

Daily News Monitor: 4 June 2020

1. India sees worst day of coronavirus pandemic: Record 9,304 new cases, 260 deaths in a day

Source: Livemint ([Link](#))

With 260 deaths reported in last 24 hours, the fatalities from coronavirus pandemic in India crossed 6,000-mark. The country also saw the biggest spike in daily coronavirus tally. The states confirmed over 9,000 cases in a day for the first time since the outbreak. Maharashtra continued to record the highest number of COVID-19 cases while Andhra Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Odisha and Telangana added over 100 cases each in last 24 hours.

2. Realty firms see jump in enquiries and purchases by Gulf-based NRIs

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

Though real estate companies have been dealt a body blow by the nationwide lockdown, one segment of their market has witnessed a surprising uptick in enquiries and sales. Non-resident Indians (NRIs) based in West Asia are snapping up properties in India as they prepare to come back to the home country in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. Developers say several factors are driving the development: Falling oil prices, and the sense of security in owning a house in one's home country amid job losses in countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in the wake the Covid-19 crisis. From United Arab Emirates (UAE) alone, about 150,000 people have registered to be repatriated. Of them, 25 per cent cited job loss as the reason for leaving the country.

3. Centre paves way for licence-free purchase directly from farmers

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

The Union Cabinet on 3 June cleared an Ordinance enabling buyers - be it farmer-producer companies or big retailers - to purchase directly from farmers outside the regulated mandis without any licence and armed with just a permanent account number (PAN) card. It will not be subject to tax by the Centre or state - a step that could bring it in direct conflict with several states. The Cabinet also approved the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Ordinance, 2020. This will facilitate contract farming between farmers and processors, and traders. It also decided to remove cereals, pulses, oilseeds, edible oils, onions, and potatoes from the list of Essential Commodities (EC) Act of 1955, but retained the power to impose it in case of war, famine or in the event of an extraordinary rise in prices.

4. Facebook to acquire 9.9% stake in Jio Platforms via Jaadhu Holdings

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

Facebook will acquire 9.9 per cent stake in Jio Platforms announced last month via a new entity -- Jaadhu Holdings LLC, as per regulatory documents. In April, Facebook had announced an investment of \$ 5.7 billion (Rs 43,574 crore) in Jio Platforms. According to a submission made to the Competition Commission of India, Jaadhu Holdings, LLC is an indirect wholly owned subsidiary of Facebook, Inc. "Jaadhu is a newly incorporated company formed in March 2020 under the laws of the State of Delaware, US...Jaadhu is not engaged in any business in India or anywhere in the world," it said.

5. Govt eases visa norms amid Covid-19; foreign businessmen can visit India

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

For the first time since the nation-wide lockdown was announced in March, the government has allowed foreign businessmen, healthcare professionals and engineers to visit India but they will have to obtain fresh visas. In an order, the Home Ministry said the foreign nationals, holding a valid long-term multiple-entry business visa, would also have to get their travel documents re-validated from the Indian missions. "The Government of India has considered the matter regarding relaxation of the visa and travel restrictions for certain categories of foreign nationals who need to come to India.

6. Covid-19: Govt clears plan to suspend IBC for 6 months, ordinance soon

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

The Union Cabinet on 3 June cleared a proposal to suspend the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) process for six months, which could be extended up to a year, sources said. The government is likely to promulgate an Ordinance soon to bring the change into effect. The details of the Cabinet decision will be announced once the Ordinance is ready, a source said. The proposal to suspend the insolvency process, taken in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, was announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on May 17. The FM had also said the government was devising a special resolution framework for micro small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). The government had already announced the increase in the threshold for triggering insolvency to Rs 1 crore, from Rs 1 lakh.

7. Reform Push: Cabinet clears Ordinances on farm trade, insolvency

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

The Cabinet on 3 June decided to promulgate three separate Ordinances to usher in the reforms in agriculture marketing and commodities trade it had announced earlier, as part of the economic package to counter Covid-19 pandemic. The ordinances are to give effect to the

amendments proposed to the Essential Commodities Act and bring in two new Central laws on inter-state trading and contract farming. The three laws will together go a long way in unshackling the entire agriculture-to-food-processing-to-retailing value-chain and giving farmers the choice to sell their produce in any market across the country, analysts said.

8. Cabinet briefing: Govt amends essential commodities act, wants farmers to benefit from one country one market

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

Union Ministers Prakash Javadekar and Narendra Singh Tomar on 4 June announced decisions taken by the union cabinet in a meeting held earlier in the day. The Union Cabinet 4 4 June approved the amendment of the Essential Commodities Act giving a nod to the removal of a number of items from the Essential Commodities Act, the minister informed. Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Union Cabinet 4 June approved decisions to help the poor Indian farmers as it aims to double the farmers' income by 2022. The government is looking to help the farm sector take benefit from one country one market, while also allowing farm produce to be sold across markets in India, the minister said. Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar claimed that the decisions taken by the Union Cabinet are historic and with these, the Indian farmer will now get the independence that he has been longing for. Farmers will now not be taxed for any sale outside the APMC markets, the Union Cabinet decided. The Modi government has also accepted the Swaminathan report allowing 50% higher MSP than input cost for farmers.

9. India provides opportunity to nations looking to diversify supply chains from one country or region: Foreign Secretary

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

Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla without naming China, which has emerged as the manufacturing hub of the world, has suggested that countries "will be looking for maximum diversification of their production and supply chains in the medium to long term, weaning away from extreme dependence on any one particular country or region." He emphasised that this phenomenon provides India with an important opportunity to develop itself into a low-cost manufacturing hub which will position India as the preferred investment destination. Shringla further pointed out that over-reliance on a particular country or region for sourcing Indian imports, or as markets for Indian exports, requires a re-think.