

Daily News Monitor: 29 June 2020

1. BSNL does not want a ban on Huawei, ZTE, other foreign vendors; says move may hurt loss-making PSU

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

State-owned, loss-making BSNL is understood to be in a protest mode on any move by the government to bar foreign vendors from participating in its forthcoming tender for rolling out 4G network. Though the government has not officially taken any such decision, its think tank body, Niti Aayog has recently recommended that BSNL's 4G network be made using only locally designed, developed and manufactured (IDDM) products. However, BSNL officials feel that if any such decision is taken by the government and imposed on it, it would further cripple the telco and its revival despite a government bailout package of over Rs 70,000 crore. The risk of any move to bar foreign vendors like Nokia, Ericsson, Samsung, ZTE or Huawei from participating in the tender would mean delay as well as cost escalation in procurement of equipment by more than 25%

2. India may step up scrutiny of imports from Chinese cos in Asean countries

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

India is looking to increase the scrutiny of imports from Chinese companies or entities located in Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) countries, said people with knowledge of the matter. New Delhi has information about China setting up new entities or acquiring defunct companies in countries such as Vietnam and using these shell enterprises to re-label and export goods to India, exploiting India's free trade agreement (FTA) with Asean. The government has also sounded out industry and importers to identify such shipments that abuse the FTA as it contemplates actions such as enhanced checks on country of origin certificates by customs authorities. The FTA with Asean allows lower tariffs on most manufactured goods. India is seeking to lower its dependence on imports and, following border hostilities with China, looking for ways in which it can reduce trade and business ties with its northern neighbour.

3. World Bank approves \$500 mn education project for six states

Source: Livemint ([Link](#))

The World Bank on 28 June said its board has approved a project worth \$500 million to improve the learning outcome and governance of government schools in six Indian states. "India has made significant strides in improving access to education across the country. Between 2004-05 and 2018-19, the number of children going to school increased from 219

million to 248 million, but the learning outcomes of students across all age groups remains below par," it said. The project, Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States Program (STARS), will be implemented through the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, the flagship central scheme, in Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha and Rajasthan.

4. India among Switzerland's top-3 partners for info exchange on tax matters: Global Forum

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

India figures among the top-three countries getting detailed information from Switzerland about bank accounts and beneficiary ownership of entities established by their residents in the Alpine nation, according to the latest study by OECD's Global Forum on transparency and exchange of information for tax purposes. In its latest peer review report on exchange of information on request, the Global Forum, which is tasked to assess the standard of exchange of information on request by various jurisdictions worldwide and their compliance, said Switzerland is rated 'largely compliant'.

5. EU-Vietnam FTA: India's labour-intensive export sectors to feel the heat, China may gain

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

Pandemic-hit Indian exporters, especially in labour-intensive sectors, are expecting their fortune to plummet further, as key competitor Vietnam has clinched a free trade agreement (FTA) with the EU. The pact will raise competition between the Asian rivals for the lucrative EU market in a range of products such as garments, footwear, marine products, plastics, rubber, leather and coffee. Importantly, Vietnam will get duty-free access to the EU for 71% of its goods from day one and 99% after seven years but Indian supplies will continue to attract up to 9.6% duty (the maximum, among the products from labour-intensive sectors, is on garments).

6. IMF advocates contingency reserves for Indian states

Source: Livemint ([Link](#))

At a time state governments are facing increasing fiscal pressures due to mounting pandemic related expenditure demands amid falling revenue collections, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has advocated states such as Tamil Nadu should build contingency reserves to meet unforeseen expenditure demands. "A contingency reserve or planning margin could be established for new initiatives to provide flexibility. A Tamil Nadu Contingency Fund of Rs1.5 billion, or less than 0.1% of total expenditure, already exists in the budget. Although

this fund may handle some limited unforeseen expenditure, it is not appropriate for substantial policy priorities that emerge during the fiscal year," IMF said in a report on 'Modernising budget formulation and managing fiscal risks' of Tamil Nadu. The report was published on 27 June.

7. New mortality software tested in hospitals to prevent misreporting of cause of death

Source: Livemint ([Link](#))

To understand patterns of covid-19-related deaths as well as prevent misreporting of the cause of death, the National Centre for Disease Informatics and Research of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has prepared a mortality software for all states. As of Sunday, 16,103 people had died in India due to the virus. The primary objective of this tool, which uses the World Health Organization's International Classification of Disease Covid-19 codes, is to measure the public health impact of the pandemic in every district in India. The e-mortality software, or E-Mor, will record the clinical disease history of every patient to understand the impact of co-morbidities when the virus attacks the body. The NCDIR has put out detailed guidelines for doctors, hospitals and nursing homes to appropriately handle covid-19-related deaths in India.