatched higher volumes in anticipation of a good festive season that began with Navratra. Cumulative sales at two-wheeler makers (excluding Honda Motorcycle) rose 23 per cent year-on-year.

The volumes however, are not strictly comparable with the last year's as unlike the last year, when two key festivals – Navratra and Diwali were clubbed in a single month – this year they are staggered over two months.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/two-wheeler-sales-zoom-in-oct-in-anticipation-of-a-good-festive-season-120110201331_1.html

Revival in economic activity, infra and rural demand pushes CV sales

Commercial vehicle makers have started seeing uptick in sales following recovery in economic activity and revival of the infrastructure sector. Tata Motors' domestic commercial sales was flat on October 20 at 26,052 units as compared to 25,983 in October 2019 and 12 per cent up compared to September 2020 (23,245 units). MHC sales grew by 9% to 5,033 units over September 2020 (4,606 units), and 3% over October 2019 (4,893 units), the first month registering growth over the previous year. CV exports in October 2020 were 45% higher than the previous month and 20% higher than October 2019.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/revival-in-economic-activity-infra-and-rural-demand-pushes-cv-sales-120110201214_1.html

Relief for FMCG after Centre relaxes packaging norms, lets companies use existing inventory

The government has allowed companies to use by March next year inventories of packaging material or wrappers with manufacturing dates already printed, which is a big relief for the FMCG sector which suffered during the lockdowns. Manufacturers will have to stamp or paste stickers declaring details of the correct month and year of manufacturing and packing, according to an order issued by the Consumer Affairs Ministry. Without this relaxation, packaging material would have been wasted because they are not allowed to put stickers to change the details. "The relaxation will be applicable to those manufacturers or packers who have to declare the month and year of manufacturing and packing under the Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 2011," said an official.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/cons-products/fmcg/relief-for-fmcg-after-centre-relaxes-packaging-norms-lets-companies-use-existing-inventory/articleshow/78997927.cms>

India, world's largest sugar consumer, wants its people to eat more

In a world where sugar has attracted increasing scrutiny for its impact on health and obesity, there are moves afoot in the biggest consuming country to persuade people to eat more of the sweetener. Mills in India are eyeing increased consumption as a way to cut the nation's chronic oversupply, which stems partly from the favorable incentives provided to growers in politically powerful rural areas. High production costs mean the country finds it hard to sell sugar on the global market without subsidies. To push forward their initiative, the mills have begun an online campaign to boost domestic demand, involving workshops and webinars, where everyone from nutritionists and endocrinologists, to public health experts and medical practitioners will share their expertise and knowledge.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/india-worlds-largest-consumer-of-sugar-wants-its-people-to-eat-more/articleshow/78991494.cms>

Smartphone shipments in 2H 2020 likely to be highest since 2017: Market trackers

Despite slowdown blues, the second half of 2020 could be the best performing period for smartphones with expected shipments at 100 million units, say market trackers. Having notched up a record 53 million shipments in the July-September period, the current festive quarter is estimated to register another 47 million, as per various estimates. Totalling 100 million, this number would be the highest ever. The sales are expected to beat 2017, the year when the Indian smartphone market was the fastest growing in the world at 14%. Pent up consumer demand post-lockdown and emergence of new use cases such as homeschooling needs are the primary factors for the stellar growth in smartphone shipments this year, analysts say.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/cons-products/electronics/smartphone-shipments-in-2h-2020-likely-to-be-highest-since-2017-market-trackers/articleshow/79000737.cms>

Hospitality industry pleads for soft loan from government: FHRAI

Hospitality industry body Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) said on Monday that roughly after three months of reopening for business, the industry has witnessed a dismal response from travelers. The industry body said having registered only 20 to 30% of the average pre-pandemic revenues across the country, the businesses are finding it more and more difficult to sustain with each passing day. FHRAI said on behalf of the 'financially distressed' fraternity, it has asked the government to provide soft loans to hotel and restaurant players. It added that financial support of this nature will help businesses cover for the required working capital which in turn will help them sustain.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/services/hotels/-/restaurants/hospitality-industry-pleads-for-soft-loan-from-government-fhrai/articleshow/79004272.cms>

Gold smuggling may rise due to unemployment, cheaper price in neighbour countries: Industry

Gold smuggling in India may increase as a number of people rendered jobless owing to Covid-19 may turn to this route to make some easy money, said industry executives. Once travel restrictions are withdrawn, smuggling channels will become active with more direct and indirect auxiliary participants, said Somasundaram PR, managing director-India, World Gold Council. About 120-150 tonnes of gold is smuggled annually into India, the second largest consumer of the yellow metal, according to trade estimates. "Gold will enter through the grey route, particularly from Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, as these countries have withdrawn duty on gold," said Anantha Padmanabhan, chairman, All India Gem & Jewellery Domestic Council. "Gold is cheaper in these countries now. West Bengal and Tamil Nadu are the two states which will see an inflow of gold through the grey route once the travel curbs are withdrawn."

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/indl-goods/svs/metals-mining/gold-smuggling-may-rise-due-to-unemployment-cheaper-price-in-neighbour-countries-industry/articleshow/78996596.cms>

Agriculture

Tur prices fall by 15%, other pulses stable; industry demands long-term import policy

Tur dal prices have declined by 15-20% from the highs of October while those of other pulses, including masur and chana, have either stabilised or declined marginally following measures taken by the government. Last month, the government extended the duration to import tur and the low import duty on masur till December 31, and offloaded chana in the market to bring down the prices of these commodities. The mill gate and retail price of tur dal had touched Rs 120/kg and Rs 150/kg, respectively. Ex-mill price of top-quality tur dal in Latur has declined from Rs 120/kg to Rs 100/kg since the government announced extension in the duration to import tur from November 15 to December 31. The government has also started selling tur to the states through the public distribution system.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/tur-prices-fall-by-15-other-pulses-stable-industry-demands-long-term-import-policy/articleshow/79005221.cms>

Onion costliest at Rs 100/kg in Bengaluru, lowest at Rs 35/kg in Udaipur and Rampurhat

Onion, a politically-sensitive commodity, remained costliest in the retail markets of Bengaluru at Rs 100 per kg on Monday despite Karnataka being the third-largest producer of the kitchen staple in the country, according to government data. The lowest price quoted was Rs 35/kg in only two cities -- Udaipur in Rajasthan and Rampurhat in

Birbhum district of West Bengal -- out of the 114 cities where price trends are monitored on a daily basis by the government. The average all-India daily price of onion was ruling as high as Rs 70/kg on Monday.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/onion-costliest-at-rs-100/kg-in-bengaluru-lowest-at-rs-35/kg-in-udaipur-and-rampurhat/articleshow/79001684.cms>

70% of households paid 25-100% more for tomato, potato and onion this year: Survey

Community social media platform LocalCircles conducted a survey to understand how much extra people were paying to purchase a kilogram of onions, potatoes and tomatoes. This comes as consumers show discernment over the rising price of these vegetables for the last two months. The survey also intended to understand the average amount a household paid this year for buying these vegetables as compared to 2019.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/70-of-households-paid-25-100-more-for-tomato-potato-and-onion-this-year-survey/article33000987.ece>

Infrastructure

Registration of residential properties in Mumbai up 36% in October: Report

The registration of residential properties in Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) during October rose 36 per cent year-on-year at 7,929 units on higher demand during festive season and reduction in stamp duty by the Maharashtra government, according to Knight Frank.

Knight Frank India on Monday released a report 'Mumbai Residential Snapshot October 2020' that analyses Residential sales for the MMR. The registrations in October 2020 rose by 42 per cent month-on-month and 36 per cent year-on-year, the property consultant said. Home sales volume in Mumbai stood at 7,929 units in October 2020 and were boosted by stamp duty cut and festive period of Navratri and Dussehra, Knight Frank said.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/registration-of-residential-properties-in-mumbai-up-36-in-oct-report-120110200875_1.html

Pune residential sales up 58 percent quarter-on-quarter in Q3, launches rise 55 percent

Property market of Pune has witnessed 58% sequential rise in housing sales to 1,344 apartments in the third quarter led by the state government's move to reduce stamp duty on property transactions. Sales momentum was also supported by low home loan rates, attractive schemes by builders, and competitive prices. Residential launches in the city saw a 55% sequential jump to 1,756 new units during the quarter with locations like Kharadi, Hinjewadi, Wakad and Hadapsar accounting for more than 50% of the launches, showed data from property consultancy JLL India. This strong growth was on a low base of the second quarter that was significantly impacted owing to the severe lockdown restriction in the wake of ongoing pandemic.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/services/property/-/cstruction/pune-residential-sales-up-58-percent-quarter-on-quarter-in-q3-launches-rise-55-percent/articleshow/79002337.cms>

Piped water: Over 50% jump in rural areas in 14 months

Piped drinking water reached about 5.74 crore rural households or 30% of such households as on last Thursday, compared with 3.24 crore (17%) as on August 15 last year, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), according to the official dashboard. This represents an impressive over 50% jump in 14-and-a-half months. Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, 1.67 crore new rural households, including 1.06 crore under JJM, have been added to functional household tap connection (FHTC) network in the country so far in FY21.

The JJM's stated the goal is to provide drinking water to all 19 crore rural households by 2024, at an estimated cost of Rs 3.6 lakh crore (Rs 2.08 lakh crore by the Centre and Rs 98,000 crore by states).

<https://www.financialexpress.com/economy/piped-water-over-50-jump-in-rural-areas-in-14-months/2118953/>

India's first solar-powered miniature train launched at Veli Tourist Village in Kerala

A solar energy-driven miniature train, billed as the country's first of its kind, was inaugurated at the Veli Tourist Village here by Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Monday. The train, which would be an attraction for children especially, was part of a string of projects totally worth Rs 60 crore taken up to elevate the facilities at the panoramic destination to international standards. Vijayan also dedicated an "Urban Park" and a swimming pool at the eco-friendly tourist village, located on the outskirts of the state capital where the Veli Lake meets the Arabian Sea. The

miniature rail has all the features of a fully- equipped rail system, including a tunnel, station and a ticket office. The train has three bogies that can accommodate around 45 people at a time.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/transportation/railways/indias-first-solar-powered-miniature-train-launched-at-veli-tourist-village-in-kerala/articleshow/79002355.cms>

Railways achieves highest-ever automobile loading in October

Railways achieved a highest-ever automobile loading in October 2020 at 320 rakes in that month, almost double the 162 rakes level in the same month last year, a top official said. Also, the cumulative automotive loading this year is up 30.5 per cent at 1156 rakes over 886 rakes till October 2020, Railway Board Chairman & CEO Vinod Kumar Yadav said at a virtual press briefing.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/logistics/railways-achieves-highest-ever-automobile-loading-in-october/article33005086.ece>

National Investment and Infrastructure Fund acquires 2 Essel projects

The National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) on Monday said it has acquired two assets - Devanahalli and Dichpally tollways - from Essel Group, marking its entry into the roads and highways sector. The deal size was not disclosed by NIIF. The acquisition is done through the NIIF Master Fund, and the projects will be managed by Athaang Infrastructure, NIIF's proprietary roads platform backed by a team of experienced professionals with rich domain expertise in the transportation sector, it said in a statement.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/indl-goods/svs/construction/national-investment-and-infrastructure-fund-acquires-2-essel-projects/articleshow/78996150.cms>

Energy

Five coal mines taken in the first day of auctions

Five coal mines were bid out on Monday, the first day of the Centre's commercial coal mining auctions. The winners on Day 1 were Aurobindo Realty and Infrastructure, JMS Mining, Yazdani International, Vedanta and Hindalco Industries. Companies are competing on the basis of the share of revenue they would part with to the respective State governments. There is no end-use restriction on the coal that is mined. The Centre will be auctioning 19 coal mines by November 9.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/bidding-under-commercial-coal-mining-auctions-begins/article33001840.ece?homepage=true>

Diesel completes a month without retail price revision across country

Auto fuel diesel on Monday completed one full month without any revision in its retail prices across the country. The auto fuel prices were revised downwards to current levels exactly a month back on October 2. But since then, oil marketing companies have not changed its price suggesting stability in the oil market. Average International Crude prices remained just a \$ 1 per barrel below at around \$ 40 a barrel in October as compared to September. This according to IndianOil chairman S.M. Vaidya is a minor change warranting any change in retail prices of petrol and diesel. The OMCs in India have been holding on to the retail price of petrol and diesel for close to a month now. Even on Monday, the price of two petrol products remained unchanged. With this, petrol prices have now been unchanged for over a month (41 days) while diesel prices have been at the same level as on October 2.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/diesel-completes-a-month-without-retail-price-revision-across-country-120110200518_1.html

Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd eyes Rs 2.4k crore revenue in FY21

State-owned Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd (IREDA) is eyeing Rs 2,406 crore revenue in the current financial year. IREDA has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) for setting key targets for the year 2020-21, the ministry said in a statement. The MoU was signed by MNRE Secretary Indu Shekhar Chaturvedi and IREDA CMD Pradip Kumar Das on Monday, the statement said. The government has set a revenue target of Rs 2,406 crore under 'Excellent' rating along with various performance-related parameters such as operating profit as percentage of revenue from operations, PAT (profit after tax) as a percentage of average net worth, loan disbursement, overdue loan etc, as per the MoU.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/power/indian-renewable-energy-development-agency-ltd-eyes-rs-2-4k-crore-revenue-in-fy21/articleshow/79004089.cms>

States

Maharashtra government inks Rs 35,000-crore MoUs with 15 companies

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the Maharashtra government on Monday inked MoUs worth around Rs 35,000 crore with 15 companies even as Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray called for attracting over Rs 1 lakh crore investments this year to the state. Thackeray made the remarks during the Magnetic Maharashtra 2.0 event, which seeks to mobilise investments in the state, held here. The MoUs worth Rs 34,850 crore were signed between the state-run Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) and the 15 companies and they are expected to create 23,182 jobs, a statement said. The event was also attended by Industries Minister Subhash Desai and Minister of State for Industries Aditi Tatkare. Speaking at the event, the chief minister lavished praise on the government's industries department for its efforts to attract investments in the state.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/maharashtra-government-inks-rs-35000-crore-mous-with-15-companies/articleshow/79004095.cms>

Tamil Nadu needs to increase Tax-GSDP ratio, suggests state's economic revival committee

A committee headed by former RBI governor C Rangarajan, set up by the Tamil Nadu government to identify measures to revive the state's economy once the Covid-19 crisis abates, has suggested "appropriate rate changes to taxes" to raise the tax-GSDP ratio. "In the medium term, the Tax-GSDP (Gross State Domestic Product) ratio should be increased through appropriate rate changes to taxes which have not been revised for a while and other measures," the panel said. The high-level committee also suggested immediate and urgent financial restructuring of electricity transmission and distribution utilities to improve state finances. It pitched for development of integrated townships with social infrastructure facilities to attract investments. Developing such townships in the 'growth centres' would provide a big advantage to the state in attracting investments, the panel suggested.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/tamil-nadu-needs-to-increase-tax-gsdp-ratio-suggests-states-economic-revival-committee/articleshow/79004530.cms>

Healthcare

India home healthcare industry to hit \$11-13 billion by 2025: Report

The home healthcare industry in India is expected to continue growing at 15-19 per cent a year to touch \$11-13 billion by 2025 from \$5.4 billion currently, a Redseer Consulting report said on Monday. Consumer pain points with hospital services in India like access and availability, risk of getting infected, increasing costs in addition to the hassle of repeat hospital visits, lack of personal care and high hospitalisation costs are the major factors that consumers are looking at home healthcare as the emerging solution. Home healthcare solutions can be up to 40 per cent less costly as compared to hospitals as they utilise available capacity in patient homes, said the home-grown consulting firm. Further, home healthcare can reduce unnecessary hospital visits by up to 65 per cent and reduce the overall operational costs of hospitals by 20 per cent, said the report, adding that patients in home health care have a faster recovery cycle.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/india-home-healthcare-industry-to-hit-11-13-billion-by-2025-report-120110201165_1.html

India in pole position globally in COVID-19 recoveries, active cases witness steady downward trend

India continues to occupy the top position globally in terms of COVID-19 recoveries, while the total number of active cases have witnessed a sustained downward trend with its percentage having reduced more than three times in just two months, the Union Health Ministry said on Monday. With 53,285 people recuperating from the infection in a day, the total number of recoveries have surged to 75,44,798 on Monday, while at the same time the country recorded 45,231 new cases. There are 5,61,908 active cases of coronavirus infection which comprises only 6.83 per cent of the total caseload in the country, the ministry said. The number of active cases remained below six lakh for four days in a row. "In a span of just two months, the percentage of active cases have reduced more than three times. On September 3, the percentage of active cases was 21.16 per cent," it highlighted.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/healthcare/biotech/healthcare/india-in-pole-position-globally-in-covid-19-recoveries-active-cases-witness-steady-downward-trend/articleshow/78998637.cms>

Government attributes festivals, laxity in adhering to protocol behind surge in COVID cases in Delhi

The government on Monday attributed the surge in active COVID-19 cases in Delhi to the festive season, greater movement of people and laxity in adhering to safe COVID behaviour and said efforts will be made to increase testing in critical zones. It also emphasised that Metro travel should be carefully regulated as per the SOPs. At a high level meeting, chaired by Union Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla, the COVID-19 situation in Delhi was discussed threadbare. "The recent surge in the number of active cases was attributed to the festival season, which has witnessed greater movement of people, accompanied by laxity in adhering to the basic principles of safe COVID behaviour," a home ministry statement said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/healthcare/biotech/healthcare/government-attributes-festivals-laxity-in-adhering-to-protocol-behind-surge-in-covid-cases-in-delhi/articleshow/78999465.cms>

DCGI rejects Dr Reddy's proposal seeking change in regulatory approval status for remdesivir

India's drug regulatory authority has rejected a proposal of pharma giant Dr. Reddy's seeking change in regulatory approval status for remdesivir from restricted emergency use to full marketing authorisation. Dr Reddy's had approached the Subject Expert committee (SEC) that advises the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) on applications seeking permissions for new drugs, clinical trials, vaccines for Covid-19. It had asked the SEC for change of regulatory approval status of Remdesivir from restricted emergency use to full marketing authorisation. However, "after detailed deliberation the committee did not recommend for grant of full marketing authorisation and opined that approval for restricted emergency use of the drug should continue," said the minutes of the meeting dated October 29.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/healthcare/biotech/pharmaceuticals/dcgi-rejects-dr-reddys-proposal-seeking-change-in-regulatory-approval-status-for-remdesivir/articleshow/79001321.cms>

T-cell study gains insight into COVID-19 immunity, asymptomatic people could be safer

A small UK study has found that "cellular immunity" to the pandemic SARS-CoV-2 virus is present after six months in people who had mild or asymptomatic COVID-19 infections - suggesting they might have some level of protection for at least that time. Scientists presenting the findings, from 100 non-hospitalised COVID-19 patients in Britain, said they were "reassuring" but did not mean people cannot in rare cases be infected twice with the disease. "While our findings cause us to be cautiously optimistic about the strength and length of immunity generated after SARS-CoV-2 infection, this is just one piece of the puzzle," said Paul Moss, a professor of haematology at Britain's Birmingham University who co-led the study.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/healthcare/biotech/healthcare/t-cell-study-gains-insight-into-covid-19-immunity-asymptomatic-people-could-be-safer/articleshow/79002218.cms>

External

Hiking import duties won't promote manufacturing or improve exports: Report

Amid the government hiking import duties on a slew of products to help boost local manufacturing, a report on Monday pitched for lowering such levies, saying higher duties will not promote competitive manufacturing but may lead to inefficiency.

Since the beginning of 2000, successive governments have been eyeing a quarter of the GDP to come from manufacturing by 2025 but not much has moved in that direction.

Between 2004 and 2017, the incremental gain in the country's manufacturing global share is a low 1.5 percentage points to 3 per cent, while China has gained a whopping 18 per cent share, SBI Research said in a report on Monday.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/hiking-import-duties-won-t-promote-manufacturing-or-improve-exports-report-120110201112_1.html

Healthy export demand mitigates Covid impact on specialty chemicals: Report

Even as domestic demand has remained subdued, improved export demand and positive outlook for segments like agro-chemicals and surfactants have reduced the COVID-19 impact on specialty chemicals, according to a report.

The Indian specialty chemical sector, which had witnessed healthy revenue growth in the past few years aided by growth in domestic demand as well as increasing exports, was adversely impacted in the first quarter of 2020-21 due to the coronavirus-induced lockdowns and disruptions, ICRA Ratings said in a report.

ICRA expects the impact on the sector to be mitigated during the rest of the financial year, due to growing demand from the export segment and positive demand outlook in the near term for segments like agro-chemicals and surfactants. However, segments catering to construction and auto sectors will witness some demand pressure and have more gradual recovery, it added.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/markets/healthy-export-demand-mitigates-covid-impact-on-specialty-chemicals-report-120110201159_1.html

Demand from online sellers seen reviving handicrafts exports

Export of handicrafts, which was battered in the first quarter of the fiscal due to the disruption caused by Covid-19, may see a revival now with a sudden spurt in orders from online sellers over the past three months, say exporters. And, this could last well beyond the festive season, they add. "Due to the pandemic, online sellers have now started doing a lot of business. This is favouring handicraft exporters from India. Most of the online sellers have exhausted their stocks and are looking for new products. Therefore, there is a spurt in demand from such buyers since August this year and we are hopeful that this will continue in the months to come," said Raj Kumar Malhotra, a Gurgaon-based exporter and Vice Chairman of the Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH), at a media interaction on Monday.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/demand-from-online-sellers-seen-reviving-handicrafts-exports/article33003602.ece?homepage=true>

Indian Foreign Secretary Harsh V Shringla cautions against debt trap diplomacy

Foreign Secretary Harsh V Shringla while on his visit to Berlin pulled up China's BRI in a veiled fashion and cautioned against growing debt trap diplomacy and outlined India's inclusive vision for the Indo-Pacific region. "Threats to nation states and sovereignty can also come in other forms. The world is increasingly witnessing debt trap diplomacy in the garb of improving infrastructure and connectivity without heeding financial viability or environmental concerns. While there is no doubt that connectivity among nations needs to be improved, we have to be cautious about the terms of engagement," Shringla is understood to have told his German interlocutors on Monday. "Similar is the case with data and of cyber-governance we cannot afford to trample on democratic, transparent norms, or the need for multi-stakeholderism. We have to be wary of initiatives on data which are not transparent and are not negotiated in multilateral forums. We are all for cyber security and use of data for greater common good, but we cannot accept non-inclusive measures to achieve it" Shringla is understood to further stated.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/indian-foreign-secretary-harsh-v-shringla-cautions-against-debt-trap-diplomacy/articleshow/79003038.cms>