

Daily News Monitor: 21 August 2020

1. Ease of doing biz: Govt proposes unified compliance platform for India Inc

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

India Inc may soon get a single online compliance framework for various regulatory requirements, according to an Economic Times report. The initiative by the government will help the companies to comply with all the regulations at one go. “The idea is to reduce compliance burden,” a senior government official told the newspaper. The Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) has started discussions with various regulators including the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi), and the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), on the possibility of creating a single platform or compliance forms with common data sources, the official told Economic Times. The official said that the move is expected to give a huge boost to ease of doing business in the country. The single platform system will integrate the MCA database and other regulatory bodies and cut down on duplication of filings.

2. Indore cleanest city in India for the fourth time, five others rated 5-star

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

Indore, Ambikapur, Navi Mumbai, Surat, Rajkot and Mysuru have been rated as five-star cities, 86 cities as three-star and 64 cities as one-star as per the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs' rating protocol for garbage-free cities. The announcement was made during the Swachh Survekshan awards declared by Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri. It is meant to monitor the performance of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, launched in 2014. The survey was conducted in 4,242 cities, 62 cantonment boards and 92 Ganga towns and was completed in 28 days. Indore city in Madhya Pradesh emerged as the cleanest city for the fourth time in a row, Surat and Navi Mumbai won the second and third position respectively in the more than 100,000 population category.

3. Ambassador Sandhu makes a strong case for conclusion of Indo-US trade talks

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

Indian Ambassador to the US Taranjit Singh Sandhu on 21 August made a strong case for conclusion of the ongoing trade negotiations which would become the first phase of a comprehensive bilateral trade agreement between the two nations. Bilateral trade between India and the US, which touched USD 150 billion last year, has dropped 25 per cent in the first half of this year, he said at webinar organised by industry body Ficci. Sandhu observed

that India's bilateral trade has been growing at the rate of 10 per cent on a year-to-year basis, reaching USD 150 billion in 2019. "Our bilateral trade has not been immune to COVID-19 as total trade between the two countries has reduced by nearly 25 per cent in the first half of 2020 as compared to 2019," he said. The US is today India's biggest trading partner, but the real potential of the trade relationship is yet to be reached, he added.

4. Swachh Bharat report card: 72 lakh urban toilets built; next stage, water treatment, toilet waste disposal

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

After the Modi government's initial goal to make urban India open defecation free (ODF) along with 100 per cent scientific solid waste management, the government is now planning to tap other aspects under the Swachh Bharat mission. In its vision for the next phase of the mission, the government said that it aims to ensure safe containment, transportation, disposal of faecal sludge, and septage from toilets, according to the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs. It added that the treatment of all wastewater before discharging into water bodies, and their maximum possible re-use will also be the government's priority.

5. Vande Bharat Mission Phase V: India extends helping hand, sends medical aid to countries in South America

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

More and more Indians are returning home on the special flights which have been organized to get them back. Phase V is in progress and by the end of the month around 375 international flights are scheduled to be operated. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has been in close coordination with other agencies, state government and ministries have been working round the clock to bring back the stranded citizens from across the globe due to the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. So far the bilateral air bubbles, arrangements with US, Canada, UK, France, Germany, UAE, Qatar and the Maldives are operational and functioning well. Negotiations are going on with around 18 countries on air travel arrangements. These include Russia, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka Australia, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Nigeria, Bahrain, Israel, Kenya, and the Philippines, are ongoing.

6. Air India privatisation: At least 6, including Lufthansa and Etihad, in race for Maharaja

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

At least half a dozen entities including Hinduja Group, Germany's Lufthansa, the UAE's Etihad Airways, Singapore Airlines and the Tata Group may throw their hats in the ring, as

the government has expedited the process to sell sick, state-owned airline Air India (AI), sources privy to matter said. Several steps are being taken to lure the buyers including putting in a place a plan to trim the airline's 9,400-strong workforce expeditiously. Logistic issues due to travel restrictions imposed in the wake of Covid-18 have forced the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) to extend the expression of interest (EoI) submission deadline multiple times. A call would taken next week if it needs to be extended further from August 31, the sources added.

7. France reopens select visa services for Indian students, researchers & teachers

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

Students, researchers and teachers invited by an academic establishment or laboratory in France, as well as holders of the Talent passport can now travel again to France. Starting 17th August, 7 VFS centres (Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Kochi) became operational to receive select visa applications, while complying with Indian travel regulations as well as the safety of the consular teams working in different parts of India, according to a French government. Statement. Applications will be processed in small batches every week to ensure adequate safety measures at these centres.

8. US halt to plasma therapy brings a severe jolt to treatment plans in India

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

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has put on hold an emergency authorisation for blood plasma arguing that emerging data on the treatment is too weak, raising concerns for countries like India which are going big on plasma therapy, experts say. Amar Jesani, editor of the Indian Journal of Medical Ethics, said that the therapeutic effectivity of the therapy has to be established through clinical research. "So far there is no evidence providing that evidence," he told ET. Many states and hospitals have not only backed the therapy but have set up plasma banks as well. For example in Maharashtra, Delhi and Haryana doctors have been prescribing therapy for the moderate patients. To assess safety and efficacy of plasma therapy, the ICMR had in April sought participation in the randomised controlled study.

