

Daily News Monitor: 9 February 2021

1. Labour codes: Free medical check-up, 4-day work week among draft rules

Source: The Indian Express ([Link](#))

The proposed labour codes could provide companies with the flexibility of four working days in a week, even as the working hours limit of 48 hours for a week will remain sacrosanct, Labour and Employment Secretary Apurva Chandra said on 8 February. The Ministry of Labour and Employment is also likely to complete the process to finalise the rules for four labour codes soon. A simultaneous exercise of consultations with states has also taken place, with states/UT of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab and J&K also expected to formulate their draft rules for state-level labour codes within a week, he said.

2. India-UK enhanced trade partnership to be launched

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

The India-UK Enhanced Trade Partnership (ETP), which could lead to a potential comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the two countries, will be formally launched during the visit of the UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson to India later this year. Commerce & Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and his UK counterpart Elizabeth Truss, at their bilateral meeting in New Delhi last week, committed themselves to make concrete progress on trade and investment front to deliver quick gains for both countries and also set joint timelines for further advances, according to an official release circulated on 8 February.

3. RBI to buy bonds worth Rs 20,000 crore via open market operations on Feb 10

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

The bond market is getting ready for another year of below 6 per cent yields on 10-year instruments after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) gave signals about its displeasure of higher rates. The central bank on Friday devolved nearly the entire bond auction on primary dealers, as the markets were demanding higher yields for five-year and 10-year bonds being sold. On Monday, the central bank said it would buy bonds worth Rs 20,000 crore from the secondary markets on Wednesday. Such open market operations (OMO) are now expected to be a common theme for the remainder of this fiscal year, and will continue in the next one as well, bond dealers are now expecting. However, the RBI is still not in a mood to issue an OMO calendar, which was the expectation in some sections of the market. That calendar is unlikely

to come; rather, the RBI would want to intervene as and when yields rise, bond dealers are now saying.

4. 5G to roll out in India by early 2022; panel pulls up DoT for delay

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

The government expects that the roll-out of 5G services will begin in early-2022 after another round of spectrum auction that is planned to be held after six month, according to a panel report tabled in Parliament on 8 February. The Standing Committee on Information Technology pulled up the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) for delay in the launch of 5G services when several countries have commercially rolled out the next-generation technology. The telecom ministry has already announced the auction of spectrum worth Rs 3.92 trillion from March 1, but it does not include the desired frequency band for 5G services.

5. Chance for India, US to resolve duty dispute as WTO defers ruling

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

The World Trade Organization has pushed back its dispute panel's rulings on the US' tiff with India, the EU and four others nations over higher duties on some steel and aluminium products to the second half of this year on account of the pandemic. The development gives the Joe Biden-led US government more time to resolve the dispute through consultations. Russia, Norway, Turkey, Switzerland, and European Union too had dragged the US to the WTO on Washington's move to impose 25% and 10% import duties on certain steel and aluminium products in 2018. The US had said the duties were measures for national security.

6. Strategic divestment of CEL, SAIL units likely to conclude by FY21 end

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

The government plans to conclude stake sales in a couple of companies before March-end even though a large majority of the ongoing strategic divestment pipeline will be completed in the next financial year. "We should be able to close Computer Electronics Ltd. and some units of Steel Authority of India by March," a top government official told ET. The revised estimate of proceeds from disinvestment of equity in public sector enterprises is pegged at Rs 32,000 crore in FY21. The sale of stakes in Air India, Bharat Petroleum Corp., Shipping Corporation of India, BEML and Container Corp. of India, among others, will pick up pace from March. The disinvestment target for FY22 has been set at Rs 1.75 lakh crore.