

Daily New Monitor: 27 March 2020

1. Coronavirus impact: DGCA extends ban on international flights till April 14

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

All international commercial passenger flights will remain suspended till April 14, aviation regulator DGCA announced on 27 March, amid a nationwide lockdown to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on March 19 had announced that no international commercial passenger flight operations will take place in India from 1.30 am on March 23 to 5.30 am on March 29. "In continuation of circular-II dated 19.3.2020 issued on the subject cited-above, it has been decided that all scheduled international commercial passenger services shall remain closed till 1830 hrs GMT (0000 hrs of Indian Standard Time) of April 14, 2020," the aviation regulator said. "However, this restriction will not apply to international all-cargo operations and flights specifically approved by the DGCA," it said. The government suspended domestic passenger flight operations from midnight on March 24. There are 649 coronavirus positive cases in the country and 13 people have died due to it till now, according to the Union health ministry.

2. Coronavirus cases in India climb to 724, death toll at 17. State-wise tally

Source: Livemint ([Link](#))

The total number of coronavirus cases in the country has crossed 700-mark on 27 March. India has so far reported 724 coronavirus patients. More than 70 fresh cases were reported in India on 26 March. Out of the total cases, 677 are Indians and 47 are foreign nationals. Covid-19 claimed its first life in Madhya Pradesh on 26 March, taking the total toll across India to 17. On 26 March, India has recorded highest number of deaths in a single day. At present, there are 640 active coronavirus patients in the country. Till now, 67 patients have been cured or discharged, according to Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. Kerala reported 19 fresh COVID-19 cases on 26 March, taking the total number of active cases in the state to 137. Maharashtra comes close second with 130 active cases reported so far.

3. Brilliant idea! Indian Railways to convert train coaches into quarantine facilities; details

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

Ticket sales for all public transport buses will be suspended from March 26 to April 30 in compliance with the government's declaration of a state of emergency which takes effect on March 26, the president of Transport Co Ltd, Jirasak Yaovatsakul, said. He added that the

company will also enforce social distancing by leaving empty alternate seats on the buses and keep a distance of at least one metre between persons at all bus terminals.

4. Coronavirus pandemic | RBI Shaktikanta Das presser today: 3 likely announcements **Source: Money Control ([Link](#))**

A day after Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman unveiled a Rs 1.7 lakh crore economic welfare package for the poor in the backdrop of the coronavirus pandemic, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das has announced a press conference at 10 am on March 27. Beginning March 25, for a period of three weeks, India is under a complete lock-down to curb the spread of the COVID-19. This will have an impact across key economic segments including manufacturing, services, construction and tourism. On March 26, the government announced a mix of measures including direct cash transfers and distribution of free food grains for a period of three months to help the economically weaker sections of the society tide over the crisis phase. Now, it is RBI's turn.

5. Israel thanks Air India for rescuing its stranded nationals **Source: Livemint ([Link](#))**

Amid the coronavirus pandemic, An Air India special flight carrying 314 Israelis back to their country landed safely in Tel Aviv on 26 March evening with many passengers carrying Indian and Israeli flags while deplaning. The Israeli embassy had put up a request with the Ministry of External Affairs, which, in turn, asked Air India to operate such a flight. The national carrier had earlier organised rescue flights for Indians stuck in China, Italy, Iran and Madrid. According to a senior official of the airline, the Boeing 777 aircraft had departed from Delhi around 4 pm. Israel's Ambassador in New Delhi, Ron Malka, came to the airport to see off the passengers and thanked Air India for the selfless service. "I thank and appreciate the @airindiain flight staff who are responsibly and selflessly ensuring that Israelis get home safe. Dhanyavad from the bottom of our (heart in emoji)", Malka tweeted before the flight took off from India.

6. E-grocers resume work as states step in amid coronavirus lockdown **Source: Business Standard ([Link](#))**

E-commerce companies, especially those selling grocery online, said on 26 March they had resumed services as situations on the ground improved. Most states took several measures including providing passes to delivery executives and eased interstate movement of essential goods being transported by these firms. However, some sources also said many of these firms were facing an uphill task of convincing the people on the ground to return to work, as many

are apprehensive of their safety. “Things are a lot better now. We have started (operations) in all cities, with clear permission from the authorities, and all our warehouses are open now,” said Hari Menon, co-founder and CEO, BigBasket. “Yesterday, the Central government and states gave clear instructions to make sure this does not happen again. While passes are being issued, local policemen have also been informed to allow the executives based on their uniforms and badges,” he said.

7. Centre asks states to allow manufacture, distribution of packaged foods

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

The food processing ministry on 26 March sent an advisory to states under a nationwide lockdown to allow manufacturing, transport, distribution and retail of packaged foods and beverages amongst others—a move that’s expected to help companies like PepsiCo, Coke, and Nestle. Many packaged foods and beverage companies have had to suspend production and distribution of their products due to the lockdown and confusion in what constitutes essential food items. Pushpa Subrahmanyam, the food processing secretary, said in a communication that in understanding food, the definition of “food” would be as per the Food Safety and Standards Act of 2006 under which any packaged or loose food article would be defined as a food product. As a result, manufacturing, transportation, distribution and retail of packaged foods and beverages, milk and milk products which include bakery and dairy, animal feed, pet food, infant and baby food, tea and coffee, health supplements, nutraceuticals, food for special medical purposes amongst others are all listed for permission.

8. New-age warriors against coronavirus: Robots, drones, chatbots, apps

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

Drones spraying disinfectant across large areas, robots dispensing hand sanitiser, apps analysing coughs to see if they are ‘dry’ or ‘wet’, and AI techniques normally used for detecting tuberculosis being tweaked so that they can detect the virus, are some of the contributions of Indian startups to the fight against the contagion. As the nation moves into a 21-day lockdown, start-ups, far from letting their spirits sink, are rising to the occasion by building drones, chatbots, apps, and robots to help healthcare professionals fighting on the Covid-19 frontline. General Aeronautics, a Bengaluru-based aerospace engineering startup, has deployed its drones to spray disinfectant across the city. “We have sprayed disinfectant in crowded areas such as KR Market and Majestic and will continue for the next 10 days to cover most parts of the city,” said Abhishek Burman, founder and CEO. The disinfectant, a mixture of sanitiser and

bleaching powder, is being sprayed in areas where garbage has piled up to prevent the spread of any further infections.

9. G20 nations vow to inject \$5 tn to fight Covid-19, global slump

Source: Livemint ([Link](#))

Leaders of the Group of 20 or G20 major economies on 26 March pledged to infuse over \$5 trillion into the global economy, and do "whatever it takes" to minimize the economic and social impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. In a joint statement issued after the G-20's first ever virtual summit, chaired by Saudi Arabia, members committed themselves to restore global growth, maintaining market stability and strengthening resilience. Prime Minister Narendra Modi was among leaders who participated in the video conference. "We are injecting over \$5 trillion into the global economy, as part of a targeted fiscal policy, economic measures, and guarantee schemes to counteract the social, economic and financial impacts of the pandemic. We will continue to conduct bold and large-scale fiscal support. Collective G20 action will amplify its impact, ensure coherence, and harness synergies. The magnitude and scope of this response will get the global economy back on its feet, and set a strong basis for the protection of jobs and the recovery of growth," the statement said.

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