

## Daily News Monitor: 10 August 2020

### **1. PM Narendra Modi launches Rs 1-trillion fund for agri infrastructure**

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

Agriculture infrastructure projects worth almost Rs 1,300 crore, to be executed through 2,282 primary agriculture cooperative societies, were launched on 9 August. This is part of the Modi government's ambitious programme to extend financing facility of around Rs 1 trillion over the next few years to farmer groups and individuals. The financing will be extended to create viable post-harvest infrastructure in villages and generate jobs. Launching, the agriculture infrastructure fund, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on 9 August that the country does not face problems in farm production but in post-harvest losses. Therefore, efforts are being made to strengthen post-harvest infrastructure facilities and ensure better income for farmers. Legal hurdles are being removed and major push for agri-reforms are being given to encourage investment in rural India for creating post-harvest linkages, he added.

### **2. Invoking self-reliant India, govt bans import of 101 defence items**

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

Invoking the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Atmanirbhar Bharat (Self-Reliant India) initiative, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) announced on 9 August a phased, year-wise embargo on the import of 101 items of defence equipment. As an equipment type comes under the import embargo, the military will be required to buy it from Indian defence manufacturers. "This decision will offer great opportunity to the Indian defence industry to manufacture items on the negative list by using its own design and development capabilities or adopting the technologies designed and developed by the Defence R&D Organisation to meet the requirements of the Armed Forces," tweeted Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. Modi endorsed the new export embargoes from his own Twitter account shortly afterwards.

### **3. 15-year plan to convert Reliance Industries into new energy company**

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

Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Ltd has a 15-year vision to build itself as a new energy company that aims to recycle CO<sub>2</sub>, create value from plastic waste and has an optimal mix of clean and affordable energy, analysts said. While the oil-to-chemical conglomerate has in recent times seen focus on consumer business, RIL's core oil-to-chemical (O2C) business is well placed to generate sustained free cash flow, BofA Securities

said in a report. "Until demand normalises, RIL is looking to maximise throughput, focus on cost by leveraging deep petrochemical integration and continue to focus on domestic fuel marketing," it said. Future of O2C is new energy company and partnerships. "RIL has a 15-year vision to build itself as one of the world's leading new energy and newmaterial companies. It also intends to be a net carbon zero company by 2035. To achieve this, the company is open to work with global financial investors, reputed technologypartners and start-ups working on futuristic solutions," it said.

#### **4. Saudi Aramco still eyes Mukesh Ambani's Reliance for \$15 billion investment**

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

Saudi Aramco said it's still working on a deal to buy a \$15 billion stake in Reliance Industries Ltd.'s refining and chemicals business, even as lower oil prices forces it to slash investment spending. Reliance's shares fell in mid-July after Chairman Mukesh Ambani said a transaction had been delayed "due to unforeseen circumstances in the energy market and the Covid-19 situation." A deal with Reliance would help the world's biggest crude exporter join the ranks of the top oil refiners and chemical makers. State-owned Aramco is already a major supplier of crude to India, while Reliance sells petroleum products, including gasoline, to the kingdom.

#### **5. Defence minister Rajnath Singh to launch 'Atmanirbhar Bharat Saptah' on August 11**

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

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will launch the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat Saptah' on 10 August, an official statement said. The event will be held at 3.30 pm, the defence minister's office tweeted on 9 August night. "Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, an 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' (self-reliant India) will be built which will be self-sufficient in terms of roti, kapda and makan as well as education and health," Singh said during an online event. He said the prime minister announced the creation of a new India in 2017 on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Champaran Satyagraha. "Now the Prime Minister has made it clear that when we lay the foundation of a new India, it will be full of self-confidence as well as self-reliance," Singh noted.

#### **6. Govt to offer production-linked incentives to man-made textiles**

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

The government will roll out a production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for the labour-intensive textiles and garment sector and correct its historical policy bias towards a cotton-dominated value chain, as it plans a renewed bid to reclaim India's export markets after

ceding a substantial ground to Bangladesh and Vietnam in recent years. In a recent interaction with a group of Japanese officials and investors, textile secretary Ravi Capoor said the “focussed product scheme” will incentivise the production of about 40 items with high export potential and reposition India as a major producer of synthetic fibre-based apparel. The incentive structure is being worked out.

### **7. Indian companies ready to export coronavirus test kits, target Latin America, Eastern Europe markets**

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

Indian manufacturers of the RT-PCR kits used for Covid-19 diagnosis are set to export their products to markets such as Latin America, East Asia and Eastern Europe, after the Indian government allowed restricted shipment of these kits earlier this week. The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) has fixed export quotas for viral transport media kits (VTM kits) and RT-PCR kits including swabs. India has a manufacturing capacity of 1 billion RT-PCR kits. The country on an average is doing daily testing of 600,000 samples. The decision of allowing limited exports of these kits was taken after diagnostic companies complained that their stocks were unpicked by state governments, leaving them with surplus inventory.

### **8. 327 items form 3/4th of imports from China, ‘can be alternatively sourced’**

**Source: Times of India ([Link](#))**

Just 327 products — ranging from mobile phones and telecom equipment to cameras, solar panels, air-conditioners and penicillin — accounted for nearly three-fourths of the imports from China, a study has estimated, while pointing out that it is possible to find alternative sources to get these goods or manufacture them in India. A paper by policy thinktank Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) used UN Comtrade data to estimate the value of these "critically sensitive imports" at \$66.6 billion in 2018 in overall imports of a little over \$90 billion. In 2018-19, official numbers had pegged imports from China at \$76.4 billion. A product was considered sensitive if China accounted for over 10% share of imports or if the value of shipments was \$50 million or more. "Such export monopoly of China has to be diluted in view of strategic requirements," the report said.