

## Daily News Monitor: 7 August 2020

### **1. Microsoft in talks to invest in ShareChat**

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

ShareChat is in talks with Microsoft Corp. for an investment of around \$100 million in the Indian content sharing platform, two people aware of the development said. If the deal materializes, the Microsoft investment will be about a third of what ShareChat is looking to raise in the latest funding round, the first person said on condition of anonymity. ShareChat is, however, likely to raise funds from existing investors before closing deals with new ones, a second person familiar with the development said. The deal might take a couple of months to close as the talks are at an early stage, this person added. Microsoft's interest in ShareChat comes at a time when the tech giant is negotiating the purchase of video-sharing app TikTok's operations in the US and a few other markets from China's ByteDance.

### **2. Railways plan to merge different cadres into single service likely by November**

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

The merger of eight major cadres of the Indian Railways into one single service -- the Indian Railway Management Service (IRMS) -- is likely to be completed by November this year, officials said 6 August, adding that the national transporter has hired consultancy firm McKinsey & Company to finalise its modalities. Railway Minister Piyush Goyal and Railway Board Chairman VK Yadav held a meeting with representatives of various cadres and railway unions on Wednesday on the merging of the railway services, the officials said. In December 2019, the Union Cabinet approved the restructuring of the national carrier by trimming the Railway Board's strength to --half-- from eight to four -- and unifying its eight railway services into a central service.

### **3. Focussed inter-ministerial group to address Japanese investors' issues: Piyush Goyal**

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

Commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal on 6 August said that a focussed group of key officials will resolve Japanese investors' concerns on logistics, customs clearance, export procedures and quality issues as more than 200 investment plans of Japanese companies in India, including factory construction and production line expansion, are stuck. "The red carpet (for investors) can't be rolled out by Invest India alone. A focussed group will meet 50 companies from Japan in four separate sessions, 25 of which are already operating in the

country and 25 potential investors,” Goyal said at a virtual Exclusive Investment Forum organised by Invest India

#### **4. Girish Chandra Murmu to be new CAG of India**

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

Government has appointed Girish Chandra Murmu as new Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India. He will replace Rajiv Mehrishi who superannuated on 6 August. Murmu got in a headline last October when he was appointed first Lieutenant Governor of Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir. However, on the first anniversary of abrogation of Article 370, he resigned and now been given charge of another constitutional authority. He will primarily be entrusted with the responsibility to audit the accounts and related activities of the three tiers of Government – Federal, Provincial and Local; the State-owned public sector commercial enterprises; and autonomous bodies financed by the Federal and Provincial Governments. His reports are laid before the Parliament and Legislatures of the Provinces. CAG reports are laid in the Parliament and State assemblies.

#### **5. Embassy Office Parks REIT to invest Rs 1,500 cr to develop office spaces**

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

Embassy Office Parks REIT has said that it will invest Rs 1,500 crore over the next two years to add 2.6 million square feet of commercial space to its already existing portfolio of 26 million square feet of operational office space. This additional 2.6 million square feet of space is in the early stages of construction and will be a part of its existing integrated business parks and campuses. “The earliest delivery will come in June of 2022. Given our liquidity availability and balance sheet, we are going ahead with the development,” said Vikaash Khdloya, Deputy CEO at Embassy Office Parks REIT. The Blackstone-backed REIT has another 5 million potential development in its existing parks. “Once we see traction in 2.6 million sq feet, we will kickstart the next phase of five mn sq feet,” said Khdloya. The Bengaluru-based office developer reported a muted 1 per cent year-on-year rise in net operating income for the quarter ended June at Rs 456.9 crore.

#### **6. RBI introduces ASISO facility to help banks manage liquidity in times of COVID-19**

**Source: Money Control ([Link](#))**

In view of the disruptions caused by COVID-19, the Reserve Bank of India on 6 August introduced an optional automated sweep-in and sweep-out (ASISO) facility in electronic platform e-Kuber system to help banks manage liquidity. Under the ASISO facility, banks will be able to set the amount (specific or range) that they wish to keep as balances in their

current accounts with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) at the end of the day. "Depending upon this pre-set amount, marginal standing facility (MSF) and reverse repo bids, as the case may be, will be generated automatically without any manual intervention at the end of the day," the RBI said in a press release.

#### **7. Serum Institute of India, Novavax in covid vaccine deal, may produce 100 crore doses** **Source: Livemint ([Link](#))**

Pune-based Serum Institute of India and US-based Novavax have announced an agreement for the development and commercialization of Novavax' COVID-19 vaccine candidate in India and other low- and middle-income countries. The agreement is expected to support minimum of 1 billion doses of NVX-CoV2373 for India and low- and middle-income countries, Novavax said. "We believe that Novavax' NVX-CoV2373 has significant potential to successfully prevent COVID-19. Given our experience with Novavax on the development of a malaria vaccine, we know the power of their vaccine technologies," said Adar Poonawalla, Chief Executive Officer of Serum Institute of India. "We will work urgently together to bring this vaccine to patients in these geographies." This agreement excludes major upper-middle and high-income countries, for which Novavax continues to retain rights.

#### **9. RBI keeps repo rate unchanged at 4%, scope for a rate cut later** **Source: Financial Express ([Link](#))**

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) on 6 August left the key repo rate unchanged at 4% while retaining its accommodative stance. Reserve Bank of India governor Shaktikanta Das said while inflation had been elevated in recent months, there would be scope for a rate cut once there is a durable reduction in inflation. Most economists believe, the rise in prices will taper off in the second half of the year and consequently there would be room for another 40-50 basis points cut in the current cycle with at least 25 bps possible in 2020. Pranjul Bhandari, chief economist at HSBC India, said what may have tilted the MPC's decision towards a pause is the 250 bps repo rate cut since early-2019, which is still working its way through the system and the fact that financial conditions have eased considerably across the money, corporate bond and g-sec markets. "Some rate cuts should be preserved for when they will have the maximum impact within the financial system," Bhandari said.