

Daily News Monitor: 7 April 2021

1. RBI Monetary Policy: Key takeaways from Governor Shaktikanta Das' address

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

The RBI Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) on April 7 kept the key policy rates unchanged at 4 percent indicating that a status-quo will be desirable at this juncture when the growth-inflation scenario remains uncertain. Here are key updates from RBI governor Shaktikanta Das' address:

> RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said that the MPC voted unanimously to keep the policy rates unchanged. "The accommodative policy stance will continue for as long as necessary," Das said.

> The marginal standing facility (MSF) rate and the bank rate remain unchanged at 4.25 percent. The reverse repo rate stands unchanged at 3.35 percent.

> MPC maintained the GDP growth outlook for FY22 at 10.5 percent consisting of 26.2 percent in Q1; 8.3 percent in Q2; 5.4 percent in Q3; and 6.2 percent in Q4. The Committee had projected this estimate during the previous policy announcement.

2. Ambani "has become the richest person in Asia, ranked Number 10 and worth an estimated \$ 84.5 billion.

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

India has the third highest number of billionaires in the world after the US and China, according to a new list by the prestigious Forbes magazine, which said Reliance Industries Chairman Mukesh Ambani reclaimed his spot as Asia's richest person, dethroning Chinese business tycoon Jack Ma who was the richest person in the region a year ago. Forbes' 35th annual list of the world's billionaires is topped by Amazon CEO and Founder Jeff Bezos for the fourth year in a row. Forbes' 35th annual list of the world's billionaires is topped by Amazon CEO and Founder Jeff Bezos for the fourth year in a row. On the second spot is SpaceX founder Elon Musk, who was the biggest gainer in dollar terms. Ambani, the richest person in India and also the wealthiest in Asia, is ranked 10 on the global billionaires' list. He reclaimed his spot as Asia's richest person with a net worth of \$ 84.5 billion.

3. India ‘red hot investment opportunity’ for clean energy: Kerry

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

Calling India a “red hot investment opportunity” because of the country’s efforts to increase the share of renewables in the energy basket, special US presidential envoy for climate John Kerry said on 6 April that “global investment in new clean power capacity is set to exceed \$10 trillion through mid-century, more than six times the investments in dirtier options”. Kerry made the comment while delivering the keynote address at the annual leadership summit of South Asia Women in Energy — a platform launched in 2019 by the US India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF), in partnership with United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

4. Pharmeasy parent enters unicorn club at \$1.5 billion valuation

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

Prosus Ventures and US-based private equity firm TPG Capital are leading an investment of \$350 million (about Rs 2,570 crore) in API Holdings, the parent company of Mumbai-based online pharmacy Pharmeasy. Prosus Ventures (previously Naspers Ventures) is the venture investing arm of South African technology and media conglomerate Prosus, which is one of the largest investors in Indian technology startups including Swiggy, Byju's and Meesho. The deal is estimated to have valued Pharmeasy at \$1.5 billion post-investment, said people in the know, making API Holdings the latest entrant into India’s unicorn club—privately held startups valued at or over \$1 billion.

5. Bureaucratic rejig: Seth new DEA secretary, Bajaj shifted to revenue dept

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

The government on 6 April shifted Tarun Bajaj, secretary of the department of economic affairs (DEA), to the revenue department and appointed Karnataka-cadre civil servant Ajay Seth as the DEA secretary, as part of a bureaucratic shuffle. Bajaj — who had worked at the Prime Minister’s Office before his elevation as the DEA secretary in April last year —was also holding the additional charge of the revenue department since the superannuation of Ajay Bhushan Pandey in February.

6. IMF projects India’s growth rate to jump to impressive 12.5 per cent in 2021

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

The IMF on 6 April projected an impressive 12.5 per cent growth rate for India in 2021, stronger than that of China, the only major economy to have a positive growth rate last year during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Washington-based global financial institution, in its

annual World Economic Outlook ahead of the annual Spring meeting with the World Bank, said the Indian economy is expected to grow by 6.9 per cent in 2022. Notably in 2020, India's economy contracted by a record eight per cent, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said as it projected an impressive 12.5 per cent growth rate for the country in 2021. China, on the other hand which was the only major economy to have a positive growth rate of 2.3 per cent in 2020, is expected to grow by 8.6 per cent in 2021 and 5.6 per cent in 2022.

7. RTGS, NEFT money transfer facilities extended beyond banks

Source: Livemint ([Link](#))

Reserve Bank of India on 7 April extended the National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT) and Real-Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) facilities to digital payments intermediaries. Till now, only banks were allowed to use RTGS and NEFT payments facility. The central bank also increased the maximum end of day balance for payment banks to ₹2 lakh from ₹1 lakh. Reserve Bank of India on 7 April kept interest rates unchanged and maintained an accommodative stance. The decision came amid a renewed threat to growth due to the resurgence of coronavirus cases in the country. The repo rate has been maintained at 4% and reverse repo rate at 3.35%.

8. Coronavirus update: India records over 1.15 lakh new Covid-19 cases, the highest ever

Source: Livemint ([Link](#))

India on 7 April recorded 1,15,736 daily Covid-19 cases, taking the country's overall tally to 1,28,01,785 even as the government cautioned that the next four weeks are "very very critical" and sought people's participation to control the second wave of the pandemic. The number of Covid-19 cases breached the 1-lakh mark for the second time this year. India on Sunday registered an all-time high of 1,03,558 cases in a span of 24 hours. The country's death toll went up to 1,66,177 after 630 new fatalities were registered in a span of 24 hours. The active cases rose for the 28th straight day to 8,43,473, breaching the eight-lakh mark. As many as 1,17,92,135 people have recovered from the infection in the country with 59,856 recoveries in the last 24 hours. The cumulative number of coronavirus vaccine doses administered crossed 8,70,77,474, the health ministry data showed today.

9. Indian refiners to buy one-third less oil from Saudi Arabia next month

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

Indian refiners will buy less oil from Saudi Arabia next month as they snap up supplies outside of the Middle East as part of diversification drive amid weakening domestic fuel demand on the resurgence of COVID-19. State-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) and

three other refiners have sought just 65 per cent of the monthly average of about 15 million barrels from Saudi Arabia in May, three sources with knowledge of the matter said. The move follows tensions between India and Saudi Arabia over the Kingdom's hawkish stance on boosting production to cool prices. With Saudi Arabia ignoring its pleas to lift output curbs, the Indian government last month asked state refiners to look for sources outside of the Middle East. Sources said IOC and other state refiners are looking to buy more oil from the spot or current market rather than rely on term or fixed quantity contracts with Saudi and other oil cartel OPEC nations.