WEEKLY MEDIA UPDATE

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Monday

(This document comprises news clips from various media in which Balmer Lawrie is mentioned, news related to GOI and PSEs, and news from the verticals that we do business in. This will be uploaded on intranet and website every Monday.)

India GDP growth to rebound at slower pace: Fitch

After slumping to an over six-year low, India's economic growth will pick up over the coming quarters but the rebound is expected to be weaker than before, Fitch Solutions said on Monday as it trimmed GDP forecast for the current fiscal to 6.4% from 6.8% previously. India's real GDP growth slumped further in Q1 of FY2019/20 (April–March) to 5% year-on-year, from 5.8% in Q4 (January-March) FY2018/19 due mainly to a sharp slowdown in private consumption growth. "We at Fitch Solutions believe that growth has likely bottomed out and will start to rebound over the coming quarters. However, noting ongoing pressure on the external sector and private consumption, we now expect this rebound to be weaker than before," the rating agency said in its comments on India's growth. The combination of fiscal and monetary stimulus, continued reform momentum, and favorable base effects would lead to a rebound in growth, it said. "While we at Fitch Solutions continue to forecast growth to pick up over the coming quarters supported by reforms, fiscal stimulus, and favorable base effects, we now expect the rebound to be weaker than before, given a subdued external and private consumption outlook," it said.

Mint - 03.09.3019
https://www.livemint.com/news/india/india-gdp-growth-to-rebound-at-slower-pace-fitch-1567436077581.html

Now Crisil lowers India's GDP growth forecast to 6.3%, says slowdown deeper than suspected

Domestic rating agency Crisil on Wednesday cut India's GDP growth forecast to 6.3 per cent for fiscal year 2020 from its earlier forecast of 6.9 per cent. This comes after the GDP growth was at its slowest in almost 6 years and grew only at 5 per cent in the first quarter. The agency has said that lower GDP growth forecast corroborates that India's economic slowdown is deeper and more broad-based than suspected. In its statement, Crisil has said, "We expect growth to get some lift from the low base effect of 6.3 per cent in the second half of the FY19." Earlier, Moody's too had revised India's GDP growth forecast for the current year to 6.2 per cent, saying the economy remains sluggish due to a combination of factors such as weak hiring, distress among rural households and tighter financial conditions. The GDP growth forecast for 2019 calendar year was revised downwards from its previous estimation of 6.8 per cent. The same for 2020 was also lowered by a similar 0.6 percentage points to 6.7 per cent, Moody's said in a statement, a few weeks ago.

India Today - 05.09.2019
https://www.indiatoday.in/business/story/crisil-lowers-india-gdp-growth-forecast-to-6-3-from-6-9-1595685-2019-09-05

Govt to Take More Measures for Revival of Economy, Says FM

Finance minister Sitharaman has refused to give any timeline on when the economy will be back on 7% GDP growth level but said that her government would take more measures to for revival. "We are taking a considered view on the sectoral challenges," she said. India's first quarter GDP grew a mere 5%, which is a six year low. "We are responding to every sector in the way they have asked us to respond," Sitharaman said in Kolkata late on Friday, after her meeting with tax administrators and local business bodies. The FM's meeting with tax officials was the seventh such in the sequence to convey officials not to overreach while serving tax notices to business people. She

August PMI manufacturing activity slows to 15-month low

Manufacturing activity in India slumped to a 15-month low in August as sales slowed, forcing factories to cut back on production, a private survey showed, while separately released government numbers showed muted output rise in the infrastructure sector in July. The twin sets of data indicated the lack of any indications of recovery, both in demand or investment, in the economy in the second quarter from the six-year low it touched in the June quarter. The IHS Markit India Manufacturing PMI fell to 51.4 in August from 52.5 in July, its lowest since May 2018 and below its long-run average of 53.9. However, it remained above the 50-point mark said that the consultation process is on and the government is likely to come out with more measures to boost the economy. Moody's Investors Service has cut India's gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate to 6.2% for calendar year 2019 against its earlier projection of 6.8%. Local rating firm Crisil too has revised the country's GDP projection for FY20 to 6.3% from 6.9%. Amid concerns over a likely fall in tax collections, the FM said that there would be no cut down on the government's aggressive social programme.

The Economic Times - 07.09.2019

https://epaper.timesgroup.com/Olive/ODN/TheEconomicTimes/shared/ShowArticle.aspx?doc=ETKM%2F2019%2F09%2F07&entity=Ar00416&sk=A8DECA48&mode=text

Core sector growth slows to 2.1% in July

India's core sector output remained weak in July, with growth slowing to 2.1% from a year earlier, as production of coal, crude oil, natural gas and refinery products declined, the government said on Monday. While growth as recorded by the Index of Eight Core Industries was higher than an over four-year low of 0.2% in June, it was lower than 4.4% recorded in July 2018. The eight core industries of coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertilisers, steel, cement and electricity, which have a 40.27% weight in the Index of Industrial Production, grew 3% in the April-July period compared with 5.9% in the year-ago period. Last week, official data showed India's GDP expanded at 5% in the first quarter, the slowest pace in over six years. "There seems to be a slowdown which appears to be deep-rooted, particularly on the demand side. Coal, crude oil and petroleum are all linked to the demand side, particularly for automobiles and anything related to manufacturing," said NR Bhanumurthy, professor at the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy. He added that the data indicated that the budget had not helped much in improving sentiment in July

The Economic Times - 03.09.2019

https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/growth-of-eight-core-industries-slows-down-to-2-1-per-cent/articleshow/70947976.cms?from=mdr

Incentives to boost exports in the works

he government plans to come out with export sops to boost shipments at a time the country's domestic growth rate has slumped to a six-year low of 5 per cent in the first quarter and weak demand is likely to impact the economy in the coming months. The commerce ministry has called a meeting of exporters to hear out the steps that that separates expansion from contraction. PMI stands for purchasing managers' index. The index of eight core industries, which measures output in eight infrastructure industries, rose 2.1% in July, ahead of 0.7% in June. This index has a 40% weight in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), suggesting modest industrial growth in July. Data released on Friday showed the Indian economy grew 5% in April-June period, the lowest in 25 quarters.

The Economic Times - 03.09.2019

https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/india-manufacturing-growth-at-15-month-low-in-august-pmi/articleshow/70942848.cms

India's August services sector activity falls from 21-month peak: PMI

India's services sector activity fell in August from July's 21-month peak as new business orders declined, following which firms raised their staffing levels at a modest pace amid rising input cost inflation, a monthly survey said Wednesday. The seasonally adjusted Nikkei India Services Business Activity Index, fell from July's peak of 54.2 to 51.5 in August owing to weakest growth in new work in three months. In PMI parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below that denotes contraction. "August data signalled that the pace of growth in India's service economy cooled from July's recent peak. This was matched by the slowest expansions in new business and employment since May and November 2017, respectively," said Aashna Dodhia, Economist at IHS Markit, the author of the report. Meanwhile, the headline seasonally adjusted Nikkei India Composite PMI Output Index fell to 51.9 in August from July's 21-month high of 54.1, owing to weaker growth in both the manufacturing and service sectors.

The Economic Times - 05.09.2019

https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/indias-august-services-sector-activity-falls-from-21-month-peak-pmi/articleshow/65682257.cms?from=mdr

FinMin asks central PSEs to advance spending plans

The finance ministry has asked central public sector enterprises (CPSEs) to advance their capital expenditure plans and also ensure the timely release of payments to small and medium enterprises, as part of the government's efforts aimed at giving a boost to need to be taken in the short and medium term to boost shipments and take advantage of the ongoing trade war between the US and China. “The meeting called on September 11 will focus on measures that could be taken to aid exports and spur development. A good performance in exports is important for a robust growth in GDP. A lot more needs to be done to encourage exports,” a senior commerce ministry official said. Also, inputs would be sought on the measures to be taken as part of the foreign trade policy, which will lay down the strategy to be adopted for the next five years, they said. The new foreign trade policy is likely to be announced by September-end or early-October. The trade policy for the next five years (2020-25) will focus on simplifying the procedures for exporters and importers, besides providing incentives to boost outbound shipments.

The Telegraph - 09.09.2019

https://www.telegraphindia.com/business/incentives-to-boost-exports-in-the-works/cid/1703510

the sagging economy. The finance ministry has asked central public sector enterprises (CPSEs) to advance their capital expenditure plans and also ensure the timely release of payments to small and medium enterprises, as part of the government’s efforts aimed at giving a boost to the sagging economy. North Block called heads of Maharatna and Navratna companies to review their expenditure plans on Friday. The meeting was co-chaired by economic affairs secretary Atanu Chakraborty and expenditure secretary GC Murmu and also attended by financial advisors of infrastructure ministries. In the budget for FY20, the government had provided ₹5.38 lakh crore for capital expenditure through internal and extra budgetary resources (IBER), which is essentially that by CPSEs.

The Economic Times - 07.09.2019

https://epaper.timesgroup.com/Olive/ODN/TheEconomicTimes/shared/ShowArticle.aspx?doc=ETKM%2F2019%2F09%2F07&entity=Ar00600&sk=B478F522&mode=text

Govt steps up asset monetisation of PSUs

The government has prepared a road map for monetising nearly two dozen assets of state-run companies, including land as it accelerates process to unlock value of its investments in public sector companies and other government departments. Government think tank NITI Aayog, which has been tasked with the selection of state-run companies for asset monetisation as well as the route to be followed, is finalising the list. PMO is also overseeing some aspects of the drive . The latest push comes against the backdrop of a slowing economy and need to push reforms to boost growth. Assets identified include six airports in tier-2 and tier-3 cities, two lots of power transmission lines valued at Rs 20,000 crore, 11 terminals at major ports, involving around Rs 5,700 crore investment and 10 tranches of completed highway projects, totalling nearly 5,000 km. State-run Power Grid Corporation has drawn up plans to monetise two lots of transmission lines infrastructure, valued at about Rs 10,000 crore. Sources said Niti Aayog had finalised the list after several rounds of consultation. The six airports that will be monetised are Trichy, Amritsar, Varanasi, Bhubaneswar, Raipur and Indore.

The Times of India - 05.09.2019

https://epaper.timesgroup.com/olive/ODN/TimesOfIndia/shared/ShowArticle.aspx?doc=TOIKM%2F2019%2F09%2F05&entity=Ar01103&sk=B149067F&mode=text

From Coal India to ONGC, shares of PSUs log biggest gain in four months

Shares of several public sector undertakings (PSUs) rebounded on Thursday, even as the benchmark indices ended flat. Market experts say the sharp jump was on account of value buying, as valuations in several counters have hit rock-bottom levels. The NSE PSE index — a gauge for performance of 20 PSUs — rose 3.12 per cent, its most since May 20. Among its constituents Coal India rose 7.3 per cent, ONGC 5.3 per cent, BPCL 4.5 per cent, and Nalco and Indian Oil by above 3 per cent each. Most of these have seen a sharp drop this year and quote in single-digit price-to-earnings (P/E) multiples. Some analysts said that current prices, few of the cash-rich PSUs could be value hunt. "The government has said PSUs with lot of cash should give special dividend, considering fiscal constraints. The relatively cash firms have moved up," said Equinomics Founder G Chokkalingam. The NSE PSE index is down 9 per cent this year. In comparison, the Nifty is down just 0.1 per cent. Moreover, the NSE PSE is trading 12 month P/E multiple of just 9 against Nifty's 12-month trailing P/E of 27.

Business Standard - 06.09.2019

https://www.business-standard.com/article/markets/from-coal-india-to-ongc-shares-of-psus-log-biggest-gain-in-four-months-119090501632_1.html

Undervalued PSUs may gain from govt rethink on divestment policy

Any changes in divestment or dividend policies would benefit undervalued public sector undertakings (PSUs) such as Indian Oil, BPCL, Bharat Electronics, ONGC, NTPC, Powergrid Corporation, NMDC and Petronet LNG, among others, which could offer good value to the investors, analysts said. Stocks such as Coal India, Hindustan Copper, ONGC, BPCL, National Aluminium and Indian Oil rallied up to 10 per cent intraday on Thursday over news the government is likely to sell stake in state-owned companies through strategic divestments instead of an offer-for-sale or exchange traded funds (ETFs). The multiple offerings of CPSE ETF over the past one year has acted as a key overhang for some PSU stocks, which remained flattish during this period. BSE PSU plunged 18 per cent in the last one year against 3.5 per cent decline of the Sensex. "The news of a possible rethink on selling of government stake at the present low valuations have come as a relief to public sector companies that are anyway trading at attractive valuations," said Gaurav Dua, senior VP, head, capital market strategy, Sharekhan. "Within the PSU basket, we prefer Bharat Electronics, ONGC, NTPC, Powergrid Corporation and Petronet LNG."

The Economic Times - 06.09.2019

https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/markets/stocks/news/undervalued-psus-may-gain-from-govt-rethink-on-divestment-policy/articleshow/71002361.cms?from=mdr

Fast privatisation vital for economic turnaround

News reports suggest that, along the lines of ONGC's purchase of oil marketing company (OMC) HPCL, the government is trying to persuade Indian Oil Corporation's (IOC) supposedly independent board to buy BPCL, the third government-owned OMC in the country. This is in keeping with the government's goal to have bigger PSUs so that they can have more financial muscle and will also help meet this year's Rs 105,000 crore disinvestment target; but should this happen, it will be unfortunate for a variety of reasons. For one, India's OMCs need to become more efficient, and it is difficult to see how that will happen if they remain in a public sector environment. That is why, for instance, in just the period since Narendra Modi assumed office in May 2014, the share of PSUs in the country's overall market-capitalisation has fallen from 22.5% to 11.6%—while overall BSE market capitalisation rose 61%, that of PSUs fell 17%. Second, were the IOC-BPCL sale to happen, the amount of competition in the sector will fall by a third as there will then be just two major players, ONGC-HPCL and IOC-BPCL; there are, it is true, private sector oil companies like Reliance and Essar, but these operate mainly on the highways as getting land in cities/metros is next to impossible.

The Financial Express - 09.09.2019

https://www.financialexpress.com/opinion/fast-privatisation-vital-for-economic-turnaround/1700025/

Pradhan meets Saudi counterpart, discusses boosting energy ties

Union Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Dharmendra Pradhan met his Saudi counterpart Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman here on Sunday and the latter reiterated the kingdom's commitment to remain a reliable and sustainable partner in hydrocarbon supplies for India. "Met the newly appointed Saudi Minister of Energy HRH Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman in Jeddah and renewed my earlier acquaintance with him during his previous assignments with Saudi Ministry of Energy," Pradhan tweeted. "Saudi Minister reiterated Saudi Arabia's commitment to remain a reliable and sustainable partner in hydrocarbon supplies and also on Saudi investments in India," he said in another tweet. Pradhan is currently on a three-nation visit to Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Qatar to engage with his counterparts in oil and gas as well as steel sectors in these countries. The visit began from September 7 and will conclude on September 12. "During his meetings, the minister will seek to further enhance cooperation with Saudi Arabia in the entire value chain of the hydrocarbon sector.

World's oil glut is much worse than it looks

A meeting of ministers from OPEC states and their oil-producing allies will take place in Abu Dhabi this week. It will probably be a subdued affair. Oil prices remain stubbornly low despite big output cuts by the so-called OPEC+ group and geopolitical factors such as the US sanctions on Iran. The meeting of the Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee, a body set up by OPEC+ to oversee its production-cutting strategy, won't reset the group's approach but it might provide some clearer guidance on its goals. The ministers insist that they don't have a target for how far they want the price of crude to rise, and say instead that their aim is to reduce excess stockpiles. But for market-watchers it's tough to even get a sense of how big that stockpile is, and hence when the output-cutting exercise may be seen to have done its job. The original target of the output cuts back in November 2016 was to get stockpiles back to their five-year average level. That was never going to be enough, though.

Saudi Arabia has traditionally been a top supplier of crude oil to India," an official statement said.

The Economic Times - 09.09.2019

https://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/oil-and-gas/pradhan-meets-saudi-counterpart-discusses-boosting-energy-ties/71041379

The problem is that this average has been inflated by the very excess stockpile that OPEC+ is trying to drain.

The Economic Times - 09.09.2019

https://epaper.timesgroup.com/Olive/ODN/TheEconomicTimes/shared/ShowArticle.aspx?doc=ETKM%2F2019%2F09%2F09&entity=Ar01105&sk=61B1CADC&mode=text

Top global oil producers to mull fresh cuts as trade war hits prices

Top oil producers will consider fresh output cuts at a meeting this week, but analysts are doubtful they will succeed in bolstering crude prices dented by the US-China trade war. The OPEC petroleum exporters' cartel and key non-OPEC members want to halt a slide in prices that has continued despite previous production cuts and US sanctions that have squeezed supply from Iran and Venezuela. Analysts say the OPEC+ group's Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee, which monitors a supply cut deal reached last year, has limited options when it meets in Abu Dhabi on Thursday. The obvious move is to deepen the reductions. But while that could help prices, it also risks further losses of market share, analysts say. "OPEC has traditionally resorted to production cuts in order to shore up the prices," said M. R. Raghu, head of research at Kuwait Financial Centre (Markaz).

The Economic Times - 08.09.2019

https://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/oil-and-gas/top-global-oil-producers-to-mull-fresh-cuts-as-trade-war-hits-prices/71031836

BP expects oil demand to grow by less than 1 mn bpd in 2019

Global oil demand is expected to grow by less than 1 million barrels per day in 2019 as consumption slows, BP Chief Financial Officer Brian Gilvary told Reuters on Wednesday. Mounting trade tensions between the United States and China and increased signs of global economic recession are also set to weigh on oil refining margins, which BP expects will soften in the fourth quarter of the year, Gilvary said. A major change in marine fuel standards starting in 2020 has yet to impact refining margins, he added. "There is a lot of dynamic going on around demand, generally, which started off fairly robust at the start of the year, softened through the mid-point. We were seeing a little bit of a pick up around our results ... but that seems to have softened off again," Gilvary said.

The Economic Times - 05.09.2019

https://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/oil-and-gas/bp-expects-oil-demand-to-grow-by-less-than-1-mn-bpd-in-2019/70989060

Oil refining companies raise digital technology investment despite lower margins: Accenture study

Oil refining companies globally are continuing to increase investments in digital technologies even as they are yet to fully capitalise on digital investments and such technologies delivering lower margin improvements in refining operations this year, according to the latest research conducted by Accenture. The study is based on a survey of 145 oil industry professionals, including executives, functional leaders and engineers at refineries globally. According to the report, over the past year the number of refiners reporting that digital technologies delivered a margin improvement of more than 10 per cent in refining operations dropped from 11 per cent to 3 per cent; the number reporting that the technologies delivered margin improvements of 7-10 per cent dropped from 19 per cent to 11 per cent; and the number reporting that digital delivered margin improvements of 2-6 per cent dropped from 46 per cent to 38 per cent. Asked which technologies

Oil rises as Saudi Arabia signals OPEC cuts to continue under new energy minister

Oil rose on Monday on expectations that Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil exporter, will continue to support output cuts by OPEC and other producers to prop up prices under new Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman. Prices climbed for a fourth day and were also supported by comments from the United Arab Emirates' energy minister that OPEC and its allies are committed to balancing the crude market. Global benchmark Brent was up 53 cents, or 0.9%, at $62.07 a barrel by 0425 GMT, while U.S. West Texas Intermediate was 57 cents, or 1%, higher at $57.09 a barrel. Salman, a long-time member of the Saudi delegation to the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), was named to the position on Sunday, replacing Khalid al-Falih. He is the son of Saudi King Salman and this is the first time the energy portfolio has been handed to a member of the royal family. He drove the greatest margin improvements in their operations over the last three to five years, advanced data analytics was cited in their top-three selections by 62 per cent respondents followed by platforms (46 per cent) and internet of things sensors and edge computing (43 per cent).

The Economic Times - 04.09.2019

https://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/oil-and-gas/oil-refining-companies-raise-digital-technology-investment-despite-lower-margins-accenture-study/70978723

helped to negotiate the current agreement between OPEC and non-OPEC countries including Russia, a group known as OPEC+, to cut global crude supply to support prices and balance the market.

The Economic Times - 09.09.2019

https://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/oil-and-gas/oil-rises-as-saudi-arabia-signals-opec-cuts-to-continue-under-new-energy-minister/71043889

Finance Ministry objects to BPCL divestment to IOC

The Narendra Modi government has a divestment target of Rs 1.05 lakh crore for the current fiscal and it wants to move fast in case of public sector undertakings (PSUs) such as BPCL. However, CNBC-TV18 has learnt that the finance ministry has raised objection on government's stake sale to IOC, as it can create a monopoly in the oil marketing business in India. Sources privy to the developments have told CNBC-TV18, "Ministry of petroleum and natural resources is of the view that IOC should acquire 100 percent of government’s stake in BPCL but if IOC acquires BPCL, it will lead to IOC becoming a monopoly in the market which may not get clearance from the Competition Commission of India". IOC currently has a debt of about Rs 72,000 crore and has a planned capital expenditure plan of about Rs 25,000 crore for the year 2019-20. The idea of strategic sale of government's stake particularly in BPCL is to offer a stake to a private entity and bring competition in the oil marketing sector which is currently held by big PSUs like IOC, HPCL and BPCL only.

CNBC - 07.09.2019

https://www.cnbctv18.com/energy/finance-ministry-objects-to-bpcl-divestment-to-ioc-4307501.htm

Govt hikes ethanol price to cut oil import bill

The government today raised the price of sugarcane-extracted ethanol used for blending in petrol by up to Rs 1.84 per litre as it looked to cut oil import bill by $1 billion annually through its greater use in auto fuels. State-owned oil marketing companies will buy ethanol from sugar mills, for mixing in petrol, at enhanced rates for ethanol year beginning December 1, Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said. He was briefing reporters on the decisions taken by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The price of ethanol from 'C-heavy molasses' has been raised by 29 paise per litre to Rs 43.75 while the same from 'B-heavy molasses', also called as intermediary molasses, by Rs 1.84 to Rs 54.27 a litre. Ethanol is a by-product of molasses generated on crushing of sugarcane and the higher price is to encourage sugar mills to divert from sugar production. Cane-based ethanol can be produced in three different ways — directly from cane juice, from B-grade and C-grade molasses.

The Tribune - 04.09.2019

https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/govt-hikes-ethanol-price-to-cut-oil-import-bill/827714.html

India seeks Russian investment in refining, petrochemical projects

India on Wednesday invited Russian companies to invest in its oil refining and petrochemical projects as the two nations vowed to increase energy cooperation going beyond LNG supplies and stakes in Russian oil and gas fields. Indian state-owned firms have stakes in four sets of oil and gas fields in Russia and they will continue to look at investing in producing fields in the resource-rich nation, said a joint statement issued after Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s annual bilateral summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin here. “India-Russia hydrocarbon cooperation is a major pillar

OPEC kingpin Saudi Arabia replaces energy minister: State media

OPEC kingpin Saudi Arabia named King Salman's son as energy minister after sacking veteran oil official Khalid al-Falih, state media said early Sunday. "Khalid al-Falih has been removed from his position," the official Saudi Press Agency said, citing a royal decree. "His royal highness Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman is appointed minister of energy." Prince Salman is the king's son and the brother of powerful Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. Falih's dismissal comes just days after he was removed as chairman of state-owned oil giant Aramco as of India-Russia strategic partnership and has grown over the last two decades. Notably, the last 5 years have witnessed a major boost in cooperation in this area," the statement issued by the Indian government said. The two sides, it said, share ? common understanding that energy is crucial for the development of their people and economy and they recognised the importance of global energy markets that are stable, predictable and balanced giving due regard to the interests of producer and consumer countries.

The Financial Express - 05.09.2019

https://www.financialexpress.com/economy/india-seeks-russian-investment-in-refining-petrochemical-projects/1696408/

the company prepares for a much-anticipated initial public offering (IPO). He was replaced in that post by Yasir al-Rumayyan, governor of the kingdom's vast Public Investment Fund. Falih also saw his portfolio shrink as the kingdom reels from low oil prices. Last month the world's top oil exporter announced the creation of a new ministry of industry and mineral resources, separating it from his energy ministry.

The Economic Times - 08.09.2019

https://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/oil-and-gas/opec-kingpin-saudi-arabia-replaces-energy-minister-state-media/71031607

Big Oil undermines UN climate goals with $50 billion of new projects

Major oil companies have approved $50 billion of projects since last year that will not be economically viable if governments implement the Paris Agreement on climate change, think-tank Carbon Tracker said in a report published on Friday. The analysis found that investment plans by Royal Dutch Shell , BP and ExxonMobil among other companies will not be compatible with the 2015 Paris Agreement, which aims to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. "Every oil major is betting heavily against a 1.5 degree Celsius world and investing in projects that are contrary to the Paris goals," said report co-author Andrew Grant, a former natural resources analyst at Barclays. Big oil and gas companies have welcomed the U.N.-backed Paris Agreement, in which governments agreed to curb greenhouse gas emissions enough to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, or "well below" 2 degrees Celsius by the end of the century. Scientists view 1.5 degrees Celsius as a tipping point where climate impacts such as sea-level rise, natural disasters, forced migration, failed harvests and deadly heatwaves will rapidly start to intensify if it is breached.

The Economic Times - 06.09.2019

https://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/oil-and-gas/big-oil-undermines-un-climate-goals-with-50-billion-of-new-projects/71005886

Ind-Ra lowers outlook on steel sector on sluggish demand expectation

India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) has revised its outlook on the steel sector to stable-to-negative from stable for the remainder of FY20 in the wake of a sluggish steel demand growth expectations owing to a mix of structural and cyclical concerns in end-user sectors, primarily auto and real estate construction. Ind-Ra has revised downwards its FY20 steel demand growth expectations to around 4 per cent from the previous forecast of 7 per cent. The figure for FY19 was 8 per cent. The outlook factors in increased import risks especially from the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) countries such as Japan and South Korea due to adverse domino impact of the slowing global growth and continuing trade frictions. Furthermore, Ind-Ra believes that raw material availability and price risks may escalate in 4QFY20 if the uncertainty over iron ore mine auctions prolongs. According to Ind-Ra, overall steel sales volumes and margins are expected to weaken further in 2QFY20 after the industry witnessed margin correction in 4QFY19 and 1QFY20.

Business Standard - 04.09.2019

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/ind-ra-lowers-outlook-on-steel-sector-on-sluggish-demand-expectation-119090301126_1.html

Economic slowdown, trade war to test steel industry's mettle

The wider economic slowdown is not likely to spare the domestic steel industry, with three credit rating agencies raising the alarm on falling profitability at steel mills. Profit margins for steel companies are expected to get further squeezed between weakening domestic steel consumption and a weak outlook for global growth amid

Fitch Solutions lowers 2019 global steel price forecast

Fitch Solutions Macro Research on Tuesday said it has lowered its 2019 global steel price forecast as global prices continue to be hammered by poor sentiment amid ongoing United States (US)-China trade tensions and increasing downside risks to the global economy. In the long term, Fitch Solutions escalating trade war tensions, ratings agency Icra said in a report on Wednesday. Over the last four quarters, operating profit margins of the domestic steel industry have been on slippery ground, declining steadily from 22.6% in Q1 FY19 to 18.2% in Q1 FY20. This downward trend in profitability is expected to continue in Q2 FY20 as well, according to the latest Icra report on the steel sector. The Indian economy grew at only 5% in Q1 FY20, the slowest in the last six years. With steel demand growth being dependant on growth of gross domestic product (GDP), domestic steel consumption growth slowed down to 5.7% in April-July of FY20, against 7.5% and 7.9% in FY19 and FY18, respectively.

Mint - 05.09.2019

https://www.livemint.com/companies/news/icra-india-ratings-moody-s-raise-alarm-on-slowing-steel-sector-revise-outlook-to-negative-1567593239703.html

maintains its view that prices will ease and embark on a multi-year declining track as fundamentals loosen with falling demand and increasing production. “We are revising down our 2019 global steel price forecast from an average of $650/tonne to $600/tonne, as prolonged weak investor sentiment on the back of the ongoing trade tensions between the US and China and increasing downside risks to the global economy continues to pressure prices,” Fitch Solutions Macro Research said in a statement. In terms of fundamental factors, in China, while demand from infrastructure and construction sectors proved exceptionally strong in the year to date as targeted stimulus measures take effect, steel production has also soared, loosening the market, it said.

The Hindu Business Line - 04.09.2019

https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/fitch-solutions-lowers-2019-global-steel-price-forecast/article29322043.ece

India ranked 34th on world travel, tourism competitiveness index: Report

India has moved up six places to rank 34th on world travel and tourism competitiveness index, driven by rich natural and cultural resources and strong price competitiveness, a WEF report said on Wednesday. India's ranking improved from 40th to 34th, the greatest improvement over 2017 among the top 25 per cent of all countries ranked in the report. "India, which accounts for the majority of South Asia's T&T (travel and tourism) GDP, remains the sub-region's most competitive T&T economy, moving up six places to rank 34th globally," the report said. As per the report, China, Mexico, Malaysia, Thailand, Brazil and India -- which are not high-income economies but rank in the top 35 in the overall list -- stand out in the Cultural Resources and Business Travel Pillar through their combination of rich natural and cultural resources and strong price competitiveness. "India showed the greatest percentage improvement to its overall Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI) score, which has helped it become the only lower-middle income country in the top 35," the report said and lauded its natural and cultural assets and price competitiveness.

Business Standard - 05.09.2019

https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/india-moves-up-6-places-to-34th-rank-on-world-travel-tourism-competitiveness-index-wef-report-119090400693_1.html

India's domestic air passenger traffic beats global trend, up by 8.9% in July

At a time when the global air passenger growth is decreasing, Indian domestic air passenger market clocked an 8.9% growth in July this year when compared to the same month last year, international airlines body IATA said on Friday. Moreover, India's July RPK (Revenue Passenger Kilometre) growth at 8.9% was higher than what was observed in June this year at 8.2%. RPK measures actual passenger volume and is calculated by multiplying number of passengers to the number of kilometres travelled by them. On India, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) said in its analysis, "The market has not yet returned to the double-digit growth rates that were the norm in the past 4-5 years." "Yet it seems to be adjusting well to the disruption caused by the demise of Jet Airways; capacity is also back on track (7.1% year-on-year in July vs 3.4% in June)," it added. The full-service carrier Jet Airways had shut down its operations on April 17 this year due to a lack of funds. This led to a sudden decrease in total number of flights in India, leading to a decrease in passenger growth.

Mint - 07.09.2019

https://www.livemint.com/news/india/india-s-domestic-air-passenger-traffic-beats-global-trend-up-by-8-9-in-july-1567797029894.html

Decline In August On Lower Liquid And Coal Volumes

Cargo handled by Indian ports declined in August over last year after one month of growth on global

A K Gupta takes over as ONGC Videsh Director (Operations)

AK Gupta has taken over as the Director (Operations) in the Board of ONGC Videsh, the trade tensions and slowing domestic consumption. A fall in liquid cargo—oil and gas-related products—and coal volumes, which together contribute nearly three-fifth of the total cargo volumes in India, led to subdued cargo volumes in August. Volume growth at India's ports increased by only one percent in August, according to a Goldman Sachs report, largely led by container, iron ore, fertiliser and other cargo volumes. Most of these positives were offset by negative trends in coal, oil and gas-related product volumes. Ports across the country handled 576.2 lakh tonnes of cargo in August. Volumes of liquid cargo—oil and gas-related products—comprising nearly 40 percent of total cargo volumes, declined for the second consecutive month. Coal volumes fell for the fourth consecutive month to 104 lakh tonnes in August.

Bloomberg Quint - 09.09.2019

https://www.bloombergquint.com/economy-finance/cargo-volumes-at-indian-ports-decline-in-august-on-lower-liquid-and-coal-volumes

Oil India gets new CMD

The Appointments Committee of Cabinet (ACC) has approved a proposal to appoint Sushil Chandra Mishra as the Chairman and Managing Director of Oil India Ltd. The proposal was moved by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas and Mishra is currently an Executive Director at OIL. Mishra will take charge on October 1, 2019 and will hold his post till June 30, 2022. In another approval, Alok Kumar Gupta, an Executive Director at ONGC, has been appointed to the post of Director (Operations) at ONGC Videsh, the overseas investment arm of the oil and gas major. He has also been appointed till June 30, 2022.

The Hindu Business Line - 04.09.2019

https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/companies/oil-india-gets-new-cmd/article29324714.ece

Sumit Deb assumes charge as NMDC Director (Personnel)

Sumit Deb has assumed charge as Director (Personnel) of NMDC Limited on September 1, 2019. Prior to this, he was Executive Director (Personnel & Administration) at NMDC and was heading functions of Personnel, Human Resource Development, Rajbhasha, Administration etc. He is a graduate in Mechanical Engineering from Orissa University of Agriculture and Technology, Bhubaneshwar.

Millennium Post - 04.09.2019

http://www.millenniumpost.in/business/sumit-deb-assumes-charge-as-nmdc-director-personnel-372508

international petroleum company of India. He brings over three decades of experience in various capacities in domestic and overseas operations. He was most recently the Asset Manager Designate of Assam and prior to that Asset Manager Silchar, ONGC. Earlier, as Head of Business Development in ONGC Videsh, he managed the global business development activity of the company. In his first stint with ONGC Videsh, he managed ONGC Videsh assets in diverse geographies.

Millennium Post - 05.09.2019

http://www.millenniumpost.in/business/a-k-gupta-takes-over-as-ongc-videsh-director-operations-372728

R. Kesavan takes over as Director Finance, HPCL

R Kesavan has taken over as Director (Finance) of state-run oil refiner Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) from September 5, a company statement said. He is also the Chief Financial Officer of the Navratna PSU. Kesavan, a fellow member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India, was till recently the Executive Director (Corporate Finance) at HPCL.

The Hindu Business Line - 06.09.2019

https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/companies/r-kesavan-takes-over-as-hpcls-director-for-finance/article29341521.ece

Yash Paul Bhola takes over as NFL Director (Finance)

Yash Paul Bhola has taken over as Director (Finance) in NFL on September 3, 2019. Prior to this, he was Executive Director (Finance) in the Company. An MBA in Finance & CMA, Bhola has a rich experience of 36 years in NFL's various manufacturing Units, Marketing Division and Corporate Office. He started his career with NFL in 1983 and has gained experience in all aspects of Financial Management in the Company.

Millennium Post - 05.09.2019

http://www.millenniumpost.in/business/yash-paul-bhola-takes-overas-nfl-director-finance-372727