

Daily News Monitor: 2 April 2020

1. Railways accepting bookings for passenger trains from April 15: Report

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

The Indian Railways has started bookings for passenger trains from April 15 onwards as the 21-day lockdown announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi ends on April 14, The Economic Times reported. A senior government official said as per the report that bookings will be accepted by the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) from April 15, “naturally when the lockdown is till April 14”, but added that passenger train operations may not resume entirely. Passenger services were discontinued from March 22 till March 31, even before the lockdown was announced, but goods trains are operating as usual. It will now “gradually” begin the passenger services from April 15, the official added.

2. US begins repatriation of its nationals from India, receives help from govt

Source: Livemint ([Link](#))

The US has begun repatriation of its stranded nationals, who want to return home, from India which is undergoing a 21-day lockdown to stem the spread of coronavirus pandemic, a senior American diplomat has said, praising the Indian government for extending full support to undertake this "important mission". The repatriation from India is part of the massive effort being undertaken by the US for its citizens from across the world. So far, the US has repatriated over 30,000 citizens from over 60 countries on more than 350 flights. "We began our repatriation efforts from India yesterday with a flight that brought in some 170 US citizens," Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs Ian Brownlee told reporters during a conference call on 1 April. "We will begin a steadier flow of flights out of New Delhi and Mumbai in the coming days, really beginning toward the end of this week and into the weekend," he said in response to a question. There are more than 80 flights scheduled or in the planning stages from various locations, he added.

3. As business plummets, food delivery platforms nudge restaurants to open with newfound goodwill

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

Food delivery platforms, which not long ago held the upper hand because of the wider reach they provide, have softened their stance against restaurants by launching multiple steps to encourage them to get back online as business took a pounding after the outbreak of the coronavirus and the consequent lockdown. Zomato and Swiggy have even offered to help on

restaurants with improving hygiene standards to coax them to return to their platforms. These actions have become critical because food delivery volumes have dropped by more than 40 percent in the past two weeks, according to industry estimates.

4. Coronavirus pandemic | RBI announces more measures to deal with COVID-19 fallout

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

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced a series of additional measures for dealing with the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. In a statement on the RBI website, the central bank said it has extended the realisation period of export proceeds, has reviewed limits of ways and means advances (WMA) to states and union territories (UTs), and has put in place a framework for implementation of countercyclical capital buffer (CCyB). **Extension of realisation period of export proceeds:** Under this, the time period for realisation and repatriation of export proceeds for exports made up to or on July 31, 2020 has been extended to 15 months from the date of export...

5. India uses WTO peace clause for higher rice sops

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

India has invoked the peace clause of the World Trade Organization for exceeding the ceiling on support it can offer farmers for rice for the marketing year 2018-2019, marking the first time any country has taken recourse to this safeguard. India informed the WTO that the value of its rice production was \$43.67 billion in 2018-19 and that it gave subsidies worth \$5 billion. The limit is pegged at 10% of the value of food production in the case of India and other developing countries.

6. Govt slashes LPG prices amid coronavirus lockdown; non-subsidised cylinder to cost Rs 744 in Delhi, Rs 714 in Mumbai

Source: Firstpost ([Link](#))

In a major announcement amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, the Indian Oil Corporation announced a cut in the prices of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) cylinders. Delhi saw the cost of a 14.2 kg non-subsidized LPG become Rs 744, which is a reduction of Rs 61 per cylinder. The earlier price in Delhi was Rs 805.50. In Mumbai, it will now be available at Rs 714.50 as compared to Rs 776.50. In Kolkata, the price has become Rs 774.50, while in Chennai the revised price is Rs 761.50. The earlier prices for the two metro cities were Rs 839.50 and Rs 826 respectively. In India, every household is entitled to receive 12 cylinders at subsidized rates each year. If a family has requirement of more than that, they need to buy it at the market rate.

7. BS-VI: India switches to world's cleanest petrol, diesel with no increase in prices

Source: The Hindu, Business Line ([Link](#))

India on 1 April joined a select league of nations having the world's cleanest petrol and diesel as oil companies rolled out Euro-VI emission compliant fuels without either disruption or a price increase. Leapfrogging from BS-IV grade fuel straight to BS-VI grade, equivalent to Euro-VI fuel, petrol and diesel would have resulted in an up to Re 1 per litre increase in cost but oil companies decided against passing this on to consumers and instead adjusted it against the reduction warranted from international oil prices plummeting to a 17-year low. "We are today 100 per cent supplying BS-VI petrol and diesel. All the over 68,700 petrol pumps in the country are selling the cleaner fuel from today," said Sanjiv Singh, Chairman, Indian Oil Corp (IOC) - the firm that controls roughly half of the market.

8. Seafood sector gets relief on small revival of overseas shipments

Source: The Hindu, Business Line ([Link](#))

The beleaguered seafood sector, which has remained stagnant due to the Covid 19 impact, hopes to find some revival of exports, albeit on a low note, to countries where there are minimal restrictions on documentation. "We have sent shipments to Vietnam, Indonesia, Japan, China, etc, where there were no serious restrictions for demanding original export documents. However, the quantity shipped, mainly shrimp, is very negligible, but the move has given a ray of hope in the current situation", Alex K Ninan, President, Seafood Exporters Association of India, Kerala Region, said. "We will be in a position to increase such shipments provided the government should be liberal in allowing the road movement of consignments from processing plants to the port. However, the 21-day lockdown is posing a hindrance, despite the exemptions given by the Government for the fisheries sector to carry out its operations" he told *BusinessLine*.

9. Centre plans joint action with 10 nations, embassies

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

The spread of Covid-19 from the Tablighi Jamaat congregation in the capital's Nizamuddin area and the matter of visa violations by foreigners who participated in it have brought to the fore the need for cooperation between India and countries whose nationals have regularly attended this event. Nationals from 10 countries across Asia and Eurasia were present at the gathering in New Delhi last month and the government has contacted the embassies concerned to deal with the issue. The government is coordinating with the embassies and governments to

ascertain the issue of visa violations, ET has learnt. Many of the visitors are said to have travelled to India on tourist visas when their purpose was to preach.

10. Coronavirus battle: India coordinating with US, China and others

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

India is coordinating with both the United States and China without getting drawn into any geopolitical rivalry, along with accepting contributions from individuals and organisations abroad, to tide over the Covid-19 crisis, said people aware of the matter. While the foreign ministers of India and the US have spoken twice since last month for effective coordination to contain the spread of the virus, India is coordinating with China for the purchase of personal protective equipment (PPE) Kits they said. India is also in touch with the other three P-5 countries for coordinated approach to combat Covid-19. Besides, the Indian PM has spoken to all key leaders in West Asia, which houses thousands of Indians, and exchanged ideas on sharing best practices against containing the contagious viral infection.