

Daily News Monitor: 25 February 2021

1. Cryptocurrencies safe or not? RBI governor voices ‘major concerns’

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

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has “major concerns” about the risks posed by the cryptocurrencies to financial stability, governor Shaktikanta Das said in an interview on Wednesday. At the same time, the central bank is on track to launch its digital currency, he said, without specifying a timeline for the completion of the project. In an interview with CNBC-TV18, Das said, “We have certain major concerns about cryptocurrency. We have communicated them to the government. It is under consideration with the government and I do expect and I think that sooner or later, the government will take a call and if required, the Parliament also will consider and decide

2. Cabinet decisions: Biggies to benefit from PLI for pharma, IT hardware

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

The Cabinet on 24 february cleared production-linked incentive (PLI) schemes for pharmaceuticals and IT hardware, including laptops, which would cost the government as much as Rs 22,350 crore. Shedding the historical, costly bias in favour of small companies, the government has earmarked big bucks for big firms with elevated export potential. Under the scheme for pharmaceuticals, as much as Rs 11,000 crore (73% of the total incentives of Rs 15,000 crore) will be extended to eligible applicants whose global manufacturing revenue was in excess of Rs 5,000 crore in FY20. Similarly, the firms with manufacturing revenue of Rs 500-5,000 crore in FY20 will be granted incentives of Rs 2,250 crore.

3. Flipkart to deploy more than 25K EVs, partners with leading manufacturers

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

E-commerce giant Flipkart will deploy more than 25,000 electric vehicles by 2030. This is in line with Walmart owned firm’s public commitment to transition to electric vehicles across its city logistics fleet. It would help set up charging infrastructure around delivery hubs and offices to fast track the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) in India. Flipkart’s electric fleet will include 2-wheeler, 3-wheeler, and 4-wheeler vehicles designed and assembled in India, helping boost local innovation and economy. The Bengaluru-based firm has partnered with leading electric vehicle manufacturers, including Hero Electric, Mahindra Electric and Piaggio, for specific vehicles to be deployed for its first and last-mile delivery fleet across the

country. “We are going to continue to take a leadership role when it comes to serious and important environmental and social issues in the context of India's sustainable development journey,” said Mahesh Pratap Singh, head of sustainability and social responsibility at Flipkart

4. Japan's Suzuki Motor bets big on India for its record sales target

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

Suzuki Motor Corporation (SMC), Japan’s fourth-largest carmaker, is betting big on a recovery in the Indian market to fulfil its record sales target of 4.8 million yen by 2025. SMC is the parent company of India’s largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki, which is also the single-largest volume generator for the Japanese giant. India generates more than twice the volume generated by SMC’s home market of Japan. Suzuki added that it intends to be aggressive in electrification of its cars in India, marking a change in its stance. The company had earlier decided to put its electric vehicle plans on the back-burner even as most other passenger vehicle makers are going full throttle with their plans, thanks to the government’s policy push. The company had, instead, decided to focus on alternative technologies, including compressed natural gas (CNG) and hybrid, to reduce the overall carbon footprint and meet advance emission norms.

5. Plan to monetise 100 public sector assets, drawing Rs 2.5 trillion: PM

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

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 24 February made a strong case for privatisation of public sector undertakings that he said burdened the taxpayer, and stressed that the government has “no business to be in business”. He said his regime has set a target to monetise 100 PSUs in oil, gas, airports, ports, power, among other areas, which will draw Rs 2.5 trillion of investment. “This process will continue in the future as well,” he said at a webinar on privatisation and investments in the Budget for 2021-22. The PM underscored the need for adopting the best global practices for determining price discovery of these assets and mapping stakeholders. “The implementation of these policies are equally important. Stable policies and the right processes are required to ensure transparency and competition,” he added. The PM said the government is committed to privatise public sector enterprises (PSEs) in every area — other than strategic — as was underlined in the Budget. He said this policy — Medium-Term Strategic Approach — is more than simply setting annual targets for disinvestment in PSEs. This approach will help in drawing up a road map for investments.

6. Tie-up with Serum Institute of India key to mass production of COVID vaccines, say two pharma majors

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

British-Swedish pharma giant AstraZeneca and US pharmaceutical major Novavax have told lawmakers that they are ready to scale up their production of COVID-19 vaccines in partnership with the Serum Institute of India. Located in the city of Pune in Maharashtra, the SII is the world's largest vaccine manufacturer by volume. It is manufacturing the coronavirus vaccine developed by AstraZeneca and Oxford University, which is known locally as Covishield. Covishield was granted emergency use listing by the World Health Organisation (WHO) this month, allowing it to be supplied to low and middle-income countries around the world.

7. India hosts first meeting of the BRICS finance and central bank deputies of 2021

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

India hosted the first meeting of the BRICS finance and central bank deputies of 2021 in virtual mode on Wednesday, according to a statement from the finance ministry. India had assumed the BRICS chairship for this year, at a time when the organisation, formed by the nations of Brazil, India, Russia, China and South Africa, was celebrating its 15th anniversary. The meeting was co-chaired by Tarun Bajaj, economic affairs secretary and Michael Patra, deputy governor of the Reserve Bank of India, under the theme, 'BRICS@15: Intra-BRICS Cooperation'. The priorities for the year, set by India, included the global economic outlook and response to Covid-19 and social infrastructure financing.