

DAILY NEWS MONITOR: 26 MAY 2021

1. UK launches consultation round in run-up to FTA talks

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

The UK has launched formal preparations for a free-trade agreement with India which will open new opportunities for various industries and boost bilateral trade in science and services and thereby job creation. The consultation follows the Enhanced Trade Partnership agreed at the virtual meeting between the Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his British counterpart Boris Johnson on 4 May, where they launched a '2030 Roadmap' which will provide a framework for UK-India relations. Trade Secretary Liz Truss started preparations on 25 May for a trade deal with India with the launch of a 14-week consultation to seek the views of the public and businesses, in a run-up to the formal negotiations for a UK-India FTA aiming to start in autumn.

2. WhatsApp says Indian govt exceeded powers with encryption-breaking rule

Source: Livemint ([Link](#))

India's government exceeded its legal powers by enacting rules that companies such as WhatsApp say will force them to break end-to-end message encryption, the messaging app owned by Facebook argued in a court filing seen by Reuters. WhatsApp has filed a lawsuit in a Delhi court against the government to quash a provision of a new regulation that mandates companies to divulge the "first originator of information", arguing in favour of protecting privacy. In a statement on Wednesday, WhatsApp said it would engage with the Indian government to find "practical solutions" and protect users, but its court filing shows it has taken a firmer stance against Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration.

3. Government may announce stimulus when unlock phase commences

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

With the world's worst pandemic outbreak scarring nascent economic recovery, the government may at the beginning of the unlock phase announce another stimulus package for the most hit sectors such as small business and self-employed, Bernstein said. The brokerage in a note said its macro index suggests a deterioration in economic activity during April/May. "Energy consumption has moderated, with power down over 4 per cent and oil consumption down over 16 per cent in May so far (all 2-year CAGR). E-waybills are down 16 per cent, suggesting the impact of scale down in factory production for some product categories, owing to the shut down in retail outlets. Apart from those 5 top states, other states which are witnessing an increase in cases are Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Odisha, West Bengal, and Andhra

Pradesh - which now constitute 48 per cent of new cases reported (as of May 24). These 5 states collectively account for 25 per cent of India's GDP.

4. Ikea launches shopping app in India

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

Swedish home furnishing retailer IKEA on 27 May announced the launch of its shopping app in India, in a bid to expand its omni-channel approach in the country. The IKEA app would be available on both platforms -- iOS and Android -- and will offer 7,000 home furnishing products, said a statement. Now customers from cities -- Mumbai, Pune, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Surat, and Baroda – will be able to buy products with a click on their phone, it added. The mobile app will help IKEA to connect with customers in the current situation, where people are preferring online shopping due to health and safety reasons amid the pandemic. IKEA India, part of Ingka Group, opened its first retail store in Hyderabad in August 2018, followed by online stores in Mumbai, Hyderabad and Pune in 2019 as part of its multi-channel approach.

5. Report status on IT rules 'preferably today': Govt tells social media firms

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

The Indian government is in no mood to give more time to social media firms to comply with new social media rules. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), in a notification, has asked all social media intermediaries to give details of the complaint redressal mechanism with an officer being based in the country, as soon as possible. This will include a chief compliance officer, a nodal contact person for 24x7 coordination with law enforcement agencies, and a resident grievance officer, and the physical contact address in India, preferably by today itself, said the notification. The notification said: “The additional due diligence required from significant social media intermediary (SSMI) have come into effect today, at the conclusion of three additional months given to SSIMs.