

Daily News Monitor: 4 February 2021

1. RBI's MPC starts deliberations on monetary policy

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

The Reserve Bank's rate-setting Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) began its meeting on 3 February and is likely to hold interest rates and continue with accommodative policy stance so that necessary monetary action could be taken to push growth. This is the first MPC meeting after the presentation of the Union Budget 2021-22. Although the bi-monthly monetary to be announced on February 5 is likely to refrain from cutting benchmark repo rate, it will ensure availability of adequate liquidity which will be needed to spur investment in the infrastructure sector.

2. India does not agree with USTR's report on ecommerce tax: Commerce Secretary

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

India does not agree with the United States Trade Representative (USTR) report that the country's two per cent equalisation levy on foreign e-commerce firms discriminates against American companies, Commerce Secretary Anup Wadhawan said on 3 February. Last month, an USTR investigation has concluded that India's 2 per cent digital services tax on e-commerce supply discriminates against US companies and is inconsistent with international tax principles.

3. Dispute Resolution Committee to have multiple benches: CBDT chief

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

The Dispute Resolution Committee proposed to be set up in the Budget will have multiple benches which will give opportunity to small taxpayers to settle tax matters without going through the appellate process, a top tax official said on 4 February. Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) Chairman P C Mody said the I-T department would make available all the information it is receiving from various other agencies like Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) or Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) in form 26AS to facilitate taxpayers to file correct tax returns.

4. US backs India's new farm laws, says peaceful protests hallmark of a democracy

Source: Livemint ([Link](#))

The US on 4 February seemed to give conditional support to India's newly passed farm laws that have triggered protests from farmers but added that unfettered access to information

including the internet was one of the “hallmarks of a thriving democracy.” In a statement, the US embassy in New Delhi said: "In general, the United States welcomes steps that would improve the efficiency of India's markets and attract greater private sector investment." This has been a key argument of the Indian government that has been facing protests from late November.

5. Brazil aims to buy 30 million Sputnik V, Covaxin shots

Source: Livemint ([Link](#))

The Brazilian government announced 3 February it was negotiating the purchase of 30 million coronavirus vaccine doses from Russia and India, after regulators made it easier for the treatments to win emergency-use authorizations. Until now, only the AstraZeneca/Oxford shot and China's CoronaVac have been permitted in Brazil, the second-hardest-hit country after the US, with more than 226,000 deaths from Covid-19. The health ministry said it is meeting from representatives from Russia and India on 5 February to finalize details of a deal, which would see some 18 million doses delivered this month, and 12 million more in March.

6. Draft National Fisheries Policy 2020: Fishermen voice concern over rising fuel cost

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

The spiralling fuel cost is a concern raised by the fishing community and they have highlighted the same as their comments in the draft of National Fisheries Policy 2020, urging the government to take effective steps to tide over the worsening situation. Any national policy on fishing without addressing the problem of rising diesel prices will torpedo attempts to mitigate the expenses and streamline modern methods of fishing, the All Kerala Fishing Boat Operators Association said. Joseph Xavier Kalappurackal, general secretary of the association, said currently fishing has become a high-cost incurring profession as the price of diesel is being increased every day. “Any national policy on fishing without addressing the problem of diesel prices has no nexus with the policy,” he said.

7. India’s active caseload drops below 156,000; recoveries surpass 10.48 million

Source: Hindustan Times ([Link](#))

India’s active cases of the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) dropped below 156,000, down by 5,032 cases from the previous day, according to the Union ministry of health and family welfare’s dashboard on 4 February morning. The country reported 12,899 fresh cases in the last 24 hours while 107 people died of the viral disease during the same period, the ministry said. Of the total 10,790,183 cases in India, only 155,025 are active, which accounts for

1.49% of the total caseload. A total of 10,480,455 people have recovered from the disease across the nation. According to the health ministry, the recovery rate stands at 97.08%. As many as 14 states and Union territories including Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Daman and Diu, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura, Mizoram, Nagaland, Lakshadweep, Ladakh (UT), Sikkim, Manipur, Puducherry, Goa, Odisha and Assam have not recorded any Covid-19 related death in the last 24 hours, according to the ministry's dashboard.