

WEEKLY MEDIA UPDATE

(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's GDP likely to have grown 7.8-8.5% in June qtr: Economists

The Indian economy is expected to have grown 7.8-8.5 per cent in the April-June quarter on the back of robust capital expenditure by Centre and states and a pickup in services sector, economists said. Some drag to growth, however, is expected from weaker momentum in mining, and exports, and a possible slowdown in momentum of government capex as the country will approach the elections, which could dampen economic growth in the second half of the ongoing financial year 2023-24, they said. The growth estimates are higher than the projection of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), which has estimated Q1 FY24 real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth at 8.0 per cent and full year FY24 growth at 6.5 per cent. Barclays has estimated Q1 GDP growth at 7.8 per cent, while SBI Research and ICRA have pegged Q1 growth at 8.3 per cent and 8.5 per cent, respectively.

The Indian Express - 23.08.2023

<https://indianexpress.com/article/business/economy/indias-gdp-likely-to-have-grown-7-8-8-5-in-june-qtr-economists-8904555/>

Global uncertainty may keep inflation elevated: Sitharaman

Global uncertainty and domestic disruptions may keep inflationary pressures elevated in coming months, the finance ministry said on Tuesday, adding that this warrants greater vigilance by government and the Reserve Bank of India. Global uncertainty and domestic disruptions may keep inflationary pressures elevated in coming months, the finance ministry said on Tuesday, adding that this warrants greater vigilance by government and the Reserve Bank of India. India's retail inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index, jumped to a 15-month high to 7.44% in July from 4.87% the preceding month, with food inflation at its highest in 39 months because prices of vegetables, cereals and pulses spiked. "Monsoon

ICRA estimates GDP growth at 8.5% in Q1, maintains FY24 forecast at 6%

India's economic growth will accelerate to 8.5 per cent in the April-June period of the current fiscal from the 6.1 per cent growth rate witnessed in the preceding January-March quarter, IcrA Ratings said in a report on Tuesday. The rating agency attributed the faster growth to a supportive base and also a recovery in the services sector. Though its estimate is higher than the RBI's forecast of 8.1 per cent, IcrA's chief economist Aditi Nayar said the second half of the fiscal is likely to witness headwinds, which will prove a dampener. Nayar said erratic rainfall, narrowing differentials with year-ago commodity prices, and possible slowdown in momentum of government capex "as we approach the Parliamentary elections will limit the growth", and maintained her 6 per cent real GDP growth estimate for FY24 which is lower than RBI's 6.5 per cent. In the first quarter, unseasonal heavy rains, lagged effect of the monetary tightening and weak external demand exerted a downward pressure on GDP growth, she said.

Business Standard - 22.08.2023

https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/icra-estimates-gdp-growth-at-8-5-in-q1-maintains-fy24-forecast-at-6-123082200483_1.html

Global inflation may become harder to manage in coming years: Research

Rising trade barriers. Aging populations. A broad transition from carbon-spewing fossil fuels to renewable energy. The prevalence of such trends across the world could intensify global inflation pressures in the coming years and make it harder for the Federal Reserve and other central banks to meet their inflation targets. That concern was a theme sounded in several high-profile speeches and economic studies presented Friday and Saturday at the Fed's annual conference of central bankers in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. For decades, the global economy had been moving toward greater integration, with goods flowing more freely between the United States and its trading

rains in August have been deficient at the time of writing," the ministry said in its latest monthly economic review, hinting at persistent supply-side uncertainties. Adverse geopolitical developments could put pressure on food prices globally, it said.

The Hindustan Times - 23.08.2023

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/business/global-uncertainty-and-domestic-disruptions-may-keep-inflation-elevated-in-india-caution-finance-ministry-101692785375845.html>

FM: Q1 GDP nos. should be good, taming inflation key

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Friday that taming inflation is a key priority for sustaining economic growth and asserted that the first quarter GDP numbers, which would be released in a few days, should be good. Addressing the B20 India summit in the national capital, the FM also said that green shoots of private capital expenditure were visible and the Centre's massive push on capital expenditure was crowding the private sector. "As things stand, nobody has a clue. But everybody feels that, yes, the first quarter did go on well, so the numbers should be good," said Sitharaman. The National Statistical Office (NSO) will release the first quarter GDP data on August 31. India is expected to grow at 6.5% in the current financial year. The FM was speaking on the theme "key priorities for sustained global economic recovery" at the summit. She highlighted five key priorities, which are critical to bringing global economies to the path of sustained recovery.

The Times of India - 26.08.2023

https://epaper.timesgroup.com/article-share?article=26_08_2023_017_003_tokc_TOI

India's foreign trade down 2.5% on-yr in Jan-June: GTRI

India's exports and imports of goods and services declined 2.5% on-year in January-June 2023 at \$800.9 billion, think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said Monday. Exports of goods and services rose 1.5% to \$385.4 billion in the first six months of the calendar year as against \$379.5 billion in the corresponding period a year ago while imports dipped 5.9% to \$415.5 billion from \$441.7 billion in January-June 2022. In merchandise trade, exports fell 8.1% to \$218.7 billion, while imports contracted 8.3% to \$325.7 billion. "Data is showing modest decline due to weak global demand and losing competitiveness in labour intensive sectors," said GTRI Co-founder Ajay Srivastava. Services exports during the six

partners. Lower-wage production overseas allowed Americans to enjoy inexpensive goods and kept inflation low, though at the expense of many U.S. manufacturing jobs. Since the pandemic, though, massive subsidies by the Biden administration. At the same time, large-scale investments in renewable energies could prove disruptive, at least temporarily, by increasing government borrowing and demand for raw materials, thereby heightening inflation.

The Economic Times - 28.08.2023

https://epaper.timesgroup.com/article-share?article=28_08_2023_013_004_etkc_ET

FM discusses road map with officials to make India developed nation by '47

Finance and corporate affairs minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday huddled with over 100 senior officers of her ministries to deliberate on re-orienting policies and priorities to realise the goal of turning India into a developed nation by 2047. The meeting, part of the Chintan Shivir discussions in Gujarat's Kevadia, also focussed on realising the goal by embracing the Panch Pran (five resolutions), as envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the finance ministry said. The five resolutions are: turn India into a developed country; remove every trace of bondage; take pride in its heritage; maintain unity and integrity; and fulfil duties to achieve the dreams of freedom fighters. In her address, Sitharaman stressed the optimal utilisation of the vast pool of government resources and underlined the need for mentoring young generations "to embellish efforts in the march" toward a developed nation by the time India completes its 100 years of independence.

The Economic Times - 22.08.2023

https://epaper.timesgroup.com/article-share?article=22_08_2023_009_020_etkc_ET

FDI inflows fall 34% to \$11bn in June qtr as MNCs go slow

Foreign direct investment (FDI) equity inflows dropped 34% to \$10.9 billion during the June quarter from the year-ago period, government data showed. Amid an aggressive investment pitch by India, government officials said companies are holding back on fresh funding due to the slowdown in Europe and the US, which have been aggravated by geopolitical tensions. Other countries have also been hit, with China reporting a 2.7% decline, although some, such as, Indonesia have bucked the trend so far in 2023. For the last few months. FDI inflows to India have remained depressed, with 2022-23 being the first time in nearly a decade when overseas direct investments into the

months grew 17.7% to \$166.7 billion, while imports rose 3.7% to \$89.8 billion. India exports goods to 240 countries and out of that, the country's outbound shipments declined in 134 destinations. Major countries where exports declined include the US, UAE, China, Bangladesh, and Germany.

The Telegraph - 22.08.2023

<https://www.businesstelegraph.co.uk/indias-foreign-trade-down-2-5-on-yr-in-jan-june-gtri/>

Domestic crude oil production up 2.1% to 2.5 MMT in July, imports decline 6.3% YoY: PPAC

India produced a total of 2.50 million metric tonnes (MMT) of crude oil in July 2023 - registering a growth of 2.1 per cent compared to the year-ago period, according to Petroleum Planning & Analysis Cell (PPAC). Out of 2.5 MMT, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) produced 1.62 MMT of crude oil while Oil India Limited (OIL) and private sector producers contributed 0.28 MMT and 0.60 MMT, data released by the Oil Ministry showed. Crude oil imports decreased by 6.3 per cent and 2.4 per cent during June 2023 and April-July 2023 respectively, compared to the corresponding period of the previous year. The net import bill for oil and gas was \$9.8 billion in July 2023 compared to \$15.8 billion in July 2022, according to PPAC. Out of this, crude oil imports constitute \$10.2 billion, liquified natural gas (LNG) imports \$2.1 billion and the exports were \$4.1 billion during July 2023, the data showed. The Indian basket crude price averaged \$80.37/bbl during July 2023 compared to \$74.93/bbl during June 2023 and \$105.49 /bbl during July 2022.

Mint - 23.08.2023

<https://www.livemint.com/economy/domestic-crude-oil-production-up-2-1-to-2-5-mmt-in-july-imports-decline-6-3-yoy-ppac-11692702658786.html>

EU looking at petroleum products made from Russian crude oil in India finding way to its market

The EU on Saturday voiced concerns over "rapid" rise in refined petroleum products made from Russian crude oil in India finding way to the European market, saying it defies the purpose of the economic sanctions against Moscow that are aimed at reducing its ability to finance the war on Ukraine. The European Union's Executive Vice-President and Commissioner for Trade, Valdis Dombrovskis, said oil products processed from Russian crude oil are arriving at the European market in "large quantities" and the grouping is looking at ways to deal with it. In an interaction with a small group of journalists, the EU Vice

country declined. Data released by the department for promotion of industry and internal trade (DPIIT) showed that barring construction, which included building housing and townships, all major sectors saw a dip (see graphic). The Netherlands and Japan were the only countries that saw an increase in inflows.

The Times of India - 28.08.2023

https://epaper.timesgroup.com/article-share?article=28_08_2023_013_020_toikc_TOI

India's July Russian oil imports dip; Saudi import down to 2-1/2-yr low: trade

India's July crude oil imports from Russia dipped for the first time in nine months, while inbound shipments from Saudi Arabia tumbled to their lowest in 2-1/2 years following OPEC+ cuts, tanker data from trade and industry sources showed. Both China and India, the world's biggest and third-biggest oil importers, cut imports from Russia and Saudi Arabia in July after prices rose and as the two oil producers reduced output and crude oil shipments. Saudi Arabia volunteered to cut output by another 1 million barrels per day (bpd) from July through September, and Russia will reduce exports in August by 500,000 bpd, part of a deal among members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies, a grouping known as OPEC+, to curb supplies and support prices. India's overall imports also declined 5.2 per cent from June to 4.4 million bpd oil in July, the data showed, as several refining plants are shut for maintenance during monsoon season.

The Economic Times - 22.08.2023

<https://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/oil-and-gas/indias-july-russian-oil-imports-dip-saudi-import-down-to-2-1/2-yr-low-trade/102932551>

As rains dampen India's domestic petroleum demand, uptick in exports help refiners maintain high run rates

With domestic demand for fuels and other petroleum products witnessing a slump due to the monsoon rains, India's refined products exports has witnessed an uptick, helping the country's refiners keep refinery runs high at a time when refining margins are robust globally, shows an analysis of data shared by commodity market analytics and intelligence firm Kpler. The cumulative clean product exports from India in August have so far been the highest since May 2022, with jet fuel exports at a historic high. In oil industry parlance, clean products refer to the class of petroleum

President, currently on a visit to India, accused Russia of using its energy supplies, and food as "tools" of "war and manipulation" to continue its attack on Ukraine. On the issue of food, Dombrovskis cited Russia withdrawing from the Black Sea grain initiative and blocking Ukraine's export of food grain to the world market.

The Economic Times - 27.08.2023

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/oil-gas/eu-looking-at-petroleum-products-made-from-russian-crude-oil-in-india-finding-way-to-its-market/articleshow/103088220.cms>

Indian Oil Corporation to invest Rs 4 trillion to expand oil refining and petrochemical businesses

Indian Oil Corporation on Friday said it plans to invest over Rs 4 lakh crore (trillion) in this decade to expand its oil refining and petrochemical businesses as well as in energy transition projects. IndianOil will invest Rs 1 lakh crore in expanding capacity to refine and turn crude oil into fuel and a staggering Rs 2.4 lakh crore in projects that will help it achieve net-zero carbon emissions from its operations, IOC chairman Shrikant Madhav Vaidya said. Indian Oil Corporation on Friday said it plans to invest over Rs 4 lakh crore (trillion) in this decade to expand its oil refining and petrochemical businesses as well as in energy transition projects. IndianOil will invest Rs 1 lakh crore in expanding capacity to refine and turn crude oil into fuel and a staggering Rs 2.4 lakh crore in projects that will help it achieve net-zero carbon emissions from its operations, IOC chairman Shrikant Madhav Vaidya said. The IOC board, he said, has accorded Stage-1 approval to set up the Paradip petrochemical complex in Odisha at an estimated cost of over Rs 61,000 crore. This will be IOC's single largest investment at a location.

The Telegraph - 26.08.2023

<https://www.telegraphindia.com/business/indian-oil-corporation-to-invest-rs-4-trillion-to-expand-oil-refining-and-petrochemical-businesses/cid/1961659>

India well positioned for global transitions in AI, energy: B20 chair

India is well positioned for global transition in the areas of artificial intelligence (AI), energy or supply chain resilience, and transition due to geopolitical situation, said N Chandrasekaran, chair, B20 India, at B20 Summit India 2023 in New Delhi on Thursday. "The global transitions favour India, and our growth momentum continues, compared to the rest of the world which faces a

products that are uncontaminated and not previously used in any application. Most major crude oil-based fuels like diesel, petrol, jet fuel, kerosene, and naphtha are categorised as clean products. Dirty refined products refer to the likes of fuel oil, low sulphur waxy residue, and carbon black feedstock. So far in August, India's jet fuel exports have averaged at a record high of 242,382 barrels per day (bpd), Kpler data shows.

The Indian Express - 28.08.2023

<https://indianexpress.com/article/business/market/as-rains-dampen-indias-domestic-petroleum-demand-uptick-in-exports-help-refiners-maintain-high-run-rates-8912287/i>

Shell Energy India to invest Rs 3500 crore in Gujarat

Shell India Private Limited, one of India's most diversified international energy companies, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Gujarat to invest Rs 3500 crore in the state. The MoU was signed in the presence of Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel and Minister of State Harsh Sanghavi. As per the MoU, Shell will invest Rs 2200 crore to set up a renewable energy generation plant in 1200-acre land in Banaskantha district of North Gujarat. This investment will generate direct or indirect employment for more than 1000 people. The commercial production at the plant is expected to start by 2027. Apart from this, Shell India will invest Rs 500 crore in the projects of LNG regasification terminal, asset integrity rejuvenation and debottlenecking project. These projects will generate employment for 375 people. The MoU signed on Wednesday are in line with the upcoming Vibrant Gujarat Summit in January 2024.

The Financial Express - 24.08.2023

<https://www.financialexpress.com/business/industry/shell-energy-india-to-invest-rs-3500-crore-in-gujarat/3220524/>

World must invest in both fossil fuels and renewables to ensure orderly transition: BP CEO

The world must invest both in the existing fossil fuel-based energy system as well as in renewable energy sources to ensure an orderly transition, BP CEO Bernard Looney said at the B20 summit on Saturday. "We must make sure that the energy transition is both rapid and orderly," Looney said. "It needs to be rapid

low growth situation," he added, lauding India's growth trajectory. Also, the chairman of Tata Sons, Chandrasekaran noted that India stood at the cusp of changes happening worldwide. "We are the fifth largest economy, and we have a lot of things going for us. Not just in terms of economic growth but in terms of infrastructure as well," he said. Set up in 2010, Business20, or B20, is one of the G20 forums representing the global business community. The forum has made 54 policy recommendations and over 170 actions to be undertaken.

Business Standard - 24.08.2023

https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/india-well-positioned-for-global-transitions-in-ai-energy-b20-chair-123082401088_1.html

Travel will represent a \$15.5 trillion economy by 2033

The crowds of travellers filling airports in many parts of the world this summer are a telltale sign of what's ahead for tourism. By 2033, travel is set to become a \$15.5 trillion industry—accounting for more than 11.6% of the global economy. This represents a 50% increase over its \$10 trillion value in 2019, when travel represented 10.4% of the world's gross domestic product. The 10-year forecast comes from the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), the leading advocacy group dedicated to quantifying the industry's economic impact. Although it was released in May as part of a 2023 World Economic Impact report on travel, the data hasn't circulated beyond a small set of industry executives until now. The report breaks down the economic contributions of the world's major tourism markets and reveals the top five most powerful travel and tourism economies as of 2022 in terms of GDP contribution. These remained the same as pre-2019: the US, China, Germany, UK and Japan, with Japan overtaking the UK in the most recent list. France, Mexico, Italy, India and Spain rounded out the top 10.

Moneycontrol - 22.08.2023

<https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/business/travel-will-represent-a-15-5-trillion-economy-by-2033-11231741.html>

because every year since Paris (climate agreement), the emissions have risen in the world with the exception of the pandemic." If the transition is not orderly, he said, it would "impact the pace of the transition". Looney cited last year's natural gas market shock when prices rose sevenfold, forcing people to spend a higher share of their disposable income on energy. "Normally, governments spend between 10 and 12% of their GDP on energy, but last year that number was 20%. And if that number is that high, that's going to leave very little for investment in the transition," he said. High prices and tighter gas supply also pushed up consumption of cheaper but more polluting coal last year, the BP CEO said.

The Economic Times - 27.08.2023

https://epaper.timesgroup.com/article-share?article=27_08_2023_003_011_etkc_ET

SBI chief Khara likely to get 10-mth extension

SBI chairman Dinesh Khara is likely to get an extension until August 2024, giving him almost another year at the helm as his current tenure is to end in October. Under existing norms, SBI chairman is given a term up to 63 years but Khara reaches that age next August. There are other public sector bank chiefs who were not given additional time in office despite being several months away from reaching the age of superannuation. Ashwini Kumar Tewari, whose term as MD is due to end in January, 2024, is also in line to get another two years on the job. An extension to Khara and Tewari may also upset the succession plan at SBI. C S Setty, the current MD, was widely seen to be in line to succeed his current boss. Alok Kumar Choudhary is the third MD on the board of the country's largest lender with one MD post falling vacant following the appointment of Swaminathan J as RBI deputy governor. Separately, the Financial Services Institutions Bureau — the agency responsible for selecting the heads of state-run banks, insurance companies and financial institutions — is discussing a proposal to increase the retirement age for SBI and LIC chiefs to 65 years.

The Times of India - 22.08.2023

https://epaper.timesgroup.com/article-share?article=22_08_2023_015_008_toikc_TOI