

Daily News Monitor: 19 May 2020

1. Govt withdraws order on compulsory wage payment by firms during lockdown

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

In what may come as a major relief to businesses, the Union government has withdrawn its order directing employers to pay wages to workers, even with units remaining shut during lockdown. On 17 May, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) had issued a fresh set of guidelines which will be applicable from 18 May. It has repealed the order dated March 29, 2020 which had talked about compulsory wage payment to workers during lockdown. “Save as otherwise provided in the guidelines annexed to this order, all order issued by the NEC [national executive committee] under Section 10(2)(I) of the Disaster Management (DM) Act, 2005, shall cease to have effect from 18.05.2020.”

2. Covid: 4 Indian companies among global companies battling for net-zero recovery

Source: Livemint ([Link](#))

Four Indian corporations are among over 150 global companies that have signed a statement urging governments around the world to align their COVID-19 economic aid and recovery efforts with the latest climate science that prioritises a faster and fairer transition from a grey to a green economy. Dalmia Cement (Bharat) Chief Executive Officer Mahendra Singhi, Polygenta Technologies Chief Marketing Officer Makarand Kulkarni, Tech Mahindra Chief Executive Officer C P Gurnani and Wipro’s Chief Executive Officer Abidali Neemuchwala are the signatories to the statement, along with top executives hailing from 34 sectors across 33 countries. The other signatories include global pharma giant Novartis headed by Vas Narasimhan and Adobe, led by Shantanu Narayen, AstraZeneca, Burberry, Capgemini, Colgate Palmolive, Hewlett Packard Enterprise, Nestlé, Sanofi and Unilever.

3. Covid-19: Pune-based drug firm to export favipiravir to 18 countries

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

Pune-based pharmaceutical marketing company Brinton Pharmaceuticals is gearing up to export anti-viral drug favipiravir to 18 countries and awaiting approval from the Indian drug controller to launch the drug in India. Favipiravir is under trial in many countries as a potential treatment for Covid-19, and in India, Glenmark Pharmaceuticals is conducting the trials that have entered phase 3. After the trials are over in India, the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) is likely to give the nod to market the drug here which was originally developed by Japan's Fujifilm Toyama Chemical Co Ltd, a subsidiary of Fujifilm

Corporation. The drug is not yet part of the treatment protocol for Covid-19 here, but sources claim that it is on the list of the most promising drugs for treating the new coronavirus by the task force in Mumbai.

4. Airlines start flight ticket bookings for June travel: Report

Source: Livemint ([Link](#))

A number of airlines have started accepting bookings from passengers for domestic flights from June onwards, according to a PTI report quoting sources. Under the lockdown 4.0 guidelines, all commercial flight operations are suspended in India till May 31. Sources at IndiGo and Vistara said they were taking bookings for domestic flights. When contacted, a SpiceJet spokesperson, in a statement, said, "Our international bookings are closed till June 15." There was no official comments from IndiGo, Vistara and GoAir on commencement of bookings. Commercial flights have been suspended since March 25 when the country-wide lockdown began to curb the spread of coronavirus. Earlier, Air India had said that it will resume domestic flights only after a directive comes in from the Union government. The airline had also urged people to follow Ministry of Civil Aviation and Air India's Twitter handles and respective websites for official announcement regarding resumption of commercial services.

5. Japan concerned over fate of its companies in India

Source: The Hindu, Business Line ([Link](#))

The Japanese government has expressed concern over the fate of its companies in India, especially in the automobile sector, due to disruptions caused by the lockdown. It has asked New Delhi to make labour laws "less stringent", improve logistics and lower customs duties on specific products. Representatives from Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Investment (METI) met representatives from the Department for Promotion of Investments and Internal Trade (DPIIT) and the Ministry of External Affairs in a video conference recently to discuss problems being faced by Japanese companies in India and how it could be mitigated. "The Japanese government is not only concerned about the restrictions in place due to the on-going lockdown, but is also worried about the falling demand, especially for automobiles, and wanted to discuss measures for supporting its companies," a person familiar with the meeting told BusinessLine.

6. Covid-19 effect: E-commerce companies turn to kiranas for distribution

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

The ongoing crisis and economic uncertainty following the Covid-19 pandemic has led to e-commerce companies looking for unique hyperlocal distribution tie-ups. The supply chain disruptions caused due to the lockdown and prohibitions in terms of deliveries across various regions has resulted in e-commerce majors tying up with local kiranas or neighbourhood mom-and-pop stores. Recently-launched online store JioMart by Reliance Industries, which went live on WhatsApp in select locations in Mumbai, claims to have tied up with millions of kirana stores. Paytm Mall, meanwhile, announced its partnership with 10,000 neighbourhood stores to scale up its grocery delivery services around the country.

7. New PSE policy to cut number of such firms, force all to co-exist with private firms

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

Centre will soon come out with a new policy to privatise all central public enterprises (CPSEs) in non-strategic space and some in strategic sector in order to open all the industries to private players. Taking forward its intent to exit from businesses, the Centre will soon come out with a new policy to privatise all central public enterprises (CPSEs) in non-strategic space and some in strategic sector in order to open all the industries to private players. “In strategic sectors, at least one enterprise will remain in the public sector but private sector will also be allowed,” finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Sunday. To minimise wasteful administrative costs, number of enterprises in strategic sectors will ordinarily be only one to four; others will be privatized or merged or brought under holding companies, she said.