

Daily News Monitor: 15 May 2020

1. Nirmala Sitharaman Highlights: Migrant worker, small farmer, street vendor crisis answered; PMAY scheme extended

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

The government has finally taken up steps to resolve the pain of migrant workers, small farmers, and street vendors with the second round of measures largely focusing on providing work and benefits for the poor. The government introduced one nation one ration card, through which people can buy ration at any ration depot in the country, to help the poor. Along with an increase in wage rate from Rs 182 to Rs 202, announced earlier, it was also announced that migrant workers will now get work in their own states under MNREGA as more opportunities have been created. Street vendors were also tended to as the government announced a special credit facility of Rs 5,000 crore for them.

2. Govt refashions 'One Nation One Ration Card' as relief measure for migrants

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

The government on 14 May refashioned the 'One Nation, One Ration Card' scheme as a relief measure for migrant workers, but pushed the deadline for complete coverage to March 2021, an extension of nine months. Critics said the measure was unlikely to have any impact on migrant workers as most don't have their ration cards with them. The scheme, which enables cardholders to avail cheap grains from any ration shop irrespective of current residence, was already operational in 12 states at a very limited scale by April. Thereafter, seven more states were added to the list, including Uttar Pradesh. The earlier date for full coverage was June.

3. Centre creates 6 informal groups of ministers to discuss post-COVID-19 revival plans: Report

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

The government has created six informal groups of ministers (GoMs) to discuss the revival strategy after the lockdown ends. The GoMs have already begun discussions with officials, experts and industry representatives to prepare their suggestions, The Economic Times reported. Moneycontrol could not independently verify the report. India is currently in a nationwide lockdown to contain the spread of COVID-19. Eleven empowered groups of secretaries and senior government officials were formed to provide recommendations to tackle the economic fallout of the crisis during the lockdown.

4. Vande Bharat-2 likely to bring back over 32,000 stranded Indians

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

More than 32,000 stranded Indians are likely to be brought back to the country from 31 nations in the second phase of the week-long Vande Bharat mission starting on May 16. "Our capacity depends on our ability to carry out tests, provide quarantine facilities and ensure safe travel. In the second week of the repatriation drive we are hopeful of bringing back around 32,000 Indians, which is more than double our target in the first week," a source told *BusinessLine*.

5. Govt to boost Made in India products for exports; wants MSMEs to tap market potential in Europe, Latin America, Africa

Source: Firstpost ([Link](#))

After broadening the definition of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), the government is looking at widening the market for this key industrial sector. According to top sources, the government has already identified high potential export market for the MSMEs in several countries and will soon come out with a calibrated strategy. The review of future export markets, opportunities and other legal issues linked to the particular countries was carried out just weeks before the mega announcement by the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to support MSMEs while also revising the limit of investment to boost productivity.

6. Work from home to be new normal for govt offices after lifting of lockdown

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

'Work from home' may become a new normal post-lockdown for government employees to ensure social distancing norms till the coronavirus pandemic is checked. Draft guidelines in this regard have been circulated by the Personnel Ministry to all central government departments asking them to send their comments on it by May 21, failing which, it would be presumed that they are in agreement with the proposed draft. Preparing for life amid Covid-19 pandemic, the ministry said that the steps were being initiated because the virus necessitated many ministries to operate from home to maintain social distancing. According to the draft, the government may provide option for work from home to the eligible officers and staff for 15 days in a year as a matter of policy. There are 4.83 million central government employees.

7. India provided medical supplies to 120 nations to fight Covid-19: Goyal

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

India has provided medical supplies to over 120 countries to combat the coronavirus pandemic, out of which 43 countries received it as a grant, Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said during the G-20 trade ministers session on Thursday. Goyal participated during the second G20 Virtual Trade and Investment Ministers Meeting. "We offer full support to any

global engagements to further this cause. Staying true to our tradition of 'Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam' -- the world is one big family. India has unconditionally provided medical supplies to over 120 countries to combat this disease, of which 43 countries received it as a grant. We are also sharing our medical and public health expertise and capacity with them, using digital technologies," said Goyal. During his intervention, Goyal called upon the [G20](#) nations to ensure access to essential medicines, treatments and vaccines at affordable prices.

8. World Bank approves another \$1 billion fund to India to protect poor from Covid

Source: Livemint ([Link](#))

Amid the spread of coronavirus pandemic, the World Bank has approved \$1 billion aid to support India's efforts for providing social assistance to poor and vulnerable households. The social protection package for India is linked to central government's programmes. World Bank said that the billion-dollar social protection package was in addition to the previous package of \$1 billion allocated to India for COVID-19 emergency response and health systems last month. "The World Bank's billion-dollar support for social protection will help India leverage it's PM Garib Kalyan Yojana," said World Bank Country Director (India) Junaid Kamal Ahmad. This new support will be funded in two phases – an immediate allocation of \$750 million for fiscal year 2020 and a \$250 million second tranche that will be made available for fiscal year 2021.

9. Indian smartphone maker Lava plans to shift production to India

Source: Livemint ([Link](#))

Indian smartphone manufacturer Lava has said it will shift the production base of all of its phones meant for exports to India from China. The company will also shift its design centre to the country, chairman and managing director of Lava International told Business Standard (BS). The move is thanks to the government's new production linked incentive (PLI) scheme for mobile manufacturers in the country. Industry executives say that it gives manufacturers here a 6% cost advantage, something they didn't have earlier. Rai told BS that the "cost disadvantage" Lava had as compared to China, is eliminated by the PLI scheme. Since the proliferation of Chinese smartphones in the Indian market, companies like Lava, Micromax, Karbonn, among others, had found themselves at a disadvantage. However, Lava is among the few Indian players who had been able to move into other countries and sell phones there. The company also moved most of its business towards the manufacturing and design side of things.