

DAILY NEWS MONITOR: 21 JUNE 2021

1. Commerce ministry to seek duty relief for SEZs

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

The commerce ministry may float a proposal to allow units in special economic zones (SEZs) to sell goods in the domestic market, at least temporarily, at the lowest tariffs at which India imports from its free-trade partners. This will help the SEZs cope with the havoc wrought by the Covid-19 pandemic, sources said. Currently, SEZ units are mandated to pay the regular customs duty on a product if they sell it in the domestic tariff area (DTA). This is because an SEZ is a specifically delineated duty-free enclave and is a deemed foreign territory for the purpose of trade operations, duties and tariffs. Such units, therefore, have access to duty-free imports of goods, which manufacturers in the DTA are not entitled to.

2. Centralised free Covid-19 vaccination policy begins today for all adults

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

The centralised free vaccination policy began on 21 June under which the government will provide free COVID-19 vaccine to all Indian citizens above 18 years of age. Prime Minister Narendra Modi made the announcement in a televised address to the nation and said the central government would take over the nationwide vaccination drive, and the Centre would procure 75 per cent of vaccines and give them to states for free distribution to all citizens above the age of 18. The Centre will also handle the 25 per cent vaccination that was with states till now under the liberalised plan announced earlier. In a briefing on Friday, the health ministry had said states would be playing a facilitatory role by aggregating demand and vaccination capabilities of private hospitals in the state and ensure the administrations of vaccinations.

3. James Murdoch weighs tapping billionaire families for India investments

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

James Murdoch is considering raising funds from ultra-rich families around the globe, a move that would give him more firepower to make acquisitions and further establish his investment firm. Murdoch's Lupa Systems is looking for about \$150 million each from fewer than half-a-dozen family offices for investments in India, according to a person with knowledge of the matter. It intends to use an external fundraiser to help with the drive, said the person, who asked not to be identified as the plans are private and still tentative. A spokesperson for Murdoch declined to comment. James, 48, set up Lupa Systems in 2019. Based in New York and Mumbai, it already counts Indian startups Doubtnut and Harappa

Education among its investments. The firm is also backing a U.S. blank-check company that will focus on India as it hunts for targets across south and southeast Asia.

4. Cabinet note issued for 100% FDI in oil PSUs marked for disinvestment

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

The commerce and industry ministry has floated a draft cabinet note seeking inter-ministerial views on a proposal to allow up to 100 per cent foreign investment under automatic route in oil and gas PSUs, which have an 'in-principle' approval for disinvestment, sources said. The move, if approved by the union cabinet, would facilitate privatisation of India's second biggest oil refiner Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd (BPCL). The government is privatising BPCL and is selling its entire 52.98 per cent stake in the company. Sources said that as per the draft note, a new clause would be added in the FDI policy under the petroleum and natural gas sector. According to the proposal, foreign investment up to 100 per cent under the automatic route would be allowed in cases where an 'in-principle' approval for disinvestment of a PSU has been granted by the government.

5. Govt open to more measures to boost economy: CEA KV Subramanian

Source: Money Control ([Link](#))

The government is open to coming out with more measures to boost the economy which has been hit by the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic, says Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) K V Subramanian. He, however, added that the demand for a fresh stimulus package has to be considered against the backdrop of a host of initiatives taken by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her budget for 2021-22 presented in February. The Chief Economic Advisor was responding to a suggestion made by some industry bodies that the government needed to come out with a Rs 3 lakh crore stimulus package to boost the economy which was badly hit by the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic in April-May.