

## Daily News Monitor: 31 August 2020

### **1. India-ASEAN can resolve differences, take trade to \$300 billion: Piyush Goyal**

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

India has pitched for stronger provisions in the rules of origin, removal of non-tariff barriers and better market access in the existing existing Free-Trade agreement (FTA) with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), arguing the changes should kick off sooner rather than later. At the 17th Asean-India Economic Ministers Consultations held virtually on 29 August, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal reiterated India's consistent position that the review of the current FTA, in effect since 2010 has, has been inordinately delayed. Goyal batted for closer engagement towards finalisation of the scoping exercise, before the ASEAN-India Leaders' Summit scheduled in November 2020, and to start the full review before the end of this year. He said the review should make the Free Trade Agreement more user-friendly, simple, and trade facilitative for businesses.

### **2. India ready to tie-up with ASEAN in generics, medical tech for fighting Covid-19**

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

India is willing to collaborate with the ten-member ASEAN in the production of generic drugs and medical technologies used for treatment of Covid-19 patients, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said. "India welcomes the initiatives of ASEAN to mitigate the impact of the pandemic and the establishment of the ASEAN Covid-19 Response Fund," Goyal said at the 8th East Asia Summit - Economic Ministers' Meeting) held virtually on Friday, adding that the two sides could work together in fighting Covid-19 by jointly producing generics and technology. Economic Ministers from the ten ASEAN Member States, Australia, China, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Russia and the United States, who participated in the East India Summit, also highlighted their commitment to promote trade and investment, minimise disruptions to trade and global supply chains.

### **3. Affordable Rental Housing Complex accorded infrastructure status**

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

Finance Ministry has included 'Affordable Rental Housing Complex' (ARHC) under Harmonised Master List of Infrastructure Sub-sectors. This will help in getting more investment even from Sovereign Wealth Fund and Pension Fund and long-term finance from bank and financial institutions at easier terms "Affordable Rental Housing Complex is included in the Harmonized Master List of Infrastructure Sub-sectors by insertion of a new

item in the category of Social and Commercial Infrastructure,” a notification issued by Economic Affairs Department of the Finance Ministry said. ARHC was announced under part of Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan announced in May this year.

#### **4. GDP numbers out today: India’s economy faces worst quarterly slump ever after lockdown**

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

India's economy likely suffered its largest quarterly slump on record, data is expected to show on 31 August, as Covid-related lockdowns add to already-declining consumer demand and investment. Economists in a Reuters poll predicted that gross domestic product in world's fifth-largest economy will contract by 18.3% in the June quarter, compared to 3.1% growth in the previous quarter, the worst performance in at least eight years. The same economists predict a contraction of 8.1% and 1.0% in the September and December quarters respectively, which would dash any hopes of an economic recovery this year.

#### **5. Mauritius-based PE firm invests ₹250 crore in Shriji Polymers**

**Source: Livemint ([Link](#))**

Malaysia-based private equity firm Creador, managing assets worth \$1.5 billion, has invested ₹250 crore in Indian pharmaceutical packaging firm Shriji Polymers (India) Ltd. Shriji’s product portfolio includes high-density poly ethylene bottles, polypropylene caps--both continuous thread and child resistant--and other speciality plastic products such as derma bottles, tablet applicators, dosing cards and self-administered metered dosing devices. The company's manufacturing facilities are located in key markets across India, the US, and China. The deal signifies the interest of private equity players in this pharma allied industry of packaging, given India’s cost advantage and policy makers’ efforts to boost domestic manufacturing. “With this investment, Creador acquires what it called a 'significant minority stake' in the company, buying out existing domestic and international institutional investors through its affiliate Sundara (Mauritius) Ltd," Anand Narayan, managing partner – Creador Advisors India LLP, said in a statement.

#### **6. Adani Enterprises subsidiary to take control of Mumbai, Navi Mumbai airports**

**Source: Livemint ([Link](#))**

Adani Enterprises Ltd, through its subsidiary Adani Airport Holdings Limited (AAHL), has entered into an agreement to acquire the debt of GVK Airport Developers Limited (GVKADL), a subsidiary of GVK Power and Infrastructure Ltd, both companies informed stock exchanges. When this transaction is complete, the Adani group will gain control of the second busiest airport in the country in Mumbai. GVKADL is the holding company through

which the GVK group holds 50.50% equity stake in Mumbai International Airport Limited (MIAL), which, in turn, holds 74% equity stake in the greenfield Navi Mumbai International Airport Limited (NMIAL). According to the agreement, AAHL will acquire the debt of GVKADL from its airport lenders. The GVK Group and AAHL have agreed that AAHL will also offer a stand-still to GVK to release of the guarantee given by GVK Power and Infrastructure Limited with respect to the debt acquired by it.

### **7. New e-market platform launched to bridge gap between Indian farmers and UAE food industry**

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

The UAE has launched Agriota, a new technology-driven agri-commodity trading and sourcing e-market platform that will bridge the gap between millions of rural farmers in India and the Gulf nation's food industry. Under the initiative, launched earlier this week by the Dubai's free-zone Dubai Multi Commodities Centre (DMCC) and the government of Dubai's authority on commodities trade and enterprise, millions of Indian farmers will get an opportunity to connect directly with the entire food industry in the UAE, including food processing companies, traders and wholesalers through the Agriota-E Marketplace platform. The marketplace allows the farmers to bypass intermediaries, optimising the supply chain and ensuring traceability to create value for all stakeholders, officials said.