

Daily Economic News Summary:17 March 2020

1. Coronavirus outbreak: India bans air travel from UK, Europe till March 31

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

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation on 16 March ordered suspension of all passenger traffic from Europe from 18 March till March 31 to stop the spread of COVID-19. “Travel from member countries of the European Union, the European Free Trade Association, Turkey, and the United Kingdom to India is prohibited with effect from March 18. The airline shall enforce this at the point of initial departure. Both these instructions are temporary measures and shall be in force till March 31 and will be reviewed subsequently,” Deputy Director General Sunil Kumar said in a circular. The order applies to both Indian and European airlines and also those from West Asia, which carry traffic via Dubai, Abu Dhabi, or Doha. The government’s latest directions comes as deaths spike in European countries — Italy said 349 were dead on 16 March, a day after reporting 368 deaths. The US government, too, suspended all passenger movement to and from the European Union.

2. New H-1B visa rules could dampen Indian techies' American dream

Source: Livemint ([Link](#))

Already hit hard by high rejection rates, H-1B visa applicants from India might have a tougher time this year as the Donald Trump administration has changed rules for application and processing of the non-immigrant visa. The US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will close the initial registration for H-1B visa on March 20 while applications will start from April 1. The new rules will not only increase the time taken to process a visa but will also increase the cost. New York-based immigration law firm Davies & Associates said the new rules will delay visa processing as the process that used to run from early week of March to the second week of April will now extend from early March to at least the end of July.

3. Govt calls for social distancing as confirmed coronavirus cases rise to 124

Source: Livemint ([Link](#))

There could be an explosion in the number of Covid-19 cases in India, unless states take strict steps to ensure social distancing, a senior government scientist warned on 16 March amid

growing scepticism over how a nation of a billion-plus people could have an infection count of only 124. "As a scientist, my immediate worry is to find evidence of us landing into community transmission mode. We don't have that yet. So my worry is finding it out," Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) scientist Raman R. Gangakhedkar told reporters on the sidelines of a press conference. Community transmission takes place when a virus is transmitted locally within a community. The accepted belief so far has been that Indians have contracted the virus abroad and that patient quarantine has stopped community transmission.

4. Lok Sabha passes Appropriation Bill

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

The Lok Sabha on 16 March passed the Appropriation Bill 2020-21, authorising the government to draw over ₹110-lakh crore from the Consolidated Fund of India for its working as well as implementation of its programmes and schemes. This completes two-thirds of the exercise for approval of the Budget for 2020-21. The Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha had debated on Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's second Budget in the first half of the current session and in the second part, the lower house of Parliament passed the Appropriation Bill. In the third stage, the Finance Bill, which details the tax proposals, will be discussed and approved.

5. Commerce Ministry holds meeting of stakeholders on new foreign trade policy

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

The Commerce and Industry Ministry on 16 March held deliberations with stakeholders on issues related to the forthcoming foreign trade policy (FTP) for 2020-25, an official said. The meeting was attended by representatives of CII and exporters from various sectors. The official said that presentations were given to Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal on sectors such as textiles, chemicals, agriculture, capital goods, electronics, engineering, pharmaceuticals, leather, higher education, hospitality and tourism, e-commerce, and media and entertainment. Suggestions were given on inclusion of these sectors in the next policy, the official added.

6. Exporters hard hit by impact of coronavirus on global trade, seek urgent relief from govt

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

With major economies of the world slipping into a 'near-halt' due to pandemic Coronavirus, Indian exporters find themselves in a state of turmoil as trade in the country's top destinations is paralysed, making it imperative for an urgent relief measures for the exporting industries, the

EEPC India said on 16 March. The US, UAE, Germany, UK, Singapore, Italy and China, among others, are the largest contributors to the country's basket of merchandise exports. " Trade is crippled in most of these destinations due to a near collapse of global supply chain even as the cargo movement has stopped. The warehousing capacity is over-stretched with severe blocking of export finance. The international shipping lines are affected. Even the urgent and less bulky cargo through air routes is paralysed with the airlines trimming their operations, " said EEPC chairman Mr Ravi Sehgal.