

Daily News Monitor: 18 March 2021

1. Blue Star enters AC mass market

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

Leading air conditioning brand Blue Star, known for its premium products, on 17 March announced its entry into the mass market by launching what it called the ‘mass premium’ split air conditioners. The company has strategically re-positioned its brand to include the ‘mass premium’ category with the intent to expand its market reach and target the masses. With this strategic foray, Blue Star has rolled out a series of split ACs at affordable prices, which are of high quality, reliable, and durable — qualities that all products from the company promise. The new range comprises 3-star, 4-star, and 5-star inverter split air conditioners that are available at attractive prices starting from Rs 25,990 for a 0.80TR 3-star inverter split AC. The ACs are available in various cooling capacities ranging from 0.80TR to 2TR, said Blue Star.

2. Parliamentary panel for early disposal of pending 205 FDI proposals

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

A parliamentary panel has recommended the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) for taking necessary steps for disposal of 205 pending FDI proposals by the respective ministries. A report by the department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Commerce said that since the abolition of FIPB (foreign investment promotion board), 471 out of 676 proposals (including 99 proposals transferred from FIPB) have been disposed off as on February 15, 2021.

3. Government notifies vehicle recall policy: Check the key highlights

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

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways issued two set of notifications on March 17. These are the key highlights from the notifications on rules for mandatory recall of defective vehicles and proposal to increase re-registering fee of 15-year-old vehicles: The government has asked automobile companies to recall vehicles in case the number of complaints about a defective part in a particular model rises beyond a threshold. Wherever a minimum number of complaints, ranging from 100 to around 1,250-- for different categories of vehicle against total sales of model is received on vehicle recall portal, mandatory recall is to be initiated, the

ministry said. The Ministry has also asked stakeholders to submit feedback on their proposal within a period of 30 days.

4. 'Boost to e-mobility': Indian Oil partners with Israel's Phinergy to manufacture metal-air batteries

Source: Livemint ([Link](#))

The Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) on 17 March entered into a collaboration with the Israeli start-up company Phinergy to form IOC Phinergy Private Limited. The collaboration will manufacture Aluminum-Air systems in India to boost the "Make in India" programme and recycle used Aluminum to strengthen India's energy security. According to an official statement, leading automotive manufacturers Maruti Suzuki and Ashok Leyland have signed a Letter of Intent (LOI) with the IOC Phinergy Private Limited. This is expected to prove to be a significant boost to India's pursuit of e-mobility. "The joint venture will facilitate will help India in its journey towards clean, sustainable, affordable, safe, and long-lasting energy options and facilitate much faster adoption of e-vehicles in the country," said Union Min Dharmendra Pradhan after the collaboration.

5. Lok Sabha passes Appropriation Bill, finishes two-thirds of budget exercise

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

The Lok Sabha on 17 March passed the Appropriation Bill 2021-22, authorising the government to draw funds 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 2021-22. The Appropriation Bill authorising payment and appropriation of specified sums from the Consolidated Fund of India for 2021-22 was introduced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. The bill was later approved by voice vote. The Lok Sabha earlier discussed demands for grants of different ministries, including railways, education and health. Speaker Om Birla later applied the guillotine, after which all the outstanding demands for grants, whether discussed or not, were put to vote at once and passed..

6. Centre says Covid vaccine wastage in India at 6.5%, calls for optimal usage

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

With India witnessing a vaccine wastage of 6.5 per cent, the government has asked states to promote optimal utilisation and drastically reduce the wastage, Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said on 17 March. Several states are recording much higher levels of wastage than the national average, such as Telangana, which is losing 17.5 per cent of vaccines; Andhra Pradesh (11.6 per cent) and Uttar Pradesh (9.4 per cent). The government has made available

75 million doses of Covid-19 vaccines so far across all states, according to the health ministry. “Vaccines are public health goods. They are invaluable commodities. Any reduction in wastage means you end up inoculating more people and therefore chances of disrupting the chain of infection grows,” Bhushan said. Some states which are performing better in management of their vaccine supply include Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand — with less than 2 per cent of doses going to waste. On increasing the dosage interval from four to eight weeks for the Covishield vaccine, V K Paul, member-health, NITI Aayog, said the interim advice of the national technical advisory group on immunisation is that there is no change.