

Headlines at a Glance - 10th September 2020

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PM to launch Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will preside over the digital launch of the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY). The 20,050 crore scheme of the Centre, approved by the cabinet in May, is part of the 20 trillion stimulus package to revive the struggling economy and aims to achieve sustainable and responsible development of fisheries. Modi is also set to inaugurate a slew of projects in poll-bound Bihar later in the day. "The prime minister will launch the e-Gopala App, a comprehensive breed improvement marketplace and information portal for the direct use of farmers. Several other initiatives in the fisheries and animal husbandry sectors in Bihar will also be launched by the prime minister on the occasion," the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said. The launches come just a few months ahead of the Bihar elections where the National Democratic Alliance, including the Janata Dal (United), has been facing tough questions on reverse migration, unemployment, floods, and covid-19 management. The Election Commission indicated that the poll process will be completed before the tenure of the legislative Assembly ends on 29 November.

SOURCE: *The Hindu*

Cabinet approves 3 labour code changes

The Union Cabinet has, on September 8, approved proposed changes to labour codes, which will be moved in the upcoming monsoon session in Parliament. Amendments are to the labour codes on industrial relations (IR), social security and occupational safety and health (OSH). The proposed changes include medical and pension for informal workers; removes 'employees' and 'workers' distinction and defines areas and conditions for fixed-term employment, layoffs and retrenchment policies (firms employing 100 or more workers) under IR; clear definition of 'appropriate authority' and strengthening of health facilities at factory premises under OSH, a government official told. These code amendments will allow states such as Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat to push through their planned labour reforms, the report said. The Centre is working to consolidate 44 central labour laws in four broad codes – IR, OSH, social security and wages. These were introduced in Lok Sabha in 2019 and sent to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour for scrutiny.

SOURCE: *Financial Express*

India-Angola hold first Joint commission Meet

India and Angola on Monday held the first Joint Commission Meeting during which the two sides agreed to diversify their trade relationship and discussed cooperation in health, pharmaceuticals, defence, agriculture, food processing, digitization and telecom. The meeting was co-chaired by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his Angola counterpart Tete Antonio. "Co-chaired the 1st India-Angola Joint Commission Meeting with FM Tete Antonio. Comprehensive review of bilateral issues. Agreed to diversify the trade basket. Discussions included cooperation in health, pharmaceuticals, defence, agriculture, food processing, digitization & telecom," Jaishankar tweeted. "Welcome the signing of MoUs on health, training and visa facilitation," he added.

SOURCE: *Business Standard*

US to block key exports from China's Xinjiang province

The US is set to block exports from China's Xinjiang region over accusations of forced labour. The administration has prepared orders that would block two of China's commodity exports including cotton and tomato products, among five other imports. Preparations made by US Customs and Border Protection follow increased international pressure over reports of the Chinese government's oppression of the Uighur people in Xinjiang. China is believed to have detained as many as a million people, mostly Muslim ethnic minorities, in the province of Xinjiang since 2017 in "re-education" camps. China has denied the claims of human rights abuses and has said that the camps are vocational training centres aimed at fighting extremism. The prepared "Withhold Release Orders" allow the border agency to detain shipments based on suspicion of forced-labour involvement under long-standing laws used to fight human rights abuses. An official announcement has not yet been made by the administration regarding the orders and a briefing planned for Tuesday was put off due to "scheduling issues", an agency spokesperson said.

SOURCE: *BBC News*

Oxford led COVID-19 Vaccine trial put on hold

AstraZeneca Plc has put a hold on the late-stage trial of its [highly-anticipated COVID-19 vaccine candidate](#) after a suspected serious adverse reaction in a study participant, health news website *Stat News* reported on Tuesday. It quoted an AstraZeneca spokesperson as saying in a statement that the “standard review process triggered a pause to vaccination to allow review of safety data. The study is testing a COVID-19 vaccine being developed by AstraZeneca and University of Oxford researchers at [sites including India](#), the United States and the United Kingdom, where the adverse event was reported. The nature of the safety issue and when it happened were not immediately known, although the participant is expected to recover, according to *Stat News*. The report said suspension of the trial was having an impact on other AstraZeneca vaccine trials – as well as on clinical trials being conducted by other vaccine makers. Nine leading U.S. and European vaccine developers pledged on Tuesday to uphold scientific safety and efficacy standards for their experimental vaccines despite the urgency to contain the coronavirus pandemic.

SOURCE: *The Hindu*