

Daily News Monitor: 16 April 2020

1. FM participates in G20 Finance Ministers' virtual meeting

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

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on 15 April shared with G20 Finance Ministers the policy measures undertaken by the Government and RBI to support the poor, vulnerable and various sectors of the Indian economy to tide over the COVID-19 induced crisis. Participating in the virtual session of the 2nd G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meeting under Saudi Arabian presidency on 15 April, Sitharaman said that so far within a couple of weeks INDIA has disbursed financial assistance amounting to \$ 3.9 billion to more than 320 million, with a special focus on direct benefit transfer through digital technology so that the exposure of beneficiaries to public places is minimised.

2. OYO offers free stay to medical personnel fighting COVID-19

Source: Livemint ([Link](#))

Hospitality major OYO on 15 April said that it is opening its hotels for free stay of doctors, nurses and other medical first responders who are helping in the fight against coronavirus in India, starting with select OYO Townhouse hotels in Gurugram and Bengaluru. OYO has rolled out similar initiative offering free accommodation to medical personnel in other international markets including the USA, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and Nepal. "Starting with select [OYO](#) Townhouse hotels in Gurgaon and Bangalore, medical first responders who are in need of a place to stay and are facing any accommodation issues will receive free accommodations on the display of identification cards," an OYO statement said.

3. India's proposal on subsidies for poor fishermen awaits WTO response

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

With disruptions due to Covid-19 outbreak making meetings difficult, written submissions on India's proposal for protecting subsidies for artisanal fishers in poorer countries are being submitted by the the World Trade Organisation (WTO) members. All timelines have also been extended. This will be done at the on-going negotiations of the WTO. The inputs would go into framing provisions for special and differential treatment (S&DT) for developing nations, which is to be part of the revised version of the draft text of the agreement on curbing harmful fisheries subsidies, an official told *BusinessLine*.

4. MHA guidelines: Govt allows e-tail, agri activities to resume from April 20

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

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 15 April announced the extension of nationwide lockdown till May 3 to contain the spread of coronavirus (Covid-19). In his address to the nation, PM Modi said that there would be some relaxations to allow activities to resume in select areas. The Ministry of Home Affairs came out with some guidelines about what activities have been allowed and what will remain restricted. The ministry added that State and union territory governments shall not dilute lockdown guidelines in any manner, but they may impose stricter measures as per local requirements. The exemptions given will not be applicable to the hotspots. Now, wearing a mask will be mandatory across the nation.

5. Mumbai airport facilitates evacuation of 3,700 passengers during lockdown

Source: Livemint ([Link](#))

The Mumbai airport on 15 April said it has helped in the evacuation of over 3700 foreign nationals with 20 repatriation flights during the first phase of nationwide lockdown to stem coronavirus spread. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International [Airport](#) (CSMIA) in a statement said it has facilitated the operation of flights carrying stranded passengers from Mumbai to London, Atlanta, Frankfurt, Singapore, Paris and Tokyo among other international destinations. "GVK-MIAL managing Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) evacuated over 3700 passengers with 20 repatriation flights between 25th March - 14th April 2020," the statement read. Besides this, CSMIA has maintained seamless cargo operations and has managed close to 240 cargo flight movements over the lockdown period that commenced on March 25. The cargo operations at CSMIA have recorded the highest number of exports and import delivery of cargo in a single day in India.

6. Nirmala Sitharaman to meet PM Narendra Modi for stimulus 2.0

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

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman will meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 16 April to finalise the stimulus and support measures to counter the severe economic impact of Covid-19. "If the package is finalised, it could be unveiled soon after," a government official said on condition of anonymity. The upcoming package is likely to focus on the MSME sector, which has been the worst hit, and could include an over Rs 15,000 crore credit guarantee fund, another government official said. This is expected to be the first of a series of measures spanning other sectors of the economy as the situation on the ground unfolds after economic activity is opened up.

7. Indian begins export of major farm items amid COVID-19 lockdown: Government Source: The Economic Times ([Link](#))

India has started export of major farm products such as rice, meat, dairy and processed food items after the government stepped in to resolve the issues related to transportation and packaging in the wake of COVID-19 lockdown. The Union Agriculture Ministry, in a statement, said exporters' problems are being resolved by the farm export promotion body Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA). "Exports of all major products i.e. rice, groundnut, processed food, meat, poultry, dairy and organic products has started," the ministry said. APEDA has put in a lot of efforts and issues related to transportation, curfew passes, and packaging units, which are being resolved, it said. The ministry further said that the government has adopted a "flexible approach" and is issuing digital copies of phytosanitary certificates for exports.