

Daily News Monitor: 30 June 2020

1. Unlock 2.0 opens a small window; PM to address the nation at 4 pm today

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

The Centre on 29 June issued guidelines for “unlock 2.0”, but the rapid increase in Covid-19 cases in several parts of the country meant it stopped short of reopening schools, colleges, and coaching institutions. International air travel and metro rail services will also continue to remain shut at least till July 31, and large congregations stay banned. Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra decided to extend the lockdown in several parts of the states until July 31. “Unlock 2.0” will come into force on Wednesday, July 1. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is slated to address the nation at 4pm on 30 June. The fresh guidelines, issued by Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla, stated domestic flights and train services, already allowed, would be further expanded in a calibrated manner.

2. Digital strike: India bans 59 Chinese mobile apps on security threat

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

India has banned 59 Chinese mobile apps, including the popular SHAREit, TikTok, UC Browser, and SHEIN, citing them to be a security threat. The government invoked its powers under Section 69A of the Information Technology Act and relevant provisions under IT Rules 2009 to block these apps, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) said on 29 June. The move did not come as a surprise as it comes in the backdrop of stand-off along the Line of Actual control in Ladakh with Chinese troops. Other popular apps on the ban list include Club Factory, Helo, and CamScanner. The ministry said it had received complaints about the misuse of some mobile apps available on the Android and iOS platforms “for stealing and surreptitiously transmitting user data” in an unauthorised manner to servers located outside India. The Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre and the Home Ministry, who had earlier sent an exhaustive recommendation on the apps to be blocked, were consulted on this issue, the MeitY statement said.

3. Covid-19 crisis: Bharat Biotech's vaccine gets nod for human trials

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

Bharat Biotech’s Covid vaccine candidate Covaxin is set to undergo human clinical trials in July. It was developed at the firm’s Genome Valley plant in Hyderabad, in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). On 29 June, the Hyderabad-based firm said the Drug Controller General of India gave the green light for phase-1 and phase-2 human

clinical trials of the indigenously developed drug, following submission of results generated from pre-clinical (animal) studies. These were meant to demonstrate safety and immune response. The SARS-CoV-2 strain was isolated at National Institute of Virology (Pune), an institute under the ICMR, and transferred to Bharat Biotech. Bharat Biotech has a biosafety level-3 plant in Hyderabad. These type of plants are appropriate for work involving microbes, which could cause serious and potentially lethal diseases, through the inhalation route.

4. Govt approves PMKVY-III with focus on industry 4.0 — check details

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

The government has approved the third phase of skill development scheme, Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), with an increased focus on digital technology and industry 4.0, Union minister Mahendra Nath Pandey said on 29 June. Addressing a webinar organised by ASSOCHAM, the Minister for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship said as the second phase of the implementation of PMKVY is nearing completion, the third phase of the scheme has received the Centre's approval, paving the way for its launch. "You will be happy to know that the second part (phase) of PMKVY is ending and the government has approved part three (of the scheme) prepared by us," Pandey said. The government launched the PMKVY scheme in 2015 and revamped it in 2016 to impart skills to one crore persons by 2020.

5. Yogi's efforts paying off? Microsoft to set up tech hub in Greater Noida

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

The Uttar Pradesh government's efforts to woo multinational companies taking flight from China through virtual roadshows have started showing results. Microsoft India's managing director and corporate president Rajiv Kumar has assured that the company will establish a worldclass technology hub in Greater Noida. Informing about the company's decision, Uttar Pradesh's minister for investment, export promotion and MSMEs Siddharth Nath Singh, who had a virtual meeting with Kumar and his team, said that the company's new campus will have a strength of 4,000 people.

6. Coal India to invest Rs 15,700 crore to create first-mile connectivity, check details

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

After zeroing in on 35 projects to create first-mile connectivity (FMC) for transporting coal, Coal India (CIL) has identified 14 additional projects under its FMC initiative, facilitating mechanised loading and transporting of more than 506 million tonne (mt) per annum. CIL at present does mechanised handling of 151 mtpa; this will witness a more than four-fold

increase once all the 49 projects come into operation. The 35 projects brought under Phase 1 has a capacity of handling 4 mtpa each and will be executed by 6 subsidiaries. The six subsidiaries together will infuse Rs 12,300 crore for all the projects. The 14 projects brought under Phase 2 will be executed by four subsidiaries and together will infuse another Rs 3,400 crore, with a total handling capacity of 100.05 mtpa.

7. Centre allows ‘restricted’ exports of PPE coveralls

Source: The Hindu, Business Line ([Link](#))

The Centre has removed the prohibition on the export of medical coveralls for Covid-19, allowing up to 50 lakh units to be exported every month against licences issued by the government. While the move is in response to demands made by local producers of personal protection equipment (PPE) who had assured the government of surplus capacities, the domestic industry says that exports of N-95 masks, too, should be allowed. As per a notification issued by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) on 29 June, PPE medical coveralls have been shifted to the restricted category from the prohibited category. “A monthly quote of 50 lakh PPE medical coveralls for Covid-19 units has been fixed for issuance of export licences to the eligible applicants....as per the criteria to be separately issued in a Trade Notice,” the notification stated.

8. Government plans levy on solar panel makers in SEZs

Source: Livemint ([Link](#))

India’s plan to levy a customs duty on solar panels will be framed in a way that it does not severely hit domestic companies who operate from special economic zones, or SEZs, said a person familiar with the matter. Such zones are typically considered as foreign territories for import duty purposes. The government, hence, plans to charge a small ‘equalization levy’ on imports of solar panels from factories based in such SEZs and run by Indian companies to sell to domestic customers, said the person requesting anonymity. This would be in lieu of the basic customs duty that is set to be levied on imports of solar components from other nations, mainly China and Malaysia. Such a move will allow units based in SEZs to be competitive, compared to imports while selling to local customers, and at the same time, make a level-playing field for companies outside these zones who do not receive similar tax and other benefits.

9. Green shoots in Bharat lead country's economic revival

Source: Livemint ([Link](#))

Businesses are banking on a bumper harvest and high rural incomes to drive demand for goods after the coronavirus pandemic stunted growth in the country's cities, where most of the factories and offices are located. Business leaders expect a normal monsoon, record sowing of summer crops, improved winter harvest and a raft of government measures to increase rural incomes to boost demand for goods ranging from two-wheelers to tractors. Among others that stand to benefit are consumer durables makers, farm input producers, cement firms and essential goods manufacturers. Tractor sales, a bellwether for rural demand, have picked up strongly across rural belts and are headed for a record growth in June, industry executives said.

10. Government may license import of ACs, TVs to check shipments

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

The government is looking to license the import of 10-12 items, including air conditioners and several of its components, and parts of television sets as it discourages the entry of foreign goods into the country, especially those from China. While work on licensing of products had started a few months ago, with agarbatti and tyres being among the initial set of items along with palm oil, the list has expanded in recent weeks as tension on the Ladakh border escalated, government sources told TOI. The focus on reducing import of products such as air conditioners and its components is also part of an exercise to boost domestic production of around a dozen items. While imports can be regulated in multiple ways — including an increase in customs duty and putting in place barriers such as technical standards — licensing and allowing entry of specific goods only from designated ports are being discussed.