

## DAILY NEWS MONITOR: 15 JUNE 2021

### **1. Novavax Covid-19 shot shows 90% efficacy, Serum Institute starts production**

**Source: Business Standard ([Link](#))**

US based Novavax on 14 June said that its nano-particle protein based Covid-19 vaccine candidate has demonstrated an overall 90.4 percent efficacy in phase 3 clinical trials. In India its partner Serum Institute of India (SII) has started manufacturing the vaccine it has named Covovax already. In fact, the Centre expects availability of 200 mn doses of Covovax between August and December. India will allow entry of this vaccine once the USFDA approves it. The vaccine candidate NVX-CoV2373 has shown 100 percent protection against moderate and severe disease, 90.4 percent efficacy overall, and also met the primary endpoint in the PREVENT-19 phase 3 trial, the company said in a statement.

### **2. RBI proposes to lift interest rate cap on microfinance institutions**

**Source: Business Standard ([Link](#))**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on 14 June proposed to lift the interest rate cap on microfinance institutions (MFIs), and said all micro loans should be regulated by a common set of guidelines irrespective of who gives them. Proposing a debt-income ratio cap, the RBI said the loans should be given in such a way that the payment of interest and repayment of principal for all outstanding loans of a household at any point of time should not cross 50 per cent of the household income. This debt-income cap, the RBI felt, would obviate the need for having multiple restrictions being faced by MFIs only. There are no micro loans-specific strictures for lenders such as banks and non-banking financial institutions (NBFCs), even as they are responsible for extending 70 per cent of the microfinance loans

### **3. Paytm launches vaccine appointment booking feature on mobile app**

**Source: Business Standard ([Link](#))**

Fintech major Paytm on 14 June said its users will now be able to book vaccination appointment on the app apart from finding available slots. "Paytm users can now search, discover & also book their vaccination slots for both Covaxin and Covishield at the nearest centre through the Paytm app. The service would help Indians seamlessly book vaccination slots and gain immunity, helping in fighting the ongoing pandemic," Paytm said in a statement. CoWIN head R S Sharma had recently said over a dozen entities, including large digital companies like Paytm, MakeMyTrip and Infosys, are looking at approval for offering vaccine bookings. The government had, last month, released new guidelines for the integration of CoWIN with third-party applications, easing the way for such apps to offer

vaccine bookings. Previously, giants like Facebook and Google to startups such as HealthifyMe have introduced a slew of tools to help people find slots for vaccination appointments. Platforms like Under45 and GetJab became popular overnight as they alerted users when vaccine slots opened up and then directed them to the CoWIN platform to secure an appointment.

#### **4. Gold hallmarking mandatory from today: All you need to know**

**Source: Hindustan Times ([Link](#))**

As per the government, hallmarking centres have grown by 25% in the last five years. With the existing capabilities at certification centres, India has the capacity to hallmark around 14 crore articles per year. Hallmarking on gold jewellery and related items is set to become mandatory from 15 June after the government extended the earlier June 1 deadline in view of the Covid-19 pandemic. As per the new guidelines, jewellers across India will now be allowed to sell gold items of only 14, 18 and 22 carats. As per the government, hallmarking centres have grown by 25% in the last five years. With the existing capabilities at certification centres, India has the capacity to hallmark around 14 crore articles per year. A committee, headed by Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) director general Pramod Tewari, has been formed to ensure proper coordination and resolve the implementation issues, according to news agency PTI.

#### **5. UN Trade Forum event: Decouple trade policy from green goals: Goyal**

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

Commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal on 14 June pitched for decoupling trade policy from environmental goals, and called on the developed world to not use trade “as a means to foist conditionalities” on poor and developing nations. Speaking at a virtual event of the UN Trade Forum, Goyal said: “I do believe we have to decouple trade policy and green goals. Let the trade policy look for more inclusive growth all over the world and let us all work towards what my Prime Minister has said climate justice and sustainable lifestyle.”