



June 28, 2021 – Monday

Key Developments

Zydus Covid-19 vaccine doses may be out soon for adolescents: Govt

The Centre informed the Supreme Court in an affidavit that a new Covid-19 vaccine would be available soon for adolescents (12-18 years) from Zydus Cadila. It also said that 1.35 billion doses would be needed to vaccinate the adult population August onwards, and it expects availability of the same. This is a downward revision of the earlier estimate of 2.1 billion doses that the Centre had indicated it expects between August and December.

“It is submitted that Zydus Cadila, which is developing DNA vaccines, has concluded its clinical trial for those between the age group of 12 to 18 years and subject to the statutory permissions, the same may be available in near future for children of the age group of 12 to 18 years,” the Centre said in an affidavit to the top court.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/zydus-covid-19-vaccine-doses-may-be-out-soon-for-adolescents-govt-121062700664_1.html

GAME partners with SIDBI to help MSMEs revive biz amid pandemic

The Global Alliance for Mass Entrepreneurship (GAME) and the Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) have signed a pact to help micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) address their challenges that were accentuated during the pandemic. The broad themes covered under the partnership include expanding credit access, increasing formalisation, building competitive clusters, and improving the legal framework for ease of doing business, according to a statement released on Sunday. The two organisations have committed that at least 25 per cent of the beneficiaries from the partnership would be women entrepreneurs, it added.

SIDBI has been at the forefront of supporting and innovating MSMEs since its inception. The organisation also helps promote some of India’s largest MSME-focused platforms and schemes such as CGTMSE and TReDS (RXIL).

<https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/sme/game-partners-with-sidbi-to-help-msmes-revive-biz-amid-pandemic/2279255/>

Panel meets to thrash out regulatory issues, speed up bank privatisation

Inching a step closer to privatisation of two public sector banks, a high-level panel headed by the cabinet secretary recently held a meeting to thrash out various regulatory and administrative issues so that the proposal could be placed with the group of ministers on disinvestment or Alternative Mechanism (AM) for approval. Pursuant to the announcement made by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her 2021 budget speech, the NITI Aayog has suggested a couple of bank names for privatisation to the Core Group of Secretaries on Disinvestment headed by Cabinet Secretary in April, sources said.

The meeting of the high-level panel deliberated on the recommendation of the NITI Aayog on Thursday June 24, sources said, adding the panel would after tying up all loose ends will send the names of the shortlisted PSU banks to AM for consideration.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/finance/cabinet-secy-led-panel-holds-crucial-meeting-on-bank-privatisation-121062700262_1.html

India Inc can now claim deduction for Covid support

India Inc will be able to claim deduction on financial support provided to employees and their families for medical expenses or ex-gratia payments in the event of death due to Covid-19, a top government official said. "These can be claimed as a deduction," the official said. Experts, however, said a clear guideline on deduction may be needed to remove any ambiguity. On Friday, the government exempted recipients from taxation for financial help received from employers or others to meet Covid-19 treatment expenditures from financial year 2019-20 onwards.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/company/corporate-trends/india-inc-can-now-claim-deduction-for-covid-support/articleshow/83901171.cms>

Govt defers mandatory installation of front seat airbags in existing car models till December 31

The road transport ministry has deferred by four months the mandatory installation of dual airbags for front seats in the existing car models, in view of the COVID-19 pandemic, a senior government official said on Sunday. At present, only the driver's seat airbag is mandatory for existing models of cars. In view of the prevailing pandemic situation, the ministry has decided to defer mandatory installation of front passenger airbags in the existing car models till December 31, 2021, the official said on condition of anonymity.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/auto/auto-news/govt-extends-deadline-for-mandatory-airbags-for-front-seat-passengers-in-existing-car-models-to-december/articleshow/83887721.cms>

Economy

Indian economy poised for recovery in FY22, says SBI Chairman

Although the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic again brought businesses and economic activities to a standstill, Chairman of the State Bank of India (SBI), Dinesh Kumar Khara has expressed hope that the country's economy would recover in the ongoing financial year. The Chairman noted that the global economy contracted by 3.3 per cent in 2020 with the pandemic causing significant loss of lives and livelihood. The GDP in India contracted by 7.3 per cent in FY2021 and the country experienced a second wave of infections with cases rising rapidly since March 2021, he said while addressing the 66th Annual General Meeting of the bank. He, however, said that policy measures and the coordinated efforts of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Centre were directed towards enabling growth on a more durable basis during these difficult times. "Notwithstanding the second wave of Covid-19, Indian economy, through its resilience, is poised for a recovery in FY2022," the SBI chief told the shareholders of the bank.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/indian-economy-poised-for-recovery-in-fy22-says-sbi-chairman-121062700234_1.html

PM Modi urges people to focus on rainwater harvesting amid ongoing monsoon

Water conservation is a way to render service to the nation, said Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday and urged citizens to focus on rainwater harvesting amid ongoing monsoon.

"The monsoons have come. Let us once again focus on water conservation. When the cloud rain they just don't rain for us, they also rain for our future generation. The rainwater gets collected on the ground, it increases the groundwater level, and that is why I believe water conservation is a way of service to the nation," said PM Modi while addressing the "Mann Ki Baat" radio programme. PM Modi said there are lots of people around us who do the good deed of water conservation as their duty and talked about Satchidananda Bharati from Uttarakhand's Pauri Garhwa.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/pm-modi-urges-people-to-focus-on-rainwater-harvesting-amid-ongoing-monsoon-121062700282_1.html

To foster ease of land property registration, govt plans to link e-courts with land records

Seeking to help bonafide buyers know whether the land they plan to buy is under any legal dispute, the government plans to link e-courts with land records and registration database. The government feels that in the long run it will reduce dubious transactions, help in dispute containment and also reduce clogging of the court's system. The pilot project on linking of e-Court with land records and registration database has been successfully completed in Maharashtra along with Uttar Pradesh and Haryana and soon it will be launched across the country. The Department of Justice in the Law Ministry has requested the registrars general of all the high courts to provide clearance to state governments to integrate land records and registration database with eCourts and National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) for speedy disposal of property disputes.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/to-foster-ease-of-land-property-registration-govt-plans-to-link-e-courts-with-land-records/articleshow/83890051.cms>

Rs 4,698.10 cr paid for death claims under PMJJBY last fiscal

Around Rs 4,700 crore has been paid against more than two lakh death claims filed under the Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) in the last financial year which witnessed COVID-19 leaving a trail of death, according to an RTI reply. The information regarding death claims under the PMJJBY, given by the Department of Financial Services to Neemuch district based RTI activist Chandrashekhar Gaur, do not mention the cause of deaths. According to the reply, payment of Rs 4,698.10 crore was against 2,34,905 death claims under the PMJJBY in the last fiscal, Gaur said.

https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/finance/rs-4698-10-cr-paid-for-death-claims-under-pmjby-last-fiscal/articleshow/83898159.cms?utm_source=ETTopNews&utm_medium=HPTN&utm_campaign=AL1&utm_content=23

Taxpayers can avail exemption on receipt of Covid-related aid citing SC's 'limitation' order

The Supreme Court's recent order extending the period of limitation on various laws till further orders in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic can prove useful for income tax payers who want to claim tax exemption on the financial aid for Covid-19 treatment or ex-gratia payment received by them during financial year 2019-20, say tax experts.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/taxpayers-can-avail-exemption-on-receipt-of-covid-related-aid-citing-scs-limitation-order/article34992636.ece>

All websites of high courts now have captchas that are disabled-friendly: Law Ministry

All websites of the high courts now have captchas that are accessible to people with disabilities, the law ministry said on Sunday. The task of making the digital infrastructure of the Indian judicial system more accessible to people with disabilities has been a core component of the work of the e-Committee of the Supreme Court in the last few months, it said in a statement. "A significant milestone that the e-Committee's efforts towards this objective have yielded has been to ensure that all high court websites now have captchas which are accessible to Persons with Disabilities (PwDs)," it said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/all-websites-of-high-courts-now-have-captchas-that-are-disabled-friendly-law-ministry/articleshow/83894935.cms>

Need to redesign welfare system to meet challenge of pandemics: Nobel laureate Abhijit Banerjee

The Covid pandemic has paved the way for learning many lessons with regard to the country's health situation and preparedness in general as well as highlighted the need to redesign welfare systems, Noble laureate and renowned economist Abhijit Banerjee said on Sunday. While addressing a webinar organised by the city-based National Institute for Implementation Research on Non-Communicable Diseases, Banerjee focused on the economic aspect of the country's health situation, welfare and healthcare systems. On the economic aspect of the health situation, he said that India has a large population afflicted with lifestyle diseases, which are non-communicable diseases (NCDs). "Many young people died in the second and first wave of the pandemic, but their conditions were not detected. Casualties among the young has caught us without any clue," the economist said, terming awareness about NCDs a key challenge.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/need-to-redesign-welfare-system-to-meet-challenge-of-pandemics-nobel-laureate-abhijit-banerjee/articleshow/83894799.cms>

India has capacity to store Covid vaccines requiring low temperatures: Centre to Supreme Court

India has the capacity to store vaccines that may require a lower temperature in the range of minus 15 to minus 20 degrees Celsius and there are over 29,000 cold chain points (CCPs) across the country where vaccines are stored at the recommended temperatures, the Centre has told the Supreme Court. In an affidavit filed in the apex court in a suo motu case on distribution of essential supplies and services during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Centre has said that at present, the two vaccines -- Covishield and Covaxin -- are required to be stored at a temperature range of two to eight degrees Celsius.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/india-has-capacity-to-store-covid-vaccines-requiring-low-temperatures-centre-to-supreme-court/articleshow/83892980.cms>

Banking and Finance

IBBI puts out Aadhaar, PAN info of creditors on website; removes them later

The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) "inadvertently" put out on its website Aadhaar and PAN details of creditors, including workmen, of some companies undergoing resolution process, and the issues are expected to be sorted out in the next few days. A senior official said the details came into the public domain "inadvertently" as the regulator is working on a beta project to host the information of creditors of companies undergoing Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) and liquidation.

The IBBI, a key institution in implementing the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), is working on the project to ensure and enhance transparency with respect to CIRP and liquidation processes, the official said, adding that the matter will be sorted out in the next few days.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/ibbi-puts-out-aadhaar-pan-info-of-creditors-on-website-removes-them-later-121062700521_1.html

Covid effect: A four-point plan likely for bankruptcy professionals

The frontline regulator for India's new-age bankruptcy professionals is drafting a four-point plan, including setting limits on the number of permissible assignments for each executive and crafting a bespoke package for MSMEs, to quicken the process of loan resolutions amid an anticipated surge in delinquencies due to the pandemic. Two people familiar with the matter told ET that the Indian Institute of Insolvency Professionals of ICAI (IIPI) is making the recommendations, including a standard on ethics, which will need the nod of both the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code of India (IBBI) and the government.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/covid-effect-a-four-point-plan-likely-for-bankruptcy-professionals/articleshow/83892982.cms>

PE industry players rue GST on fund management fees

The domestic private equity industry is keen that the government ensures a level-playing field between the locally set up PE funds and those established abroad on the taxation front. The existing 18 per cent GST on 'fund management fees' of PE funds continues to be a "big tax friction" affecting the onshoring of fund management activity in India, they said.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/policy/pe-industry-players-rue-gst-on-fund-management-fees/article34994899.ece>

RBI hunts for entity that can develop multimedia publicity material for awareness campaign

Seeking to accelerate its general awareness campaign, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has started looking for an entity that can develop multimedia publicity material in 14 languages. The pan-India campaign to educate the general public about the essential rules and regulations will be launched in Hindi, Assamese, Bangla, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu besides English. The media mix, according to an RBI document, will include traditional as well as new media. Besides newspapers, magazines, radio, television channels and cinema halls, the campaign will also cover digital media, web portals and social media, the RBI said while inviting applications from advertising agencies for designing the creatives for the awareness campaigns.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/banking/finance/banking/rbi-hunts-for-entity-that-can-develop-multimedia-publicity-material-for-awareness-campaign/articleshow/83889854.cms>

Industry

Traders body CAIT urges govt not to dilute draft e-commerce rules

Domestic traders' body CAIT on Sunday urged the government not to dilute the draft of e-commerce rules under any pressure of foreign-funded online firms. In a communication to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the

Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) said it has been observed that voices of terming the rules as stringent is being created. "In the wake of expected pressure tactics of foreign funded e-commerce companies against the draft of e-commerce rules...(we urged) him (prime minister) to ensure that no dilution is made in draft of e-commerce rules under any pressure," CAIT said in a statement. The draft rules after examining the suggestions and objections should be notified without any further delay, it added.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/traders-body-cait-urges-govt-not-to-dilute-draft-e-commerce-rules-121062700436_1.html

India's crude steel output grows 46.9% to 9.2 mn tonnes in May: Report

India registered a 46.9 per cent year-on-year growth in its crude steel output at 9.2 million tonnes (MT) in May, according to worldsteel data. The country had produced 5.8 MT steel in the same month a year ago. "The production of the 64 countries reporting to the World Steel Association (worldsteel) was 174.4 MT in May 2021, a 16.5 per cent increase compared to May 2020," the global industry body said in its latest report. China remained the global leader in the production of steel in May, registering 6.6 percent year-on-year growth in output at 99.5 MT during the month. According to the worldsteel data, China had produced 92.3 MT of steel in the same month last year. Last month, Japan's output increased to 8.4 MT from 5.9 MT in May 2020. The US produced 7.2 MT steel in the month under review. Its output was at 4.8 MT in May 2020.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/india-s-crude-steel-output-grows-46-9-to-9-2-mn-tonnes-in-may-report-121062700277_1.html

Odisha based steel industries face shortage of iron ore

Steel industries in Odisha have urged the state government to bail them out from the high price of raw materials including iron ore. Iron ore production in Odisha has dropped by over 31 million tonnes from 142 million tonnes in 2019-20 to 111 million tonnes in the 2020-21 financial year, according to official data. Due to less production and increase in exports, the local industries have to pay around Rs 10,000 per tonne of iron ore in comparison to Rs 2,200 per MT in June last year.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/indl-goods/svs/steel/odisha-based-steel-industries-face-shortage-of-iron-ore/articleshow/83890272.cms>

Agriculture

30 FPOs see over 2-fold jump in revenue in 2 years after SFAC intervention

About 30 farmer producer organisations (FPOs) in three states, including West Bengal, reported more than two-fold increase in their annual turnover in the last two years after a pilot intervention to make them viable, Small Farmers Agri-Business Consortium (SFAC) said on Sunday. SFAC, an autonomous body promoted by the Union Agriculture Ministry, collaborated with Grant Thornton Bharat in 2018 to introduce multiple interventions on 30 select FPOs in West Bengal, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh for two years. "A gamut of interventions were undertaken by way of input, credit, common facilities and market linkages, in addition to capacity-building and training of the Board of Directors (BoDs) on business planning. Notably, almost all of the FPOs were credit-linked for either working capital or term loan," said SFAC Managing Director Neelkamal Darbari in a statement.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/30-fpos-see-over-2-fold-jump-in-revenue-in-2-years-after-sfac-intervention/articleshow/83893334.cms>

Price crash and fungal infection force growers to dump quintals of mangoes on highway

Mango growers in Karnataka's Kolar district have dumped many quintals of mangoes following the Anthracnose fungal infection and crash in mango prices, a farmer leader said. "Mango growers are in distress in the district due to terrible losses. With no aid coming from the government, farmers have dumped loads of mangoes by the roadside in some parts of Srinivasapura in the district," Kolar District Mango Growers and Marketing Association president Neelaturu Chinnappa Reddy told P T I.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/price-crash-and-fungal-infection-force-growers-to-dump-quintals-of-mangoes-on-highway/articleshow/83891860.cms>

Infrastructure

478 infrastructure projects show cost overruns worth Rs 4.4 trillion

As many as 478 infrastructure projects, each worth Rs 150 crore or more, have been hit by cost overruns totalling more than Rs 4.4 lakh crore, according to a report. The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation monitors infrastructure projects worth Rs 150 crore and above. Of the 1,768 such projects, 478 reported cost overruns and 525 were delayed.

"Total original cost of implementation of the 1,768 projects was Rs 22,86,955.18 crore and their anticipated completion cost is likely to be Rs 27,27,220.47 crore, which reflects overall cost overruns of Rs 4,40,265.29 crore (19.25 per cent of original cost)," the ministry's latest report for May 2021 said.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/478-infrastructure-projects-show-cost-overruns-worth-rs-4-4-trillion-121062700179_1.html

Ground handling operators seek govt support to help tide over pandemic-induced crisis

Reeling under the impact of the pandemic, ground handling operators have sought government support, including an at least two-year moratorium on interest charges on bank loans and instructions to airport operators not to charge concessions and rental fees till normalcy returns, to help tide over the current crisis. The industry, which is estimated to have incurred a loss of Rs 800-900 crore in the last financial year due to no international operations that account for around 70 per cent of its total business, also wants the government to reopen the overseas flights in a planned and restructured manner. In a representation to the civil aviation ministry recently, industry body Ground Handling Association of India (GHIA) said the last many months have been "challenging" for the industry and given the situation, the government needs to come up with considerations and support measures to help it survive this challenging phase.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/ground-handling-operators-seek-govt-support-to-help-tide-over-pandemic-induced-crisis/2279310/>

Centre-State tussle over port control

The draft Indian Ports Bill 2021 seeks to empower the Central government to make a port non-operational for three reasons — if it has been non-operational for ten years after notification; in national security interest; or if it is not in consonance with the national plan for the development of major (owned by the Centre) and non-major (owned by the states) ports.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/logistics/centre-state-tussle-over-port-control/article34999030.ece>

Indian Railways to rope in realtors to redevelop Mumbai's Dadar, Andheri, Bandra station junctions

Indian Railway Stations Development Corporation Ltd. (IRSDC), the nodal agency for station redevelopment in the country, is set to rope in realty developers to redevelop multiple railway junctions in and around Mumbai including Andheri, Dadar, Kalyan, Bandra, Borivali and Thane. IRSDC has already shortlisted nine bidders for the proposed redevelopment of the iconic Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) Railway Station in South Mumbai.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/transportation/railways/indian-railways-to-rope-in-realtors-to-redevelop-mumbais-dadar-andheri-bandra-station-junctions/articleshow/83891687.cms>

Railways improves operating ratio to 97.45% in Covid-hit 2020-21

Limited train services for most of the year with no subsidies or concessions and severely tightening of expenses have led to the Railways better its operating ratio to 97.45 per cent in the financial year 2020-21 from 98.36 per cent the previous fiscal, according to an RTI reply. Operating ratio is the amount spent to earn every Rs 100. The lower it is the better. It is used to measure the operational efficiency of any organisation. Higher the operating ratio, lower the financial resources available for expansion and growth. The improvement in the running costs of the Railways means the national transporter was able to lower its expenditure and make up for the shortfall in passenger traffic through revenue generated by freight operations.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/transportation/railways/railways-improves-operating-ratio-to-97-45-in-covid-hit-2020-21/articleshow/83892684.cms>

Energy

India's coal import rises 30% to 22 million tonnes in April

India's coal import rose 30.3 per cent to 22.27 million tonnes in April amid supply concerns and demand for pre-monsoon restocking of dry fuel. The country had imported 17.09 million tonnes of coal in April last year, according to a provisional compilation by mjunction services, based on monitoring of vessels' positions and data received from shipping companies.

"India's coal and coke imports in April 2021 through the major and non-major ports are estimated to have increased by 30.3 per cent over April 2020... Imports in April 2021 stood at around 22.27 million tonnes (MT) as against 17.09 MT imported in April 2020," it said. "The demand for pre-monsoon restocking and supply concerns led to a surge in coal import during the month under review. Recently, tightened supply in overseas markets have firmed up prices. This factor coupled with the onset of monsoon is expected to keep the volumes in check in the near term," Vinaya Varma, MD & CEO, mjunction services Ltd, said.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/india-s-coal-import-rises-30-to-22-million-tonnes-in-april-121062700224_1.html

Sugar companies ramp up ethanol capacity as Govt advance blending target

Sugar companies have started announcing capital expenditure after a long gap to enhance their ethanol production capacity. Their decision has largely been enthused by the Centre's plans to advance its target of 20 per cent ethanol blending with petrol to 2023 from 2025.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/sugar-companies-ramp-up-ethanol-capacity-as-govt-advance-blending-target/article34986333.ece>

States

Green nod suggested for Delhi's 1st transit-oriented hub; 143 trees to be felled, transplanted

The Environment Ministry's Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) has recommended granting environmental clearance to phase one of the 'Integrated Development of East Delhi Hub' project under which 123 trees are planned to be felled and 20 transplanted. The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) had approved the project in 2014 and entrusted it to National Buildings Construction Corporation NBCC (India) Limited in 2019. The proposed project at Karkardooma is "conceptualised to be a new transit-oriented development that imbibes the core values of a sustainable 'Smart City'", the minutes of the 65th meeting of the EAC held on May 27-28 read. Spread over 37.42 hectares, the Rs 1,168-crore project will bring together metro stations, residences, workplaces and recreational spaces such as museums. The total green area proposed for phase one of the project, to be developed on 25.89 hectares of land, is 78,213 sqm.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/infrastructure/green-nod-suggested-for-delhis-1st-transit-oriented-hub-143-trees-to-be-felled-transplanted/2279293/>

NGT raps Chhattisgarh for not constructing road for transporting coal from mines

The National Green Tribunal has rapped the Chhattisgarh government for not constructing a road for transporting coal from mines to thermal power plants to minimise air pollution. A bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel directed the chief secretary, Chhattisgarh to ensure necessary action on the part of departments concerned on the subject of construction of road and providing health care facilities and drinking water to those affected by air pollution in the area.

"The State Board should prepare a list of areas where unscientific disposal of fly ash has taken place and generate data about the quantity of the coal mined, used in industries and available for thermal power plants," the bench said. Steps need to be taken expeditiously for development of health facilities, constructing necessary road from Raigarh to Dharamjaygarh and from Punjipatra to Milupara, disposal of fly ash in abandoned coal mines and constitution of State Level Committee to look into scientific utilisation of the fly ash. Taking such steps is undoubtedly necessary for protection of the environment, the bench said.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/infrastructure/ngt-raps-chhattisgarh-for-not-constructing-road-for-transporting-coal-from-mines/2279267/>

Haryana extends lockdown till July 5, relaxations allowed earlier to continue

The Haryana government Sunday extended the coronavirus lockdown by another week till July 5, while allowing university campuses to open for research scholars and practical classes in laboratories. "The Mahamari Alert-Surakshit Haryana is extended for another week that is from June 28 (5 am onwards) to July 5 (till 5 am) in the state of Haryana," Chief Secretary Vijai Vardhan said in an order issued under the Disaster Management Act, 2005. The state government has termed the coronavirus lockdown "Mahamari Alert-Surakshit Haryana (Epidemic Alert-Safe Haryana)".

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/haryana-extends-lockdown-till-jul-5-relaxations-allowed-earlier-to-continue/articleshow/83892590.cms>

Healthcare

No evidence that Covid-19 vaccine booster a must, says US CDC

There is currently no data to support that a Covid-19 vaccine booster shot is needed for the general population, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. But, an extra dose may be needed for more-vulnerable groups, such as older adults or organ transplant patients. However, public health officials will continue to monitor the virus to determine if additional shots are warranted in the future, said the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunisation Practices, CNBC news reported.

"Boosters may be required for a broad population. However, it could also be that the need for boosters of Covid vaccine may only be demonstrated in some populations," Sarah Oliver, co-lead of the working group and a medical epidemiologist with the CDC's National Center for Immunisation and Respiratory Diseases, was quoted as saying.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/no-evidence-that-covid-19-vaccine-booster-a-must-says-us-cdc-121062700603_1.html

Thanks to immunity gained, 3rd wave may not be as severe as second one: ICMR study

The intensity of Covid-19 third wave may not be as severe as the second one as immunity attained during the earlier waves would be offering some protection against the new variant even if there is more transmissibility in the next wave, said Samiran Panda, senior scientist at the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) on Saturday.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/thanks-to-immunity-gained-3rd-wave-may-not-be-as-severe-as-second-one-icmr-study/article34992440.ece>

Serum Institute of India produces over 10 crore doses of Covishield in June

Fulfilling its commitment, Serum Institute of India has produced over 10 crore doses of its Covid-19 vaccine Covishield in June so far as India ramps up the pace of its vaccination drive in the face of a possible third wave of the viral infection. India's Covid-19 inoculation drive has picked up pace under the new phase of universalisation of Covid-19 vaccination that commenced on June 21 with around 69 lakh vaccine doses being administered on an average daily in the last six days. The immunisation data published at 7 am on Sunday showed that India administered 64.25 lakh vaccine doses in a day, taking the cumulative number of jabs given so far under the nationwide inoculation drive to 32.17 crore.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/healthcare/biotech/healthcare/serum-institute-of-india-produces-over-10-crore-doses-of-covishield-in-june/articleshow/83893568.cms>

External

Gold imports jump multi-fold to \$6.91 bn in Apr-May on low base effect

Gold imports, which have a bearing on the current account deficit, zoomed to USD 6.91 billion (Rs 51,438.82 crore) during April-May 2021 due to low base effect in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to data from the Commerce Ministry. Imports of the yellow metal had plunged to USD 79.14 million (Rs 599 crore) in the corresponding period last year, the data showed. Silver imports, however, dipped by 93.7 per cent to USD 27.56 million. Significant jump in the gold imports has led to widening of the country's trade deficit, difference between imports and exports, to USD 21.38 billion during April-May this fiscal as against USD 9.91 billion in the year-ago period.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/markets/gold-imports-jump-multi-fold-to-6-91-bn-in-apr-may-on-low-base-effect-121062700288_1.html

Japan-India ties more relevant for global stability in pandemic: PM Modi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Japanese counterpart Yoshihide Suga believe that during the COVID-19 pandemic, India and Japan's friendship and partnership has become more relevant for global stability and prosperity. "Japan's Prime Minister and I believe that during COVID-19 pandemic, India and Japan's friendship and partnership becomes more relevant for global stability and prosperity. Need of the hour is that our relations should become stronger," said Prime Minister Modi while inaugurating Zen Garden and Kaizen Academy in Ahmedabad. "India and Japan have been devoted to external progress, we have also given importance to internal peace and progress," he said. Speaking about Zen Garden and Kaizen Academy in Ahmedabad, he noted that what is 'Zen' in Japan is 'Meditation' in India. "This is the meditation that Buddha gave to the world. And as far as the concept of 'Kaizen' is concerned, it symbolises the strength of our intentions in the present." He said that the Japanese Zen Garden is a beautiful expression of this quest for peace, and simplicity.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/japan-india-relationship-relevant-for-global-stability-prosperity-pm-modi-121062700362_1.html

No European Union 'Green Pass' for India-made Covishield, yet

Travellers vaccinated with Covishield, manufactured by Pune-based Serum Institute of India (SII), may not be eligible for the European Union 'Green Pass', being launched to enable easy travel into and between EU countries. The digital "vaccine passport" recognises the Vaxzevria version of the AstraZeneca vaccine that is produced in the UK and Europe, and approved by the European Medicines Agency (EMA). Covishield, manufactured by the Serum Institute of India, is not yet recognised by the EMA.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/no-european-union-green-pass-for-covishield-yet/articleshow/83886024.cms>

Assam-grown Burmese grapes exported to Dubai

In another attempt to tap India's agriculture export potential, especially from the North-East, a consignment of Burmese grapes, known as "Leteku" in Assamese language, has been shipped to Dubai from Guwahati by air.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/assam-grown-burmese-grapes-exported-to-dubai/article34993137.ece>

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