

Daily News Monitor: 18 May 2020

1. Lockdown 4.0 guidelines: Nationwide lockdown extended till May 31, with considerable relaxations

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

The centre 17 May extended the ongoing nationwide lockdown till May 31. The fourth phase of the lockdown will commence from 18 May. The government has allowed considerable relaxations in this round of lockdown- Inter-state movement of vehicles, buses have been allowed with states and Union Territories being given the final power to delineate Red, Orange and Green zones. The new guidelines are based on suggestions from states that PM Narendra Modi had sought during his fifth discussion with with chief ministers on the pandemic on May 11.

2. These 5 people will monitor Modi's Rs 21 lakh cr economic package; PM forms informal GoM

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

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has assigned an informal group of ministers (GoM) with the responsibility of monitoring his Rs 21 lakh crore special economic package. The GoM will be responsible for tracking the implementation of the economic package that the Prime Minister announced last week, The Indian Express reported on Monday citing unidentified sources. The GoM will consist of top leadership from the government including, Home Minister Amit Shah, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Railway and Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal, and Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Puri. The announcement of the economic revival package was followed by the Finance Minister's five-day marathon press briefings where she laid out the reforms totaling an economic value of Rs 21 lakh crore. These reforms and stimulus measures are expected to help the Indian economy on its feet in the post-coronavirus world.

3. FM Nirmala Sitharaman clears the decks for Indian companies to directly list overseas

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

A host of Indian companies can now tap foreign capital by directly listing overseas. Start-ups and complex conglomerates and their holding companies, along with new-age technology companies, can now look at an overseas listing without listing in India first. Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Sunday cleared the decks for Indian companies to directly list overseas. The move will allow Indian start-ups and other specialised sectors to list overseas, where investors are sophisticated enough to take bets on new sectors. Other than start-ups, holding

companies, banks and select technology companies may find better valuations while listing overseas. For instance, conglomerates and holding companies trade at a discount due to the complexity of the business, but the same may enjoy a better valuation overseas.

4. Govt will soon decide on OCI visa issue: Minister tells Indian diaspora

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

In a bid to allay fears of OCI cardholders over the temporary suspension of their long-term visas, Minister of State for External Affairs, V Muraleedharan said his government will soon take an appropriate decision on it. He also invited members of the Indian diaspora to invest in the country in view of the recent economic reforms announced by the government. Participating in a virtual panel discussion with Indian-Americans on Covid-19, organised jointly by the Federation of Indian Associations (FIA) and the Bihar Jharkhand Association of North America (BAJNA), Muraleedharan was flooded with queries over the OCI card issue. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi was aware of it and will take an appropriate decision soon," he said. A large number of Indian citizens whose children are OCI (overseas citizen of India) card holders and several people of Indian origin having the card are unable to travel to India, even for emergency reasons, because of the temporary suspension of their long-term visa.

5. Govt notifies GST law changes, lack of clarity on transitional claims

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

With the government notifying the GST-related changes made in the Finance Act, 2020, the recent Delhi high court judgment allowing taxpayers till June 30 to claim the transitional credit would be nullified. The Finance Act, earlier this year, had amended relevant sections of the CGST Act, which would come into effect from 18 May. Earlier this month, the Delhi high court had allowed taxpayers registered under GST to claim accumulated CENVAT credit from pre-GST regime till June 30, 2020, and noted that the benefit of transitional credit will be applicable for three years (since launch of GST on July 1, 2017) which is the period mentioned in the limitation Act.

6. Government to bring ordinance to amend companies act

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

The government will promulgate an Ordinance to amend the companies law to decriminalise various provisions, permit direct overseas listing for Indian corporates and changes to further improve the ease of doing business. Addressing a press conference on 17 May, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said companies can list their securities directly in foreign jurisdictions and described it as "one big step for Indian companies". A Bill to amend the

Companies Act, 2013 is pending before Parliament. The Act is implemented by the corporate affairs ministry.

7. PM e-VIDYA initiative to bring more opportunities for ed-tech startups

Source: Livemint ([Link](#))

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on 17 May announced the immediate launch 'Pradhan Mantri e-VIDYA' initiative for digital education, which is likely to boost already high interest in the ed-tech startups, given the extended at-home learning requirements that the industry is catering to. Top 100 universities of the country will be allowed to start online courses by 30 May, Sitharaman said while announcing several measures for the education sector. "This should create opportunities for the players in the education sector and technology companies to create, distribute and monetize, relevant digital content targeted at all sections of the society leading to a much wider reach and impact. During these tough times, the right use of digital technologies can go a long way in achieving the goals laid out by the government," said Ashvin Vellody, partner, Deloitte India.

8. Lockdown 4.0: Relief for e-commerce firms as deliveries can resume in red zones

Source: Livemint ([Link](#))

The ministry of home affairs allowed delivery of non-essential products in red zones, as part of the new guidelines issued on 17 May for Lockdown 4.0, providing huge relief to e-commerce companies. Now, e-commerce firms may finally resume full operations after nearly two months of staggered operations after the lockdown began on 25 March. So far, they could only deliver essentials, such as groceries, which is a small part of the business for most, including Amazon and Flipkart. From 4 May, the firms were only allowed to deliver non-essential products in orange and green zones. However, large parts of most major cities were in red zones, and thus, remained out of bounds for non-essential deliveries.