

## Daily News Monitor: 19 February 2021

### **1. Policy and regulatory framework for discoms in the offing, says PM Modi**

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

A policy and regulatory framework for discoms is in the offing, Prime Minister Narendra Modi told key stakeholders of power and renewable energy sector on 18 February. “A consumer should be able to choose his/her supplier as per performance like any other retail commodity. Work is on to free distribution sector of entry barriers and licensing for distribution and supply. Efforts are underway for prepaid smart meter, feeder separation, and system upgradation,” the PM said. The ministry of power has floated a draft Electricity Bill with these reforms and policy changes. The PM addressed a webinar organised to push for the reforms planned. The webinar was attended by Power and New and Renewable Energy Minister R K Singh, ministry officials, and other stakeholders.

### **2. PM Modi to chair Niti Aayog’s Governing Council meeting on Feb 20**

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

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will chair Niti Aayog’s Governing Council meeting on February 20 where issues related to agriculture, infrastructure, manufacturing and human resource development will be discussed, according to an official statement. The council, the apex body of Niti Aayog, includes all chief ministers, lieutenant governors of Union Territories (UTs), several union ministers and senior government officials. The sixth meeting of the Governing Council will witness the entry of Ladakh for the first time, in addition to the participation of Jammu and Kashmir as a UT, the statement said.

### **3. CECPA: Cabinet clears trade pact with Mauritius**

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

about Minister Santosh Gangwar will launch software applications for five all India surveys, including on migrant and domestic workers on February 18, the labour ministry said on 17 February. Gangwar will also release instruction manuals with questionnaire for five All India Surveys being conducted by the Labour Bureau, the ministry said. These five surveys being undertaken by Labour Bureau are All India Survey on Migrant workers, All India Survey on Domestic Workers, All India Survey on Employment Generated by Professionals, All India Survey on Employment Generated in Transport Sector, and All-India Quarterly Establishment based Employment Survey.

#### **4. Five Indian-origin personalities in TIME's 100 emerging leaders list**

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

Five Indian-origin personalities, including Twitter's top lawyer Vijaya Gadde and UK's finance minister Rishi Sunak, and an Indian activist feature in TIME magazine's annual list of 100 "emerging leaders who are shaping the future". The 2021 TIME100 Next, released on Wednesday, is an expansion of TIME's flagship TIME100 franchise of the most influential people in the world and highlights 100 emerging leaders who are shaping the future. "Everyone on this list is poised to make history. And in fact, many already have," Dan Macsai, the editorial director of the TIME100, said. Other Indian-origin personalities on the list are Instacart founder and CEO Apoorva Mehta, doctor and Executive Director of nonprofit Get Us PPE Shikha Gupta and founder of nonprofit Upsolve Rohan Pavuluri.

#### **5. Dept of telecommunications likely to announce schedule for 5G trials in few days**

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

It seems that after being pulled up by the parliamentary committee on lack of preparedness for 5G, the department of telecommunications (DoT) is likely to announce the schedule for 5G trials in the coming few days. The DoT has already undertaken a meeting with telecom operators as well as equipment makers regarding the trials. After hearing from the industry, telecom secretary Anshu Prakash, held a meeting with officials in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) on February 16, to give an update. The DoT has assured the telecom operators that it will soon announce the 5G trial schedule. The standing committee on information technology, chaired by Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, has pulled up DoT for not doing sufficient preparatory work for launching of 5G services in India. The committee said at a time when many countries are swiftly moving towards 5G technology, India is likely to witness its deployment only by the end of 2021 or early part of 2022, that too partially.

#### **6. India, Russia should diversify trade basket by going beyond traditional sectors:**

**Shringla**

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

India and Russia should diversify their trade basket and economic exchanges by going beyond the traditional sectors and cooperating in new areas like railways, transport and logistics, pharmaceuticals, minerals and steel that will add momentum to the bilateral ties, Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla has said. Addressing a meeting hosted by the Diplomatic Academy of Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 17 February, Shringla said India-Russia trade, amounting to USD 10.11 billion in FY 2019-2020, is far below the

potential. "Last year there was a slump but we are finding ways of reviving it. Both countries have set the bilateral trade target at USD 30 billion by 2025," he said

### **7. Indian startup Hike planning social networking platform to rival Facebook**

**Source: Hindustan Times ([Link](#))**

Kavin Bharti Mittal, a scion of the family behind India's second-biggest wireless operator, is planning to revive his struggling technology startup more than four years after it was valued at \$1.4 billion by backers including Softbank Group Corp. Since attaining unicorn status in 2016, New Delhi-based Hike Pvt. has suffered a string of setbacks. The latest blow came last month when it shut down its signature messaging app -- a platform that grabbed the attention of other investors such as Tencent Holdings Ltd. and Foxconn Technology Group for taking on WhatsApp in the local market. That setback doesn't mean the end of the road for Hike, the 33-year-old son of Bharti Airtel Ltd.'s billionaire-chairman Sunil Mittal, said in an interview last week. In a bid to rekindle growth, he's now betting on a Facebook-like new social networking platform that promises to weed out "creeps" and "fake profiles" as well as a gaming app that aims to tap rising demand in the world's second-most populous country.

### **8. Flipkart signs MoU with Tamil Nadu government to boost small-scale businesses**

**Source: Hindustan Times ([Link](#))**

E-commerce marketplace Flipkart has signed a memorandum of understanding with Tamil Nadu MSME Trade and Investment Promotion Bureau to bring local artisans, weavers, craftsmen and SMBs into the e-commerce fold. The partnership under the Flipkart Samarth programme will enable Tamil Nadu's local artisans, weavers, craftsmen and smaller industries to showcase their hallmark products. Anu George, Industries Commissioner and Director of Industries and Commerce, said there are 294 industrial cooperative societies functioning under the department. Many of them are involved in production of handicraft items including GI registered products. "The MoU will provide these societies with a new vigour and link them to a national market for their products," he said.