

Daily News Monitor: 24 September 2020

1. Parliament passes 3 key labour reform bills amid boycott by oppn parties

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

The curtains came down on the Monsoon Session of Parliament on 23 September, eight days ahead of schedule, as both Houses were adjourned sine die, bringing an end to a stormy and heated session where the government and Opposition parties sparred over the contentious farm Bills. On the last day of the Session, the Rajya Sabha approved three key labour reform Bills that will remove impediments to winding up of companies and allow firing of staff without government permission in firms with up to 300 workers from the existing 100, a move aimed at attracting more investments and job creation. These Bills were cleared by the Lok Sabha on 22 September.

2. Toyota Kirloskar plans to continue selling diesel vehicles in India

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

Toyota Kirloskar plans to continue selling diesel models of large utility vehicles in the country. However, it doesn't see much opportunity for diesel products in the smaller, mass market segment. "Diesel is not going anywhere. Diesel will be a mainstay," said Naveen Soni, senior vice-president, sales and service, Toyota Kirloskar Motors. The Japanese automaker operates in India through a joint-venture with the Kirloskar Group. However, Soni indicated that the company might not to offer diesel variants of smaller vehicles. Instead, Toyota will likely concentrate on electric and hybrid vehicles, a focus area of its Japanese parent.

3. States to approve land acquisition process for private coal miners

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

The Union ministry of coal wants mine-bearing states to choose the legal framework they will follow for land acquisition by private coal miners as part of the ongoing commercial coal auction. This comes after some states protested that the Centre was encroaching on their right to approve land acquisition for private miners. The coal ministry has proposed that states can choose between the Coal Bearing Areas (Acquisition & Development) Act, 1957, and the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (LARR) Act, 2013. The compensation amount is the same under both. To ease the mining process under the auction, the Centre was considering allowing land acquisition under the CBA Act. This would entail the Centre acquiring land and then leasing it to private miners.

4. Saudi Arabia suspends flights to and from India amid surge in Covid cases

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

Saudi Arabia has banned flights to and from India from 22 September amid a surge in coronavirus cases, according to an official document. In a circular issued on 22 September, Saudi Arabia's General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA) said it was "suspending travel to and from the following countries: (India, Brazil and Argentina) including any person who has been in any of the mentioned countries above in the last 14 days prior to their arrival to the Kingdom". However, it excluded "passengers who have official government invitations". The GACA circular — titled: 'Suspension of travel to countries where the Covid-19 virus has outbreak' — was marked to all the airlines and chartered flight companies operating at the Saudi Arabia's airports.

5. Swiggy turns to hyperlocal

Source: Livemint ([Link](#))

Food tech unicorn Swiggy has ventured into different hyperlocal categories in a bid to get dormant customers back and give them more reasons to use the app, as food delivery volumes continue to be impacted from the ongoing pandemic. In sharp contrast, its rival Zomato, which entered the grocery delivery space earlier this year, scaled back its hyperlocal services by June, to focus strongly on its core food delivery business. It has continued its alcohol delivery service though in a few states. E-commerce firms including Flipkart and Amazon in recent months too taken the same route aiming to bring customers closer by quicker delivery and address a range of needs.

6. In the process of finalising trade pact with Mauritius: Piyush Goyal

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

Commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal on 23 September said India is in the process of finalising the proposed free trade pact with Mauritius. The proposed India-Mauritius Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA) seeks to mutually benefit both the countries in the area of trade in goods and services, he said. "At present, we have a number of different comprehensive partnership arrangements with countries around the world and we are in the process of finalising a CECPA with Mauritius," Goyal said at CII-EXIM Bank Digital Conclave on India Africa project partnership. He also said that recently India and the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) have decided for early resumption of negotiations for a preferential trading agreement.

7. Parliament passes Labour Bills, making it easier for employers to hire and fire
Source: The Economic Times ([Link](#))

Parliament on 23 September passed the three key labour reform bills that will provide greater flexibility to employers to hire and fire while ensuring social security for workers. The three bills---- Code on Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions, Industrial Relations Code and Social Security Code, were passed in the Upper House by voice vote amid boycott by the opposition over suspension of eight members. The minister informed the house that as many as 16 states had already increased the threshold for closure, lay off and retrenchment in firms with up to 300 workers without government permission.