

Daily News Monitor: 30 December 2020

1. India defers certificate requirement for rice export to European countries till July

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

A notification dated August 10 is “amended to the extent that export of rice (basmati and non-basmati) to EU member states and other European countries – Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland only will require Certificate of Inspection from EIA/EIC”. Export to remaining European countries (except Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland) will require Certificate of Inspection by Export Inspection Council (EIC)/Export Inspection Agency (EIA) for export “from July 1, 2021,” the directorate said. India, the world’s top rice exporter, exports about 3 lakh tonnes of basmati rice to the EU. The Export Inspection Council (EIC) is the official export certification body of India which ensures quality and safety of products exported from India.

2. Jindal Stainless (Hisar) to merge into group company Jindal Steel

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

Jindal Stainless (Hisar) (JSHL) will be merged into group company Jindal Steel (JSL), the management announced on 29 December. “The merger of JSL and JSHL will induce a simplified capital structure, expanding the turnover of the merged business to around Rs 20,000 crore. With 1.9 million tonnes per annum melt capacity, the merged entity will be the only Indian company in the league of top 10 stainless steel firms in the world,” said Abhyuday Jindal, MD, JSL & JSHL.

3. Ease of doing business: Centre steps up focus on Kolkata, Bangalore

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

The Centre has firmed up several proposals — from adopting an online system to approve building plan and e-filing of cases for the enforcement of contracts to providing electricity connections in as early as a week — to make it easier for doing business in Kolkata and Bangalore. The move follows the World Bank’s decision to add these two cities to the list of its existing destinations (Delhi and Mumbai) and widen the coverage of its survey for gauging India’s performance in its ease of doing business index. The ranks are typically based on stakeholders’ perception of reforms in the cities under the survey.

4. Farmers to meet Centre for 6th round of talks on farm laws, eager for solution

Source: Livemint ([Link](#))

As the farmers' protests against Centre's new farm laws gripped the national capital for over a month, the farmers are hoping for a breakthrough as they are all set to sit for the sixth round of talks with the Centre 30 December. The Union Agriculture Ministry invited the leaders of farmers' unions to sit on the negotiating table at Vigyan Bhawan at 2 pm on 30 December. The four-point agenda for talks in their list includes modalities to repeal farm laws and a mechanism to bring a law for providing a legal guarantee on Minimum Support Price (MSP). The agitating farmers have a clear stand that they will leave the protesting sites once the laws are revoked.

5. RIL completes acquisition of IMG Worldwide's stake in sports management JV

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

Reliance Industries Ltd has completed acquisition of IMG Worldwide LLC's stake in their sports management joint venture IMG Reliance Ltd (IMG-R). "The company has, on December 28, 2020, completed the acquisition of equity shares of IMGR. Accordingly, IMG-R has become a wholly-owned subsidiary of the company," Reliance Industries said in a regulatory filing. Last week, Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) announced it will buy out IMG Worldwide LLC from their sports management joint venture (JV) for Rs 52.08 crore. The nation's biggest company by market value, in a stock exchange filing, had said it will buy IMG Worldwide's 50 per cent stake in IMG-Reliance Ltd (IMG-R) for no more than Rs 52.08 crore in cash. RIL had formed an equal joint venture with IMG Worldwide, an international sports marketing and management company, in 2010 to develop, market and manage sports and entertainment in India.

6. Tatas spread wings in aviation, hike stake in AirAsia India to 84%

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

In a major step to consolidate the group's aviation business, Tata Sons--the holding company for the salt to software conglomerate--has increased its stake in AirAsia India to 83.67 per cent from 51 per cent till now. The Tata group bought 32.67 per cent stake from AirAsia Berhad at Rs 276.29 crore, the Malaysian airline told the Kuala Lumpur-based exchange Bursa on 30 December. Tata Sons also has a call option on the remaining 16.33 per cent stake that its partner holds in the airline. A person aware of the development said Tatas would exercise the right, thereby giving a total exit to the Tony Fernandes-owned group by the middle of 2021. The 51-49 joint venture partnership between the Tatas and the AirAsia group had started operations in 2014 as a low-cost carrier in the country.

7. India starts probe into alleged exports subsidisation of aluminium item by Malaysia

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

India has initiated a probe into alleged exports subsidisation by Malaysia on an aluminium product, following a complaint by the domestic industry, according to a notification. The commerce ministry's investigation arm Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) has started an anti-subsidy investigation to examine whether Malaysia's subsidy programmes for exports of 'aluminium primary foundry alloy ingot' into India are impacting the domestic industry. Vedanta Ltd and Bharat Aluminium Company Ltd have filed an application before the directorate seeking initiation of the probe of subsidised imports of the product originating in or exported from Malaysia.

8. India is set to swing from being a cautious spender in 2020 to opening the fiscal floodgates in Budget 2021

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

India is set to swing from being a cautious spender in 2020 to opening the fiscal floodgates as Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeks to pull Asia's third-biggest economy back from the worst of the pandemic. Curbs imposed by the finance ministry on more than 80 government departments and ministries earlier in the year to preserve cash were relaxed this quarter. In addition, this year's Budget will be increased from its current \$407 billion when new spending plans are announced Feb. 1, according to people familiar with discussions, who asked not to be identified as the information isn't public and subject to change. The developments will give a boost to much-needed spending to help weather the hit from the coronavirus pandemic. Government expenditures have barely hit the half way mark seven months into the fiscal year, which started April.