

Daily News Monitor: 19 January 2021

1. India to gift 2 million doses of Covid-19 vaccine 'Covishield' to Bangladesh

Source: Livemint ([Link](#))

The Health Services Division under the Ministry has issued a letter to the drug regulator the Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA) to take appropriate steps to administer the vaccine. The vaccines will be received and stored at DGHS' facilities, such as the Expanded Program on Immunisation (EPI), Dhaka Tribune further said. Meanwhile, Health Minister Zahid Maleque said that additional storage for the COVID-19 vaccines will be provided by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

2. India Subcontracting Expo 2021 to highlight trade opportunities in India for US businesses

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

India offers tremendous business opportunities to the US in various sectors such as manufacturing and the COVID-19 pandemic has presented a "unique" opportunity to the country to work with America to build resilient and reliable supply chains that will have the ability to weather future shocks, eminent speakers told a virtual forum ahead of the India Subcontracting Expo. The India Subcontracting Expo 2021 focusing on the North American region is scheduled to be held February 16-19 virtually. The expo will bring together exhibitors from India and buyers from Canada, Mexico and the US.

3. PVR predicts return of big bang releases

Source: Livemint ([Link](#))

PVR Ltd. is in talks with Bollywood producers to release their movies in cinema halls now rather than on streaming sites like those run by Netflix Inc. and Amazon.com Inc., now that the pandemic is easing in India. The country's biggest cinema operator, which runs about 835 screens across 71 cities, is currently operating most theaters at half capacity due to Covid-related restrictions. However, it sees benefits in the "age-old strategy" of movies first coming to the big screen before being monetized on other platforms. "This applies more to big films, where the yield per eyeball in theater is still the highest as compared to all the other distribution platforms," Kamal Gianchandani, PVR's chief of strategy, said in an earnings call last week.

4. Centre considers rationalizing 120 autonomous bodies

Source: Livemint ([Link](#))

The Centre is considering rationalizing over 120 autonomous bodies under 23 central government ministries and departments after the department of expenditure submitted a review report on 231 such entities, officials aware of the development said, requesting anonymity. In a slew of recommendations to the cabinet secretariat, a copy of which was reviewed by Hindustan Times, the department said 83 of the 231 autonomous bodies should be retained, while 117 must be merged into just 29. It said the Centre must disengage from 20 entities, and seven autonomous bodies should be closed.

5. TOTAL France to acquire 20% stake in Adani Green Energy for \$2.5 bn

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

Global energy major Total will pick up a 20 per cent stake in Adani Green Energy Ltd (AGEL), the renewable power company of the Adani group, by way of acquiring shares held by the promoter group. Along with the minority stake, the French firm will acquire 50 per cent in a 2.35-gigawatt portfolio of operating solar assets owned by AGEL in a deal worth \$2.5 billion (about Rs 18,000 crore), said a statement by AGEL. Total will also have a seat on the AGEL board. This is the third partnership between Total and the Adani group. In 2019, Total had acquired 37.4 per cent in Adani Gas and 50 per cent in the group's Dhamra LNG project. The JV entailed developing various regasification terminals, including Dhamra LNG, and a retail network of 1,500 service stations over a period of 10 years.

6. Isro decides to partner with industry to launch space-themed merchandise

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

Missions to Moon. Mission to Mars. And to Venus. The Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) has a lot to show and has its sights set on a lot more. An organisation that keeps its focus squarely on a world that has no limits is now planning to offer a small bit of itself through space-themed merchandise (merch) that will revolve around the many missions it has made possible from the time it was established in 1969. To put a count to those: 111 spacecraft missions; 79 launch missions; 10 student satellites; 328 foreign satellites belonging to 33 countries... and counting. Isro's launch plan for its merchandise is, however, simple. It will rope in industry to manufacture customised Isro-theme T-shirts, coffee mugs, posters, key chains, games, jigsaw puzzle and so on. Isro officials said that of late, many agencies interested in creating customised articles had approached it. The space agency hopes through these items it can create awareness and kindle an interest, especially among students, in space science and technology, while also propagating the achievements of the agency.

7. FinMin releases weekly instalment of Rs 6,000 crore to states to meet GST compensation shortfall

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

The Finance Ministry on 18 January released the 12th instalment of Rs 6,000 crore to states to meet the GST compensation shortfall, taking the total amount released so far under this window to Rs 72,000 crore. The Centre had set up a special borrowing window in October 2020 to meet the estimated shortfall of Rs 1.10 lakh crore in revenue arising on account of implementation of Goods and Services Tax (GST). The ministry in a statement said it has released the 12th weekly instalment of Rs 6,000 crore to the states to meet the GST compensation shortfall. Out of this, an amount of Rs 5,516.60 crore has been released to 23 states and Rs 483.40 crore has been released to the 3 Union Territories (UT) with Legislative Assembly (Delhi, Jammu & Kashmir & Puducherry), who are members of the GST Council.