

## Daily Economic News Summary: 7 January 2019

### **1. Indian Companies Log Record \$129 Billion In M&A Deals In 2018**

**Source: Livemint ([Link](#))**

The value of announced merger and acquisition (M&A) deals involving Indian companies more than doubled to reach \$129.4 billion in 2018, according to data compiled by Thomson Reuters. The previous highest was \$67.4 billion in 2007. The number of announced deals also grew 17.2% from a year ago. Average M&A deal size for transactions with disclosed values increased to \$127.8 million in 2018 compared to \$82.8 million in the previous year. The year witnessed five deals above \$5 billion (with a combined value of \$39.8 billion) compared to only one in 2017 when the \$11.6 billion Idea-Vodafone merger was announced.

### **2. Farmers To Join Central Trade Unions Strike On January 8-9**

**Source: Financial Express ([Link](#))**

Farmers across the country under the aegis of the Left peasant wings would join the two-day nationwide general strike on January 8 and 9 called by central trade unions against the alleged repressive policies for workers adopted by the Narendra Modi-led BJP government. “AIKS and Bhumi Adhikar Andolan will observe ‘gramin hartal’, rail roko and road roko on January 8 and 9, the day trade unions are observing nationwide general strike. This move is against the Modi government’s failure to address rural distress issues, to save rural farmers’ lands from the corporates. The farmers will extend all support to the ensuing general strike,” said Hannan Mollah, general secretary of the CPI(M)-affiliated All India Kisan Sabha.

### **3. International Kite Festival To Help In Employment Generation And Support The Local Economy: Sj Haider, Gujarat’s Principal Secretary Tourism**

**Source: Financial Express ([Link](#))**

Gujarat’s International Kite Flying Festival is one of the few prominent kite flying festivals in the world. Master kite flyers from all over the world converge here to participate in the event. Although the kite festival is organised and celebrated for few days but the industry of kite making and allied products such as firki, thread, etc., run almost round the year. The industry is mostly unorganised and it offers huge opportunity and employment potential. Recently there

## Daily Economic News Summary: 7 January 2019

were reports that kite trade has taken a hit and there is a slowdown in the market. Talking to the Financial Express Online, SJ Haider, Principal Secretary Tourism refuted the report and claimed, “In fact, there has been a spurt in the activity as this kite flying festival gives very good platform to a large number of people here in Gujarat.”

### **4. New Drug Price Cap Exemptions Pitch Dops Against Health Ministry**

**Source: [Livemint \(Link\)](#)**

The ministry of health and family welfare and the department of pharmaceuticals (DoP) seem to be heading for a face off following the DoP’s decision to remove price caps on orphan drugs for the first five years, despite the ministry asking it to bring such life-saving drugs under price control. Exchange of letters between the DoP and health ministry show that even the DoP had initially asked the ministry to identify rare diseases so that the drug prices could be capped. However, the sudden U-turn by the DoP is likely to set off a round of recriminations between the two.

### **5. Nepal Writes To Rbi To Declare Banned New Indian Currency Notes Legal**

**Source: [Financial Express \(Link\)](#)**

Nepal has asked the RBI to declare newly circulated Indian currency notes of denominations higher than Rs 100 legal tender in the country, according to media report on Sunday. The Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB), the country’s central monetary authority, has written a letter on Friday to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), asking it to make Indian bank bills Rs 200, Rs 500 and Rs 2,000 legal tender in Nepal, The Himalayan Times reported. The NRB has asked the India’s central bank to issue a notification under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), which will make Indian bank notes of denomination more than Rs 100 legal tender in Nepal and to provide the exchange facilities to get bills of such denominations, it said.

### **6. Govt. Banks Rationalising Foreign Units**

**Source: [The Hindu \(Link\)](#)**

Public sector banks are in the process of closing or rationalising about 69 overseas operations in the next few months as part of their capital conservation exercise. Planned rationalisation of operations and examination of a total of 216 overseas operations of the public sector banks (PSBs) was undertaken last year, sources said. Following the review, 35 overseas operations

## Daily Economic News Summary: 7 January 2019

were closed while 69 are under process or being considered for rationalisation. Unviable foreign operations are being shut while multiple branches in same cities or nearby places are being rationalised with a view to achieve efficiency, sources said. State Bank of India (SBI) has the largest number of overseas branches (52) followed by Bank of Baroda (50) and Bank of India (29).

### **7. Government Exploring Ways To Exempt Security Agencies From Data Protection Bill**

**Source: The Economic Times ([Link](#))**

The government is in a lastmile huddle with security and intelligence agencies to find ways to either exempt them from the Personal Data Protection Bill or put in place a special dispensation to regulate their public scrutiny. ET has reliably gathered that the agencies have raised a red flag on the application of the provisions of the proposed Bill, which is expected to be considered by the Cabinet soon, on their surveillance-cum-investigation functions. “These agencies, including some of the state police forces, access data for security purposes and some of it may be private in nature. They want protection,” said an insider familiar with the issue.

### **8. Govt To Launch Delayed Second Round Of Oil Block Auction Today In A Bid To Raise Domestic Output**

**Source: Firstpost ([Link](#))**

After months of delay, India will on 7 January launch the second auction of 14 blocks for prospecting of oil and gas in an attempt to raise domestic output to cut imports. Officials said the Open Acreage Licensing Policy (OALP) bid round-II, with 14 blocks measuring 29,333 square kilometres in aggregate area on offer, will be launched by Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on 7 January. India had in July 2017 allowed companies to carve out blocks of their choice with a view to bringing about 2.8 million sq km of unexplored area in the country under exploration. Under this policy called open acreage licensing policy or OALP, companies are allowed to put in an expression of interest (EoI) for prospecting of oil and gas in any area that is presently not under any production or exploration licence. The EoIs can be put in at any time of the year but they are accumulated twice annually.