

(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.)

Businesses expect recovery by June 2021: PwC Survey

Though Covid-19 and the ensuing mayhem has left the global and Indian economy battered, a survey by auditing major PwC reveals that more than 80% of business expect markets to recover by June next year as companies focus on crisis management, operational efficiency and innovation. PwC India surveyed 225 CXOs across industries between June 17 and July 10 to assess the impact of Covid-19, the challenges it poses, new paradigms and interventions being considered by business leaders. "Despite the near-term challenges on both the demand and supply side, the good news from our survey is that India Inc is optimistic about economic revival. Nearly 80% of the respondents of our survey expect their businesses to recover by June 2021, with early signs expected to be visible from September 2020," PwC India partner & elder (deals), Sanjeev Krishan wrote in the report's preface. They attribute this resilience to operational flexibility, robust crisis management and process/product innovation. For many, this is a result of work done in the pre Covid-19 era, he added.

The Financial Express - 31.07.2020

<https://www.financialexpress.com/economy/businesses-expect-recovery-by-june-2021-pwc-survey/2040227/>

Falling imports, moderate crude to help post 0.4% current account surplus, first since FY04: Study

For the first time since FY04, the economy is set to close the current fiscal with a current account surplus of 0.4 per cent of GDP, boosted by falling imports and crude prices, and not driven by better exports, according to a report. After many quarters, the economy logged in a marginal current account surplus in June quarter at 0.1 per cent or USD 600 million as against a deficit of USD 4.6 billion or 0.7 per cent of GDP in FY19, according to the latest Reserve Bank data. For fiscal 2020, CAD improved to 0.9 per cent of GDP from 2.1 per cent in FY19. "For the first time since FY04, the economy is set to register a small current account surplus of 0.4 per cent of GDP in FY21...led by weak domestic demand and lower crude prices leading to a collapse in imports rather

India's GDP growth to lose momentum from third quarter: Oxford Economics

Global forecasting firm Oxford Economics on Tuesday said it expects India's GDP growth to lose momentum from late third quarter (October-December) of the current fiscal as the push from the initial reopening fades. It further said India fares the worst in its Asia recovery scorecard, implying that the country will likely take the longest among major economies to converge to its pre-coronavirus growth level. Oxford Economics, in a report titled 'India: A reopening gone wrong', said the central government's attempts to restart the economy are already running aground. "In our baseline, we expect GDP growth to lose momentum from late Q3 on, once the push from the initial reopening fades and, likely compounded by the ongoing pandemic and inadequate policy support, legacy economic headwinds re-assert themselves. "The risk clearly is that proactive steps by regional governments, especially the richer ones, to stem the spread of the virus bring the tipping point forward," it said.

The Economic Times - 28.07.2020

https://m.economictimes.com/news/economy/finance/indias-gdp-growth-to-lose-momentum-from-third-quarter-oxford-economics/amp_articleshow/77221478.cms

Indian economy: V-shaped recovery forecast

India will see a sharp V-shaped recovery in the third and fourth quarter of the current fiscal, but GDP in 2020-21 would ultimately contract as the coronavirus lockdown has led to serious demand and supply dislocations, N.K. Singh, chairman of the 15th Finance Commission, said on Monday. Stating that the global economic depression will continue to cast a shadow on growth prospects next fiscal, Singh said the economic expansion in 2022-23 would determine whether or not the initiatives to revive growth are sustainable. "This pandemic has led to enormous economic consequences by way of lockdown which brought serious dislocation both on the demand and supply sides," Singh said at an AIMA event here. "The first and second quarters will not be lofty

than a strong export recovery," Tanvee Gupta Jain, the house economist at UBS Securities India said in a note, without quantifying the surplus amount that year.

The Economic Times - 27.07.2020

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/finance/falling-imports-moderate-crude-to-help-post-0-4-current-account-surplus-first-since-fy04-study/articleshow/77197434>

Recent uptick in economy likely to fade, due to rising COVID-19 cases, says Nomura report

The recent improvements in activity during the initial post-lockdown phase are likely to fade after a normalising, said a Nomura report on Monday. "While high frequency indicators for Q2 broadly suggest a normalization, we see a rising risk that the sequential improvement in activity may fade after the initial post-lockdown normalization," it said. Further, the persistent rise in daily cases is likely to impact India's economic recovery, according to the report. "With daily cases continuing to pick up both nationally and in traditionally safer states (the South and East), we expect increased risk aversion from the public and local governments to weigh on the pace of the economic recovery," it said. The Nomura India Business Resumption Index (NIBRI), which is a weekly tracker of the pace at which economic activity normalises, remained broadly unchanged at 70.1 for the week ending July 26, over the previous week.

The Economic Times - 27.07.2020

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/recent-uptick-in-economy-likely-to-fade-due-to-rising-covid-19-cases-says-nomura-report/articleshow/77198418.cms>

Covid setback: Tax revenue drops 32.6% in June Quarter

The government's tax revenue fell 32.6% in the April-June quarter, underscoring the damage done to the economy by the Covid-19 pandemic and the lockdown that followed. The revenue shortfall widened the fiscal deficit at the end of June to ₹6.62 lakh crore, or 83.2% of the full-year budget estimate of ₹7.96 lakh crore. This is the highest fiscal deficit in percentage terms for the first quarter going back to available data since FY2000. The central goods and services tax (GST) took the maximum 53% knock, data released on Friday showed, suggesting extreme consumer distress or caution, experts said. This points to a steep cut in June quarter GDP, with SBI Research estimating a 40% contraction. First-quarter GDP estimates will

performances to say the least... I think in the third and fourth quarter of the current fiscal year, there would be a very sharp V-shaped recovery... not necessarily that anything fundamental will happen or may happen but because of a lower base.

The Telegraph - 28.07.2020

<https://www.telegraphindia.com/business/indian-economy-v-shaped-recovery-forecast/cid/1787542>

Local curbs put brakes on economic revival in July

The economy did not gather pace in July after the June spurt amid rising Covid-19 cases and local lockdowns to contain the spread, bending back the recovery trend. Transportation of goods, rail freight, exports, car sales, farming and employment indicators improved further in July from June levels, but retail remained sluggish, credit growth was lower, diesel demand fell and mobility indicators did not suggest increased activity in the month. Experts called for another fiscal stimulus to prevent the economy from slipping again as states imposed restrictions due to rising coronavirus cases. Goods and services tax (GST) collections for July, which included payments for earlier months because of relief given by the government, amounted to Rs 87,422 crore, short of Rs 1.02 lakh crore in the year earlier. GST collections are seen as a key indicator of consumption demand. Google's Mobility Reports showed that people movement across locations was stagnant in June and July.

The Economic Times - 03.08.2020

<https://epaper.timesgroup.com/Olive/ODN/TheEconomicTimes/shared/ShowArticle.aspx?doc=ETKM%2F2020%2F08%2F03&entity=Ar00121&sk=FC1101CC&mode=text>

Core sector output shrinks in June, but at a slower pace

India's eight infrastructure sectors contracted sharply for the fourth straight month in June, though at a slower pace than in May, signalling an uneven return to normal manufacturing activity since the lifting of the nationwide lockdown on 1 June. Data released by the industry department showed that in June, the core sector which constitutes 40% of the index of industrial production (IIP) shrunk 15%, against 22% in May, with cement (-6.9%), refinery products (-8.9%) and steel (-33.8%) recording an improvement from the previous month, even as electricity (-11%), natural gas (-12%) and crude oil (-6%) displayed muted pickup. The International Monetary Fund (IMF)

be released on August 31. The flagging collections have forced the government to increase the amount it's borrowing this fiscal year to a record ₹12 lakh crore to meet spending requirements. However, the contraction in gross tax revenue narrowed to 23% in June, suggesting some pickup in the economy after restrictions were eased in stages from May.

The Economic Times - 01.08.2020

<https://epaper.timesgroup.com/Olive/ODN/TheEconomicTimes/shared/ShowArticle.aspx?doc=ETKM%2F2020%2F08%2F01&entity=Ar00103&sk=2A98335B&mode=text>

Fiscal deficit widens to 83% of budget estimate

With lockdown measures badly hitting the government's revenue collection and expenditure shooting through the roof, India's fiscal deficit widened to Rs 6.62 lakh crore in the April-June quarter, accounting for 83.2% of the target for the whole financial year. The deficit is unusually high for a quarter, say experts. "Our baseline estimate is that the fiscal deficit will surge to Rs 13 lakh crore in FY21 from the budgeted level of Rs 8.0 lakh crore. This anticipated fiscal slippage, even in our base case scenario, exceeds the extent by which the Centre's market borrowings have already been increased," said Aditi Nayar, principal economist at ICRA. As expected, revenue collection remained subdued. Data released by the Controller General of Accounts (CGA) on Friday revealed that the net tax receipts were Rs 1.35 lakh crore, compared to Rs 2.51 lakh crore in the same period last year. For the quarter, tax revenues were at 8% of the full year target of Rs 16.35 lakh crore, while non-tax revenues were at only 4% of the full fiscal target of Rs 3.85 lakh crore.

New Indian Express - 01.08.2020

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/business/2020/jul/31/fiscal-deficit-touches-832-pc-of-budget-estimates-at-end-june-2177395.html>

Govt to go ahead with divestment of 23 PSUs cleared by Cabinet: FM Nirmala Sitharaman

The government is working to complete stake sale process of 23 public sector companies whose divestment has been cleared by the Cabinet, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Monday. In an online conversation with Hero Enterprise Chairman Sunil Kant Munjal, she said the government is willing to listen to all issues being faced industry and has an open mind with

on Wednesday said high-frequency indicators signal plateauing of economic activity in India as the positive impact from unlock is not as strong as the negative impact of the lockdown. It urged the government to urgently contain the spread of the coronavirus pandemic on a priority to make economic recovery sustainable.

Mint - 01.08.2020

<https://www.livemint.com/news/india/eight-core-sector-output-contracts-sharply-for-the-fourth-month-in-june-11596196162513.html>

Retail inflation for industrial workers marginally eases to 5.06% in June

Retail inflation for industrial workers eased to 5.06 per cent in June this year from 8.59 per cent in the same month of 2019, mainly due to lower prices of certain food items and kerosene oil. It was recorded at 5.10 per cent in May 2020, a labour ministry statement said. Food inflation stood at 5.49 per cent in June 2020 as against 5.88 per cent in the previous month and 5.47 per cent during the corresponding month a year ago. Retail inflation for industrial workers measured in terms of Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (CPI-IW) for June 2020 increased by 2 points and stood at 332. Labour Minister Santosh Gangwar said, "The All-India Index for June 2020 stood at 332 with a rise of two points compared to previous month. However, rate of annual inflation moderated to 5.06 per cent from 5.10 percent in the previous month and 8.59 per cent in the month a year before." This index is utilised primarily for measuring Dearness Allowance (DA) payable to workers in the organised sector including PSUs, banks and insurance companies besides government employees, the minister added stressing upon the importance of the CPI-IW.

Business Standard - 01.08.2020

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/retail-inflation-for-industrial-workers-marginally-eases-to-5-06-in-june-120073101464_1.html

New public sector policy soon

The government will soon come out with a new public sector enterprises policy that will define the strategic sectors which will not have more than four PSUs, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Saturday. As part of the "Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan" package, the finance minister in May had announced that there will be a maximum of four public sector companies in strategic sectors, and state-owned firms in other segments will eventually

regard to further measures that may be needed to support the economy. "We are open to every suggestion that is coming in. We have not closed any options," she said. To a query on whether the government will provide support to small finance banks (SFB) and non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), the minister said she would soon meet them to review their situation. Munjal said lower rated firms were finding it difficult to raise funding from banks. He also stressed the need for a special relief measures for sectors — travel and tourism — which have been specifically been hit by the Covid-19 pandemic's impact on economic activity.

The Indian Express - 27.07.2020

<https://indianexpress.com/article/business/govt-to-go-ahead-with-divestment-of-23-psus-cleared-by-cabinet-fm-nirmala-sitharaman-6526451/>

Sebi relaxes stake rule for PSUs

In a further relief to public sector enterprises (PSEs), the government on Saturday gave listed entities one more year to comply with the rules of minimum public shareholding. Under current rules, listed companies must have a minimum public shareholding of 25 per cent. The latest move from the Centre is expected to benefit more than three dozen PSUs who have been unable to meet this requirement. In November last year, Sebi chairman Ajay Tyagi had said of the 91 PSEs that are listed, around 45 have not met the minimum shareholding rules. For instance, in MMTC, the government's holding stands at 89.93 per cent, while it is 87.40 per cent in IRCTC and 86.77 per cent in SJVN. The Centre on Saturday notified the changes in the Securities Contracts (Regulation) Rules, 1957, providing more time to listed entities to meet the criteria of minimum public shareholding. "In the Securities Contracts (Regulation) Rules, 1957, in rule 19A, in sub-rule (1), in the proviso, for the words 'two years' the words 'three years' shall be substituted," said a government notification dated July 31.

The Telegraph - 02.08.2020

<https://www.telegraphindia.com/business/sebi-relaxes-stake-rule-for-psus-giving-one-more-year-to-comply-with-minimum-public-shareholding/cid/1788005>

BP, Total not to bid for BPCL; investors weigh inflexible locations, labour laws with mkt access

Supermajors BP Plc and Total of France may not bid for the acquisition of Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd (BPCL) as foreign investors weigh inflexible locations of company's oil refineries as well as tough labour laws against access to world's fastest-growing fuel market. Among the probable

be privatised. "We are working on it ... it should go to the cabinet soon," she said in an interaction with reporters when asked about the strategic sector list. She said there could be various models to have minimum four PSUs for those falling under the strategic sector. Either they will be merged, or they will be brought together in such a way that there are only four or fewer, she said. Under the policy, a list of strategic sectors will be notified where there will be at least one and a maximum of four public sector enterprises, apart from private sector companies.

The Telegraph - 02.08.2020

<https://www.telegraphindia.com/business/new-public-sector-policy-soon/cid/1787998>

Investors bet on some PSUs as India privatises

State-run companies have for long been stragglers of India's \$1.9 trillion stock market. They are now being picked out by some investors that see them turning the corner as Prime Minister Narendra Modi pushes ahead with the plan to sell public assets. The planned \$6.5 billion sale of the government's 53% stake in refiner Bharat Petroleum Corp., India's first big-ticket transaction in over a decade, has lured several global oil majors. Funds including Jupiter Asset Management Ltd. and Smartsun Capital Pte. say a change in ownership can reignite demand for the category whose valuations have only shrunk since early 2010. "Strategic sales, like the one happening in BPCL, will mark a turning point for stocks of state-owned enterprises," said Sumeet Rohra, a fund manager at Smartsun, which has raised its shareholding in the refiner and Hindustan Petroleum Corp. this year.

Mint - 01.08.2020

<https://www.livemint.com/companies/news/investors-bet-on-state-owned-stragglers-as-india-privatises-11596181990319.html>

BPCL delay throttles selloff ambitions

The Centre's decision to extend the deadline for the BPCL selloff has put a question mark on the Narendra Modi government's ability to achieve the ambitious disinvestment target of Rs 2.10 lakh crore set for the current fiscal. The BPCL stock plunged 7.63 per cent to Rs 419.10 on the BSE on Thursday after the last date to accept expressions of interest (EOIs) for the sale of the

who could bid to buy government's entire 52.98 per cent stake in India's third-biggest oil refiner and second-largest fuel retailer at the close of bidding on Friday include Russian energy giant Rosneft or its affiliates, Saudi Arabian Oil Company (Saudi Aramco) and billionaire Mukesh Ambani's oil-to-telecom conglomerate Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL), multiple sources said. Top consideration for investors is the USD 10 billion or around Rs 75,000 crore price tag at current market price and after including the requirement to make an open offer for additional 26 per cent stake from shareholders post buying out of the government share, they said.

The Economic Times - 30.07.2020

<https://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/oil-and-gas/bp-total-not-to-bid-for-bpcl-investors-weigh-inflexible-locations-labour-laws-with-mkt-access/77252456>

India's June crude oil imports lowest in over 5 yrs; exports fall

India's crude oil imports fell in June to their lowest level since February 2015, while year-on-year refined product exports declined for the first time in almost a year, government data showed on Friday. Crude oil imports last month dropped about 19% from a year earlier to 13.68 million tonnes, down for a third straight month, data from the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC) of the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas showed. "This is likely driven by not yet fully recovered oil demand and expectation that it might take longer to have Indian oil demand rising strongly again," said UBS analyst Giovanni Staunovo. "Together with higher crude imports at the start of the year, crude tanks are still well filled, reducing the need to import more crude for now." Fuel demand in India, the world's third-biggest oil importer and consumer, fell 7.8% in June compared with a year earlier as surging coronavirus cases and rising retail prices hammered demand. "India's fuel demand recovery will continue to stall as coronavirus cases continue to skyrocket," said OANDA senior market analyst Edward Moya.

Business Standard - 02.08.2020

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/india-s-june-crude-oil-imports-lowest-in-over-5-yrs-exports-fall-120080200539_1.html

India's oil bill may dip 40 per cent in FY21 on Covid, low rates

At least in the oil sector, the global health emergency caused by coronavirus is coming to India's advantage. While the severe demand squeeze due to the pandemic helped India save on

government's 52.98 per cent stake in PSU got extended by two months to September 30. Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her budget had said the government plans to garner Rs 1,20,000 crore from selloffs in PSUs and another Rs 90,000 crore from the sale of stakes in banks and financial institutions. The ambitious target depends heavily on proceeds from the strategic disinvestment in public sector companies such as Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd, Container Corp and Shipping Corp, along with the listing of insurance behemoth Life Insurance Corp of India. Based on current market prices, it was estimated the BPCL selloff could fetch as much as Rs 70,000 crore to Rs 80,000 crore.

The Telegraph - 31.07.2020

<https://www.telegraphindia.com/business/bpcl-delay-throttles-selloff-ambitions/cid/1787810>

India energy demand improves in June: Report

With economic activities slowly picking pace, the all India energy demand improved in June as compared to May, says India Ratings. The power demand for June was, however, 10.9 per cent lower than the corresponding period of 2019. "The energy demand is showing signs of recovery as the decline in power demand narrowed in June as compared to May and April which was down 14.9 per cent and 22.3 per cent, respectively, due to the gradual lifting of lockdown for certain economic activities and an increase in domestic consumption with the extended summer season," the agency said. In June 2020, the all-India energy demand contracted 10.9 per cent y-o-y for the fourth consecutive month to 105.6 billion units, while energy supply also decreased 10.9 per cent, resulting in the energy deficit remaining at 0.4 per cent as compared to June 2019, when it stood at 0.5 per cent.

Mint - 31.07.2020

<https://www.livemint.com/industry/energy/india-energy-demand-improves-in-june-report-11596116275765.html>

Indian refiners cut crude processing as fuel demand dips, margins fade

Indian refiners are cutting crude processing and shutting units for maintenance as local fuel demand falls and global refining margins are weak, officials at the companies said. Fuel

oil imports, low global crude prices could help it further in reducing sharply the import bill. Declining consistently since April, India's oil imports fell about 29 per cent (YoY) to around 13.44 million tonnes in June, the lowest since October 2011. In value terms, the June oil imports stood at \$4.93 billion (Rs 37,341.70 crore), down 55.29 per cent in the dollar terms from \$11.03 billion (Rs 76,586.73 crore) in June 2019. In April, it fell to 16.55 million tonnes, a 16 per cent YoY decline, from 17.28 million tonnes reported earlier. In May, crude oil imports fell 22.6 per cent, the biggest drop since at least 2005, to 14.61 million tonnes against the year-ago month. If the trend continues, crude oil imports in FY21 may fall to 180 million tonnes, 50 million tonnes lower than 227 million tonnes imported in FY20. At current prices, the value of this 50 million tonnes will be around \$20 billion.

The Economic Times - 28.07.2020

<https://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/oil-and-gas/indias-oil-bill-may-dip-40-per-cent-in-fy21-on-covid-low-rates/77221081>

Fuel demand recovery falters in July amid record Covid cases, lockdowns, high prices

Fuel demand recovery stalled in July amid record rise in coronavirus cases, lockdown by states and high fuel prices. Demand for diesel in July dropped 12.5% over June, halting a swift recovery witnessed in May and June. Petrol sales in July also fell 1% compared to June. Diesel and petrol sales are down 21% and 11%, respectively, in July from a year earlier, according to industry executives. The figures are for sales by state-run fuel retailers who control 90% of the market. The sale of aviation turbine fuel (ATF) rose 3.8% in July from a month earlier but is down 65% from the July of 2019 due to the absence of international flights and limited domestic operations. Sales of liquefied petroleum gas, used mainly as cooking fuel in India, rose 10% month on month and were up 3.4% year on year. The oil demand is unlikely to return to pre-covid levels anytime soon as the effect of the pandemic expands across the country and state governments respond with more lockdowns, Indian Oil Chairman Shrikant Madhav Vaidya said on Friday.

The Economic Times - 01.08.2020

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/oil-gas/fuel-demand-recovery-falters-in-july-amid-record-covid-cases-lockdowns-high-prices/articleshow/77300926.cms?from=mdr>

demand in Asia's third largest economy had been rising since May from historic lows in April, when a nation-wide lockdown to stem the spread of the novel coronavirus was enforced. In July, however, local demand growth has slowed because of high fuel prices, renewed lockdown in parts of the country and as monsoon rains hit transport, industrial and construction activity. Bharat Petroleum Corp is operating its three refineries at about 70 per cent capacity compared to about 90 per cent in early June, its head of refineries R. Ramachandran said. Officials said India's August crude processing will decrease further as the country's top refiner Indian Oil Corp, Reliance Industries - operator of the world's biggest refining complex - and BPCL among others are shutting units for maintenance during this low demand period.

The Economic Times - 29.07.2020

<https://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/oil-and-gas/indian-refiners-cuts-crude-processing-as-fuel-demand-dips-margins-fade/77232125>

End game for oil? OPEC prepares for an age of dwindling demand

The coronavirus crisis may have triggered the long-anticipated tipping point in oil demand and it is focusing minds in OPEC. The pandemic drove down daily crude consumption by as much as a third earlier this year, at a time when the rise of electric vehicles and a shift to renewable energy sources were already prompting downward revisions in forecasts for long-term oil demand. It has prompted some officials in the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, oil's most powerful proponent since it was founded 60 years ago, to ask whether this year's dramatic demand destruction heralds a permanent shift and how best to manage supplies if the age of oil is drawing to a close. "People are waking up to a new reality and trying to work their heads around it all," an industry source close to OPEC told Reuters, adding the "possibility exists in the minds of all the key players" that consumption might never fully recover. Reuters interviewed seven current and former officials or other sources involved in OPEC, most of whom asked not to be named.

The Economic Times - 28.07.2020

<https://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/oil-and-gas/end-game-for-oil-opec-prepares-for-an-age-of-dwindling-demand/77214738>

Headache for OPEC as oil market structure signals return of glut

Rising OPEC and U.S. oil supply, coupled with stalled economic and crude demand recovery, have pushed the futures market structure back to indicating a surplus, last observed during oil's collapse in April and May amid the coronavirus pandemic. The development is a headache for OPEC, which had been hoping demand would recover quicker after a round of record global output cuts. The group will either have to consider further production cuts or tolerate lower oil prices for longer. The surplus market structure, when prompt prices are weaker than future prices, is also a boon for traders, as they can store crude in the hope to resell it later at a profit. Royal Dutch/Shell, Total, Eni and Norway's Equinor have all reported bumper trading profits over the past week. Front-month September Brent futures in the past week have been trading at a discount of \$2 per barrel to March 2021, the steepest discount since May, when lockdown measures against the virus outbreak cut global oil demand by a third.

The Economic Times - 31.07.2020

<https://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/oil-and-gas/headache-for-opec-as-oil-market-structure-signals-return-of-glut/77274180>

Total, IOC form joint venture to manufacture bitumen derivatives

French energy giant Total SA and the country's top oil firm Indian Oil Corp (IOC) on Monday announced a 50:50 joint venture to manufacture and market high-quality bitumen derivatives and specialty products for the growing road-building industry in India. "The new JV will combine the R&D and marketing strengths of both IOC and Total to manufacture and market innovative bitumen formulations and superior quality products such as polymer-modified bitumen, crumb rubber modified bitumen, bitumen emulsions and other specialty products," the two firms said in a joint statement. The joint venture company will set up manufacturing units across the country with cost-effective logistics solutions, keeping innovation, safety, and sustainability at the helm of its operations. Total is the leading bitumen manufacturer and supplier in Europe, while IOC is the largest player in the Indian bitumen market. The JV will also explore possibilities to cater to other South Asian markets, the statement said. The two companies already have an established business relationship in India, notably in the LPG and fuel additives businesses.

The New Indian Express - 27.07.2020

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/business/2020/jul/27/total-ioc-form-joint-venture-to-manufacture-bitumen-derivatives-2175550.html>

Oil demand may never recover from COVID-19 crisis, says Shell CEO

Global oil demand might never return to levels seen before the outbreak of the COVID-19 epidemic, Royal Dutch Shell CEO Ben Beurden said on Thursday. "Demand will take a long time to recover if it recovers at all," van Beurden told reporters after the Anglo-Dutch energy company reported a sharp drop in second-quarter profit. Shell expects aviation fuel consumption to recover to 50% of pre-crisis levels by the end of 2020, he said. "The aviation sector is down and will remain down for some time to come."

The Economic Times - 31.07.2020

<https://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/oil-and-gas/oil-demand-may-never-recover-from-covid-19-crisis-says-shell-ceo/77260827>

IOCL to invest Rs 13,805 cr to set up new plant in Odisha

Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL) will invest Rs 13,805 crore to set up a plant in Odisha's Paradip to manufacture raw materials for the textile sector, an official said on Sunday. The project is expected to be completed by 2024, he said. The paraxylene (PX) and purified terephthalic acid (PTA) plant will be integrated with the IOCL's refinery facility in the port town of Jagatsinghpur district. "The integrated paraxylene (PX) and purified terephthalic acid (PTA) complex plant in Paradip will be set up at an estimated investment of Rs 13,805 crore to facilitate textile sector," the official said. The project will generate approximately five million man-days of employment over the three-year plant construction period, he said. The petrochemicals complex will have a PX production capacity of 800,000 tonne per annum, which would be the feedstock for the manufacturing of PTA.

The Economic Times - 03.08.2020

<https://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/oil-and-gas/iocl-to-invest-rs-13805cr-to-set-up-new-plant-in-odisha/77324011>

India's crude steel production at 6.8 million tonnes in June, says Steel Ministry

The steel sector in India has started showing signs of improvement and in the month of June the country's crude steel production stood at 6.8 million tonne (MT), according to the Ministry of Steel. At, 6.8 MT, the production was 17.7 per cent higher over May, 2020, but on a year-on-year basis it was lower by 27.2 per cent over June 2019, the ministry said in an update. It noted that economic activities, after hitting the nadir in April 2020 due to spread of COVID-19 pandemic and nationwide lockdown, have started showing signs of improvement from May 2020. "This was reflected in the performance of eight core industries (with a weight of 40.27 per cent in IIP) which as against a decline of 37 per cent in April 2020 registered a decline of 23.4 per cent in the month of May 2020. Similarly, the Index of steel production which fell sharply by 83.9 per cent in April 2020 registered a decline of 48.4 per cent in May 2020," the ministry said. On the output of steel, it said the production has shown a consistent improvement after witnessing a decline in April this fiscal.

The Economic Times - 28.07.2020

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/indl-goods/svs/steel/indias-crude-steel-production-at-6-8-million-tonnes-in-june-says-steel-ministry/articleshow/77193068.cms>

Iran's Chabahar port exports cargo to India and Southeast Asia, notwithstanding slowdown

Iran's Chabahar Port built with India's support has recently witnessed cargo movement to South Asia and SE Asia notwithstanding slowdown in the global trade due to Covid. The first shipment of Iran's aquatic products has been shipped to Thailand via Chabahar Port recently, ET has learnt. Director General of Sistan and Baluchestan Ports and Maritime Organization, Behrouz Aghaei has said that the first ship carrying Iran's aquatic products left the South-eastern Iranian port of Chabahar for Thailand for the first time. Aghaei informed that the shipment of non-edible fishes was sent to the Indian port of Mundra via Chabahar. Aghaei further informed that the forth shipment of Afghanistan's transit goods has been shipped to India through Shahid Beheshti terminal in Chabahar Port. In 2016, Iran, India, and Afghanistan decided to jointly establish a trade route for land-locked Afghanistan and Central Asian countries. India had also sent a consignment

Soon, green corridors to slash logistics costs to 10% of GDP

India proposes to create green corridors with minimal inspections to speed up truck movement to an average of 500 km per day from 350 km daily at present and cut the cost of logistics. The government has identified eight sectors including textiles, leather, agriculture and gems & jewellery where transportation and warehousing issues will be resolved as part of a mega plan to reduce logistics costs to 10% of GDP from 13-14% now. "Lower logistics costs mean predictability and will give a competitive edge in doing business," Pawan Kumar Agarwal, special secretary (logistics) in the commerce and industry ministry, told ET. The introduction of e-tolling, electronic document flow, rationalisation of checkpoints and digital verification at all checkpoints to decrease wait time will help trucks cover greater distances daily across key corridors. Globally, trucks cover 800-900 km per day. The government estimates India can save Rs 10 lakh crore in capital costs if logistics costs come down by 5%. The cost of logistics in India is higher than Japan's 11% and 9-10% in the US. Transportation and warehousing account for the bulk of these costs.

The Economic Times - 03.08.2020

<https://epaper.timesgroup.com/Olive/ODN/Th/eEconomicTimes/shared/ShowArticle.aspx?doc=ETKM%2F2020%2F08%2F03&entity=Ar00704&sk=FEB4763A&mode=text>

Chandan Kumar Mondol takes charge as NTPC Director Commercial

NTPC on Saturday said Chandan Kumar Mondol has taken over as the company's Director (Commercial). Mondol has been with NTPC for over 35 years and has held several key leadership positions across multiple business units, an official statement said. Mondol joined NTPC in 1984 and started with project execution and commissioning of 3X500 MW units at Ramagundam and 4X210 MW units at Kahalgaon. In 1998, he joined Corporate Commercial where he worked towards developing commercial and marketing strategies, execution of domestic and international Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs), formulation of Tariff Regulations with CERC, participation in Ultra Mega Power Plant (UMPP) bidding, etc. He also represented NTPC in government meetings for the formulation of various policies and statutes including the Electricity Act 2003, the National Electricity

of wheat to Afghanistan through Chabahar Port in the past.

The Economic Times - 03.08.2020

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/irans-chabahar-port-exports-cargo-to-india-and-southeast-asia-notwithstanding-slowdown/articleshow/77313124.cms?from=mdr>

Navratna PSU Bharat Electronics Ltd gets new director of finance

Navratna defence PSU (public sector undertaking) Bharat Electronics Limited on Saturday got a new director (finance). He is Dinesh Kumar Batra. He joined BEL at its Ghaziabad unit in 1984. In a career spanning over three-and-a-half decades, he served the company in various capacities in Delhi, Pune and Bengaluru, a statement from the PSU said. Prior to his new assignment, he headed the internal audit at BELs corporate office, regional office-Delhi and Pune unit as general manager, the statement said. Batra was instrumental in the company's move to foray into the electro-explosive segment. To make India 'Aatma Nirbhar' in electronic artillery fuses and other ammunitions, he got 200 acres land allotted by Maharashtra government in Nagpur to set up an explosives integration complex, it said. He is also credited with BEL entering into Li-ion battery packs for automobiles to support the e-mobility programme of the central government.

The Economic Times - 02.08.2020

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/company/corporate-trends/navratna-psu-bharat-electronics-ltd-gets-new-director-of-finance/articleshow/77300925>

Ms Vartika Shukla Takes Over As Director Technical EIL

Ms. Vartika Shukla assumes charge as Director (Technical) of EIL today. She is a Chemical Engineering graduate from IIT, Kanpur and is certified with an Executive General Management Program from IIM (Lucknow). She was ED (T) at EIL prior to this appointment.

PSU Connect – 01.08.2020

<https://www.psuconnect.in/news/ms-vartika-shukla-takes-over--as-director-technical-eil-/24039>

Policy, the Tariff Policy and the Competitive Bidding Guidelines.

The Economic Times - 02.08.2020

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/power/chandan-kumar-mondol-takes-charge-as-ntpc-director-commercial/articleshow/77298040.cms>

Sumit Deb takes charge as NMDC's CMD

State-run NMDC on Saturday said Sumit Deb has taken over as its Chairman-cum Managing Director. Deb succeeds N. Bajindra Kumar who superannuated from the services of the company on Friday, NMDC said in a statement. "Sumit Deb has assumed charge as Chairman-cum-Managing Director of NMDC Limited on 1 August, 2020," the company said. Prior to assuming the role of CMD, NMDC, Deb was Director (Personnel) of the company. Deb is a graduate in Mechanical Engineering from Orissa University of Agriculture and Technology, Bhubaneswar. He joined NMDC as General Manager (Commercial) in 2015, later he was then promoted as Executive Director (Personnel & Admin) at NMDC.

Millennium Post - 02.08.2020

<http://www.millenniumpost.in/business/rupee-slips-12-paise-to-7493-against-us-dollar-in-early-trade-414528?infinitemscroll=1>